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The Human Body as a Terrorist Weapon: Hunger Strikes and Suicide Bombers

Abstract

This article argues that a major factor in terrorist acts is an appeal to the actor's own community at an emotional and symbolic level, through acts of sacrifice, particularly self-sacrifice. Whilst other aims also exist a prime concern is to recall the actor's home audience to the struggle, since the actor regards himself as acting on their behalf. This utilises the imagery and symbolism of traditional religion, implying a strong communal and non-material impetus to terrorist acts, rather than rational material calculation, that modern western man finds difficult to comprehend. It also recalls much classical social theory that emphasised the central role of religion in community. Self-sacrifice tells an emotional story to the actor's community that is comprehensible to them and will have an emotional appeal to maintaining the community. For the Northern Ireland hunger strikes (possibly analogous to suicide bombers) this is reflected in their appeal solely to a Catholic/nationalist community that equates strongly with ideas of a pre-modern society under threat from a modernising society. All the hunger strikers were very normal for their community, but left non-Catholics completely unmoved. Consequently there is a need to understand the communal dynamics behind terrorism if one is to effectively countre the threat and that different societies may have different values regarding the individual, community and life itself. That individual motivations do not provide an adequate explanation for much terrorism and it is a failure to grasp this that severely hinders much counter-terrorism.

The Human Body as a Terrorist Weapon: Hunger Strikes and Suicide Bombers

The use of the individual body as a weapon is a very old tactic (such as the Assassins (1)). All soldiers are trained to use their bodies as weapons to a certain extent. Also, they expect to risk their lives in war, so potential loss of life is part of a soldier's essential being. Indeed, dead heroes are often useful role models for soldiers. Consequently, it is possible to argue that there is some overlap between the hunger striker, suicide bomber and the ordinary soldier in terms of a willingness to die.

However, certain differences exist. First, the ordinary soldier is not trained to deliberately seek death. Indeed, part of the key to well motivated soldiers is an expectation of survival in combat, Keegan makes it clear that once survival rates fall below certain levels armies tend to mutiny (2). Certain soldiers may undertake certain near-suicidal missions but this is something usually done under intense combat stress and needs differentiating from the suicide bomber or hunger striker who takes a reasoned decision to voluntarily offer their body for certain death. Their behaviour thus requires explanation beyond normal soldiering.

Suicide tactics also recall the idea of cost-tolerance (imposing greater suffering on ones opponents than on ones-self (3)). But with hunger strikers or suicide bombers this is taken to the ultimate level of certain death, challenging the existence of life itself. Normal soldiers would not accept such a denial since it is part of international state regulation of war to maintain the state's authority in this area. (4) There appears to be a fundamental difference at the level of moral authority between hunger strikers

and suicide bombers and ordinary soldiers that belies terrorist claims to be regarded as ordinary soldiers fighting a war like any other soldier.

Further, terrorism falls outside of the normal laws and rules relating to armed conflict, (5) but whilst the terrorist may be regarded as abnormal in purely legal terms there is no indication that they are abnormal in any psychological or psychiatric sense (6). Thus it is not possible to dismiss either hunger strikers or suicide bombers as somehow deranged or inadequate. Most studies tend to stress how normal they are (7).

The above leads us to look at the sources of morality and legitimacy involved in these acts, both of which are primarily found in the social or political community and to consider the social aspects of death and dying, an important aspect of understanding the use of the body as a weapon. Thus the "killing or death of in time of war involves a whole configuration of events which illustrates the social nature of death" (8), the same suicide rate under these conditions is related to social factors. This recalls sociological ideas of suicide, such as Durkheim's, where the propensity to suicide was related to the nature and form of society (9). Similar observations have been made more recently by Post et al in their analysis of Middle Eastern terrorists. (10)

Currently, there are many terrorist and other political campaigns around the world that utilise both hunger strikes (11) and suicide bombers (12). And knowing how to respond to them is a major cause for concern. Shooting or judicial executions are hardly likely to act as a deterrent; given the large numbers who imitate them one may argue that killing such people only exacerbates the problem. Additionally, the wide degree of public support and sympathy they elicit should also indicate that the individual bomber or hunger striker is not the key problem, consequently one is looking at the social dynamics that impel the individual activist.

We thus aim to investigate the motivations of suicide bombers and hunger strikers via reference to their social environment so as to provide an understanding of why and how the human body is used as a terminal weapon in itself; and how to respond to it. Central to our analysis will be the hunger strikes in Northern Ireland (1980-81) and interviews carried out with the two surviving Irish National Liberation Army (INLA) hunger strikers (the majority were members of the Provisional Irish Republican Army - PIRA) (13).

The primary emphasis will be on the hunger strikes but with the inference that suicide bombers may be understood in a similar way, since they also use their bodies as the prime weapon. But even understanding the hunger strikes alone will be important since this is a recurring tactic in many conflicts. It is also a tactic that surprises and offends the sensibilities of most western civilisations and their concepts of legitimate violence.

History of hunger strikes in Ireland

In Ireland the tactic was an old and accepted part of local culture. Thus historically someone who felt aggrieved at a neighbour would sit outside their hut and starve until duly recompensed. (14). The tactic had largely died out by the Williamite wars (1690's) and only appears to have re-emerged in the late nineteenth century in the Romantic writings of the nationalist poet W.B. Yeats (15) and taken up by Irish Republican activists during their campaign to secede from the UK (1916-24). In particular it was used by imprisoned Republicans in their campaigns for political recognition and increased publicity for their cause where it was found to be succesful in acting as a rallying call amongst Catholics by evoking strong emotional pulls amongst them. (16)

An early example was Terence MacSwiney, Lord Mayor of Cork and local IRA commander, who died on hunger strike in October 1920 in Brixton prison, London. After his death his body was placed in Saint George's Roman Catholic Cathedral in Southwark, London, where his coffin was draped with the Irish Republicans flag and his body dressed in his IRA uniform. His funeral procession returning his body to Cork, Ireland, "was one of London's historic protest marches" and it evoked strong reactions around the world, especially amongst the Irish diaspora, due to its well publicised progress (17).

MacSwiney also recalled the progress of the Manchester Martyrs (1867) (18). Here Republican activists, executed by the British authorities, in Manchester, for their part in the murder of a British police officer, had their bodies paraded through Ireland after their execution. The bodies progress was an occasion for great emotional angst and public demonstrations of sympathy and communal identification with the Republican cause. Politically, it had a cathartic effect in mobilising public opinion behind nationalist sentiment. And although few in Ireland overtly agreed with what they had done, they sympathised with the idealism of the cause behind the act. At this time few in Ireland wanted independence from the UK, but the emotional sentiment whipped up by the progress of the bodies and the idealism that had inspired the act gave a major boost to nationalist sentiments. This gives an indication of how the act in itself was not to be assessed in terms of its immediate objectives, but in its social implications, symbolism and wider social dynamics.

At this point two observations about the Manchester Martyrs and the early hunger strikers need making. First, the political ideals of an independent Ireland were almost exclusively premised on the ideals of Romantic Nationalism. Contemporary and current Irish nationalism is directly descended from the Young Ireland movement of the 1840's, led by Davis, Lalor and Duffy (19). They were direct disciples of the German Romantics of the late eighteenth and early nineteenth century, indeed Young Ireland leaders and German Romantics such as the Grimm Brothers or Lessing were in direct correspondence with each other (20). Second, this Irish nationalism appealed almost exclusively to Roman Catholics, who in turn were mostly rural/peasant or rural small town and culturally derived from the rapidly fading Gaelic tradition, which Young Ireland wanted to revive. (21)

What is significant is that the Protestants of Ireland were unmoved by either event, probably alienated by them, indeed it probably had exactly the opposite effect on them to that which it had on Catholics. Additionally Protestants were mostly urban and industrial, as well as English orientated in terms of culture and identified themselves as British. (22). Ulster Protestants in particular were hostile to Irish nationalism, their culture being derived from the Scottish Enlightenment tradition and their economy based on the only part of Ireland to experience an industrial revolution. (23) The different responses of the two populations in Ireland to the same events may thus provide an important clue to an understanding of the use of the body as a weapon. Particularly since this coincides with the observations of the great classical sociologists, writing at the time and reflecting on the contemporary social changes with regard to cultural attitudes as determinants of human behaviour.

Marx famously referred to the 'idiocy of rural life' (24) and noted how urbanisation altered men's consciousness and that religion was the 'opium of the masses'. Weber discussed the decline of traditional and the rise of rational authority as a result of progressive industrialisation and the increasing rationalisation and individualisation of life. He famously wrote on the link between Protestantism, rationality and industrialisation. (25) Durkheim similarly observed the connection between religion, society, industry and increased rationality and science. (26) Similar themes can also be found in Tonnies, Pareto and other contemporary social theorists. Common themes emerged of progress, rationality, industry, modernisation, individualism, and a whole new consciousness, culture and morality that were also associated either with an increased secularisation or a dominant set of Protestant derived scientific values. (27). These were the values of the Enlightenment and as such were vehemently opposed by the Romantics and the Catholic Church throughout Europe. (28) A Catholicism that was dominated by an ultramontane discipline and antipathy towards Protestantism, as reflected in the 1908 Ne Temere decree.

The significance of this is that different Catholic and Protestant attitudes, in Ireland, to the same events can be matched with established theories of socio-economic change and culture. We suggest that it may be possible to identify a significant causal factor for the use and success of hunger strikes (and possibly suicide bombers) as lying in the social arena rather than the individual, although not discounting individual factors altogether. Consequently social dynamics may well be the most important factor in understanding the use of the body as a weapon.

Background to the hunger strikes of 1980-81
These hunger strikes were part of an ongoing campaign in Northern Ireland, popularly referred to as the 'troubles' that began in 1969 (29). The troubles may be seen as part of an history going back almost two hundred years and utilising virtually the same dynamics. Most commentators have remarked on the continuity of the sectarian hostility, of riots as taking a similar form from one generation to the next and occuring in the same places and even involving the same families. (30)

In 1921 Northern Ireland was partitioned from the rest of Ireland (the South, which became the Republic in 1949), which seceded from the UK. The South was then 90% Catholic, (97% by the 1950's) (31), whilst Northern Ireland had a population that was around 64% Protestant (32) and opposed to being part of an independent Ireland. However, Northern Ireland had a large Catholic minority, many opposed to its existence and aspiring to join the South. Northern Catholics kept themselves separate as part of a mutually agreed segregation that covered everything from newspapers, sports, clubs, schools, social venues and employment. Protestants and Catholics maintained separate social and economic networks and aspired to different national identities and consciousness (33) and Catholics identified with the (Romantic) nationalist ideology already mentioned, although an important minority seemed content to remain in the UK. (34)

Many Catholics found life congenial within the UK, but as nationalists they were seen as a state threat and often felt confined. Claims of discrimination against them were rife and the evidence is somewhat contradictory (35). That some existed is indisputable, but they also discriminated back when they had the chance. Also, the culture of Gaelic Catholicism (scholastic and antipathetical to science), represented in their Romantic nationalism, provided a possible barrier to opportunities in the local industrial economy, which required skills and knowledge not provided by a traditional Catholic education in strictly segregated schools. Thus science became an almost exclusively Protestant interest throughout Ireland. (36)

Whilst most people dwell on the religious aspects of Northern Ireland/Ireland few pick up on the important economic differences and Northern Ireland's predominantly industrial and Protestant dominated economy and culture. This is at variance with the rest of Ireland (37) and the values of Romantic nationalism that decried the values of modern society (38) and was mostly supported by Catholics. However, it is this that may be the most significant difference in our analysis.

Sectarian riots and violence between Catholics and Protestants became an established feature of Northern Irish life and helped cement a tradition of communal distrust. (39) Republican attempts at armed insurrection in the twentieth century and their push for Irish independence added to this sectarian divide (40), which broke out into a new round of violence in 1969 and is the basis for the ongoing troubles, of which the hunger strikes were part.

The immediate background to the hunger strikes
The hunger strikes of 1980-81 were the direct result of claims to political status by prisoners convicted under the UK's Prevention of Terrorism Act, which held that those so convicted should be treated as ordinary criminals. Until 1977 this had not been the case, which was directly related to the period of

internment without trial (1972-77) for those suspected of involvement in terrorism in Northern Ireland. Those interned had been allowed special category status and been granted special privileges. (41)

In the mid 1970's, as the government began to develop a coherent strategy on Northern Ireland, it gradually released internees or formally charged them under new legislation and phased out internment. Its new approach was based on an Ulsterisation policy (making the locally recruited security forces the prime force in countering terrorism) and criminalisation (whereby all terrorists were to be charged and processed as ordinary criminals and treated as such). (42). It was the claim of terrorists to political status in the new environment that was the crux of the immediate issue. Republicans wanted political status, the Government refused.

Initially Republican prisoners had responded via their 'dirty protest', where they fouled their cells with excrement and refused to wear prison clothes. This led to a face off (1978-9) with the Government over political status that Republicans lost. But whilst the 'dirty' campaign failed it did provide valuable experience for both the prisoners and their outside supporters in mobilising support within their communities. (43)

The prisoners claim to political status utilised previous expedience in UK prisons policy that had previously allowed for categories of political prisoners (44). However, in the changed atmosphere of the 1970's with an ongoing murderous terrorist campaign in Northern Ireland, the rise of Middle Eastern terrorism and left and right-wing terrorism through-out Europe UK and international governmental attitudes were changing, as reflected in counter-terrorism cooperation (45). The UK was thus in line with others in defining political acts much more strictly.

Thus, whatever the motivation of Republican terrorists, it was felt necessary to counter a world trend that appeared to regard violence as a justified political means. It was felt important for the government to assert its role as the sole legitimate authority in Northern Ireland as part of this ongoing battle against terrorism, since the crux of Republican politics was the denial of UK legitimacy there. Republican claims to political status must be seen against this background, as part of a struggle to assert who has legitimate authority and the right to use violence, when and where. The sole claim to these, within the law, goes to the very heart of the existence of any state and this was precisely what Republicans challenged.

The prisoners' campaign had lasted four years by the time they went on their hunger strike and may thus be seen as the final resort to last desperate measures to challenge the role of the state. By mid-1980 the prisoners' morale was low and their supporters outside disillusioned due to their continued failure to secure political status (46). The hunger strike was a last resort and tactic that recalled the power of what they saw as a noble tradition. It played to Republicans own past in symbolic and sentimental terms and as a tactic known to have been previously beneficial.

The 1980-81 Hunger Strike

The immediate origins of the 1980-81 hunger strike go back to 1978, when the IRSP (Irish Republican Socialist Party, political wing of INLA) organised a protest meeting in Belfast to commemorate the second anniversary of the abolition of political status and in support of the dirty protest. However, the following year increased pressure came from the prisoners to "further escalate the dispute by undertaking a hunger strike". Meanwhile the "Provisional leadership were less keen than that of the IRSP to support such a measure to escalate the dispute" (47). But despite reservations a 17 member H-Block Committee was elected, chaired by a Dublin priest and dominated by PIRA members (prison cell blocks were designed in an 'H' layout, hence h-Blocks). But, despite several demonstrations it got nowhere and by October 1980, the Committee and other involved organisations had to face the reality of a call for an imminent hunger strike, despite reservations:

> We must support the hunger strike with the full involvement of all party members… many of our prisoners are against the hunger strike but will probably take part in it" (IRSP Ard-Chomhairle minutes, 4 October 1980)

What is clear is that pressure for the strike came from the prisoners and that external bodies initially had little direct influence. And although a number of prisoners were originally opposed group loyalty silenced them.

On the 27th October 1980, seven republican prisoners (six IRA and one INLA - John Nixon from Armagh) refused their meals in the H-blocks (HM Prison, Maze/Long Kesh) and began the strike, projected as part of a long running campaign of rolling strikes since it had been agreed that:

> "each one who died would have his place taken by one of the other 342 prisoners involved in the dirty protest" (48).

However, the UK Prime Minister, Margaret Thatcher, replied that political status would not be granted. This forewarned of a major clash with the Nationalist community since the prisoners' demands had widespread support within it (49). However, a clash was staved off after a relatively short period, when the first hunger striker's (Sean McKenna) condition deteriorated badly after six weeks and he was moved to a military hospital. Meanwhile, the British government seemed to offer some concessions and the PIRA commander inside the prison (Brendan Hughes) decided to call the strike off, apparently without consultation with PIRA's external leadership. Hughes thought the concessions were sufficient and was afraid that McKenna would die needlessly. However, the statement subsequently issued by the British government was deemed unsatisfactory by the prisoners (50).

This set the scene for the second, bigger hunger strike, announced on the 21st December 1980. Sinn Fein issued a statement saying that the hunger strike would resume if further concessions were not granted. On the 29th December Republican prisoners began smashing furniture in their cells, so presaging their determination to resume their campaign. For them it seemed that "there was no other way but another hunger strike", (51) to achieve political status.

Following a new call for volunteers on the 5th February the prisoners formally decided to start a new hunger strike, which would begin with three PIRA prisoners and one INLA, their commander Patsy O'Hara. On the 1st March Bobby Sands initiated the new series of strikes with his own strike. The original strategy had been for new hunger strikers to replace each one that died as they died. However, this was soon amended, to exert maximum pressure upon the British government, to that of new strikers joining at weekly intervals.

As a result of these hunger strikes 10 prisoners died (3 INLA men and 7 PIRA men) during the course of the year. However, by the 3rd October 1981 the hunger-strike was called off, as many of the 'next of kin' took their relatives off their fast once they were so close to death as to be deemed unable to reason for themselves, which created embarrassing situations for the external Republican leadership. In addition the tactic of fasting to death ran out of impetus as the more who died the less media sensation it attracted. But equally the government was eager to end the saga, since it produced only bad publicity for them.

Consequently, the hunger strikes were called off in response to a proposed government formula, the terms of which have never been made public and are thus open to some debate. However, the government, supported by much of the media, claimed a victory (52).

Meanwhile, three days after the end of the hunger strike Jim Prior (Northern Ireland Secretary of State) called a press conference to announce that certain new concessions had been made. These concessions included: the right for prisoners to wear their own clothes; abolition of the 'badge' of criminality; the restoration of lost remission; and greater freedom of association among inmates. Even the major outstanding demand, at the time, was later conceded, i.e. the right to work in prison. However, "no formal recognition was made by Government of the prisoners' "political status" (53) Thus precisely who won the immediate battle was left open to some conjecture.

The prisoners and their political and military organisations thus regarded themselves as also winning a victory, despite losing ten men and not obtaining political status. In many ways the ending was a climb down by them and a triumph for the government, who felt that they had kept the substance of their case. However, the real results of the strikes may not have been apparent at this time since they related more to the resultant long-term political and social implications.

Before he died on hunger strike Bobby Sands had been elected as an MP in a Parliamentary bye-election. The entire election campaign offered a magnificent chance for Republicans to go out and canvass for Sands on the hunger strike issue alone, especially since their normal constitutional nationalist opponents (SDLP) did not oppose them. The hunger strikes appeared to have a major mobilising effect on Catholic nationalist sentiment and provided the impetus for a renewed resurgence of Republican support. Previously Republican support had been almost non-existent, but from gaining less than 2% popular support in the late 1970's they rose after the Sands election to their current 24% support. (54)

Significantly the rise of the PIRA's political wing, Sinn Fein, is invariably dated from this time, followed within a couple of years, by the PIRA's 'armalite and ballot box' strategy announcement (using politics and terrorism conjointly to pursue their goals). (55) Since then Sinn Fein have come to be the largest party representing Catholic nationalists in Northern Ireland. Thus the real victory may lie in the long-term consequences rather than the short-term results. The government may not have been moved, but a proportion of Northern Ireland's Catholic/nationalist population were. And in the long-run this has had more effect on government policy, since much of the Province's politics since 1982 has been built around responding to the rise of Sinn Fein, from the Anglo-Irish Agreement (1985) up to the Belfast Agreement (1997) and beyond. (56)

Thus whilst the government was able to claim a victory in purely legal terms the strikes may well have been a triumph for Republicans in social and political terms, particularly by galvanising a communal support previously only latent, also, Republicans ability to supersede the normal democratic representatives (SDLP) of their community. This is important for other governments when responding to similar situations, the actual win/lose of a particular battle is much less important than the wider socio-political affects the battle itself can have in terms of symbolism and political mobilisation. The true significance of using the body as a weapon and the real target is not so much the terrorists' opposition as their own community. This should cause any counter-terrorist strategy to think carefully about its response to acts of terrorism.

A fundamental affect is not so much to terrorise opponents but to galvanise ones own community of support. In this way it is possible to help explain apparently senseless acts of violence that appear mindless when looked at from the rational affect on the terrorists opponents. As Dingley and Kirk-Smith in their analysis of PIRA and ETA bombings observe (57) that they are symbolic acts aimed at arousing community sentiment from the terrorists own community; any suffering ensuing merely adding to the emotional impact that pulls people together at the emotional level rather than the rational. That people could suffer self-annihilation on behalf of a cause implies an intensity of commitment and moral rectitude. This reminds other members of the same community of the importance of a cause in which they should feel bound up as part of that community. The aim is to raise emotional awareness and sentiment, so increasing support via it, thus Christian, Jewish or Islamic martyrs are utilised to recall members of the religious community to their cause. Martyrs strengthen the communal sense via their sacrifice for the community and they provide a rallying symbol that operates on an emotional level, suffering and passion, rather than one of rational, calculated gain.

Passion and emotion can be identified in the increased violence surrounding the hunger strikes, thus raising the emotional ties of community. In 1981 108 people died violently in Northern Ireland (58). And during the 217 days of the 1981 hunger strike, often as a direct result of the political passions resulting from it, 64 people died (59). Consequently the death toll may be regarded as higher than just those ten who starved themselves to death. The communal feelings aroused have led to more bitterly

divided but internally stronger communities and a lessening of tolerance in Northern Ireland as witnessed in parading disputes such as Drumcree. (60) Such sentiments return one to the social implications of death in political conflict.

To further this analysis and how to respond it is now important to go beyond the description of events to look at causal factors to sustain our claims of socio-cultural significance in using the body as a weapon. To do this we will look at the way the hunger strikers were chosen: the implications and rewards for the individual strikers and the community they came from: the aims and justifications for the hunger strikes: the effects of the strikes on the two communities, and: the socio-cultural and religious factors they played upon.

Choosing the hunger strikers: Criteria for group and individual selection
The hunger strikers were chosen in secret from a predetermined set of criteria and not randomly selected. The selection process began with a call for volunteers by the prisoners' commanders within the prison. It was essential that the strikers be volunteers to ensure maximum commitment and to rebuff any suggestions of coercion or similar adverse comment. All volunteers were then asked to write a brief history of themselves and their family. These notes were then sent to the external leadership who, with the internal leadership then proceeded to select which volunteers would go on strike.

The first criterion considered was a preference for single men with no children, although one of the last strikers did have two children, (61) since they were less likely to have family pressures placed upon them or face conflicting loyalties. Also, they could less easily be portrayed either by the media or state authorities as making others suffer for their beliefs. Consequently they were unencumbered emotionally to anyone but themselves and their cause, so increasing their commitment.

The next criteria was that they still had a considerable length of time left to serve (62); prisoners with only a short term to serve being less likely to commit themselves to seeing an hunger strike through to the end. Third, they were also selected on the basis of their convictions, i.e. non-sectarian offences. Prisoners were required who could be presented as relatively 'pure' in political terms.

Another criterion was good health, in order to avoid premature death and prolong the impact of their strike. It would also indicate that their deaths were solely due to the government's refusal to concede their demands. Additionally they needed to be mentally stable to cope with the stress likely to arise from such a painful ordeal. (This further supports the often overlooked factor concerning the mental stability of terrorists (63).) As Jacobs argues in terms of normal suicides "suicidal persons are not easily distinguished from the *normal* persons", in other words "there is no indication that they had given or received any advance warning". So, there exists "no convenient mechanical means of anticipating a suicide attempt" (64). By analogy, every 'political prisoner' could be a potential hunger striker, which also emphasised their normality.

But above all individual commitment had to be *tested*:

> 'Comrade, you have put your name forward for the hunger strike. Do you know that this means you will most likely be dead within two months? ... Reconsider carefully your decision. A.C.' (65).

Thus another factor in selection emerges - commitment to cause and comrades, something not associated with mental instability.

Whilst those chosen were mostly single men, they still had parental families to consider. This point emerged belatedly after the strikes had begun, when strike' families indicated that they would intervene once their sons had reached a stage where they could no longer reason for themselves. Family intervention was discussed by the prisoners leaders (66), who explored, with solicitors, how they might have legal documents "stating their wish to be allowed to die and forbidding intervention" drawn up by the strikers. These "would preclude a hunger striker's family from intervening should he lose consciousness" (67). However, the prisoners also feared the danger that the authorities "could exploit such a move propaganda-wise" (68). So, the short-list of potential hunger strikers was amended to exclude those whose family might object, "people who were on the short-list were long-listed and other names brought forward" (69).

Strategically the leadership also chose the original and replacement strikers with a geo-political forethought, those chosen came from all over Northern Ireland "to ensure all ... regions were covered" (70). In this way they ensured nearly every Catholic/nationalist area would be affected, thus maximising involvement and helping to create an image to the outside world of the whole Province being galvanised.

None of the strikers were Protestant (few Republicans are), all came from families and communities marked by a traditional Catholic/Nationalist affiliation, socio-cultural and economic profile. In terms of Catholic/Nationalist politics and community all strikers were easily identifiable as typical. Seven of the ten hunger strikers came from strong Republican families and areas; all came from large families, five from families with eight or more children. None had higher level education and only three had finished secondary school. Five were from rural and five from urban backgrounds, whilst eight had lived at home and all had had very commonplace jobs and all came of age in the civil rights movement of the 1960's.
Consequently, all the hunger strikers were very ordinary in terms of the nationalist community from which Republicans recruited and therefore Catholics could easily identify with them (71). Whether this was deliberate policy cannot be substantiated, but it is significant in terms of their appeal to their wider constituency that the hunger strikers strongly resembled the normal profile from which Republicans recruit. Their profile would also fit in with the known dynamics of most ethnic politics. (72)

The ability to establish a strong emotional sense of identity between the strikers and their community was crucial. Being 'the same' or 'normal' most members of the Catholic/Nationalist community could see themselves in the strikers, empathise with them and be bound up in the same sense of angst. Such an emotional attachment is then able to overcome any rational analysis and arguments against the strikers. This fits on to the long established sense, in the Catholic/Nationalist community, that the Republican cause for which the strikers fought was part of an historically legitimate one. (73) The strikers thus came to represent deep-seated, feelings within their community, bringing an often only latent sympathy out into an active support. This is illustrated in the massive communal outpouring of support that emerged for the strikers, which helped galvanise the rise of Sinn Fein.

Implications and rewards for the individual hunger strikers

Why did the hunger strikers volunteer in the first place? Obviously there are no material rewards for dead hunger strikers, and few for their families, even if collections are often made for them, but these may be relatively small in terms of life opportunities. Meanwhile, non-material rewards can be seen to accrue to those who die for the cause. One example is the Islamic suicide bomber, who may gain entry to paradise. Further, in conventional war the awarding of posthumous medals and pensions to dead heroes can be seen as of some benefit to fallen comrades and their families. But perhaps the most significant reward is the honour the deceased and by association, their families, is held in.

But this is a communal reward and depends on recognition within the relevant political community, again indicating the importance of the acts social dimension. Thus rewards should not necessarily be seen in material terms, but in terms of a sense of individual immortality, which is strongly linked to and is a function of the continued existence of the relevant social and political community. Outside of the community there is often no recognition. This can be seen as both the subliminal motivation and the reward for the hunger striker. The same point can also be applied to the needs of the community, it requires its heroes for its own good. Symbolic sacrifices recall individuals to the community and its needs. In this way there may be a symbiotic relationship between individual and community that recalls classical sociology and modern anthropology.

Much of social science is predicated upon the idea that the individual is never simply that, but a complex product of society, social relations and community. (74) The individual's sense of being and identity is thus bound up with community, which is particularly strong in small rural societies or inner city ghettos. Thus where the individual is affected so is the community and vice versa in a very direct manner. Indeed many of the most virulent contemporary terrorist movements arise out of societies that are dominated by small rural communities. (75) Such societies also tend to be dominated by religion, tradition and emotion, sentiment not rational analysis is the dominant feature of motivation. The suffering of an individual is thus felt much more strongly at a non-reflective community level and consequently likely to provoke a greater communal outpouring, reconfirming communal existence and ties.

This non-reflective response is likely to be reinforced by the relatively closed nature of small, rural communities where outside ideas and analysis is relatively limited, thus ensuring only a single message or interpretation of events occurs. And that message is the one that comes from within the community, consequently largely emotional as a result and helps to reinforce the sense of community, since critical and rational analysis is lacking. Indeed rationality and critical analysis may well be viewed as the enemy of the community since it would disrupt its agreed message and cohesion in turn having negative affects on its members own sense of identity. This is the basis of discourse theory and has already been used to help explain the distorted political views and continued violence in Northern Ireland. (76) We now add this insight to our reflections on the normality of terrorists and the selection of hunger strikers to suggest that in important ways the target of the terrorist is their own community and keeping the sense of community going via sacrifice.

If our analysis is correct then it has important ramifications for anti-terrorist policies. Specific causes may be less relevant than a deeper socio-communal concern that is more disparate and linked to emotional security problems. This may help explain why specific government policies and acts often fail to resolve terrorist problems. Equally, the way to respond to terrorism may be better advanced by trying to isolate the terrorist from their community or alter the sense of community. Effective counter-terrorism requires an effective socio-cultural knowledge and response.

Liam McCloskey, John Nixon and Loyalty

The above is illustrated by the strong motivational sense that community amongst the hunger strikers played in keeping them going. Liam and John are two surviving INLA hunger strikers who agreed to be interviewed and both emphasised the importance of the strong sense of community and shared suffering they had experienced in prison during their protests. When asked whether the decision of other prisoners to participate in the strike had influenced them in joining the strike John replied:

> "Yes. We had all endured together" (John Nixon, who entered a simultaneous strike with 6 PIRA men).

And Liam added:

> "Yes, it was a common decision, Brendan Hughes announced the first HS and we were asked to think about it and to put our names forward if we wanted to in three days from that time". (Liam McCloskey, who entered the hunger strike at a later stage and after 7 (5 PIRA and 2 INLA) strikers had died).

Further, Liam also said that he could not stop it himself, he:

> "was committed to those who had died before me ... Even though he was no longer committed to the I.N.L.A. his commitment to his fellow prisoners overwhelmed all other considerations" (77).

So, as O'Malley observed, the prisoners' first loyalties were to each other. (78)

John and Liam further reinforce the point:

> "Certainly, for myself, and I believe for most others that first loyalties were to each other. Other issues were secondary" (John Nixon).

> "Yes. A special personal affinity did exist via a shared experience of suffering and commitment to see it all through, no matter what the cost" (Liam McCloskey).

And when asked about what they personally thought could be obtained from the hunger strike they responded:

> "The demands might be obtained. The misery of the Blanket protest would be ended, win or lose" (Liam McCloskey);

> "Personally? I did not think I would achieve anything. It was never personal! Never selfish. Always about the struggle for ending the oppression and sufferings of others ... this required personal sacrifice" (John Nixon).

Both the INLA hunger strikers argued that the suffering experienced in their previous forms of protest made the hunger strike inevitable. It was the resulting sense of desperation they went through that impelled them and their sense of 'other' in terms of their own community and comrades. 'Never selfish', emotive not rational choice reasons:

> "it was a situation of desperation and desperate men will do desperate actions" (Liam McCloskey).

They illustrate the strong sense of altruism towards a community, personal sacrifice and suffering. That their primary commitment was to their fellow community of prisoners could easily be extrapolated to the wider communities they come from and that held a similar set of communal values. In this way the wider community felt bound to support them out of a communal sense of loyalty and shared sacrifice and thus became involved in the struggle and shared the suffering. It is thus group dynamics that need to be understood not individual actions as such, although there is also an important aspect of why such individuals in particular should volunteer, but this is beyond the particular scope of this study.

Loss and the Community of Prisoners

Homansa argues that the psychological dimension "can explain how and why individuals respond to value change and value loss". In other words the process of mourning where "the *lost* objects are social and cultural objects and not only familiar ones ... When such symbols "die", then the communities they represent undergo fragmentation and persons experience loss and are confronted by the need to mourn" (79). And mourning is an intensely emotional experience. The same community inside the prison went through a process of fragmentation that could be translated to their communities. They started a process of mourning where the same mourners could in turn change into bereaved ones. Inside the prison the community got closer through mourning, it led to a loyalty, which later led to more deaths and the

same process occurred in the wider community. The community thus begins to control the individual and command their actions.

Vernon argues that "the death of one member of a team results in the partial death of the other members", in other words we talk of "social death" (80). The prison community faced its social death, which was both a strength and a weakness. The human cost was high but the loyalty engendered became a major strength that was then exported out to their community.

The individual and community become conflated via a shared suffering and the individual becomes a tool of the community. Thus the hunger strikers acted not only on behalf of fellow prisoners but also their wider community:

> "Yes, but more than this. They were now at the interface of the struggle, the cutting edge, the only weapons they had was their bodies and their minds. The person was the new battleground and it was going to be decisive" (John Nixon)

Aims of the hunger strike

Such observations are reinforced when looking at the stated aims of the hunger strikes, not individual gain or recognition but concerns for broader group and community interests:

a) *Statement at Start of First Hunger Strike*: the prisoners demanded political recognition, as being captured combatants in the struggle for self-determination. As a consequence they refuted the tag 'criminal'. (81) The reference to self-determination is one to community that takes the strikers beyond personal motivation.

b) *Statement at Start of Second Hunger Strike:* "We, the Republican POWs in the H-Blocks ... are entitled to and hereby demand political status, and we reject today ... the British government's attempted criminalisation of ourselves and our struggle ... Only the loud voice of the Irish people and world opinion can bring them to their senses and only a hunger strike, where lives are laid down as proof of the strength of our political convictions, can rally such opinion ... We have asserted that we are political prisoners and everything about our country, our arrests, interrogations, trials and prison conditions show that we are politically motivated" (82). Again, this provides a clear insight into their explicitly non-individual motivation.

c) *4th July 1981 Declaration* (which followed the first wave of deaths) whose main points were:
- the British government are responsible for the hunger strikes ... The ending of special category status was a political tactic used [to] criminalise the republican attack on British imperialism in Ireland;
- welcome of the five demands for all prisoners;
- the prisoners should have their dignity restored;

- the European Commission on Human Rights had criticised the British government for being inflexible;
- non-recognition of what the British government considers 'prison work';
- free association means ... freedom of movement within the prison wings ... It is unrealistic to expect loyalist and republicans to integrate ... Forced integration ... is wrong and can only lead to trouble;
- prison clothes are prison clothes and prisoners should not be made to wear anything but their own clothes. (83)

In their conclusion they stated that there could be "a solution, without loss of principle to either side ... [as] comrades ... have died and ... others ... face death on hunger strike. Our people on the outside have died and more may die ... That is why we seek immediate talks with the British administration to seek a solution". (84)

It is easy to identify their goals as greater than personal gratification as their objections relate to tags of criminality, which they clearly do not apply to themselves and nor does their wider community. That the, larger, Unionist community did not share their interpretation of their situation is ignored, only the hunger strikers own community is referred to. It is their own communal dimension that dominates and it is the communal dissonance between the larger and smaller communities that lies at the heart of Northern Ireland's troubles.

Neither their convictions, the acts they committed or their imprisonment as such is disputed. Thus individual acts are not a factor. It is only the social status and definition of their acts as political or criminal that is at issue – that, they acted on behalf of their communities and not their individual self-interest. In this way they see themselves as soldiers.

Religion and the hunger strikers

Although all the hunger strikers were Catholic and the community and political affiliation they represented were uniquely Catholic all disclaimed any specifically religious motivation. At the purely literal level this may be true, however, if one reads religion in a wider sense it may not be so. Thus when asked if eternal life was a motivation for their choice:

> "No, it was not. Many have fused political/religions ideas from the Hunger Strikes, but the aims of those involved were very much earthly ones" (Liam McCloskey).

> "No. Some of them were not religious at all, but all of them may have been spiritual. There were fundamental differences between them on issues of metaphysical beliefs" (John Nixon).

They interpreted religion in a narrow institutional way and Nixon's references to spirituality implied a religious dimension. Further, all were products of a traditional Catholic upbringing and education and can be viewed as sharing a Catholic view of the world that is so unquestioned as not to appear to them as religious. (85) Also, if one accepts the important role of community in religion, this in itself can be

seen as religious. It is a commonplace in much sociology and anthropology to see the religious in the community, points made both by Dingley and Kirk-Smith in relation to Irish and Basque violence and by Strenski in relation to Islamic 'suicide bombers'. (86)

The etymology of religion and society are revealing here. Religion comes from the Latin - religio, bonds of relations, and society comes from socio - compassion (87). Put the two together and one arrives at a derivation of: compassion for those with whom one is in bonds of relations, a community, and the closer the relations the closer the community, as in small, isolated rural communities. Thus religion is community in the terms of this derivation. And if the individual is fundamentally derived from the community, as suggested, then so too are they from their religion. Community ideals and imperatives are themselves, then, deeply religious.

What is also illuminating are their answers to reasons for joining the hunger strike:

> "Had I been asked before going to prison would I ever go on hunger strike, I would have said never. Because of the dirt protest, suffering, common bond, etc. the hunger strike became an option" (Liam McCloskey);

> "I was a leader in the jail. I had spent five years on protest. The onus was on me to lead and not to follow" (John Nixon).

Again, these replies stress the emotive issues of suffering and community, which brings us back to the metaphysics of religion and emotional experience. The very opposite of autonomous, rational behaviour stressed in modern industrial society, with its large cities, loose and shifting relations and material concerns. (88) One could even go further and suggest the same distinctions between Israel and most of the Arab world.

But whilst this helps explain their acts as hunger strikers can it also illuminate the thoughts of suicide bombers? When asked if they could see themselves as potential suicide bombers their answers were revealing:

> "Not now. At the time I was involved we never thought about it. Our lives were not desperate enough for such measures. We felt that we could be effective enough with put such measures. Suicide bombing is a relatively recent tactic" (Liam McCloskey);

> "When young and idealist anything is possible, but I don't call it a suicide, this is a sacrifice. I am normal. I want to live but if an act meant an end to the suffering of others it would mean considering it, but I don't like the term suicide. It implies a desire to die. I think the use of the body as a weapon is not a form of suicide, it is a sacrifice" (John Nixon).

How did they themselves justify such an action?

> "Through them being forced upon by an unyielding Government. And to help each other out of hard conditions. By being willing to die as well to suffer for the cause" (Liam McCloskey);

> "They believed in the justice of their cause" (John Nixon).

Again, acts are sanctioned not by rational analysis or individual gain/loss but by emotive reference and by turning the act of suicide into one of sacrifice, which implies a greater entity to which one defers and surrenders - the community (religion). The hunger strike and suicide bombing may be technically different tactics but they operate at fundamentally the same level and in the same way, by reference to the community. In turn the community, utilises the language of religion as its own, members of the community express themselves in religious ways using religious symbols, metaphors, stories and ideals. The world is interpreted religiously, even if the actors are not conscious of their religious interpretation and that the relevance of their acts is only understood in their religious terms. Thus their acts appeal to their own religious community in a subliminal way whilst totally alienating them from other religious groups. This also acts to reinforce the 'reality' and 'truth' of the religiously conceived, transmitted and interpreted message within the community by reconfirming it in practice.

Affects of the hunger strike on nationalists and unionists

The above may be illustrated via the responses of the Unionist and Nationalist communities in Northern Ireland to the hunger strikes. Here, the same act created a greater cohesion and shared sense of communal loyalty amongst nationalists that did much to hasten the rise of Sinn Fein, but at the same time pushed them further away from the majority Unionist community. Rationally the hunger strikes made any idea of an United Ireland much more difficult in terms of inter-communal reconciliation, but, sub-consciously, that may not have been the point. Thus the different communal reactions have an important significance for our analysis

Loyalist/Protestant reaction: Loyalists are the hard core of Unionism, mostly inner city or rural working class. During the hunger strike Loyalist terrorism showed an increased capacity for sectarian assassination. A new political party, the Ulster Loyalist Democratic Party was founded in June 1981 partly in response to the hunger strikes and to represent Loyalist worries. At the more respectable level of normal constitutional politics the Rev. Ian Paisley's Democratic Unionist Party (hard-line Unionists) took almost 30 per cent of first preference votes in elections to the European Parliament (June 1981). (89). This was a big gain from the more moderate Ulster Unionist Party with whom they compete. Thus the non-nationalist community, predominantly Protestant, industrial and urban were further alienated from nationalism and hardened in their response to it.

What is further illuminating is that Loyalist prisoners also attempted an hunger strike for similar ends to Republicans but failed to gain more than one hunger striker and any outside support. Not only have Protestants always been much more sanguine about Loyalist terrorists who claim to represent them but the Protestant, industrial and urban culture that permeates them is much less susceptible to the kind of communal pull that affect nationalists. The personal salvation that lies at the heart of Protestant and modern industrial culture may well be illustrated in the contrast in reactions to the hunger strikes between Unionists and Catholic/nationalists with their greater emphasis on community and sacrifice. There is a cultural difference about the Protestant/Unionist community that makes them less responsive to ideals of communal sacrifice and emotion. This in turn may also tell us much about the conflict in

Northern Ireland and the divisions between Catholics and Protestants generally. Again, a similar parallel may be suggested with regard to differences between Jew and Muslim in the Middle East.

SDLP Reaction: the SDLP is the constitutional representative of the more moderate Catholic/nationalist community, often regarded as representing liberal, middle class Catholics, whose main spokesman was John Hume. They can be regarded as the big losers since the hunger strikes since before they were virtually the sole political representatives of their community, now they poll fewer votes than Sinn Fein who before the strikes did not even contest elections. Within five years Sinn Fein were polling 10% of the total vote in Northern Ireland and by 2003 they were up to 24%, well over 50% of the nationalist vote. (90)

In the immediate aftermath of the hunger strikes the prisoners began blaming the SDLP for their losses:

> "Rather than take action to secure an honourable solution and save lives, they [SDLP] tried ... to make political gain by attacking those who did genuinely endeavour to end the issue honourably, namely the national H-Block/Armagh Committee and those councillors who answered our call to withdraw from the councils". (Statement at the End of Second Hunger Strike).

Even for the long term they knew already what to say:

> "This party [SDLP] is spineless and weak and is very capable of selling out to unionist intimidators for imperialist perks" (Statement at the End of Second Hunger Strike). (91)

John Hume, despite the "respectability and a visibility beyond the province" that he gave the Catholic community, was a major victim. During the strike the SDLP refused to put up a candidate to oppose Bobby Sands in the Parliamentary bye-election. When Sands died, after being elected, the SDLP further failed to field a candidate in the next bye-election to replace him, so again a Sinn Fein candidate was elected. In doing this the SDLP effectively conceded the nationalist community leadership to Sinn Fein in terms of their 'historically legitimate' struggle in which the nationalist community felt itself engaged. As Arthur put it "SDLP refusal to nominate a candidate in the April by-election ... was an acknowledgement that this was ground where the Provisionals were too strong" (92).

Thus a major change in the political landscape following the hunger strike was Sinn Fein becoming a political force, since then "its fortunes have prospered [meanwhile] those of the SDLP have dwindled" (93). And it became a force precisely because it responded to deep communal feelings brought to the surface by the strikes. The ten dead hunger strikers became martyrs whose sacrifice could be used to recall their own community back to historical ideals symbolised and idealised in the dead strikers. They bound all the members of the community together in an intense emotional experience that reinforced their sense of solidarity so that no one, not even the SDLP dared to challenge it.

Sinn Fein Response: The political wing of PIRA and the leading Republican political party grew out of all recognition as a result of the strikes and their leading role in them until they have become the expression of popular Catholic/Nationalist opinion. In particular the success of Sands and Owen Carron (Sand's successor in the subsequent bye-election) and the popular electoral support indicated by it led

to a complete re-evaluation of their traditional abstentionist policy regarding elections and taking up seats won at them:

> "The decision to contest Northern Ireland elections was hastened by the success of Bobby Sands and Owen Carron in the Westminster by-election in 1981. In 1982, Sinn Fein abandoned the federalist Eire Nua (New Ireland) policy in favour of a policy calling for a unitary all-Ireland state; in 1983 it elected Gerry Adams president; in 1985 Sinn Fein candidates elected to local councils took their seats; and in 1986 Sinn Fein dropped its abstentionist stand in the Dublin Parliament". (94)

As Arthur argues Sinn Fein, "received surprising popular support endorsement in the wake of the hunger strike", (95) but, in view of our analysis, not so surprising. At the General Election of June 1983, when Sinn Fein vice-president Gerry Adams was elected MP for Belfast West, in the UK Parliament, the Sinn Fein vote had a "traumatic impact" on Dublin, in the Irish Republic, as well. (96) Sinn Fein, with 13.4%, initially peaked in 1983, after which at the "general elections in 1987 and in 1992 their vote dropped to 11.4 and 10 per cent respectively ... And in 1992 Adams lost his West Belfast seat". However, since then it has regained its ground and gone on to greater strength:

> "The hunger strikes ... provided the republican movement with a political launching pad, serving as the foundation of Sinn Fein's subsequent electoral success" (97).

The success of their electoral strategy during the hunger strikes nudged PIRA in a new policy direction, the "bomb and ballot box", (98) which has been highly successful.

Socio-cultural and religious aspects

As already explained religion and the socio-cultural have long been linked, particularly in the context of community. Churches, Temples, Mosques are centres of relations and communications, places of instruction and consciousness and political movements, particularly nationalist, have often centred upon them. (99) So too has violence often emanated from a religious organisation, (100) indeed one important role of religion has been identified as the mediation of violence and its expulsion from the community via symbolic acts of violence such as symbolic sacrifice. (101) Peace and harmony are brought to the community via externalising violence on to others.

Equally the idea of passion is central to most religions and often forms the basis for much symbolic ritual and theological disputes. The Crucifixion of Christ is central to Christian ritual and its symbolic representation in the Eucharist is a core feature of most Christian services and the passion of the crucifixion and resurrection at Easter is the major Christian festival. This is particularly so in Roman Catholicism, but less so in Protestantism, especially the Presbyterian variant that dominates in Northern Ireland, where the word as represented in the bible is the key feature. (102) Protestants place greater emphasis on individual salvation and rational calculation of God's grace via signs and works. There is also a strong correlation between Protestantism, science and industry with its rational, critical and individual ethos that would make communal appeals much less emotionally appealing than in

traditional Catholic societies (or Islamic). For Protestants in Northern Ireland individual rights would have a greater emotional appeal and emphasis rather than communal ties. (103)

Also, in the study of religion, the role of sacrifice and martyrs has been noted as often central, recalling both the individual and the community to sacred ideals. Indeed sacrifice is an ideal in itself and can reap rich rewards in terms of communal self-esteem and status. Such an emphasis on sacrifice would have a stronger appeal to Catholics in Ireland than Protestants. This is well illustrated in the almost total conflation of Irish nationalism with Catholicism and the further conflation of nationalist self-martyrdom with Christ on the cross, the classical example being Patrick Pearse in 1916. Pearse virtually acted out his own imitation of Christ's sacrifice on the cross in the Easter Rising (1916) that he new was bound to fail before it began. But consciously he and his colleagues knew that it was the symbolic gesture and sacrifice that counted and would appeal to Catholic/nationalist Ireland. This was something the UK state failed to grasp when it added to the martyrs by executing surviving members of the Rising and turned an Irish (Catholic) population that initially had ambiguous attitudes towards the rising into open sympathisers of it. (104)

Suffering and martyrdom are thus central images and messages for Catholics in a way they are not for Protestants, they legitimate a cause unique to the Catholic community and in a way culturally specific to Catholic/nationalists. In this way any contemporary sacrifice links into a legitimating history of suffering and community and works to reconfirm that history and recall individuals to the community. And additionally it also adds legitimacy via the religious sanctification imbued by the sacrifice and suffering.

If one compares Pearse's self-martyrdom with the hunger strikers there is a similar theme running through both of sacrifice for the cause and the community. The sense of spirituality given to political acts is the same and thus blends in with an unbroken tradition. This tradition may not consciously be remembered until a symbolic act recalls members of the community to it, such as hunger strikes or suicide bombings. It keeps the tradition of resistance alive and heightens the emotional commitment to the struggle when more rational voices may doubt its value. Because one has suffered it sanctifies the cause and makes it worth continuing. This works most effectively in small rural communities where close ties ensure that the suffering of one will be felt by many. Revenge type retaliation by the other community or the authorities would then further add to the sense of suffering and further add to the emotional commitment of the community and its solidarity.

The above is born out by the sense of victim-hood and the willingness to suffer of the hunger strikers (and by implication, the suicide bomber).

> "The old sense of injustice and victimhood became self-inflicted, sacrifice   connected "the profane and the sacred through an act of violence" (105).

Consequently, for the hunger strikes there was never a shortage of volunteers, as their religiously inspired message linked in to deep parts of the prisoners consciousness and communal sense of being:

> "There were others prepared to join the fast at any time despite the numbers they had witnessed dying" (106).

Logically, death should have acted as a rational means to dissuade, it didn't because at the communal and religious level of being it acted as a source of life. The hunger strikers were acting in a religious manner, even if they did not recognise it in themselves. They were creating a religious spectacle that had all the symbolism that their own community could understand at a deep emotional level and respond to in a pre-determined manner. Just like a Passion play at Easter or the Easter Rising of 1916.

Arthur argues that this may be the point of departure for many contemporary movements that claim to work for emancipation:

> "is not equality but *victimhood* ... Today it is the "negative other" which takes the moral measure of the whole" (107).

> "Apter may have had the hunger strikes in mind when he wrote that endowing confrontational events with political symbolism is itself a strategy which changes the political process from accountability and consensus to a politics of spectacle, theatre, violence, drama ... no one single incident or event invested as much spectacle as did the hunger strikes". (108)

> "What Mack calls *the egoism of victimization*: "incapacity of an ethno-national group, as a direct result of its historical traumas, to empathise with the suffering of another group ... Victims kill victims through unendingly repeated cycles that are transmitted from one generation to another, bolstered by stories and myths of atrocities committed by the other people, and by heroic acts committed in defence of the nation and its values by one's own" (109).

Thus hunger strikers, like contemporary Middle Eastern suicide bombers, may be playing out a very old religious drama as contemporary politics. But it works at the level of the actor's own community and their internal social dynamics, even if they fail to affect those outside the community. But that is not the point. The point is that the community is given new life through the acting out of the old drama and its sacrifices so that it can maintain its being and continue to assert its values and thus defy the outside world. It is a kind of renewal of communal consciousness by a repetition of known stories and acts, just as in regular religious ceremonies.

And the community is fundamentally built around a religious organisation and has a religious conception, hence the importance of a religious drama; this takes the community beyond a mere collection individuals, turning it into a metaphysical force. The community can be realised through religious symbols, language and experience. Thus the community now has a moral significance and legitimacy that takes it beyond rational calculation and conflates it with the individual. This in turn can then act to inflate the ego of the individual actor or martyr by enabling them to equate the community or cause with themselves. In their own eyes and that of the community they become the beacon or bearer of communal hopes and values, providing them with a mission and meaning that raises their

self-esteem and status in life. Self-sacrifice becomes a form of vanity and self-deification and thus links the community to individual needs for recognition and status, thus completing a circle.

Martyrdom and Symbolism

The literal reality of the last point is illustrated in the actions and deeds of the hunger strikers. Thus just as Christ said "No greater love hath a man than to lay down his life for his friends", so hunger strikers imagined themselves in Christ like ways:

> "He [Bobby Sands] saw himself as the Messiah, Christ like" (110).

The previously mentioned Terence McSwiney, in 1920, also identified in "sacrifice" the price victory needed:

> "It is not those who inflict the most but those who suffer the most who will conquer".

And, during the hunger strike, martyrdom and religious symbolism came together to function powerfully to have a major electoral impact in terms of galvanising Catholic support:

> "Sinn Fein's plea for a vote to save Sands's life; the graffito in West Belfast of a dying hunger striker being comforted by the Virgin Mary with the message, "Blessed are those who hunger for justice"; the prisoners using their bodies as social texts "in the act of refusal, i.e. refusing to eat ... their supporters sense of theatre with the hunger strikers portrayed in crucified postures ... the place of religion with the Mass as a "real sacrifice" and source of comfort and strength to the prisoners". (111)

The message of the injured body played to an old script in the religio-political arena of Catholic Nationalism and was recognisable within their community and ensured the self-martyrs a place in the nationalist pantheon of fame. The common message drew people together and played on a shared understanding and emotional response; the injured dying body became a source of electoral consent, itself a source of celebrity for the martyr. In wall murals in the Catholic/nationalist ghettos the Madonna was portrayed as blessing the injured body of the dead hunger striker, and a vote against him was a vote against Her. For the predominantly Protestant population this would be a message lacking in any symbolic significance since the centrality of the Virgin Mary in religious worship is confined to Catholics. To Protestants it would merely reconfirm the alien nature of the Nationalist community and serve to harden their resolve against it.

For the Catholic/nationalist community the sacrifice of the hunger strikers would purify and renew the holy community. It would expunge old doubts and cleavages, remove impure thoughts and ideas and renew the spirit of struggle. This would be achieved via the emotive pull of the symbolism, not just of Christ but of all the martyrs of the Catholic Church. Justice for the hunger strikers was justification for the cause, a religious translation of injustice into an electoral context, while the aim went beyond post-mortem expectations for suffering in life, the prize was eternity within the human realm of their own political/religious community, even a kind of metaphysical ego-trip. A place in a communal history

was offered that had to be accepted and maintained if it was to make sense and to have an emotional impact. In this sense they did seek death, since through this death they achieved immortality (and self-importance) via the continuance of the community and their own place in its hall of martyrs and consciousness.

This may also help us understand something of the suicide bombers when they claim not to be committing suicide. (112) In Islam suicide is immoral, but by being called, acted upon by communal imperatives, and following the models of sacrifice of earlier Muslims they cease to be suicides and become martyrs in a way that most Muslims can empathise with. The suicide fits into a mentally conceived religious drama that has resonance within the community (as well as giving status to often remarkably ordinary people) and can thus effect an emotional pull and bonding beyond any rational calculation. The individual suicide bombers can thus see themselves and be seen by significant others not as acting individually but communally. In this way we can support Strenski's argument (113) about the social nature of their acts and the failure of an highly individualised culture to comprehend the meaning of their acts.

Most terrorists are not mindless or fanatics (114). What impels them is the threat they feel to the community they are so well integrated in to and consequently acts strongly on them. This is why so many terrorists come from a religious background. Also, religious symbolism and messages are formative in the way such people will conceive and interpret the world and in how they respond to those interpretations.

Sacrifice

Although self-sacrifice and martyrdom come together a true martyr does not seek out their own sacrifice. St Augustine himself thought self-sacrifice was only justified as:

> "voluntary death only when a divine order has been received" (115).

The actor has to feel obliged to immolate himself only as an holy order, thus removing the moral responsibility of the act from himself, also, it makes him feel good since God talking directly to one is good for the ego as it illustrates ones own Godly importance. And the moral confusion of their act is recalled in the hunger strikers own words as they did not at first see it in any way as a religious problem and thought that they were acting purely politically. However, when their own Catholic priests observed the religious immorality of their acts it caused considerable consternation, indicating the religious dimensions of their behaviour and politics and possibly deflating any self-importance. Consciously they were unaware of the religiosity of their acts and the religious dimensions of their politics.

Thus when asked, 'Is it true that only once the decision to fast to death was taken did the Christian myth of sacrifice came up?' they replied:

> "In the inside such an issue was not discussed until some senior Church figures condemned the hunger strike as suicide and morally wrong. We of course disagreed and would have searched scriptures to try to make a point. I did not as I was unsure of the morality but I disagreed with the rest of us who took such a stance. To give one's life for friends or country is seen as noble" (Liam McCloskey);

> "There is nothing theological about hunger strike in Ireland as far as I know. It is supremely political" (John Nixon).

The above replies indicate the conflation of politics with religion, also the immanence of religion in community and politics that we have already suggested. This is further reinforced by the way that the Protestant/Unionist community did not share any of the hunger strikers attitudes and were simply alienated from them.

The concept of such sacrifice is alien to Protestants. Catholic churches have a crucifix on the altar as central to their worship. The two main Protestant denominations in Northern Ireland are the Church of Ireland, who have only a plain cross on their altar, and the Presbyterians, the largest Protestant denomination and thus forming the dominant ethos of Protestant Northern Ireland. Presbyterians do not even have an altar, let alone a cross of any kind in their churches, the bible and the pulpit are the centre of their worship. Images of suffering are lacking. Self-sacrifice is a very Catholic ideal and one that dominates Irish nationalism. Similarly Strenski (116) notes the sacrificial frame of reference that dominates Islam and helps to impel suicide bombers. This makes them understandable to and reminds their audience of a set of ideals that is instantly comprehensible, yet alienates non-believers. It tightens the religio-communal bonds and enhances the ideal of struggle and continued battle to preserve the community and its interests.

Sacrifice and the holy community

The ideology of nationalism and patriotism is full of religious metaphor and symbolism. Indeed, the nation as Anderson (117) reminds us is an imagined community, it takes place at the mental and emotional level and takes on the essence of a metaphysical being. Meanwhile, other writers on nationalism, such as Smith or Hastings (118) openly refer to its religious origins, i.e. most nations form around a religious tradition or base. Consequently it is no surprise to find the rhetoric of nationalism abounds with religious terms, values, symbols and rituals and one of the strongest themes of nationalism is the blood sacrifice - giving ones life for the country, death for Fatherland or Motherland or the Party, martyrs for the nation as in Religion. Death, sacrifice for the greater good, is used as "an avenue by which certain rewards are obtained" (119). Indeed, most such ceremonies of remembrance take place in religious settings as part of religious services. And servicemen who 'gave' their lives are not treated as suicides but martyrs, their names inscribed on plaques in public places so that they can be publicly venerated in the heart of their communities.

Consequently the literature of war is awash with phrases such as, 'giving their lives for us'; 'we will not forget them'; 'the earth being made holy by the blood they shed' and God is constantly on 'our' side. It is however when stateless communities commit the same acts that we begin to ask questions. Although it

also has to be added that being stateless such 'community warriors' tend not to abide by the rules that states have laid down for state violence - a major factor in defining terrorism. Much of what they do may not be as abnormal as we like to think. This leads us on to much more complex questions of morality and the legitimacy of states, nations and state acts and the problems of communities that are unable to find a state outlet or representation. Once again these are problems that take one beyond the traditional individualistic and psychologically determined views of terrorist behaviour to looking at the socio-economic and political relations that govern our lives and the way emotional incidents affect them along with the emotional need to belong to communal identities and be held in some esteem within them.

Irish Catholic/nationalism, a minority community in a Protestant/Unionist state, achieved an added value for itself via the hunger strikers sacrifice, similarly, the same appears to happen amongst certain Islamic movements. Their nationalism or religious community was part of a process, of coming into being, a dream that could be realised, or brought to a more vivid consciousness, via their sacrificial acts. Thus in their minds it was a positive thing and not a senseless act, life for their group was easier to understand and given higher value and life was given to those who had already given their lives, thus tying all together in greater bonds of loyalty. The alienation of Protestants in Ireland merely reinforced their perception as not being really Irish, because they were not Catholic and unable to share in the heightened emotional sense of attachment and community represented in the symbolic sacrificial gesture.

This is important when looking at all nationalist and religious conflicts, since as Anderson (120) observes national identity is a result of mental process and association, of shared emotional responses at the un-thought out level of the irrational. Those not integrated into the community/religion will be seen as impure, even unholy and alien and therefore not worthy to receive the benefits of membership of the community, indeed they may even be regarded as posing a threat and thus need to be expelled. This brings one full-circle back to the functional purpose of the violent act - to expel the impure, hence the virulence of modern ethnic violence. Thus religious ideals of sacrifice and martyrdom can be seen to act in a very functional manner - to protect the *volk*. Religion is the symbolic representation that both reflects and impels the desire to keep out impurity. And the greatest sacrifices of all often involve the slaughter of the innocents, since the Gods require purity. Murdering a couple of hardened soldiers, trained for killing, would not have the relevant emotional impact. This may also help to explain the ethnic violence and cleansing in former Yugoslavia, which, again, the West totally failed to comprehend or effectively respond to.

The targeting of innocent civilians takes on an explanation that is comprehensible. The more pure the victim the greater the emotional impact, the more people respond at an un-thought out and irrational level. In this sense the thoughts and ideals are purer simply because they are un-thought out, pure emotion = pure spirit. Civilised industrial society is uniquely thought out and very rational; according to the ethnic canon it lacks pure spirit and emotional values, replacing them for calculation. This was a

key aspect of the thinking behind most of the ethnic nationalist movements stemming from the German Romantics (121*)* and was particularly influential in the ideological formation of modern Irish Nationalism (122).

The ideas of Romantic idealists had much in common with Durkheim's mechanical society, small, tight-knit communities, in which religion played a dominant role. A key factor for Durkheim was that in such communities the social relations were so intimate that they acted on the individual not only in a very determinate manner but also in a non-thought out way, at the emotional level not at the rational. This he contrasted with his organic society in which relations were more distant and extensive, requiring rational calculation. These he associated with industrial society where relations are built on an extensive division of labour and impersonal contract, which enabled the growth and development of the individual at the expense of close community ties. Community, symbolically represented in religion, was thus severely threatened by modernisation, emotional purity threatened by individual calculation for material gain. (123) Thus, it is not surprising that resistance to emotionally disturbing change should be expressed via religiously conceived and sanctioned actions.

The idea of the role of religion in society is not something unique to Durkheim and the relationship between socio-economic factors and religion is something common to most of the early social theorists, such as Weber's thesis on Capitalism and Protestantism. (124) Hence the importance we attach to contrasting the reaction of Irish Protestants to Irish Catholics and the fact that Protestant Ulster was the only industrialised part of Ireland, whose economy was bound to the rest of the UK. Again, this may well be analogous to the situation regarding Islam and the Palestine-Israel conflict and Strenski's analysis. Islamic societies generally are characterised by their pre-modern socio-economic structures and relations, industrialisation has not taken root in the vast majority of Islamic states. Indeed it is modern industrial society and values that are most opposed by Islam and whose symbols (e.g. the Twin Towers of capitalist usury and material greed) are the main targets for its terrorist violence.

However, we would also stress that the Palestine-Israel conflict has dimensions to it that are not analogous in terms of the objective politico-economic situation of the relevant populations. What we would stress is the importance of the socio-economic and communal factors behind the role of religion and the importance of social relations and the way these take on religious forms of representation and consequently religious expression. Religion then provides the narrative for earthly behaviour and how to respond to earthly conditions and problems. This is an area grossly under-researched by students of terrorism. It is an area that provides for a level of understanding lacking in much of the psychologically based and individualistic rational-calculation based analysis that seeks only to understand according to dominant western values or the actors own literal words. It may even give some substance to Huntingdon's *Clash of Civilisations* thesis, (125) but at a deeper and different level than he appreciates.

Sacrifice and Church

Thus martyrdom needs to be better understood as guiding metaphor and as Bataille and Girard observe:

"the most important act of *exchange* within tribal societies was the act of sacrifice" (126)

We may now see the hunger strikers making such an offering (also suicide bombers), an exchange of their individual lives for the communal life (and their own immortality), even though they did not see it that way themselves. Thus when asked if they were making "an offering to a god" (127) they replied:

> "No. It was for political reasons a sacrifice for comrades, for the cause, for the people of Ireland" (Liam McCloskey).

Of course 'people of Ireland' takes no account of Protestants.

We can now understand the hunger strikers better since we are now able to interpret God as their community, and their politics as a metaphor for their religion.

And when asked if they could be seen as offering an act that might provide "people with a recognition of their continuity in death" (128), in other words eternal life? The response was:

> "How each individual formed a hope/opinion on that concept is something I will not guess at. I hoped for the mercy of God. Before John McElwee died the gospel reading had been about Jesus walking on the water and Peter coming to meet him. John told Michael Devine before death that he felt like Peter about to walk into the arms of Jesus. Michael was said to have gained faith from John's example" (Liam McCloskey).

Both of McCloskey's replies are consistent with someone who conflates their politics with religion in a way they do not recognise. Such a closed society, with its exclusive set of social relations can be seen in the Catholic/Nationalist one in Northern Ireland, or an Islamic one in the Middle East, indeed anywhere not yet integrated in to the modern (industrial) world. None of which is necessarily to deny the existence of real problems with an objective nature, merely to say that the way they are expressed and comprehended is via a religious metaphor due to the closed nature of their communities. But this then poses the problem of comprehension and problem resolution when the metaphor is not understood and thus prevents rational analysis and response on the part of actors at the time.

Both hunger strikers were further asked to comment on Goldstein's views on inevitability and divine will in relation to suicide:

> "If the deaths of Saul and others in the Hebrew Bible who take their lives are supernaturally foreordained, what of the principle of inevitability? Does "suicide" in such cases become a mere carrying out of the "divine" sentence? What if one's physical condition is such that one has no chance to live on anyway?" (129).

The responses indicate that they were familiar with the relevant biblical passages, thus indicating a religious knowledge base in their own minds, whilst previously disavowing religious intent. They were able to interpret the problems in a religiously correct manner and in so doing denied personal responsibility for their acts in a way that would be consistent with our analysis of them acting out a religious metaphor:

> "In Saul's case he had more than one choice in life and took a series of actions that were not right even when warned of the consequences by Prophets "foreordained", inevitably are philosophical concepts that are too complex to analyse now ... If it is known that you are about to undergo a slow painful death, you may, in desperation, decide to take control of your own death by whatever means available as with Saul" (Liam McCloskey);

> "In Modern Christian Philosophy there is no physical reward in "heaven" or earth for sacrifice on behalf of others. In fact nobody knows what is beyond the threshold of death. That's the frightening prospect of it all. But martyrdom in Ireland grasps other rewards, immortality via enshrinement in history myth and memory. This is eternal but only in the eyes of those who want to remember you" (John Nixon).

Nixon, seems to grasp the idea of immortality in the communal context, what we would suggest is that he does not grasp the religious dimension of that community and the symbolism it employs. Meanwhile, McCloskey clearly saw his fate as beyond him, perhaps only the manner of his death at the last was in his hands. Impelled by an higher force of religion/community and in small tight-knit communities the social force of close relationships can be very deterministic and felt as a force above and beyond the individual. (130) This religious dimension, despite earlier denials of being religious, is revealed in their attitudes to immortality and eternal life. Thus:

> "Eternal life is a concept to which I gave some thought during the blanket protest. Is life to be born, grow up, marry, have children, then die with no further meaning? Questions such as this eventually convinced me that life had a "higher purpose" and faith in God grew with Bible reading and prayer. In short, I believe in eternal Life (Liam McCloskey);

Although Nixon was more ambiguous, his response does not indicate the rejection of the idea:

> "What is eternal life?" (John Nixon)

This shows a concern for the idea of eternal life that is compatible with a religious/communal message. Both can be regarded as having an interest in eternal life and self-sacrifice would be a means of achieving this. And within our frame of analysis eternal life would be dependent upon the continuity of the community, which is under threat and can be saved via their sacrifice. Martyrdom is the sacrifice required for community, it heightens communal awareness and recalls individuals to the collective interest in which eternity is found and ensures individual immortality and status.

As Droge and Tabor point out:

> "God desires martyrdom", it is a sure means of salvation, it was necessary to achieve immortality (131). Origen saw martyrdom as a *second* baptism and voluntary martyrdom was believed to be necessary for eternal life (132):

> "Behind every description of martyrdom lay the example of Jesus. Martyrdom was believed ... to be a necessary re-enactment of his death ... Death was a release" (133).

The Christian message is about sacrifice, especially in the Catholic version, but so are most religions. But the story of Christ on the cross is particularly virulent because of its imagery and self-sacrifice at the very centre of Catholic worship. It is this story which is being played out in the minds and actions

of the hunger strikers, which in turn is a symbolic metaphor for their Catholic/nationalist community and threat to its existence.

As Arthur observed:

> "Irish political violence of the past twenty years moved from the extra-institutional protest of the civil rights' movement through a politics of oppression to a politics of sacrifice in search of a logical project" (134).

The point that Arthur may not grasp is that the politics of sacrifice does not need a logical project, other than the community, it is often enough in itself, since its emotional impact keeps the community together. This is witnessed in the rise of Sinn Fein as the political representatives of the Catholic/nationalist community. Their success stems from the hunger strikes and can be measured in the massive increase in the sectarian divide in Northern Ireland. Protestants and Catholics always had a sectarian divide, it is now almost total. Indeed when the current troubles began, one of the features of life in Northern Ireland was that old sectarian divisions were crumbling and many Catholics began to accept the state. (135) Such moves could have threatened the existence of a separate Catholic/Nationalist community with its separate values.

The past 35 years of 'troubles' may not have witnessed any significant move towards an United Ireland, indeed they may almost have impeded them as Republican terror tactics increasingly alienated Protestants and there has been a marked distancing of the Republic from Northern Ireland. Indeed, many Republican tactics appear actually to run counter to their long-term goals. However, Republicans have succeeded in reinforcing communal divisions and in maintaining an uniquely Catholic/nationalist community in 'splendid isolation', uncorrupted by alien influences and with greater barriers to integration than ever before. But this may well be the point. As the forces of socio-economic change led inexorably to greater integration and mixing, with an inevitable loss of unique communal identity, continuity and values violence has been able to reverse that process for a purer inbreeding. To maintain this purity, against such inexorable forces will thus require constant resort to violence in the future.

This point is reinforced by the timing of the hunger strikes (1980-81) when many Catholics were questioning just what the purpose of the PIRA campaign was. (136) On purely rational grounds many Catholics questioned the benefits of an united Ireland; and when viewed from the cold light of Protestant, industrial values, there is little rational to much Republicanism. (Similarly when one looks at the benefits of western industrial society from its own rational values it is difficult to see what any Islamic activist can possibly want in rejecting it.) Now we may have identified the point, lying not in those rational, industrial and individualistic values, but in the irrational, emotional values of community that provide for non-material needs. These latter may be much more ephemeral but are no less real for all that, and these are human needs that lie in the social sphere of community. They refer to the satisfaction of the psychological need for social relations of a particular kind that meet the needs for identity, belonging, place, role, esteem and status as well as material rewards. In this western, industrial society may be poorly equipped to respond.

Once again this is not to deny the existence of objective and material factors, especially in the case of Palestine. Nor do we suggest that the material and non-material are not necessarily closely related, in a religious community knowledge of religion provides economic security as much as emotional security. However, when looking at the broader picture of Islamic fundamentalism the situation may be analogous to Northern Ireland, or even the Basque Lands. (137) Here the enmity to the 'other' often defies simple rational analysis either in terms of individual abnormality or in terms of what the 'other' has objectively done. The reason lies in the social relations that find a religious representation and metaphor in the minds of a population that is often the un-realised target of the activists. In all three cases one can identify the incursion of modern industrial socio-economic relations and values in to highly traditional pre-industrial societies.

Implications for government

Most important is to re-emphasise the social and redirect our attention away from the individual, and along with this to recall the importance of the irrational and emotional as well as the rational and objective. Second, is to recognise the important role of religion in people's lives, often at a sub-conscious level, and also playing on the irrational needs of life. Third, to recall the great emphasis earlier social scientists placed on the relationship between the social and religious, particularly with reference to small communities in which religion played a pivotal role not only in daily life and worship but also in the general socialisation of its members. In the modern scientific world with its material consumerism it is often easy to overlook the importance of religion. It is also more often forgotten to what an extent science itself is a product of religion, the Protestant tradition in particular reflects this. (138) Both religion and science stress the pursuit of truth and both rely on a strong communal sense of shared endeavour. Many of the early scientists, such as Priestly and Franklin were deeply religious men who saw in science the pursuit of God's truth and eternal laws. The same can be said for modern economics, 'the dismal science', both Francis Hutcheson and Adam Smith were staunch Presbyterians and both held the chair in moral philosophy, not economics, at Glasgow University. (139) And science breeds its own community and values, it also has its own economic and social applications in modern industry that make pre-industrial socio-economic organisation and values redundant. Industry is the appliance of science and was the starting point for modernisation, secularisation and the decline of traditional religion.

These developments are important although their effects may be more long term than short, thus governments may have to re-adjust to more long term policies, not knee-jerk reactions to terrorist crises. If the aim of the terrorist is to out-suffer governments then governments must be prepared to out-suffer terrorists. Most important here is recognising the role of community, not only building them up, but also making sure they are not too impervious to change and adjustment as well as integration between different ones. Similarly communities need to contain all, not, as in Northern Ireland, leaving a minority out to build its own community, which is then perceived as hostile. A successful and peaceful nation or province needs to be one community in which all can share a common metaphor and

recognise shared symbols with a common meaning. This is fairly standard in the literature on nationalism, yet seems blissfully ignored in the case of Northern Ireland.

Currently multi-culturalism is in vogue amongst western thinkers. This may be a mistake if it permits the existence of perceived hostile communities within a larger one. Governments may need to ensure integration by creating larger, alternative, inclusive communities, which subsume older ones, also communities able to effectively replace those values and ideals that were met in traditional religious ones. But these are long term considerations, although vital to the ultimate resolution of violent conflicts.

In the more short-term realm of immediate counter-terrorist response the important thing is to break the connection between the individual activist and their community. There is a need isolate the terrorist so that the emotional, social and psychological relations that bind them and the community are broken and the metaphors not read and the sacrifices not applauded nor the symbols understood. Equally, when security forces are responding to such violence they need to be sensitive to the unrealised message they may convey in the community. Loosely this brings one to the idea of 'psy-ops'. But this has to work two ways, drawing the community closer to the relevant authorities in terms of policies of integration in to the larger community and, second, to make the terrorist look alien in the eyes of the community they come from. In these ways one breaks the social relations that affect the emotional and psychological ties, one ensures that the metaphor the activist is acting out is not one that will be understood by the mass of the community. This in turn implies a low level and long term policy of social control and manipulation of important communal messages and channels of communication.

However, given the importance of the emotional and moral factors attaching to traditional communal societies, for which acts of great sacrifice are committed, it is important that the manipulation is of an high moral and emotional character. New messages must be grounded in real values and benefits that can be clearly seen and appreciated. Thus simple psychological manipulation won't work, it requires morally valid and legitimate values to build on which in turn requires an understanding of social relations and process, and also of material interest and needs related to individual and communal welfare and the individual-community relationship.

One of the key aspects of a terrorist's strategy is their ability to suffer more than their opponents, to shed their blood and to sacrifice themselves for the cause. This implies that an effective government response is the ability to out suffer the suffering terrorist. It also implies that shooting and bombing them is not a very good tactic, indeed it may actually play into their hands since it increases the blood sacrifice. This supports our argument in favour of an effective strategy based on a social response, long-term and disciplined and built on an in-depth analysis of fundamental causes and an appreciation of the social dynamics and moral concerns that usually lie behind most instances of political violence.

Conclusion

Of course we realise that there are many other aspects to any conflict, thus loss of land and property is a major factor in Palestine and the important role of culture to master economic functions and thus earn a living are crucial in nationalist disputes. However, we are concentrating on just one aspect, that of comprehension between different groups and the failure to appreciate different meanings between cultures. Specifically, we are arguing that religion is not just about a set of teachings but that it is often the core for an entire culture and that different cultures entail different meanings, values, legitimacy and authority. These are symbolised in different ways and transmit imperatives to act for the individual that may not be understood outside of a particular culture. Further, we argue, in line with much classical sociology and modern theories of nationalism, that religion is also a metaphor for community. Thus communal/religious symbols will impel individuals to act in a way that conforms to communal/religious values and functional needs for community maintenance.

The social dimension is crucial and frequently ignored (reflecting 'our' western cultural bias) by an over emphasis on the rational individual. Non-western, pre-modern and pre-industrial society do not have the same concept of the individual, they place greater emphasis on the communal and prioritise it over the individual. Thus clan, family, community or ethnic group are given an higher priority and values are evolved that may well seem incomprehensible to westerners. The typical western response to this is to seek individual traits and inadequacies to explain the behaviour of those (terrorists) who do not act according to our (individual) values. This is illustrated in much of the literature on profiling that ends up quite bemused that terrorists should display no unique characteristics, at least in the psychological sense. This reflects our own social bias and our failure to appreciate that our individual values are themselves a product of society. Thus we try to transpose our values on to other societies and then wonder why it produces such little valid or useful knowledge.

Again, in the west, as we have become increasingly secularised and individualised we fail to grasp the role of religion as anything other than a life-style choice or something to do with personal salvation in the after-life. The rest of the world is not like this. Religion plays a major and central role in the daily life and understandings of the non-western and non-industrialised world. This neither makes it right nor wrong, but is merely a statement of fact. Given the centrality of religion in their lives it is not surprising that those motivated by non-industrial values should be impelled by religious values often radically different from ours. And if religion is a metaphor for community then it is no surprise that forces seen as disrupting the community should be attacked (in self-defence) via the medium of religion.

Thus when western social norms and values are imported into non-western societies they can be seen as highly destructive of prised values and ways of life. Thus freedom and democracy, rational calculation of individual self-interest, science and open debate, even individual psychology, as we know it can be seen as evil in a society where conformity and communal ties are highly valued. Often the communal ties are highly valued for quite functional, economic reasons; poor peasants can often only survive by combining together at all times and their religious organisation is frequently also a

health and welfare system and form of economic control and organisation, as it was in medieval Christendom. It is western society itself that is seen as the violent force of disruption, no matter what material benefits we appear to offer to our own satisfaction. Consequently we need to better understand the social dynamics that surround terrorism and impel it if we are successfully to respond to it.

In general we may sum up by saying that much terrorism is the result of a reaction against modernisation in the form of industrialisation and the spread of its values and the resulting social disruption and disorganisation from it that is the problem. It is loss of close knit community and its psychologically comforting sense of place, status, belonging etc, along with a known narrative (religion) from which to interpret the world around one which causes acute anxiety and a genuine sense of loss that has to be addressed. Within this one may find specific individuals who are more likely to be affected more severely than others and so become communal representatives for a general malaise. But generally it is a problem of modernisation, with which 19th century Europe was well familiar and gave birth to the modern terrorist. This is illustrated in the location of most successful terrorist campaigns in backward rural areas (Ireland, Basque Lands and Islamic States) which are having to face the incursion of modern society in to traditional cultures where religion plays a central role in local communities

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