Alderdice, a psychoanalyst, Presbyterian, and political leader who was to play a pivotal role in the institutions that were to bring the warring parties together into a democratic peace.

Strozier has woven a complex tapestry, a rich and unforgettable psychologically astute history of how people for whom violence has become their only mode of communication can be brought finally to participate in common democratic institutions finding a democratic voice and road to a democratic peace, and how such institutions are, in fact, in the interest of everyone. It is an astonishing and spectacular achievement, a much needed reminder that even apparently intractable violence is neither inevitable nor without remedy, and will be broadly of interest to people everywhere seeking a democratic and just peace.

David A.J. Richards, Edwin D. Webb Professor of Law, New York University, author of over 25 books, including (with Carol Gilligan), *Darkness Now Visible: Patriarchy's Resurgence and Feminist Resistance* and *The Antipatriarchal Jesus* (forthcoming)

This book is a gift in giving readers a feel for the interweaving of empathy and hatreds in real life conflicts. Strozier show how empathy makes everything look and feel different, and makes the impossible possible.

Making Peace in Northern Ireland is a great book, and a great gift. It offers whoever reads it a sense of what may be possible because making peace by violent people has actually happened; a feel for the empathy that can come to life and what that can give birth to; and the many other factors, including dumb luck, to look for and to maximize in the long after-birth process of nursing a beginning into being an enduring reality.

Michael Britton, EdD, psychotherapist and Adjunct Faculty, Rutgers University Graduate School of Education

Making Peace in Northern Ireland

The Miracle of the Good Friday Agreement and the Creation of a Fair and Just Democracy

By

Charles B. Strozier

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For River and Skye, and their generation

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Part 5 — Securing Peace

Preface
"Time moves more slowly in Ireland."

J. Bowyer Bell, Jr. [1]

This book examines the remarkable process that led to peace in Northern Ireland after decades of violence. That story lies in its granular history but equally in an appreciation of its psychological dynamics, especially the emergence in the social and political realm of what I call radical empathy.

The leaders who made peace happen were all larger than life, figures out of some 19th Century opera strutting across the stage of history. John Hume as a student in the 1960s helped lead the civil rights movement, then spent decades building support for the creation of a fair, just, and democratic Northern Ireland. David Trimble became the reluctant peacemaker who finally led the obstinate Protestants out of their splendid isolation. Gerry Adams and Martin McGuinness, both street fighters in the early days of the Troubles for which they served time in prison, led the IRA toward compromise and democracy after it was clear that forever violence would not accomplish anything. Even Ian Paisley, the fiery fundamentalist Presbyterian who spent years inciting hatred toward Catholics and obstructing peace talks, came around to playing a key role in the Assembly which he even headed in the end.

There were other stakeholders in the peace process; in fact, the Troubles and then the peace process in Northern Ireland occupied the imagination of leaders all over Europe and America. A succession of British Prime Ministers, especially Tony Blair toward the end, struggled mightily to identify workable democratic arrangements in Northern Ireland. The same was true of the Taoisigh of the Republic of Ireland, especially Bertie Ahern, as the peace talks neared completion. Leaders in Europe, for their part, provided subtle encouragement, since both Britain and Ireland joined the European Union on the same day in 1973. Nor one can forget the United

[1] J. Bowyer Bell, "The Irish Republican Army Enters an Endgame: An Overview," *Studies in Conflict and Terrorism*, 18(1995): 156.

States. Figures like Senator Ted Kennedy and Tip O'Neill brought American support for peace and weaned the naïve from their romantic attachment to the violence of the IRA. And no one mattered more than President Bill Clinton. He dispatched the astute George Mitchell to lead the negotiations that led to the Good Friday Agreement and then kept the pressure on with many late-night calls.

There was another hero in the mix, one often noted for his presence but not fully appreciated by scholarly observers for his contributions to the peace process: John Alderdice. The son of a moderate Presbyterian minister, a medical doctor, and a psychiatrist and psychoanalyst, Alderdice headed Alliance, a centrist party committed to nonviolence and democracy. Alliance was unusual in Northern Ireland in its composition of roughly equal numbers of Catholics and Protestants; this was a land in which various Christian denominations seldom even intermarried, let alone worked together in politics. The Alliance Party, though low in electoral strength, became the moral center of politics in Northern Ireland. Alderdice brought to the peace process his psychoanalytic grasp of others, his generosity, and clarity of vision.

I met John Alderdice in 2014 after I invited him to speak in a seminar at the Center on Terrorism at John Jay College in The City University of New York. I founded the Center after 9/11 and led it for the next 18 years. As everyone at my college and indeed in New York, 9/11 shook us to seek ways to understand the tragedy. By 2014 I had written a book about 9/11 and another with some colleagues on the psychology of fundamentalism, taught a host of courses on terrorism over more than a decade, and was familiar with the literature. The field had begun to feel stale, however. Its relentless focus on the narrative of violence preoccupied scholars across the landscape of academia, think tanks in Washington, and journalists around the world. The discourse had become off-putting for me. I reviled at the focus on military interventions to defeat terrorism that wreaked their own kind of havoc, including what seemed to be the forever wars of the United States in Iraq and Afghanistan. Intelligence gathering spilled over to intrusive loss of freedoms abroad and at home. The new "discipline" of terrorism studies generated a class of "experts" with narrow vision and less humanity. Missing was any genuine understanding of how to end

intractable conflict, heal the wounds of hatred and mistrust, and reconstruct viable political and social institutions.

Alderdice played a crucial role in the implementation of the Good Friday Agreement. That process of implementation of the Good Friday Agreement is why Belfast didn't become another Oslo. That is why my narrative ends not in 1998 but in 2007. It was then that Ian Paisley agreed to serve as First Minister and Martin McGuinness as Deputy First Minister. The dons of the Montagues and the Capulets might as well have agreed to serve as the joint executives of the Verona town council. Surprisingly, these two leaders of the Irish communities that had fought each other for decades worked well together. Death burned itself out, as my colleague Jeffrey Stern has put it.[2] The cooperation between Paisley and McGuinness marked the start of the most stable period in the recent history of Northern Ireland. They even laughed together and were dubbed the "Chuckle Brothers" after a popular BBC show.

The Northern Irish story is immensely complicated but in the end uplifting. They deserve the peace they have made for themselves. The story of the Troubles is horrifying but the story of peacemaking is not just dramatic, it inspires hope. If the Irish can make peace, anyone can. That may be the most important lesson of my book. And that lesson is transferable.

[2] Jeffrey Stern, Comments in a seminar I lead on "Violence and Peacemaking," May 12, 2023.

Introduction

> "To understand us, Senator, you must realize that we in Northern Ireland will drive one hundred miles out of our way to receive an insult."
>
> David Ervine to George Mitchell on the first day of the talks.

> "Unionists and Nationalists both have an Ulster, Irish, and British heritage but with very different emphases. Unionists tend to disregard their Irish heritage and emphasize only their British heritage. Nationalists feel cut off from their Irish heritage and are often very ambivalent about their British heritage.
>
> John Alderdice[1]

> "The Jews and the Irish have been fucked by history. That's why they nourish grudges."
>
> Robert Jay Lifton[2]

The Troubles ravaged Northern Ireland from the late 1960s until 1998. Some 3,700 people died in sectarian violence, that included 16,000 bombings and close to 50,000 injuries on both sides of the Protestant-Catholic divide. Shootings were so pervasive they seemed random; other terrible acts of violence included kneecappings and beatings. It is remarkable that all that violence took place in a contained space — a "statelet" as Gerry Adams and others mockingly like to call it — that is no larger than Connecticut and during the Troubles had a population of roughly 1.6 million people of whom 430,000 were Catholics. To understand the Troubles in Northern Ireland, one has to scale down geographic and demographic sensibilities but scale up the meanings of violence. As Fionola

[1] John Alderdice, "Untying The Knot—At Last?" A Comment on the Current Political Situation, The Northern Consensus Group, January, 1996. Pamphlet in AA.
[2] Robert Jay Lifton, personal communication, November 26, 2018.

Meredith has put it, "The Troubles were a "world-class problem in miniature."[3]

Northern Irish Nomenclature

Northern Ireland society until fairly recently broke down into two communities, one Protestant and the other Catholic. Within each community, however, there were in turn key divisions. Among Protestants, Unionists consisted of Presbyterians and Anglicans. They were conservative politically, accustomed to rule since 1921 (if not 1690!), and the party they adhered to in the 20th Century was the Ulster Unionist Party, or the UUP. The more radical Unionists were the Loyalists, who were often supporters of and involved in terrorist groups like the Ulster Defence Association, or the UDA. The radicalization of the Unionists over the years was encouraged by Ian Paisley's Free Presbyterian Church and his political party, the Democratic Unionist Party, the DUP. Quite apart from the Unionists or Loyalists was the Alliance Party that was pro-Union but was committed to nonviolence, comprised of equal parts Protestants and Catholics, and was willing to accept unification with the Republic of Ireland if a clear majority of the population voted for it but held as a matter of principle that most Catholics wanted a fair and just society much more than unification.

The Catholic community, in turn, divided into two main groups (besides those in Alliance). The Nationalists were led by John Hume, believed in nonviolence, and sought unification but in the meanwhile worked for political change that would make Northern Ireland fair and just. Hume's party was the Social Democratic and Labor Party, or the SDLP. The Republicans were led by the Provisional IRA that embarked after 1969 on a campaign of violence to force the British out of Northern Ireland and unite the province with the Republic. Sinn Fein was the political arm of the PIRA.

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[3] Fionola Meredith, "A Troubles Museum: The Case For and Against," *Irish Times*, January 9, 2019. Cp. Diarmaid Ferriter, *The Border: The Legacy of a Century of Anglo-Irish Politics* (London: Profile books, 2019), 9.

These five parties—UUP, DUP, Alliance, SDLP, and Sinn Fein—dominated politics in Northern Ireland during the Troubles and the peace process, though their relative strengths changed over time (and there has been a dramatic shift in their configuration in this century). But yet another group has become important in recent years. An increasing number of people over the years, especially the young, despised the rigid categories of their parents and wished a plague on both their houses. Many are culturally liberal, secular, and never fitted easily into the two camps that long dominated society. Some were atheists, most were secular, and others included Baptists, Methodists, and Jews.

The Irish Republican Army emerged in 1913 as the Irish Volunteers. They opposed fighting for Britain in World War I and led the futile Easter Rebellion in 1916. Later, the IRA took shape among those opposed to accepting the Treaty Britain offered Ireland in 1921. After the civil war, for many decades the IRA stagnated. It was uniquely unable to respond to the crisis that erupted in Northern Ireland in August of 1969. Young firebrands took matters into their own hands and within a few months formed the Provisional IRA, or the Provos. At first the PIRA was a mere splinter group from the moribund Official IRA based in Dublin, but within a few years the Provos assumed control of the armed struggle. Any reference in this book to the IRA during and after the Troubles means the PIRA. During and after the peace talks, splinter groups—the Real IRA and Continuity IRA, among others—tried to undermine negotiations through continued violence. Loyalists blamed Gerry Adams for all violence and claimed he and others used it secretly to manipulate the talks. Sometimes, it seems, they were not wrong.

Identity

The Troubles themselves changed Northern Irish identity. Despite decades of sectarian strife and identity politics, in retrospect, Northern Ireland before the late 1960s was remarkably integrated. Neighbors lived cheek to jowl and shared many aspects of their lives. They looked alike, wore the same clothes, and drank the same Guinness beer. Yet Catholics and Protestants remained locked in their strict religious identities. For a people that was so similar in other ways, intermarriage was rare, even among

different Protestant denominations, Presbyterians and Anglicans, for example.[4]

It has been argued, however, that the religious identities of Protestants and Catholics in Northern Ireland have been exaggerated and the apparent differences between the communities were mere "badges of convenience."[5] That seems a stretch. The tense separation between Protestants and Catholics that existed for centuries accelerated during the Troubles. John Alderdice, for example, grew up in a small Protestant town west of Belfast as the son of a Presbyterian minister. He had a keen awareness of the general separation of the Protestants and Catholics, but nothing prepared him for the radical sorting out of the communities during the Troubles.[6] Those newly defined sectarian communities left the Protestants feeling beleaguered and threatened. Their complaints became strident and ever more apocalyptic. The population shift caused by the turmoil of the Troubles soon escalated into one of the largest such movement of peoples in the west since 1945. Fear and insecurity motivated this radical displacement. In 1971 alone, 2,069 families moved out of their homes across Belfast. In the south Belfast area of Suffolk 88% of the Protestant population left. In Derry over the course of the first twenty years of the Troubles, there was an 88.4% decline of the Protestant population on the west side of the city.[7]

Beginnings

A struggle as large and enduring as the Troubles inevitably had murky beginnings. Many would suggest the period was a contemporary expression of a centuries-long battle of the Irish with the British or collateral damage from the botched treaty that created Northern Ireland in 1921.

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[4] Ferriter, *The Border*, 60.

[5] Neil Ferguson and James W. McAuley, "Radicalization or Reaction: Understanding Engagement in Violent Extremism in Northern Ireland," *Political Psychology*, 41, Issue 2 (September, 2019). Cp. Neil Ferguson and Michael Gordon, "Intragroup Variability Among Northern Irish Catholics and Protestants," *Journal of Society Psychology*, 147 (2007): 317-319.

[6] Interview with Alderdice, Nov. 22, 2015.

[7] Aaron Edwards, *The Northern Ireland Troubles: Operation Banner, 1969-2007* (Oxford, England: The Osprey Press, 2011), 32-33.

History matters for the Irish. The problem is contrasting interpretations of what matters in history. For the more fundamentalist Protestants who embraced Loyalism the key historical moment, the one that defines their identity, is the battle of Boyne in 1690, when the Catholic King James II of England and Ireland was resoundingly defeated by King William III of England, insuring Protestant rule in Ireland. For Republicans who yearn to be part of the Republic of Ireland, their tradition begins in the mists of time and culminates with the 1916 Easter Rising, that hopeless and botched affair that was easily suppressed by the English but generated a roster of martyrs in the pantheon of Catholic suffering.

A radically diverging sense of history resulted in the contrasting rhetoric between the two communities about their identity, especially among the more vocal and strident elements. Loyalists felt that all Catholics wanted to join with the Republic to make a united Ireland and thus subvert Protestants into a besieged minority. As a result, there appeared to be nothing to negotiate. The analog of this rhetorical flattening of complexity from the Republican point of view was that there was no middle ground between remaining part of the United Kingdom and joining a United Ireland. It was a binary choice. In fact, there were any number of possible political solutions besides these extreme positions. A peace process could well result in arrangements that would be neither a continuation of the current status in Northern Ireland nor fully integrate the province into the Republic of Ireland. And, of course, that is exactly what happened.

Tensions between Catholics and Protestants boiled over in a series of protests in the 1960s as the idealistic civil rights movement of the mid-1960s prompted a virulent response. The dynamics became alarming. Nonviolent protests provoked violent response. Marches in Northern Ireland in 1966, for example, caused an uproar among conservative Protestants.[8] Two years later, a series of marches that defied government bans culminated in an attack on students and other protesters on the Burntollet Bridge, outside of Derry on January 4, 1969. Some 200 raging loyalists let loose with bricks,

[8] One could argue the turning point came a bit earlier with the "tricolour riots" of 1964. See Danny Morrison, "The Tricolour Riots-28 September 1964," *Anphoblacht*, September 27, 2014. DS

bottles, and bats while the biased police looked on. That night the police invaded the Catholic area of Derry, called the Bogside, and attacked Catholic homes while they spewed sectarian abuse. That violence spurred more marches in the following months, culminating in an eruption of fighting on August 12, when the police watched as a group of loyalist thugs attacked Catholic homes in Derry. The local residents fought back as best they could, barricading their neighborhood, in what became known as the Battle of the Bogside. That "battle" lasted for the next two days and soon spread to Belfast and beyond. The events of August 1969 are regarded by many to be the starting point of the Troubles.[9]

In the initial political confusion after the Protestant mob attack on the Civil Rights march in Derry in August 1969, there was an extended period of chaos and utter violence. The police allowed violent Protestants in Belfast to burn and loot Catholic homes in the Falls Road area; half the homes were burned to the ground. The meager fighting forces, mostly angry young men like Gerry Adams, would become the Provisional IRA. But at this point in the Troubles they found themselves helpless to prevent the onslaught. Adams and his cohorts had long since lost faith in the civil rights movement and its commitment to nonviolence; now they mobilized for war and began to mount a military campaign against the police and marauding Protestant paramilitaries.[10]

The violence seemed to release decades of racism and hatred at the margins of the Protestant community in Northern Ireland. The paramilitary groups that took shape varied considerably. Most on the Loyalist side were loosely organized, as the B-Specials, a reserve special police force dating to 1920, had been. Once the Troubles started, however, the B-Specials were soon joined by a host of other groups that engaged in gang violence. At the extreme margin of such groups the Shankill Butchers, led by psychotic killers, rounded up Catholics at random, dragged their victims into back alleys where they were stabbed to death and often beheaded. Other groups

[9] Cp., however, Martin Cowley, "Duke Street, Derry, 5 October 1968," Deric Henderson and Ivan Little, *Reporting the Troubles: Journalists Tell Their Stories of the Northern Ireland Conflict* (Belfast, Northern Ireland: Blackstaff Press, 2018).
[10] Tim Pat Coogan, *The IRA*, 621ff.

included the Ulster Defence Association (UDA), founded in 1971, actually an umbrella organization of local Loyalists. Gusty Spence's smaller Ulster Volunteer Force; and any number of splinter groups of armed and angry Protestants also took the law into their own hands.[11] Soon, as Eamonn Mallie and David McKittrick put it, "tens of thousands of men [were] marching around the streets of Belfast." By 1972 a violent core of these Protestant loyalists began killing "substantial numbers of Catholics."[12]

Provos

These loyalist paramilitaries, encouraged by the biased police and soon by the British military, faced little organized opposition at first. The old IRA, Marxist and Dublin-based, had a successful history of little more than martyrdom. They were caught completely flat-footed by the eruption of violence in the north. Gerry Adams (Belfast) and Martin McGuinness (Derry) split off from what came to be called the "Official" IRA and formed their own "Provisional" IRA. The Provos, however, adopted the old organizational structures . The group was modeled after an actual army with its own training manual, called the "Green Book." The Provos enlisted members and paid salaries to their "Volunteers."

Most of that money came from America that took a special interest in the Troubles but from a specific vantage point. Over 50 million Americans—though the count is inevitably squishy — claim some Irish descent. This means no politician from the South End of Boston to Hell's Kitchen in New York, to the greening of the Chicago river on March 17 can ignore the large Irish-American vote. St. Patrick Day parades mark a major date on the calendar for mayors, governors, senators, congress people and countless other local union and institutional leaders. Americans everywhere celebrate the music of Ireland and retain a sentimental place in their hearts for the 40 shades of green in the lush Irish landscape, as Johnny Cash put it in his 1959 song of that title. Jack Kennedy, our first Irish-American and Catholic President, remains a martyred icon in American memory. Political

[11] Martin Dillon, The Shankill Butchers (New York: Routledge, 1989).
[12] Eamonn Mallie & David McKittrick, *Endgame in Ireland* (London: Hodder & Stoughton, 2001), 25.

machines in many big cities reflect the power the Irish gained over the years as they flooded the country in waves of immigration during the 19th Century, especially the years after the Great Famine in Ireland of the 1840s. That immigration, in turn, elicited a fierce surge of prejudice that even prompted a new party, The Know Nothings in the 1850s; Lincoln said that if the Know Nothings came to power, with their hatred of Catholics and especially the Irish, he would prefer to live somewhere like Russia, where they make no pretense of loving liberty and where "despotism can be taken pure, and without the base alloy of hypocacry [sic]."[13] In many cities, the Irish came to dominate the Catholic church and the police forces, among other institutions. By the second half of the 20th Century in America, the Irish themselves had not only thoroughly assimilated but moved up the social scale and were assuredly middle class, while many were rich and part of the elite. That gave them political clout at the local but also the national level.

Irish-Americans are thus overwhelmingly Catholic in tribal identity, if not in actual beliefs, which shaped the way Americans understood the meaning of the Troubles. They overwhelmingly identified with the Catholic narrative of persecution, colonization, and oppression by the British, which led to the "simplistic" idea, as John Hume put it, that the answer was simply to unite Ireland and be done with it. "Our generation," Hume said, was the first to face up to how you actually accomplished that."[14] Most Americans framed the terrorism of the troubles as a heroic guerrilla warfare at the edges of a dying British Empire. By the 1980s, the "Provisionals" and Sinn Fein were raising over a million dollars each year in small contributions and larger ones collected by people like the gun runner George Harrison, an old IRA stalwart in New York who had been raising money for the IRA for decades.[15]

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[13] Abraham Lincoln to Joshua Speed, August 24, 1855, *The Collected Works of Abraham Lincoln*, ed. Roy Basler, et.al. 8 volumes (New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers University Press, 1955), 2:320-323.

[14] John Hume's Oral History, Edward M. Kennedy Institute, 2016.

[15] Tim Pat Coogan, *The IRA* (revised and updated) (New York: St. Martin's Griffin, 2000 [1970]).

Naming of the Troubles

The historian Liam Kennedy has argued that the Troubles were a form of "communal and civil war, man against man, fought out largely within the confines of Northern society." As Dean Godson wrote two decades ago, the Troubles were a "squalid conflict."[16]

The violence began in uncertain terms and remained as perplexing for those involved as for observers. The nomenclature itself was not up to the events. For many years, there was no single term to describe what was happening, and many designations were partisan. People like Ian Paisley, the RUC, hardcore British military, indeed most Protestants, considered the violence a terrorist campaign. For the Provos the violence of the Troubles represented a war of liberation, which is why Gerry Adams called for prisoner release in the peace negotiations ("After the war, the soldiers come home"). Officially and internationally, the violence was called the "Northern Ireland Conflict," while some, seeking conceptual clarity, classified it as a "irregular war" or "low-level war." Ordinary people at the time struggled with their own meaning. Sometimes the period was called "the sorrows," as the mother of Middle Sister in Anna Burns's *Milkman* calls it. But for most the gut-wrenching events of the thirty years of violence were just "the troubles."

The Troubles designated something real and tangible, a period, a historical event like a war or genocide. Proper nouns develop in the telling — events so large they require capitalization.[17] There is nothing remarkable in the etymology of the word "troubles." It means simply a disturbance of mind or feelings; worry, vexation; affliction; grief; perplexity; or distress. But in the Irish context, a deep unconscious meaning connects "trouble" with death. In Kevin Toolis memoir, *My Father's Wake*, all his relatives, neighbors, friends, and some of the strangers in the village to which he travels for the wake take his hand and say, "Sorry for your trouble, Kevin,"

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[16] *Liam Kennedy, Who* Was Responsible for the Troubles? The Northern Ireland Conflict (McGill-Queens University Press, 2022); Dean Godson, *Himself Alone: David Trimble and the Ordeal of Unionism* (New York: HarperCollins, 2004), 554.

[17] In Anna Burns, *Milkman: A Novel* (London: Faber and Faber, 2018), 86. Note Bernard MacLaverty, *Cal: A Novel* (New York: Norton, 1983), which always uses the lower case.

a description imbedded in the Irish literary imagination.[18] The Troubles psychologically were death writ large. And as Finton O'Toole has said, "Death is one of the things we do well in Ireland."[19]

But the Troubles were not a war in any conventional sense, nor did the violence fit anti-colonial struggles, as those in India or in much of Asia and Africa in the mid-20th Century. There were no tanks or fighter planes between Belfast and Derry, and never in all the thirty years of fighting was there a set piece between the warring factions. Freedom-fighting paramilitary groups were hardly battling it out in jungles or trenches. Those who fought in Northern Ireland did not wear uniforms (unless one counts the characteristic stone-washed jeans and leather jackets of the Provisionals and the camouflage anoraks and caps of the Loyalists). In fact, enemies looked alike, wore the same clothes, had the same pale coloring, and drank the same Guinness beer, even if they lived apart, seldom intermarried, and mythologized their differences.

At the same time, they knew each other well. There was an intimacy to the violence. Ned Gibson, for example, who lived in the small town of Tyrone in the western part of Northern Ireland, was recruited to serve on a local militia drawn exclusively from the Protestant community. Gibson was an ordinary guy, a garbage collector—a "bin-man" in the local dialect—who without his gun and the protection of the army had to go home and be an ordinary citizen. That made him vulnerable to attack by the IRA, who scoped out the goings and comings of people like him with ease. Their dossiers on 'common' folk were quite complete. Every hedgerow had eyes and ears in small communities where each side had to cross through enemy territory on a regular basis. Gibson had been working for almost a month when he was killed in 1992. Such deaths occurred by the thousands in the slow drip of violence that permeated Northern Ireland during the Troubles. Sometimes, the attacks were on prominent targets in the British army, police, or political or cultural leadership. But more commonly and

[18] Kevin Toolis, *My Father's Wake: How the Irish Teach Us to Live and Die* (London: Weidenfeld and Nicolson, 2017).
[19] Finton O'Toole, *We Don't Know Ourselves: A Personal History of Modern Ireland* (New York: Liveright Publishing Company [Norton], 2021).

regularly, the targets were the Ned Gibsons of the world, locals killed by other locals as the hatred burned bright for so many years.[20]

The nature of the violence itself became more brutal. The Irish, like the English, tended not to own firearms nor carry them on their persons, so criminal activity, which was small in scale, seldom resulted in significant violence to victims. The Troubles introduced an altogether new level and *form* of violence. Carrying a rifle or pistol became common. Kneecapping, or shooting the victim in the front or back of the knee, emerged as a common form of punishment following summary justice in a kangaroo court. It also became common to throw acid and other kinds of corrosive liquid in the eyes of victims. As tensions continued to rise, bombs were placed in pubs or hotels or stores or train stations; these created havoc and mass suffering. This new *kind* of violence altered the psychological and spiritual core of the perpetrators.

"Thing was," says the narrator in Anna Burns's brilliant M*ilkman*, "these were paranoid times. These were knife-edge times, primal times, with everybody suspicious of everybody." The narrator knew as a child the pall that lay over the land, the "distorted quality" of the light, the hurts, the loss of hope, and the "mental incapacitation over which nobody seemed willing or able to prevail." Hidden cameras are everywhere in *Milkman*, in the bushes, at the top of lampposts, behind every window. The unseen watched every move and tracked every association so that the information could go into the mental records of rival groups. *Milkman* describes the renouncers and defenders instead of the Catholic-based IRA and the Protestant police, army, paramilitaries, and British. That linguistic construction makes the struggle mythic but also abstract and anonymous. The "other" is remote, dangerous, toxic, and confusing, not quite real and human, but ever-present, lurking in every corner, ready to cause harm and misery. The "other" could drag you into kangaroo courts where the sentence would be violent. "All of this made sense within the context of our intricately coiled, overly secretive, hyper-gossipy, puritanical yet indecent,

[20] Toolis, *Rebel Hearts: Journeys Within the IRA's Soul* (New York: St. Martin's Griffin, 1995), 5-59 and 261; cp. 1-3; 81-82; 86. On the intimacy of the violence, note, besides *Milkman*, Anna Burns, *No Bones* (New York: Norton, 2001).

totalitarian district," the narrator says in *Milkman*. The despair is palpable. "Life here," she continues about the figure she calls the "real Milkman," simply has to be "lived and died in extremes."[21]

[21] Anna Burns, *Milkman: A Novel*, 27, 89-90, 145, 172, 310-11. The watching included an elaborate British intelligence effort that will only be clarified in future decades when the archives open. See Hemming, *Four Shots*, 246-47; cp. Trilling, *London Review*, 15.

Part 1

John Alderdice

My friendship with John Alderdice was how I began this study of the peace process in Northern Ireland. He granted me numerous interviews over the years, shared his extensive personal archives before they were even organized, and introduced me to many other players in Northern Ireland (and in the United States, e.g. George Mitchell). The more I learned about the peace process the more I came to appreciate his significance, especially in that crucial period after the Good Friday Agreement in 1998 and before the symbolic moment in 2007 when Ian Paisley and Martin McGuinness assumed executive leadership.

The two chapters that follow are devoted to Alderdice's story. I tell it at length because he has for too long been in the shadows. The portraits of the other leaders can be less detailed precisely because they are better known.

There was not a single moment of blinding truth in Alderdice's realization that he had a special role to play in helping to heal the wounds of Northern Ireland. His early "formed awareness," as Robert Jay Lifton might say, that he could contribute to peacemaking from his knowledge of psychoanalysis, especially in the way groups behave in crisis, remained a core belief for Alderdice.[1] He never left his training as a doctor and was serious and committed about his professional identity as a psychiatrist and psychoanalyst. But an important part of his deepest commitments yearned for a life in politics to accompany his work in medicine.

[1] Note Alderdice, TEXx Talk, "Sacred Values and Deadly Violence," September 29, 2014. The image of a "formed awareness" is from Robert Jay Lifton, *The Broken Connection: On Death and the Continuity of Life* (New York: Basic Books, 1979); note also Alderdice interview with David Hanly, "Hanly's People RTE 1988," posted on Alderdice channel on YouTube, https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=zxvdpEKGiD4, August 2,m 2019.

Chapter 1
Presbyterian, Psychoanalyst, and Peacemaker

The Alderdice family can be dated back to the 17th Century in Northern Ireland. Earlier genealogical tracings are murky, but it is clear John Alderdice's ancestors were from the west of Scotland. That seems also to be true of the ancestors on his mother's side. The various families who became the Alderdices lived on small farms, raising a few sheep and cows, some wheat or barley, and perhaps some vegetables in the garden.[1]

William Alderdice, John Alderdice's great great-grandfather, in 1883 bequeathed to his son, David, "houses, land, furniture, cattle, farm implements, in fact, all I possess." William states that his son David is to "keep my wife comfortably in every respect during her life . . . and if in the event of his marriage she should decide to leave the place he is to pay her 12 pounds sterling per annum as long as she lives."[2] David Alderdice worked the small farm, which was quite near the border in the South, outside of Newry, for his entire life. He and his wife, Sarah, had a daughter (Margaret Louisa) and a son, also named David, who took on the small-holding when his father died in 1934. This David, however, was not a simple farmer, though he lacked much of a formal education. John Alderdice remembers him sitting by an old lamp or candle at night, reading dense history books. He had a terrific memory. He could start at Psalm 1 and repeat all 150 Psalms without a mistake. In truth," John feels, "he was very frustrated about being on this little country farm." He was not particularly religious and not in the Orange Order (though he might have joined briefly as a young man). This grandfather had been exposed to the world. He had trouble with pleurisy and in those days, the recommended treatment was to go off somewhere with a better climate. If you were wealthy, you would go for Switzerland. He decided to go to Australia. It's dry there," he said.

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[1] The biographical details in this chapter are based on my interviews with Alderdice on December 6, 13, and 20, 2015; January 24 and February 7, 2016; and February 19, 2017.

[2] The probated will of William Alderdice, dated 1883 but only probated in 1903. AA

David Alderdice stayed in Australia for about a year. After he returned, for the rest of his life he would say, "I wish I had never come back. I wish I had stayed. Why did I come back in this old, damp clay land that didn't produce anything? It's terrible." John Alderdice suspects he came back partly out of the sense of guilt. He was the only son, and the farm had been in the family for many generations. But he had also fallen in love before he left. The day the grandfather came back from Australia, he walked way down to the village of Bessbrook to see the girl he had left behind, and soon married her.

That grandmother, Amy Alderdice (nee King), was quite beautiful but had a hard life. She had five children. Besides David, the youngest (and John's father), some of the other children were angry and mostly quite "sour," as Alderdice puts it. One, Thomas (Tommy) Alderdice, served as a policeman for 40 years. He held his post into the Troubles but retired and returned to the farm. Another boy, William Alderdice, joined the merchant marine and was rigid and religiously fundamentalist. He was angry that his parents refused to follow his ideas about religion. Two sisters—Amy Martin and Sadie Downey--seemed to get along okay, but Sadie fought her own internal demons.

On his mother's side, John's grandfather, John Shields, was raised on a small farm in the Mourne mountains where his father (also John Shields) just managed to eke out a living. There were a number of children, but the mother developed some serious medical problems that led the doctors to advise against any more childbirths. Two or three years later, however, she got pregnant and then died in childbirth. Soon afterwards, John Shields, feeling guilty and destitute, hung himself in the cowshed. That left young John, then 11 years old, adrift in the world with five younger surviving siblings. This maternal grandfather was very quiet and never said very much about religious or political topics. He turned out to be quite resourceful, however, even though he never got much of an education. He loved cars and motorcycles, which he raced as a young man.

Eventually, John Shields developed a small taxi business in Belfast, married, and had three children. His wife, Annie Hunter (John's maternal grandmother), however, was "quite a robust evangelical Protestant." She

was in fact a British Israelite, a small, odd, and fundamentalist group that believed the white people of northern Europe, and especially in Great Britain, were the true lost tribes of Israel; the so-called Jews were fakes, literally spawned by the devil, in this peculiar theology.[3] These grandparents lived in Belfast on the Ormeau Road that subsequently became notorious during the Troubles. John can remember his grandmother talking about how there were a lot of Catholics "down the bottom of the road" who were "affecting the Protestant nature of the upper part of the road." Alderdice recalls that she talked often about this shifting pattern in the neighborhood and how uncomfortable it made him feel, even before he fully understood the larger meanings of her words. He sensed the underlying prejudice.

John Shields (Alderdice's maternal grandfather) carried the weight of his traumatic childhood. Two of his children—including Alderdice's mother--married happily at around 20 years of age. But a much younger daughter (Pauline, whose married name is Johnston) delayed marriage until she was about 40. Her father, John, had long worried about his daughter and never wanted his children to suffer the pain he had experienced with the sudden loss of his parents. He walked down the aisle to give away his youngest daughter with great pride. It seemed the culmination of his life. In a matter of months he began to fade, developed dementia that proceeded rapidly, and died in less than a year. It seemed that he saw all his children happily married and taken care of so he could die content.

The dementia of his last year also loosed his tongue. These grandparents (John and Annie Shields) were once visiting with the Alderdices in this last stage of the grandfather's life. Annie, the rigid Baptist and British-Israelite, who could be quite difficult, came to breakfast once greatly distressed. She reported that there was something terribly wrong with the grandfather, who had always been extremely kind and gentle, though rather all-

[3] British Israelism influenced Henry Ford, who was fiercely anti-semitic, and through him and his propaganda machine the Christian Identity movement that has been important in the United States ever since. The best discussion of British Israelism and its importance in America is Michael Barkun, *Religion and the Racist Right: The Origin of the Christian Identity Movement* (Chapel Hill, NC: The University of North Carolina Press, 1996).

suffering. The grandmother reported that John Shields, now in some stage of dementia, had rolled over in bed onto her arm. The grandmother complained that "You will break my arm, for goodness sake." He replied: "Break your arm? I will break your neck if you don't shut up." One suspects he had wanted to say those words for many decades.

Preacher Father and Doting Mother

John Alderdice's father, David Alderdice (born 1929), was a Presbyterian minister. Raised in the countryside, the teenage David left school at 15, assuming he would join the family farm. But he had a religious conversion and decided he wanted to become a minister. To that end, he returned to a secondary school where he did well enough to matriculate and get into Magee University College, in Derry, the smaller of the two Irish Presbyterian seminaries for trainee ministers. It was while he was training for the ministry that he began to court Annie Margaret Helena Shields (born 1933) who lived in Belfast.

Helena was bright but not university educated. Two early traumas deeply affected her. At about six or seven, as the Germans bombed Belfast, she was sent to stay with some relatives in North Antrim for safety. She caught diphtheria, a bacterial infection of the throat that in serious cases can be fatal. She was put in an isolation unit in a fever hospital (now a simple dose of antibiotics would heal the diphtheria). No one could visit or come near her. She remained in this terrifying isolation for five or six weeks. Not long after she got well and was home, her mother went into the hospital to deliver another baby. Helena begged the nurse to let her see her mother. The nurse callously replied, "No, no, your mommy doesn't want to see you. She's busy with your little sister." The effect was catastrophic.

Alderdice's interpretation of these traumas on his mother is that it left her full of anxiety and never able to accept that people really liked her. She was "a very hospitable person, very kindly, welcoming to people, sensitive . . . and would put herself out a very great deal, not just for the family but for the church, for other people." But no matter how much she did, no matter how great an impact she had on people, "she never realized how much she was appreciated." Alderdice tells the story of something she told him after

her husband's funeral. Rev. Alderdice was well known, and the funeral had been attended by all kinds of dignitaries. Afterwards, knowing of her illness, Alderdice asked her if she had thoughts about he own funeral. She said, "Nobody will want to come to my funeral. You don't even need to bother having it in the church because there'll be nobody. . . It was different with your father, he was very important." In fact, says Alderdice, the church was packed when his mother died. She was much beloved. People came from far and wide, including hardened farmers, who stood in the church with tears streaming down their faces.

Helena Shields was a secretary in an office in Belfast when she met and fell in love with David Alderdice. Having gotten his BA degree, he wanted more in the way of an education at that point in his life and decided to pursue further theological studies at New College, the theological college of Edinburgh University. While David Alderdice was there, Helena Shields would go over from time to time to see him. After completing his BD degree, he returned to Ireland and was soon ordained as a Minister of the Presbyterian Church in Ireland, at which point he married Helena in 1954.

First Church

Rev. Alderdice's first assignment was to a country church in Donaughcloney, a little village with a population of a few hundred people. It is a small village on the River Lagan between Lurgan and Dromore, south of the large lake, Lough Neagh, southwest of Belfast. Donaghcloney was a friendly place, a "trusting community," where no one locked their doors and there was hardly any crime. It was a decidedly Scotch-Irish town, dating from the "Plantation period" in the early Seventeenth Century when England engineered a large population transfer of Scottish Presbyterian Protestants to Ireland as a way of forcing restive Catholics off the land, controlling them, and preventing further rebellions. The English and Scots-Irish character of Donaghcloney was identifiable by its flax spinning mills there (flax was spun into a thread and then used to make linen cloth). Its English character was further marked by the fact that it had a Cricket team, almost to make a statement that it was not Irish (or Catholic). Even now it hasn't changed much. One can drive through it, as I did in the spring of 2018, and see lots of union flags flying from homes.

Donaghcloney was representative of the radical nature of the separation between the two communities. Protestants, the dominant group socially, economically, and politically, but also demographically in Northern Ireland, lived apart from the far smaller Catholic community. The countryside in the east was overwhelmingly like Donaghcloney, which was Protestant in character. Catholics were concentrated much more in the urban centers and especially in Belfast and Derry/Londonderry, though some Catholics lived in medium-sized cities like Ballymena and in the west of Northern Ireland. In the cities, parochial neighborhoods faced each other cheek to jowl, which is why the "peace lines" emerged early in the Troubles to separate the two communities, the most dramatic of which is the high wall separating the Falls and Shankill Roads. In the countryside, however, as in a small town like Donaghcloney, the Protestants dominated absolutely, while other small towns would be almost exclusively Catholic. The village of Donaghcloney even now has the feel of Protestant hegemony. Walking the streets with some visible sign of being Catholic would pose the same kind of potential danger as a Black might face in America wandering in a white neighborhood in Chicago, or Los Angeles, or in a small town in Montana. Such a Black would not likely face overt violence, but the starkness of the contrast between the white community and the lone person of color would be noted, glances averted, and an implicit threat would lurk below the surface.

Rev. Alderdice was the Presbyterian minister for the parish that included a wide rural area surrounding Donaghcloney. The father's church dominated this very Protestant, Presbyterian area, but there was also, typically, a number of other churches, including an Anglican, or Church of Ireland, congregation and a small Methodist church. There was no Catholic church at all in the village or surrounding area. Rev. Alderdice and his new wife were both "very devoted in their work in the church, very committed," says Alderdice. The father was an effective preacher and a particularly devoted Pastor. He was good with his flock. At any hour of the day or night, if someone needed attention because of a death in the family or whatever it was, he would be there. "I grew up with no sense that there was a particular division between work and social life and relaxation and

all of these kinds of things." Work commitments permeated all aspects of life.

Alderdice's mother was devoted to the church where she took a leading role. In some ways she was quite shy but managed to carve out a meaningful identity as the pastor's wife. They were a loving couple and very hospitable. Whenever anybody came to the house, she would make "lots of cakes and buns and stuff like that," says Alderdice. In 1997 in one of his early speeches in the House of Lords as a newly minted Baron, Alderdice told a personal anecdote about his mother. When he was growing up, Annie Alderdice told the children in preparation for Sundays that all the shoes that they own should be taken out and polished on Saturday so that Sunday could remain as much as possible a day not only of, "religious observance but also one of rest." Alderdice tells the Lords that things of course have changed significantly, but he wondered if it would not be good for all to return to Sunday as a quiet moment.[4] Helena Alderdice and her husband were close and devoted. When David Alderdice died first from pancreatic cancer in 2011, she never really recovered emotionally, didn't take care of herself, and failed to attend to the recurrence of her breast cancer. She remained fond of the children and the grandchildren but couldn't live without her husband in her life.

Alderdice Childhood

John Alderdice was born a son of the Donaughcloney manse on March 25, 1955, about a year after his parents were married. The family lived in a large house surrounded by fields. It was cold, however, without central heating. Rev. Alderdice built a greenhouse in which he grew tomatoes and other vegetables. One of Alderdice's earliest memories was of watching as the father "glazed the greenhouse which he had built out of wooden strips." It left an impression on the boy of a skilled and competent father. A more curious family story often repeated by the mother is of her taking baby Alderdice in the pram to church. She would then leave him outside by the window so she could hear if he started crying. With her chronic anxiety,

[4] House of Lords speech, November 20, 1997. Book of Alderdice speeches. AA

she seemed to fear taking him inside the church for the service itself because he might make noise.

When Alderdice was three, his sister Anne was born. "She arrived in this white carrycot. A premium white carrycot and I remember it was put on a kind of a rack or frame. And I can just remember and picture myself trying to peer over and to try to see what -- who and what was this new arrival?" There is little hint of rivalry at this new member of the household, as Alderdice's first memory of his sister suggests curiosity more than distaste, though sometimes such feelings are suppressed. Three years later, another sister, Ruth, was born, and after another five years a boy, David.

Freud argued that the first-born boy of a young mother often draws her special attention and devotion. There is something deeply involving in that connection he felt (speaking self-referentially as the first-born boy of his young mother), making it unique, endowing such a child with a sense of his own greatness that can translate into actual success later on.[5] Something along those lines seemed in place between Helena Alderdice and young John. She was 22 when he was born. He went out of his way in one of my interviews with him to note how beautiful she was. He found his mother "supportive," "warm," and "caring" and at another point as brimming with "courtesy" and "thoughtfulness." She was physically expressive and hugged him warmly. She was also a "lady," he would say, which presumably meant to him that she was quiet and dignified, someone to respect and honor. She never seemed to get angry, unlike his father who could rage at things. Alderdice's mother mourned the suffering of people from mistreatment, as the victims of violence in Northern Ireland. The soul of his mother one can say, inspired his work later in the Alliance party. It greatly distressed her that people could so viciously hurt others. She also hated conflict. If Alderdice got into a heated argument with his father over

[5] Martha called the baby Freud "meine goldene Sigi" and he said, "When you were incontestably the favorite child of your mother, you keep during your lifetime this victorious feeling, you keep feeling sure of success, which in reality results in actual success." Ernest Jones, *The Life and Work of Sigmund Freud* (New York: Basic Books, 1960), I: 32-33.