

Talks resume in Northern Ireland on peace, self-rule

Continued from page 5
tarianism."

The killing came as a shock since women are rarely targeted in the conflict. It raised fears that Republicans would retaliate in another bloody round of sectarian "tit-for-tat" killings.

But it was the Protestant faction that made the next strike, slaying a man believed to be Catholic at a community center.

Sinn Fein, the political wing of the Irish Republican Army fighting to oust Britain from Northern Ireland, has been excluded from the talks because it re-

fuses to renounce violence.

"Talks without Sinn Fein are like Hamlet without the prince," said Sinn Fein's leader Gerry Adams.

The talks were chaired by Britain's new Northern Ireland minister, Sir Patrick Mayhew. Participating were the two Protestant Unionist parties, which favor continued links with Britain; the moderate Social Democratic and Labor Party, a mostly Catholic organization; and the middle-of-the-road Alliance Party.

The last attempt at self-government collapsed in 1974 when a Protestant-inspired general strike brought Northern Ireland to a halt and London decided to take up the reins of power once more.

Northern Ireland has become one of history's most intractable problems.

Enjoying a 2-1 majority in the province, Northern Ireland's 1 million Protestants have no wish to join a Catholic-dominated Irish Republic. In a united Ireland they would be outnumbered 4-1.

The North's 500,000 nationalists — who launched a civil-rights movement for better jobs, housing and education in 1969 — aspire to national unity, but as a first step want Protestants to agree to share power in a province wearied by constant conflict.

After the meeting, a U.S. organization whose leader participated in the talks said that unbiased hiring and broad-based negotiations are two central elements of a lasting solution to Northern Ireland's troubles.

"All sides recognize that one of the underlying causes of the civil unrest is

unemployment," said a statement by the Irish American Unity Conference, headquartered in Washington, D.C. The group's president, Robert Linnon, attended the Belfast talks.

The statement also said that "critics have claimed that no peaceful, lasting solution is possible without the participation of all parties to the conflict in the negotiations, i.e., Sinn Fein, the legal political wing of the IRA."

It noted that the unemployment among Catholics is more than double that of Protestants.

"If this imbalance is to be eradicated via attrition and turnover, the unrest will continue indefinitely," the conference said. "The only solution is job creation to eliminate the option of discrimination."

The conference is ready to "assist with job creation efforts, but only on the condition that these jobs be awarded in a non-discriminatory manner."

Referring to his sessions in Belfast, Linnon said that "as a non-partisan American human rights organization, the Irish American Unity Conference is the ideal group to meet with these leaders to have an open discussion of their views on Northern Ireland."



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