

# THE PARTITION OF IRELAND

HOW AND WHY IT WAS ACCOMPLISHED



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a High King of Ireland acknowledged by lesser kingdoms was the symbol of that unity.

This unity survived all the changes that 2,000 years of history can bring. It was not broken by invasion. It was not broken by internal revolt. Under it, Ireland passed from paganism to Christianity, from a pastoral civilisation to one in which she led Europe in many of the arts. Under it, Ireland as a single nation had her great victories and her great defeats. In the days of her power she sent armies overseas, in the days of her subjugation her sons could arm only in secret, but in both periods there was only one meaning to "Ireland"—that is the whole island.

#### ONLY ONE IRELAND.

This unity which triumphed over every misfortune and every failure was as evident in the modern political struggle as it had been in the centuries before it. There was only one Ireland all through the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. Grattan spoke for it, Emmet died for it, the Young Irelanders and Fenians rose in its name, Parnell led it, and the men of 1916 began their immortal proclamation with the words:

"Irishmen and Irishwomen! In the name of God and of the dead generations from which she receives her old tradition of nationhood, Ireland, through us, summons her children to her flag and strikes for her freedom."

The signatories to that Proclamation were all executed, but their sacrifice only strengthened the Irish will to be free, and in the General Election of 1918, their followers carried an overwhelming majority of the seats in the whole of Ireland. The following January the elected

deputies—those who were not in prison—met in Dublin, established Dáil Éireann, the Parliament of Ireland, and "in the name of the Irish nation," declared the Independence of Ireland.

#### THE ACT OF A STRANGER.

In 1920, after the unity of Ireland had once more been demonstrated in the local elections held throughout the nation in that year, this most ancient nation was partitioned. It was partitioned by an Act of the British Parliament for which none of the Irishmen in the House of Commons could be got to vote, not even those from "Northern Ireland." The dismemberment was, and could only be, the act of a stranger who had no understanding of Irish history or Irish culture or Irish tradition. It is true that the national minority concentrated in the North-east of Ireland had, under the inspiration of the British Tory Party, opposed Home Rule or, indeed, any form of Irish self-government. They desired an Ireland, all Ireland, inside the British Empire and governed by the British; the majority desired an Ireland, all Ireland, outside the British Empire, governed by Irishmen. Neither the majority nor the minority proposed as a solution of their conflicting views the cutting-up of the motherland that both loved. That, a foreign power proposed and carried out.<sup>1</sup>

#### A BLOODY PAWN IN A PARTY GAME.

This outrage was committed upon Ireland not because those who committed it thought it was necessary for the good of Ireland. They did it in pursuance of their own party politics. When the Liberals were in office in 1886, Gladstone proposed a Home Rule Bill for Ireland. The Tories saw that on such a measure they could arouse both

<sup>1</sup> "We never asked for 'Partition,' and we never wanted it"—Lord Glentoran, former Chief Whip of the Six County Unionist Party, speaking on October 10th, 1946, at Belfast.

racial antagonism and religious fears and direct them against the Liberal party. Their leader, Lord Randolph Churchill, anticipating that the Liberal leader would bring in such a measure, decided beforehand what the British Tory Party's counter would be.

"I decided some time ago," he wrote on February 16th, 1886, "that if the G.O.M.<sup>1</sup> went for Home Rule, the Orange card would be the one to play."<sup>2</sup>

He played it. He went to Belfast and there so effectively stirred up sectarian passions that his son, Mr. Winston Churchill, writes of his "rousing England and inflaming Ulster." He inflamed it so that, as again his son tells us,

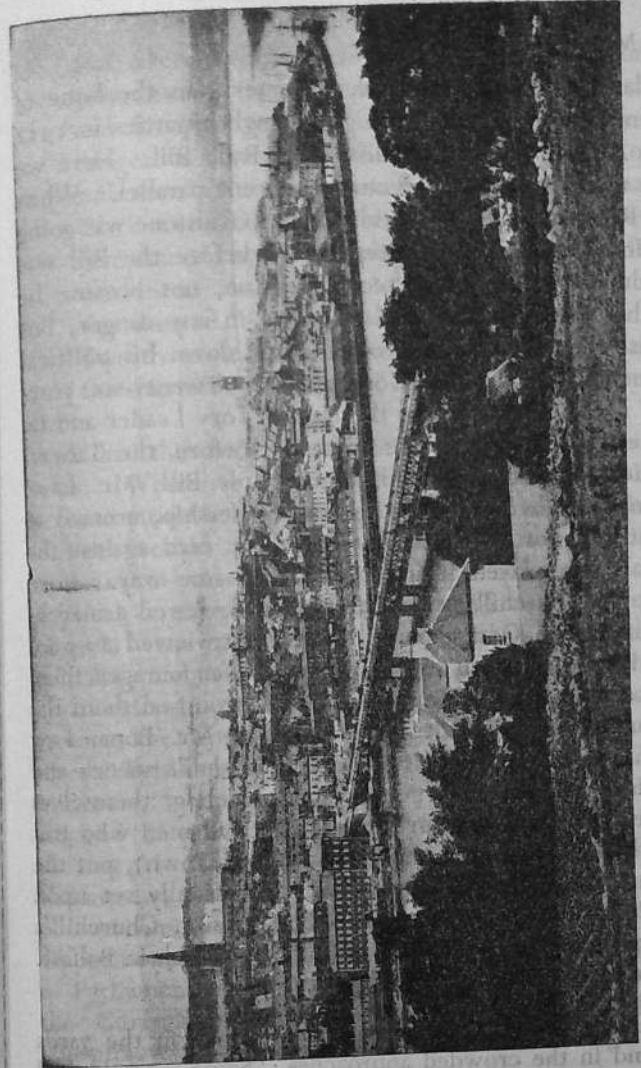
"the attitude of the Protestants in the North of Ireland became daily more formidable. The excitement in Belfast did not subside. Dangerous riots, increasing in fury until they almost amounted to warfare, occurred in the streets between the factions of Orange and Green. Firearms were freely used by the police and by the combatants. Houses were sacked and men and women were killed. So savage, repeated and prolonged were the disturbances, breaking out again and again in spite of all efforts to suppress them, that they became in the end the subject of a Parliamentary Commission, the evidence and report of which are not pleasant reading and proved, when finally published, damaging to the Orange party."<sup>3</sup>

The whole Tory leadership concentrated on this sectarian incitement with such good effect for the Party that they actually brought down the Gladstone Government and drove the Liberals out of office for 20 years with a short break from 1892 to 1895.

<sup>1</sup> G.O.M. (Grand Old Man) = Gladstone.

<sup>2</sup> Winston Spencer Churchill, *Lord Randolph Churchill*, Vol. II, p. 59.

<sup>3</sup> Winston Spencer Churchill, *Lord Randolph Churchill*, Vol. II, pp. 65-66.



DERRY, SECOND CITY IN THE PARTITIONED AREA. HERE THE NATIONALISTS ARE IN MAJORITY BUT HAVE BEEN DISFRANCHISED BY A SYSTEM WHICH GIVES A MAJORITY OF THE REPRESENTATION TO A MINORITY OF THE POPULATION.



## OLD METHODS REVIVED.

Ireland, still unpartitioned, became again the bone of contention between the two great English parties in 1912 when Asquith introduced his Home Rule Bill. Here we come upon an instructive and significant parallel. When Lord Randolph Churchill realised that Gladstone was going for Home Rule he took steps, even before the Bill was introduced, to raise the sectarian issue, not because he felt that Protestants in Ireland were in any danger, but because by that means he could bring down his political opponents, the Liberal Government. Twenty-six years later, Mr. Bonar Law was the British Tory Leader and he adopted exactly the same tactics. Before the Liberal Premier had introduced his Home Rule Bill, Mr. Law, accompanied by others of the Tory leadership, crossed to Belfast and not only played the Orange card against the Liberals but played it in exactly the same way. Lord Randolph Churchill had organised and reviewed a march-past of 70,000 Orangemen. Mr. Law reviewed 80,000. Lord Randolph, in an incendiary speech, encouraged them to take extra constitutional action and promised them the full support of the British Tory party. Mr. Bonar Law did the same. The effect of Lord Randolph's speech and promise was that the Orangemen, feeling themselves privileged by such support (for it included men who had held the highest offices under the British Crown), put the inflammatory speeches into action and brutally set upon the Catholics. We have seen Mr. Winston Churchill's description of what followed his father's speech in Belfast. The same sequence occurred in 1912.

"Catholic workmen were assaulted both in the yards and in the crowded approaches. Some were kicked and beaten; others assailed by showers of iron nuts

and rivets—'Belfast confetti'; during the month of July, 1912, there were twenty-five assaults inside and fifty-five outside the yards, 'five of the most dangerous character, threatening the lives of the sufferers.' The Catholics employed by Workman and Clark were driven out of their employment, as they complained, by the threats of their Protestant fellow-workmen, and refused to return until their safety was assured."<sup>1</sup>

"Two thousand Catholic workers had been driven from the shipyards in scenes of considerable brutality."<sup>2</sup>

What had thus begun was continued at intervals for many years. Whenever it seemed that Ireland was likely to become either self-governing or wholly free, British Tory leaders crossed to Belfast, and there fanned a brutal sectarianism into flame solely to inconvenience their political opponents in Britain. In 1912, however, the Liberals were in a stronger position than they had been in 1886, and, therefore, it would need more powerful organisation to secure their defeat on the long chosen ground, the Home Rule Bill. Thus it came about that several British ex-Premiers, many other former Cabinet Ministers, many high-ranking British officers were soon engaged in proceedings which involved the creation of the first private army in 20th century Europe—the Carsonite Volunteers, who were armed by the illegal importation of weapons, and, under the leadership of the British Opposition, pledged themselves to resist a British Act of Parliament in arms. British Army officers stationed at the Curragh mutinied rather than interfere with the conspiracy. Faced with this array of leading British

<sup>1</sup> Ian Colvin, *The Life of Lord Carson*, Vol. II, pp. 132-133.

<sup>2</sup> George Dangerfield, *The Strange Death of Liberal England*, p. 88.

statesmen and Senior British officers, Asquith, then British Premier, surrendered and proposed the Partition of Ireland.

#### MANOEUVRE AND DECEIT.

Thus had Partition its origin in the manoeuvring of one English political party to get the other political party out of office. The Tories, by inflaming racial and religious prejudices throughout Britain and the North-East, had created conditions which threatened the security of the Liberal Government. The Liberal Government, rather than stand by their own principles which were enshrined in their own Act of Parliament giving self-government to all Ireland, surrendered to the armed threats and to save themselves proposed that Ireland be dismembered.

What was born of a partisan manoeuvre was perpetuated in deceit. In order to secure the assent of some of the Irish Nationalist leaders to this new policy the Asquith Government pressed it upon Mr. Redmond, head of the Irish Parliamentary Party, on the grounds that it was purely a temporary measure and that, after five years, the excluded counties, which were to be only four, would revert automatically to the control of the National Parliament. At the same time pledges were being given to the Belfast leaders by the British that Partition would be permanent.

#### MORE THAN 300,000.

Before the new "settlement" could be put through the first World War intervened and self-government for Ireland was shelved while Britain took the field for the liberty of small nations. Irishmen were recruited for that war on pledges issued by the British War Office, which stated that when it was over, Ireland (not a part of Ireland)

would receive the same independence as Belgium: "They [the Allies] cannot then in the face of Europe give freedom to all small nations and leave Ireland out," said a British official War Office recruiting poster. It is estimated by General Sir William Hickie that more than 300,000 Irishmen served in the first World War. That the vast majority did so believing Ireland also was to be freed or given Home Rule is indisputable. But a number of Irishmen of deeper understanding decided, in view of Britain's shelving of the whole question of Irish self-government, that nothing would win them liberty but the assertion of independence in arms.

A rising took place in Easter Week, 1916. It was crushed ruthlessly, all the signatories of the Proclamation of a Republic issued on the morning of the Rising being executed and, with them, the greater number of highest ranking officers of the revolutionary army. But Britain, no longer able to hide from the world her denial of freedom to Ireland, busied herself, with much publicity, in preparing a measure of Irish self-government. There was little sincerity in this apparent concern for Ireland's rights; the explanation is to be found 3,000 miles away where America, deeply shocked at the execution by firing-squads of men of a subject nation seeking liberty, seemed to recede still further from entering the war. It was thought in London that a gesture towards Ireland might help to undo the harm done by the suppression of the Rising. Lloyd George was given the task of finding a "solution to the Irish question."

#### A SIGNIFICANT LETTER.

He promptly revived the proposal to partition Ireland, and on this occasion did actually succeed in persuading the Irish Parliamentary leaders that the exclusion of the

North-East would be purely temporary, and by that means won their consent to the proposal. It is significant of the manner in which Partition was eventually accomplished to notice that Lloyd George, while persuading the Nationalist leaders of the temporary nature of the "solution," was writing as follows to Sir Edward Carson, the Orange Leader:

Whitehall, S.W.

May 29th, 1916.

My dear Carson,

I enclose Greer's draft proposition.

We must make it clear that at the end of the provisional period Ulster does not, whether she wills it or not, merge in the rest of Ireland.

Ever sincerely,

(Signed) D. Lloyd George.

Will you show it to Craig.

#### A NEW PLAN.

The popular revulsion against the Partition proposal defeated the attempt to soothe American opinion and a new offer was made by Lloyd George, who had since become Premier. The British would set up a convention of Irishmen and let them decide on a plan for self-government for all Ireland. When, however, the Convention was created, it was found to be not an elective but an appointed body in which the Sinn Féin movement, now representing a majority of Irishmen and women, was to be given five

seats out of 101. This "Irish Convention" was not to be permitted to declare for Irish independence, which was what the Irish people now desired. Its main purpose was to deceive the United States into believing that Britain meant at last to deal honestly with Ireland and so the Convention was kept talking until America was securely in the war. Then it was brought to an end by the receipt of a letter from the British Premier completely changing its terms of reference and declaring that such agreements as had been come to by the majority of the delegates could not be accepted and that, in fact, even the limited self-government which was being considered was impracticable. During the sittings of the Convention, the Unionists of the predominantly Nationalist area joined with the Nationalists themselves in an effort to avert partition by making extraordinarily generous concessions to the Northern minority. That minority, however, actively encouraged by the British Tories, blocked every effort at a settlement. Home Rule for all Ireland being no longer useful to the British cause in America, was dropped by the British Cabinet.

By their acceptance, even temporarily, of Partition, the Irish Parliamentary Party, although still holding the vast majority of Irish seats (the last election was in 1912), had lost the confidence of the electorate. The people had transferred their support to the new movement led by men who had taken part in the Rising and who stood for full independence for the whole of Ireland. The first electoral test after Partition had been proposed came in December, 1918. At that election, the Irish Parliamentary Party vanished, only six of its seventy-three members surviving. That was the measure of the people's anger against the Partition proposal and of their determination that Ireland as a unit should be fully free.

## A VOTE FOR FREEDOM.

That General Election of 1918 is significant not only for the defeat of the Irish Parliamentary Party, but for its actual results. In all Ireland, those who stood for full self-government were returned in an overwhelming majority—79 to 26. Even in the province of Ulster itself in this election—the last election before Partition was accomplished in 1920—there were returned a majority of deputies standing for an independent Ireland. In votes cast, including estimates for the constituencies in which no opponents to independence were nominated, the electorate decided:

For self-governing Ireland .. ..	1,211,516
Against self-government .. ..	315,394

Local elections were held in Ireland in 1920, again before Partition was accomplished. They showed that in 206 Corporations and Councils there were 182 in which the majorities were for a self-governing Irish nation. In 19 only were majorities against self-government and in five others the membership was even.

## NO ONE WANTED IT.

It is here necessary to stress a point already made. Up to December, 1920, no party in Ireland wanted Partition. The mass of the Irish people demanding independence obviously did not want Partition, but neither did the Unionists of the North-East, who, even when they strove for the exclusion of Ulster, did so in the hope that Home Rule would thus be defeated and all Ireland remain in the British Empire and under the as yet unshaken patronage of their own class.

In view of this national opposition, the steps taken by the British Government to impose Partition had to be thoroughgoing to be effective. They took a twofold form:

- (i). To inflame, as in the past, sectarian passions in the North-East.
- (ii). To inflict such punishment on Ireland in her struggle for freedom as to break her will to resist dismemberment.

With this double aim Lloyd George, in December, 1919, introduced in the British Commons the measure now known as the Partition Act. When its terms became public they created anger and revulsion. Even the anti-Home Rule *Irish Times* said on February, 1920:

"The Bill has not a single friend in either hemisphere, outside Downing Street."

That friendlessness was emphasised later, when the Bill came to be discussed and when not a single Irish member of any party voted for it. This all-party antagonism faced Lloyd George with the task of creating conditions in which the hated settlement could be forced on the Irish people. Let us follow the British plan as it developed.

## THE IRISH RESISTANCE.

After the war, Ireland applied the principle of self-determination of nations to herself. Her elected deputies met in Dublin, set up a National Parliament, and, as a symbol of the indivisibility of Ireland, invited to its sessions the Unionist deputies elected in the North-East. This Parliament in turn elected a Government, and Ireland became, by open and democratic processes, a Republic. Britain, in the next two and a half years, sought to

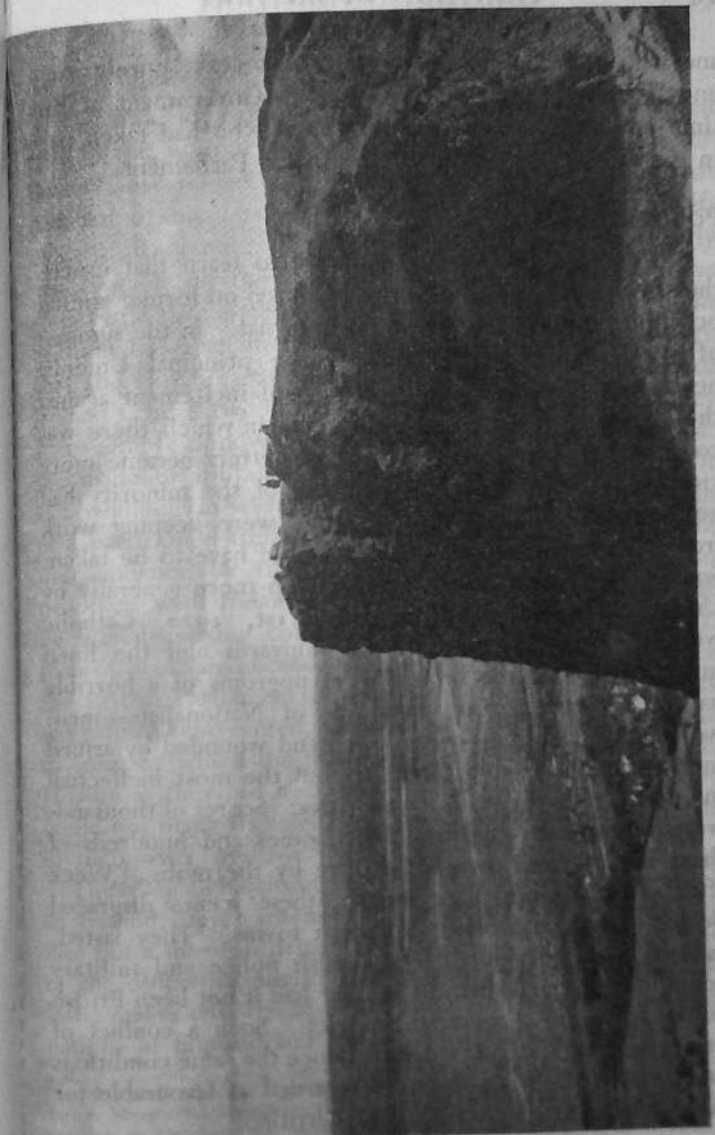


overthrow that Republic by sheer military might. Instead of granting Ireland the same independence as Belgium, as was promised to the hundreds of thousands of Irishmen who had enlisted for the war (the Irish casualties were twice those of Belgium) the British Government declared the elected Parliament an unlawful body and recruited and despatched to Ireland the Black-and-Tans. This terrorist army was loosed upon the people. Scores of towns were burned and wrecked, industries were smashed up, private residences destroyed for "reprisals," prisons filled with resisters, many captured in action executed, and systematic assassinations carried out, elected leaders being shot in their homes at night.

#### HELP FROM ABROAD.

When a year of terrorism on this enormous scale was found not to have broken the Irish resistance movement, the British realised that eventually they might have to make peace with leaders so heroically supported by the people. Instead of the desire for independence weakening, it was daily becoming stronger. Vast moral support was given to it by the exiled Irish and their friends throughout the world. In the United States, public opinion was deeply moved by the unequal fight, and American citizens sent generous aid to the insurgent Irish Government. The British Cabinet, despairing of a decision by brute force, resumed more energetically their preparations for the partition of an Ireland which seemed to be successfully shaking itself free.

The British Government elected in 1918, although Lloyd George was Premier, was predominantly Tory. Its sympathies lay mainly with those whom earlier it had encouraged to create a private army and resist in arms an Act of Parliament passed by their opponents, the Liberals,



ALSO CUT OFF FROM IRELAND—CAVE HILL, OUTSIDE BELFAST, WHERE THE MODERN MOVEMENT FOR IRELAND'S INDEPENDENCE WAS BEGUN BY THEOBALD WOLFE TONE AND HIS COMRADES IN 1795.

and who had even organised mutiny to serve purely party ends. Indeed, the personnel of the Government at this time included some of the very men who had taken part in the armed opposition to the British Parliament.

#### POGROM AGAIN.

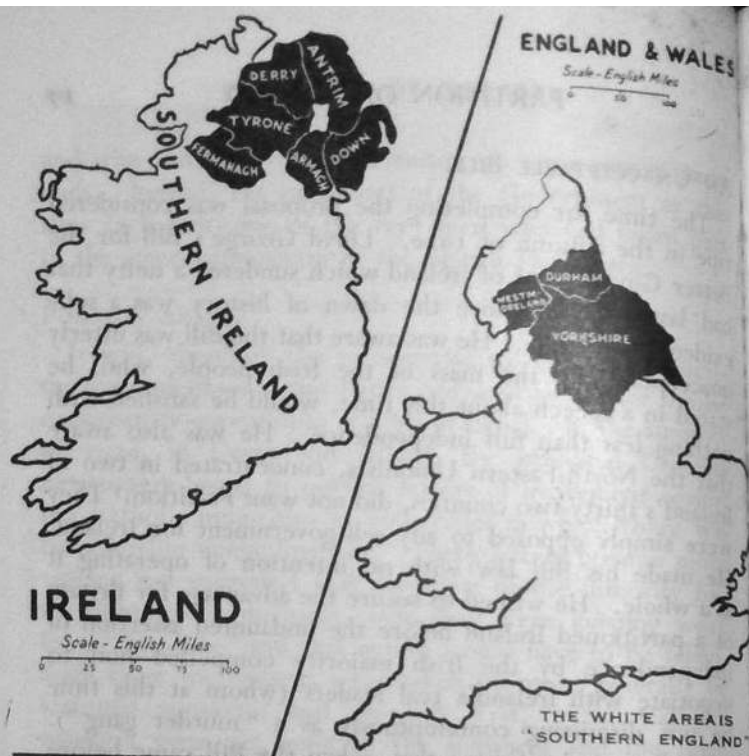
It will, therefore, be no surprise to learn that exactly the same methods as the Tories had used on former similar occasions re-appeared as at a given signal. In the summer of 1920, in Derry and Belfast, the principal Unionist newspapers began to publish letters of incitement against the Catholic minorities in both cities in which there was considerable unemployment. These letters became more violent and suggested that members of the minority had no right to employment, that they were keeping work from "loyalists," and that action would have to be taken. Soon these incitements were taken up more generally by Unionist speakers, and on July 21st, 1920, Catholic workers were set upon in the shipyards and the linen mills. This was the beginning of pogroms of a horrible nature in which many hundreds of Nationalists—men, women and children—were killed and wounded by armed mobs who operated without any but the most ineffectual interference by the British authorities. Scores of thousands were forcibly driven from their homes and hundreds of these homes were then set on fire by the mobs. Week after week, month after month, these scenes disgraced Belfast, Derry and other Northern towns. They lasted, indeed, for two years. The British police and military could have stopped them in an hour had it not been British policy to incite a sectarian conflict. Such a conflict of Protestant and Catholic might produce the same conditions as in 1886 and 1913-14, now regarded as favourable for putting through the proposal of Partition.

#### AN UNACCEPTABLE BILL.

The time for completing the proposal was considered ripe in the autumn of 1920. Lloyd George's Bill for the Better Government of Ireland which sundered a unity that had lasted since before the dawn of history was a self-evident manoeuvre. He was aware that the Bill was utterly unacceptable to the mass of the Irish people, who, he stated in a speech about this time, would be satisfied with nothing less than full independence. He was also aware that the North-Eastern Unionists, concentrated in two of Ireland's thirty-two counties, did not want Partition.<sup>1</sup> They were simply opposed to any self-government for Ireland. He made his Bill law with no intention of operating it as a whole. He wished to secure the advantage for Britain of a partitioned Ireland before the undaunted assertion of independence by the Irish majority compelled him to negotiate with Ireland's real leaders (whom at this time he was dismissing contemptuously as a "murder gang"). It is of great significance that, when the Bill came before the British Parliament in which the Six-County Unionists were fully represented, not one of them took part in the division by which the principle of Partition was accepted. Hostile as they had been made to the Irish majority, they could not bring themselves to vote for the dismemberment of their own nation.

Thus began Partition. Never sought for by any party in Ireland, never intended by its authors to be anything else but a move in British politics, it committed upon one of the oldest nations in Europe a wrong which, while it lasts, makes true friendship between the two neighbouring nations of England and Ireland impossible.

<sup>1</sup> "We never asked for 'Partition' and we never wanted it"—Lord Glentoran, former Minister for Agriculture and Unionist Chief Whip in the Belfast Parliament speaking on October 10th, 1946.



## PART II: THE PROBLEM TO BE FACED

SINCE a Parliament was set up in Belfast all the institutions of State—a Government, a Judiciary, a Civil Service, a police force, etc., have been created. As a result, there has now grown up a vested interest in the maintenance of these institutions and in the continuance of Partition on which the Unionist majority think their maintenance depends. Consequently, there is in the North East to-day a party which desires Partition. That, as will be clear from what has already been said, is a direct result of British policy. But it poses a problem which all interested in Ireland have now to face.

### THE FACTS.

That it may be faced in the full light of facts the details of the partitioned area should be understood. The first requisite of an understanding is to know exactly what the area is. This can best be done by observing what it is *not*. Lloyd George, whose Bill partitioned Ireland, was anxious to mislead international opinion on the matter. In fulfilling this task, he accomplished something no geographer had ever attempted. He put the most northerly part of Ireland into "Southern Ireland." He called the Six Counties which his Bill cut off from the body of Ireland "Northern Ireland," and the remaining twenty-six Counties "Southern Ireland." It is as if the area of York, Westmoreland and Durham were to be called "Northern England," and all the rest of England, including Cumberland and Northumberland, "Southern England." It is as if Wisconsin, Ohio, New York and Pennsylvania were called the "Northern States," and all the rest, including Maine, New Hampshire and Michigan, the "Southern

States." Such nomenclature applied to England or the United States would be absurd. It is no less absurd in regard to Ireland.

The partitioned area is *not* Northern Ireland. Neither is it the historic province of Ulster which is nine counties. It is a purely arbitrary area without any natural boundaries. Its tortuous border is 270 miles long in a country only 300 miles in length and passes over mountains and across rivers, dividing farms, villages, streets and even houses in half. Not only does the cut-off area partition Ireland, it partitions Northern Ireland too, the greater part of which is outside the area, and it partitions Ulster, three of whose counties, including Donegal, the largest, are outside the area also. Neither geography nor history justify partition, no physical boundaries exist to explain why six counties were chosen to be separated from the nation whose life of thousands of years they shared.

#### NOT ULSTER.

The Six Counties were chosen as the area to be partitioned for one reason only, that it was the greatest extent of country which the concentration of Unionists in Belfast and its contiguous hinterland could out-vote. Sir Edward Carson, the Ulster leader, himself argued against including the three other Ulster counties because, if he did, he told the British Parliament, "You would have no chance of successfully starting a Parliament in Belfast," as there were 260,000 Nationalists in these counties, which, with the 430,000 inside, might out-vote the Partitionists. As has been already said, in the last election before the Partition Act was passed, the province of Ulster returned a majority of Nationalists. Had the Partition Act cut away Ulster, it might have immediately voted itself back into Ireland.

The area which was, in fact, chosen is not territorially Unionist. Almost half the cut-off area has Nationalist

majorities. The two counties of Tyrone (largest county in the area) and Fermanagh are in the majority Nationalist, so are the old Parliamentary constituencies of South Down and South Armagh which adjoin free Ireland. So also is the second of the only two cities in the area, Derry. There is no question, therefore, of a Unionist homogeneous area to justify partition. Indeed, if four of the Six Counties, Tyrone, Fermanagh, Derry and Armagh, were to vote as a unit, the majority would be Nationalist and they would vote themselves into free Ireland.

#### NO RACIAL DIFFERENCE.

Nor is the area racially different from the rest of Ireland. The Six County population is predominantly of Gaelic stock, as is Ireland as a whole; even those who were brought from Britain during the plantations to occupy the lands from which the "natives" were expelled came, in a majority, from areas which had previously been peopled or partially peopled from Ireland.

Again, the partitioned area has no religious unity which would justify separation from the rest of the country. In fact, the most numerous religious group within the area are of the same persuasion as the majority in Ireland, *i.e.*, Catholic, despite the propaganda about the "Protestant North." These are the figures:

Catholics	. . . . .	428,290
Presbyterians	. . . . .	390,931
Church of Ireland	. . . . .	345,474
Methodists	. . . . .	55,135
Others	. . . . .	59,915

#### INDUSTRIAL WORKERS.

Another excuse given to justify Partition is that the Six Counties are industrial while the rest of Ireland is



agricultural. It is not so. The greatest single industry in the North-East, as in Ireland as a whole, is agriculture in which 164,811 are engaged. The number of industrial workers as shown in the last Census of Production, published in the official *Ulster Year Book*, of 1938, was 143,176, while in the same year the number of industrial workers in the rest of Ireland was 166,174. These figures do not mean that the Six Counties are not more industrialised than the Twenty-six Counties, for the difference in area and population has to be kept in mind. But they do mean that agriculture and not manufacturing industry is the Six Counties' chief occupation. The Six Counties have at present many more industrial workers than they had before 1939. This is abnormal and is due to the transient effects of war. In fact, the two main industries of the North—ship-building and linen—were in the years between the wars so crippled that, in the whole of the so-called United Kingdom, unemployment high everywhere was highest in the Six Counties, which was officially scheduled as Depressed Area No. 1. The fictitious prosperity which war brings has momentarily changed that,<sup>1</sup> but, in the twenty-four years of the separate existence of this North-Eastern State, more than half that period was spent in an almost unbroken industrial slump, due largely to the impossibility of a State so cut off from its natural markets ever being prosperous under normal conditions.

#### TREATMENT OF MINORITIES.

The main effort made to justify Partition was based on the grounds that it was necessary to save the Protestant minority in Ireland from persecution at the hands of the Catholic majority. Of all pretences this is the most

<sup>1</sup> The transient nature of the Six County war prosperity is shown by the fact that the latest unemployment returns for the two areas (October, 1946) shows the Six County unemployment (1 in 44 of the population) was much greater than in free Ireland (1 in 67).

dishonest. Nowhere in the whole wide world is a minority better treated than the Protestant minority in the free part of Ireland. It not only shares in every benefit, in every grant, in all public appointments, in the freedom of worship enjoyed by all citizens and groups; it holds a position in the public, economic, political and social life of free Ireland far outstripping that due to it by its numbers. It is so weak in numerical strength (only 6.6% of the whole) that its persecution would be easy. In fact, its rights are jealously protected by the State and special arrangements are made to ensure, for instance, the continuance of its schools. Of public appointments even of the highest kind—for instance, judgeships, memberships of State Commissions, etc.—it receives an apportionment many times that to which its numbers would entitle it.<sup>1</sup> On December 12th, 1945, the *Irish Times*, organ of this minority, said in its main editorial:

“So far, the Government of Eire has had an exemplary record in religious affairs. It has never discriminated in any way between the sects. . . .”

It would be impossible for any Nationalist paper in the North-East to say that of the Six County Government. That Government has systematically denied to the Catholic minority, not in this case one of 6%, but one of 33%, the rights due to it even as ordinary citizens. Its schools are discriminated against, public appointments of importance are virtually denied it (it is estimated that though the Catholics by their numbers must supply in the neighbourhood of 33% of the revenue, their share of public salaries is 4%), its electors are disfranchised, it has been the subject of several murderous pogroms.

<sup>1</sup> Since June, 1945, the Irish Government has made a series of appointments to Boards, Committees, etc. The average representation given to the 6.6% minority on those bodies was 37%.

## PRIME MINISTERS LEAD IN BIGOTRY.

That this discrimination against the minority and their exclusion from public appointments is no haphazard result of thoughtlessness, but a set policy decided at the highest levels, the following quotations show.

The Six Counties have had three Prime Ministers since its foundation: Lord Craigavon, Mr. J. M. Andrews, and the present Premier, Sir Basil Brooke. All have openly encouraged the exclusion of the minority from employment either under the subterfuge that they are not "loyal" or directly. Sir Basil Brooke, the present Premier, said in 1933 (twelve years after the State was set up):

"Many in the audience employ Catholics but I have not one about the place."

The previous Premier, Mr. J. M. Andrews, speaking in the same year, said that it had been "alleged against the Government," that there were twenty-eight Catholic porters in the Parliament House.

"I have investigated the matter," he said, "and I find that there are thirty Protestants and only one Roman Catholic there only temporarily."

The first Premier, Lord Craigavon, declared in 1934, "We are a Protestant Parliament and a Protestant State," and later that year said:

"Public appointments are given to men and women who are loyal [*i.e.*, to the Protestant State] to the core."

This practice of discrimination was then already of long standing. The Minister for Agriculture, Sir E. M. Archdale, said nine years earlier (March, 1925):

"I have 109 officials and so far as I know there are four Roman Catholics, three of whom were Civil Servants turned over to me, whom I had to take when we began."

The minority was proscribed in 1925, in 1934 and is to-day.

## NO POLITICAL UNANIMITY.

From all this it is evident that there are no grounds of racial difference, no grounds of religious unanimity, no grounds of economic divergence, no grounds of economic self-sufficiency, no grounds that religious or political discrimination is exercised in the free part of Ireland to justify partition, just as already shown there are no grounds of history or of historical geography or of physical geography. The only other reason that might be put forward for the separation of this area from Ireland would be the political unanimity of those who inhabit the area. As already indicated, there is no such political unanimity. Politically, as far as can be ascertained from the latest statistics, which, as will later be explained, are not really a sufficient indication of the strength of the minority, the position is:

Total Population . . .	1,279,000
Nationalists . . .	428,000
Others . . .	851,000

The "others" are not a political entity. They are divided into official Unionists—the only vociferous upholders of Partition—Labour supporters and Independents. Before we break up the total of those who are not Nationalists into its component parts it is necessary to describe the electoral system of the area.

## TAKING THE FRANCHISE AWAY.

That electoral system is surely the world's outstanding example of how a minority may be disfranchised under a democratic façade. In the British Act under which the Six Counties were established as a separate State, proportional representation was decreed to be the system of election. Under proportional representation strong minorities are guaranteed their full representational strength. Not only did the Belfast Government abolish P.R. as soon as it felt it had the power to do so, but it re-arranged the electoral areas not only for elections to Parliament but for elections to all local bodies. The plan on which this re-arrangement of constituencies was based was a simple one. It drew electoral areas of the most absurd configuration—one of them crosses a mountain—in order to enclose the greatest possible number of Nationalists and the smallest number of Unionists into one division. To that area was then given one representative. The remaining areas in the neighbourhood were divided into several divisions in which Unionists had an assured majority and to each of these was given one representative.

## UNEQUAL VALUE OF VOTES.

By this means, 10,000 Unionist votes were given the same electoral power as 20,000 Nationalist votes, and in fact in Co. Down where every 22,486 Unionists have one M.P., 39,861 Nationalists have no representative, and in Co. Fermanagh, 32,455 Nationalists can elect only one member but 25,529 Unionists can elect two. This process was carried into the elections for local government authorities down to the smallest town council. Absurdities are so numerous that a choice of examples is difficult.

Here are a few: In Tyrone, 73,600 Nationalists get only 11 seats on the County Council, the minority of 59,109 get 16. In Dungannon Urban District Council, 1,959 Nationalists elect 7 members but 1,803 others elect 14. In Castlederg Union area 5,158 Nationalists get 6 seats; 4,990 others elect 16. In the second city of the partitioned area, Derry, 27,062 Nationalists can elect only 8 members on the City Council but 18,097 others can elect 12.

Under so glaringly unjust a system it is evident that the minority, knowing beforehand that it cannot elect its due percentage of representatives, gives up hope and it is always a feature of Six County Parliamentary elections that between a third and a half of all the seats are filled without contests. On a count of heads the Nationalists should be able to secure at least 17 seats in the Six County Parliament, and where there are three-cornered contests, a few others. In fact the Nationalists have never been able to secure more than 12.

## OPPOSITION POLL IN BELFAST.

In the last election, 13 of the official Unionists, 1 Unofficial Unionist and 6 Nationalists, *i.e.*, 38% of the House, were returned unopposed, something unique in electoral history. In the contested areas for the remaining 32 seats, out of a total poll of 358,000, the Government polled 186,000 votes, while all shades of the Opposition secured 172,000. In Belfast City, the Opposition parties polled more heavily than the Government candidates. If those figures were to be applied generally throughout the area, the Unionists would have 27 seats and the Opposition 25. In fact, the Unionists have 33 seats and the entire Opposition 19.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Figures cited on this page are taken from *The Partition of Ireland: Statement by Northern Nationalists*, 1938. See also Fabian Society Pamphlet, No. 54, by John Hawkins (London).

The election results are, as has been said, largely decided by the manner in which the constituencies have been gerrymandered, and in consequence, there has never been a change of Government in the Six County area in the whole twenty-five years of Partition. The unjust and undemocratic nature of Partition is reflected in the complete dishonesty of the electoral system by which it is maintained. Nominally, any vote is the equal of any other (the main test of a democratic system), but, in fact, the Unionist vote is in the Six Counties made the equal of at least two Nationalist votes and in many areas of more. But, even under such a system, the fact emerges that there is far less political unanimity in the Six Counties than there is in the Twenty-six.

#### THE TRICK IS REPEATED.

It has been part of partitionist propaganda that the dismemberment of Ireland was accepted by the whole people and was ratified by Dáil Éireann. As will be obvious from the fact that every party in the Twenty-six Counties has in the forefront of its programme the abolition of Partition, this is not true. Indeed, the putting forward of that plea by the defenders of dismemberment is a reminder of the general trickery that went into the creation of Partition. We have shown that, when Partition was first mooted, Asquith, and then Lloyd George, tried to get the consent of the Irish Parliamentary Leaders to the exclusion of the North-East area from the operation of the Home Rule Bill on the definite ground that the exclusion would be temporary. In 1921, the trick was repeated in a different form on the signatories of the Anglo-Irish Treaty. Article XII of that Treaty was so worded as to mean that a plebiscite would be taken of the areas desiring

exclusion. Such a plebiscite would have reduced the Partition area to two Counties which would be so small as to render its continued existence as a separate State impossible. The British Premier and his colleagues persuaded the Irish signatories that, not only was that interpretation of Article XII right, but that, when the time came for the establishment of the Boundary Commission envisaged in the Article, they would back that interpretation with all their influence.

#### TO RE-UNITE IRELAND.

The Treaty was thus accepted by those who voted for it as an instrument for the re-union of Ireland. That was how the British wished it to be read to make sure of its acceptance. When, however, its terms came to be fulfilled—Collins and Griffith, principal signatories of the Treaty, now being dead—the British Premier and his colleagues did the very opposite to their promise to the Irish signatories. They threw all their influence publicly behind an interpretation of Article XII which perpetuated Partition, thus influencing the Boundary Commission (which meanwhile had been set up with two British nominees and one Irish), not only to declare for the existing boundary, but to seek to add other parts of Irish territory to the separated area.

#### UNDER DURESS.

The outburst of Irish anger at this proposal was so great<sup>1</sup> that the British never officially published the Commission's

<sup>1</sup> The *Irish Independent*, principal supporter of the Treaty settlement, commenting on this new interpretation, made it clear that those who accepted that settlement did so only because they believed Clause XII would undo Partition. In an editorial on September 8th, 1924, it said: "If it were capable of bearing any other meaning but that placed upon it by Michael Collins, Arthur Griffith and the Irish people it would never have received five minutes consideration in this country."



## PARTITION OF IRELAND

report, but using the threat of publication as duress, forced a compromise upon the then leader of the Irish Government, Mr. Cosgrave, that he would consent to the deletion of Article XII from the Treaty, thus indirectly stabilising the existing boundary. The vote in favour of this action in the Irish Parliament was taken on December 10th, 1925, while the Republican deputies were still excluded from that Chamber. The agreement embodying the deletion of Article XII was passed, but only 71 deputies voted for it, which was well less than half the House of 153 members. On the same day, the Republican members met outside the House and issued the following declaration:

"In the name of the Irish nation and the Irish race, in the name of all who have stood and will yet stand unflinchingly for the sovereign independence of Ireland, we, the duly elected representatives of the Irish people, by our names appended hereto, proclaim and record our unalterable opposition to the partition of our country."

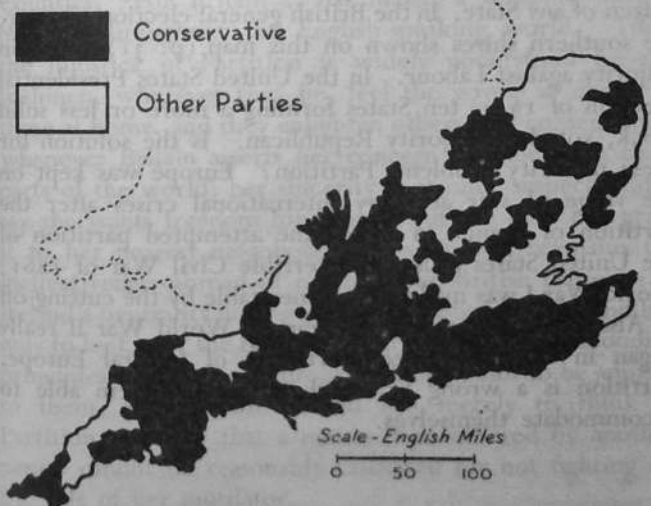
Before the Deputies signed this declaration, Mr. de Valéra, addressing them said:

"We deny that any section of our people can give away the sovereignty or alienate any part of this nation's territory. If this generation should be base enough to give them away, the right to win them back remains unimpaired for those to whom the future will bring the opportunity."

The Irish Labour Party also issued a manifesto denouncing the agreement as an "unmitigated betrayal."



## SOUTHERN ENGLAND



## IS PARTITION THE SOLUTION HERE TOO?

All through its short history, from the first moment of its origin as a mere move in a wholly British political game, Partition has had as its fruits—trickery, deceits, pogroms, broken pledges, dishonoured treaties, denial of elementary democracy, base injustice to the minority, economic depression and political frustration. By its fruits it stands wholly condemned.

But a problem remains. It is a problem not unknown in other nations; indeed, it is one of the most ordinary problems of national governments—that of a dissenting minority. If every such problem were to be settled by detaching part of the historic nation and attaching it to another country, there would not be a bodily whole nation either in Europe or America. A solution by the partition of its territory would be abhorrent to every right-thinking citizen of any State. In the British general election of 1945, the southern shires shown on this map (p. 31) voted in majority against Labour. In the United States Presidential Election of 1944, ten States forming a more or less solid block, voted in majority Republican. Is the solution for these minority problems Partition? Europe was kept on the verge of war at many international crises after the partition of France in 1870; the attempted partition of the United States caused the terrible Civil War of 1861; World War I was made almost inevitable by the cutting-off of Alsace and Lorraine from France; World War II really began in the partitioned territories of Central Europe. Partition is a wrong to which no people seem able to accommodate themselves.

## A POSSIBLE SOLUTION.

In Ireland, it can be settled entirely peacefully. What is required is an arrangement by which the special political outlook of the minority, concentrated as it is in the North-East, is given just recognition and protection, even to the extent of permitting the area to retain its autonomy, subject to full justice for its own minority. The re-unification of the whole territory could then be effected under an All-Ireland parliament in which the minority will naturally have the representation to which its strength in the nation entitles it. Such a solution would be fair to the minority, just to the nation and in accordance with democratic principles.

## BENEFITED NOBODY.

Partition has benefited neither Britain nor the Six Counties. For Britain it has meant a crippling loss of prestige throughout the English-speaking world. There the injustice of Partition is widely understood because Irishmen, wherever they be, feel the wrong as deeply as those at home, and they enlighten others. In consequence, whenever Britain asserts her concern for liberty in these parts of the world, her sincerity is at once suspect. Men say she wants freedom for others, but she does not grant it to her nearest neighbour. This, indeed, explains the ineffectiveness abroad of much of the British criticism of Ireland's neutrality during the war. Irishmen in Ireland had only to look over the Border to know that the high-sounding principles in British war propaganda were not to be applied to them; while those abroad had merely to think of Partition to know that a nation dismembered by another nation cannot be reasonably criticised for not fighting on the side of her mutilator.

## WEAKENS BRITAIN.

Further, the existence of Partition must weaken gravely the effectiveness of British foreign policy. Questions which give rise to international fears as this pamphlet is being written can be shown to have in them a striking similarity to what happened in North-East Ireland—an outside power inciting a minority to revolt against majority rule in order to give to that outside power a special dominant position in that particular piece of territory. How, in face of what has been done and is being perpetuated in Ireland, can Britain object with any effectiveness to what is happening in these areas, vital though those happenings are to British interests? It may be that these questions will be settled satisfactorily to all concerned, but the fact that similar situations will recur points to the necessity for Britain to have clean hands when entering into conference with other Powers. While Partition lasts, Britain's international position in such disputes cannot be strong.

## WHAT THE NORTH-EAST LOST.

The Six Counties have lost immeasurably by Partition. In the inter-war years, as has been mentioned, the economic situation in the partitioned area was so deplorable that subsidies from Britain were required to keep the Government afloat. In the war years, there was definite prosperity in the area, but the Six Counties had to send enormous sums to Britain—well over £100,000,000 from that small area—as an Imperial contribution, thus dispersing the resources out of which the effects of the slump, already beginning, might have been alleviated. Situated as it is, without free access to its natural markets in Ireland, the partitioned area cannot, if the past is any indication, expect prosperity, even in normal times. Because the minority is permanently persecuted in an effort to compel them to

accept a permanently inferior position and acquiesce in their separation from their own fellow-countrymen, there are not even the conditions necessary for internal peace and for that respect for Governmental authority essential if a community is to be brought through difficult times without dire hardship.

## SOCIAL SERVICES.

It is said that, if the Six Counties did rejoin the Twenty-Six, the standard of living of the average Six County citizen would be reduced. But there is never any proof brought forward to support this contention. There was far more poverty in the Six Counties in the seventeen inter-war years, 1923-1939, than there was in the Twenty-six, and had the Six Counties come into free Ireland before the war, it is free Ireland that must have suffered economically. During and since the war, the British social services have been extended or promised to the Six Counties, and it is said that, if the Six Counties were merged in the rest of Ireland now, those social service benefits would be reduced. That is true only superficially. Benefits in the North-East are better in certain social services than in the rest of Ireland.<sup>1</sup> In others, they are not, and the Twenty-six Counties spend generally far more on social services in proportion to the State revenues than is spent in the North-East. And it must never be forgotten that these services are mainly for providing benefits to relieve unemployment and its consequences of sickness and poverty. A healthy economy is the real guarantee of individual well-being, not the value of services designed to relieve distress. Such a healthy economy for all Ireland could well be the outcome of re-union and could itself provide the economic basis

<sup>1</sup> If some of the social service benefits are high in the Six Counties so is their cost to the individual citizen. In taxes the average family of five paid in 1945: in the Six Counties, £202, and in free Ireland, £88. The difference (£114) was far more than the difference in social service benefits.

upon which social services might be brought to any standard that necessity might demand. It is, however, certain that no social services could compensate the Six Counties for the widespread unemployment and economic depression in which Partition expressed itself in the inter-war years and looks likely to express itself in the peace period just beginning.

#### THE STRATEGIC ASPECT.

Finally, it is said by those opposed to the ending of Partition that, were Ireland re-united, Britain could not expect the substantial strategic advantages which were provided by the presence of British naval and military forces in the Six County area during the war. That simply begs the whole question. If Partition had been ended before the war broke out, there might have been an entirely new situation. Ireland as an island can be most successfully defended as a unit. As lately as May, 1946, the organ of the pro-British minority in Dublin published a series of articles on Ireland's defence, in which the following occurs:

"At the present day, the old historical injustices which have so often adversely affected the relationships between the British and ourselves have largely lost their force. What does persist is the running sore of partition. Primarily a political question, partition, nevertheless, has its importance on the military side. The defence of such a small island as this must, for effectiveness, be unified. It is not only ridiculous, but also extremely dangerous, for an artificial frontier to split what is essentially a strategic unit. Partition not only endangers the goodwill which should exist between Britain and Ireland, but threatens also the safety of Britain," (*Irish Times*, May 1st, 1946).

During the war, Britain herself recognised the danger of Partition, and in many of her war measures, conceived all Ireland as a unit. A re-united Ireland would have been so obviously better able to defend itself against aggression, a free Ireland so obviously ready to accept from Britain all the aid she needed if her own strength were overtaxed, that no aggressor would have sought to attack Ireland, which would then be, as the free part of Ireland partly was, a shield to Britain's flank. Out of that fact alone, Britain would have gained almost all she enjoyed from the occupation of the Six Counties with the immeasurably greater advantages which just dealing with Ireland would have brought her throughout the world. An Ireland with her recognised freedom to defend, an Ireland whose rights are fully respected by Britain will always be more concerned than any other nation with her nearest neighbour's safety and well-being. That concern, in the long run, is a far more important element in Britain's strength in time of war, as is now being recognised with regard to Egypt and India,<sup>1</sup> than any supposed advantages of an occupation which embitters against her a far-flung race and minimises grievously her reputation for just dealing, impugns her sincerity and consequently restricts fatally her influence for good in world affairs.

<sup>1</sup> In the British White Paper on India of May, 1946 (Cmd. 6821), partition is emphatically rejected as a solution of the Indian minority problem (Moslems are, like the Unionists in Ireland, about 25% of the whole) on the grounds that to set up two States would injure India economically, not solve the minority problem and make more difficult the defence of India. It is particularly pointed out that those in favour of Partition asked for areas in majority non-Muslim, and that "every argument that can be used in favour of Pakistan can equally in our view be used in favour of the exclusion of non-Muslim areas from Pakistan." Compare Tyrone and Fermanagh, two counties in majority Nationalist, forcibly included in the partitioned area.



## CONCLUSION.

Partition is a wrong that must be righted. It has proved itself to be the source of evil for both parts of Ireland and for Britain herself, and it can with truth be said that nothing good has ever come out of it for any of the three communities affected by it. It can be ended without injustice to the Unionist minority in Ireland; indeed, its undoing may well prove to be the beginning of a new, more fruitful and more influential life than that minority has ever known. In an unpartitioned Ireland, the whole nation can co-operate to make the motherland an example to the world.