

crushed or buried more than 10,000 people, proved “a watershed for civil society,” Bilello writes in *Current History* (Feb. 1996). The disaster overwhelmed the government. In the aftermath of the quake, many neighborhood associations, environmental and human rights organizations, and “good government” groups sprang up.

The emergence of “ever more independent voices, pressure groups, and grass-roots organizations,” according to Daniel Franklin, Washington bureau chief for the *Economist* (Oct. 28, 1995) is “one of the most significant things happening in Mexico today.” It has received added impetus, he says, from the anger of the majority of Mexicans who are neither the extremely wealthy (“usually white and living behind guarded walls”) nor the extremely poor (“people with next to nothing, mostly rural and Indian”). The Mexicans in the middle, he says, “aspire to the sorts of things middle-class people want everywhere: safe streets, clean air, a decent education for their children, a chance to get ahead.” But they are not well-off, their incomes have fallen in the last 15 years, and they are seething with anger at the government.

“Mexicans are becoming increasingly

intolerant of the abuses of one-party rule,” Franklin writes. “They are insulted by the electoral fraud and indignant about the repeated crises. In particular, they are fed up with the pervasive corruption which they think lies behind much of Mexico’s current mess.”

Recent Mexican presidents, most notably Carlos Salinas (now living in self-exile, under a cloud of suspicion of having been involved in various shady dealings), have been technocrats favoring economic reform without political change. “This will no longer do: the one-party edifice is crumbling at the foundation,” Franklin says.

Mexico is indeed becoming more like the United States, he believes, and, without losing its “Mexicanness,” it must keep on doing so—by proceeding along the path of reform. “In economics, it means keeping faith with the market and, through [the North American Free Trade Agreement], integrating more closely with America. . . . In politics, it means reform leading to full democracy and to a Mexican constitution that begins to work in practice more like the American one it resembles on paper.”

The Ulster Obstacle

“. . . And Ulster Will Be Right,” by Peregrine Worsthorpe, in *The National Interest* (Summer 1996), 1112 16th St. N.W., Ste. 540, Washington, D.C. 20036.

Whether peace comes to Northern Ireland, many people seem to think, is up to the Irish Republican Army (IRA) and the British government. Not so, argues Worsthorpe, a columnist for the *Sunday Telegraph* (London). It is mainly up to Ulster’s Protestants. “IRA terrorism gets all the publicity,” he points out, “which makes it seem as if Southern Irish nationalism is the irresistible force and Ulster nationalism the moveable object.” The reverse, he says, is nearer the truth.

For the Protestant majority in Northern Ireland, Worsthorpe says, “the thought of being governed by the Republic of Ireland is more than flesh and blood can be expected to bear.” This state of mind is deeply rooted, he says, going back to the royal establishment in 1609 of a self-consciously Protestant settlement in Ulster whose loyalty could be relied upon if the Catholic powers of France and Spain tried to use Ireland to force Britain back into the arms of Rome. Eighty-one years

later, the Catholic powers did try to use Ulster as a base, helping Britain’s deposed Catholic king James II to land an army there—but the Ulster Protestants heroically held his forces at bay for more than 100 days, until the fleet of Britain’s new king, William III, arrived. “Many nationalisms rest on less glorious folk memories than those of Protestant Ulster,” Worsthorpe observes.

Unification would suddenly introduce into the Republic of Ireland, which today is “a happy, tranquil society, at ease with itself as it has never been before,” one million “alien and hostile” Ulstermen, Worsthorpe points out. “The only result of pacifying the IRA, by giving them a united Ireland, would be to produce an Ulster National Army which would bomb Dublin and Cork instead of—as is the IRA’s way—Belfast, Londonderry, Birmingham, and London,” he argues.

Most Irish have abandoned the cause of a united Ireland, Worsthorpe says, and do not

support the outlawed IRA, which is a smaller minority today than it was in 1920 when Ireland (except for Ulster) gained its independence from Britain. "Only the American Irish, far enough away to escape the bloody consequences, feel inclined to carry on banging the drum."

But what of Ulster's half-million Catholics, subjected for decades to discrimination? Worsthorne contends that in the quarter-century since Catholic grievances exploded into violent demonstrations and direct British rule of the province was reimposed, reforms have brought an end to discrimination. The Ulster Catholics now get "a square deal," he says, and are better off economically than they would be as citizens of the Irish Republic.

Yet unification remains the official aim of the Irish government, which, Worsthorne says, "does precious little" to control the IRA terrorists. As long as influential Irish Americans continue to beat

the drum for unification, he believes, there is little chance of any Irish government "daring to sound more muffled."

A Revolution's Victims



Thousands of photographs, including the one above and others published in see (1996, Issue 2:1), have been discovered at a Phnom Penh prison where "enemies of the state" were taken during Pol Pot's reign of terror in Cambodia. In some cases, says Australian writer David Chandler, the prisoners in the photographs had just had their blindfolds removed. "As they stare at their captors, they have no idea where they are, who is taking their picture or what will happen to them. None of them ever were released."

Tears for Liberia

"Madness in Monrovia" by James F. Joyce, in *Commonweal* (June 1, 1996), 15 Dutch St., New York, N.Y. 10038.

Hailed for more than a century as Africa's only democracy, Liberia now is in the grip of a seemingly interminable civil war. Since 1990, some 150,000 lives have been lost in a land of only 2.5 million. The historical roots of the conflict lie in the country's flawed practice of democracy, argues Joyce, a Jesuit who has worked in the capital of Monrovia and with Liberian refugees in Guinea and Ivory Coast.

Initially settled in 1821 as a colony for

freed and fugitive U.S. slaves—a project carried out by antislavery groups such as the American Colonization Society, with the aid of the U.S. government—Liberia became a republic, with a constitutional, democratic government, in 1847. Ironically, Joyce writes, "a government run by redeemed slaves evolved into a society that repressed its 'second-class citizens,' the indigenous ethnic groups of the interior." These include the Krahn, one of the larger groups; the Kpelle