

## RESISTING REUNIFICATION

**There is now a serious prospect of the reunification of Ireland taking place in some form in the medium term. This is due to a number of factors addressed elsewhere dealing with demography and changing political attitudes, within both Ireland and Britain.**

It is only to be expected that there is opposition to this emanating from some traditional unionist quarters, although there are also signs that more liberal and realistic just as he was opposed to nationalism without republicanism elements within the northern Protestant community are prepared to consider reunification on reasonable and accommodating terms, not least given that they are becoming more and more aware that they are simply not wanted within the United Kingdom by those inhabiting the neighbouring island.

At the same time, one hears siren warnings that the attempt to reunify will lead to dissension and conflict, quite possibly of a violent nature, both within the north and Ireland generally and emanating from loyalists. So-called responsible and moderate voices are raised in 'respectable' circles cautioning to this end. It is notable that these correspond to the moneyed classes, particularly in the 'South', and are frequently and loudly heard within the news media, which they either own or tend to dominate. In more old-fashioned terms, this element would be simply termed the bourgeoisie. They, however, tend to refer to themselves as 'the people', a classically presumptuous instance of illogically arguing from the particular to the general. In the first case, they are worried about the alleged cost to the 'South' of reunification, although this is frequently and grossly exaggerated. (In fact, it has been demonstrated by some researchers that reunification will lead to economic benefits overall for the island.) As for any costs that could arise in the immediate term, the bourgeois concern is that they will be borne by the well-off who can afford to and will have to pay any taxes necessarily involved.



*Don't mention a united Ireland!*

Naturally, the bourgeoisie cannot admit that this is the situation which causes anxiety for them. Therefore, they conjure up the spectre of 'inevitable' loyalist and unionist violence arising from the campaign for reunification and its possible actualization, both in the six and particularly in the 26 counties. This is nothing more than a glorified scare tactic. It is something which has been used in numerous other post-colonial contexts where *colons* or their descendants have been seen to ultimately accept the new state of affairs and to accommodate themselves to it. Why that should be any different in the case of the North is not clear.

Given the experience of the past fifty years, what seems to be totally ignored in this outlook is the likelihood of violence indeed re-emerging - on the part of frustrated nationalist youth, if the promise in the Good Friday Agreement of reunification pursuant to a border poll resulting in a 50%+1 or more vote for unity is reneged on. It would indeed be an outrage if the criterion which was good enough for unionists in the previous half century were to be changed in the case of nationalists.

In fact, the 'Southern' moneyed classes urge that we not even talk about a united Ireland or a border poll, lest it antagonise unionists. It is alright for unionists to shout to the high heavens about the Union with Britain without nationalists of course being in the least annoyed, but one must not speak of Irish unity for fear of sensitive unionist upset.

In reality, this approach to the situation could become rapidly incandescent with consequences that it is not pleasant to think about. If the democratic settlement of the Good Friday Agreement is reneged on in respect of a simple majority vote on reunification, young Ireland may turn once again to armed insurrection as apparently the only way of asserting their rightful demands. They may recall Mitchell's dictum of "They know nothing save the edge of the sword." That is precisely the state of affairs which the 'Southern' bourgeoisie is in danger of leading us into. Their resistance to reunification must thus be resisted at all cost.

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