

Religious issue...



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they displaced from the ownership of the land.

The result has been an intercommunity problem as intractable as that in Cyprus, in South Africa, or indeed in parts of the United States. But in contrast to the situation in other countries, where different communities are differentiated by language or skin color, in Northern Ireland the only feature differentiating the two communities is religion.

It is this phenomenon, compounded by an anachronistic but deep seated fear on the part of many Northern Ireland Protestants of what they see as the authoritarian attitude of the Roman Catholic Church, that gives the misleading impression of a religious conflict. In fact, religious belief has little to do with the problem, and the least fervent

adherents to either religion are often the most violent and aggressive in the intercommunity conflict that has culminated in the past five years of extreme violence.

The decision to partition Ireland in 1920 when it was still within the United Kingdom, was, perhaps, intended by some of its British authors at any rate to help relieve the pressures created by this long-standing intercommunity tension. In practice, it had precisely the opposite effect.

The artificially created local Protestant majority in the newly created region of Northern Ireland inevitably felt themselves threatened by the much larger independent Irish State in the rest of the island — which as a result of this division was almost 95 per cent Roman Catholic — and by the large 35 per cent Roman Catholic minority within their own area. They responded to this

sense of threat by developing a siege mentality, and by repressing the Roman Catholic minority, whose natural development was frustrated by discriminatory housing and employment policies, and whose political influence in areas where there is a local Roman Catholic majority was frequently negated by unscrupulous Gerrymandering of constituency boundaries.

The Catholic minority responded to this by largely opting out of the political and administrative system, with the result that the new political arrangements in Northern Ireland never gained consensus support from the population as a whole. Government of the area for 50 years was in the hands of a single party, dominated by landed and business interests which exploited the sectarian fears of the workers and small farmers in order to retain their dominant position.

Greater agricultural output costly...

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Congressional approval of Ford's proposal to end restrictions on the growing of rice, peanuts and cotton could make a difference — but not enough to produce a substantial decline in over-all food prices.

Only about 28 million of the country's 2.2 billion acres of territory are used to grow crops. But economists say that the investment required to convert forests or barren or hilly pastureland to farmland is enormous. New highways, reservoirs, airports and cities also eat up about 1.2 million acres a year.

analysis

According to Paarlberg, the most promising irrigation projects to reclaim land are now completed, and new ones will be costly. Many of the schemes now under study, or already rejected as too expensive, have a futuristic character. Among these are plans for a canal from Canada along the Continental Divide, and the abandoned idea of pumping water from the Mississippi River to Western Texas.

According to Lester Brown, an economist with the private Overseas Development Council, water is in extremely short supply in many parts of the country. In rich wheat regions such as Montana, farmers soon may have to compete for water with potential new producers of energy for the Project Independence program, he contends.

Because of these limitations, officials are counting mainly on increasing crop yields per acre to achieve the expanded production that the President wants.

The House Agricultural Subcommittee report released this week spoke of a "throttling down" of agricultural research on livestock, fruits, vegetables, farm management, soil and land use. The report Oregon Daily Emerald

noted that there has been an inability to achieve technological breakthroughs recently in key areas. Scientists still haven't been able to devise any commercially feasible way of producing more than one calf per cow a year.

Also, scientists have not been able to achieve any dramatic rise in soybean yields, even though soybeans contain more protein than any other plant and are the country's leading farm export product.

Manpower shortages in the countryside and the high prices of fertilizer also are problems which could limit dramatic production increases in the future.

Erik Eckholm, also of the Overseas Development Council, says that the fertilizer-glutted fields of the United States are likely to be far less responsive to heavier doses than undernourished land in other parts of the world.

"As yields increase, there is a diminishing return," he says. A ton of fertilizer applied to high yielding crop land in the U.S. might produce an additional five tons of grain, compared with 12 tons more in India, he says. But tight supplies, which are not expected to ease for several years, may limit how much even the United States can apply to its land.

High prices of nitrogen and phosphate fertilizer have been a major complaint of farmers this year. According to Eckholm, an estimated three million tons of nutrients a year go to industry, and to maintain golf courses, cemeteries, gardens and lawns.

There is no question of the United States running out of food. Normally, the country exports a quarter of its corn crop, two-thirds of its wheat crop, close to half its soybean crop and 60 per cent of its rice crop.

The question is how to satisfy U.S. consumers, commercial customers abroad and poor countries in need of cheap food to combat hunger — all in a period when the weather and limits in technology could both cause disappointments.

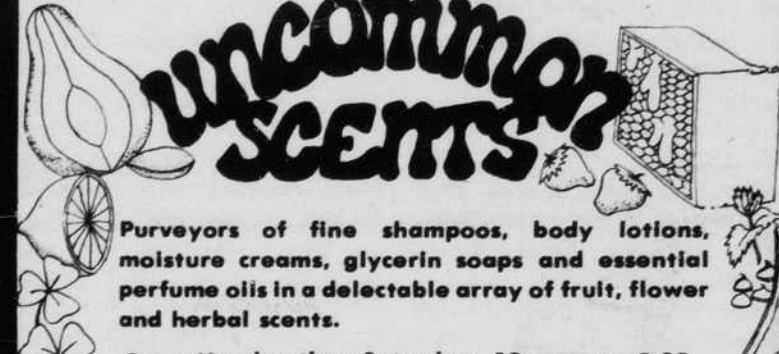
Faced with the bitter and bloody consequences of this tangled historical situation, the basic policy of the Irish Government — indeed, of all political parties in the Irish Parliament — is to help find that point of balance between the different elements in the Northern Ireland community which will provide stable, just and efficient government there in spite of pressure from extremist groups, and which will contribute to the restoration of peace.

The IRA and also, of course, the Protestant Paramilitary organizations — regard violence as a valid instrument of policy.

The hollowness of the IRA claim to be waging war on the British Army is demonstrated by the fact

that all but about 200 of almost 1,100 people killed in the north over the past five years have been Irishmen or Irish women — a large number by the IRA itself.

I know that most Irish-Americans abhor the IRA and the tragedy it has brought to the country of their origin which they hold dear. I would appeal to that minority of Irish-Americans, who in the past have been misled by the specious propaganda of the IRA and by its false equating of its atrocious campaign with the War of Independence in Ireland of half a century ago, to give neither comfort nor support to the IRA nor its front organizations who are the enemies of the whole Irish people.



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