

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

and Mandingo, found both in Liberia and Guinea; and the Gio, Mano, and Kru, who live on both sides of the border with the Ivory Coast. Although vastly outnumbered, the Americo-Liberians held power. One political party, the True Whig Party, prevailed; others were declared illegal.

In 1980, Master Sergeant Samuel Kenyon Doe, a member of the Krahn, overthrew the government of William Tolbert, Jr., the last Americo-Liberian president. The coup was popular at first, Joyce says, “but Doe’s decade of leadership was marked by mistakes and atrocities.”

Doe’s worst mistake, Joyce contends, was “ethnicizing” the armed forces, replacing the Americo-Liberians who had dominated the upper ranks with Krahn people. “The armed forces . . . behaved more like a faction than a national army,” Joyce says. “Doe divided ethnic groups as never before.” After a failed

coup attempt in 1985, his armed forces slaughtered thousands of ethnic rivals.

The nation descended into chaos. The National Patriotic Front of Liberia—largely composed of indigenous Gio and Mano people, and led by Charles Ghankey Taylor, an Americo-Liberian—was the first group to rise against Doe. It swept through the interior and was poised in 1990 to take Monrovia. But a West African peacekeeping force, composed of troops from Nigeria, Ghana, and four other nations, was then deployed to secure the capital. Despite its presence, a breakaway rebel leader, Prince Yeduo Johnson, and his followers captured Doe and tortured and executed him.

Since then, despite at least seven peace accords, fighting among the eight warring factions has continued. “Many observers,” writes Joyce, “believe that the violence will continue until only one warlord is left standing.”

The End of the Iranian Dream?

“Dateline Tehran: A Revolution Implodes” by Robin Wright, in *Foreign Policy* (Summer 1996), Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, 2400 N St. N.W., Washington, D.C. 20037–1153.

Seventeen years after the revolution, the Islamic Republic of Iran has fallen on hard times. Indeed, argues Wright, author of *In the Name of God: The Khomeini Decade* (1989), “the Islamic regime can no longer hope to survive over the long term under the economic and political system established after the 1979 revolution.”

Iran’s population has almost doubled since the revolution—from 34 million to nearly 65 million. Oil revenues have dropped about two-thirds, driven down by falling prices. The country’s oil industry is badly in need of modernization, Wright says, as is industry in general. While the regime poured billions of petrodollars into the military during the 1980–88 war with Iraq, it left industry to stagnate. Today, up to two-thirds of Iran’s factories run at limited capacity because they lack raw materials, spare parts, and new equipment. Unemployment has climbed to 30 percent, and among those aged 15 to 24, it is twice that.

“Three groups vital to the regime’s survival—the young, the middle class, and the *mostazafin*, the oppressed in whose name the revolution was undertaken—have soured on the revolution,” Wright says. Many *bazaaris*

(merchants), while traditionally religious, are also disenchanted. Taxi drivers in Tehran “often refuse rides to the clergy, and some even run fingers across their throats to show contempt,” Wright observes. The mullahs are the butt of many jokes.

Abdol Karim Soroush, the country’s leading philosopher and an early supporter of the revolution, has argued, Wright says, for “an Islamic democracy not imposed from the top but chosen by the majority of the people, both believers and nonbelievers.” He also contends that the clergy should have no special rights. “Soroush has such a large following that leading Iranian officials now openly attack his ideas in public speeches,” Wright notes.

Iranian president Ali Akbar Hashemi Rafsanjani, elected after Ayatollah Ruhollah Khomeini’s death in mid-1989, made efforts at economic and other reform during his first four-year term, but has been thwarted since by a conservative Majlis (parliament), led by Speaker Ali Akbar Nateq-Nouri. He is one of three conservatives seeking to succeed Rafsanjani next year. None of the candidates, Wright adds, are talking about the kinds of changes needed to reverse Iran’s slide.