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Visit to Northern Ireland on 18-20 September 1974.

I visited Northern Ireland from 18-20 September and had meetings with Mr. William Craig, Leader of the Vanguard Unionist Party, Fr. John O'Connor of the Down and Connor Relief Advisory Service, Mr. Jim Fitzpatrick a solicitor, Mr. Gerry Quigley of the INTO, Mr. John McGuckian a business man from Cloughmills.

I met Fr. O'Connor of DACRAS on Wednesday, 18th September. Fr. O'Connor was accompanied by Mr. Larry Ryan (who also accompanied him at his meeting in Dublin) and a Mr. Muiredach Dinan, both of whom are lay members of his Committee. Fr. O'Connor was extremely gloomy about the general political situation. There is a feeling of total vacuum in the North at the moment and this is having a very depressing effect on the Catholic population. They feel that this apparent lull is only a breathing space before what they fear may be the ultimate confrontation. Fr. O'Connor said that people were now frightened who had never been frightened before. The mood of a substantial number of people was that they found the vacuum intolerable and were adopting an attitude of "lets get it over with as soon as possible". On the other hand, following on the murder of the two judges, he had in his own area for the first time seen openly expressed resentment against the IRA, in connection with the street blockades. This was a small but not insignificant reaction and he feels strongly that the Catholic community badly needs a charismatic leader who could lead them away from the IRA.

With regard to developments in DACRAS itself, Fr. O'Connor said they were making progress at a slow but satisfactory rate. His main problem is trying to get the reality of the situation through to his parish Committees. Some of them want wildly ambitious schemes and others are not even aware of what the real needs are. He has had several confrontation meetings between his Committees and the welfare services of the Department of Social Services. He is

getting reasonable cooperation from the Department but their resources are limited and he has unfairly had to expose them to some of his parish Committees with a view to showing the Committees that in many respects they are totally on their own. This has been a bit unfair to the Department people but a necessary therapy in order to get his own people to see the light. The Department people have been quite helpful though the resources at their disposal are quite small. They have at least now been given an official role to prepare contingency plans in the event of another strike or similar type breakdown. Their main role will be in food supplies and bedding and blankets. For this they have a budget of about £12,000. It is obviously grossly inadequate but Fr. O'Connor did not seem too worried about this just at present.

They have been approaching him with a view to getting detailed facts and figures about the relief necessities which he envisages and he is quite sure that when he gives them these facts and figures they will have to have another look at their budget. In fact, he told me confidentially that the people on the ground from the Department were only too anxious that his requirements should be stated as strongly as possible as this would enable them to put pressure on their own top civil servants who are less than enthusiastic. In fact, Mr. Malone, who is the local man in West and North Belfast, has asked Fr. O'Connor to come to a meeting with the Permanent Secretary so that O'Connor can try and put the case which Malone feels, if put by a civil servant, would not be listened to. Fr. O'Connor seemed to be confident that with the facts and figures which he will have at his disposal in about a fortnight's time, he can get the Social Services Department to give him supplies of bottled gas, food and blankets, etc. for storage in selected depots, even before the strike begins, as well as establishing a system of guaranteed recoupment of expenditure on these items in the event of breakdown.

However, the range of facilities which the Social Services Department

can make available to him are limited to these three commodities and it is unlikely that they would be able to help him with transport and impossible that they could help with the supply of electricity generators etc. His contacts have told him that when it gets to the stage of needing generators it would be ^a ~~the~~ question of a national emergency and in those circumstances, the decision would be political rather than departmental. Fr. O'Connor has arranged to meet Lord Donaldson next week to raise this point with him.

He is disappointed that the development of similar organisations to his own in the other Northern dioceses has not really progressed. There was to have been a meeting to discuss this on 8th September but this had been postponed and it was hoped now that it would take place on the 30th September. However, Fr. O'Connor was not very confident that there was any real enthusiasm elsewhere and he took that as a reflection that Down and Connor is really the most vulnerable diocese in the event of a breakdown. He said anything that we could do to persuade the Cardinal to press the idea both on his own priests in Armagh (which O'Connor thinks is the second most critical area) and on the other Northern Ireland dioceses, would be most helpful. He made it clear however that it would be counter-productive if the Cardinal knew that he was pressing the idea. I said that we would handle the matter as diplomatically as possible and keep his name out of it. We were anxious to see similar organisations in the other dioceses and we would do what we could to discreetly push the Cardinal.

Fr. O'Connor's assessment of his state of readiness at the moment is that 15% of his parishes are quite well prepared, 35% are moderately so or are at least aware of their problems but 50% have hardly yet realised that they have a problem. His main pre-occupation at present is the establishment of a system of evacuation vouchers, the format of which would be agreed between him and us.

With regard to locating the Catholics in the North, Fr. O'Connor informed me confidentially that Dr. Philbin has at least seen a copy of the Orange and Green map which the Army has worked out and which apparently is quite detailed. He is going to try to let us have a copy of this if he can get to see it himself but he is doubtful that he will succeed. In the meantime he is drawing up, on the basis of figures he is getting from individual parishes, as detailed a map as he can. He was obviously under the impression that we wanted a perfect map from him and he seemed quite relieved when I said if he gave it to us piece-meal we could collate it ourselves. He hopes to let us have at least details of certain areas in the Down and Connor diocese in about a fortnight. He has for instance now got a fairly detailed map of the Newtownards district from the local parish priest and he will be getting in similar maps from other areas in the near future. He says the only hope for the Catholics in Carrickfergus or in Larne is to literally retire to the beaches. He has suggested to the parish priest there that they might consider buying some small boats to use as an escape route. He is only too well aware that his whole organisation is moving too slowly but this is not surprising him and obviously he himself is putting an enormous personal effort into the operation.

To be taken
up with
Defence
at 1/2 hr
meeting

He was very anxious to come down to Dublin and discuss what stage of planning we were at with regard to the reception facilities for a large influx of refugees. He would like to have some fairly detailed information on this for his own satisfaction. He will obviously keep such information strictly to himself but if he is to be in a position to guarantee to the people he is working with that the South are prepared to help in a substantial way he cannot give this sort of promise unless he himself knows exactly what we are planning. I said that we would obviously be happy to talk to him about this and a meeting could be arranged in this Department with representatives as necessary from the Departments of Defence and the Taoiseach's Office. Part of his own planning has been the

establishment of a large telephone centre with about 12 lines in an annex to a convent which he himself is living in, just off the Glen Road. He has fitted out this annex as a sort of emergency centre and feels that we should be thinking of something similar in the South. I said to him that we had certain contingency plans but that it might be better if we did not go into this matter in detail until he came down to talk to us.

I also had a meeting for about an hour with Mr. William Craig, the leader of the Vanguard Unionist Party, in the Conway Hotel in Dunmurray at lunch-time, on Thursday. Mr. Craig was in very good form and seemed disposed to be friendly and co-operative. Though I should say that this was in contrast to his reaction when I first telephoned him and asked him to meet me. At that stage he was quite hesitant about the whole idea and said frankly that he did not see what the usefulness of such a meeting would be.

He seemed in very good health and projected a quietly menacing self assurance. He was quite adamant that there could be no question of what he called "an imposed power-sharing solution" i.e. there could not be power-sharing in whatever new Northern Ireland Assembly emerged through a parliamentary committee system but he saw clearly that government as such would be conducted by the majority party. If the majority party wished to enter into a coalition with some other party in the Assembly to run the Government that would be perfectly all right, but in circumstances in which the majority party had sufficient strength and did not desire to share government with the minority then the majority should rule. Despite the recent statements from London he is convinced that the British will eventually come round to this point of view. The first straw in the wind is the Conservative Party election manifesto which he thought significantly spoke about the minority having a share in the community rather than a share in Government.

He also spoke about the recent murder of the two judges and said that he was not greatly surprised at it. His people had information that a campaign of several violent murders against prominent people would be undertaken by the IRA and he had no doubt that the two judges were only the first two in a list that would probably run to eight or ten. He thinks that the Provisional IRA are at a very low level of morale at present and this is their way of keeping the strangle-hold on the Catholic community. His greatest fear is that because of the present Provisional weakness, they may join in what he called "an unholy alliance" with the Official Sinn Féin and if this happens it will encourage the UDA to get back into business again. He told me that before he met me he had been talking to Andy Tyrrie who was confident that he could keep the UDA quiet for the moment and that there will not be another UWC strike in the near future. If there is to be a further strike it will come after the Convention has broken down and at a time when Britain is trying to impose a solution on the Loyalist community. The strike will be used to show the British that such a solution cannot be imposed and will not be tolerated. I asked him whether the UWC had lost any of its strength through the defection of Harry Murray and he said on the contrary, that with Murray's defection it was stronger than ever. Murray was a sincere and decent man who had been put up as a front figure for the organisation but he never really controlled the thing or was a strong political figure inside it. Murray's problem was that he had tried to run before he could walk and he might have had a political future inside the organisation if he had had a little more patience though frankly he was not a man of great political ability and he doubted if he would have ever come to anything, even inside the UWC.

With regard to the forthcoming Westminster elections, he felt that the UUUC should hold their 11 seats and that they will substantially

increase their vote in any event. Enoch Powell is a distinct advantage to them as he will give them a voice that will be listened to in Westminster. They accept frankly that they have no such voice from amongst themselves at present. He expects that by the time that the Convention elections come round the UUUC will have become one party and will be an even more powerful political machine than it is at present. There is an agreement that none of the people who are standing for Westminster apart from the three leaders, i.e. himself, West and Paisley, will be allowed to stand for the Convention. This is a partial explanation of Glen Barr's withdrawal in Derry but not the whole story. Barr was worried that apart from Craig himself there would be no other Vanguard representative at Westminster but he has been reassured by a promise from the UUUC Council that Vanguard will be allowed two nominations for the Convention in Derry. The Derry situation is a question of a personality clash not between Barr and Willy Ross but between Barr and Douglas, who is Ross's agent and is the real power figure in the Derry constituency. This fits in with what Barr himself said to me as he also mentioned Douglas as being his biggest worry.

Craig is confident that with the present political situation in Britain, the Tory party is going to have to woo the UUUC and that a new alliance will be cemented after the election. He expects that Ulster-Westminster MPs will have to attend frequently at Westminster and will be much more engaged than they have been in the past as he expects the Westminster Whips to be exceptionally busy during the next British parliament. On the home front, he sees whatever form of Government comes out of Northern Ireland having to rule in a firm way through a strengthened police force. He accepts that there is a grave deterioration in normal respect for authority in the North on both sides and said that the vandals and gangsters who now roam freely in both communities would have to be taken on and dealt with summarily.

I said to him that my impression from the talks I had had with both sides in the North was that the Catholic community was severely depressed and that the Protestant community was confident and very sure of itself. He accepted this and surprisingly indicated that this worried him and that he felt once the Westminster election was out of the way there would be an onus on people like himself to do something to lift the Catholic community. He did not clearly see yet how this could be done but he accepted that he had a responsibility in the matter. He mentioned that he had had some excellent discussions with the SDLP prior to the publication of Whitelaw's Green Paper and while he was not under the illusion that the climate was as good now he obviously hoped that he might be able to start something similar after the election. He stressed several times that he sees a real need for dialogue between both parties before the Convention election takes place though he is also aware of an inherent danger in this process, in that the Convention elections must not be seen to be about negotiated positions which have been adopted before the election takes place.

With regard to relations with the South, he saw the ultimate necessity of co-operation between the two parts of the country and of the North of Ireland having some sort of special relationship with the South. However, he emphasised clearly that the guiding principle of such co-operation or such relationships must be that it would be on the basis of a partnership of equality. He accepts that the South is doing a reasonable job in containing the IRA and seemed to see the logic of the SDLP position that policing in Northern Ireland is something that can only be finally resolved in the context of an overall solution. He also admitted frankly that the ending of internment would help to whittle away support for the IRA in the North. On the question of what the South could do at the moment, he felt that gestures like the abolition of Articles 2 and 3 of the Constitution would be helpful but he was also aware that a referendum on this that failed would be worse

than having no referendum at all.

I asked him if he would be prepared to see me on a continuing basis or if he wished to nominate someone from his organisation to talk to me from time to time. He is quite prepared to see me on request in the future and said that he would prefer if I approached him directly. If he himself is not available on a given occasion he could nominate someone. He would also like to have what he called "an exchange of views" with the Minister, provided that such an exchange was not seen and was not projected by us as a negotiation. I said that the Minister would be anxious to see him and gave him my telephone number for the purpose of setting up such a meeting if and when, in accordance with his criteria, the timing and the climate was right. I took this to mean that a meeting could not take place until at least a month after the Westminster elections.

He has no great faith that the Convention solution will work and if it does not he sees an inevitable confrontation between the two communities in about a year from now. He obviously thinks that the result of this will be a return by Britain to the old Stormont system of majority rule and that the Catholics will just have to accept in good faith that given the developments over the past five years, a majority Government will ensure ^{that} its general protection and a fair deal for them. He does not in the long run see any possibility of continued direct rule. Whatever emerges will involve a devolution of power to a local N. Ireland Assembly. The movements for devolution in Scotland and Wales will at least ensure this minimum for N. Ireland. He feels that the whole British economic situation at the moment will force them to disengage more and more from Northern Ireland and to hand over the reins of government to the majority community. Northern Ireland industrially has major problems at the moment because while it is true that production has been rising, investment has not been going ahead satisfactorily. However while the British Government may wish to pull out of the shipyards and hand it over

to Northern Ireland, they will have to stay involved whether they like it or not in running the shipyards for the immediate future.

A final point he mentioned was that it was not to be excluded that the UUUC might take the twelfth seat in West Belfast since from reports he has heard either Billy Mc Kee or Máire Drumn will also stand and if they do it could whittle away enough of Fitt's votes to let the Loyalist candidate John McQuaid, in. Finally he told me that in the event of a Labour majority at Westminster he hoped that Merlyn Rees would continue as Secretary of State. He had done a good job and deserved to be allowed finish it. I presume that by this Craig meant the handing back of power to the Loyalists but I did not ask him to elaborate on it.

I also met Mr. Jim Fitzpatrick, a solicitor, who is also part owner of the Irish News. He told me that the Community Conference Council meeting at Port Salon had been a great success. A particularly good rapport had been established between Jacky Taggart who is one of the leaders of the UDA in North Belfast and Seamus Loughran of Provisional Sinn Féin. Fitzpatrick made it clear to me that the people who participated in the Conference from the IRA side were either official Sinn Féin or non-violent Provisionals. To the best of his knowledge, there were no Provisional gunmen at the Conference. The contacts between Provisional Sinn Féin and UDA have only been taking place since the UWC stoppage and are in Fitzpatrick's opinion a very valuable side-effect of the stoppage. A rapport between the two groups at community level is being gradually built up but he was unable to assess what the eventual results of this contact might be, though he is clearly convinced that its general effect will be a good one.

He himself has had contacts with some of the hardline Protestants for a considerable period. He is a man of great sincerity and from what he told me, quite considerable physical courage as well. At the time when the Protestant assassination campaign was at its height, he was so emotionally upset one morning that he drove straight into the Shankill Road to confront Tommy Lyttle, (whom he had met previously) over the sectarian policy of the UDA. The incident took place at the time of the Dublin bombings and Fitzpatrick asked to see one of the top UDA men. Lyttle said to him that unfortunately Harding Smith was out of town that day but that he would take him to meet Herron. Fitzpatrick suspects from this that Harding Smith was personally involved in the Dublin bombings but he has no more evidence than the fact that he was not available in Belfast the day the bombings took place. Fitzpatrick met Herron on that occasion and described him to me as a Chicago-type gangster, dressed in a leather jacket and dark glasses.

Fitzpatrick's own estimate of the Provisionals is that they are at a low ebb at present and that their operatives are all young boys of 17 or 18. He estimates that in the Lower Falls area, where he lives himself there would not be more than six full-time gunmen amongst the Provisionals. He also told me that to the best of his knowledge Gerry Fitt has been having private talks with Tommy Lyttle of the UDA since the collapse of the public UDA/SDLP meeting in early August. These talks are taking place on a very confidential basis and he would not wish it to be widely known that he was aware of them.

Mr. Fitzpatrick is very anxious to come down and talk to the Minister about the Reconciliation Trust Fund, and I said that the Minister had indicated that he would be very happy to see him after his return from the United States on the 5th of October and that I would get in touch with him about fixing a definite date. Fitzpatrick feels that with the demise of the Community Relations Commission, it is necessary to establish some sort of organisation which can encourage and support the very valuable contact work which is going on between the various community groups in Belfast at present. The man who has done the most perhaps in this regard to bring the paramilitary groups on both sides together is Joe Camplisson and from what Fitzpatrick told me a way apparently has been found to retain his services for this purpose. Fitzpatrick told me in absolute confidence that Camplisson would ~~not~~ be attached to his own office, ostensibly as an ordinary member of his staff, but in fact to continue his work in getting the community groups together. Camplisson's salary will be paid by the British in a quite extraordinary and round-about way. According to Fitzpatrick, he was instructed to write to Jackie Stewart, the Scottish racing driver, in Geneva and let him know that Camplisson was working on his staff. The result of this is that he received a cheque for £5,000 through Stewart, which is to be used to pay Camplisson's salary over the next two years. I said to Mr. Fitzpatrick that this seemed to me to be an incredible complex way of dealing with

the matter and while he was obviously somewhat puzzled by the procedure himself he has accepted it and there it is. I should stress that he gave me this information in the strictest confidence and it would obviously be very dangerous and damaging for Fitzpatrick if it ever became known that he was involved in this sort of operation.

Fitzpatrick also explained to me that as a part owner of the Irish News, he has been trying to change the image of the newspaper over the past few years. Through a change of their advertising editor in London, he has managed to raise their advertising income in that area from £20,000 to £65,000. In addition, he was anxious to recruit a progressive young Irish journalist from the South called Healy, whom the editor was quite willing to accept but whom his other partner, and I gather the major shareholder in the paper, a Mr. McSporran, refused to accept. He has for the moment given up any attempt to change the strongly sectarian nature of the paper but is eventually hopeful that when the troubles end he may turn it into a more quality paper ~~with~~ expressing a policy of strong social concern.

During our conversation we were joined by a Mr. Liam McCollum of the Alliance Party who is married to Fitzpatrick's sister and who was, I understand, one of the Alliance Party representatives at the Sunningdale Conference. McCollum struck me as a rather embittered and truculent character and during the 10 minutes or so we were together he spent his time running down the Sunningdale Agreement and the ineptness of the politicians in passing the problem of extradition back to the lawyers. He has ~~no~~ faith that the legislation on the extra-territorial courts will be in any way effective and feels certain that Dublin courts will consistently acquit persons brought before it. He obviously thinks the situation in the North will deteriorate rapidly in about a year's time and he said the best advice he could give to the Dublin Government was to quadruple the strength of its army and to prepare for a full-scale

war. He said that Northern Ireland was on the verge of a Fascist takeover from the right-wing Loyalists and when that happened we in the South would become inevitably involved in a military way.

The conversation turned to the murder of the two judges which had taken place the previous Monday and McCollum was very cynical about the apparent emotion which their deaths and funerals had aroused. He said it was an indication of the insincerity in the community in Northern Ireland that on the Catholic side there would have been far more people at the funeral of a Provisional IRA man and that on the Protestant side it had never been known that the SDLP had come to an RUC man's funeral. I took McCollum to be a Catholic and he exhibited a phenomenon which I have noticed amongst other Catholic members of the Alliance Party that I have met, which is that their bitterness towards ^dcynicism about the South tends to be more deep-seated than anything I have come across amongst the hardline Protestants.

Towards the end of our conversation, Fitzpatrick withdrew to 'phone Desmond Boal to see if he would be willing to meet and talk to me. He came back to tell me that he was quite astounded at Boal's reaction which had been quite bluntly that he would, under no circumstances, speak to anyone from Dr. FitzGerald's Office as both he and Dr. Cruise O'Brien had between them done more damage in Northern Ireland than any other two men he could think of. Fitzpatrick was obviously very embarrassed at this reaction and I assured him that I was in no way upset. He obviously intends to meet Boal to discuss the matter further with him but it is unlikely that if this is Boal's initial frame of mind, he will change it.

I also had a meeting with a Mr. John McGuckian, a wealthy Catholic business man in Cloughmills. He owns three or four shirt manufacturing companies throughout the North of Ireland and is in the curious position of being a Catholic employer in one of the strongest

Protestant enclaves in North Antrim. Over 90% of his staff at the Cloughmills factory are Paisleyites and amongst his workers is the local head of the UDA, and the former head of the B-Specials in the area. During the UWC stoppage he had no problems whatsoever and until the power eventually failed all his workers turned up each day. I asked him if he felt exposed in any way as a prominent Catholic in the middle of a strong Protestant enclave and he admitted frankly that while there was always the possibility of some nut-case wanting to kill him, he did not think his chances were any worse than those of any other Catholic in the North.

McGuckian, as well as being a prosperous business man, is also on the Board of Ulster Television and is a Director of Allied Irish Banks. He firmly believes that there will be no major confrontation between the two communities. From what he knows of the Protestants in the Cloughmills and Ballymena area and from his other plants scattered around the province, he is quite convinced that they know they have too much to lose in any such confrontation. They certainly believe that they would eventually win out but they think that the price would be far too high. He said that the happiest men in Northern Ireland today were in many instances the ex-B-Specials, who did not mind shooting Catholics in the old days but now that the other side had a sizeable supply of arms and guns the ball game had become quite a different one.

He is very firmly of the opinion that things have changed radically in the last six years and that the Catholic population have been admitted to areas of power and influence which were never open to them before and the Protestants realise and accept that there can be no going back on this. He said one might easily get the impression in Belfast that the two communities were at one another's throats and were about to embark on a campaign of mutual annihilation but in his opinion this is a phenomenon of the Belfast ghetto rather than a reflection of the thinking in the more rural and small-town areas of the province. As an instance of the difference in climate

from 20 years ago, he mentioned that the local Catholics in Cloughmills, of whom there were not many, tried to start a hurling team in 1948 and that the posts were cut down by the local Protestants and every Catholic house in the village had its windows put in one dark night except, he added ruefully, his own father's house, which was naturally somewhat embarrassing at the time. However, he is quite confident that if a similar proposal got under way from the Catholic community in the area today, the local Protestant population would not dare to oppose it.

McGuckian said that he did not weep any tears at the collapse of Sunningdale. He felt that the agreement which was reached there was an unreal one in that it left out a substantial proportion of the Protestant population. The Convention will at least make the two populations confront one another and while he does not know whether it will work or not, he feels it is starting off from a more realistic basis. He is convinced though he does not admire them, that the Provisional IRA are the only people who have consistently read the situation correctly and that they are right in assessing that the British will pull out. He does not see a total blood-bath situation emerging from this and says that the number of deaths will probably not be more than a thousand or so, which would be quite tolerable and in line with what the province has been putting up with over the last few years. He also feels that the British method of compensation payments for damaged property and particularly their payments for consequential loss of earnings because of bomb damage, has been the most critical factor in enabling the bombing to continue. In addition the payment of Social Security during the UWC strike was the main factor that enabled the strike to continue. He himself paid out more in Social Security than he would normally pay out in wages.

He expressed considerable resentment at the Taoiseach's statement after the fall of the Executive that because of the level of violence in the North people in the South were now beginning to

ask themselves if they really wanted unification with the North. This had done immense damage to the morale of the Catholic community at a time when they were already reeling from the collapse of the Executive. McGuckian was extremely bitter about this speech and said "with friends like this we don't need enemies". He made it clear that he was not asking Dublin to intervene ^{militarily} but it is absolutely essential that at regular intervals we make sufficient noises to show the Protestant community that we are committed to the ultimate protection of the minority. This is the bare minimum that the exposed Catholic community can expect from "their so called Southern friends".

I also had a brief meeting with Mr. Gerry Quigley, of the INTO, who said that the murder of Judge Conaghan had shocked middle-class Catholics but in his assessment would have had very little effect on the working-class Catholics in the ghetto areas. It is firmly believed in all circles in Belfast that the murder of the two judges was not a decision of the Belfast Brigade of the IRA but was taken by Toomey or O'Connell in Dublin. He is of the opinion that Brian Faulkner is not as totally discredited at present as many people think. Faulkner is playing a very clever waiting game at the moment and he will not risk a humiliating defeat in the Westminster elections. Faulkner's moment for re-launching himself amongst the Protestant population will come when something particularly abrasive and sectarian happens on the Protestant side. This is an old theory of Quigley's and it is too early to say whether in fact it will turn out as he foresees it but it is at least interesting to note that he does not think that Faulkner is completely finished politically as yet.

Quigley also mentioned that the recent problems about building a Catholic church in the Cavehill area need never have arisen. It all was due to what he called the idiocy of the local parish priest. The reaction amongst the local Catholic community was that it was an

entirely stupid move and at a very delicate time and was bound to trigger off the type of reaction it did from the Protestant community. In passing he also mentioned to me that he considered Bishop Philbin to be totally out of touch with the situation and to have no real grasp of what was happening to the Catholic community on the ground. I should also add that Fitzpatrick mentioned precisely the same point to me in more general terms and expressed the view that the position of the Catholic hierarchy in the North was becoming more and more insupportable and that the time was coming when lay people like himself would have to stand out and tackle the church leaders.

Jm cc
25/9/74