

ONLY HE IS A MARXIST who extends the recognition of the class struggle to the recognition of the dictatorship of the proletariat. This is the touchstone on which the real understanding and recognition of Marxism is to be tested.
V.I. Lenin

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Leninist perspective on triumphant Irish national-liberation struggle Part 4 (February 1996 – August 1997)

Right and 'left' critics of Irish national-liberation struggle have history against them. The occupied colony of non-existent 'Northern Ireland' is a doomed imperialist anachronism which cannot last. Fake-'Marxist' critics are ludicrously missing the point.

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The Irish national liberation struggle's decision to resume its war for full independence from British colonial domination over any part of the island, continues to disorient bourgeois thinking of all kinds.

The IRA's confident resolve to end the ceasefire and to again take on the full might of the British imperialist military, police, and security forces has

especially disturbed the critical realism of 'reformists' in Britain, and the fake 'Marxism' of the petty-bourgeois 'revolutionary' sects.

The conceited arrogance of these comfortable and complacent circles has never believed that what have often been dismissed as nothing but a 'bunch of murdering bog-trotters' could become a partial instrument of

significant historical change.

If 'reformist' decades of 'Official Opposition' to Tory imperialist government could do nothing at all to improve or disrupt London's obviously failed Ireland policy, then what could mere 'handfuls of desperate gunmen' achieve, it was assumed, – especially when they had once been universally dismissed as just 'racketeering criminals' and were treated as such, denied any political-prisoner status or prisoner-of-war status at all.

Least of all could the putrid 'progressive intelligentsia' of Britain conceive that the tiny national liberation struggle could be capable of the only really farsighted, magnanimous, and truly civilised behaviour in this whole affair by helping to get imperialism off the hook by declaring a ceasefire in the first place. The IRA's peace-talks

proposal was just dismissed as 'defeat', 'capitulation', or 'realisation of the hopelessness of their aims' by all strands of British bourgeois opinion, – right, centre, and Trotskyite.

The ending of the cease-fire a week ago left all, & bogus 'Marxism', embarrassingly exposed as understanding nothing of the national liberation struggle in Ireland, or anything about the international crisis of the imperialist system either (as examined in the previous *Review* - see *EPSR* Book Vol 22 *Ireland Part 3*).

But the sectarianism of the middle-class fake-'left' in Britain never ceases to astonish. Instead of licking their wounds and trying to learn something, these anti-communist 'revolutionaries' have merely started repeating their stupidity.

The national-liberation struggle really is just 'defeated despair', they have resumed saying; and beneath a pretence of defending the IRA's right to fight, they just repeat their old criticism of it all as 'futile', and refuse to help expose the obstacles to Sinn Féin's anti-imperialist stand.

Under a superficial headline appearance of cheering on the

national liberation struggle to new defiance and to routing its critics in the wake of the Docklands explosion, the 'Leninist' rump who captured the CPGB title (Communist Party of Great Britain, now defunct) have really only told IRA/Sinn Féin not to bother, thus emphasising their inability to understand the international class struggle in all its complexities, and the cosmetic shallowness of their ultra-left sloganising, much like the Sparts.

These Trot CPGB anti-communists only ever lived inside the Eurocommunist swamp for so long, without suffocating, because their feigned 'pro-Soviet' and 'pro-Lenin' protestations were as phoney as Trotskyism's always have been throughout its existence (see ILWP (EPSR) Books vols 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, etc).

These petty-bourgeois posturers loathe and despise the historical reality of the dictatorship of the proletariat as much as any armchair socialist 'intellectual' philistines have ever done. At any crisis moment when the only actual workers state power that has ever existed was under ferocious bourgeois imperialist propaganda and subversion pressure (such as the 1980 CIA/Vatican 'Solidarnosc' bogus 'trade-union' counter-revolutionary disruption of the Polish workers state), — this Islington-acceptable brand of 'Marxism-Leninism' always made sure that its basic 'pro-freedom' (i.e. anti-communist) sentiments were well understood.

Despite copious volumes of nauseating 'left' verbal diarrhoea, these 'Leninist' frauds could never bring themselves to say that they wanted the dictatorship of the proletariat in Poland to ruthlessly crush the obscene 'Solidarnosc' petty bourgeois degeneracy.

Now, similarly, they cannot bring themselves to say that they want the Irish national liberation struggle to complete its toppling of British colonialism in the Occupied Zone of Ireland, — in spite of its 'New fight for Ireland' and 'For the IRA, against the British state' headlines in their Feb 15 *Weekly Worker* issue, because once again they don't really believe in it.

In both cases, although relating to vastly different sectors of historical significance for the international class struggle, the reason these Trot sectarians cannot grasp the objective necessity of the situation (if it can be achieved by the revolutionary forces available) is because they only really ever listen to their own subjective idealist self-

promotion.

They had no sincere commitment to keeping Polish workers-state power going in 1980 because they dream exclusively of the 'perfect revolution' somewhere, someday, which will not suffer the obvious defects and mistakes of the postwar proletarian dictatorship in Poland, or the long history of revisionist crimes and difficulties of the USSR, etc, — a 'perfect revolution' which, of course, only they could ever lead (or people like them.)

These Trot- 'Leninist' poseurs similarly have no real stake in an IRA/Sinn Féin national liberation victory over British imperialism because their actual ignorance of Marxist philosophy means they can see no real historical value in such a triumph. Such a thing just does not exist for them, — so tunnel visioned are they in their petty-bourgeois fantasies of leading "really worthwhile socialist revolutions" everywhere.

Extricated from all their 'right-on' verbal camouflage of the 'up the revolution' variety, the basic class pessimism (petty bourgeois) of these 'revolutionary' fantasists can be established from their own words, taken from their two frontpage statements:

Since the collapse of the Soviet Union, liberation struggles and hot spots throughout the world are being resolved in imperialism's favour.

The failure of Irish republicans to take any other course is a failure of the whole of the working class oppressed under the same British state.

It is this failure that has left republicans in the north facing monolithic opposition, with all bourgeois parties singing with one voice, and no independent working class voice to be heard.

This failure has meant that it is not just the republican struggle upon which imperialism is wreaked its revenge. The British state has wielded its weapons of oppression, steeled in the north of Ireland, against the working class on its mainland. Troops against the miners in 1984-85, police tactics against anything from anti-poll tax demonstrators to anti-road and even anti-live animal export demonstrators. Repressive legislation, honed against revolutionaries in the SIZZ

Dissected in this way from their deliberately confusing overall gobbledegook, they clearly paint a picture of the IRA's ending of the ceasefire with the Docklands bomb being nothing more than just another insignificant incident in a historical pattern they regard as already well entrenched and unaffected by purely nationalist aspirations, — (as they view the IRA/Sinn Féin fight.)

As these anti-communists see it, "imperialism has got the whip hand worldwide at the moment; the nationalist attempt to influence the historical outcome

via pressure on the bourgeoisie is doomed; the Docklands bomb was just another part of this same hopeless peace process; and the only real way for Irish national-liberation interests to extricate themselves from a losing scenario is to join forces now with such revolutionary hotshots as the CPGB and go directly for a communist overthrow of imperialism in Britain and Ireland."

It would, of course, be the EPSR's own wish to join in such a happy dream, but meanwhile the immediate practical way forward is at least to make a correct analysis of objective reality, — the international balance of class forces and the decisive movements within it, — not to sow total confusion by a complete misreading of what is going on.

The first crucial requirement is to grasp the nature of the epoch we are living in. Far from it being the time when everything is resolved in imperialism's favour, it is just the opposite, — the epoch of terminal imperialist crisis.

Purely temporarily, a brief 'new world order' period is taking place which gives a superficial appearance of US imperialism easily dominating every situation with its bullying 'unchallengeable' military and economic might.

But the immediate obvious reality of this 'order' is total unsatisfactory chaos, — and underneath it all, an inter-imperialist crisis of unprecedented proportions is relentlessly brewing, — as the more honest critical-realist outpourings of the bourgeoisie itself, of course, continuously confirm (see endless past *Reviews*). The artificial postwar inflationary boom and arms race can only result in eventual all-out trade war, markets collapse, and warmongering confrontation between all the great 'free-world' powers (and their various areas of stooge influence.)

The revisionist self-liquidation in the former Soviet Union is part of the crisis of bourgeois anti-Leninist ideology, the crisis of international class-collaboration, — not a crisis of anti-imperialist struggle. The Cold War 'balance of class forces' was always essentially a phony balance at root because the revisionist Moscow ideology no longer believed in anti-imperialist revolution as the essential way forward for civilisation (see ILWP Books vol 13 — *Gorbachevism*).

Liquidating that colossal revisionist influence on the world (especially on these anti-

communist CPGBers), exposing it as a 'Leninist' fraud (Gorbachev used to quote Lenin too, the posturing oaf), — was an essential step for helping revive international revolutionary science, a step which should have been fought for not through the Trot Eurocommunist anti-Soviet anti-Leninist continuous treachery to the East European workers states in their difficulties, but through unconditional support for the proletarian dictatorships, only criticising (from a communist angle) Moscow's pro-world-collaboration delusions.

The examples these defeatists give of 'imperialist domination' are only superficially plausible, concealing the underlying anti-imperialist reality.

South Africa, for example, is currently a sad spectacle of bourgeois-nationalist delusions usurping the ANC's revolutionary defeat of apartheid-imperialism temporarily, but in no way able to detract from the colossal overall historical significance (for Africa and the world) of that final mass-movement triumph over monopoly-capitalist international tyranny. Reaction wanted to, and did, hold onto apartheid for as long as possible. Reaction only finally gave in when it could see that a deal with the ANC nationalists would be better than risking total communist mass revolutionary overthrow later on. So which direction is history heading for, towards imperialist domination, or towards communist domination? Obviously, more towards revolution all the time.

So the anti-imperialism of the Irish national-liberation struggle is going with the grain of history, not against it. And only some superficial word play enables these bogus 'Leninists' to label Irish republicanism a 'failure' — by identifying it as part of "a failure of the whole of the working class oppressed under the same British state".

But what is failing the whole working class in Britain is its entire anti-communist past leadership, — Labour, TUC, Trots, Eurocommunists, and bogus 'lefts' of all descriptions, all of them complete philistines who only ever posture about 'Marxism' in order to kill it with revisionist distortion and demoralise the working class. And that is a failure much to be welcomed as opening the door at last to a serious revival of Leninist science, greatly in harmony with the revolutionary spirit with which Irish republicanism has triumphantly challenged British imperialism.

And it is just not true that "all

bourgeois parties are singing with one voice" against Sinn Féin and the IRA on the Irish question. Last week's *Review* [see EPSR Book Vol22 – Ireland Pt3- ed] quoted dozens of capitalist sources denouncing Tory muddle and weakness for the renewed war tensions. The flow of bourgeois condemnation of culpable imperialist trickery and decadence has not diminished:

The target, rather, was IRA ideology, which maintains that they are in a state of war with the British regime and that their arms are legitimate. So what Britain sought was not an actual end to the capacity but the defeat of a concept.

But even the concept may be of less importance than the search for a way of forcing the other side into a retreat, a search which the IRA and the British have been conducting. This urge to dominate was long ago identified in conflict theory as one of the reasons why conflicts go critical and why resolution efforts fail.

Hindsight shows that the persistent raising of the decommissioning issue, whatever the theoretical rights and wrongs, was a mistake, and one which London tried to back away from too late.

This is always likely to happen when the issue of who dominates is allowed to become central.

Old powers with a tradition of thinking of themselves as the centre of the universe are prone to a reflex of dominance.

Peace theory says that you approach settlement by sidelining issues of dominance, which are really the old war questions of who is winning and who is losing in a different form. Peace moves along, then, on an imperfect basis, dependent for quite a long time on the avoidance of at least some of the hard questions. Then, when they are finally looked at again, they may have changed, or the parties may have changed, which is the same thing. That change, if it comes about, arises from an acceptance of the complexity of what history has created, its entanglement of peoples, its overlapping of jurisdictions, its neighbouring of the strong and the weak. The irony of many conflicts at the end of the century is that in most cases the antagonists know that they cannot achieve their objectives by war and therefore have a common interest in peace, but they carry on making war because, futile and dangerous as it is, it is easier than making peace.

This may well be very constipated critical realism as a British bourgeois tries to digest British bourgeois-imperialist decadence, but this is just one more added to the scores of examples of the British capitalist state being told by its own side that it is already well on the way to being judged guilty by history for the 1996 ceasefire breakdown.

It is British imperialism which is terrified of losing face by having to capitulate to an anti-

mistice in a major conflict with a 'bunch of criminal gunmen, six of whom it takes to change one light bulb', etc.

The 'urge to dominate' is the living historical essence of the imperialist-economic exploitation system (monopoly capitalism) and could be nothing else. This bourgeois realises this. There is only one 'old power with a tradition of thinking of itself as the centre of the universe' involved in the war in Ireland, – British imperialism.

And there is only one side which is obviously 'avoiding looking at the hard questions, spinning things out, hoping that something might change', – and that is British imperialism, putting off the time it hopes will never come when Unionist intransigence finally has to be told "Accept a new political settlement for the whole of Ireland or be forced into one". And it is only British imperialism which knows that it is carrying on a futile and dangerous war because, in its senility and paralysed confusion and 3-vote majority in the House of Commons, it feels this is 'easier than making peace'.

Having missed the underlying message of modern history on the question of US imperialism's purely temporary chaotic 'new world order' which is masking the greatest economic, political warmongering catastrophe ever suffered by international bourgeois society, – the CPGB fake '*Leninists*', also miss essential revolutionary lessons which have been learned in the course of their long list of recent working-class 'failures', and which could not have been learned in any other way. In other words they are setbacks essential for the transformation of a 'reformist'-minded, class-collaborating British imperialist working class towards becoming a revolutionary class.

The defeat of the 1984-85 miners' strike was crucial among them, helping towards the demolition at last of the illusion that 'left' trade-union pressure on a bourgeois government, with the hope of a 'reformist' Labour government to take over subsequently to give workers all they want, can solve the class contradictions of the modern trade-war imperialist crisis (which in fact can only find a solution in the direction of world communist revolution). History works slowly, and Scargill is a hopelessly centrist and sectarian muddlehead. But the formation at last of the SLP breakaway from the Labour Party, to challenge Labour's essential anti-socialism, anti-

working class ambitions, – is proof of how history is working.

And the organisation of the 1984-85 miners' strike was in itself an enormous triumph anyway, although part of a colossal and necessary defeat for political illusions. And that organisational experience as part of an always accumulating working-class tradition of confident struggle and maturity, showed up in the anti-poll tax fight which was anything but a failure. It is also very light-minded even to write off such apparently eccentric protests as the anti-road and anti-animal-export demonstrations. What they increasingly show is that people do not like what is happening to their lives under modern monopoly-imperialism. They may be hopelessly single-issue or hopelessly idealistic in the causes they take up, and obviously a political diversion. But there is simply no way of knowing which diversions might prove to have been the route by which some people come towards an understanding of monopoly-capitalist crisis as the root of their problems, and proletarian dictatorship as its only solution.

The automatic equating of every failed or partially successful protest with total historic working class failure, expresses only one thing, – the incurably subjective defeatism of the petty-bourgeois making the observations.

The fixed idea of these middle-class 'revolutionaries', – total socialist victory or nothing, – having been inappropriately applied to essential learning processes in the transformation of the old class-collaborating British working class, – is then ludicrously incorrectly used as a measure of success in a purely national-liberation struggle. They are virtually saying that even if the peace process was a success from Sinn Féin's point of view, – a reunited Ireland, – it would be a failure.

This is irrelevant 'left' sectarianism gone barmy.

All they are really hoping for, between the lines, is that the IRA will fight these petty-bourgeois "lefts" war for them against British imperialism. They actually **want** the IRA and Sinn Féin to split in the hope of "restarting the war against British imperialism", war which obviously will not cease with the liquidation of the hated 'Northern Ireland' colony and Partition, but will aim only for the total actual military defeat of all British imperialism!

This is grotesque. Why don't these super-'revolutionaries'

start their own urban guerrilla warfare against the British imperialist state on their own frontline and give the IRA a hand?

This monstrous kibbutzing-in on someone else's fight by these CPGB freaks shows contempt for the subject and people's intelligence in both directions. Are they really telling the British working class to start urban guerrilla warfare against the British state in England now? In the circumstances of an as yet incompletely exposed full parliamentary bourgeois democracy system, this would certainly not be a classical Marxist-Leninist strategy, more like a stupid anarchist provocation. And the CPGB is presumably calling for no such thing, of course.

But this unstated implication of 'Right on to the barricades now, lads' is slyly useful for adopting a grandiosely 'revolutionary' posture against the IRA: 'Oh, this Docklands bomb is just a way of getting back to the peace process. It's not the start of a **real** war against British imperialism'.

And such irrelevant Walter Mitty fantasies demonstrate that this CPGB rump is not talking seriously about the Irish question either. Yet again, it is just another vehicle for yet more petty-bourgeois subjective-'revolutionary' verbal diarrhoea. National-liberation struggle can be a limited anti-imperialist struggle, but a wholly legitimate one from a scientific Marxist-Leninist point of view in the right circumstances, and even one to be enthusiastically unconditionally supported in certain conditions, as being an important and even revolutionary blow against imperialism. Such is the IRA/Sinn Féin struggle (see ILWP (EPSR) Books vol 8,15, 22 & 25 – Ireland Pt 1-4) and countless past *Reviews*).

Sickest of all with these poseurs, and their hopelessly philistine and sectarian petty-bourgeois 'revolutionary' milieu, – the suspicion is inescapable that really it irks them to have to identify with the Sinn Féin/IRA struggle as it is, – superficially very unpopular with the British public, – but that their posturing lifestyle requires them to find a very 'left' reason for avoiding doing so. This was certainly part of their weird middle-class psychology with regard to the Polish workers state. On the only realistic anti-imperialist way forward, – for the Polish workers state or the Red Army to crush the 'Solidarnosc' counter-revolution without trace (which would have run into a hurricane of hatred

and abuse from Western public opinion), – these fake ‘Leninists’ were very unenthusiastic, even though their intellectual alertness made them want to distance themselves from the Solidarnosc fraud in favour of **real** ‘real socialism’. Are all these ‘revolutionary’ summonses to unity in the IRA’s direction just a sick way of avoiding wholeheartedly defending the national-liberation struggle’s right to fight the actual war it is fighting now? (albeit with often-stated disagreement between what a Marxist-Leninist movement might choose as the best strategy and tactics, and what bourgeois nationalism might choose).

There can be no historical-hindsight theoretical justification for all these fake-‘Leninist’ lines on the grounds that these CPGBers were right not to look for a Polish workers-state victory over Solidarnosc because they knew its deeply revisionist-flawed condition was bound to be a disastrous loser eventually, – as eventually it did lose, totally and spectacularly, collapsing completely.

What the working class needs to understand from any and every struggle is in which direc-

tion the longterm historical trend necessarily most go. The Paris Commune was bound to lose because of its many flaws, most of which Marx and Engels saw from the start. But they wholeheartedly urged it on as the only way to go historically in the longterm. The Easter Rising 1916 was doomed from the start for its premature, idealist putschist nature. But Lenin welcomed it ecstatically as a glorious ‘revolutionary’ explosion of what was to come in European history. The 1984-85 miners strike was handicapped from the start, as the Leninist ILWP fully explained at the time.

But the *Review’s* predecessor paper worked wholeheartedly and enthusiastically for the victory of such a mass working-class struggle to the end, even though knowing failure was coming, because it was the only way historically for working-class experience to go.

The Polish workers state represented the only period of proletarian dictatorship there has been on earth so far, – the Soviet camp experience started in 1917 and continuing on now via China, Cuba, Korea, Vietnam, etc. Undoubtedly, the world will have to return again

and again to this proletarian-dictatorship experience, – as the former Soviet Union is beginning to do now, and as much of East Europe has already done, voting in Communists on the belief that this was bringing back some of the stability and colossal social and economic achievements of the former workers states.

While obviously mistaken-strewn and revisionist-corrupted, these proletarian dictatorships nevertheless represented the only alternative way forward from capitalism. They died from the collapse of Marxist-Leninist understanding of this fact, sabotaged by revisionist imbecility, that believed socialism and capitalism could harmonise their better achievements; that capitalism had overcome its crisis-ridden essence; that Western living standards were what they seemed superficially, – the result of the market mechanism rather than of worldwide colonial exploitation; and that imperialism had somehow divested itself of its essential arms-race warmongering counter-revolutionary nature.

The 1980 Polish workers state (and Moscow, by extension) needed an unconditional

defence based on criticism of the above delusions. What it got from various opportunist CPGB factions and other Trot sectarians was no unconditional defence at all (i.e. no defence at all), and just a bit of sympathy from the slyer ones who could see through Solidarnosc, but conditional on the Polish workers state giving up its proletarian dictatorship anyway, and Moscow too. None of the fake-‘left’ willed the East European workers states on to victory, – the correct Marxist-Leninist scientific stance even though these particular flawed regimes might well already have been doomed in the long run.

But as the *Review* has frequently already asked various sectarian ‘left’ posturers, – where do they stand now on China, Cuba, Vietnam, etc? They have all inherited many revisionist faults in their understanding, and have undoubtedly made mistakes. It may turn out with historical hindsight that these regimes were already irrevocably flawed even when still battling on against imperialism in 1998. But who is now going to say as a policy: Let China collapse against counter-revolutionary imperialist propaganda pressure and economic-sabotage threats? Only incorrigibly sectarian idiots who don’t live in the real world but only in the ‘perfect revolutionary’ world of their own fantasies.

Leninism says defend the Chinese workers state unconditionally in all its contradictions with the ‘free’ world. Constructively criticise it only as part of the struggle to return the whole world to a true Marxist-Leninist scientific understanding of imperialist crisis and the vital role of proletarian dictatorship in securing civilisation’s future, consistent with completing the communist revolution internationally.

The ultra-‘left’ all-or-nothing defeatism only survives in the short term because only the renewed surge of spontaneous world-revolutionary struggle can prove their pessimisms wrong, basing itself as it must on taking up the Soviet proletarian dictatorship experiences from where they were left off under creeping revisionist imbecility. And that revolutionary surge is, naturally, far longer in coming than anyone can imagine, want, or expect.

Some of these criminally light-minded Trot dilettantes do actually call for the overthrow of the Castro revolution in Cuba, for example, in favour of an even better ‘real socialist’ revolution, – from the safety of



their armchairs in Islington, of course. And while the CPGB are not yet this sectarian-barmy, the notion of them being 'right' not to call for Poland's proletarian dictatorship to assert itself and crush Solidarnosc in 1980 is just as sick, – living only for the fantasy 'perfect revolution' that never comes.

And even if longterm historical hindsight eventually proves them 'right' to give the thumbs-down to the Irish national-liberation struggle's present perspective (of forcing British imperialism to negotiate away a completely new political set-up for the whole of Ireland) in that it still might fail (because superceded by other developments, such as World War III, or sudden spontaneous socialist revolution erupting all over Britain), – they would still be wrong. The Irish revolutionary-nationalist perspective to force British and world imperialism to concede total Ireland independence, or face an added and increasing revolutionary hazard to what the West already has on its plate worldwide, – is eminently conceivable, and would also happen to be a very worthwhile revolutionary (arms-in-hand) pushing back of imperialist forces by popular struggle.

Bourgeois critics of British imperialism see things much more clearly, – understanding exactly the successful limited war aims that the Irish national-liberation struggle has posed. These glimmerings of critical-realist enlightenment also give the lie to the newest Ulster-Unionist propaganda obscenity that IRA bombing has recommenced because Sinn Féin was unable to go through with the peace process, – standing reality exactly on its head. That it was the British imperialist camp which had to abort the negotiated peace process is abundantly clear from admissions such as these (and scores more) in its own capitalist press:

Violence was, is and always will be a potential condition of existence in and concerning Ireland, whether or not any given batch of leaders has agreed to end it.

In these circumstances, the British demand on de-commissioning and renunciation was always more totemic than substantive. If it had been satisfied, that wouldn't have removed the threat of violence. For ministers to talk about not negotiating "when one party has a gun outside the door" may have sounded reasonable but posed, in fact, an unreal hypothesis. The purpose was symbolic: to make the IRA eat dirt.

It had almost nothing to do with effective peace-making. Unmentioned in the *Downing Street Declaration*, it was a way of belatedly recompensing the people most put out by both

declaration and framework document, the Ulster Unionists.

However, the demand was inconsistent with the strategy Major had already adopted. This was, bravely and irregularly, to override the Unionist veto on political progress. Major's text was that Britain no longer entertained a "selfish" interest in Northern Ireland. Deciding to devote himself to a new way of peace, he was prepared to shatter icons. He liberated himself from the past, and sought to bypass old entanglements. Ulster, he made plain, no longer had the same eternal place as Cornwall or Wales in British thinking. Its connection was contingent, and he would not strive to keep it alive against any majority inclination that disclosed itself in the future.

This was a remarkable shift. It proposed a new way forward whereby the mainland polity, entering an alliance with the Dublin government, simultaneously defended the status quo while acknowledging that, if the will of the people changed, it might not last for ever. The logic of this was that London would talk to Sinn Féin even though the IRA threat could plainly not be definitively written out of the script.

The point of the strategy was to create a new reality that might lead to a political settlement. It could never ordain that the threat of violence was wiped off the agenda. If all-party talks began, in parallel with rather than preceded by de-commissioning, they would be another step forward, a proof that the momentum of peace could be preserved, a way of further bedding down a new status quo. It is a great tragedy that they did not occur. If they had, there would have been no South Quay bomb.

If the de-commissioning demand was, in the real world, a chimera, then this whole political edifice Mr Major constructed was not well served by it. It was invented to satisfy the Unionists, who were thus able to impose their view on the entire negotiating procedure, and almost the entire House of Commons.

The House of Commons is important. It has been a place of reliable consensus from the beginning to the end of the peace process. But we begin to see the weaknesses of this. There was a huge majority for the process, and thus for the adventurous modifications it made on time-honoured British attitudes to Ulster. It is hard to believe, given the symbolic nature of the required de-commissioning, that the majority, given a free hand, would have allowed that to stop the process dead. If the Government had found another way of dealing with it, Mr Major would have secured the certain agreement of most MPs. But at the last, he ran away from his own logic. Instead of assembling a critical mass of British politicians behind a process that posed no genuine threat to the Unionist constituency, he let the Unionists draw their line in the sand.

We know one reason why this happened. The Tories feared for their position. Enjoying a vast majority for their Irish policy, they were and are vulnerable on every other policy.

Such is the grim arithmetic of political priorities.

Worldwide, the Irish national-liberation struggle will be more listened to than decrepit British imperialist cowardice, and world opinion will judge that London is in the wrong (in spite of the pathetic renewed televised hand-wringing propaganda onslaught about the 'terrible suffering inflicted on the innocent by the evil bombers', etc) – as the capitalist press itself is further obliged to admit:

The IRA yesterday confirmed unequivocally that its ceasefire was over and offered only the most oblique prospect of a resumption in the event of progress towards talks.

A "spokesperson for the general headquarters staff" of the IRA told *An Phoblacht* that the decision to end the ceasefire was taken because of "John Major's cynical misuse and betrayal of the historic opportunity" it had offered.

In its first detailed explanation of the background to the Canary Wharf bomb in London last Friday, the IRA claimed that Mr Major had reneged on his commitments in order to keep himself in power.

Suggestions that the bomb had been a one-off action were rejected when an IRA spokesperson said: "We in Oglagh na hEireann will continue to assert Irish national rights in the face of British denial for as long as is necessary."

In the two-page interview, the spokesperson stated: "There is only one place for all the political representatives of the Irish people to go and that is to the negotiating table. Current British policy prevents all those with a democratic mandate from sitting around that table."

There was also criticism of John Bruton, the Irish premier, who this week claimed he had been betrayed by the bombing. The IRA said he well knew the basis of the ceasefire.

The spokesperson denied there was any split in the IRA and said it had no problem with Sinn Féin continuing its peace strategy.

Meanwhile, Michael Ancram, the Northern Ireland political development minister, said yesterday that an election could be held without a ceasefire, but he refused to be drawn when asked if Sinn Féin could take part in such circumstances.

The Government came in for further criticism yesterday from Albert Reynolds, who said that Britain's response to the *Mitchell report* on illegally held weapons was the straw that broke the camel's back.

'He said that Mr Major's reaction to the report was "the greatest challenge that goaded them [the IRA] into proving they were back in existence".'

After 25 years of all-out national-liberation struggle against all-out imperialist police-military repression, the IRA's ceasefire initiative demonstrated that no-one (apart from complete maniacs like Paisley) dared say that a negotiated solution, fully including the 'men of

violence' was impossible.

But it has not happened because of British, imperialist intransigence.

So now the choice is back to 25 more years of all-out national-liberation struggle against all-out imperialist police-military repression, or else back to the negotiating table (or at least to more serious 'talks about talks' than taken place so far). It is a choice which the unfortunate British public, indeed suffering from the horrors of an urban guerrilla war erupting in its midst, should loudly declare is no choice at all. Get back quickly to the negotiating table, is the obvious message, and start talking seriously this time about a complete new settlement for Ireland, in particular, the cowardly Labourite 'Official Opposition' worms should be told finally to either oppose imperialist reaction, or disappear from history completely.

As unlikely as it may seem, Labour's class-collaborating servility to British imperialism on the Irish question may be forced to shift by the sheer weight of public opinion. Letters columns to the bourgeois press are no more scientific than the radio and TV vox pops, but all round there does seem to be more refreshing open-mindedness on this issue than ever before:

MY house was rocked by the Canary Wharf bomb. The people of London are not prepared to carry the burden of unionist intransigence any longer. The British government, under pressure from the unionists, has spent the last 18 months throwing up obstacle after obstacle to serious negotiations over Northern Ireland.

The reason is equally obvious; any negotiations must involve compromise, and that means some weakening of unionist power. The unionists are not prepared to cede an inch, and have successfully blackmailed the Government into playing their game.

We owe the bigots of Northern Ireland nothing and it's time we got rid of this expensive colony, just like we've got rid of dozens of others in the past 30 years.

WE are constantly being told that the "democratic process" is the best way, the only way, to resolve conflict. That being so why cannot the people of Ireland (the whole of Ireland) decide the future of their country? Is not the existence of Northern Ireland a denial of democracy?

ARTHUR Aughey's appeal to "democracy" in support of David Trimble's election proposals is disingenuous (*Comment Page*, February 12). The conflict has been caused by majoritarian "democracy" within the sectarian Northern Ireland framework. The two main union-

ist parties would simply perpetuate the problem by insisting that an election within this framework is the only route for admitting Sinn Féin to all-party talks.

Such a single-issue election would lead to further sectarian polarisation. Trimble's proposal was intended to delay all-party talks, reduce the Dublin government's involvement in the peace process and marginalise the small loyalist parties — their more reasonable stance since the ceasefire began has shown up the inflexibility of Trimble's and Paisley's mainstream unionism.

John Major, supported by "opposition" leader Tony Blair, adopted Trimble's proposal, rather than accept the Mitchell advice to call immediately all-party talks. It seems this triggered the IRA's appalling return to bombing.

Arthur Aughey claims elections would make it "the people's peace process", but the delay and further marginalisation of the small loyalist parties and Sinn Féin would destroy any chance of there being a "peace process" — another pyrrhic victory for the main unionist parties.

John Hume's proposal for immediate referenda North and South, on the two questions of rejecting vio-

lent methods and the need for all-party talks, should be extended to Britain. For too long the main unionist parties have been the "tail wagging the dog".

I am surprised and disappointed that the *Guardian's* editorial (February 10) has joined the "whitewashes" of John Major and the Government in the latest IRA bombing outrage. The IRA and very likely Sinn Féin are responsible for this act, but as to the question whose fault it has been, you could at least reserve your judgment.

I think also that you are mistaken as to the effect of this bombing. It is not another "blitz" and John Major is not another Churchill. The IRA is obviously trying to avoid human casualties, going for destruction of real estate, and money seems to be valued these days more than anything else. After all, if it is for material gain, this government kowtows to such objectionable people as the Saudi royals and the Nigerian dictator, General Abacha. Multi-million losses in the heart of the City have their eloquence.

But Ireland is far from British imperialism's only, or even

essential problem, as the following article examines. As even the capitalist press grasps, the arms-race scandal is more about terminal imperialist crisis than lie exposures:

Because of increasingly unrealistic efforts to maintain both civilian and defence high technology sectors, trade is often no longer a favour that the advanced countries bestow on less developed societies that, like Iraq, had money to spend, or, like China, can offer the attractions of a huge market and of cheap, skilled labour. We are getting to the point where we need them more than they need us.

Behind the story of the sale of equipment to Iraq lies another, larger story, that of the increasingly tough task of maintaining advanced quasimilitary economies in a less and less favourable environment. The dozen or so larger advanced nations are wedded to the idea that they must be able to support a varied high technology sector capable of producing both complex civilian and military products, and maintaining sophisticated multi-purpose armed forces. But this is getting to be a harder and harder trick to do.

The past 25 years have demonstrated that the maintenance of an advanced military-industrial-intellectual complex is becoming more and more difficult. Fewer and fewer countries can keep up anything like the whole range of advanced industry, weapons production, and the research centres to support them. This has gone far beyond the question of not being able to produce all the military equipment that a "respectable" power should possess. Nor is it just a question of jobs. It is also a matter of gaps developing in the array of advanced civilian industries. At a time when military technology is increasingly dependent on civilian spin-offs rather than, as was the case for many years, the other way round, this warns of a double loss of potency, both industrial and military.

This is why, incidentally, the British government's argument that the supply of non-lethal defence equipment is more permissible than that of lethal equipment, arms proper, is wrong.

Imperialist decadence is dying.
Build Leninism.
Douglas Bell

Irish National liberation struggle wins again as fixed date negotiations edge closer. Is Orange-colonist bluff at last being called?

[EPSR No 842 27-02-96]

The Government's domestic humiliation from Judge Scott's damning criticism of deceit and incompetence over murky arms sales to the Saddam Hussein regime, is matched by its embarrassment over Ireland.

It seems more certain than ever that better managed and more serious peace negotiations are going to be forced on London by the weight of world opinion, whether the paralysed bourgeois political leadership bleats increasingly hysterically over renewed IRA bombing or not.

In which case the sooner that purposeful talks are resumed, the better from everyone's point of view, apart from that of the doomed and unhinged 'Ulster' colonial establishment in the Occupied Zone of Ireland, whose taking-on and challenging over its intransigence is long overdue and cannot now be much further delayed.

Whatever the Tory electoral wish for as long deferments as possible in all major political decisions to give time for the polls to swing round in Conservative favour, public views from almost every quarter are that a permanent and fair peace settlement with Irish nationalism be pursued as urgently and energetically as possible, bombs

or no bombs.

The best source on how much middle-class pressure there is on Downing Street to do a deal with Sinn Féin and the IRA is in the capitalist press itself whose own primitive jingoistic instincts are just to promote the most implacable hatred and crudest vengeance possible against the 'men of violence', etc.

There has been plenty of that too, but what the bourgeois media also feel obliged to admit is that smiting the 'evil terrorists' is no longer everyone's favourite immediate proposal for finding a solution:

THE GOVERNMENT should continue to talk to Gerry Adams despite last weekend's Docklands bomb, the latest Sunday Times/NOP poll shows.

Two out of three voters think negotiations with Sinn Féin should be reopened.

Worryingly for John Major, the poll finds almost half the electorate blame the government "a great deal" or "a fair amount" for the breakdown in the Irish peace process.

The poll, conducted last week throughout mainland Britain, is the first to test public responses to the end of the ceasefire.

The popular view that responsibility is widely spread helps to explain why just 32% back the view that "the British government should break off all contact with Sinn Féin as long as

the violence continues".

Twice as many, 63%, think the government "should be willing to talk to Sinn Féin in order to find a way to restore the ceasefire".

Clear majorities in every demographic and political group back talks with Sinn Féin. Among Tory supporters, the figures are: talk 59%, don't talk 38%.

.....the poll dashes any hopes among ministers that the bomb outrage would turn the public against the political aims of Irish nationalism. Only one in three voters wants Northern Ireland to remain part of the UK in the long term, and 40% want all British troops out within 12 months.

Since the resumption of IRA terrorism nine days ago, a debate has raged over who should be blamed for the breakdown of the peace process. Nine out of 10 Britons blame the IRA "a great deal" (69%) or "a fair amount" (20%). Only 7% blame the IRA "a little" (5%) or "not at all" (2%).

However, most people think other groups share at least some of the blame: 53% blame the Ulster Unionists, 36% think the Irish government bears some responsibility. As many as 47% blame the British government "a great deal" (17%) or "a fair amount" (30%). A further 27% blame it "a little"; only 19% do not blame the government at all.

Newspapers' letters columns are even less scientific and reliable than crude opinion poll answers to unavoidably shallow and biasedly-presented questions. But superficially, at least, the letters that are now getting printed in the bourgeois press have recently shown a marked tendency to begin probing more deeply and penetratively into the Irish question:

WHO does Robert McCartney think he is kidding with his claim

that Northern Ireland is a "civilised democracy" and the only problem is republican violence? He makes no mention of the unionist violence which goes right back to the origins of the Northern Ireland state.

As far as "democracy" is concerned, Northern Ireland isn't one. It has been gerrymandered and undemocratic since its inception: the imposition of an artificial border to ensure one-party, unionist rule there was compounded by internal gerrymandering and coercion. The current proposal for further elections only reinforces a harmful misconception of democracy.

ROBERT McCartney emphasises how important it is to stick to democratic principles; would he therefore not accept the right of the peoples of Fermanagh, Tyrone, east Derry and south Armagh, which have nationalist majorities, to integrate with the Republic of Ireland? Would he also accept that, for any part of Ireland to remain part of the UK, it is also necessary for the people of England, Scotland and Wales to give their assent?

Agreeing to these democratic principles, however, might well leave Mr McCartney and his fellow compatriots in a small independent statelet in the north-east of Ireland about the size of Devon. He might not care for this outcome but it might well secure peace in these Anglo-Celtic islands of ours.

DOES the situation in Northern Ireland amount to civil war, and can democracy as we practice it resolve civil war (*Bound to end in tears*, by Robert McCartney, February 20)? If the IRA is not supported by significant numbers of the Northern Ireland population, then it is a gang of fascist thugs whom we can hope to isolate and eliminate.

If, however, its supporters are sufficiently numerous, say, to elect at

least one MP, then we are in a state of civil war, and our best hope is to allow outside powers to bring us together for a further ceasefire, negotiations and an eventual settlement.

The British bourgeois intelligentsia, (vast because of the peculiarities of history of British imperialism), are now becoming a very disturbed class of people, – in general because of the relentless collapse of that imperialist system, but in particular because of such shocks as the Scott exposure of cynical dishonesty and corruption deep within the parliamentary political mechanism. For some more ‘liberal’ minds, the incredible mess over the Irish question has been almost as disturbing a shock:

The period of the ceasefire can either be viewed as one in which the IRA and Sinn Féin, dissatisfied at the meagre results of the unarmed struggle, finally gave in to their hard men and went back to doing what they know best. But it is surely better seen as a period in which a potentially divided organisation that needed to be drawn deeper and deeper into non-violent politics was mishandled by governments, particularly in London, who ought to have known better.

Know your enemy is the most ancient adage in conflict, yet the events of the past 18 months have demonstrated that Britain failed, not once but again and again, to comprehend the movement that still holds the key to peace or war in Ulster. An enemy who could have evolved into something between a political opponent and a kind of partner was mismanaged to the point where everything that has been achieved has been put in jeopardy. The breakdown of the ceasefire cannot be understood without asking why Britain lacked knowledge of the mood, let alone of the precise decision-making processes, of Sinn Féin and the IRA. It suggests a double failure, in the intelligence operations which were supposed to give government a clear picture of the intentions and capabilities of the movement, and in a British disregard of more generalised political warnings that came from many quarters.

The British, an expert on Israeli intelligence commented, know far less about the IRA than the Israelis know and always have known about the PLO, across a much more serious linguistic and ethnic divide. The explanation, it is usually suggested, lies in the compact nature of the IRA, and in the absence of an outer fringe of people more or less in the know who can occasionally be suborned and sometimes recruited. Yet there was plenty of evidence, other than the kind provided by agents on the inside.

Royal Ulster Constabulary sources say that MI5 failed to take seriously

their warnings late last year that the IRA contingency plan for a return to violent action was becoming more of a real possibility and less of a sop to the sceptics than before.

The truth seems to be that it was readying itself to go either way, yet neither London or Dublin was aware of this. A senior political source in Dublin says, “It wasn’t appreciated that a breakdown was imminent, although we knew in general terms of the strains within the IRA and that a return to violence was an option. On the day of the British reaction to Mitchell, the feeling was that John Major had thrown a big spanner.

“They would not have rejected Mitchell outright and they would not have abandoned the ceasefire if Britain had accepted the report in a straightforward way. That would have been too abrupt a rebuff to the Clinton administration.”

The influential and usually well informed Irish American journalist Niall O’Dowd recalls that “Gerry Adams’s first reaction to the Mitchell proposals was that this was the best day since the ceasefire. He knew he could sell it. But the balance was tipped against him by Major’s manner of dismissing Mitchell. If the report had been accepted this could have been avoided.”

AFTER ALL, serious republican dissent was already being openly expressed by the summer of last year. When Gerry Adams was heckled at a rally outside Belfast’s City Hall by a man shouting “Bring back the IRA”, he departed from his prepared script and replied: “They haven’t gone away, you know.” Adams was referring to a reality that was to him full of danger. He needed political progress to keep everybody on board and he had already made it clear that there would be no splits in the movement. That would indeed be victory for Britain. The movement as a whole would go for peace or it would return to war.

By then the spectaculars were running out. He had been to the White House for dinner, shaken hands with Nelson Mandela in South Africa and been awarded a joint peace prize with John Hume, Albert Reynolds and John Major. In spite of all the benefits of financial assistance, democratic respectability, new political alliances and near-saturation publicity, still there was no sign of all-party negotiations or movement on the prisoners. The serious rioting following the release of Paratrooper Lee Clegg, convicted of murdering a west Belfast teenage girl, should have set alarm bells ringing in Downing Street and Stormont Castle. The “imaginative steps” which had been promised prior to the IRA cessation seemed to republicans to have been bogus.

The Government responded to criticism by publishing a glossy booklet outlining a hundred changes to everyday life in Northern Ireland. But there was no explanation offered for why so little effort had been put into convincing the Unionists that their best interests lay in taking the ceasefire at face value and joining their enemies at the negotiating table, even if only to explore their sincerity and see if the peace overtures were genuine.

By late November, when the first IRA prisoners were freed from the Maze prison under the restored 50 per cent remission rule, even those who were being granted their freedom talked as if the ceasefire was nearing its end. Yet the British government still seemed nearly deaf to the obvious signs of a huge shift in mood. Calls for negotiations, stalled by the British insistence on decommissioning, were constantly repeated. “If we don’t get them, it’s over,” said a senior figure waiting at the prison gates. A week earlier a 1,300lb vehicle bomb had been intercepted by Gardai in the Republic and several arrests made. Its destination was believed to be Crossmaglen and the couriers were from a new armed wing of republican Sinn Féin – the remnants of a previous split from the Provisional in 1986. Hardliners from outside the Provisional movement but within the republican family were growing confident enough to show that others were prepared to continue the war if the IRA no longer had the stomach.

At the last moment before President Clinton’s visit to Northern Ireland, John Major and John Bruton handed the task of a solution to the arms decommissioning issue to former US senator George Mitchell, in effect the special US envoy for Ireland. They also agreed on the “firm aim” of beginning talks by the end of February. It now seems very likely that at this stage the IRA leadership had already taken its decision in principle to return to war. If the Mitchell commission could deliver a clear, unambiguous path to the talks table, the decision would be revoked. Meanwhile teeth were bared. Five alleged drug-dealers were shot dead over the Christmas and New Year period by the IRA under the cover-name Direct Action Against Drugs.

Mitchell and his colleagues, the Canadian General John de Chastelain and former Finnish prime minister Harri Holkeri, worked strenuously to meet their mid-January deadline. They met all the parties, both governments and the security forces on both sides of the border. Doubtless they heard from the RUC of its private view that decommissioning was of no practical value; the IRA’s engineers were expert in turning every-day and easily obtainable objects into lethal machines.

As publication of the report approached it was evident that for Sinn Féin the direction of the peace process hinged upon its contents. Its main conclusion was that no paramilitary group would hand over weaponry in advance of the commencement of full political negotiations on Northern Ireland’s future. It was what all the main political players had known all along and a slap in the face for John Major. However, the climbdown it required him to make on that issue was softened by a series of tough tests for those who wanted to complete a genuine journey from military methods to peaceful democratic means.

These included a compromise proposal for decommissioning to take place in parallel with talks: the eventual destruction of all weapons

to be monitored and verified by independent observers; a declaration of a total and absolute commitment to abide by the democratic outcome of talks, or to oppose it by purely peaceful methods; an end to punishment attacks; and the lifting of paramilitary “exclusion orders” on individuals. Tucked away at the back of the report in paragraph 56 was the suggestion that “an elective process could contribute to the building of confidence”. For a few hours after the report was published Sinn Féin officials indicated that it would be difficult to sell these terms to the IRA but that it might just be possible. But that Wednesday afternoon John Major announced in the Commons that there were now two ways into the long-awaited talks for Sinn Féin; decommissioning or participation in a Northern Ireland election.

It would be wrong to assume that Adams had given up on his belief in the fundamental republican goal of a united Ireland, but it is fair to pose the question of what he really expected to gain from all-party negotiations. The Dublin Forum for Peace and Reconciliation – which Albert Reynolds had originally sold to the Provisionals as the all-Ireland body in which negotiations with the Unionists on the island’s political future would take place, but which instead became the fast-track for bringing Sinn Féin into the mainstream fold of constitutional politics – had demonstrated that the over-whelming consensus view was that while a united Ireland was a desirable goal, nobody wanted it unless the unionists gave consent. Indeed, according to the published diaries of Reynolds’s press secretary Sean Duignan, Adams was well aware that acceptance of the consent principle – which is enshrined in the December 1993 *Downing Street Declaration* – was central to the success of the peace process. Even so, the month before the IRA ceasefire was declared, that principle was rejected by a special Sinn Féin conference in Letterkenny, Co Donegal.

Given the contradiction, a number of theories have been put forward. Either Sinn Féin and the IRA never intended to accept the framework which the British and Irish governments had agreed but were prepared to see what political progress could be wrung from talks following a ceasefire before the inevitable return to armed struggle. Or Adams was engaging in a degree of deception of the rank and file, preparing to accept a settlement which fell short of traditional republican objectives, selling it as an interim settlement with the rest of the journey towards full British withdrawal to be reached by non-violent methods. The evidence, while not conclusive, leaned toward this view.

The three most common words heard in any discussion of the IRA’s intentions are “I don’t know.” There is some excuse for not knowing precisely what the IRA intends at any moment and for doubts over the organisation’s objectives. But there was surely enough evidence to show that Britain was playing with fire in ignoring the predicament of the Sinn Féin leadership, and failing to measure the balance of forces within

the movement if Adams was trying to manage his flock into a settlement of the kind indicated, bluffing some of his own people, what an authoritative Dublin source calls his "backwoodsmen problem" was not helped by a British policy that pushed him to the wall. There are chastened politicians, officials, policemen, and intelligence people in London, Belfast and Dublin today.

Now it is even more important to know what the IRA wants and believes.

There is a tinge of optimism, as well as a general view that as Niall O'Dowd puts it, "The future of the conflict is going to be dealt with in the next two weeks for good or ill. What the Irish and British governments do and what input the Americans have is what matters... That's what we need now. People really charging at it saying it can be done."

And what of that American input? Like most things will be in Washington in this election year, there have been only cautious responses initially, but their pro-negotiation trend already seems to be clearly reasserting itself:

Those who know Mr Clinton say he will stay involved since he now has a direct stake in peace in Northern Ireland. The political reasons have been rehearsed often; there are 44 million US voters claiming Irish lineage of whom perhaps two million feel their identity keenly; the 17-month ceasefire was one of the brightest points in a patchy foreign policy record; last year's visit to Belfast and Dublin was, by consensus, the highlight of the Clinton presidency (the footage was just waiting to be converted into TV ads for November's election campaign). For those reasons alone, Mr Clinton cannot afford to have the peace process go into reverse.

What's more, the president is under no political pressure to abandon Northern Ireland. There is no pro-British vote in the US, and few Republicans have seen any political profit in an end to a ceasefire which everyone wanted to work. Remarkably, even now there is no domestic pressure on Mr Clinton to desert his new political ally Gerry Adams.

But the crucial point is that there is a very powerful political and economic force working to ensure Mr Clinton stays involved: Irish America. Indeed, some say the real outside agent in the battle for Northern Ireland has been a team effort by the US government and the country's Irish community.

It was Irish-American pressure which pushed Mr Clinton to weigh in in the first place, subsequently lobbying him on the Adams visa and Sinn Féin fundraising. As with all things Clinton, there was a political history to this, too. Irish-Americans had worked for Bill Clinton when he was an unknown presidential wannabe, back in 1991.

"He feels the Irish were there for him early," says Niall O'Dowd, publisher of the Irish Voice and a key liaison between the administration

and the community.

What is remarkable is not that a US president is repaying a political debt to Irish-Americans but that he is using activity in Northern Ireland to do it. For most of this century no one would have made the connection.

Unlike American Jews, who have always demanded a pro-Israel stance from their government, Irish-American concern for Ireland has waxed and waned.

Of course the first wave of immigrants were obsessed by the old country; a band of Fenians attempted to invade British-held Canada in 1866 and 1870 in the hope that London would hand over Ireland in a swap for Canada; "dynamite schools" popped up in Brooklyn and Chicago, training fighters for the Irish war; the agitators of the Land League were funded by Irish-American dollars.

But later generations lost interest as they set about making their way in America. The legendary Irish political machines in Boston and New York were preoccupied with gaining local influence and jobs — not with foreign policy. Faced with anti-Irish and anti-Catholic bigotry, they worked hard to become unhyphenated Americans.

That drive for assimilation reached its climax in the election of a third-generation Irishman as president in 1960. John F. Kennedy meant "it was OK to be Irish," says Mr O'Dowd — and Irish-Americans began to take pride in their roots.

Peter Quinn, a leading chronicler of Irish-America, believes it was assimilation itself which triggered the reawakening. "When your identity begins to unravel, that's when you become interested in it," he says.

In the early 1980s the trend crystallised. Like all America's ethnic groups, the Irish began to look for their roots.

The connection with Northern Ireland came with the H-block hunger strike of 1981. "Ten guys starving to death had an impact that a thousand bombs in London would never have," recalls Mr O'Dowd. The IRA had always turned off all but a tiny minority of Irish-Americans. Now more started to care.

These moderate forces began working with the Irish government, who had previously dismissed Irish-America as too extreme.

The initial focus of their efforts was the wave of illegal immigrants flooding into the US in the mid-1980s. That was resolved in the famous lottery for Green Cards, but it left a working relationship between Irish America and Dublin that has endured.

Now second only to Jews as America's best educated and most affluent ethnic group — a community of company bosses and professionals, not cops and navvies — Irish America's interest in the old country has been stirred. And they're making sure their president doesn't forget it.

Even the long-dormant Irish nationalist spirit in Dublin seems to have been stirred too by the masterful resilience of the last 20 years of 'armalite and ballot-box' struggle by the

national-liberation movement in the Occupied Zone of Ireland, as seen by capitalist press sources usually cynically hostile to the armed fight against imperialism:

THE IRA's London bombs are having an explosive political effect here as the three coalition loaders—John "Unionist" Bruton, Dick "Tricky Dicky" Spring and Proinsias "Pernicious" De Rosso — wonder how to decommission blame for the end of the ceasefire.

Prime minister Bruton is perceived to be so pro-British he was recently asked by Ned O'Keefe, the opposition Fianna Fail party's answer to your Denis Skinner, if a certain Sergeant Bruton, who gave evidence against one of the 1916 martyrs, was a relation. Such jibes are not as damaging as the belief that Bruton gave everything to John Major and got nothing in return.

As leader of the conservative Fine Gael party, Bruton never cared about the north before accidentally coming to power after the Reynolds-Spring coalition imploded. He rarely went north, and in 27 years as a parliamentarian hardly ever made a speech about the place. In recent years he also declined the advice of St John of Hume, the Martin Luther King of Irish politics, that he try to understand the trials of the northern nationalists, whom Bruton regards with as much affection as Nero did the Roman mob.

On taking office just over a year ago he was briefed by Fianna Fail's northern adviser, Martin Mansergh, on where Belfast was, who called the shots in the IRA and who in the British government could deliver an agreement. He appeared to take the advice but soon reverted to form. He collapsed when Sir Patrick Mayhew demanded decommissioning of IRA arms before all party talks; he refused to meet Gerry Adams and Hume to cement the nationalist consensus lest it upset the Unionists; and he allowed himself to be double crossed by Major over the Mitchell report — in a way that made many in Dublin cringe at his servility.

"Responsible" commentators declined to point out these blunders, but when even Geraldine Kennedy, of the unswervingly pro-coalition *Irish Times*, slammed Bruton last week for his subservient attitude, the "Unionist" (O Albert Reynolds) must have realised he was in trouble. Kennedy even suggested Bruton was not perhaps the man to rebuild the peace process. Worst of all is his image as the leader who was handed the glittering prize of a peace process and allowed it to slip from his grasp.

Labour leader and foreign minister Dick Spring, despite belated efforts to cast himself as the northern nationalists' guardian angel, will not find it easy to absolve himself either. Plenty of politicians will remind the public that he simply did not want to know about the IRA or Sinn Féin when Reynolds told him three years ago a ceasefire and political settlement were on the cards.

In Dail Eireann Spring is loathed. He forced Reynolds to resign; before that he humiliated Bruton by refus-

ing to take him seriously as a coalition partner and now sits uneasily alongside him in government. Even there he can hardly bring himself to talk to his other coalition partner, De Rossa, whose Democratic Left party is in mortal electoral combat with Spring's Labour.

Spring did get the IRA to stop beating up drug pushers in his own constituency of North Kerry, but he could not stop the ceasefire from unravelling and he must have felt uncomfortable reading intelligence reports that showed the Kerry IRA as among those primarily responsible for ending it. Tricky will not be allowed to escape the recrimination now gathering.

Most incongruous of all is the shuffling figure of De Rossa, whose DL party has the same roots as the Provos and which has, ever since, been keen to denounce republican violence. Gerry Adams has taken to referring to Pernicious as 'my former colleague', a taunt that enrages De Rossa. Such is the political schizophrenia of the DL it has become the most ardent critic of Irish nationalism, be it of Hume's SDLP or Adams's Sinn Féin. Pernicious will also reap the whirlwind of discontent that may engulf the coalition if the IRA does not revert to a ceasefire.

This is the time for a maximum effort of dialogue with Sinn Féin.

As to substance, it matters not a whit whether it be officials or Ministers who speak for the governments to Sinn Féin, although I understand why Ministers in both governments want to be seen to stand back given the IRA's resumption of terror.

It should now be possible to elaborate a structure which includes within a balanced package the necessary hard nuggets about time, date and place for all-party negotiation. Those who communicate on these matters on behalf of the British Government to Sinn Féin must find a way to do so which carries credibility where virtually none now exists. This may require joint Anglo-Irish communication or the help of other outsiders who might enhance credibility. There should certainly be no sacrifice of democratic principle; there should equally be no sacrifice of success for the sake of pride or protocol.

This seems precisely the style adopted since the beginning of the ceasefire in dealing with Sinn Féin. The 'prize' of all-party negotiations held out to the republicans in return for the ceasefire has successively been dangled before their noses, withheld and dangled again, higher than before and further out of reach. The problem is that in dealing with a "front" for a violent subversive organisation — whether it be the IRA, the Contras or ETA — it is not wise to 'negotiate' in the traditional professional manner. Messages must be clear, deadlines nailed down and undertakings honoured.

Remember that the IRA has for 25 years lived inside its own monastic structures, isolated and immune to the world's opprobrium. There is no basis of trust or confidence on their side. This does not mean that unacceptable concessions should

be made: merely that only solid undertakings and actual delivery will serve. I say this from my own acquaintance with those close to the IRA.

I am convinced that this tragedy can still be replaced by a strengthened peace process because there are enough people of standing in the republican movement -- including the IRA -- who very much want this. There has been a substantial change in the normal Provisional rhetoric since the ceasefire declaration of 1994. Despite it ending, those people have not reverted to a purely 'Brits out' rhetoric.

Sinn Féin's Mitchell McLaughlin said last week that his party would accept and sell any negotiated settlement, provided his colleagues had been part of the negotiation -- even if the outcome was not what they desired.

What these people now need is no more, in their version, than what they believed was on offer in August 1994: all-party negotiations without preconditions. They need to be told -- in credible terms and in a credible way -- when this can be delivered.

The presentation of the *Mitchell Report* did not seem to have been well handled by Dublin or London, but it contains an elaborate set of recommendations, which could transform the obstacles to all-party negotiations into milestones of progress.

There are, coincidentally, other helpful new suggestions: which for once have not been rejected: the Dayton proximity talks model from Irish Foreign Minister Dick Spring; the Ireland-wide referendum

And not only have the complacent Green-Tory Irish bourgeoisie been shaken out of their long Cold-War sleep in the philistine embrace of international imperialist orthodoxy, but bitter Irish history lessons have even begun disturbing dark corners of 'justice'-posturing mentality in quaint English circles too:

To prefer Derry to Londonderry, it is not an expression of religious bias -- only because it is manifestly and historically fair.

This has been a holy place since the sixth century; local people boast that the monastery was founded by Columba himself. A thousand years elapsed before the English took any serious interest. Derry acquired its unhappy prefix as recently as 29 March 1613, the day before yesterday in Irish history. Its renaming was in honour -- if honour's the word -- of the City of London's investment in the comprehensive redevelopment of the city centre and its enclosure by a stone wall.

Six rebellious Irishmen who thought badly of English colonisation were drawn through the streets in chains, hanged on the gallows, cut down when half dead, disembowelled, beheaded, quartered and burned. The exemplary nature of this punishment succeeded in discouraging further resistance among the dispossessed natives, but you could say that it marked the start of the Troubles.

In the next 300 years, Derry expe-

rienced a siege, a famine, the emigration of much of the population, the partition of Ireland, economic depression, and long periods of bleak stupefaction when nothing of interest occurred. Then, in 1936, the Catholics again got it into their heads that they were being unfairly treated.

A public inquiry was held into long-standing allegations of gerrymandering in local government. Cyril Nicholson, counsel for the Derry Nationalists, suggested to one of the witnesses, Councillor James Welch, that new electoral arrangements would entitle 7,000 Unionist voters to 16 councillors while 9,000 Nationalist voters would have only eight. Wasn't this extraordinary?

Welch: 'Put that way it looks...

Nicholson: 'A bit funny?'

Welch: 'When you put it that way it looks a bit..

Nicholson: 'A bit unjust? You are a businessman and a fair-minded man, what does it look to you?'

Welch: 'It looks slightly out of proportion.'

The disgraceful scheme was rejected by the inquiry, but implemented nevertheless. The Northern Ireland government made one concession: the entrenched Unionist majority would be reduced from eight to four. Thirty years later, the same unrepresentative result prevailed. Derry continued to be ruled by a Unionist council, though

Catholic voters now outnumbered Protestant by two to one.

This, however, was the least of the evil. What was worse was the restriction of the local government franchise to householders, depriving many Catholics of the vote and giving the council every incentive to keep housing conditions as wretched as possible. Since every new house allocated to a Catholic family chipped away at Unionist domination, it was expedient to retain a large number of homeless. For years they squatted, two or three families together under the same inadequate roof, in abandoned Nissen huts.

In the face of this blatant provocation, this wickedness, the oppressed Catholics were strangely apathetic. Their leaders did very little, except occasionally to attempt reason.

One night in 1966, after the council dismissed a housing association's plan to build houses for poor Catholics in a Unionist ward, a Nationalist councillor, Paddy Friel, was walking home with a Unionist councillor, Alex McGowan. Friel said: 'How do you, the decent man I know you used to be, sit there and listen to arguments for the building of those badly needed houses, and vote against what you know to be right?' McGowan replied: 'Ah, Paddy, how do you think I feel, with my hand up and my head down?'

British army patrol in the "Northern Ireland" occupied zone police state

Even then, it was possible for friends from opposite sides of the religious divide to walk together in peace. But the tensions were becoming unbearable. The disintegration of the city which began two years later, the result of too many hands going up while too many heads remained down, should have surprised no one.

Yet it seemed to surprise London. For writing a play about the cruel treatment of civil rights marchers by the British Army, Paddy Friel's son, Brian, was accused by metropolitan critics of defending the murdering thugs of the IRA.

The play did no such thing. The hysterical response of the press typified English myopia, English stupidity, English arrogance. To this day, London has never lost its capacity for being surprised by Ireland.

Local government reform in 1973, which brought a Catholic majority to power at last, failed to end the violence in Derry. Genuine democracy was not a cure but a slow-acting palliative.

Of its 90,000 inhabitants, 45,000 are under the age of 25. Few if any birtherates in Europe are higher. One of the side-effects of this feverish procreation is that many, if not most, citizens in Derry are too young to remember 30 January 1972, 'Bloody Sunday', when the British Army fired into a crowd of civil rights



marchers and killed 13 innocent people.

What baggage, if any, do the young of today carry? What inherited burden? Seldom in these travels have I seen more beautiful faces, heard more intelligent conversation, than in Derry one recent Saturday afternoon.

That is how it looks to the casual visitor, but not quite how it is. The local hospital is treating 40 cases a month of drug overdoses, an extraordinarily high number for a small population. Most of these patients are young, many are women. Unemployment, the traditional curse of Derry, remains high. The peripheral estate of Waterside, to which 15,000 Protestants have migrated in recent years for fear of what might happen to them, stinks of crime, drugs and petty corruption of various sorts.

Downfalls of a similar 'poor-white' poignancy will have begun to be felt all over the colonial Occupied Zone of Ireland in recent years, not unlike the fate which befell poor whites in South Africa in later periods. London has publicly declared that it no longer has any selfish interest in how a new settlement for Ireland is worked out, or in the detailed provisions of that settlement. All 'British' claim on any part of Ireland is formally relinquished, as is any notion of any British proprietorial or paternalistic 'right' to interfere there any more, beyond relinquishing its present duties as rapidly as possible.

The Tory leadership's clash last night with the mainstream 'Ulster Unionist' party which saw Trimble and his unsavoury company voting against the Conservative 'and Unionist' government over Scott because of failing to twist Major's arm over more concessions to the colonists over 'Northern Ireland', could be a turning point. Maybe at long last, the London establishment is ready to be an imperialist dog which refuses any further to be wagged by its colonial tail in Occupied Ireland. Maybe at long last, the reactionary bluff of the Orange colonial establishment is finally going to be called: 'You keep threatening an armed Unilateral Declaration of Independence (UDI) if London does not dance to your tune, - go ahead and do it':

After the vote Mr Major joined colleagues for a drink, grateful that his "no deals" gamble with pressure from the Unionists will again allow him to look Dublin and Washington in the face over the peace process — even though the abstention by Ian Paisley's three Democratic Unionists (DUP) contributed to the Government's survival.

In mid-evening Mr Major met Mr Trimble in his Commons room to hear his case for a voting system in

the proposed Northern Ireland forum which would not have skewed the results in the favour of the DUP and the nationalist SDLP — the "list" system which the DUP had claimed ministers would grant them.

The Prime Minister made no concessions while the Northern Ireland Secretary, Sir Patrick Mayhew, wrote to John Taylor, Mr Trimble's deputy, to insist no voting system had yet been agreed.

After the Commons vote, Mr Trimble said: "Any meetings I had with ministers were at their request. We weren't in the business of making deals."

Trimble, Taylor, & Co could not have made it clearer in recent days that how they would vote last night, - with the possibility hanging on it of this Tory Government being brought down by what decision they reached, - very much depended on how "overall, that Government's suitability for all the interests of all the people of the United Kingdom, all of the time" was being assessed. This is nothing more or less than a statement of the obvious truth. Plainly, the 'Unionists' voted last night in accordance with how their relationship is going currently with this Government over the Irish question, first and foremost.

A deal by Major to win the Paisleyites' abstention, thus saving Cabinet ministers' necks last night and possibly the Government itself in a subsequent vote of confidence, - could imply either some very great cunning and clever vote-counting by the Tory leadership, - saying sufficiently little or just enough to Paisley & Co to keep them at arms length while deliberately putting on a bluff-calling show against Trimble's gang; - or it could mean that a decision really has been taken to deliberately get maximum small-party representation on any elected forum for helping prepare new-settlement negotiations for Ireland, - deliberately designed to puncture the 'Ulster Unionist' myth about a 'no surrender' monolith. Any sinister longterm deal with Paisley seems the least-likely explanation.

Whatever emerges, it is the breakaway new 'Unionist' parties, plus the old UUP-DUP division by Paisley, which both reflects the collapse of the outdated colonial situation, and also helps bring it down.

The British colonist community of the so-called non-existent 'Northern Irish' or 'Ulster Unionists' is a squatter imperialist society which has lost its heart with the demise of the British Empire. It started to fall apart decades ago with the first splits in the old 'Ulster Unionist' monolith, - as the implications of the collapse of British

imperialism began to dawn on everybody. It has been downhill all the way ever since, with increasing migration away from the place by 'Unionists', and with increasingly bitter rancour between despairing 'Unionist' factions, blaming each other for what is 'going wrong', and all of them blaming London for its 'treachery', etc.

Ordinary people in the British colony are worried and confused about what is happening to 'their country', but they most certainly will not all be willing to sacrifice everything for the sake of their own decadent bourgeois establishment (Paisley, Trimble, & Co) which sees its days numbered as the supreme ruling class of 'Northern Ireland'.

Many of these discarded 'master-race' foot-soldiers would instinctively turn towards a fascist 'solution' to their problems, - armed aggression against those seen as 'wrecking their paradise' or 'taking' it away from them', etc.

But the historical record is clearly against such responses, they go right against the grain of necessary development as seen by all.

The armed white backlash has not yet happened in South Africa in spite of all the threats and promises over the past decade, and looks increasingly less and less likely. It would be a total catastrophe if it was attempted.

The only thing between this realisation and the 'No surrender' UDI-threatening diehards in the Occupied Zone of Ireland is the cowardly weakness and historic paralysis of the decadent British imperialist bourgeoisie in London.

If it was just once put firmly by London to the Orange colonist community in the OZ that the days of a British imperialist toe-hold in Ireland were being abandoned for ever, and that power would be handed over to a new unified political structure for the whole of Ireland at a fixed near date in the future backed by the existing armed British presence, and that the bogusly-named 'Ulster Unionists' had better start working out acceptable new constitutional, political, economic and social relations quickly with everyone else in Ireland around the negotiating table, - then the only people who would stay whingeing outside the conference room would be Paisley and possibly one other mad dog with him, but no one else.

Logic would dictate that faced with a clear decision by the international imperialist powers

that the historically outdated and unjust British colonial Partition of Ireland was finally to be ended after all the trouble that it has caused, the vast majority of ordinary 'Protestant' people now supposedly glorying in living under the Union Jack in the bastard non-existent statelet of 'Northern Ireland' would accept the inevitable, and possibly even enthusiastically (if the miserable Waterside Estate experiences in Derry are anything to go by) join in discussing a complete new development in Ireland.

Common observation dictates the same expectation. The mass of 'protestant' rank-and-file have obviously not been itching to get back to 'no surrender' battle stations against Irish nationalism. And even the new 'protestant' breakaway parties from 'Ulster Unionism', - those supposedly representing the 'Loyalist' gunmen, - have been much more reasonable about negotiating a new settlement for Ireland than have the old entrenched bourgeois-colonist freemasonries, religious and otherwise.

British imperialism is done for, a historically spent force inside an imperialist world system which is itself on its last legs, unable to avoid periodic international economic catastrophes of trade wars, crashes, slumps, and arms races while facing a world population which, over the course of this dramatic century of unprecedented change and upheaval, has become utterly hostile in general to the idea of imperialist warmongering as a 'regular' occurrence.

With the unresolved and unresolvable class and national contradictions of the imperialist exploitative profit system all the time heading towards World War part III for monopoly-capitalist supremacy, - mass opinion worldwide is increasingly going to be determined to find alternatives to the fascist-chauvinist route of destructive conflict.

More jingoistic warmongering there will be in abundance, everywhere, - as the final lesson of the need for international communist revolution slowly sinks in.

But the overall longterm tendency is towards the complete liquidation of colonial-imperialist mentality eventually. And the dying days of British imperialist mess in Ireland look like a good opportunity for a constructive anti-imperialist advance to everyone's benefit, prior to any worsening of the international situation for all.

The chance for limited pro-

gress in Ireland (to solve a local national self-determination problem) might yet be lost, swept away by vaster events overtaking the whole mess of British imperialism and its close relationships, altogether.

But a rational reading of the international balance of class

forces at this moment would suggest this limited victory for the Irish national-liberation struggle is still on the cards, taking Ireland towards reunification as the world imperialist crisis clouds pile ever higher. Build Leninism.

Douglas Bell

Zionist revenge is the real 'terror' tactic, but it will be useless against the Palestinian national liberation struggle's legitimate guerrilla war fight. The West's anti-terror propaganda shoots itself in the foot too over Ireland's winning fight for reunification.

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The chorus of screeching philosophical outrage against "terrorism" by Zionist and British imperialism on behalf of the whole 'free world' is a hopeless contradiction and doomed to bitter frustration.

The most grotesque propaganda nonsense is being churned out against the Palestinian and Irish national liberation struggles by the press, Parliament, the pulpit, and the BBC, in the delusion that a stampede of middle-class 'public opinion' can succeed in preserving monopoly capitalist colonial privilege where military tyranny has failed to subdue rebellion.

The pretence that the Palestinian Arabs have gained (and stand to gain) much more by 'peace' than by 'terror' is a pathetic lie. The 'peace' imperialism has offered them is a humiliating reservation treatment on the worst land and with no real political or economic rights, – just like Zionism's parent US imperialism dealt with the USA's original inhabitants, the so-called Red Indians.

And even that miserable 'peace' settlement forced on the weaker Palestinian Arab circles with added pressure from the all-powerful Western imperialist international financial and military dominance and by other Arab nationalist stooge regimes in the pay of the West, – was only conceded as a consequence of the Palestinian intifada rebellion which the Zionist military dictatorship and police-state repression could not break and were forced to compromise with in the end, – conceding at last the pocket-handkerchief sized 'state' in embryo for the Palestinians, initially around Gaza and Jericho, but now becoming a patchwork quilt size and shape with more town autonomy being handed

over here and there on the still Zionist-occupied West Bank.

The Zionist 'peace' offering is a total fraud, as every Palestinian and almost every Arab in the world knows. It concedes little or nothing, and far too late, and only as a result of Arab Palestinian total rebellion anyway. The will to fight of the 5-million-strong Palestinian nation, still basically living in enforced exile, can only continue to grow, as the world anti-imperialist struggle grows relentlessly, alongside the ever-increasing technological and social/political understanding and ambition of the entire Third World (now all ripped into enlightened development by the endless expansion of monopoly imperialist industrial and commercial international exploitation.)

Colonial profiteering creates fabulous wealth for tiny handfuls of monopoly-imperialist bourgeois, but it also forces the masses everywhere ever closer towards the redevelopment of international communist revolutionary consciousness.

Hamas is an appallingly religious-reactionary diversion, driving the Palestinians into revolt but an ultimately sterile one, as happened under Islamic fundamentalism to the anti-imperialist revolution in Iran after 1979.

But nevertheless it remains a revolution (where Arafat's conventional bourgeois nationalism has already been forced into such humiliating pro-imperialist class collaboration that Arafat's early downfall must be a near certainty)

And all the time, Hamas is better learning how to wage guerrilla warfare, in line with the steady expansion of the Third World proletariat's technological education anyway, courtesy of capitalist exploita-

tion.

Palestinian national aspirations can never stop strengthening relentlessly. The whole of Palestine was their homeland. Their folk memories go back over a thousand years to every corner of that land. The Zionists are modern colonists, just like all the other modern imperialist colonialism of the 19th and 20th centuries by America, Britain, France, and the rest of West Europe, – inspired entirely by the early 20th century European imperialist mentality, born and bred in imperialist Britain and then taken up by Jews in modern imperialist America.

This Zionist colonial state of occupied Palestine will smite formidably. Their savage determination and efficiency to brutally repress the Arabs is in no doubt, – blowing up the family homes of last week's suicide bombers, and inflicting Nazi-style collective punishment also on the refugee camp one of them came from. The Zionists gun down suspects at will and with impunity – or so they think.

But the Hamas suicide bombers have now given their answer to the Zionist cold-blooded assassination of Yahya Ayash, a leading Hamas militant, – 120 Zionist colonists killed.

And now the world's most blatant and monstrous imperialism is threatening to turn the whole West Bank and Gaza Strip open prison back into a closed prison under total lock and key plus revenge killings of Arabs whenever they step just slightly out of line.

This can only make even more certain the day when total Arab revolt destroys this colonial prison entirely, which is coming anyway:

The homes in the El-Fawwar refugee camp belonging to the two Islamist suicide bombers responsible for the horrific attacks on February 25 were destroyed yesterday by the Israeli occupying army. It was a collective punishment.

El-Fawwar camp, just a few miles south of the flashpoint West Bank town of Hebron, is, according to one Hebron resident "a large reservoir of human misery". Open sewage channels divide its tiny streets. Young children run about barefoot in the mud.

Neglected by Israel and the Palestinian Authority, El-Fawwar is, according to Khaled Amareh, a well-known Islamic commentator, a time bomb waiting to go off. And it did – last Sunday.

In the aftermath of the bombs, their mothers and other female relatives – the men had already been arrested for questioning – sat under blankets in their leaking and bare brick homes.

With tears in her eyes Ibrahim Sarahna's mother, aged 60, told of

how happy and proud she was for her son, who had died like a hero and had gone to Allah. "He was very quiet and prayed a lot. The children loved him. He was always laughing and smiling," she said.

But now she had no one to look after her. Her five other sons were still in prison.

Ibrahim had been the family's hope. He had registered at Hebron university and was earning money to pay his way by teaching at the local United Nations school.

Majdi Abu Wadeh, described by his mother as "normal" and "very kind", was a high-school student. He had been jailed a few times.

The residents of El-Fawwar are contemptuous of the Israeli-Palestinian peace process. Most, if they voted at all in January's first Palestinian elections, chose Hamas supporters. In Hebron the turnout was 18 per cent.

Mr Amareh said he was not surprised the two bombers came from El-Fawwar. "It is one of the most despicable camps and a consistent target of Israeli repression because it is just next to an army base" he said.

"Last Sunday's bombs should sound an alarm bell in all of us. If the callousness continues, other camps will try to emulate what the two guys did to make people wake up," he said.

Mr Amareh believes there is a chance the two could have acted independently of Hamas – anyone can make a bomb. "What counts is the decision to make a bomb. The rest is detail" he said. "If you have the determination and the motive, you can do it – and there is no shortage of motive."

Eventually there will be one Palestine, and all the Arabs will go back home. All the postwar incoming colonists of a modern imperialist mentality from New York and other Western cities will go back to where they belong. What few religious-nut Jewish pioneers wish to remain on land which genuinely belongs to no-one else, can stay and become Palestine citizens.

The outraged Western propaganda has tried every avenue for boosting imperialist resistance, including *Thought For The Day* which likened Hamas to the school bully who should be stood up to and shamed into desisting! And yet it is the Arabs, who have had their land stolen from them and been forced to live permanently in an open prison, who are termed "hysterical" and "fanatical"!

But some of the bourgeois media are beginning to dimly grasp the hopeless contradiction imperialism faces in the modern world, a conflict which only the exploited proletarian masses can eventually win:

The trouble now is, however, that the very methods which Peres must adopt – and insist that his peace-partner adopts too – threaten to undermine them both.

Peres faces a great irony. For so



Palestinian schoolboys sit among the rubble of homes in the Rafah refugee camp yesterday which were bulldozed by the Israeli army

long as extremists on either side have the will to act, the mechanics of the peace process itself now assist them. The perpetrators of last week's bombings came from Hebron, still outside Arafat's control altogether. But the more territory Israel cedes to Arafat's National Authority, the more territory there is for the "terrorists" to use as a haven.

Altogether, Hamas has killed some 120 Israelis in 15 suicide assaults since its campaign began. After each one Israel goes through the ritual of sealing off the occupied territories. Is it both a necessary sop to Israeli opinion and a collective punishment of the Palestinians.

But until now it has always lifted the blockade in the end. For it knows that the Palestinians can no more tolerate an interminable closure than their own people can the terror. But it was becoming a vicious circle. Once the closure is lifted it enables the suicide bomber to infiltrate, but the longer it lasts the more it adds to the reservoir of terrorists, because terror feeds, not least, on the poverty and hardship the closure only serves to increase. Peres cannot but be aware of this vicious circle. But now, in announcing his "total war" on Hamas, he is resorting in apparent desperation to the long contemplated policy of complete and permanent "separation" of Israel from the West Bank and Gaza. That is bad and contradictory enough. But, perhaps worse still, he is demanding of

12Arafat in the peace process the kind of action against his own people which could break him.

Since he established himself in Gaza, Arafat has undertaken

campaigns of repression against Islamic militants which have earned him continuous reproaches from Palestinian, international and even Israeli human rights organisations. He has made himself the object of hatred at least as fierce as that which Peres has earned from his own extremists. When his police killed two activists in their homes, sympathisers staged demonstrations calling for his blood.

Yet even before yesterday's mayhem, both Israelis and Americans were demanding yet more of Arafat, Hamas is much more than its military extension. It is the whole social and religious infrastructure from which it springs, the whole climate of fervour by which it is inspired.

Polls do indeed show that an overwhelming majority of Palestinians oppose the terrorist strikes, largely because of the material hardships they bring in their wake. But as ever the Palestinian heart is in disagreement with the Palestinian head, and every strike is followed by unseemly rejoicing that extends well beyond the immediate family of the latest "martyr".

SO IN such a climate there will always be at least a minority of Palestinians with the will to go on with a terror against which, as Israel's leading commentators acknowledge, there is no real deterrent.

It was the Israelis themselves who, in early January, broke this undeclared ceasefire when they booby trapped the most wanted fugitive of all, "the engineer" Yahya Ayash. The latest bombings were the inevitable, promised retaliation for that.

But the same capitalist press on colonial embarrassments nearer home still cannot avoid spluttering imperialist knee-jerk reactions when it comes to the IRA thorn in the side of embarrassed and paralysed British colonial mess in Ireland. Listen to this bilious retired colonel from his estate near Tunbridge Wells:

WHY, I wonder, do we work so hard to polish Gerry Adams' already gleaming ego. The easy answer — offered out of habit and without much thought — is that the president of Sinn Féin is a potential influence for peace. Two bombs in as many weeks suggest that, if he is arguing for an end to violence, nobody in the IRA is listening. Meanwhile, by treating him as if he is essential to a permanent settlement, we glorify and glamorise intransigence, bigotry and extremism. Long ago, I was taught that terrorists had to be detached from the decent people who give them misguided support. Adams unites sentimental Republicans with the pathological killers who think that murder is part of a political process. Every time he visits America or meets civil servants, the idea that Ireland unfree will never be at peace gets a new lease of life.

Ireland, although wrongly partitioned, has been free for 70 years — admittedly for part of the time an elective dictatorship, but there are a lot of those about. It is absolute nonsense to think of Adams as one of the colonial revolutionaries who went on to lead independent countries. Makarios, Mugabe and

Kenyatta spoke for whole nations of subject people who — being denied the vote — had no choice but to challenge their oppressors by force of arms. Northern Ireland is a democracy which rejects the idea of unity with the south. It is democracy that creates Adams' problem. For he leads — or at least he fronts — the fringe party which De Valera (the father of the Irish Republic) abandoned. And it does not even attract majority support amongst Northern Ireland's Republican minority.

To suggest that Adams and Gandhi are both part of the same anti-colonial struggle is a shameful perversion of history. It also leads to other logical absurdities which ought to be knocked on the head.

Chief amongst them is Sinn Féin's response to demands for the surrender of IRA arms — a question which would be less stupid if it were only rhetorical. When, they ask, are the British forces going to contribute to the peace process by leaving Northern Ireland? The proper reply to that demand for reciprocity — terrorists on one side and military "in aid of the civil power" on the other — is: "don't be silly". The troops are there at the will of an elected government and their presence is legitimised by the approval of a representative parliament. The army has made mistakes, but it is not to be compared with thugs in balaclava helmets who shoot off-duty policemen in their living rooms.

The suspicion that the IRA had got politically above itself — whilst remaining morally beneath contempt — was confirmed by an item in last Friday's television news. The

Government, a young reporter said, is anxious not to push its arguments too far, in case, when a compromise was reached, the murder squads regarded it as "loss of face" and thought that *amour-propre* requires them to start killing people again. There cannot be much point in trying to negotiate — which means reason — with men whose warped personalities impel them to commit indiscriminate murder so that they will be treated with greater respect.

By giving so much publicity and apparent power to their chief apologist — coffin-carrier to one of the Shankill Road bombers who blew himself up whilst murdering children in a fish and chip shop queue — we may well be holding the peace process back. We are certainly diminishing the importance which is accorded to John Hume — the man who kept the hope of peace alive and, by his dogged daring, fought on for hope to be made a reality while the rest of us despaired.

The people of Northern Ireland would vote for a ceasefire by a huge majority. And the negotiations for a lasting settlement could begin — attended by all those political parties which had campaigned for peace during the referendum. Lions would lie down with lambs and only jackals would be excluded. Gerry Adams would have to choose between speaking up for decency and being relegated to the status of anachronism. He would end his posturing on the Falls Road under the wall painting of Bobby Sands and it would put him in the proper historical perspective. More important it would permanently detach him from the decent people of Ireland.

This 'democratic' buffoon is in fact Roy Hattersley, recently retired deputy leader of the Labour Party. His bile is that of a lifelong parliamentary fraud who still squirms at the exposure of his own criminal and degenerate uselessness now that the long injustice to Ireland (blameable as much on Labour governments as Tory) is at last to be put right — by the heroic skill and courage of the Irish national-liberation struggle which has finally forced decrepit British imperialism to discuss ending the colonial farce of non-existent 'Northern Ireland'.

Hattersley is such a disgusting worm that he cannot bear to consider what is staring everyone in the face from his remarks, — that it was precisely the 'democracy' which was the fraud from start to finish in 'Northern Ireland', and the one thing which had to be exposed by being blown apart.

Every line of this fat oaf's whinge is deceit and sly innuendo. Adams speaks with passionate conviction, not egoism; but after a lifetime's disgusting dilettantism as a leader of the bogus 'democratic' nonsense in Parliament of a plainly capitalist and ruling-class-run Britain, no

wonder Hattersley hates genuine conviction. There is nothing bigoted or extreme in wanting to end the injustice of Ireland's colonial partition.

And who taught that 'terrorism had to be detached from decent people'?

It is the language of colonial-imperialist arrogance the world over. But Hattersley is so stupid from his gluttony that his own point about Makarios, Mugabe, and Kenyatta, — used against Adams in the very next paragraph as 'speaking for whole nations', — shoots his own foot. They were all the 'Godfathers of terrorism' to the then British governments repressing them, (or helping to).

And interestingly enough, all Labour governments. So where was the fat little opportunist climber Hattersley then? Was he denouncing his Labour government on behalf of these "colonial revolutionaries" who "had no choice but to challenge their oppressors by force of arms"?

The ignorance and hypocrisy of this disgusting turd of a human being is so gross that even Goebbels would have been offended.

'Northern Ireland' is not a 'democracy'. It is an artificially ripped-out part of six of Ulster's nine counties, gerrymandered to give British colonial remnants an "elective dictatorship", as this thick-skinned cretin Hattersley actually admits. All talk thereafter, including now, of 'democracy' with respect to the Occupied Zone of Ireland is pure idiocy.

The partition was a monstrous crime against Irish self-determination for all time and must be ended. Thanks only to Sinn Féin and the IRA, a minority of people who had the guts to fight for what is right when the rest of the world was filling its face in contemptible moronic complacency like Hattersley, it soon will be.

Showing the intellect of a dung beetle, the Labourite ends with the insane allegation that the IRA fought its guerrilla war for egoistic kicks, — because he heard some 'young reporter' say so!! And we pay this imbecile £60,000 a year plus expenses to represent us!!

And this police-protected slimeball wants to consider his own responsibility for the tragic casualties of guerrilla war like the Shankill shop children. The politicians of capitalist colonialism responsible for a whole history of imperialist injustice and tyranny never put themselves in the front line on purpose, thus making the risky tactics of guerrilla war inevitable, including

their often tragic consequences.

Hume has not brought justice at last, Sinn Féin and the IRA have.

And doesn't the living fraud Hattersley squirm at the dead hero Bobby Sands who starved himself to death to rout British imperialism for what he believed in, — and had contempt for the luxurious club life at Westminster-on-Thames to which he was also an elected MP.

Hattersley's "Don't be silly" imperialist arrogance would make a pig choke, — not an unpleasant thought, incidentally, in having to deal with Sheffield's human tub of lard.

What this obscene stooge of detestable British imperialism should be taking up, of course, is the latest ludicrous insult to the unanswerable Irish nationalist aspiration for reunification of their country, excluding from the Belfast proximity talks the very embodiment of that liberation struggle, — Sinn Féin.

The shameful pictures of Adams & Go being turned away from Ireland's Stormont Castle grounds by a British flunkey will scorch their way round the world and return again and again to haunt the hopelessly out-of-touch British colonialists for yet another catastrophic blunder.

British imperialism is being forced out of its last colonial toe-hold on Ireland by irresistible historical forces, as the capitalist press itself is beginning to admit, however reluctantly:

The bombing has worked.

YESTERDAY'S joint communiqué by the Prime Minister and his Irish counterpart, John Bruton, was firm in its insistence that neither "violence nor the threat of violence" will be allowed to influence the Northern Ireland peace process. Yet there was never any doubt about whom their new proposals were aimed at. Less than three weeks ago the IRA, apparently frustrated at what it viewed as British and Unionist prevarication over the calling of all-party talks, ended its ceasefire with a huge bomb in Docklands. Now it knows the response.

Here are London and Dublin bringing all-party talks closer than they were before the killing restarted. What does it matter if, in the interim, Sinn Féin cannot meet ministers, when it can talk to them via the most senior officials from both governments, and Gerard Kelly and Martin McGuinness can lecture them on their failure to move forward towards peace?

Gerry Adams may have had a whale of time in Washington and Dublin, but that never produced a date for talks. It took a few pounds of Semtex in London to get that. And though the idea of an all-island referendum on violence is unhelpful to the IRA in one sense, since it could produce large-scale backing for a

second ceasefire, it is very helpful in another since it would establish a precedent for all Ireland solutions to the province's problems. As for the renewed demand that Sinn Féin once again forswear violence, well, that did not prove so difficult last time round, did it?

The IRA may indeed restore the ceasefire, should that prove convenient because when it again becomes inconvenient it can again be ended. Republicans will reasonably now conclude that when the political going gets tough they can resume violence with political impunity.

A fixed date for negotiations without preconditions had always been the central demand of Sinn Féin since the moment the IRA declared its cessation of hostilities in August, 1994.

Yesterday, that demand was met. If anything, the hurdles are lower than they were.

The original British demand that all-party talks could not happen unless some arms were first given up was abandoned after the report from the former Senator George Mitchell said the IRA would never agree.

Instead, Mr Major opted for elections whereby the Unionists would sit in the same convention as Sinn Féin, provided they obtained their own electoral mandate.

The Unionists, however, never envisaged that the elections should lead directly into all-party talks.

There is one condition for the republicans to get their seat at the table on June 10: a resumed ceasefire. They have not been asked to surrender any weapons in advance or give any other guarantees that it will be any more credible than the last.

There are also those in the IRA who clearly believe the bombs in London have paid dividends. They will see the latest Anglo-Irish communiqué as the corollary of resumed violence and will need a lot of persuading to give it up again. Some republicans would be prepared to accept Northern consent in return for some form of London-Dublin condominium over Ulster, especially if they have persuaded themselves that Ulster's population trends will produce a Catholic majority within as little as a decade. Yet even this speculation begs the earlier and more difficult question about where Britain really stands. The furthest that the Government has ever gone towards this hypothetical deal with the IRA is the Peter Brooke phrase, now embodied in the joint framework document, about Britain not having a "selfish or strategic interest" in Northern Ireland. But it is a big leap from there to accepting a condominium, or any other form of shared or diluted sovereignty solution.

The peace process began because Britain was finding the price of the Ulster conflict too high. The explosions in the City and the threats to Heathrow had even greater implications than the already high and seemingly unending security commitments in Ulster.

Having got the ceasefire, London seemed in no hurry to go for a political solution.

If that was true, even at a subconscious level, then the end of the

ceasefire shows that it was not an adequate approach. The Canary Wharf bombing marked a policy failure for Britain, which the Government has appeared very eager to remedy ever since. Last week's Major-Bruton communiqué showed an agreed sense of urgency which had been lacking on the British side before. It is simply untrue to pretend that British policy has not been influenced by the resumed bombing campaign.

But where is that policy aiming? The question still demands to be asked. If, as logic suggests, the answer is towards some sort of new Anglo-Irish constitutional settlement in Ulster, then Britain is going a very odd way about it.

Pressure grows to get Britain out of its Irish colonial disaster as Adams again triumphs in America. Anti-Sinn Féin publicity stunts fool no-one. 'Unionist' colonial bosses looking for an Irish deal. Labour's disgrace opens door to SLP.

[EPSR No 845 19-03-96]

The conspiratorial Western imperialist deal to quietly clear up the British colonial mess in the Occupied Zone of Ireland without letting the Irish national-liberation struggle's triumph become too obvious, is inching forward towards its June 10 denouement.

In the USA, Clinton and Bruton out-abased each other in pleading for a renewed IRA ceasefire which could so help the re-election political cause of both of them.

As the *Review* has explained, the situation is now completely transformed concerning any national-liberation decision to suspend again its military operations. Eighteen months ago, London's ludicrous delaying tactic for saving face (not wanting to be seen granting war-opponent status to the IRA, still keeping alive the pretence that the IRA were "common criminals" to be denied prisoner-of-war standing and be given only ordinary criminal-prison treatment), was to sneer at the IRA's offer as being untrustworthy because not declared "permanent" and as having only arisen because the IRA had "had enough, and had accepted the futility of its activities", etc.

Now, London, Washington and Dublin are desperate to get any ceasefire declarations or hints that they can, and are eager to accept them at face value as soon as possible. Now it is the Western imperialist negotiating partners whose word cannot be trusted, it is generally accepted.

Instead of approaching each step in the process as an opportunity to secure such a goal, the Government gives every appearance of being dragged and chivvied there against its better judgment by the Irish. The logic of British policy is that Britain ought to get round the table with Sinn Féin.

And Sinn Féin will play a major part in the eventual reunification process. The dying farce of British colonial spite and arrogance is kept alive only by the stooge imperialist mentality and stupidity of the joke Labour 'parliamentary opposition'.

Build Leninism.

Douglas Bell

So in Washington, President Clinton had to make to the IRA an astonishing guarantee of London's good faith, swearing that the White House would not allow the national-liberation struggle's trust to be betrayed.

These sensational US commitments to the cause of Irish nationalists' anti-colonial struggle, and this outstanding snub to the British political establishment, were all casually reported (see below) to down-page small print by the cowardly and totally demoralised (on this question) British bourgeois press, panic-stricken as it slowly emerges that it is itself as much up to its neck in the criminal deceptions and spineless stupidity which have prolonged Ireland's troubles long after need have happened, as is the succession of past British imperialist governments, Labour and Tory alike:

President Clinton made an extraordinarily direct St Patrick's Day appeal to the seven leaders of the army council of the IRA yesterday, telling them they did not have to trust the British government to proceed with peace talks, since the honour of the United States stood behind any deal that might be made.

"The United States has placed its good faith in the ultimate outcome of the product," he said from the White House. "There is nothing to be lost here by taking a leap of faith."

Simultaneously in Washington, Bruton practically went on his knees to plead with the IRA for a renewed ceasefire; it at last

dawning on the limited grasp of this reactionary opportunist that London's hopeless mishandling of these delicate end-of-colonialism negotiations might be depriving him of some chance (undeserved) glory as the Dublin prime minister in office when the reunification and final completion of Ireland's independence from direct British imperialist control edged its way onto the final track towards completion in a few years time. 'Please, please, please, please' he urged the IRA, to give him another chance to make a name for himself by bullying London into getting on with the necessary steps for rounding off the preparations, - by putting the out-of-date colonial 'unionists' in their place, telling them either to integrate properly into Ireland, or else be resigned to losing social and political power in Ireland completely.

At the same time, London joined forces with Dublin to fire the latest shot across the intransigent bows of "no surrender" unionism, the leaked consultation document outlining ways of curbing further delaying tactics by the colonists, which Trimble denounced as being "produced in a sneaky way" and which left him "very concerned":

The paper contains two proposals which cut across the opinions of the main unionist parties and which they regard as another concession to the IRA and Sinn Féin.

These are that both London and Dublin have committed themselves to not allowing the decommissioning of paramilitary weapons to be dealt with in isolation from other aspects of peace negotiations and so risk talks grinding to a halt on the first day.

And secondly that the two governments have agreed to co-chair a management committee to oversee all three strands of the peace talks, covering relationships between the north and south of Ireland, Northern Ireland's internal settlement, and the future of relations between London and Dublin.

According to Unionists this means that John Major has reneged on promises that Dublin will not be given a say in any matters which are purely the concern of Northern Ireland - something which they see as another step towards joint authority.

A senior Irish government official last night confirmed that a joint consultation paper was on its way to all the political parties. "It ensures that the agenda for all party talks should be comprehensive," he said.

The single issue of decommissioning of arms will not be allowed to derail talks in Northern Ireland, President Clinton and John Bruton, the Irish prime minister, both stressed yesterday in St Patrick's Day statements from the White House.

Mr Bruton insisted in his White

House speech yesterday: "We are not willing to allow any one item, be it decommissioning or anything else, to prevent progress on other items."

Perhaps the most significant movement of all came from the smaller 'Loyalist' parties and the statement of their so-called 'military command', meaning the thug gunmen and gangsters which have been employed by the British secret service and military intelligence to stage sectarian random killings of Catholics in the Occupied Zone of Ireland as a sick 'counter tenor' to the IRA/Sinn Féin national-liberation struggle against the forces of the British colonial state.

A huge propaganda stunt was launched by London to pretend that these 'Loyalist paramilitaries' would resume their 'armed operations' to 'match those of the IRA' unless a new ceasefire was declared by the national liberation struggle. This implied that more innocent Catholic private citizens were about to be murdered by hired gunmen-thugs to try to put political pressure on Sinn Féin.

In the first place, there is no equivalence whatever between the sordid sectarian killings of ordinary Catholic people by common criminals for money, and the world-honoured, classic guerrilla-war, national-liberation struggle by the Irish to end British colonial domination of all or part of Ireland.

In the second place, these threats are almost certainly total bluff by London anyway. The longterm damage to British imperialism's reputation from the mess in Ireland is bad enough anyway, added humiliation coming from the most recent maladministration of the peace process which properly directed the IRA back into military operations to break the 'no-fixed-talks-date' logjam, created by London's refusal to put a stop to 'unionist' intransigence.

The international contempt coming down on London's head if things were let slide backwards so far as to allow the 'unionist' gunmen thugs back onto the streets, would have been unsustainable by weak British imperialism. Clinton's ill-concealed and patronising scorn for London's uselessness was stunning enough last week as it is. More public criticism for causing the 'Loyalist' gun thugs to resume their killings would have brought worsening London-Washington relations towards crisis-point.

The purpose of this M15 and Special Branch bluff about reactivating their tame gunmen

bearing Union Jacks was to help the London political establishment to escape too much ridicule and loss-of-face for when the realisation comes to everybody that Sinn Féin and the IRA are back in the talks process on their own terms and without any preconditions whatever, the ceasefire being accepted strictly at face value, with the imperialist conspirators very glad to get it too.

A renewed 'Loyalist' gunmen threat will enable a new lying smokescreen to be set up around the resumed negotiations, – namely that the fresh national-liberation ceasefire offer has arrived not to help out the imperialist negotiations from another mess of their own making, but because Sinn Féin and the IRA "are scared of retaliation", etc. Only Primrose League fascists, Irish-hating racists, and every vile form of British bourgeois lowlife right down to Trotskyites will be fooled by such imbecility.

Interestingly, the statement put out on the 'loyalists' own behalf was not quite the clear ringing threat it was presented as being. In fact it contained one of the first-ever admissions from the 'unionist' camp that the colonial days really are numbered, and that a completely new deal for all of Ireland is on its way, certainly meaning an end to 'Northern Ireland' as it fictionally existed, (the bogus gerrymandered British colonial statelet ripped out of six of Ulster's nine counties by the criminal artificial nonsense of Partition by the force of British bayonets to save London's face after the 1918-1921 national-liberation war all but achieved Ireland's total independence then):

"We are convinced that sufficient political agreement can be reached in order to allow all of our citizens to have an equal and meaningful stake in the new society that is coming.

"Despite the frustration we all occasionally feel, the democratic process is the only way forward."

Northern Irish society was changing. "New ground is constantly being broken and old animosities gradually laid to rest. We all have had hard decisions to make in the cause of peace.

Possibly contained in these remarks, again little highlighted, or commented upon by the dismal capitalist press, is the indication that the foot-soldiers of British colonialism, the breakaway smaller 'unionist' parties, are increasingly alienated from their imperialist ruling class as the game of domination of part of Ireland more and more looks to be over.

As the *Review* has analysed before, a ruling class with a bit of imperial glory behind it is one thing, – guaranteeing in the past, for example, protestant jobs and housing perks, among much else. But a ruling class with nothing but imperialist dishonour behind it, and now paralysed and losing to boot, – is something else entirely. It becomes just a collection of rent-racking landlords, job-cutting bosses, and privileged snobs, made worse by being politically useless as well.

And if the 'unionist' big bourgeoisie do not play their cards right, it will be a ruling class with no future at all in Ireland, – which is almost certainly why these colonial degenerates will reluctantly eventually come round themselves to negotiating a completely 'new society' for Ireland (in the optimistic words of the small-time 'loyalists'), meaning a steadily reunifying Ireland, and a complete end to the tradition of 'British-Irishness', i.e. British colonial domination.

Routing Tory imperialism on this issue will also mean usefully routing Labour imperialism as well, – already well under fire even from the capitalist press itself for its cowardly subservience to the colonial-domination racket, e.g. over the Prevention of Terrorism Act tyranny:

These powers are draconian. Terrorist suspects can be held for seven days without a court hearing, and excluded from transit between Northern Ireland, and the mainland simply on the say-so of the Home Secretary. Not only are the courts kept out of the process, the most basic requirement of natural justice is extinguished: internal exile is imposed, and its stigma planted, without the victim knowing the specific reason why.

Under recent pressure from the European Court of Justice, which protects EU rules of free movement, the process has been slightly modified, but not so far as to diminish the ultimate and arbitrary power of the Home Secretary.

Labour Party. Year after year, it [the Labour Party] opposed renewal of the PTA powers, arguing, with much statistical evidence, that they did not actually produce prosecutions which couldn't have been brought under other statutes, and that such unique breaches of the norm of executive restraint were unacceptable.

For this admirable stance, successive shadow home secretaries endured crude accusations of sleeping with the enemy. Politically there was nothing in it for them, but they persisted. In 1993, when Tony Blair was making the case, he faced the scornful charge from Kenneth Clarke that Labour's line gave "great encouragement to the IRA" and that he himself was "burned up about civil liberties".

Yesterday, the fire went out. Jack



US president Bill Clinton shakes hands with Gerry Adams of Sinn Féin

Straw advised the shadow cabinet that the party should no longer oppose the PTA. For more than a decade, through many waves of IRA bombing, it resisted the blackmail cry that called it soft on terrorism. Now, when terrorism is at least no worse and may be waning, and when British and Irish governments were on the same day reassembling their belief in the politics of peace, Labour exchanged libertarian principle for authoritarian consent. Seldom has the clammy hand of power – the fear of it being denied, the smell of it being exercised – more obviously throttled the decencies that principled opposition kept alive.

What Old Labour wanted was rule by law, not by politicians. Blair spoke for it. They weren't against an anti-terrorist law as such, but Blair argued eloquently for "judicial intervention" before a detainee under the PTA was kept inside for more than four days. Along with exclusion orders, here were "serious and fundamental departures from the normal processes of British law... contrary to the principles of British justice... virtually unique in the western world".

He accused Clarke of cancelling the separation of powers between the executive and the judiciary, and ridiculed the need to "cravenly accept" any act just because the Government called it prevention of terrorism. Last year, in his turn, Jack Straw talked about "our opposition to exclusion orders" and said no new ones should be issued. The detention law was "inherently unsatisfactory", and there must be "a judicial element".

None of this has happened.

The omens are telling. If, pending Lloyd, the party's official line is that it will now countenance both exclusion orders and judge-free seven-day detentions, thus swallowing the principles of outrage it enunciated so many times, how can it be relied on, when in office, not to be seduced by

the case made by its new friends in the security services? When you're running the state, *raison d'état* take on new allure.

All of which exposure of reformism's class-collaborating reactionariness can only be good for another shot in the arm for Scargill's centrism, whose SLP has issued an exemplary statement on Ireland, which includes:

The root cause of Ireland's economic, social, and political problems has always been British imperialist interference. This remains true today.

James Connolly wrote that if Ireland were to be partitioned, then there would be a "carnival of reaction" on both sides of the border. Following partition imposed by Britain under threat of war, his prediction came true.

For centuries Britain had treated the whole of the island as a colony.

From 1921 onwards it gave the 26 counties of Eire a measure of political independence while in reality continuing to economically dominate. Instead of enjoying the fruits of their struggle for independence, the people of the South saw the same landowners remain in place, and Catholicism enshrined in the constitution.

But in the north of Ireland, in alliance with its friends among the landowners and Belfast businessmen, it created a statelet that was not only totally dependent on the British for its existence, but which was founded on, and could not function without, state-sponsored discrimination against the nationalist population. The border had been drawn to ensure a built-in Unionist majority for all time, elections were gerrymandered, and opposition was put down by state-sponsored violence.

Lasting peace can only be achieved on the island of Ireland and between Ireland and Britain by the ending of all British interference so that the Irish can exercise their inalienable and indivisible right to national self-determina-

tion.

For over 20 years, public opinion polls conducted in Britain have supported British withdrawal from the north. However, British governments, both Labour and Tory, have allowed the Unionists to dictate policy and exercise a veto over any progressive developments.

This veto exercised by a tiny minority of those at present represented in the Westminster Parliament, is a denial of the democratic rights of the peoples of both islands, and has just recently scuppered the best chance for peace since the present phase of the troubles started in the late 1960s.

The SLP believes that the path of development chosen by the Irish people, having got rid of the British, is their business and their business alone. We will work with all those seeking to achieve the end of British interference, and the development of self-determination and full independence. From this

basis, debate and exchange of ideas will flourish on the basis of equality, mutual respect and developing trust. The SLP will fight for:

* An immediate declaration by Britain of its intention to withdraw militarily and politically from the north of Ireland at the maximum within the lifetime of a parliament;

* The immediate and unconditional repeal of the Government of Ireland Act and all repressive legislation and special powers;

* The immediate and unconditional repatriation of all Irish political prisoners;

* The immediate and unconditional convening of inclusive all-party peace talks.

Full support to all such reasonably Marxist propaganda about Ireland. Build Leninism.
Douglas Bell

out of its civil-war repressive-war morass in Ireland, with the active encouragement of Washington and the EEC, with only one proviso that the retreat should not make too obvious the victory of the arms-in-hand revolutionary struggle by the nationalists. Hence the snail's-pace withdrawal programme. Hence the official propaganda attempts to still rubbish everything Sinn Féin and the IRA do even while steadily making concessions towards their ultimate basic reunification demand (i.e. an end to the colony of 'Northern Ireland' as it was, - and still constitutionally remains for the moment).

Simultaneously the complacent monopoly ruling-class participants in this whole peace process, particularly London, could not resist continuing trying to hoodwink the nationalists into settling for some propaganda humiliations themselves (such as prior decommissioning) or endless humiliating delays, etc.

The decision to temporarily suspend the ceasefire with the Docklands bombing operation put a stop to much of this nonsense. Now the entire imperialist camp is clamouring for a renewed ceasefire with no conditions attached (or looking askance) whatever. Just any ceasefire will do, and Sinn Féin will at last get the suddenly-hastily-arranged firm-start to all-party talks on a new constitutional arrangement for Ireland that the nationalists have been fighting for.

The Review piece slammed the *Workers Weekly** [**Weekly Worker* - ed] as typical of the defeatist Trot response to these new developments, not just quoting but actually reproducing more than 400 words (nearly half) of that issue's skinny lead article.

Although some headings were vaguely positive (as the *Review* faithfully reported), the *WW* article was relentlessly pessimistically defeatist and still scornful of the national-liberation struggle. It said imperialism was still winning every battle worldwide, and then spoke paragraph after paragraph about the Republicans' failure. To clarify the argument, let what they wrote be reproduced:

Since the collapse of the Soviet Union, liberation struggles and hot spots throughout the world are being resolved in imperialism's favour.

The failure of Irish republicans to take any other course is a failure of the whole of the working class oppressed under the same British state. It is this failure that has left republicans in the north facing monolithic opposition, with all bourgeois parties singing with one voice, and no independent working class voice to be heard.

This failure has meant that it is not just the republican struggle upon which imperialism is wreaked its revenge. The British state has wielded its weapons of oppression, steered in the north of Ireland, against the working class on its mainland. Troops against the miners in 1984-85, police tactics against anything from anti-poll tax demonstrators to anti-road and even anti-live animal export demonstrators. Repressive legislation, honed against revolutionaries in the Six Counties, has been brought home in the Criminal Justice Act.

It seems increasingly clear that this bomb and the IRA statement to end the ceasefire were part and parcel of the strategy of negotiations and commitment to the 'peace' process.

This was not a breakaway aimed at restarting the war against British imperialism.

Republicans in the north, left isolated by the lack of solidarity of workers in Britain, now see little alternative.

The ending of the ceasefire in these circumstances does not contradict the fact that what is taking place is an imperialist-brokered peace in the context of the US-dominated new world order. In many 'hot spots' around the world, the negative resolution of revolutionary situations have been accompanied by flashes of violence, contradictions and temporary 'setbacks'.

The basic solution remains the same. The working class of Ireland and the UK needs an independent revolutionary communist party of its own.

Though all struggle is for the moment directed towards what can only be an imperialist-brokered 'peace', the battle is far from over.

The new situation makes new demands and places new responsibilities on all revolutionaries. To take our common fight for liberation forward demands a unity capable of destroying once and for all the British imperialist state which keeps us all in chains. Revolutionaries in Britain and Ireland need to be organised for that task now.

And *Review* 841 reinterpreted this incoherent muddle in the following words:

'As these anti-communists see it, "imperialism has got the whip hand worldwide at the moment; the nationalist attempt to influence the historical outcome via pressure on the bourgeoisie is doomed; the Docklands bomb was just another part of this same hopeless peace process; and the only real way for Irish national-liberation interests to extricate themselves from a losing scenario is to join forces now with such revolutionary hotshots as the CPGB and go directly for a communist overthrow of imperialism in Britain and Ireland."

A further 2,000 words pulled apart every aspect of the *WW* lead article from a Marxist-Leninist perspective, such as the following brief examples:

"The first crucial requirement is to grasp the nature of the epoch we are living in. Far from it being the time when everything is resolved in imperialism's favour, it is just the opposite, - the epoch of terminal imperialist crisis.

Purely temporarily, a brief 'new world order' period is taking place which gives a superficial appearance of US imperialism easily dominating every situation with its bullying 'unchallengeable' military and economic might.

But the immediate obvious reality of this 'order' is total unsatisfactory chaos, - and underneath it all, an inter-imperialist crisis of unprecedented

CPGB bogus 'Leninists' run away from Review polemics

[EPSR No 846 25-03-96]

The *Weekly Worker* paper of the 'Leninist' CPGB (deceased) faction's strange quest for a 'non-ideological or multani-mous' Party to unite 're-forged' (their word) Communists has not surprisingly found the *EPSR* not to its taste.

One recent 'communist press review' attack purported to be an analysis of the lead article in *Review* 841 (Feb 20) which examined in detail, over a length of 6,000 words-plus, how right and 'left' critics in Britain of the Irish national-liberation struggle had been proved wrong (in their caricature of the IRA/Sinn Féin) by the ending of the ceasefire.

A 200-word snippet from that piece was quoted, in full or in part from 7 or 8 different paragraphs, including the statement that all & sundry, including bogus 'Marxism', had been exposed by the ceasefire's ending as understanding nothing of the national-liberation struggle or of the international crisis of imperialism.

The 6,000 words of the *EPSR* lead go on to explain why and how this has been demonstrated, but all of this is simply ignored by *WW*, in favour of highlighting the more general criticisms of the Trotskyite petty-bourgeois mentality the piece contained.

These were rejected as requiring non-supporters of the *Review* "to agree with every dot and comma of the particular interpretation of world events".

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This is just flannel, or 'ranting' to quote a subsequent attack on the *EPSR* by the *WW* editor (see below). Why not just deal with what was said in

Review 841 about how ending the ceasefire had exposed the ignorance of Trotskyites and other critics of the national-liberation struggle?

Only one issue raised with the Trots gets mentioned, - the way they repeat their view that the national-liberation struggle is a waste of time, is the wrong struggle, and can gain nothing for the real interests of the masses.

But then they simply fail to deal with all the *Review*'s argumentation about why these Trot attitudes are hopelessly wrong, and totally alien to a Marxist-Leninist approach to such situations.

Eighteen months ago, British ideology on the right and on the fake-'left' (petty-bourgeois 'revolutionaries') slighted the IRA's ceasefire as either an admission of 'defeat', or a Sinn Féin class-collaborating 'capitulation', or an acceptance that the pursuit of national-liberation aims by guerrilla war against a fullscale British imperialist police-military dictatorship was 'futile', etc.

As the *Review*'s Leninist approach has been spelling out since the early 1980s, such class-hostile attitudes to the national-liberation struggle have simply shown appalling ignorance of a historical-materialist understanding of British imperialist decline and the crisis of world imperialism, increasingly besieged by revolutionary conflict on class and national issues.

Since as early as the 1985 Anglo-Irish Treaty, London could not have made it more obvious that it wanted to get

proportions is relentlessly brewing, – as the more honest critical-realist outpourings of the bourgeoisie itself, of course, continuously confirm see endless past *Reviews*). The artificial post-war inflationary boom and arms race can only result in eventual all-out trade war, markets collapse, and warming confrontation between all the great ‘free-world’ powers (and their various areas of stooge influence.)

The revisionist self-liquidation in the former Soviet Union is part of the crisis of bourgeois anti-Leninist ideology, the crisis of international class-collaboration, – not a crisis of anti-imperialist struggle. The Cold War ‘balance of class forces’ was always essentially a phony balance at root because the revisionist Moscow ideology no longer believed in anti-imperialist revolution as the essential way forward for civilisation (see ILWP Books vol 13 - *Gorbachevism*).

Liquidating that colossal revisionist influence on the world (especially on these anti-communist CPGBers), exposing it as a ‘*Leninist*’ fraud (Gorbachev used to quote Lenin too, the posturing oaf), – was an essential step for helping revive international revolutionary science, a step which should have been fought for not through the Trot/Eurocommunist anti-Soviet anti-Leninist continuous treachery to the East European workers states in their difficulties, but through unconditional support for the proletarian dictatorships, only criticising (from a communist angle) Moscow’s pro-world-collaboration delusions.

The examples these defeatists give of ‘imperialist domination’ are only superficially plausible, concealing the underlying anti-imperialist reality.

South Africa, for example, is currently a sad spectacle of bourgeois-nationalist delusions usurping the ANC’s revolutionary defeat of apartheid-imperialism temporarily, but in no way able to detract from the colossal overall historical significance (for Africa and the world) of that final mass-movement triumph over monopoly-capitalist international tyranny. Reaction wanted to, and did, hold onto apartheid for as long as possible. Reaction only finally gave in when it could see that a deal with the ANC nationalists would be better than risking total communist mass revolutionary overthrow later on. So which direction is history heading for, – towards imperialist domination, or towards communist domination? Obviously, more towards revolution all the time.

So the anti-imperialism of the Irish national-liberation struggle is going with the grain of history, not against it. And only some superficial word play enables these bogus ‘*Leninists*’ to label Irish republicanism a ‘failure’ by identifying it as part of “a failure of the whole of the working class oppressed under the same British state”.

But what is failing the whole working class in Britain is its entire anti-communist past leadership, – Labour, TUC, Trots, Eurocommunists, and bogus ‘lefts’ of all descriptions, all of them complete philistines who only ever posture about ‘Marxism’ in order to kill it with revisionist distortion and demoralise the working class. And that is a failure much to be welcomed as opening the door at last to a serious revival of Leninist science, greatly in harmony with the revolutionary spirit with which Irish republicanism

has triumphantly challenged British imperialism.

The fixed idea of these middle-class ‘revolutionaries’, – total socialist victory or nothing, – having been inappropriately applied to essential learning processes in the transformation of the old class-collaborating British working class, – is then ludicrously incorrectly used as a measure of success in a purely national-liberation struggle. They are virtually saying that even if the peace process was a success from Sinn Féin’s point of view, – a reunited Ireland, – it would be a failure.

This is irrelevant ‘left’ sectarianism gone barmy. All they are really hoping for, between the lines, is that the IRA will fight these petty-bourgeois ‘lefts’ war for them against British imperialism. They actually want the IRA and Sinn Féin to split in the hope of “restarting the war against British imperialism”, war which obviously will not cease with the liquidation of the hated ‘Northern Ireland’ colony and Partition, but will aim only for the total actual military defeat of all British imperialism!

This is grotesque. Why don’t these super-‘revolutionaries’ start their own urban guerrilla warfare against the British imperialist state on their own frontline and give the IRA a hand?

This monstrous kibbutzing-in on someone else’s fight by these CPGB freaks shows contempt for the subject and people’s intelligence in both directions. Are they really telling the British working class to start urban guerrilla warfare against the British state in England now? In the circumstances of an as yet incompletely exposed full parliamentary bourgeois democracy system, this would certainly not be a classical Marxist-Leninist strategy, more like a stupid anarchist provocation. And the CPGB is presumably calling for no such thing, of course. But this unstated implication of ‘Right on to the barricades now, lads’ is slyly useful for adopting a grandiosely ‘revolutionary’ posture against the IRA: ‘Oh, this Docklands bomb is just a way of getting back to the peace process. It’s not the start of a real war against British imperialism’.

And such irrelevant Walter Mitty fantasies demonstrate that this CPGB rump is not talking seriously about the Irish question either. Yet again, it is just another vehicle for yet more petty-bourgeois subjective-‘revolutionary’ verbal diarrhoea. National-liberation struggle can be a limited anti-imperialist struggle, but a wholly legitimate one from a scientific Marxist-Leninist point of view in the right circumstances, and even one to be enthusiastically unconditionally supported in certain conditions, as being an important and even revolutionary blow against imperialism. Such is the IRA/Sinn Féin struggle (see ILWP Books vol 8,15 & 22 – *Ireland*).

It is simply meaningless verbal diarrhoea to pretend to deal with these arguments by describing them as just “*Review* insistence on agreement with every dot and comma of what they say”. These are not dots and commas but a completely different world view from how the anti-communist Trots see things, – a Marxist-Leninist

world view.

Against this polemic, and while refusing to answer any of its points, the *WW* counterposes a notion of “building Leninism” (deriding a *Review* slogan) “which allows.... a permanent interplay of contending ideas, – i.e. Lenin’s insistence on freedom of criticism, unity in action”.

Review 843 dealt with this very question at considerable length, quoting extensively directly from reproduced Lenin pages from four separate articles basically demolishing Trotsky and all anti-Bolsheviks for their hollow blather about ‘unity’ while always avoiding polemical conflict over crucial major differences in interpretation of world events relevant to the international class struggle, (which is exactly the stated *WW* attitude towards the *Review*’s criticisms of it and other Trotskyite rags).

The colossal achievements of Lenin’s entire political life revolve around his understanding that without agreement on correct revolutionary theory, there can be no successful revolutionary practice.

A revolutionary party leadership cannot be an eclectic dustbin of unresolved theoretical muddle and differences. This is a ludicrous anti-Marxist approach, – the essence of the collapse of the Third International to which tradition the *WW* ‘Leninists’ so offensively pretended to cling (while not knowing, or understanding, or believing a word of Moscow’s line) to put down (without the need for argument) all those who were not part of the ‘official’ communist movement.

Bolshevism’s greatest achievement, which made the successful revolution possible, was in routing the scores of muddle-headed anti-Marxist

groups around the Russian workers revolutionary movement prior to October 1917. The entire existence of Marx, Engels, and Lenin basically revolved around polemically routing all the endless varieties of ‘revolutionary socialist’ nonsense which divided and held back the anti-capitalist struggle. Just read their books. Frequently in prefaces, etc, they point out that work on more expository basic theory was again having to be interrupted in order to publish refutations, often book-length, against the latest revisionist nonsense. Building the revolutionary party in Britain is going to involve a great amount of polemical destruction of anti-Marxist nonsense about the world since 1917 (and before) from 57 varieties of Trotskyite, state-capitalist, and anarchist stupidity.

A week after the attempted *WW* put-down of the *Review*, its editor stepped into the fray via a letters-column dispute with *Open Polemic* to wish that her ‘*communist press review*’ column had not drawn attention to “the little known and rather isolated ILWP organisation” by quoting from the *Review* at such length from what she regarded as “nothing more than a confused and illogical rant”, which “did little to further our common struggle for a non-ideological or, as you say, a unanimous Party”.

Once again, not only no attempt to deal with the detailed Marxist criticism of the *WW* sectarian ignorance on the significance of the Irish (or any) national-liberation struggle, – but positive rejoicing that the last thing these ‘communists’ want is any theoretical clarification at all. No wonder they are so confused! No wonder their paper is such a triumph of ‘non-ideology’. Reg Potts



Snails-pace mishaps and failed propaganda disinformation leave British imperialism more humiliated than ever in Ireland, and Sinn Féin more authoritative than ever. Firm hand now needed to rout out-of-date colonialism's dying 'unionist' bluster. Tory and Labour stooges of reaction must be ousted simultaneously.

[EPSR No 848 09-04-86]

British imperialism's final undignified scuttle from colonial empire, conceding at last the opportunity for the Occupied Zone of Ireland to be reunited with the Republic after 75 years of infamous, despised, and criminally unjust Partition, degenerated yesterday from sly deception into a nasty raucous open brawl.

London's treacherous delaying tactics, withdrawing from 'legal' imperialist control (the logic of the 1985 Anglo-Irish Treaty accepting the right of Dublin Irish nationalism to some say in the affairs of the north) but at a snail's pace so as not to stir up the dregs of colonial bigotry in the remnants of 'No Surrender' Ulster Unionism (falsely so termed to conceal its British colonial essence), look like failing to avert imperialist ruling-class humiliation after all.

The Sinn Féin/IRA national-liberation struggle has not been fooled into abandoning its principled fight in return for worthless concessions as was hoped in London; but neither have the die-hard orange-freemasonry fascists been lulled into total capitulation to the ending of their colonial rule either.

Ireland's right to full self-determination, – with no territory stolen as happened with the 1921 partition Treaty, imposed under the threat of total British military blitzkrieg, which hived off bits of six of Ulster's nine counties as a monstrous trouble-causing 'golden handshake' to the 300 year-old British colonial bourgeois hierarchy, – is still being insisted upon by Sinn Féin/IRA as the issue for complete all party talks in June with no pre-conditions whatever, and obviously no British imperialist diktat over which Irish interests and traditions should be able to participate.

18 London's outrageous series of provocations and procrastinations over the last 18 months since the first generous IRA ceasefire has not succeeded

in frightening Sinn Féin into reducing its demands, or settling for second best. On the contrary, Sinn Féin's authority within Ireland, in the British-Irish region, in Europe, and internationally, especially in the eyes of the USA's huge 40-million electorate of Irish descent, – has grown enormously.

By firing another shot across the City of London's bows with the ending of the first IRA ceasefire, the national-liberation movement has called the bluff of the decadent British ruling class, forcing an end to its paralysis over finally surrendering, and made it hastily announce the firm June 10 date for a start at last to the all-party talks for a completely new deal for Ireland, effectively ending the nonsense of 'Northern Ireland', (an utterly non-existent country invented as a pus-seeping refuge for the dying British 'Irish' colonial mentality, a permanent insult, provocation, and danger to nearly a million Irish trapped inside its artificially gerrymandered borders (still brutally treated as virtually colonial slaves until as recently as the 1970s and still grotesquely discriminated against even to this day), and to millions more Irish nationalists outside of these hated and unnatural borders.

Thus the British imperialist establishment's whole aim of scuttling out of Ireland without anyone noticing at all that the IRA's unbeatable urban guerrilla warfare had played a large part in that triumphant national-liberation struggle, – has been looking more and more foolish and doomed. The early propaganda stunts against the IRA cease-fire, – looking down the nose until it was declared "permanent", or until some arms had been surrendered, or until prior elections had been agreed before an all-party talks date could be fixed, etc, etc, – all misfired. Now, even more embarrassingly from the British ruling class's point of view, it looks as if the latest stunt to try

to damage Sinn Féin's reputation over the ending of the IRA's ceasefire has also misfired even more badly.

A fantastic propaganda conspiracy seems to have been attempted last week to try harm Sinn Féin's standing in two by-elections held inside the Republic which were being eagerly looked on as the first secret public-opinion test of how the ending of the ceasefire had gone down. All of the bourgeois-imperialist powers with a share in carving up a new deal for Ireland, – especially London, Dublin, and Washington, – were hoping that the 'wild terrorist' smear over the IRA's resumed military operations against British monopoly capitalism in Docklands would hit Sinn Féin's vote heavily.

It was on the very eve of the Irish polling that the Tory Government rushed its astonishing hysterical new armed-patrol strip-search measures for everyone on London's streets into Parliament for inexplicable emergency legislation, backed by all kinds of leaked vague hints about some 'terrible new terrorist threat to Londoners over Easter', etc, – none of which could be openly discussed or debated "for security reasons", etc.

Even the credulous British bourgeois press and bogus 'Opposition' politicians found it hard to believe that the Government had to use last Tuesday for emergency legislation because 'the plan for these powers had only cropped up three days earlier' as the Home Office tried to explain, 'after talks with the police, and in the light of the ending of the ceasefire', etc.

But the South Quay bomb ending the ceasefire had been two months earlier, and only three weeks previously, the whole PTA (Prevention of Terrorism Act) legislation had been renewed through Parliament – with controversial full Labour Party support this time precisely because of 'confidential-security information about the new post-ceasefire situation' etc, etc.

So why this sudden hysteria last Tuesday? Even more mysteriously, news of these Irish by-elections suddenly dried up after the polling day. Despite a huge trailer in the *Guardian*, for example, before they happened, suddenly there was no news at all about the results. And very little, if any at all, on radio or television.

Only finally on Friday did it get revealed, buried deep down in an unreadable *Guardian* editorial arguing in a wholly biased

way against anyone drawing any wrong conclusions, – that Sinn Féin had doubled its vote in both Irish constituencies, – in West Dublin and Northeast Donegal.

Of course the votes are still small, – as the British bourgeois *Guardian*, in terror of revolutionary guerrilla warfare, fell over itself in rushing to emphasise.

But this ignores the key part of this whole stinking imperialist propaganda stunt which was to try to guarantee that Sinn Féin's vote went down, small as it was to start with. But it went up. In fact, it doubled (although the British press has still been coy about publishing any figures).

And even if Sinn Féin's vote has still not yet reached 10% as appears to be the case, this is still a significant development, – and could be very significant in a constituency like Donegal where there were thirteen candidates. Nearly 10% out of thirteen candidates might even have been close to winning.

Even more bizarre MI5 black propaganda was to follow. Over the weekend, the bourgeois press could not avoid letting the news out that there had indeed been some strange disinformation stunts going on around the latest hysterical 'security' measures for London's streets, made 'necessary to combat the evil of terrorism', etc. Parliament had in fact been made a complete fool of, taken for a ride, lied to, – something supposedly 'impossible' in a democracy:

In any event, the politics behind the PTA amendments were murky indeed. The evidence suggests their timing and the use of the guillotine were planned with one aim alone: to 'smoke out' (to coin Tory chairman Brian Mawhinney's phrase) Labour's internal opposition.

Pressed repeatedly in the Commons on why he was moving the amendments now and in such a hurry, Michael Howard, the Home Secretary, claimed there had been no discussion between the Government and the police until after the Canary Wharf attack on 9 February, and that it had taken until now to decide exactly what was required. This, he said, explained why the Government had not introduced the new powers, when the PTA was renewed three weeks ago. As for the guillotine, this was needed because of the potentially deadly Easter anniversary.

In sharp exchanges with the Liberal Democrat Simon Hughes, who claimed the police had been pressing for the new powers long before Canary Wharf, Mr Howard insisted: 'Not before the South Quay bomb. I had discussions about the powers with the police after the bomb.' According to authoritative police and security sources,

Mr Howard misled Parliament. Far from emerging only in the wake of Canary Wharf, the changes finally enacted last week had been on a 'shopping list' of desirable measures which the Association of Chief Police Officers and Special Branch had been urging on the Government since the bombs in Warrington and the City of London in 1992.

In 1993, when Mr Howard and his officials were drafting what became the Criminal Justice and Public Order Act, all the new measures were subject to discussion. 'We pushed quite hard at that time,' one source said, 'but a political decision was taken not to pursue it. We were told that to bring in random stops and searches was "too close to the old sus law" and would cause more trouble than it was worth.'

It is true that, after Canary Wharf, the Government asked what the police wanted. But senior officers had expected the new measures, which were rapidly agreed, would be included in the PTA renewal debate last month. Then they got a message from the Home Office: 'Don't worry, you will get the measures. But not just yet.'

The reason for the delay is apparent. After Jack Straw made clear Labour would abstain, so enraging the Left, Mr Howard saw that here was an opportunity to cause the Opposition a double dose of embarrassment. 'We have no idea why he did it ourselves,' one security source said. 'You must ask the Government's business managers.'

However, seeking party advantage by manipulating the bipartisan consensus on security has its price. The Dublin government first learnt of the Home Secretary's plans from a London newspaper. Information of this sort is usually passed through the Secretariat, set up under the terms of the Anglo-Irish Agreement. The gulf between London and Dublin was an important factor behind the end of the ceasefire.

But enclosed within this leaked information was yet another stunt, – a double bluff. The supposed final explanation for the Government's strange behaviour was all to catch out the Labour Party as 'soft on anti-terrorist measures', – the same Labour Party which had been unprecedentedly right up the arse of the Government only three weeks earlier to push the vicious PTA through unanimately, courting internal labour-movement splits to do so.

It is a highly unlikely explanation, even though it would certainly not be beyond the Tories to treacherously stab the dopey Opposition in the back on any issue whenever it suited it. The Government may well have been not unhappy to kill two birds with one stone with this sordid little black propaganda stunt.

But embarrassment on the major issue for the imperialist ruling classes, – humiliation by an unbeatable armed revolu-

tionary national-liberation struggle, – must still be the obvious main explanation for all these tortuous nonsensical goings-on.

And all for absolutely nothing anyway. For not only has Sinn Féin doubled its vote, and will now obviously be more confident and authoritative than ever, – but the hope of conning the demented British colonist remnants into docilely passing away without stirring thanks to all of these elaborate measures to conceal any notions of victory for the Irish national-liberation struggle, – looks like collapsing too. London's need to call the 'Unionist' bluff and finally tell them to accept becoming part of Ireland or lose all their privileged positions in society on the island, – now looks less likely of being avoided following last night's Ormeau Road battle.

The historical pattern is that British imperialism will finally have to impose a firm hand on its now-redundant frontline colonists, and the confused and tortured mess that is now the Irish colony suggests that the sooner this was done in order to reduce the chaos, the better, – especially in view of the flood of black propaganda misinformation being churned out by MI5 and the stupid British bourgeois press's willingness to be muddled by this, and to bury its head in the sand over the historic defeat for British colonialism in Ireland anyway.

The colonial British community in Ireland has been slowly dying for decades, – dropping its militancy, moving to Britain, emigrating abroad completely (lots to South Africa before the collapse of colonial tyranny there), or whatever. A steady firm hand from London handing sovereignty back to a reunified Irish Republic via any number of interim measures would probably have been the least upheaval-prone termination of this historical dead-end.

Thanks to all the confusing and provocative British deviousness, going into contortions with military or propaganda dirty tricks to try to undermine or conceal this ultimate triumph for the Irish national-liberation struggle, – some embittered die-hard remnants of 'unionism' are still deluding themselves that the 'no surrender' mentality still has something to fight for, even if in total despair.

The following capitalist press comments come from an article confusedly asserting in headlines that 'unionism' was more firmly united and intransigent than ever against any diminution to its 'independent' colonial

heritage:

A fly-sheet is being distributed, which says: "Ulster no longer stands at the crossroads, we are firmly on the Dublin road following an all-embracing Irish Peace Process! Behind the smokescreen, Ulster is being betrayed." It lists the "Irish dimension to Ulster's internal affairs", as including "new North/South inter-parliamentary body, All-Ireland infrastructure, All-Ireland harmonisation programme, Tourism, Agriculture and Fisheries, Industrial Development, Consumer Affairs, Transport, Energy, Trade, Health, Social Welfare, Education, Economic Policy".

"Ulster citizens wake up! This is joint authority, camouflaged as co-operation. The Union is not safe, it has never been in greater danger!"

And then it quotes a southern Irish politician as saying: "Peace is essential to facilitate British withdrawal." The same man, it claims, was entertained in the home of a prominent Belfast loyalist late last year.

Clearly all is not well in the loyalist camp.

17 months of ceasefire was working a slow change in attitudes within the Protestant community, a dawning preparedness to step out of the trenches and meet the enemy in no-man's land. They detected that the political leaders of Unionism were out of step with the ordinary men and women in the street.

An Ormeau Road Sinn Féin spokesman defended one of his parades, commemorating the introduction of internment in these terms: "Our march shouldn't be linked with the Orange marches, there is a world of difference. Ours are about freedom, equality and justice. Orange marches are about intimidation, supremacy and triumphalism."

Last year should have been different. Ulster was basking in the first real peace it had known in 25 years.

But it was, if anything, worse than the preceding seasons. spawning massive conflagrations

Lame Harbour, Ireland's most important port, was sealed off by loyalists, resulting in a heavy fine for the part played in it by the local Ulster Unionist MP, Roy Beggs.

In Portadown, the "Orange citadel", the local Ulster Unionist MP, David Trimble, walked hand in hand with the Democratic Unionist leader Ian Paisley down a bitterly contested road and emerged, four months later, the new leader of his party, giving a harder edge to Northern Ireland's largest political party. "The Siege of Drumcree" became a rallying cry for beleaguered loyalists, convinced they were being ignored and marginalised in the peace process.

This year will be no different. The first parade of the season – in what has become a modern tradition – has already been banned by the police. It would normally take six minutes for the 25 members of the Apprentice Boys Belfast Walkers Club, based in Ballynafeigh Orange Hall, to cross the Ormeau Bridge and walk along the lower section of the Ormeau Road on Monday morning at 7.30. They have been walking the route for a century. The naked eye would

not see it, but this has been twisted into fiercely contested territory.

Once over the bridge, the marchers pass the Sean Graham bookmakers shop, where five Catholics were murdered by the Ulster Freedom Fighters in 1992.

And further down the Ormeau Road stands the crumbling shell of a Methodist church, testimony to the demographic changes in Belfast which have turned the area from predominantly working-class Protestant to working-class Catholic in little more than a generation.

The Apprentice Boys will stage a protest on the bridge this Monday, but it is not likely to turn into a "Siege of Drumcree" event. They are keeping their powder dry for later in the year. The Ormeau hosts around 17 parades every year, but the three Protestant organisations which stage them – the Apprentice Boys, the Orange Order and the Royal Black Preceptory – privately accept that they would be happy if each was allowed down the road just once. It is with that aim in mind that a series of private meetings have been taking place with, as yet, no sign of a willingness to compromise.

Mr Jones is among the many who believe that the Lower Ormeau Concerned Community is a front organisation for Sinn Féin, a charge strongly denied by its main spokesman, Gerard Rice. He says that a deal on last year's 12th of July Orange parade – the high point of the marching calendar – was only lost at the last moment because of the intransigence of the Orangemen and the fact that they inflamed local feeling by taking part in the Siege of Drumcree.

Given that the people who live in the narrow terraced streets, which have become known as the Lower Ormeau Community, number around 2,000 one can only marvel at the industry and resources upon which Mr Rice and his colleagues can rely. A video, entitled "The Law and the Order" has been produced, with scenes from last year's serious disturbances set to music and overlaid with graphics. Mr Rice says it has received a "massive" response in Germany with demand also high in Italy and Australia. In his meetings with representatives of the Protestant marchers he says he detects an envy of his own community's skills in presenting their case and opposing the parades.

Mr Rice, who served four and a half years in an IRA wing of the Maze prison for possession, also admits that the Orangemen he met last year were "sound" and that they discovered a well of common experience. He remembers his mother scrubbing his face and taking him to watch the 12th of July parade at Shaftesbury Square as a boy. He thinks the marching issue can be solved, but boycotted a local open meeting organised by a peace group last week at which, he said, "it looked to us as a means of saying that the reasonable option is to accept three marches".

Without a trace of irony, given the struggles between Sinn Féin and the rest of Ireland's political parties over the same issue, Mr Rice says that "consent is fundamental, but how



• Police battering nationalist protestors at an Orange Order march

do you define consent? Who identifies and arbitrates consent?"

Senior republicans, including Gerry Kelly, who helped organise last year's 12th of July demonstration on the Ormeau Road, raised loyalist suspicions higher about the real agenda behind blocking their parades. It made many feel that even in the absence of bombs and bullets, the war was still being prosecuted by other means. But the parades issue also speaks volumes about the gulf of distrust between the two extremes.

And this assertion of Orange supremacy complained of is a practice which has been quite deliberately kept alive by 'unionist' political stooges of British imperialism, as the same article indicates, - which firm clear denunciation from London could long ago have easily routed, never to be heard of again.

And in spite of all the capitalist press attempts to portray despair perpetually in the Irish Republican camp, many reports still sneak through which reveal the exact opposite, - soaring confidence, and a determination to stick to their principles and do the right thing only at the right time, imposing their national-liberation authority over an otherwise confused and leaderless mess:

In the eyes of the other peace process players who have lent their support to Sinn Féin since September 1994 - notably the SDLP, the Irish government and, perhaps most persuasively of all, the US president, Bill Clinton - the way is now clear for the all-party talks so long demanded by the republicans to begin on June 10.

All that is now required is for the IRA to restore its ceasefire "unequiv-

ocally" - no games will be played about its permanence or the requirement of a down-payment of weaponry. It is what the original ceasefire was all about.

We are in a phoney war period, similar in mood to the run-up to the calling of the 17-month IRA ceasefire except without, for now, the murders and bombings.

The politicians take comfort from the fact that since Canary Wharf, the death of IRA volunteer Ed O'Brien in the Aldwych, and a minor explosion in Brompton Road, the ceasefire continues *de facto* if not *de jure*.

In the 1990s, journalists and diplomats are busy again, reading between the lines of the keynote Sinn Féin statements, covering everything from disbanding the RUC to supporting American Indians, but while there will be discussion of the reasons for the breakdown of the IRA ceasefire there will be none focusing specifically on calls for its restoration.

Delegates will be more concerned with apportioning blame for the ending of the ceasefire. None will fall on the Sinn Féin leadership, with attacks concentrated on London and the Irish prime minister, John Bruton, who has committed the sin, in their eyes, of breaking the pan-nationalist consensus.

The absence of trust in the peace process has been magnified by the reaction to the perceived "stalling" by the British. The view has strengthened that, post-Canary Wharf, the only language Downing Street understands is violence.

This year promises to be quite a period for the exposure of imperialist 'intelligence' agency trickery. Apart from in Ireland, propaganda stunts to falsely blackguard 'terrorists' so as to make easy scapegoats and undermine any firm resistance to imperialist diktat are splitting apart over the 1986 shoot-

ing of WFC Yvonne Fletcher outside the Libyan Embassy in London (to fuel imperialist campaigns against Gaddafi) which now looks as if it had a CIA plotter's hand in it; and over the vilification of the Serbs for "terrorist attacks on Bosnian hospital convoys" which now look as if they were carrying covert SAS soldiers after all, hidden inside ambulances.

Even the petty-bourgeois gentility of the *Guardian* is appalled at all this nonsense going through the 'parliamentary democracy' political system on the nod (although the *Guardian* itself, of course, is one of the key players in all this anti-communist stupidity):

Labour's shadow ministers may have played hard to get before Michael Howard called them in to announce his instant-whip anti-terrorism legislation. They may have been told something so horrendously shocking about an imminent IRA outrage and the capacity of fresh powers to prevent it. They may even have persuaded themselves that they forced Howard to accept some important concessions restricting the police's right to rummage unchallenged in our underwear.

But the reality is that they were taken for a ride. We know it. Most MPs know it. And deny it though they must, the shadows probably know it deep down too. Monday's Commons statement and yesterday's blink-and-you-missed-it legislative process were a revealing moment. Jack Straw is neither a fool nor a rogue, but this week he has been a sucker. And if he can be a sucker now, in opposition, then what will he be like in government? November 1974 when the Wilson government rushed the first

Prevention of Terrorism Act through the Commons. It was an evening which is hard to forget, especially for Roy Jenkins's speech in which he described the bill as draconian and unprecedented in peacetime. The whole debate, it is worth remembering, was predicated on the fact that the act would be strictly temporary, and that in no way was it the thin end of the legislative wedge.

Twenty-two years on, we know better. The PTA has become permanent. The powers of detention and questioning which were so unprecedented have now been written into the Police and Criminal Evidence Act. The accretion of powers - of which yesterday's package was the latest instalment - goes inexorably on. And in those 22 years has terrorism been prevented? Cue P O'Neill's latest bomb warning.

That debate in 1974 was full of warnings about the dangers of ill-considered emergency legislation. I was never a great personal fan of all the Labour MPs who uttered them, some of whom managed to combine their indignant concern for civil liberties in Britain with a lifelong blindness towards the achievements of the judicial system of the Soviet Union. But the fact remains that they were right on every count about the PTA. Like the equally-quickly rushed Official Secrets Act of 1911, another supposedly temporary measure, the PTA was built to last. It was a political gesture, forced on a weak Labour government by the police and MI5 as part of a bigger agenda of their own devising.

Tony Blair and Jack Straw were embarrassed by their party's latter-day opposition to the PTA because it was a hole in their otherwise tightly constructed defences. It enabled the Conservatives to paint Labour, scandalously, as soft on terrorism. Their conclusion, 30-something points ahead, was not to scorn such contemptible smears but to close the loophole. That was why they abstained on the PTA renewal debate last month.

When they did that, Michael Howard had got them. When Labour had cringed once, they were committed to a policy of cringe. There was no way without humiliation that they could oppose Howard's bogus new bill even if it had proposed the precautionary culling of the first-born children of all Irish families. They have squandered a principled and distinctive position on the PTA for no reward, and have done it without a single whimper from the front bench. It was Straw who was being put to the test, and he failed. That's what sends the shiver down the spine. For it is the shiver of familiarity and recognition. Offered the warm embrace of the governing class, Labour fell into it. The same old Labour which has found itself weak in the presence of duty so often before. Straw had something to prove this week. The great fear is that he proved it only too well.

In a subsequent article, the question of the SLP's own naivness, challenging Labour, is taken up; and the SWB piece links all this skulduggery directly to the inter-imperialist

capitalist rat race which will sink the whole of anti-communism eventually, by driving workers everywhere to seek out scientific solutions for the

SLP needs revolutionary theory, but the bogus 'Marxism' of its Trot entrists is worse than useless, especially on Ireland and on building workers unity.

[EPSR No 851 30-04-96]

The birth of a centrist Socialist Labour Party in Britain marks an important stage in the development of the imperialist crisis but also illustrates the continuing major difficulty facing the workers movement which is its traditional hostility to theory.

The SLP policy statements for this week's inaugural conference all reflect this hesitancy to adopt a class-principled historical materialist philosophy on the question of capitalism versus socialism.

It is encouraging that Arthur Scargill was confident enough to declare that the SLP's understanding of the world should be based on Marxism, but it is not enough; and this remains the great serious problem facing the working class and all who genuinely want to halt what imperialist crisis is going to do to the planet and civilisation, and is already doing.

To really take economic, social, and political power off the capitalist class, the working class must become the ruling class. A workers movement and its party of leadership will never develop the confidence to impose the dictatorship of the proletariat (to replace the dictatorship of the bourgeoisie, the only scientific reality about the essence of "parliamentary capitalist democracy") without total Marxist-Leninist mastery of every single issue facing modern society in every practical and intellectual discipline.

No one has such expertise, and it is going to have to be built. But it can only happen methodically; and that process cannot even begin on the larger scale needed until there is more widespread acceptance of some basic premises of Marxist-Leninist science, such as that without correct revolutionary theory, there can never be any hope of sustained successful revolutionary socialist practice; and that

"only he is a Marxist who extends the recognition of the class struggle to the recognition of the dictatorship of the proletariat. This is the touchstone on which the real understanding and recognition of Marxism is to be tested"(Lenin);

obscene and criminal mess which private enterprise is anarchically dragging civilisation into everywhere. Build Leninism. Adam Carr

and that the best international solidarity with any workers struggling anywhere is to continue the fight for the revolutionary overthrow of one's own ruling class; and so on for more than 100 genius-packed volumes of Marx, Engels, and Lenin, – 99.99% of which stays unknown to the British 'left', especially to most of its 'Marxist' left.

On every philosophical issue of life and society, on every question of economics and world perspectives, on every vexed matter of history and science, – the working class needs a party which grasps and gives leadership on these things better than anyone else can. Only then will the workers movement be completely ready and fit to lead the way to the socialist revolution, and temporarily become the new ruling class to carry through the transformation of society.

The SLP policy statements, particularly on the economic perspectives and international questions, have their heart in the right place but speak with very little authority. [...]

[...]One thing hindering and hugely complicating any better developments inside the SLP is the number of anti-theory 'Marxist' philistines sneaking into its ranks. These middle-class sects have always given revolutionary understanding a bad name, and they have not got any better since joining the SLP. It will be the duty of genuine revolutionaries to expose these false 'revolutionary' postures inside the SLP in due course.

And one subject on which confusion is being continuously re-created from such sources, reinforcing the SLP's own theoretical hesitancy, for example, is Ireland.

The SLP statement on Ireland is helpful as far as it goes, calling for British imperialism's immediate withdrawal to enable Ireland to complete its national self-determination (i.e. reunification), ending the artificial gerrymandered British-controlled sectarian statelet which the Nationalist population (i.e. the Irish) have never accepted plus

the immediate repatriation of all Irish political prisoners. It only significantly fails to specify the release of those prisoners, and solidarity with Irish nationalism's right to fight British imperialist interference in any way it chooses.

And how do 'revolutionary' entrists into the SLP from the Leninist CPGB faction, for example, try to help develop the SLP's understanding? They don't. They try to hold it back with their 'revolutionary' sectarian nonsense that the IRA/Sinn Féin national-liberation struggle is a complete waste of time, doomed to defeat, and already defeated, – a conclusion they reach on the idiotic, self-regarding, anti-Marxist ground that socialist revolution, north and south, is the only real anti-imperialist fight going.

Such blind sectarian stupidity, – born of the psychotic, defeatist subjectivism of petty-bourgeois 'revolutionary' individualism because of a history of frustrated isolation in a labour movement steeped in anti-theory philistinism, – has been exhaustively torn to shreds in many previous *Reviews* (see in particular *EPSR* 846, 841, and 840 of recent date), with never any attempt to answer one single point by the '*Weekly Worker*' which pretends to be so keen on polemical disputation.

Now the CPGB is back with yet more sectarian stupidity on Ireland, worse than ever; and with yet another peculiar attack on the *EPSR*, which again notes the venom of *EPSR* criticism, but again fails to reply to a single issue, either on their hopeless Ireland perspective, or on any other of their abysmally limited and incorrect outlook.

To lend weight to their anti-IRA sectarianism, the CPGBers trot out that veteran anti-communist individualist Eamonn McCann, giving his views full display without one word of dissent, criticism, or caution from the CPGB. If they publish this without reservation in the declared weekly newspaper of the CPGB, the views in it can fairly be taken as CPGB views.

These state, repeating earlier CPGB attitudes:

The armed struggle has been a total dead end. There was never any possibility of any return commensurate with the time, effort and sacrifice that was put into it. It could never work.

I do not believe there is some historical duty on British revolutionaries to pretend that the armed struggle viewed from Britain is different to the armed struggle viewed from Ireland. That is just nonsense. I am occasionally struck by how blithely those who wish to solidarise with the republican movement accept the deaths of innocent workers.

I am a Marxist. I have never been in favour

of the armed struggle. It is an anathema to me that a small group of people set themselves up as the liberators of my class. I have never been too infected by attachment to the romantic forms of Irish nationalism. Yes, the IRA struggle grew organically out of the struggle of the masses but it wasn't the only development possible.

■ When the ceasefire was declared there was an air of triumphalism in and around the republican movement and a belief they were on a 'high road' to a united Ireland. There was a certain arrogance given what they perceived to be very powerful 'allies' – the Dublin government, the US and so on.

Of course, the reason why they formed this sort of alliance is rooted in their political nature. They lack any class perspective. Even so, the triumphalism has faded: a certain disillusionment has set in. Impatience and discontent is expressing itself.

Among the rank and file there is a deeper disappointment and a feeling that they must re-examine how they got into this cul-de-sac.

This re-examination must involve facing some painful truths. You would have to be a fool not to understand that the strategy that was presented to them simply has not worked.

In reality, British imperialism has been driven to defeat in Ireland by the armed revolutionary national-liberation struggle of Sinn Féin and the IRA, an enforced snail's-pace withdrawal by Britain towards the ultimate abandonment and dismantling of its unviable colony (ludicrously, outrageously and provocatively called 'Northern Ireland' – no such country exists) which the Marxist-Leninist science of the *EPSR* has been chronicling in detail for over a dozen years.

That colonial retreat, based on the unviability any longer of British imperialism's world positions, continues to crawl towards Ireland's reunification and an important revolutionary triumph over all imperialist world reaction, not least through being achieved, arms in hand, a factor universally hated and feared by even those imperialist powers keenest to persuade Britain to accept defeat, even as the CPGB's incurable middle-class pessimism and blind sectarianism stumbles out these latest appallingly treacherous attacks on the Irish national-liberation struggle.

Far from being a 'dead end' failure, British capitalism's own press now openly admits that a concessions deal is going to be struck with the armed national-liberation struggle, exposing all London's previous face-saving hypocrisy over this issue as worthless, and that the only real stand imperialism is going to make will be against the moribund 'no surrender' intransigence of the dying British colonial epoch, deceitfully mislabelled 'unionism':

The really remarkable thing about the bomb is that it has caused so little political damage either. The



Prime Minister of course condemned it, and so do we all. But politicians seem prepared to live with this level of bombings for the time being, as they showed by giving a second reading yesterday to legislation which is designed to bring Sinn Féin into the negotiating process in just over seven weeks' time.

This is a remarkable cultural shift. It is less than three months since the end of the IRA ceasefire. That ceasefire was long regarded as the absolutely necessary pre-condition for political talks. Ministers spent months in 1994-95 refusing to make any kind of political move until the IRA said it was permanent.

But by that same token, no such moves would now be made either.

In fact, the reverse is the case. The political process goes busily on, even though Wednesday's bomb was a noisy reminder that the ceasefire isn't there any more. IRA bombers are out there somewhere, ready to up the ante if they don't get what they want, yet all the signs are that this will not be necessary.

This is the right course for the Government to take. But it is obviously a dangerous one. If it is to succeed, the Government must place as few preconditions upon entry to the June 10 talks as possible. Participation in the planned May elections is one of them, and Sinn Féin seems increasingly likely to accept that, judging by Gerry Adams' most recent remarks. A renewed ceasefire is clearly, at that stage, another. But the Government seems far less exacting these days about what that might mean in practice. Yesterday's second reading of the *Northern Ireland (Entry to Negotiations Etc) Bill* was conspicuous for Sir Patrick Mayhew's fancy footwork on the issue. Quizzed by Ian Paisley about whether he would accept a ceasefire only hours before talks were due to begin, Sir Patrick said that he would review the circumstances at the relevant time in their totality. In other words, yes.

Increasingly, the real question is not whether the Government and Sinn Féin will talk to each other, difficult though that is, since the chances are that in the end they will. The real issue is whether the two large Unionist parties will join such a transparently pragmatic process.

The infantile stupidity of that *Weekly Worker* pronouncement on Ireland is completed by the routine Trot imbecility that bourgeois nationalism is wrong because it isn't Marxist revolutionary socialism, – which is a level of reasoning on the complex national question which even Lenin's cat could have done better than.

It is tragic that the philistine ignorance of Marxism in the British labour movement is so bad that even the most basic A,B,C has to be constantly repeated; but one more time for the benefit of the CPGB, Marxism has never remotely adopted the position that a national-liberation struggle is only valid if led by a revolutionary communist party, as the *WW* argues:

revolutionaries in Ireland must pursue the main strategic demands of our programme – the total withdrawal of the British army, the dismantling of the northern Ireland state.

Thus, the fight must be conducted on an all-Ireland basis to organically link the struggle north and south with a revolutionary programme.

Nationalism fatally undermines this. The working class has the objective interest in this revolutionary perspective.

The protestant working class is of course pro-British. Yet they are worthy of more serious consideration.

What you see is an unwillingness to detach themselves from the state. The northern Ireland committee of the All Ireland Council of Trade Unions is literally in the pocket of the northern Ireland Office. But then, if you examine the finances of the TUC in London, you will find that a considerable proportion comes from the British government or from Europe.

The besetting sin of the bureaucracy is not sectarianism *per se*, but rather reformism. But one of the most interesting things about the protestant working class has been the inability of the Official Unionist Party and the Orange Order to politically control it.

There are many complications here. In one sense, the proletarian belligerents of the Progressive Unionist Party and the 'socialist' way it presents itself is not new at all. It is part of a tradition on the Shankill road, where it is concentrated.

Having said that, there is no doubt that the emergence of these new loyalist working class parties does reflect something that is happening in the working class generally. Systematic discrimination is no longer available as a viable option for the protestant community. In the past, this more or less guaranteed young protestant men work, but this simply does not exist anymore.

Socialists must make the argument against the PUP that in so far as they attempt to represent the distinct interests of the protestant section of the working class they are unable to represent the class at all. They are inviting the Shankill to compare it-

self with the Falls.

Not only is all this just wishful thinking, and a bit useless, but it is criminally harmful in that it is deliberately damaging to the astonishingly successful revolutionary anti-imperialist struggle that has already been heroically waged for 25 years by Sinn Féin and the IRA at the head of the best of all classes of Irish people in the Occupied Zone (and beyond) and is now on the verge of its conclusive triumph.

To stab a successful national-liberation struggle in the back was never part of anything remotely connected with Marxism-Leninism. Read Lenin's ecstatic welcome for even the blatantly putschist Easter Rising led by the most obviously individualistic romantic bourgeois-nationalists, in part.

Only psychotics with the most isolationist personality defects could declare such conceited irritation that Sinn Féin/IRA should have dared to fight a national-liberation war, – and yet still call themselves 'communists'. What a sick joke.

And what crass reasoning the *WW* comes up with as well. The British colony proletariat has obviously been shaken in its loyalty to Orange fascism, but how and why? Because of the defeated pounding that British imperialism has taken from the Sinn Féin/IRA national-liberation armed revolutionary struggle which it finds impossible to defeat in spite of every vicious and savage Nazi-repression punishment, intimidation, and brutality in the book. On this drivel's own admissions, the British colony proletariat have still not broken from the imperialist state, however. Communist appeals, as such, obviously cannot break them, and

Marx's famous letter on anti-Irish racism holding back the British working class – quoted in Socialist Labour Party immigration polemic

(EPSR No 853 14-05-96)

[...]There were many good speeches against the amendment too, one of which by a comrade from the Indian sub-continent asked what lay behind the assumption that workers anywhere would ever want to be immigrants anywhere else once the injustices and despair of the international monopoly-capitalist system were resolved by revolution.

This more deeply philosophical point raises doubts about

Owing to the constantly increasing concentration of tenant farming, Ireland steadily supplies its own surplus to the English labour market, and thus forces

no Marxist would ever conclude otherwise. Only further defeats for imperialism will deepen that process of alienation from a failed and discredited colonial mentality.

Complete the defeat of British colonial domination over part of Ireland, and then the revolutionary education of the whole proletariat by the failure of capitalism itself can be concluded. But to have not noticed that a worthwhile lead in the anti-imperialist struggle has already been taken by a successful national-liberation struggle in Ireland, is sectarianism gone barmy. And to actively oppose that struggle by pouring scorn on it, is just criminally insane for so-called 'communists'. Publishing this gibberish shows absolute contempt for Marxism and for the working class.

The latest *WW* attempted attack on *EPSR* is even more ludicrous, only repeating, and objecting to, the polemical language of *EPSR* criticisms, and ending with an appeal to join the CPGB in 'communist rapprochement' they are supposedly pioneering with *Open Polemic* and other Trots.

At enormous length, *EPSR* 843 has already explained to the CPGB the only Leninist understanding of unity, which is that major differences on revolutionary theory have to be clarified first, quoting from four different Lenin articles in considerable detail. The *WW* replies by dismissing all this as "incoherent rant", just as they won't reply to this critique by polemicalising against its central arguments, and just as they have never responded to Marxist-Leninist criticism of them from *EPSR* comrades in nearly 16 years of exposing these CPGB frauds.[...] AC

what the superficially-correct 'revolutionary internationalism' of the *WW* really means.

When Marx dealt with the issue of race prejudice in England against Irish immigrants in the 19th century, he produced his well-known understanding that until national oppression and exploitation is ended, then the workers of oppressor and exploiter nations will themselves never achieve their own emancipation:

down wages and lowers the moral and material condition of the English working class.

And most important of all! Every industrial and commercial centre in England now possesses a working class divided into two hostile camps, English proletarians and Irish proletarians. The ordinary English worker hates the Irish worker as a competitor who lowers his standard of life. In relation to the Irish worker he feels himself a member of the ruling nation and so turns himself into a tool of the aristocrats and capitalists of his country against Ireland, thus strengthening their domination over himself. He cherishes religious, social, and national prejudices against the Irish worker. His attitude towards him is much the same as that of the "poor whites" to the "niggers" in the former slave states of the USA. The Irishman pays him back with interest in his own money. He sees in the English worker at once the accomplice and the stupid tool of the English rule in Ireland.

This antagonism is artificially kept alive and intensified by the press, the pulpit, the comic papers, in short, by all the means at the disposal of the ruling classes. This antagonism is the secret of the impotence of the English working class, despite its organization. It is the secret by which the capitalist class maintains its power. And that class is fully aware of it.

But the evil does not stop here. It continues across the ocean. The antagonism between English and Irish is the hidden basis of the conflict between the United States and England. It makes any honest and serious co-operation between the working classes of the two countries impossible. It enables the governments of both countries, whenever they think fit, to break the edge off the social conflict by their mutual bullying, and, in case of need, by war with one another.

England, being the metropolis of capital, the power which has hitherto ruled the world market, is for the present the most important country for the workers' revolution, and moreover the only country in which the material conditions for this revolution have developed up to a certain degree of maturity. Therefore to hasten the social revolution in England is the most important object of the International Workingmen's Association. The sole means of hastening it is to make Ireland independent.

Hence it is the task of the International everywhere to put the conflict between England and Ireland in the foreground, and everywhere to side openly with Ireland. And it is the special task of the Central Council in London to awaken a consciousness in the English workers that for them the national emancipation of Ireland is no question of abstract justice or humanitarian

British colonialism prepares the ground for further retreats over Ireland, confirming *EPSR's* long struggle for a Marxist analysis of the national liberation struggle against the infantile defeatism of the British 'left'.

[*EPSR* No 854 21-05-96]

The world imperialist system continues plunging towards unprecedented humiliations, not least in Ireland, and this will be a key factor in routing the defeatism of the anti-theory 'left' which so damages the workers movement in Britain and elsewhere.

The ruling class's greatest weapon against any serious revolutionary challenge to their economic, social, and ideological dictatorship is the widespread negative feeling among workers that the establishment will always win.

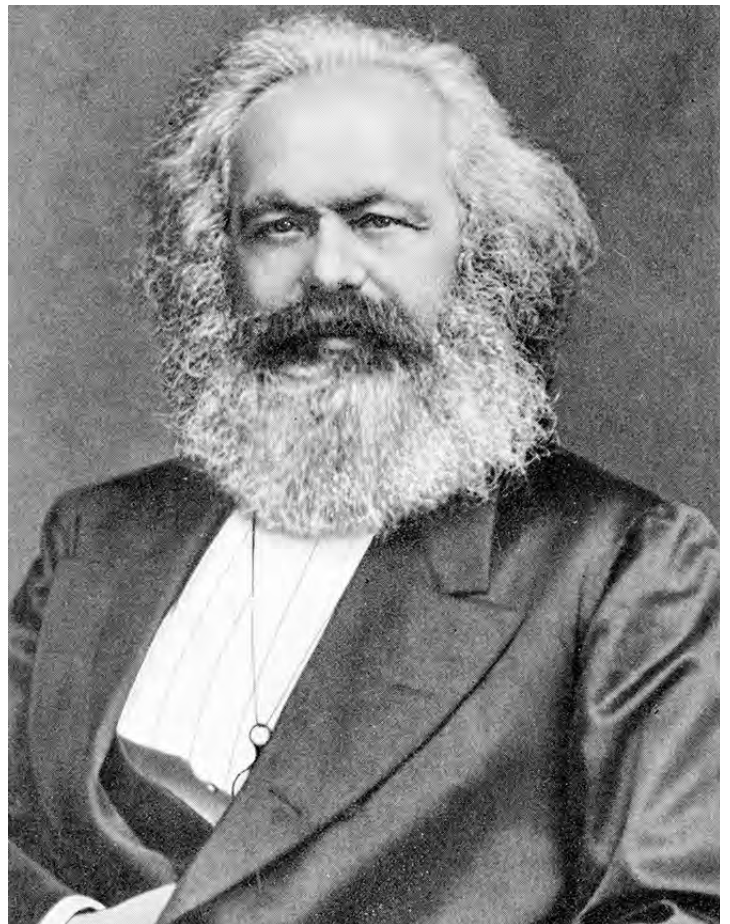
Through anti-communism, the most nightmarish phenomenon imposed on the 20th century by imperialism, – the majority of petty bourgeois 'revolutionary' sects made a 'positive' living out of this defeatism, led by the SWP and other Trots.

With their shallow intellectual idealism and their faint-hearted middle-class

opportunism much daunted by the enormous unprecedented difficulties of maintaining unconditional solidarity (however critical) with the Soviet workers state in the face of each and every 'free world' denunciation of USSR problems and mistakes, these petty bourgeois 'lefts' rapidly evolved various styles of avoiding anti-communism's too-obvious extremes and pitfalls while at the same time making sure not to get 'caught out' believing too strongly in anything ever again.

Thus the hopeless cynicism of Trotskyism and state-capitalism were born, and their most destructive feature by far was the deadening influence they had on all attempts to continue the fight for revolutionary theory.

This philistinism allowed on one side such rampant idealist nonsense as state-capitalism to survive the entire lifetime of colossal anti-imperialist struggles and achievements by the Soviet-



sentiment but the first condition of their own social emancipation. Marx to S.Meyer and A.Vogt, April 9, 1870

led socialist camp, – and on the other side allowed revisionist stupidity to slowly strangle the Third International.

The worst legacy is the continuing defeatism and hostility to theory which is now worn by generations of petty-bourgeois-minded workers in Britain as a hard but brittle superficial survivalist polish, now beginning to rush round the centrist adventure in ever decreasing circles.

Smooth operators of all descriptions have been buzzing around Scargill's SLP, for instance, (as well as genuine revolutionaries, obviously), hoping to gain an extension of life for their cynicism.

Heroic failure is the essence of this Trotskyite defeatist mentality, all stemming from the 'what might have been' idealism which quickly asserted itself from the 1920s onwards as the imperialist economic system continued its phenomenally rapid expansion and modernisation (based on consumerist greed and exploitation), – easily, of course, leaving the initially catastrophically backward Soviet workers state very far behind.

With their 'perfect revolutionary paradise' daydreams quickly in tatters, the petty-bourgeois minded 'lefts' soon built up their "if only Trotsky had taken over" fantasies, the

widespread ideological counter-balance to the withering anti-communist onslaught to which the world was subjected to an unparalleled degree for the next 70 years.

In such an extraordinary historical epoch, only defeatism could flourish on any mass scale, easily dwarfing (and eventually taking over) the dwindling ranks of outright revisionist enthusiasts still bowing the head towards Moscow, and effortlessly drowning out the few remaining sparks of genuine Marxist-Leninist endeavour with sectarian contempt indistinguishable from anti-communism itself.

This widespread defeatist mentality is impossible to crack just by correct Leninist polemics alone. It is impossible to even get the majority of the 'left' to recognise it is defeatist and hostile to theory.

Only the major earthquakes now trembling under imperialism's seemingly all-triumphant exterior will finally shatter this cynicism, first and foremost ripping apart the quiescent self-fulfilling creed that "they will always find a way out of their crisis", etc, about the repeated undoubted economic alarms.

Preceding and surrounding the major earthquakes undermining the monopoly capitalist bourgeoisie will be scores of lesser tremors, helping

to disturb accepted defeatist prejudices, – of which Ireland is a classic example.

The main cogs of the bourgeois anti-communist propaganda machinery automatically poured ill-concealed triumphalist scorn on the IRA's 'defeated' revolutionary national liberation struggle following the original ceasefire declaration by the Republican movement.

And who immediately fell into this same illusion-filled trap but virtually the entire defeatist 'left' in Britain, – albeit with its own usual shallow anti-imperialist gloss put on things, issuing fantasy threats to the Tory establishment that a united workers revolutionary movement, north and south, will soon drive capitalism out of business, – simultaneously disassociating themselves from the 'losers' Sinn Féin and the IRA, who of course had failed for not being 'revolutionary Marxist' enough, etc.

As the potentially momentous developments of the June 10 talks about a complete new deal for Ireland rapidly approach, the bourgeoisie's counter-revolutionary propaganda machinery is as usual quicker to react to the unusual stirrings connected with that approach than are the fake-'lefts', complacent in their untroubled defeatism.

But before analysing the capitalist press's own interesting signals that perhaps the IRA has not been 'defeated' after all, but might even be winning, assessing the significance of Major's *Irish Times* statement, the release back to Irish gaols of leading IRA prisoners-of-war, and psychological preparation for possible subsequent press releases with the sudden startling revelation that the Ministry of Defence forensic laboratory evidence for convicted bombers trials might all have to be declared 'unsafe', – it is necessary to recall just how the defeatist 'left' mentality automatically operates in such situations as the imperialist retreat over Ireland.

For more than 15 years, the Leninist comrades supporting the *Review* have fought to put across an examination of the Irish national liberation struggle in its historical context (see ILWP Books vol 8, first published following the 1985 Anglo-Irish Treaty, – and countless *Reviews* since [now collated in *EPSR* Books 15, 22, & 25 - ed]).

Briefly, this noted the repeated signs of retreat in the way British imperialism handled its Ireland crisis, and explained the background to this in the collapse of the British Empire's

economic and political viability which made subsidizing its Occupied Zone of Ireland no longer industrially, commercially, or strategically worthwhile, – and in the general unbeatability of national-liberation movements in the modern era ever since such colossal constraints had been placed on too-blatant colonial bullying by the history-making expansion post-1945 of the socialist camp of workers states, and the subsequent mighty movement for colonial freedom. It also noted the parallel beginnings of collapse of the old colonial-community solidarity and arrogance of the so-called 'Ulster Unionist' state of the entirely fictional 'Northern Ireland', – i.e. the British-occupied colonial zone of Ireland, which could not possibly survive much longer.

For nearly 15 years, the *EPSR*'s Leninist views have challenged the fake-'left' in Britain to a polemic over its defeatism which hides an incapacity to understand the viability of a nationalist struggle and a fear of declaring unconditional solidarity with such uncompromising guerrilla-war terror tactics, making relieved predictions of 'defeat' for the IRA instead. To this is added obscene posturing about how the 'real revolution' should be fought in Ireland (all workers north and south against all capitalists, etc., – something the Trots never have the conscience and courage to unleash themselves against the UK state (of which 'Northern Ireland' is still part).)

It was even necessary to challenge Sinn Féin itself (see ILWP Books vol 8 – *Ireland*) for its own bout of traditional British-Isles defeatist hostility to theory which initially just could not grasp what a colossal admission of imperialist **defeat** the 1985 Anglo-Irish Treaty was, not a piece of triumphalist intransigence as Sinn Féin first tried to describe it.

The *Review* has continued to use the example of Ireland frequently to illustrate the philistine defeatism of the British 'left' (and the crucial role of correct revolutionary theory for the future of anti-imperialist struggle) because of the complexities of the national question, because of a particular blind-spot among British middle-class 'revolutionaries', and because the possibly relatively-short timetable until the general lines of the outcome of this particular anti-imperialist fight become clear make it potentially priceless for the crucial testing process of putting theory into practice.

This is more a question of identifying general historical trends rather than making firm predictions of precise outcomes, but these broad outlines offer a clear-enough choice of assessments. 'Defeat for the national-liberation struggle, or success?' "Retreat for world imperialism, or advance?" "Further decline for dying British imperialism, or continued successful vicious intransigence?" "Vindication of Marx's historical materialism which analyses progress from the standpoint of objective necessity, or triumph for the 'Marxism' which postures its own subjective perspectives as reality?"

Almost without exception, the entire spectrum of petty-bourgeois 'left' ideology in Britain has replaced objective analysis of what is happening to imperialism in Ireland with posturing subjectivism about what **ought** to happen, which is nothing whatever to do with Marxism.

The most recent misleading nonsense the *Review* has dealt with in a long record of exposing every fake-'revolutionary' group within British petty-bourgeois 'left' ideology contained the following rubbish published by the CPGB's *Weekly Worker*:

I am a Marxist. I have never been in favour of the armed struggle, it is an anathema to me that a small group of people set themselves up as the liberators of my class. I have never been too infected by attachment to the romantic forms of Irish nationalism.

The armed struggle has been a total dead end. There was never any possibility of any return commensurate with the time, effort and sacrifice that was put into it. It could never work.

■ When the ceasefire was declared there was an air of triumphalism in and around the republican movement and a belief they were on a 'high road' to a united Ireland.

They lack any class perspective. Even so, the triumphalism has faded: a certain disillusionment has set in. Impatience and discontent is expressing itself. Among the rank and file there is a deeper disappointment and a feeling that they must re-examine how they got into this cul-de-sac.

This re-examination must involve facing some painful truths. You would have to be a fool nor to understand that the strategy that was presented to them simply has not worked.

This is just a giant subjective wank by a posturing 'left' nin-compoop.

What has childish self-promotion about 'being a Marxist' got to do with equally egocentric declarations of 'not being in favour of' the armed struggle? This is petty-bourgeois moralising, not historical materialist analysis, and it is an outrage to serve up such individualistic posturing to workers as worthwhile 'revolutionary theory'.

It would certainly be possible, although profoundly mistaken, to conclude that "nationalist

revolutionary armed struggle has utterly failed to force colonial imperialism to retreat one inch in Ireland and has only done harm to the real perspective for anti-imperialist struggle in Ireland", and explain why this has happened from an analysis of the international balance of class forces, leading on to perspectives of what sort of struggle "would drive imperialism back **now**", such as the fantasy of an immediate Trot-led workers revolt north and south against capitalism.

But the declaration "I am a Marxist. I have never been in favour of the armed struggle" is just self-righteous exhibitionism of the most ludicrous kind.

A statement saying "I am a Marxist. I have always been in favour of the armed struggle" would be closer to the truth of the historical record since the 1840s, but would be equally fatuous as a revolutionary-theory argument to meet a specific historical situation. It is just middle-class emotional blather.

The analysis, such as it is, simply claims that the national-liberation's armed struggle has been a total disastrous failure. The ready alternative anti-imperialist struggle, it pretends, is to just nip down the Shankhill Road and recruit the 'protestant' working class (whatever that means) out of the grip of the 'loyalist' (a sick euphemism, hiding its rotten colonial lineage) reactionary stooges of bourgeois imperialism.

For the moment, these can only remain ridiculous fantasies, – a complete joke as a pretended 'alternative policy'. This is a British colonial working class; calling it 'protestant' simply conceals the reality. It will be broken from British imperialism, of course, as will the entire British working class eventually. But not remotely possible for the moment, not until British imperialist defeat in Ireland, part of the inescapable longterm collapse of British imperialist positions in the world, has become much more obvious. What Marx wrote about the English working class never being free of its racist subservience to the British imperialist state all the time that British colonial control over Ireland, or part of it, prevailed, must inevitably be even more true of the British colonial working class which was settled in the Occupied Zone of Ireland (see last *Review*, [p23 - ed] Marx's letter to Meyer and Vogt, 1870).

And the vehicle for delivering that defeat to British colonialism is the Irish national-liberation struggle, – completely

contrary to these CPGB urgings and opinions, – as will become more and more apparent as the coming few years bring Ireland's reunification closer and closer, arising from the British imperialist retreat-settlement which will be reached not far in the future, subsequent to the talks on a new settlement (which will probably commence at last on June 10), and following all that has gone before in this triumphant anti-imperialist struggle.

The attempted *Weekly Worker* justification for its sectarian confusion about Ireland and ignorance about Marxism, – that the Republicans “lack any class perspective”, – is just more petty bourgeois ‘leftism’, – sounding clever but saying nothing. It is just a glib ‘revolutionary’ phrase serving to conceal the poverty of the analysis.

Sinn Féin and the IRA obviously have a bourgeois-nationalist class perspective (whatever they like to claim for themselves). But it is just infantile ignorance to imply that this national-liberation struggle in Ireland could never win Marxist critical support, therefore. Just the opposite. Marxism-Leninism has frequently given enthusiastic critical support for anti-imperialist struggles led by nationalists on the obvious grounds that given the objective necessity of such a conflict, imperialism could well emerge gravely damaged, to the clear ultimate advantage of every prospective further anti-imperialist struggle. Marx and Lenin were particularly clear about the benefit which the proletarian class war in Britain would eventually derive from a successful national-liberation struggle in Ireland putting an end to Britain's colonial-imperialist relationship to Ireland and the Irish, which was corrupting British workers (and obviously British workers in the Occupied Zone) along racist lines.

Of course the bourgeois nationalist Sinn Féin and IRA do not have a proletarian revolutionary perspective against all

capitalism in Ireland. But it is dishonest and imbecilic to drop smart-alec hints about this as attempted ‘justification’ for a sneaky ‘left’ denunciation of Sinn Féin and the IRA, right in line with the imperialist bourgeoisie's own hypocritical ‘horror’ at such ‘terror tactics’, etc:

I am occasionally struck by how blithely those who wish to solidarise with the republican movement accept the deaths of innocent workers.

Workers with an ounce of serious anti-imperialism in their brains will be struck by the sheer humbug of such anti-IRA posturers. These could equally be charged with “blithely accepting the death of innocent workers” by solidarising with the forces which have opposed or denounced the armed struggle, led by most sections of British bourgeois ideology, large and small, whose imperialist-tainted mentality (see Marx's letter on the corrupting influence on all British workers of their country's epoch of colonial dominance) has blithely accepted the death of literally tens of millions of colonial subjects over time.

But this would be a sick route to pursue, and all the more shame on the CPGB *Weekly Worker* for starting down it with this contemptible sneer at Marxism's unconditional (though critical) solidarity with the Irish national-liberation struggle, past and present.

This defeatist petty-bourgeois philosophy is all-pervasive, however, throughout the opportunist ‘left’ (57 varieties) in Britain. In the very week that the IRA's resumed guerrilla war exposed the nonsense all the Trots had written about its original ceasefire being just a thinly-disguised admission of ‘defeat’ (exactly as the most reactionary bourgeois ideology was saying), – the CPGB came straight out with yet more blinkered pessimism, seeing only continued defeat for the national-liberation struggle, and groundless fantasies about immediate revolutionary communism, north and south, as the alternative:

Since the collapse of the Soviet Union, liberation struggles and hot spots throughout the world are being resolved in imperialism's favour.

The failure of Irish republicans to take any other course is a failure of the whole of the working class oppressed under the same British state.

It is this failure that has left republicans in the north facing monolithic opposition, with all bourgeois parties singing with one voice, and no independent working class voice to be heard.

This failure has meant that it is not just the republican struggle upon which imperialism is wreaked its revenge. The British state has wielded its weapons of oppres-

sion, steeled in the north of Ireland, against the working class on its mainland. Troops against the miners in 1984-85, police tactics against anything from anti-poll tax demonstrators to anti-road and even anti-live animal export demonstrators. Repressive legislation, honed against revolutionaries in the Six Counties, has been brought home in the Criminal Justice Act.

It seems increasingly clear that this bomb and the IRA statement to end the ceasefire were part and parcel of the strategy of negotiations and commitment to the ‘peace’ process.

This was not a breakaway aimed at restarting the war against British imperialism.

Republicans in the north, left isolated by the lack of solidarity of workers in Britain, now see little alternative.

The ending of the ceasefire in these circumstances does not contradict the fact that what is taking place is an imperialist-brokered peace in the context of the US-dominated new world order. In many ‘hot spots’ around the world, the negative resolution of revolutionary situations have been accompanied by flashes of violence, contradictions and temporary ‘setbacks’.

The basic solution remains the same; The working class of Ireland and the UK needs an independent revolutionary communist party of its own.

Though all struggle is for the moment directed towards what can only be an imperialist-brokered ‘peace’, the battle is far from over.

The new situation makes new demands and places new responsibilities on all revolutionaries. To take our common light for liberation forward demands a unity capable of destroying once and for all the British imperialist state which keeps us all in chains. Revolutionaries in Britain and Ireland need to be organised for that task now.

Despite all their pretence about open polemic and rapprochement, the CPGB has still not replied to the *EPSR* criticism of its defeatism, and so it has to be partially-repeated:

As these anti-communists see it, “imperialism has got the whip hand worldwide at the moment; the nationalist attempt to influence the historical outcome via pressure on the bourgeoisie is doomed; the Docklands bomb was just another part of this same hopeless peace process; and the only real way for Irish national-liberation interests to extricate themselves from a losing scenario is to join forces now with such revolutionary hotshots as the CPGB and go directly for a communist overthrow of imperialism in Britain and Ireland.”

It would, of course, be the *EPSR*'s own wish to join in such a happy dream, but meanwhile the immediate practical way forward is at least to make a correct analysis of objective reality, – the international balance of class forces and the decisive movements within it, – not to sow total confusion by a complete misreading of what is going on.

The first crucial requirement is to grasp the nature of the epoch we are living in. Far from it being the time when everything is resolved in imperialism's favour, it is just the opposite, – the epoch of terminal imperialist crisis.

Purely temporarily, a brief ‘new world order’ period is taking place which gives a superficial appearance of US imperialism easily dominating every situation with its bullying ‘unchallengeable’ military and economic might.

But the immediate obvious reality of this ‘order’ is total unsatisfactory

chaos, – and underneath it all, an inter-imperialist crisis of unprecedented proportions is relentlessly brewing, – as the more honest critical-realist outpourings of the bourgeoisie itself, of course, continuously confirm (see endless past *Reviews*).

The artificial postwar inflationary boom and arms race can only result in eventual all-out trade war, markets collapse, and warmongering confrontation between all the great ‘free-world’ powers (and their various areas of stooge influence.)

The revisionist self-liquidation in the former Soviet Union is part of the crisis of bourgeois anti-Leninist ideology, the crisis of international class-collaboration, – not a crisis of anti-imperialist struggle. The Cold War ‘balance of class forces’ was always essentially a phony balance at root because the revisionist Moscow ideology no longer believed in anti-imperialist revolution as the essential way forward for civilisation (see *ILWP [EPSR] Books vol 13 – Gorbachevism*). Liquidating that colossal revisionist influence on the world (especially on these anti-communist CPGBers), exposing it as a ‘Leninist’ fraud (Gorbachev used to quote Lenin too, the posturing oaf), – was an essential step for helping revive international revolutionary science, a step which should have been fought for not through the Trot/Eurocommunist anti-Soviet anti-Leninist continuous treachery to the East European workers states in their difficulties, but through unconditional support for the proletarian dictatorships, only criticising (from a communist angle) Moscow's pro-world-collaboration delusions.

The examples these defeatists give of ‘imperialist domination’ are only superficially plausible, concealing the underlying anti-imperialist reality.

South Africa, for example, is currently a sad spectacle of bourgeois-nationalist delusions usurping the ANC's revolutionary defeat of apartheid-imperialism temporarily, but in no way able to detract from the colossal overall historical significance (for Africa and the world) of that final mass-movement triumph over monopoly-capitalist international tyranny. Reaction wanted to, and did, hold onto apartheid for as long as possible. Reaction only finally gave in when it could see that a deal with the ANC nationalists would be better than risking total communist mass revolutionary overthrow later on. So which direction is history heading for, towards imperialist domination, or towards communist domination? Obviously, more towards revolution all the time.

So the anti-imperialism of the Irish national-liberation struggle is going with the grain of history, not against it. And only some superficial word play enables these bogus ‘Leninists’ to label Irish republicanism a ‘failure’ – by identifying it as part of “a failure of the whole of the working class oppressed under the same British state”.

But what is failing the whole working class in Britain is its entire anti-communist past leadership, – Labour, TUC, Trots, Eurocommunists, and bogus ‘lefts’ of all descriptions, all of them complete Philistines who only ever posture about ‘Marxism’ in order to kill it with revisionist distortion and demoralise the working class. And that is a failure to be welcomed as opening

The 1996 truck bombing of London Docklands brought to an end the first IRA ceasefire, causing massive economic damage. It saw a rapid shift in imperialism's stalling and contemptuous prevarications on the peace talks



the door at last to a serious revival of Leninist science, greatly in harmony with the revolutionary spirit with which Irish republicanism has triumphantly challenged British imperialism.

The essence of that challenge is now being seen to be coming to the boil by everyone (except the isolated sectarian 'lefts', of course) as the June 10 talks (which should effectively result in declaring the beginning of the end for 'Northern Ireland', the diseased historical racket fraudulently pretending to be a separate country when it is just an occupied British-colonial zone of Ireland), at last come into view.

As the capitalist press itself admits about the imperialist disarray in its own ranks over fears of what John Major's notorious *Irish Times* article last week was trying to tell the world, the panic is now on that imperialism is accepting defeat: Is the IRA winning? asked the *Daily Telegraph* and called Major's initiative 'a fudge'. A restrained *Times* observed: "The wisdom of his current approach must be questioned." An unrestrained *Daily Mail* referred to it as an act of appeasement' and the *Daily Express* claimed Major had 'performed a soft shoe shuffle... to the fury of his critics.'

'Even close allies are baffled,' said the *Express*. The announcement 'clearly worries some Ministers', alleged the *Telegraph*. And the *Times* quoted an unnamed MP who said he and 'one or two colleagues are seriously considering resigning the whip if the Government persists with this'. In reality, 'both London and Dublin have danced to the Republican flute,' said its leader. 'They have placed courting the IRA above attempting to make progress without it.'

It is blindingly clear that the British Government's enemy in Northern Ireland has been the IRA. How, therefore, can the *Times'* leader writer argue that substantive peace talks exclude the IRA's political wing, Sinn Féin?

The answer lies in the assumption of right-wing newspapers that the original ceasefire represented some kind of military victory and that its proponents do not merit a place at any peace table. That is why papers, along with Unionist politicians, have placed so much emphasis on the surrender of arms. Then apparent victory becomes real.

The *London Evening Standard* said as much in arguing the point the other way round: The IRA would never concede such a step [disarming], because it would be an admission of military defeat.' However, the paper seemed happy – in line with Major's view – that some kind of gesture by the IRA, such as 'a token handover of Republican weapons to some neutral supervisory body', might suffice.

For the most Unionist of papers, compromise is irrelevant. The *Daily Telegraph* cut through semantics with what amounts to a call to arms:

'Do Ministers not realise that they risk driving Loyalists towards their own resumption of terrorism – and bloodier violence than before?'

To grasp just how irresponsible, and bigoted, this statement is, simply substitute the word 'Republicans' for 'Loyalists'. What newspaper would dare to threaten the British Government's peace goal by encouraging the IRA to bloody violence? Yet readers accept this outrageous Orange bias because of the years of press coverage in which only one enemy of the British state, the IRA, has been identified.

In its four grudging paragraphs on Major's article, the *Sun* quoted Democratic Unionist spokesman Sammy Wilson as calling the Prime Minister 'a pathetic man of putty'. Elsewhere we heard Major called 'a sheep' and 'a doormat'. Major might want peace but Tory papers clearly favour war. To adapt the *Telegraph's* leader writer: Do newspapers not realise that their continuing bias risks driving everyone to a resumption of terrorism – and bloodier violence than before?

Another Fleet Street rag tries to put a 'progressive liberal' gloss on the same imperialist retreat:

London will not now stall the talks over the issue of weapons decommissioning.

This is a genuinely welcome change from the British position last year. Fifteen months ago, Sir Patrick Mayhew set out a precondition for all-party talks which became known in Ulster-speak as Washington Three. It demanded "the actual decommissioning of some arms as a tangible confidence-building measure". That precondition created an impasse, and arguably helped to provoke the end of the IRA ceasefire. It has taken most of this year to extricate Britain from its self-created hole, but Mr Major's article is a vital step in completing that process. Decommissioning, it says, must be "addressed at the beginning of the talks" and the *Mitchell Report's* recommendations taken forward. But this must be done, says a crucial phrase in the article, "without blocking the negotiations".

This is not the end of all discussion on the subject. But it unquestionably aligns the British with the Irish government in seeking to place decommissioning into a separate but parallel talks process, the so-called "fourth strand". It also means that, once the May 30 elections have taken place, the two governments will be back on the track of using the *Mitchell Report* as the basis for future progress. Decommissioning is no longer a precondition. The way now lies clear for substantive discussion on all issues. The agenda is open, says Mr Major's article, and Britain is committed to "a genuine and serious effort to reach a comprehensive settlement covering all the issues of concern and acceptable to all concerned."

At the start of this week the Sinn Féin hierarchy asked for reassurances from Mr Major himself that the talks would be comprehensive and unencumbered by preconditions. Within days, Mr Major has given a public and positive answer.



▲ IRA training camp

There are still preconditions, above all the requirement for the IRA to resume its ceasefire, but the road is open on the basis which Irish nationalists and republicans alike (and others too) have long advocated.

The bourgeoisie's 'anti-terrorist' self-righteousness is steadily being softened up prior to breaking down completely as the post-June 10 dealing gets under way.

Far from there being any serious Tory attempt to renew their Curragh Mutiny treason (to thwart Home Rule for the whole of Ireland prior to the First World War, threatening civil war on the streets of Ulster against the Liberal Government), – most of the cowed British ruling-class pressure will go on advising the die-hard colonist 'Unionists' to not push their luck too far on what is now a historically spent issue, (given the clear directives from Washington and the Common Market partners that they would prefer British colonial history in Ireland to be brought to an dignified and trouble-free an end as possible, and as soon as possible).

That means capitulating to the IRA's determined 'shot across the bows' at London's Dockland in early February and at last agree a firm date for peace talks (June 10), and giving way on every other bogus delaying-tactic as well, such as the earlier posturing drivel about ceasefire conditions, about prior de-commissioning gestures, about initial de-commissioning promises, and about a host of other provocative pre-conditions designed to create a false picture of 'British imperialism negotiating from strength' and the national-liberation struggle negotiating from a position of enforced surrender and weakness.

To prepare the humiliated British ruling class for even

bigger climb-downs to come, the astonishing announcement that the legal forensic proof of all bombing-convictions since 1988 might now all be declared a mistake must rank as one of the most self-destructive propaganda retreats of all time. The unchallenged repatriation of more IRA prisoners-of-war is one obvious immediate purpose of such a frank admission of colossal stupidity and incompetence, but the speculation must be that a more devious purpose of such an extraordinary own goal was to undermine any remaining British colonial intransigence/confidence from the die-hard 'Unionists' which is the real remaining threat to British imperialism's purpose at the June 10 peace negotiations.

The more perceptive sections of the capitalist press are already tuning in to this new key for the final movements on a 'bash the Orange troublemakers' theme:

The symbolism is entirely apt, for the Unionists' attempts to reposition themselves in the political marketplace require a tactful rewriting of history. They have perceived the need to distance themselves from the image of their creed conveyed by Ian Paisley and his acolytes – that curious amalgam of whingeing defensiveness, racist triumphalism and religious bigotry which has been such a turn-off for the mainland Brits who, in the end, subsidise it. In its place, Mr Trimble and his advisers seek to insinuate a picture of Unionism as the very soul of sweet, democratic reasonableness, and of themselves as a persecuted and much-misunderstood minority whose only desire in life is to make 'progress' on 'difficult and complex' issues.

In effecting this transformation, they are considerably assisted by the historical illiteracy – not to mention the newt-like memory span – of much of the British mass media. As a result, some violence has been done to the truth. An impression has been created in the public mind, for example, that the only ob-

stacles to progress in the Northern Ireland peace process are Mr Adams and his friends in the IRA. To anyone who knows anything about the filibustering intransigence of Ulster Unionism, this impression must raise a wry smile, for David Trimble and his crew make Sinn Féin look like poodles on Valium. Dr Paisley's celebrated mantra - 'Ulster Says No' - may not be blazoned on the walls of the UO, but the sentiment underlying it remains the motivating force of the party and its grassroots constituents.

The New Unionists are likewise making a lot of noise about their commitment to democratic processes. In their response to the report of the Mitchell Commission, for example, they insist that 'the democratic *bona fides* of those seeking to influence the future of Northern Ireland must be firmly established'. There is, they maintain, 'a fundamental principle at stake. It is the principle of democratic procedure, without which no civilised politics and no basis for agreement can be established... We are calling for elections in order to establish, on behalf of those who seek to engage in all-party talks, a mandate based on subscription to democratic procedure'.

Splendid stuff, eh? And terrific to hear it from a party whose founders were so committed to the democratic process that when said process looked like granting a measure of Home Rule within the Empire to a united Ireland - a measure supported, incidentally, by a majority of the elected representatives of a United Kingdom which then included the southern as well as the northern part of Ireland - they denounced this democratic consent as a 'conspiracy' and pledged themselves in a solemn league and covenant to 'use all means' to defeat it. The means in question included forming a huge paramilitary army called the Ulster Volunteer Force and importing 35,000 rifles, 2.5 million rounds of ammunition and assorted other munitions.

One's delight at the New Unionists' conversion to democracy is further heightened by the memory that for 50 years their heroes - and in many cases, their current members - ran the nastiest, most repressive little statelet outside of Verwoerd's South Africa. Northern Ireland under the Craigs and the Taylors and their farce of a parliament at Stormont was a vicious place in which a substantial ethnic minority was systematically disenfranchised, discriminated against and terrorised, in which a sectarian and heavily armed police force maintained a brutal semblance of order and in which civil liberties were available only to those of the right religious and racial stripe. The fact that this all went on with the connivance of the Mother of Parliaments is, of course, a blot on the British escutcheon, but it should never be allowed to obscure the fact that Stormont and its excesses were the product of a Unionist family business.

Mr Trimble, who was but an earnest, bespectacled law student in 1968 when the RUC were kicking the living daylight out of civil rights marchers, wants to divert our at-

tention from these squalid facts. But he presides over an organisation whose members still routinely commemorate them - as we shall see shortly when the so-called 'marching season' begins. This is that demented time of year in which something like three thousand processions of bowler-hatted toffs and working-class yobs turn out to celebrate their ascendancy over their Catholic neighbours. You won't hear much about this from the Ulster Information Office, but you can bet your bottom dollar that Messrs Trimble, Taylor & Co will be on hand to lend support.

And the striking of this new anti-'Unionist' note follows the quite remarkable capitalist press silence or muted response to the amazing London announcement that the notorious forum to be elected on May 30, so bitterly denounced by Sinn Féin and the entire nationalist Irish cause, would have no independent role at all at the June 10 talks, - as big a kick in the face to all past British imperialist 'democracy' posturing as could be imagined.

There has been equal silence (apart from Paisley) over the repatriation of some of the IRA's top figures in UK prisons, which the capitalist press itself had admitted was one of the IRA's own preconditions for agreeing to a new ceasefire to help British imperialism with its June 10 peace-talks difficulties.

And all these humiliating reverses to blind British stupidity, deluding itself about an IRA 'defeat', came on top of the staggering revelations in press and book that a Back Channel had been kept open between Downing Street and Sinn Féin for years to work out a peace settlement while in public the IRA was still officially being denounced and ostracised:

THREE separate initiatives in progress during the early Nineties are tracked by The Fight for Peace.

The third, clandestine and hazardous, was the Back Channel.

'It survived many acts of violence - indeed the Government used it to complain about IRA attacks.

'It was not broken by the mortar attack on Downing Street, by the Teebane crossroads killings nor by the many other killings and bombings in Northern Ireland, Britain and mainland Europe.

'It was not broken by the deaths of the two children in the Warrington bombing; nor when, in a series of incidents, the SAS killed IRA volunteers...

'It began to function in Mrs Thatcher's time under her Northern Ireland secretary, Peter Brooke, and was kept open by John Major and Sir Patrick Mayhew.'

Looking back, the idea of the delegate meetings may have been a Machiavellian British scheme to test the readiness of republicans to talk about ideas short of a British declaration of intent to withdraw.

'After the disclosures, many were left angry about the thought that John Major, who had proclaimed to the Commons that the thought of talking to Gerry Adams would turn his stomach, had actually been maintaining indirect contact with him for years.'

IN 1995, after he had left office, Peter Brooke readily confirmed that he had authorised the opening of contacts [with Sinn Féin] in 1990. In doing so he contradicted the official Government assertion that the Back Channel opened in 1993 and confirmed the timetable outlined by Martin McGuinness.

Asked whether he had ever come across a message saying that the IRA

wanted to surrender and wanted the Government to help them [a claim made by Government sources when the *Observer* story broke], he replied: 'No, I certainly wouldn't say that. According to the Sinn Féin version, the Back Channel had existed for more than 20 years.

Imperialism is in crisis, and defeatist hostility to correct revolutionary theory is the worst obstacle facing development of a Marxist-Leninist workers movement to exploit the deepening crisis all the way to revolution.

Build Leninism.
Douglas Bell

British colonialism's Irish debacle is most instructive about imperialist system weaknesses as monopoly capitalist 'know-how' and power explode chaotically around the sick profiteering rivalry of the bogus 'European Union'. Fake-'Marxist left' exposed in all its sectarian stupidity over Ireland.

[EPSR No 855 28-05-96]

The fake 'democracy' of elections this week in the British-Occupied Zone of Ireland, still suffering under its gerrymandered artificial Orange-colonist majority, will be one of the last farcical acts of the hated imperialist domination.

The polling for the cosmetic 'Forum' is a final gesture by the humiliated London establishment to its own stupid fears of losing face, and to the sick 'Ulster Unionist' posturing of its outdated colonial regime in the OZ.

The 'Forum' was a skinny useless rabbit pulled out of the hat at the 189th minute by the Tory ruling class after the Mitchell Commission Report had effectively told London to drop all preconditions about 'decommissioning arms', etc, and fix a firm date for all-party negotiations, at last, on a completely new deal for Ireland.

The South quay bomb in London's Docklands in February was the national-liberation struggle's effective answer to this further unconfident dithering by London, frightened of further setbacks at the hands of the IRA's guerrilla war, but too befuddled and timid to finally push its 'Unionist' stooges into a corner either, and tell them to at last face up to the loss of their former colonial rackets in so-called 'Northern Ireland'.

The 'Forum' elections gimmick was persisted in, but the

firm date (June 10) was at once fixed for the opening of the all-sided negotiations, London, Dublin, the 'Unionists', and the Irish nationalist population of the Occupied Zone, - with heavyweight imperialism from the USA and Europe hovering in the background to push the reluctant British ruling class into agreeing some new deal for Ireland to replace the despised colony position and Partition provocation of 'Northern Ireland' as it was, - a permanent legitimate target for revolutionary guerrilla-war action.

Having accepted that the peace process must finally begin, the Tory hierarchy has since February been going through contortions trying to admit that there will no longer be any preconditions imposed on the national liberation movement at all, - while continuing to cloak their public statements in such confusion that the leading 'Unionist' posturers would not feel too exposed as empty bags of wind and feel obliged to resign.

London's further retreat, clearly visible for a while and always inevitable according to the historical-materialist analysis of imperialist decline (and especially the collapse of British imperialism's positions) which the *EPSR* long ago established (see *ILWP* Books vol 8 - *Ireland*, published just after the turning-point climb-down for Britain in the 1985 Anglo-Irish

Treaty)), – was semi-official in this weekend's capitalist press admissions:

THE BRITISH Government is prepared to allow detailed discussions to begin on constitutional and political issues at the all-party Northern Ireland talks before the IRA starts handing over its weapons, the *Observer* has learned.

The IRA has repeatedly made it clear it will not accept decommissioning as a precondition for negotiations.

In sum, Dublin now accepts there would not have been a ceasefire in the first place had there been such a stipulation. It takes the view it would be much harder a second time round to make another ceasefire conditional on decommissioning as a route into the 10 June talks.

The British Government holds to the view that it has compromised on the issue. Sir Patrick Mayhew said last week the Government wanted decommissioning ahead of all party negotiations. The IRA said it could only happen at the end.

The Mitchell Commission supposed 'middle course', – no prior decommissioning before talks start immediately; disarming to be dealt with in the course of the negotiations, – is in fact a complete capitulation by London.

The leaders of the national-liberation struggle will enter the peace process in total triumph, having forced the imperialist colonisers to negotiate a new deal for Ireland, and having surrendered none of their weapons, ready and willing to resume the guerrilla war the moment that London sabotages the talks again, or allows its 'Unionist' stooges to do so.

It is not even absolutely certain that the IRA will honour the settlement conference with another ceasefire, although they will probably do so out of good tactical sense. But the national liberation struggle has properly refused all demands for any 'guarantee', – short-term or longterm, – about ending its military activities. The South Quay bomb was and remains an effective ultimatum: Either talk seriously about a new deal for Ireland, or you know what to expect. And that will continue to be the sole reality, whatever idiot pretences that the Tory imperialist press propagandists try to come up with.

The desperately posturing 'Unionists' attempted one last 'menacing' hoax last week (to try to hide their retreat from their notorious 'No Surrender' past colonial bluster) when the UUP spokesman Trimble pretended to threaten to bring down Major's precarious government (only a one-vote majority in the Commons with the aid of the 'Unionist' MPs).

This should have been a sensational story, – a real threat to bring down the Tories after 17 years in power, and a real threat to rip apart the obvious unquestioning past unity between the colonists and their imperialist protectors.

But the story barely caused a ripple in the capitalist press. Everyone (bar the fake-'left' in Britain) now recognises that the British presence in Ireland is going to have to make a historic compromise with Irish nationalist self-determination in the coming period (months or years), and that the old 'Unionist' defiance of 'No Surrender' – (meaning continued exclusively British control over the Occupied Zone) is now hopelessly out-of-date and is what is going to have to disappear in order to make way for a new set-up in Ireland.

The long-running scuttle from colonial empire is going to continue. The only thing left to the British imperialists of all shades is to try to rescue a little prestige and avoid total humiliation at the hands of the despised 'bog-trotters' (six of whom it takes, remember, to change one light bulb).

The 'Unionist' bourgeoisie do not wish to appear too naked of real political power and know-how in front of their own working class, for fear of losing even more than just their ill-gotten privileged position in the bogus statelet of 'Northern Ireland'. The British imperialist state did not want to be seen to have been defeated by a relatively tiny movement of armed urban guerrillas.

Hence the problem for the imperialists in their long slow retreat from colonial empire in Ireland has been one of endless cover-ups of what is really going on, endless delays and procrastinations, and endless irritability and nervousness on all sides for fear of ending up with the historical 'blame' for the retreat.

This atmosphere of subterfuge and double-dealing has been added to by the concerns of the wider imperialist world to get justice for Irish national-liberation and self-determination (especially to score a point against rival British imperialists) but without remotely wishing to be seen internationally as having condoned or encouraged armed revolutionary struggle, which would be a disastrous precedent to set to the exploited and dominated Third World.

The one faint possible problem for clumsy British imperialism in trying to manage this retreat from empire without losing too much face was the

chance that if things were handled insensitively or indelicately in trying to smuggle in a new arrangement for Ireland without the demise of the old 'Northern Ireland' being noticed, then it might just spark off an armed backlash from the more demoted 'Ulster Unionist' bigots and British colonial die-hards, which would then have to be quickly put down by further British armed intervention.

If this had happened (and it still might yet happen), it would not be a long or major operation, nothing comparable to the latest 25-year-long losing battle against the IRA, – because the aggressive empire spirit is now a historical relic as far as British interests are concerned. There is much blowing-hard remaining, but very little determined and competent colonising know-how with any perspective to it. The pioneering spirit of the British occupation of Ireland is on its last legs.

It now looks as if the stage is finally set for a great moment in history, – the preparations towards the ultimate conclusion to 827 years of domineering occupation of Ireland from Britain via direct armed rule, subversion, and colonisation.

This eventual scuttle has long been made way for, – as has been made obvious in recent weeks with the publication of Mallie and McKittrick's book on *The Secret Story Behind The Irish Peace Process*, much quoted from in the capitalist press itself, detailing the quite astonishing degree, from 1990 onwards, of concealed British government cooperation with the Irish national-liberation struggle to end the war with a self-determination peace settlement, followed by a bad attack of cold feet in Downing Street once the Ulster Unionist votes had become so vital for securing the Major Cabinet's survival in the House of Commons:

This was the first of a sustained series of overtures which included sending the republicans advance copies of Brooke's speeches, details of ministerial discussions and even confidential reports on the progress of the Brooke and Mayhew talks with the other parties and the Irish Government.

The Back Channel opened with an approach from the British Government representative who had been in touch with the republicans in earlier periods.

In January 1992 messages were passed back and forth on what Sinn Féin called 'the Irish peace initiative' – that is, the Hume-Adams talks. The British also, according to McGuinness, kept Sinn Féin informed of the progress of the Mayhew political talks – passing on, in October 1992, a detailed internal

government report and assessment on the discussions.

Part of this document suggested the Government was intent on [influencing] a report by Sir Ninian Stephen, the retired Australian diplomat who was acting as independent chairman of the talks...and [was] drawing up model heads of agreement which [would] be submitted for his use on a non-attributable basis, in an attempt to guide his consultations. 'The idea is to ghost-write Sir Ninian's report'.

This was followed, in December 1992 and January 1993, by meetings between the contact and the British representative, together with a series of phone calls, sometimes on a daily basis. Sinn Féin was unenthusiastic until the Government representative indicated a face-to-face meeting was possible, and began to discuss the logistics of such a meeting. The republican account of a meeting between the contact and the representative in February 1993 records:

'He was very upbeat about the possibility of delegation meetings, he said that he and his colleagues had been working on this for two years. Major and Mayhew had discussed the republican struggle and the Christmas cessation.'

Dramatis personae

Gerry Adams president of Sinn Féin.

Sir Roddy Balhwaite chairman, Joint Intelligence Committee. Authors say he attended Cabinet committee; its purported records were leaked to Sinn Féin. British Government do not confirm this but acknowledge he was one of the small circle concerned with management of the Back Channel.

Peter Brooke Northern Ireland secretary from July 1989 to April 1992.

Sir Robin Butler UK Cabinet secretary since 1988.

John Chilcot permanent secretary, Northern Ireland office since 1990.

The Contact an intermediary between the Government and Sinn Féin. He has never been named.

The IRA needs to provide the space to turn the possibility of meetings into a reality. A suspension is all that is being required of them.'

The British believed that two or three weeks was a sufficient period to convince republicans [that the IRA campaign was unnecessary]. There would be an intensive round of talks. Once started, people [would] remain until decisions were arrived at. Reciprocation would be immediate; troops withdrawn to barracks, checkpoints removed, security levels determined by loyalist threat.

On 19 March 1993, the Government despatched an important document to the republicans, setting out the broad British approach.

It said it had no blueprint for the outcome of all-party talks, and accepted the outcome could eventu-

ally be a united Ireland, though based only on consent.

But only four days after this, according to the republican record, a face-to-face meeting took place between the British representative, Martin McGuinness and Gerry Kelly. The message conveyed by the representative at this meeting, according to the republican note, was much more encouraging to the republicans:

'Mayhew is now determined. He wants Sinn Féin to play a part, not because he likes Sinn Féin but because it cannot work without them. Any settlement not involving all of the people North and South won't work... The final solution is union [i.e. a united Ireland]. The historical train - Europe - determines that. We are committed to Europe. Unionists will have to change. This island will be as one.'

Confidentiality was of the utmost importance. Only Major, Mayhew, Hurd and secretary to the Cabinet [Butler] knew of all this.

On 10 May, Sinn Féin sent to the British an important document setting out their position, together with a message confirming that the IRA had agreed to a two-week suspension. It declared:

'Dialogue and negotiations are necessary and inevitable if this conflict is to be resolved on a democratic basis. Pre-conditions represent obstacles to peace.'

The road to peace, they insisted, lay through national self-determination by the Irish people.

British sovereignty over the North was the cause of instability and conflict: republicans sought the end of British jurisdiction. Unionist concerns had to be addressed, but Britain should persuade the Unionist community to reach an accommodation with the rest of the Irish people.

The republicans were intensely interested in the idea of delegate meetings, agreeing to a two-week IRA suspension and pressing the British eagerly on logistical details. In the event, however, the go-ahead never came from London. Instead, later in May, the British Government representative was in touch to say he had returned from a walking holiday to find that Ministers had changed their minds. He was *'absolutely disgusted'* [with this], he said.

According to the republican documents the representative gave the contact the following account of what had happened:

'The initiative of 10/11 May had been very well received by Chilcot, and plans were immediately put in place to get approval from John Major. Mayhew had reservations, pointing out that he couldn't risk any announcements in the run-up to the local government elections. He stated that he was worried about an upsurge in support for the DUP [Paisley's party] at the expense of the Ulster Unionist party [Molyneaux's party].'

'The timetable agenda was agreed by Chilcot and Mayhew. That is, cessation followed within seven days by logistics, followed by delegates' meeting. It was the intention to put this to Major on Monday 17 May. Present at the meeting were Major, Hurd, Mayhew, Chilcot,

Braithwaite [see dramatis personae and two other names which appeared to be secretaries or similar.

'The meeting was rushed and indecisive, with Major asking questions on which he should have been more fully briefed, e.g.:

1. *What guarantees do we have that this cessation can be held or will hold?*

2. *We need more evidence that what they say, they mean.*

'Douglas Hurd had to leave for a meeting of Foreign Secretaries on the Bosnian peace plan. On the whole, the meeting was most unsatisfactory from an Irish point of view.

'John Major adjourned the meeting to the following day and called in Kenneth Clarke [then Home Secretary] who was in buoyant, bombastic mood, and advised John Major that the proposition was much too risky at the present time with the Government under siege.

'Mayhew was wobbling between pushing for acceptance and wanting a safer, longer period of cessation. John Major compromised by instructing his secretaries to draw up a programme which he would be able to announce in Parliament having previously, ie, 24 hours before, informed Church leaders and the heads of the main political parties that he was instructing the Northern Ireland Office to enter into dialogue with the republican movement. Major's plan involved a longer cessation, followed by private logistics [involving the British Government representatives], followed by his agreed statement at Westminster, followed by dialogue.'

The British representative passed on a personal message, in which he said:

'There is depression and anger here at our failure to respond to your brave and straightforward offer. None feel it more than I do for obvious reasons... You have my word that all that was conveyed was done so honestly and accurately at the time...I can only ask for patience, for all our sakes.'

The favoured explanation on the republican side was that the key British change of heart had come around May, just as John Major was hopeful of securing Unionist support in the Commons votes on Europe.

But the national-liberation movement continued pushing the peace process from positions of strength arising from the further devastating bombing of the City of London, with potential colossal economic consequences for British imperialism if a peace settlement was not achieved.

And the erosion of the Tory Commons majority anyway, with or without the Unionist MPs, coincided with the humiliating pressure on London from the IRA's ceasefire spectacular, – and even worse pressure from the even more spectacular ending of that ceasefire 18 months later because of London's foolish and dithering intransigence.

But a halt seems about to be called to British imperialism's deliberate disruptiveness, – signalled in Major's still mystify-

ingly confusing *Irish Times* article from which the capitalist press itself could only draw the following defeated conclusion:

the overriding consideration will be to avoid blocking the negotiations.

Mr Major's presentation is a considerable departure from the original British government position, which demanded the destruction of some IRA weapons before political talks could begin. It spurns the early unionist demand for the surrender of all IRA weapons.

Last Sunday Mr McGuinness sought a commitment from Mr Major that the talks would be "meaningful and comprehensive" and he is told that they will be "meaningful and inclusive" with an "open agenda".

He sought an assurance that the decommissioning issue would not form an "obstacle to talks" and receives a qualified, and mainly positive, reply. As for a negotiating time-frame of six to nine months, Mr Major does the best he can in a situation where he does not control the talks. No one, he writes, wants "to drag out the process". But, he warns, the road to an agreed settlement will continue to be "long and painstaking".

There still exist powerful potential setbacks to these hopes for a successful eventual conclusion to Ireland's unprecedentedly long national-liberation struggle, such as the toppling of Major from the Tory leadership, a resurgence of Tory determination to stay in office at all costs, or an early general election followed by a hung Parliament, etc, etc, etc.

But the deeper currents of history are generally what are going to prevail, and these dictate an ending (in a few months, a few years) at last to the monstrous outrage of the British colonial Partition of Ireland.

This will represent a colossal triumph for anti-imperialist struggle the whole world over, brilliantly directed militarily and politically by a tiny group of determined revolutionary spirits, arms in hand.

It is of course a national-revolution, as the *EPSR* has astonishingly had to continually point out to sectarian philistine groups on the fake-'left' of the British petty-bourgeoisie's bogus 'Marxist' swamp, – but it is nonetheless an outstandingly important anti-imperialist victory for all that. A 'free-world' monopoly-imperialist giant will have been seen to have been defeated by an armed revolutionary struggle. And even more importantly, the British working class itself will at last have been freed of one of its oldest and most corrupting imperialist influences, – the mindless racist arrogance that inevitably flows from feeling to be part

of 'major power superiority', particularly contemptuous over the centuries against the Irish, and irrevocably tying workers in Britain to class-collaboration with their own ruling class, making an effective struggle for their own emancipation impossible.

As Marx explained: 'No nation which oppresses another can itself be free' and this applies even more to the British colonial working class in the Occupied Zone of Ireland, the pointless targets of ultra-'left' posturing by middle-class 'Marxist revolutionary' frauds. Many Trot sects with no real political courage, convictions, or maturity, have tried inventing a 'plausible denial' of the need for unconditional revolutionary solidarity with the Irish national-liberation struggle on the grounds that Sinn Féin & Co should really be appealing to the 'protestant' workers in the Occupied Zone for a joint revolution, north and south, against all capitalist governments.

This is particularly nasty and destructive posturing and confusion-sowing by these shallow opportunists. On one hand, it is a gutless retreat from fear of 'contamination' with IRA terrorist violence in a completely unprincipled way. No serious-minded revolutionary worker or anti-imperialist could ever dream of saying anything other than that the Irish national-liberation struggle has the absolute right to fight against colonial occupation with any and every means it chooses.

On the other hand, this fake-'left' stance is such humbug. To tell Sinn Féin it should only be fighting a revolutionary struggle against capitalist government north and south, – while not one single Trot is conducting one sliver of armed revolutionary struggle against any other part of the United Kingdom (as 'Northern Ireland' constitutionally remains) is the most despicable and provocative hypocrisy.

And the other damage these loud-mouthed provocateurs do, of course, is in general to the whole cause of Marxist-Leninist revolutionary science by showing such shallow philistine ignorance of the very ABCs of Marxism, while posturing as 'Marxists'.

Take the following poisonous sectarian rubbish from the Sparts, which goes even further than the disgraceful-enough *CPGB Workers Weekly** [**Weekly Worker* - ed] venom (see last week's *Review*) which took up British Imperialism's sneering bourgeois-moralist stance against the 'death of innocent

workers' due to, allegedly, IRA guerrilla-war actions.

As the *Review* has explained in the past to such utter nonsense, it is the imperialist ruling class which drives people to desperate terrorist struggle in the first place, and the same cowardly ruling class which, in the second place, deliberately protects itself from any danger of frontline guerrilla-war assaults, and quite consciously only leaves the more indiscriminate targets available such as ruling-class property such as the City of London buildings.

On top of that, imperialist-state policy has been quite notoriously lax on many occasions about protecting the general public when public-area bomb alerts have been notified, – frequently, as in the case of February's South Quay incident, failing to clear property areas for which more than ample warning had been given. The tragic victims at South Quay had already once been cleared from their newsagents kiosks, only to be told to go back in there before the bomb alert had even remotely been satisfactorily resolved one way or the other, – all totally due to either the authorities incompetence or their intended negligence. The same suspicions have followed scores of other tragic incidents in the past.

It is utterly reactionary to stick the knife into a popular struggle which is fighting with its lives to try to turn the tables on brutal imperialist repression. No international working-class sympathy with anti-imperialist struggle is obliged to endorse any particular tactics whether it be hunger strikes, dirty protests, assassinations, or urban guerrilla bombs. But what has always been required, without exception throughout the entire history of Marxist-Leninist science, has been unconditional solidarity with the right of any popular struggle to take on imperialism by any means it chooses.

The Sparts go one worse than the CPGB in their moralising condemnation of national-liberation struggle and guerrilla-war terrorist methods. In an astonishing series of comments taken from recent *Workers Hammers* Nos 147 and 149, these most bureaucratically-minded of Trotskyite sectarians advance from denouncing IRA/Sinn Féin as gullible stooges of British imperialism, to accusing Gerry Adams of being about to treacherously disarm the IRA to please British imperialism, to accusing the national-liberation struggle itself of murderous criminal

responsibility for deepening the hatred between Catholics and Protestants, and between English and Irish workers!

The "armalite" and the "ballot box" wings of the IRA/Sinn Féin are symbiotic, reflecting two sides of a desperate nationalist strategy which has no perspective outside the framework of capitalism and looks to imperialism for a "solution". Having built up illusions in an imperialist-brokered settlement, the IRA ended their ceasefire complaining that "instead of embracing the peace process, the British government acted in bad faith", while still calling for an "inclusive, negotiated settlement".

Talk by Sinn Féin about "taking all guns, including those of the army, RUC and Loyalists, permanently out of Irish politics" (*Independent*, 14 August) is ludicrous, bespeaking deadly illusions in imperialism.

The present dispute over whether disarming the IRA should begin before, during or after "negotiations", only reflects uncertainty over how quickly and effectively Gerry Adams can deliver the weapons without provoking a split in the IRA ranks.

As we warned: "Any imperialist 'deal' will be bloody and brutal and will necessarily be at the expense of the oppressed Catholic minority. And it would not do any good for working-class Protestants either" (*Workers Hammer* No 138 November/December 1993).

The imperialist-sponsored "peace process" in fact necessarily reinforces communal divisions between impoverished Protestant and Catholic workers through a form of the "divide and rule" strategy beloved of the British ruling class.

In such situations of interpenetrated peoples there can be no just solution to national oppression outside of the overthrow of capitalism and the establishment of workers rule.

We Marxists oppose forcible unification of Ireland, which would reverse the terms of oppression against the Protestant community, who are separate and distinct from the Irish Catholic nation.

We call for integrated, programmatically based workers militias to combat both Army/RUC rampages and sectarian terror from both sides.

Travellers have been subjected to systematic, deadly pogromist attacks throughout the south, both in cities like Dublin and in rural backwaters like Wicklow and Westmeath. For workers defence guards to defend Travellers against fascistic mobs.

Integrated workers militias - incorporating both Catholics and Protestants, under a communist leadership—are vital in Northern Ireland to combat imperialist and Loyalist rampage as well as sectarian terror from any quarter - Orange or Green.

We fight for an Irish workers republic as part of a federation of workers republics in the British Isles, forged through the revolutionary unity of the working class across national and religious boundaries.

The only way to disarm the repressive forces of the capitalist state is for the working class to seize power, and to create its own, new revolutionary armed force. We say: British troops out of Northern Ireland now! Not Orange against Green but class against class!

From the standpoint of proletarian revolutionaries the Canary Wharf bombing was indefensible - in no way a blow against the forces of British imperialism.

It indiscriminately targeted civilians who simply happen to live or work in London's Docklands.

We Marxists oppose the tactic of terrorism because it is antithetical to the necessary task of mobilising the proletariat against the imperialist oppressors. Rather it reflects the petty-bourgeois aims of its practitioners to assert themselves as the leaders of "their" people.

But we take a fundamentally different at-

titude to indiscriminate terror. From a proletarian perspective, these are criminal acts which serve only to deepen hatred between Catholic and Protestant, English and Irish workers.

This grotesque confusion starts with the same old 'left' school-boy howler of denouncing the national-liberation struggle for not being a revolutionary socialist struggle. Sinn Féin and the IRA might as well be being denounced for not being a pork sausage or a bag of crisps. It is a nationalist struggle.

That is what it is.

But it does not remotely follow from SF/IRA not being a Marxist-Leninist proletarian revolutionary struggle that it is necessarily "looking to imperialism for a solution" or wrong to anticipate being able to force imperialism into retreat from the colonial occupation of Ireland.

It is waging guerrilla war against imperialism for a 'solution', – and very effectively too.

And modern history is littered with negotiated retreats by imperialism as the 'solution' to scores of national-liberation struggles short of outright total destruction for the imperialist power or forces. Most of the British Empire achieved self-determination by such enforced negotiated settlements.

Nor in the circumstances of British imperialism's colonial retreat from Ireland is it at all 'ludicrous' or 'bespeaking deadly illusions in imperialism' to imagine that all British imperialist guns (army, RUC, and Loyalist) might eventually be taken out of Irish politics. It is precisely what will happen under eventual reunification of Ireland under a Dublin government.

It is contemptible nonsense beyond all reason to then suggest that Gerry Adams is doing his best to disarm the IRA in the interests of imperialism. What demented bilious subjectivism these petty-bourgeois 'lefts' of Trotskyite bogus 'Marxist' persuasion are capable of! How wrong is it possible to get a historic analysis posing as 'Marxist'?

The Sparts quickly demonstrate how wrong by their insane conclusion that the national-liberation struggle has achieved nothing so far (entirely incorrect) and will in fact make things worse for the nationalist population (ignorantly called 'Catholic') all round.

So blinkered are the Sparts in this determination not to see the reality in colonial Ireland but to see only their own, entirely subjective interpretation confirmed, that this daft idea, – that the national-liberation

struggle can only worsen the Irish population's plight in the Occupied Zone, – is proudly restated in March 1996, after the ending of the IRA ceasefire, – in order to boast how correct the Sparts had been when they first uttered this lunacy in December 1993.

The obvious regret by the entire population of the OZ that the IRA ceasefire had to be called off this February because of British imperialist intransigence, jeopardising thereby the improvements in life in the Occupied Zone which had flowed from the far more civilised conduct of the Zone's affairs by British imperialism in the wake of the IRA's major peace gesture, – has just not been noticed by these sectarian navel-contemplators.

What is even barmier, these Trots then add that not only will an imperialist 'deal' be bloody and brutal and at the expense of the Irish nationalist population in the Occupied Zone but that this will be inevitable precisely because the national-liberation struggle has posed matters in an allegedly artificial 'Orange v Green' manner, merely thereby resurrecting British imperialism's divide and rule strategy which for some unexplained reason is presumed to have fallen into disuse!

This is fantasy country. British imperialism plays the Orange card for centuries, deliberately implanting British-Protestant colonists on occupied Irish-Catholic lands and then terrorising the displaced ethnic Irish poor, and endlessly rousing colonial spirits with non-stop scaremongering about 'foul Fenian revenge' and 'Papist tyranny on the march', etc, etc, – and the long tradition of Irish national-liberation struggle is then blamed by these armchair 'socialists' for these sectarian divisions in the Occupied Zone population. British colonist workers have apparently never existed in their own right but have only been created by Sinn Féin's misguided propaganda, it is alleged. And the working class in Britain with its British imperialist mentality as described famously by Marx as never being ready for their own emancipation all the time they continued supporting their 'own' British imperialist ruling class (and especially true of the British working class in the Occupied Zone part of the United Kingdom), – have never existed either, – just more mere creations of misguided IRA sectarianism, according to these Trot geniuses. These academic 'Marxists' truly live in ivory

towers of their own making.

The fantasies just mount. Having written legitimate national-liberation struggle out of the history books, and having corrected Marx's 'delusion' that workers loyal to the British imperialist state were totally corrupted for all socialist purposes, the Sparts then pronounce that only proletarian revolution supported by British and Irish workers together is a way forward out of the Irish troubles, – just like that.

Now well into its make-believe stride, Trotskyite purity then declares what a good thing it is that national-liberation struggle is not able to defeat British imperialist occupation of part of Ireland, – because it would only lead to even worse domination in reverse, by the Irish against the worker-leftovers from the British colonisation!

First what a disgusting baseless slander. But second, what if there was just a remote grain of truth about some Irish attitudes towards some British colonial remnants in a re-united Ireland? In Ireland (or anywhere else) Marxism has always held that national Irish self-determination interests have the absolute right to flourish, not British colonial rights. The Trot philosophical trick here is to pretend that reality is what they would like to pretend is true, – namely that the British colonial working class are already pure internationalist proletarian revolutionaries, obviously in no way deserving of any national-discrimination disadvantages at all in Ireland, – which presumably has no right at all to feel Irish until the Spart Revolutionaries say that it is all right.

This dream world then builds up. Any hint of Irish nationalism is by now being called not just deluded and unfortunate, – strengthening the Irish's own chains, – but has become "sectarian terror" and nothing else! And to prove the point, attention is drawn to the supposedly routine sectarian terror, – no, fascist terror, even, – now rampant in town and country alike in the Irish Republic:– Gypsies have been less than well treated down there.

Now the prejudiced hostility that Gypsies arouse everywhere, in every country, is undoubtedly a sad reality, – a complex problem rooted on all sides in the hate-making contradictions of the capitalist system itself. But to blame the Irish national-liberation struggle for this racist and social prejudice – inherent in all capitalism – is just demented, – so unhinged that

these anarchic 'travellers' are described as being subjected to 'fascist pogroms' in the Republic of Ireland. To put it mildly, this seems a slightly unbalanced way to view history.

Next comes the instant mind-boggling solution: 'Mobilise the communist workers militias immediately, north and south, the only way to progress!

'Forget Marx; forget national-liberation; forget history. Just get moving quickly to transform world development at a stroke, and get down to Westmeath to protect those Gypsies who are having a poor reception locally.'

If this stuff were not so comical, it would be tragically certifiable.

But it gets worse again. Having made the case for instant proletarian socialist revolution now, not just in Ireland north and south but all over Britain as well at the same time, the Trots can then devote their full invective against what they really hate and wish to target, – the actual revolutionary struggle by the Irish national-liberation movement.

South Quay was "just an indefensible blow against innocent civilians. It was the epitome of deluded petty-bourgeois individualist terror, arrogantly pretending to leadership through a vain exhibition of indiscriminate violence. These are just criminal acts, themselves partly responsible for racist hatred in imperialist Britain. All terror is utterly abhorred by 'We Marxists'".

What indescribable conceited nonsense!

Marxism only ever 'opposed' terror tactics in the sense of preferring to mobilise working class revolutionary forces by mass political action and the philosophical leadership of correct theory in the revolutionary programme.

But the Bolsheviks themselves, under Lenin, were not opposed to the odd terrorist tactic or two, such as bank robbing; and killing Tsarist government spies; and explosions to break out of jail, killing guards if they had to; etc, etc.

This Trot posturing against heroic Irish national-liberation struggle is simply a million miles distant from the ecstatic spirit in which the founders of Marxism-Leninism enthused over militant struggle against imperialism from every quarter, – nationalism included.

These Trots are not communists but the most despicable bureaucratically minded pedants, – petty-bourgeois individualists living vicariously off the mass anti-imperialist

movements.

It is this sectarian nonsense which damages the anti-imperialist cause by sowing confusion

into workers minds. Expose Trotskyism.

Build Leninism.
Douglas Bell.

The beginning of the end for 'Northern Ireland', the bogusly-named British colony in the Occupied Zone, now looks in sight, as demanded by materialist philosophy.

[EPSR No 856 04-06-96]

The stirring triumph of the Irish national liberation struggle as it continues to press for Ireland's reunification and for the dismantling of the British imperialist colony in the Occupied Zone, richly confirms the Marxist view of history.

Last week's sensational electoral success, followed by the daily retreat now in British imperialism's negotiating positions, has demonstrated that Sinn Féin and the IRA have scored an astonishing victory over the ailing might of British monopoly capitalism during the past 20 years or so.

As throughout this historical triumph for the national right to self-determination against the stubborn resistance by part of the established imperialist world order, it is best left for the capitalist press's own admissions to reveal how the decadent British ruling class has been forced into retreat:

Sinn Féin will be allowed to hold talks on the future of Northern Ireland for three months before an arms decommissioning agreement, under a deal to be announced by the British and Irish governments today.

Under the plan talks would continue for three months before the IRA and other paramilitary organisations would be required to start handing over weapons. Sinn Féin had been concerned that the talks would not be genuine and would become bogged down over decommissioning.

Senator George Mitchell, the special adviser to President Clinton, will be given an important role in chairing the talks on decommissioning and in the main political strand of talks on the future of North-South relations in Ireland.

An RUC source said: "The election puts the republican movement in a strong position. They see no need to make any gestures unless they are confident they will get exactly what they want."

But the IRA, buoyed by Sinn Féin's record 15.5% vote sent a hardline message in response. A senior republican source said a ceasefire before June 10 was unlikely. Such a move could come only when the British government had shown it was "committed to serious all-party talks", the source said.

The IRA has developed a mortar,

described as one of the most destructive weapons in its arsenal, according to an analysis by *Jane's Intelligence Review*.

The review, quoting intelligence sources in the Republic, says that the "mark 17" mortar was developed during the ceasefire and has been tested in the Carlingford Lough area south of the border.

So convincing is this sweep of history behind the national liberation struggle that one former Green-Tory Irish Premier Albert Reynolds has even begun arguing that the negotiations for a complete new deal for Ireland, (replacing the hated Partition racket imposed by British bayonets in 1921 to thwart the triumphant national-liberation war then), – should begin next Monday without bothering any further about an IRA ceasefire.

The independence movement's formidable political skills, blistering conviction, and unbeatable guerrilla-war determination and ability have undermined the rickety colonial structure in the Occupied Zone to such an extent that London already made it clear more than 10 years ago with the Anglo-Irish Treaty that the fictional country of 'Northern Ireland', just a lingering British colonial racket artificially gerrymandered out of six of Ulster's nine counties at gunpoint, was no longer sustainable in the long term.

The EPSR's Marxist analysis has throughout the troubles explained how British imperialism would be eventually pushed out of Ireland because of its rapid international economic, industrial and political decline, and because what's left of London's global strategic and military interests no longer see this expensively-subsidised outpost in Ireland, hated by the locals and impossible to provide adequate security for, as worth maintaining any longer.

The main stumbling block all along to any speeding up of the snail's pace withdrawal outlined in the Anglo-Irish Treaty and subsequent British moves, was the acute embarrassment for the British ruling class, and

for the imperialist West in general, of being seen to have been forced to do the right thing at last in Ireland by an armed urban-guerrilla revolutionary struggle.

It is this fear of humiliation, slowing things up, which has had to accept more public capitulation this week, forced to swallow hard, and grin and bear it, by the quite masterly political grasp shown by Sinn Féin and the IRA, ruthlessly pushing home their advantage, – as the capitalist press itself is at last beginning to have to admit between the lines (after having done nothing for the last 25 years but sneer at the national liberation struggle for its ‘clumsy brutal incompetence, its grotesque insensitivity, and its utterly doomed hopelessness’, etc, etc, – backed by the relentless black propaganda campaigns initiated in Whitehall manufacturing such disinformation blitzkriegs as the Irish joke industry, etc (it takes six Paddies to change one light bulb, don’t forget).

As Paisley will tell anyone who will now listen (becoming fewer in spite of the DUP’s increased role which only reflects a reactionary British-bourgeois desire to drive a hard bargain in the coming negotiations about a new set-up for Ireland), – the London establishment has given in to national liberation demands on issue after issue (mainly for the removal of ridiculous preconditions to negotiations which were totally unrealistic, and purely

for propaganda show, in the first place).

Now, US imperialist arm-twisting, – pressuring the British ruling class throughout to remove this civil-war blot and national liberation struggle humiliation from off the ‘free world’ record, – is likely to take a direct role with Senator Mitchell chairing the tricky North-South rapprochement agenda, and sanitising the West’s embarrassment that the IRA will continue refusing to dismantle its guerrilla-war combativeness until some real negotiating progress has been made on a new deal for Ireland.

The wretched colonial bourgeois might yet have to be publicly humiliated a bit more to curb their ‘No Surrender’ arrogance even more firmly, but the only worthwhile future deals for them now lie in a reunified Ireland ultimately, for as long as it can remain capitalist.

The fake ‘Marxists’ in Britain will continue, of course, their imbecile sectarian screech that the IRA has sold Ireland out to ‘new world order’ imperialist exploitation, utterly ignoring their own idiot past predictions that national-liberation could not be achieved anyway, and blind to the colossal importance to workers worldwide that this magnificent anti-imperialist triumph, arms-in-hand, will have.

Trotskyite ‘revolutionary socialist’ daydreams will drivel on pointlessly. Real Marxist-Leninist science will go from strength to strength. Build the *EPSR*. Douglas Bell

British imperialism at last admits it has historically been completely defeated by the Irish national liberation struggle. Black propaganda denigrating Sinn Fein and the IRA revealed as deceptive nonsense. When will fake ‘Marxism’ in Britain (like the CPGB) admit its own role in this foul confusion?

[*EPSR* No 857 11-06-96]

The opening of peace talks at last for a completely new settlement in Ireland marks a massive triumph for Sinn Féin and the IRA.

Without their brilliant political campaigns and unbeatable guerrilla war fight over the last 25 years which has won worldwide respect and influence, the outrageous colonial racket bogusly called ‘Northern Ireland’ might have continued festering indefinitely.

But British imperialism has found its Occupied Zone of Ireland an increasingly uncontrollable and intolerable economic, political, military, and ideological burden. Under American pressure, London began indicating as long as 20 years ago that it would not mind getting out of Ireland if it could be done without loss of face, and without being seen as too much of a capitulation to armed revolt.

The long slow snail’s pace withdrawal programme since then has also been governed by the need to avoid provoking the colonial die-hards of mis-named ‘Ulster Unionism’ into an all-out warmongering UDI (unilateral declaration of independence) such as the equally-doomed British colonists in Rhodesia tried (before having to accept the birth of Zimbabwe); and by sordid needs of parliamentary majorities at Westminster.

The past few weeks of stumbling build-up to this week’s opening, finally, of formal negotiations has been marled by the ridiculous ‘loyalists’ retreating from one ‘no surrender’ posture after another as they finally accepted that a new deal was coming for Ireland whether they liked it or not. And the Tory Government has fixed some bi-partisan arrangement with Labour whereby ‘Unionist’ votes will not be needed any further for any controversial legislation in what parliamentary sessions remain before a General Election.

So now peace talks can open at last for a new settlement for Ireland which has almost certainly all been worked out well in advance, possibly right down to the very finest details, – which is why Sinn Féin and the IRA have been able to be so relaxed about the concluding acts of the loss-of-face pantomime which has run continuously throughout years of secret negotiations behind the scenes in Washington, Dublin, London, and Belfast, – a propaganda drama which is not remotely finished yet.

Sinn Féin’s formal exclusion from the first sessions of talks until a new IRA ceasefire can be announced may have captured the headlines, as London wanted to try to demonstrate how ‘firm’ it has always been in ‘support of democratic principles’ and in ‘rejection of violence’, allegedly, – a stance of monstrous hypocrisy.

But the much more significant theatricals are likely to have been those of Paisley and the other bigoted colonial diehards in trying to save face with their hardline supporters by pretending up to the last minute to be ready to boycott the whole negotiated settlement proceedings, but then eventually deciding that they could take part after all.

This was the decisive moment (superficially) of the whole 25 years liberation war, the moment that even the most bitterly determined colonialists indicated that they would swallow an imposed new deal for Ireland

which will permanently greatly reduce the former domineering life that they knew in the old ‘Northern Ireland’ colony.

Out of these new arrangements, these British Empire supremacists will be denied the total political authority which they have so triumphantly brandished for 300 years. They will settle for shared political authority henceforth, plus a comfortable shared political authority existence. By not accepting a deal, both of these would be put in jeopardy too.

So the last bit of play-acting has been pretending not to accept Mitchell as chairman of the proceedings on the grounds that he is an American Irish-Catholic friend of Gerry Adams; pretending to walk out if no IRA arms were surrendered prior to talks; pretending to walk out if decommissioning did not begin at least on the very first day of substantive talks; etc, etc, etc.

The propaganda manoeuvring between London and the national liberation struggle over renewing the IRA’s offer of a ceasefire is more obscure.

Most of the horse trading over a new settlement is likely to have already been concluded between Washington, Dublin, London, and Sinn Féin, and the other nationalists (principally the SDLP). The peace talks henceforth might be just a formality to a certain degree.

So being at the opening might not have been that important, and being there eventually is almost certainly guaranteed for Sinn Féin. One of the most significant features of all in recent weeks has been the solid confidence Gerry Adams has expressed that there will definitely be a peace agreement at the end of this process, and it will be one which will be well on the way to satisfying the self-determination aspirations of the Irish, at last.

Sinn Féin’s formal exclusion from the opening ceremonies could have been to do with the IRA Army Council refusing to hurry its own agenda; or a deliberate deal with London to help Paisley into the first day’s talks without having to lose face in shaking Sinn Féin hands as well as Mitchell’s; or some minor positional manoeuvring for propaganda purposes between London and Sinn Féin itself.

The main thing, however, remains that the latest 25-years national-liberation war to undermine British imperialism’s toehold remnant of colonial Ireland, – the gerrymandered bits of six of Ulster’s nine counties, carved out at bayonet-point in 1921 and deceitfully entitled

'Northern Ireland' – has at last been acknowledged by London (and the world) as making the 'Ulster' colony no longer defensible, in every sense.

The *EPSR's* Marxist understanding of history has been explaining declining British imperialism's wish and need to get out since its first publication nearly 20 years ago, exposing the propaganda falsehoods of the capitalist press and the fake-'left' in Britain alike.

Throughout, the *EPSR* has used the capitalist press's own admissions to demonstrate that surface hostility to 'terrorism' and contemptuous dismissal of its 'failure' and 'inability ever to succeed', etc, were just propaganda delusions (which the fake-'left' all fell for too out of their own ignorance of nationalist armed struggle's historic potential in this case), concealing imperialism's real moves towards compromise.

The bourgeoisie's self-deception has been unravelling rapidly as the reality of imperialism's proposed deal on self-determination has finally sunk in.

The demoralised *Telegraph* wing of the British ruling class, which has long struggled to deny the obvious decline in British imperialist fortunes, hating it bitterly, – continues sourly pretending that defeat was not inevitable, and fatuously urging a vicious counter-attack on the clearly-despised Irish nationalists, but – ultimately concedes in dismay that the disastrous British retreat is going all the way:

The IRA is winning

ROUGHLY a fortnight ago, as party campaigning in the Northern Ireland elections gathered pace, we published an editorial in these columns about efforts to find peace in the province. The headline above it read: *Is the IRA winning?* At that point the question was well worth asking, but it was hard to be sure of the answer. Today, in the wake of those election results, the same question surely must be asked. This time, there can be no doubt about the answer. It is "yes".

Consider everything that has happened since the Docklands bomb in February. Before that explosion IRA/Sinn Féin was in difficulty. It had been given no firm date for all-party talks. It was being asked to decommission its arsenal during those talks. Sinn Féin had indeed been involved in discussions with ministers, but the party had at least been placed briefly in quarantine: the Government had insisted that the IRA would have to prove that its ceasefire was permanent. Less than three months after that cessation, ministers decided to make a "working assumption" that it was.

The Docklands bomb blew that assumption apart. We now know

that even if a section of the republican movement wants to give up bombs and bullets and beatings, it is not in control of the IRA. We know, therefore, that another IRA ceasefire would have no guarantee of permanence. Yet a date was set for all-party talks within days of the bombing. Then it was indicated that the IRA/Sinn Féin would be admitted to those talks as soon as another ceasefire was declared: there is no more talk of working assumptions. None of the gains made by the IRA/Sinn Féin during the cessation was reversed: there has been no talk, for example, of re-imposing the broadcasting ban. And now ministers appear to be wavering on decommissioning – having rightly held firm throughout 1995. It is hinted that the IRA may not, if another ceasefire is declared, be required to disarm at the start of talks.

If ministers do not demand decommissioning now, before talks have even begun, how likely is it that they would do so if the IRA/Sinn Féin were admitted? Indeed, how likely is it that they would stand their ground on anything – once John Hume, elements within the Irish government, and men such as Albert Reynolds (the former Irish prime minister who wants the republicans to be let into talks without having to hand in a single ounce of Semtex) started to urge the Government to "take a chance for peace"?

It is argued that last week's elections strengthened the hand of those within the IRA/Sinn Féin who want another ceasefire. But for how long would such a ceasefire last? Until, surely, the IRA/Sinn Féin decided that its objectives would best be served by a further return to violence.

John Hume, and all those who have wooed the republicans with concessions and courted them as statesmen, have achieved the opposite of their declared aim. Instead of helping to democratise the terrorists, they are helping to terrorise our democracy. Instead of isolating those who murder and maim, they have made the use of violence acceptable – even fashionable. They are breaking down the psychological barriers that prevent countries governed by the rule of law from falling under the sway of gangsters.

How else can the 50 per cent increase in Sinn Féin's vote be read? And how, since the IRA will not disarm, can the "peace process" possibly succeed? It is not even as though ministers have gained from it: they might almost be provoking the Unionists to bring the Government down. The IRA is indeed winning – in more senses than it probably knows.

The 'liberal' frauds of British imperialism have been even more traumatised by the national-liberation success. No poseurs love to appear more open to anti-imperialist criticism than the *Guardian* tradition, denouncing the occasional Western monopoly-imperialist outrage.

But such critical-realist ideal-

ism nevertheless remains more fanatically counter-revolutionary than many more authoritarian bourgeois circles, and the *Guardian* biliousness against the armed revolutionary aspect of the Irish national-liberation struggle has never been more sullen than in these last weeks of increasingly obvious British establishment capitulation.

As Sinn Féin and the IRA have remained firm in their insistence that serious British negotiations were needed, not token arms surrenders by the IRA to give London some uncalled for propaganda victory, so the *Guardian* has screeched in headlines: "IRA deals new blow to peace", etc, turning history on its head by thus obscuring the reality of the national-liberation struggle being the only reason in the first place for there being any peace process at all, leading to a new deal for Occupied Ireland (and thus for all Ireland) to finally overcome the murderous contradictions of the monstrous 1921 Partition.

This sort of deliberate disinformation was then followed by obscure confusion-mongering over last week's dramatic breakthrough over agendas, committee chairmanships, and sensible delays before decommissioning becomes an issue, – (all long-awaited retreats by London which had the *Telegraph* and the Paisleyite die-hards howling, but which properly acknowledged the strength of the national-liberation position.)

These inevitable and justified London concessions were ridiculed as "posturing", "dispiriting", not to mention hopeless, impossible, and phoney.

And all of this from the most 'liberal' wing of British imperialist propaganda just at the moment when the Tory ruling class most deserved blunt-speaking exposure for having only at last conceded what should have been given away 18 months ago when the IRA first offered its ceasefire to the peace process.

Then on the eve of talks, the *Guardian* handed over three entire pages of its 'news'-paper to the sick hate-filled ramblings of a former British police spy within the IRA and Sinn Féin, crawling with such venomous imbecilities as claiming that a national-liberation struggle against the British was one thing, but against the 'protestant people of Northern Ireland' (whose proudest claim is to be British) was something else!, and denouncing Sinn Féin for its 'poor level of political debate' (even their worst enemies accept that Adams, McGuinness,

McLaughlin, & Co are streets ahead of all the other peace process participants in clarity and depth of understanding), and for being communist and fascist both at the same time; etc, etc, etc, – all dredged-up moronic impressions of more than 15 years ago from a slimy nonentity who was a seriously inadequate human being then, and has sunk even further today, living off police hand-outs and his unsteady treacherous memories. What a tremendous piece of 'liberal' journalism at such a delicate time in such an explosive situation as challenging entrenched British colonial reaction to at last release its stranglehold on the Occupied Zone of Ireland.

Only at yesterday's 11th hour did the *Guardian* let an outside contributor counter-revolutionary made (make) the following admission of the national-liberation struggle's strength and justice, and of the need for the British ruling class to make even further constructive retreats so as to secure a new deal for Ireland making peaceful development possible on the national question, towards reunification:

It may seem inconceivable to many at the moment but political change must of necessity bring about a diminution in the British Crown's presence in Ireland. In contrast to the Republican stance, the British government has not demonstrated particularly good faith in its handling of the ceasefire.

The Government's long prevarication ended by provoking the Republicans into another act of terrorism in London; the Government did very badly in reading its opponent's intentions.

Let us hope it does better next time and also remembers the ultimately simple rules of the game – if you have a long-running human conflict the way to resolve it is by negotiating political change.

If you merely pretend to negotiate you will guarantee one thing only: that the conflict will re-emerge and there will be more bombs and more deaths. Getting the present IRA army council to sign up to a ceasefire declaration is no guarantee of the continuation of peace.

Unionist posturing continued beyond the last minute, right into the main talks themselves, crowing about how they had refused progress until they had 'taken control of the format, the agenda, and the chairing arrangements', etc, – all pure fantasy which the British capitalist media was relieved to go along with, the BBC as usual leading the way, pretending that February's Docklands bomb's halt to the IRA ceasefire had no connection to London's final agreement to set a firm

date, June 10, to new settlement negotiations at last, when it is obvious to everyone that the June 10 date was quickly forced out of the British ruling class immediately following that renewed guerrilla-war destruction of the City of London's prized commercial and financial institutions which threatens Britain's economic survival if it goes on for another 25 years.

The BBC continued the attempted reactionary face-saving by asking Sinn Féin about an unconnected police fatality in the Irish Republic at the weekend instead of elucidating the stupidity of the British colonial regime in failing to get Sinn Féin into the opening talks session, and in failing to put the 'Unionist' backwoodsmen in their place from the start, – in propaganda terms.

Today's 'progressive' capitalist press put on an even more pitiful display of being tortured bird-brains, the *Guardian* chief commentator (and chairman of the Scott Trust) in the lead:

YESTERDAY in Belfast, history was not made. The talks that half-began were not an historic moment. Saying otherwise is the language of governments, and of media editors who have their own reasons for the deployment of hyperbole. Hyperbole heightens, promises, simplifies. It confers majesty on quotidian banalities that most people have got tired of.

The main rule of this game is lying. Perhaps I am too fastidious. I've been around politics and politicians long enough to understand that none of them could succeed if they were bound by the court room oath – the truth, the whole truth and nothing but. But Ulster politics is uniquely dependent on the oxygen of mendacity. Lying about both ends and means is so much the everyday stuff of life that the participants have long since failed to notice it.

The reporter/analyst can point this out. But its systemic prevalence comes to defeat normal dialogue. Ulster nourishes a politics in which every last comma of a statement must be routinely analysed to death, and then disbelieved: a process, however, which is still regarded by all lifetime students and practitioners with addictive fascination.

Martin McGuinness seriously expects us to believe he has no power in the IRA. Goaded by Michael Mates on *Breakfast With Frost*, he offers a rant which seems to pretend he has barely even heard of the IRA. The BBC meticulously demonstrates the power-structure of the IRA, placing Mr McGuinness very near the top, and the Sinn Féin spokesman is instantly to be found bleating on television about the irrelevance, and outrageous unhelpfulness, of such speculation at this time of a possible historic breakthrough.

34 How should we regard Mr McGuinness? As an agent of the peace engaging in a little necessary duplicity for the greater good? Or

as someone whose contempt for the truth is as congenial as his hatred of the British?

These idiocies are not just wrong, showing not the faintest grasp of history. They are not just viciously biased against the national-liberation struggle when even the more perceptive capitalist press has agreed all along (see earlier quote, and previous *Reviews*) that it is the sclerotic British imperialist performance and the bigoted humbug of the 'Unionist' colonists which has provided the massive blockage of deceit, frame-up, disinformation, hypocrisy, self-delusion, and criminal fraud which has had to be shifted out of the way before healthy historical progress could be resumed in Ireland.

This stupid rant (including much more mawkish self-pity not reproduced) is most unpleasantly revealing for its maudlin pessimistic introspection, the wretched soul of the British bourgeois with its head stuck well up its own rectum.

The *EPSR* collective has no knowledge whatever of guerrilla war, but just an atom of common sense might suggest that the IRA (which has defeated the might of British intelligence, police spies and plants, and military counter-insurgency expertise for 25 years) does not just write a letter through the post or go to a public call-box to communicate with deeply undercover active service units. It could conceivably take weeks or even months to liaise all the complex communications to bomb the City of London and seldom get caught in spite of total British counter-revolutionary operations on fulltime alert. It could equally conceivably take weeks or even months to liaise guaranteed secure communications to stand down these active service units, some of which could be lying low, out of touch, on missions planned to take 12 months or more to complete. Thus reliably installing another IRA ceasefire might not be quite the simple task that these gibbering British bourgeois press monkeys naively assume.

On top of which there could be even bigger problems which it would not only be suicidal for McGuinness to comment on (from a national-liberation security point of view) but truly might not even be able to comment on, – such as the possibility that the IRA command structure might not yet have completed its deliberations about whether it was yet worthwhile to call a new ceasefire, – wisely waiting to see if cowardly British imperialism was going to

make the 'Unionist' reactionaries talk sense at the Stormont negotiations before finally deciding.

So matters have been left in complete confusion by the British bourgeois ideologists at the end of the first historic day of negotiations for a new settlement in Ireland.

But a different reality was just discernible underneath all the posturing camouflage, – the acceptance by the 'Unionists' that talks nevertheless were inevitable.

They posed and disrupted hugely, – but they did turn up (they could have boycotted completely, as they have always said in the past they would do, on scores of different grounds), and they did not immediately walk out on Day One (after also always promising that they would do if anything challenging their 'Ulster Unionist sovereignty' was heard).

Yet challenging the survival, in its old form, of this out-of-date British colonial relic is precisely what these talks are all about, – as symbolised by the presence at Stormont of the prime minister of the Irish Republic, talking with authority about what should be done over the future of 'Ulster', the Occupied Zone, – a humiliating insult to the 'No Surrender' Orange freemasonry which was supposed to set all Paisley's ancestors spinning in their graves like Catherine wheels; – and also as symbolised by the very thing which the 'Unionists' made such an ostentatious fuss over and pretended they would never accept in any form, – the chairmanship by an American outsider over questions of 'Northern Ireland sovereignty' and a friend of Gerry Adams to boot, – as Paisley announced last week:

Ian Paisley, the Democratic Unionist leader, claimed – following talks with John Major yesterday – that Mr Mitchell had been given "a supreme role" and would be "some sort of Pope sitting over all the talks strands".

He described Mr Mitchell as "a crony of Gerry Adams" and "totally unacceptable" to Unionists.

"I think they are deliberately trying to hijack the negotiating body and I don't think they will be able to do it," he said.

There is a subtle deception in this Paisley rant, suddenly slyly pretending that he is in favour of these all-party negotiations on the future of Ireland, – 'Northern Ireland' included, – when for 75 years they have insisted in the colony that all historical questions were now permanently resolved by Partition, and that there never need

be any more talks, and there would never be any talks. 'No Surrender' of anything was the watchword.

Paisley took his deceitful climb-down a stage further yesterday, almost making out that the talks were a 'Unionist' idea, and he would not let anyone subvert their pure purpose:

Mr Paisley said that Unionists had "succeeded in preventing the two governments from proceeding to hijack these talks, to strangle these talks and to destroy these talks and get a republican agenda into motion."

Parts of the capitalist press itself even vaguely grasped the significance of all this:

The highlight of the day was not a lockout but the absence of a walk-out by any of the Unionist parties, in spite of threats over their unhappiness with the agenda and chairman George Mitchell, President Clinton's close ally.

Rev Ian Paisley sat through the entire speech of an Irish prime minister delivered on Ulster soil without walking out or bellowing at him. Even if they would not admit it, the Unionists must have liked many parts of Mr Bruton's speech.

Various delegates emerged briefly to spin and slag. But the overall picture was good; bitter enemies were standing within feet of one another and not beating each other up.

The talks could yet collapse, and the national-liberation war be required to battle on for a longer period before finally forcing British imperialism to at last concede full self-determination for the whole of Ireland collectively, i.e. reunification of this monstrously wronged nation and country.

But a Marxist historical analysis has always indicated a British imperialist defeat and retreat in this complex national question, ultimately.

The decline of British imperialist economic power meant that the military-oriented heavy industries of the Occupied Zone became an increasingly unviable burden as the Empire shrank.

The inferior political role London was assigned to by the overwhelming postwar US imperialist dominance in Western affairs meant that the colonial eye-sore of endless liberation war being fought on the streets of a prominent 'free world' state created an unfavourable international image for the West which Washington would tolerate if it was a colonial mess of its own, but not if that of a junior partner, especially in view of the huge Irish-origin electorate in the USA.

Militarily, for enfeebled British imperialism, it became a complete joke to have to hold onto its base in Occupied Ire-

land by using virtually half its military and intelligence might just to hang onto some appearance of 'security' there. Strategically, the Occupied Zone became just an enormous headache, – to be got out of as quickly as was decent.

Ideologically, British imperialism's remaining Irish connection was the biggest nightmare of all, – demoralising those circles in the Establishment who knew Britain could not win and had to get out; poisoning those circles who insisted that the imperialist line must be held in Ireland and that compromise with the 'gun-toting terrorist bog-trotters' would be a terminal humiliation for British imperialism; and provoking the eventually-to-be-abandoned colonial community in the Occupied Zone towards a possible civil-war revolt against London which could become even more devastating than the national-liberation guerrilla war.

From the hunger-strike deaths and the Sinn Féin electoral triumphs onwards, London could feel its humiliation growing, in Ireland and internationally. And once the IRA had begun bombing the City of London and other major British installations and personages with impunity, the futility of continuing the British colonial presence was complete. The hated and unviable 'Northern Ireland' colony had to go.

Another worthwhile historic triumph for national-liberation war was in the making, forcing imperialism into retreat where it would have rather let sleeping dogs lie.

This Marxist analysis by the *EPSR* is an unknown language as far as the petty-bourgeois fake-'left' in Britain is concerned.

All of the above could prove

Challenged British colonialism will have to address the national-liberation struggle demands for full self-determination for Ireland eventually. The sooner the better.

[*EPSR* No 858 18-06-96]

The continued guerrilla war by the Irish national-liberation struggle has driven British bourgeois ideology into apoplectic stupidity.

Unable to defeat the IRA in 25 years trying, and constantly outmanoeuvred by Sinn Féin's political skills, the London imperialist establishment has basically long admitted the need to get out of Ireland, and has been inching forward on a

eventually to have been a catastrophically incorrect reading of history. But the polemical debate goes on right now to give the anti-imperialist struggle a lead, eventually influential enough to further undermine imperialism.

It is now four months since the *EPSR* renewed its exposure of the CPGB fake-'lefts', for example, who wrote off the national-liberation struggle as a failure in the aftermath of the South Quay Docklands explosion ending the ceasefire. Any serious-minded workers interested in what constitutes Marxist leadership are still waiting for a reply. And so another repeat of the charge of misleadership is called for:

[The article continues with the EPSR polemic in issue No 846 – as it is already printed in full in this volume we continue only with introductory paragraph and last paragraph. Please refer back and read pages 16-17 in this volume as part of this article - ed]:

"The *Weekly Worker* paper of the Leninist CPGB (deceased) faction's strange quest for a 'non-ideological or multanimous' Party to unite 're-forged' (their word) Communists has not surprisingly found the *EPSR* not to its taste.

[...]

Once again, not only no attempt to deal with the detailed Marxist criticism of the WW sectarian ignorance on the significance of the Irish (or any) national-liberation struggle, – but positive rejoicing that the last thing these 'communists' want is any theoretical clarification at all. No wonder they are so confused! No wonder their paper is such a triumph of 'non-ideology'!!"

The CPGB 'rapprochement' posture will remain a fraudulent joke until it comments on all these important questions.

Build Leninism.

Reg Potts

snail's pace withdrawal process for more than 15 years, since before the 1985 Anglo-Irish Treaty which concedes a Republic of Ireland stake in the affairs of the remaining six counties of Ulster artificially kept out of the 1921 independence treaty by the brutal imposition of Partition.

But the all-party talks starting in Stormont last week for a completely new arrangement for Ireland, which will bury the

gerrymandered colony of non-existent 'Northern Ireland' in its old corrupt and domineering form, have been at their feeblest in putting a stop to continuing imperialist self-delusions.

The nonsense of debarring Sinn Féin from the opening of the talks in order to sustain the silly hypocrisy about the 'democratic process' by the British police-military dictatorship in the Occupied Zone (the direct successors of the Black and Tan butchers who piratically secured the Occupied Zone to start with) has suckered bourgeois ideology into even more ludicrous posturing following the new IRA blitz on Manchester.

Screeching impotent silliness about Sinn Féin now being totally isolated, about Adams now being finished, about Sinn Féin's supporters all being humiliated, about the IRA demonstrating that they are nothing but incurable gangsters, about the whole peace process now being told to "go to hell", etc, etc, have come pouring out, revealing only how wounded British bourgeois ideology has been by British imperialism's humiliating defeat in Ireland, and how every compromising step of the inevitable peace process is just hated torment for the arrogant London establishment.

Imbecile posturing about "never allowing Sinn Féin back into talks" has inevitably been followed up by even more ridiculous threats to put the Republican movement back inside the Long Kesh concentration camp and to 'step up' the security offensive against the IRA (for the thousandth time).

This is the insane logic of all this frustrated imperialist spleen. Defeating the IRA has been ruthlessly and relentlessly tried for 25 years, and it has hopelessly totally failed. Imprisoning and hounding the Sinn Féin political leadership has been brutally imposed for 25 years. That has abysmally failed also. Sinn Féin has just received a record 40% of the Irish vote in the Occupied Zone, nearly 16% of the total poll, one of the biggest of the significant political parties now in the Occupied Zone.

It seems incredible having to spell out to the shattered British bourgeoisie that if they want peace, then they had better do a deal with the people who are actually waging the national-liberation war first and foremost; but presumably such idiot-treatment is all that the British ruling class is now capable of responding to, – all sectors, all parties.

And the bankrupt propagand-

da against the IRA, hopelessly trying to justify the Establishment's mishandling of affairs, might find public opinion deserting it too. Although, of course, notoriously susceptible to arbitrary misinterpretation, some of the response to the bombing of Manchester did not quite go along the lines of the anticipated knee-jerk chauvinistic "Kill all those murdering IRA bastards" that was played for and has traditionally been invoked. As with the Docklands bombing in February, a lot of people responded by wishing that quicker progress could be made with the peace process.

At some stage, British bourgeois ideology could begin getting into an even deeper mess through its Ireland humiliation as the demoralising pain of defeat there starts merging with the sickening fear in the ruling class that they are facing defeat on all fronts, particularly, most recently, on Europe.

There seems to be an odd theatrical quality about this demented avalanche of deliberate disinformation that has begun covering the whole Irish question in these last weeks of progressive denouement. As the new settlement deal has inch by inch unfolded, sections of British bourgeois opinion have grown more and totally despairing, far right to the morbidly cynical fake 'liberal' wing (*Guardian*, etc, – see last week's *Review*).

It is tempting but fanciful to speculate that in such darkest hours when all of the anti-revolutionary pro-'democracy' (imperialism) lies and disinformation of the past starts catching up on the pitifully deluded bourgeois ideological hacks, then what is being caught a glimpse of is their future terminal despair when even their own routine motivation to just keep on telling big lies, itself starts to break down.

But certainly, there must be grounds for thinking that the cumulative damage to ruling-class credibility from all their stupid lies and dirty tricks over Ireland might by now just be beginning to turn into a qualitative change in the situation, with public opinion possibly getting ready to tell the Establishment to stop play-acting and procrastinating to save British imperialist prestige, and get on with the necessary negotiations with the Irish national-liberation struggle to reach a comprehensive peace agreement to get the Irish national question off the list of troubles once and for all.

The degree of bourgeois

press stupidity on this occasion is unprecedented. The first barmy conclusion of the massive *Guardian* editorial is that:

“The republican movement has not renounced the use of violence, and never will”.

The non-sequiturs and biliousness then just get worse and nuttier:

On one level the IRA may exist to liberate Ireland from the hated Brits. On another, it exists like Bonnie and Clyde to rob banks and kill people.

Sinn Féin has repeated ad infinitum that meaningful talks about a new deal for Ireland will restore the ceasefire and offer the only possible route towards a lasting peace. If pre-conditions continue to exclude Sinn Féin, making meaningful talks impossible, then there would be little likelihood of a new ceasefire.

Some people would conclude that last week's farce at Stormont, with Sinn Féin locked outside the gates, and this weekend's devastation in Manchester, would indicate that Sinn Féin had spoken the truth.

The *Guardian's* conclusion?:

How can anyone, whether disposed in favour of Irish nationalism, let alone against it, rely on a word that Sinn Féin now says? There is no evidence that they can deliver for peace, and plenty of evidence that they intend to continue with war.

This is dementedly crazy, leading one to wonder if the British bourgeoisie is not losing its marbles altogether.

Far from Sinn Féin being isolated, it is the whole political spectrum beyond Sinn Féin which is risking repudiation for its blind irrational opportunism on the Irish question which above all, as everyone knows, is, and has been for 800 years, – a problem of national-liberation struggle against arbitrary armed British imperialist domi-

nation by one imposed means or another, the ‘democratic’ racket of ‘northern Ireland’ not only being no exception but being one of the most vicious injustices and worst historical outrages of all time.

Only Sinn Féin and the IRA remotely honestly and accurately explain, accept, and fight for this historical justice. All other parties in the Irish peace process, ‘without exception’ are guilty of denying this historical truth, or playing it down for sectarian advantage. In the current peace process, all the other participants are seeking to gain some glory or justification riding on the back of the national-liberation struggle which alone, unaided by anyone, forced a reconsideration of the grotesque injustice that was and is Partition.

This is particularly true of the disgusting Green-Tory bourgeoisie of the Irish Republic, the cowardly ‘nationalists’ of every hue who have grown complacently fat in Dublin while one fifth of the nation and country of Ireland stifled on under the degenerate gerrymandered tyranny of the British colony and its Orange-fascist fanatical regime since 1921.

The Irish capitalist press delivered even more nauseating humbug than their British imperialist counterparts:

TODAY'S Dublin-based Sunday papers do not mince their words in condemning the IRA for the bomb in Manchester.

‘The IRA has made its presence felt and told the rest of humanity on these islands that we and our peace process can go to hell,’ says the *Sunday Tribune's* editorial. ‘To hell with consent, to hell with winning a political argument, to hell with constitutional nationalism, to hell with the Irish Government, to hell with world opinion and to hell with you too, Bill Clinton.’

The paper looks back to the 1994 ceasefire and wonders about the ‘tectonic shift’ within the Republican

movement away from violence in pursuit of political gains.

‘It now transpires,’ says the *Tribune*, ‘that Sinn Féin and the IRA cannot be trusted at all. Gerry Adams's announcement that Sinn Féin accepted the Mitchell principles must stand as a sham and a lie.’

‘What all this means for what remains of the peace process is difficult to say with not even the dust settled in Manchester. The IRA's conduct is certainly evidence of a hard-line, bullet and ballet-box strategy – or, put the IRA's way, a strategy employing the tactical use of the armed struggle.’

There is now no way whatsoever that a simple restoration of the August 1994 ceasefire would be sufficient to enable Sinn Féin to take its place at the talks table.

John Bruton will have to harden disposition on this and adopt John Major's stance. As for Mr Adams and his associates, it is hard not to conclude that their day has come ... and gone.’

The *Sunday Independent's* view is that the Manchester bomb ‘simply shows how far removed the Republican movement is from a commitment to peaceful means as the only way forward in the North. The action indicates that Sinn Féin/IRA can neither be trusted nor believed.’

‘Sinn Féin/IRA have ruled themselves out of participation in any peace process. Gerry Adams claims to back the Mitchell principles and asks to be treated as a democrat. Yet he couldn't condemn Adare and doubtless will also fail to condemn the Manchester bombing.’

‘Democrats do not have difficulty in condemning murder, particularly when the victim is a garda who is there to defend the institutions of the State, and to uphold the freedoms that terrorists seek to destroy. And democrats do not have difficulty condemning attempted mass murder when the targets are innocent shoppers in a crowded Manchester shopping centre.’

The tabloid *Sunday World* is even more forthright. ‘Presumably the IRA does not have a rule against mounting attacks that can kill or maim ordinary citizens in the UK,’ says its leader. ‘The Provos consider themselves a legitimate army. What kind of “army” mounts attack on non-combatants?’

‘What the IRA's lying denial underlines is the essential moral bankruptcy of the organisation. There are times when lies are the last refuge of scoundrels.’

One Government source added wryly: ‘This, from a movement that says it is looking for a peaceful settlement. All I can say is that this is a funny way to advance the peace process. What are they going to call this: the armed struggle for peace?’

This is all appallingly sick nonsense. The complacent southern bourgeoisie would not be within a shout of Ireland's long-awaited reunification and self-determination at last, were it not for the truly heroic and epoch-shattering guerrilla war fought by handfuls of Irish patriots against the full might

of British imperialism. Ditto Clinton's hoped-for share in this peace dividend, – and Major's if he still entertains such.

It is monstrous calumny to pretend that innocent shoppers are the targets. Anything but. In most colonial-liberation guerrilla wars fought in history, terrorist bombing to destroy property and installations has gone on without any warnings being given whatsoever. The authorities had an hour and forty minutes to clear a few thousands workers and shoppers from an area the size of Wembley Stadium. That same afternoon, 80,000 vacated the Wembley precincts within 20 minutes of the football ending:

During the afternoon a helicopter hovered above central Manchester, broadcasting a request – well an order – for people to evacuate the vicinity. The whole of the city centre was soon a desert, with the cordon stretching out to the inner suburbs.

So why not at 9.41 a.m.? Scores of eye-witnesses and victims have testified that they had been unable to get a clear picture of what was going on or what they were supposed to do, – just as happened at the South Quay bombing in February when the two fatalities had actually been cleared once from their newspaper kiosk, only to then be told that it was safe to go back in since “nothing much appears to be happening”.

The same casual negligence was reported last Saturday. There was no intention whatever to destroy innocent shoppers. The obvious entire aim was to destroy the property of the British ruling class and to disrupt its business activities.

As for the government comment, every national-liberation struggle in history has precisely been an armed struggle for peace. That is the whole idea.

The cowardly British capitalist press reflected growing doubts that the authorities are handling any part of the Irish problem correctly:

Yesterday, police defended their evacuation in the face of suggestions that they had blundered in failing to clear the area quickly enough.

The bomb exploded one hour and 20 minutes after the vehicle carrying it had been located and one hour and 35 minutes after the warnings had been received.

The police argued that clearing 80,000 people, including many foreign tourists and Euro 96 fans, from a busy city centre cannot be done at high speed without creating a panic. Assistant Chief Constable Colin Phillips said: “The fact that we managed to evacuate such a large area and no one was killed is an absolute credit to everyone involved.”



Would it not have been better to have had a little bit of panic so as to avoid 200 injuries, some of them in offices only yards from the explosion where people were still sitting working an hour and forty minutes after the first unmistakable coded message had been received by Granada Television.?

Other admissions by the British capitalist press underline that there is a lot more to the question of who is responsible for the injuries than the answer of who planted the bomb. Why in Manchester, for example? Because the cowardly British ruling-class authorities are now making sure that they do not get bombed in the City of London again, – and to hell with the rest of the country, to paraphrase the despicable Dublin *Sunday Tribune*:

One likely reason for the move to Manchester, according to security sources, is that the City of London has become increasingly impenetrable since the Bishopsgate bombing because of fears that one more big bang might not only damage the talks but might also finally drive out the foreign financial institutions. The prestige targets in the capital are also heavily fortified.

It is a complete distortion to suggest that all acts of guerrilla war aim to spread terror, or have no concern for who gets hurt. Most of the historical difficulty facing individual acts of guerrilla-war violence has been caused by the cowardly behaviour of the ruling-class Establishment, protecting their own persons at great expense and making themselves very hard targets to get at, necessitating a degree of indiscriminate bombing.

Now the British ruling class is doing it on a grand scale, protecting the City of London at huge expense, leaving the provincial cities as the obvious alternative targets.

The same capitalist press go on to admit that the ruling class also know very well that it is they who are inviting more guerrilla-war violence ad infinitum:

MIS concedes that there can be no security solution against the IRA and that, in the long term, only a political agreement will end, or significantly diminish, the threat of IRA violence.

Some well placed agents in the British intelligence community criticised the Government for not responding sufficiently positively to what they regard as a significant initiative by the IRA.

They say that John Major repeatedly sent the wrong signals, including responding to the Mitchell Commission by calling for elections to a new Northern Ireland forum.

The agents say that frustration

with Mr Major's government was reflected by Sinn Féin's success in the elections last month when it attracted record support of 40 per cent of the Northern Ireland nationalist vote.

Meanwhile, there is a feeling among republicans that it was the Docklands bomb which prompted Mr Major within days to set a firm date for all-party talks on Northern Ireland.

The national-liberation war is a known factor. It will go on until justice is at last delivered to the Irish nation, i.e. – the eventual perspective of reunification, ending British colonial rights in their intolerable and destructive separatist 'Northern Ireland' form.

So why is there destruction on the streets of Manchester? Because the cowardly and senile British ruling class Establishment cannot get its degenerate brain round the need to eat some humble pie and reach a peace agreement with the people British imperialism is suffering from a war with, – namely the Irish national-liberation struggle, – namely, Sinn Féin and the IRA.

But who do we find helping the deluded and paralysed British ruling class, and supporting bourgeois ideologists, in their complete fantasy that Sinn Féin is now completely isolated, that Gerry Adams' day has come and gone, and that no one could now blame the Western imperialists for giving up on the peace process? Why, the CPGB, of course, smoked out at last into just the vaguest echo of a reply to the pages of criticism that the *Review* has sent it on the incorrectness of its Irish analysis.

Just hours before the latest IRA offensive, these fake 'Marxists' circulated the following:

Sinn Féin was making as much propaganda as it could from the government's refusal – despite its 15.47% vote in the recent elections – to admit it without a renewed IRA ceasefire.

This exclusion is certain to be a very temporary one. A ceasefire exists in all but name, so it is just a question of a few well timed IRA words, which in fact will change nothing.

However, this should not lead anyone to the conclusion that the IRA and Sinn Féin are somehow on the brink of victory. They have clearly signalled their intention to accept continued imperialist domination, epitomised by their support for George Mitchell as chairman of the main talks sessions.

The IRA has declared: "We will never leave nationalist areas undefended this side of a final settlement." But a "final settlement" – one which "recognises both traditions" in the Six Counties – can be nothing but a continuation in modified form of the status quo. Imperialist forces will not be required to 'decommission' a single weapon and will be free to use them whenever necessary.

David McKittrick, writing in *The Independent* (June 5), intoned: 'The peace process, which has so often seemed defunct, somehow moves mysteriously on, in a way which no one really understands...'

For us there is no mystery. Despite the push and pull of all the minor players, the 'new world order' of uncontested imperialist domination since the collapse of the Soviet Union means that anti-imperialist forces are on the retreat. Most are now trying to negotiate the best deal they can get. Some have been drawn into their 'peace processes' so closely that they have become – unwittingly perhaps – an integral part of the new imperialist order.

A period of Irish nationalist resistance is coming to an end. But the heroism of the past need not be wasted. Revolutionaries on both sides of the Irish Sea must unite their strength in a new, class-based force, capable of mounting an even stronger challenge to the British state.

It is not just the inept timing of the phrase "nationalist resistance is coming to an end" which renders this muddle so alarmingly wrong and damaging. It is the entire inability of these petty-bourgeois 'revolutionaries' to remotely grasp anything about the national question. Leninism lived in vain for these ignorant Trot dilettantes.

All their previous mistakes, exposed in the *EPSR*, are repeated. These shamefaced renegades who used to boast so much about being part of the 'official' communist movement when CPSU revisionism was stifling the international anti-imperialist struggle, – clearly have no wish to enter any 'rapprochement' learning process as far as a real Leninist publication is concerned. They never publish any *EPSR* criticisms at any length. They never reply to them.

But victory it is for the Irish national-liberation struggle. British imperialism is being forced by armed revolutionary struggle to retreat from its criminal 'Northern Ireland' permanent, once-and-for-all-time 'solution' to the Irish question. Slowly but surely, the hated and monstrous Partition is going to have to be dismantled, right down the throat of the 75 outr-

The Irish formed, to all intents and purposes, a distinct nationality of their own, and the fact that they used the English language could not deprive them of the right, common to all, to have an independent national organisation within the International.

There was the fact of seven centuries of English Conquest and oppression of Ireland, and so long as that oppression existed, it was an insult to Irish working men to ask them to submit to a British Federal Council.

If members of a conquering nation called upon the nation they had conquered and continued to hold down to forget their specific nationality and position, to "sink national differences" and so forth, that was not Internationalism, it was nothing else but preaching to them submission to the yoke, and attempting to justify and to perpetuate the dominion of the conqueror under the cloak of Internationalism. It was sanctioning the belief, only too common among the English working men, that they were superior beings compared to the Irish, and as much an aristocracy as the mean whites of the Slave States considered themselves to be with regard to the Negroes.

In a case like that of the Irish, true Internationalism must necessarily be based upon a distinctly national organisation; the Irish, as well as other oppressed nationalities, could enter the Association only as equals with the members of the conquering nation, and under protest against the conquest. The Irish sections, therefore, not only were justified, but even under the necessity to state in the preamble to their rules that their first and most pressing duty, as Irishmen, was to establish their own national independence. The antagonism between Irish and English working men in England had always been one of the

most powerful means by which class rule was upheld in England.

Now, for the first time, there was a chance of making English and Irish working men act together in harmony for their common emancipation, a result attained by no previous movement in their country. And no sooner had this been effected, than they were called upon to dictate to the Irish, and to tell them they must not carry on the movement in their own way, but submit to be ruled by an English Council! Why, that was introducing into the International the subjugation of the Irish by the English.

As to the pretended collisions between Irish and English branches, they had been provoked by attempts of members of the British Federal Council to meddle with the Irish sections, to get them to give up their specific national character and to come under the rule of the British Council.

Irish sections in England could not be separated from the Irish sections in Ireland; it would not do to have some Irishmen dependent upon a London Federal Council and others upon a Dublin Federal Council. The Irish sections in England were our base of operations with regard to the Irish working men in Ireland; they were more advanced, being placed in more favourable circumstances, and the movement in Ireland could be propagated and organised only through their instrumentality. And were they to wilfully destroy their own base of operations and cut off the only means by which Ireland could be effectually won for the International? For it must not be forgotten that the Irish sections, and rightly so, would never consent to give up their distinct national organisation and submit to the British Council.

If the motion was adopted by the Council, the Council would inform the Irish working men, in so many words, that, after the dominion of the English aristocracy over Ireland, after the dominion of the English middle class over Ireland, they must now look forth to the advent of the dominion of the English working class over Ireland.

This early exposure of bogus Trotskyite 'internationalism' followed Marx's famous remarks on the need for English workers to support the complete self-determination of Ireland from any British colonial domination before the social revolution could become possible in Britain or in Ireland, written, for example, against Bakunin's ultra-leftism which had denounced

the First International's support for the Irish national-liberation movement saying that it was diverting attention from what Bakunin claimed was the International's direct task everywhere, the promotion of the social revolution. Later Marx repeated many of these March 1870 remarks in his April 1870 letter to Meyer and Vogt [see also page 22 - ed]:

The moment the forced union between the two countries ends, a social revolution will immediately break out in Ireland, though in outmoded forms. English landlordism would not only lose a great source of wealth, but also its greatest moral force, i.e., that of representing the domination of England over Ireland. On the other hand, by maintaining the power of their landlords in Ireland, the English proletariat makes them invulnerable in England itself.

In the second place, the English bourgeoisie has not only exploited the Irish poverty to keep down the working class in England by forced immigration of poor Irishmen, but it has also divided the proletariat into two hostile camps. The revolutionary fire of the Celtic worker does not go well with the nature of the Anglo-Saxon worker, solid, but slow. On the contrary, in all the big industrial centres in England there is profound antagonism between the Irish proletariat and the English proletariat. The average English worker hates the Irish worker as a competitor who lowers wages and the standard of life. He feels national and religious antipathies for him. He regards him somewhat like the poor whites of the Southern States of North America regard their black slaves. This antagonism among the proletarians of England is artificially nourished and supported by the bourgeoisie. It knows that this scission is the true secret of maintaining its power.

Furthermore, Ireland is the only pretext the English Government has for retaining a big standing army, which, if need be, as has happened before, can be used against the English workers after having done its military training in Ireland.

Lastly, England today is seeing a repetition of what happened on a monstrous scale in Ancient Rome. Any nation that oppresses another forges its own chains.

Thus, the attitude of the International Association to the Irish question is very clear. Its first need is to encourage the social revolution in England. To this end a great blow must be struck in Ireland.

The General Council's resolutions on the Irish amnesty serve only as an introduction to other resolutions which will affirm that, quite apart from international justice, it is a precondition to the emancipation of the English working class to transform the present forced union (i.e., the enslavement of Ireland) into equal and free confederation if possible, into complete separation if need be.²⁰⁶

38 Owing to the constantly increasing concentration of tenant farming, Ireland steadily supplies its own surplus to the English labour market, and thus forces down wages and lowers the moral and material condition of the English working class.

And most important of all! Every industrial and commercial centre in

England now possesses a working class divided into two hostile camps, English proletarians and Irish proletarians. The ordinary English worker hates the Irish worker as a competitor who lowers his standard of life. In relation to the Irish worker he feels himself a member of the ruling nation and so turns himself into a tool of the aristocrats and capitalists of his country against Ireland, thus strengthening their domination over himself. He cherishes religious, social, and national prejudices against the Irish worker. His attitude towards him is much the same as that of the "poor whites" to the "niggers" in the former slave states of the U.S.A. The Irishman pays him back with interest in his own money. He sees in the English worker at once the accomplice and the stupid tool of the English rule in Ireland.

This antagonism is artificially kept alive and intensified by the press, the pulpit, the comic papers, in short, by all the means at the disposal of the ruling classes. This antagonism is the secret of the impotence of the English working class, despite its organization. It is the secret by which the capitalist class maintains its power. And that class is fully aware of it.

But the evil does not stop here. It continues across the ocean. The antagonism between English and Irish is the hidden basis of the conflict between the United States and England. It makes any honest and serious co-operation between the working classes of the two countries impossible. It enables the governments of both countries, whenever they think fit, to break the edge off the social conflict by their mutual bullying, and, in case of need, by war with one another.

England, being the metropolis of capital, the power which has hitherto ruled the world market, is for the present the most important country for the workers' revolution, and moreover the only country in which the material conditions for this revolution have developed up to a certain degree of maturity. Therefore to hasten the social revolution in England is the most important object of the International Workingmen's Association. The sole means of hastening it is to make Ireland independent.

Hence it is the task of the International everywhere to put the conflict between England and Ireland in the foreground, and everywhere to side openly with Ireland. And it is the special task of the Central Council in London to awaken a consciousness in the English workers that for them the national emancipation of Ireland is no question of abstract justice or humanitarian sentiment but the first condition of their own social emancipation.

MARX TO S. MEYER AND A. VOGT, APRIL 9, 1870

Conditions have altered vastly between Marx writing of Ireland's continued total colonisation-'Unionisation' in 1870, and the 1996 situation of an established bourgeois-imperialist southern Republic, built upon the setback of Partition, plus an artificially gerrymandered Irish minority area in the north in the bits of six counties wrenched out of Ulster by British imperialism's final savage imposition on the Irish nation in 1921.

But history has already proved that Marx's broad understanding of the national question remains as valid today as ever. The workers of no nation which oppresses another (even if only partially now, and with the cover of a phoney 'democracy') can themselves be free. English workers will continue to be stooges for British ruling-class domination in England for as long as they continue to fail to see the full self-determination of Ireland (via ending Partition and 'Northern Ireland' as was, and by reunification) as as much in their own interests as in the interests of justice for the country and nation of Ireland.

Workers in Britain (not to mention the deluded wretches who consider themselves to be 'Loyalists') or in any other country can only effectively help call for socialist revolution in Ireland by agitating for the overthrow of their own

ruling class at home, - the basic premise of all Marxist internationalism.

But to even begin to successfully agitate for the social revolution in Britain, Marx explains, - first the English workers have to free themselves from their insoluble subordination to their own ruling class which inevitably flows from the continued imperial-domination status of England over any other people on earth.

The essential first step, therefore, before any socialist revolutionary agitation can become effective in England is that English workers must learn to support the complete self-determination of all of Ireland from any British control at all.

The CPGB seems unable to grasp this ABC of Marxism.

In the past, the *Weekly Worker* has turned this confusion into an impossible burden by asserting that the national-liberation struggle to complete Ireland's self-determination can never possibly succeed:

The armed struggle has been a total dead end. There was never any possibility of any return commensurate with the time, effort and sacrifice that was put into it. It could never work.

■When the ceasefire was declared there was an air of triumphalism in and around the republican movement and a belief they were on a 'high road' to a united Ireland. They lack any class perspective. Even so, the triumphalism has faded: a certain disillusionment has set in. Impatience and discontent is expressing itself

Among the rank and file there is a deeper

disappointment and a feeling that they must re-examine how they got into this cul-de-sac.

This re-examination must involve facing some painful truths. You would have to be a fool not to understand that the strategy that was presented to them simply has not worked.

These very amateur 'Marxists' have written themselves a prescription for permanent frustration with this hopelessly subjective and misinformed nonsense, not the 'permanent revolution' of their Trot fantasies.

A simple reading of the capitalist press's own admissions ought to alert them to their confusion. If having George Mitchell as chairman of the talks is such an obvious acceptance of continued imperialist domination by Sinn Féin and the IRA, as the CPGB see it, then why did reactionary 'Unionism' go so berserk last week?

Fear and loathing stalked the corridors of Castle Buildings yesterday, after George Mitchell was finally allowed to take his seat as chairman of the talks early yesterday morning. Fisticuffs was never far from breaking out between Unionists.

The main action was taking place between the Irish and British governments and the Ulster Unionists as they slaved over redrafts of position papers, straining language in the search for accommodation and ambiguity. Mr Mitchell could only wait and marvel at "the maestros of obstruction".

The deal was immediately attacked by the hardline Democratic Unionists and UK Unionists, with the Rev Ian Paisley bitterly complaining that David Trimble, the leader of the Ulster Unionists, had "done a deal" with Dublin.

Mr Paisley said: "I never thought Ulster would be sold out by Mr Trimble doing a dirty deal with Irish government. We made our protest and left, but we shall return." The UK Unionist leader, Bob McCartney, said of the Ulster Unionists: "They were gutless, they were unprincipled and they were a disgrace. Their performance as negotiators was pathetic, they failed totally in their duty."

Asked how anybody could object to a man with such impeccable international credentials, Ian Paisley Jr commented: "Yes, but so has Mickey Mouse."

At 27 minutes past midnight, Sir Patrick Mayhew, the Northern Ireland Secretary, told the delegates that Mr Mitchell would now be assuming the chairmanship. There were cries of "30 pieces of silver" and "the people of East Belfast will be waiting for you" directed at the Ulster Unionist team.

Sir Patrick, according to a senior British official, was called "scum" by one delegate and his colleague Michael Ancram physically blocked the path of another trying to occupy Mr Mitchell's chair.

When the former US senator finally walked in there was a standing ovation from everybody except the Ulster Unionists and the re-

maining members of the Democratic Unionist Party. Mr Paisley thundered at him: "We don't accept you, we object in the strongest possible terms."

A few hours sleep did nothing to sweeten tempers. Once talks resumed yesterday, Mr Paisley insisted he would not take part in any sessions chaired by Mr Mitchell. He stormed out again, claiming that the Social Democratic and Labour Party and the loyalist Ulster Democratic Party were trying to get him excluded for not verbally accepting the Mitchell principles of non-violence.

At lunchtime, Mr Trimble and the Rev William McCrea, DUP MP for Mid-Ulster, nearly came to blows. Mr Trimble was live on the local television news bulletin when the glowering reverend wandered into picture and said: "You are lying to the people of Ulster, but your lies are being caught on. Ulster's not for sale, Davey. We will certainly not be joining you to surrender Ulster."

Mr Paisley recommitted himself to the struggle. "This is a battle for the soul of this province. I will dedicate my life as never before to overturning the dastardly deed that was done." Mr Trimble expressed the hope that his colleague would soon calm down and join him in the fight against the real enemies of Unionism.

Some less demented sectors of bourgeois ideology have felt obliged to offer their own 'progressive' explanations:

Anyone who imagined that there could be progress without movement from some of the unionist parties was deluding themselves. Meanwhile down in the forest of Ulster politics, something important could be stirring, as unionism takes the first brave steps into a new political world. That noise you hear may even be the permafrost of 20th century Ulster beginning to break.

On one reading, Tuesday night's wrangling session over George Mitchell's role in the talks was a reassertion of all the worst manifestations of unionist rejectionism. Listening to Ian Paisley's disgraceful abuse, it is easy to believe that this is not the 1990s but the 1690s; If an ephemeral matter like the chairmanship can provoke such posturing, what chance is there of agreeing something important like the relationship between the two parts of Ireland?

There is a more optimistic version. We could be witnessing one of the necessary steps in the process - the calling of Paisley's bluff. The Democratic Unionist leader has always represented a threat to the peace process, for the simple reason that he wants none of it. He speaks for many people, as Northern Ireland elections always show. But not for enough people any longer. The May 90 elections gave him his rejectionist mandate, which should not be underestimated. But it should not be overestimated either. Fewer than one voter in five endorsed his party, and Mr Paisley was rejected by a big majority of the unionist electorate. The DUP has stayed stuck, while much of the rest of unionism

has begun to move on.

This is not to be naïve about the sticking points. Yet it is important to remember that if the DUP or Dr O'Brien of the UKUP, or Terry Dicks MP, or the reactionary Anglo-unionists who write editorials for the right-wing London press, had had their way, then there would have been no peace process at all. An alternative future for Northern Ireland demands change on all sides, among unionists not least of all. It would be churlish not to recognise the principled start which many of them have made this week.

Some bourgeois ideologists from the Occupied Zone have felt obliged to spell out even more clearly the direction in which things have to go:

While even now a new IRA ceasefire cannot be absolutely ruled out, it is unlikely that this bomb was intended to be a signing-off note. It is more likely that the Republican leadership has decided that the Major government is unable or unwilling to pressurise the Ulster Unionists and act as a "persuader" for Irish unity.

This was, after all, the original guiding concept of the "Irish peace process" or the Hume-Adams initiative as it was known: for all the slippage of the Major government in other respects - George Mitchell is in effect the US envoy the British government once set its face against - there is no sign of slippage on this key point.

There has to be the consent of a majority in the North before there is a united Ireland. But consent, as SDLP deputy leader Seamus Mallon points out, is a two-way street: there has to be power-sharing plus an Irish dimension before nationalists will give their consent to the status quo in the North and the dropping of the Irish territorial claim.

Where does this leave the Stormont talks, which opened in such tetchy and ill-tempered style a week ago? Before the Manchester bomb went off, political discussion in the province was dominated by speculation about the position of David Trimble, leader of the Ulster Unionist Party. Mr Trimble had taken a huge risk in accepting the talks chairmanship of George Mitchell, the former US Senator. Both Ian Paisley's Democratic Unionist Party and Robert McCartney's UK Unionist Party felt that Mitchell was an intolerable choice - on the grounds that the former senator was beholden to an Irish-American nationalist constituency.

The *Mitchell report* on decommissioning was seen also as including a rather credulous acceptance - at the very moment when the Canary Wharf bomb was being planned - of the sincerity of the Republican movement on the subject of the decommissioning of paramilitary arms.

This sits rather uneasily with the recent dictum of the leading Belfast Republican Brian Keenan, who declared that the only decommissioning on the agenda was the decommissioning of the British state in Ireland. Mr Trimble probably

shares these doubts about Senator Mitchell but it is now clear that he intends to treat the talks as a serious opportunity to reach an accommodation with nationalism. He has held together his talks delegation - which includes some of the right of his party - on this point, but others in the party's wider base and grass roots were deeply upset.

If the political class of Sinn Féin cannot deliver the IRA - and the evidence to date is that the shifting balance of forces within Republicanism means that it can no longer do so - then the talks are the only game in town.

If the parties (representing 85 per cent of the Northern Irish population and the two governments) can reach agreement - and the odds are rather against it - then they have the capacity to redefine the Irish question and, more particularly, make it exceptionally difficult for paramilitary groupings to claim to be acting in the name of the unfinished business of Irish history. For this to happen, a large segment of the Unionist community has to grasp the fact that an internal settlement is an impossibility. Unionists have entirely legitimate concerns about the apparent implication of schemes of north-south harmonisation in health, education and social welfare - concerns which the British government has done amazingly little to address in the way it should and could.

Nevertheless, cross-border institutions are an essential part of any settlement; they may be the rather large symbolic fig leaf necessary to permit the abandonment of a campaign to coerce Unionists into a united Ireland or a system of joint authority.

There is much wishful thinking here but it just about conceded the point, without stating it of course, that the war will go on indefinitely unless the Irish national question is reasonably taken into account in the new settlement, which has clearly been envisaged to stop short of immediate reunification of Ireland but to plainly open the door wide to eventual reunification.

Trimble and the splinter 'Unionist' parties, more working-class, have for a variety of reasons begun to see some point in compromising with Irish nationalism which can never cease fighting to complete Ireland's self-determination, as Marx saw so clearly.

With British imperialism's position in the world continuing to collapse so rapidly, a shoddy compromise can suit all parties, or most, and yet still represent the necessary defeat for the present British colonial-imperialist status quo which, as Marx explained, is the only route for eventually freeing all workers, whether they consider themselves English, Irish, or British, - to fight for the really worthwhile longterm emancipation

and full flowering of cultural aspirations which can only come with the socialist revolution.

Imperialist domination in one sense will not be ended by a new self-determination deal for Ireland, brokered by Washington but ultimately created by the epoch-making national-liberation struggle by Sinn Féin and the IRA.

But in the most crucial sense, the permanent colonised subordination represented by 'Northern Ireland' as it used to be, will be ended. And that will be enough to at last free all the workers of England, Ireland, and Britain from the terrible yoke of the unfinished Irish national question.

The wrecking of Manchester at a cost of half a billion pounds which the in-trouble British imperialist economy can ill afford, is an odd way, it must be said, of illustrating the CPGB's claim that Sinn Féin and the IRA have become "an integral part of the new imperialist order".

What order? British imperialism is in such total chaos on the world stage that it is now being wiped out in its home metropolises by just the tiny historic remnant of the heroic Irish national-liberation struggle which was supposed to have been permanently undermined by the slyly vicious 'new imperialist order' of 1921,

Colonialism still delays conceding Ireland's full self-determination despite guerrilla war's unstoppable onslaught, vainly hoping for a reprieve. Public opinion should demand: Dismantle the infamous Partition; Get out of Ireland now.

[EPSR No 859 25-06-96]

The great speculation raging widespread about what will or should happen next in the Ireland question confirms how complex and confusing but vital are these national issues.

Even British imperialism's chief counter-revolutionary officer in the Occupied Zone, RUC boss Annesley, confesses that he has not a clue what is going on:

Sir Hugh said that a very serious debate was being conducted in republican ranks over whether the future was to be war or politics.

"It's extremely difficult to read. I simply do not know what they will do tomorrow. They might call a ceasefire tomorrow, in a week, in a month or two years. Part of that is because they are unsure themselves."

Delivering his final annual report before retiring this autumn, Sir

– Partition, – in the epoch when Kautskyite revisionism had totally destroyed Engels' Second International with the nonsense that 'new, modernising super-Imperialism' was permanently undermining all past dreams of socialist revolution.

Stalinist revisionism eventually wrote off the world socialist revolution too, – with the CPGB as loyal supporters. But it is precisely the collapse of Stalinist revisionism (see also Russian election story) which marks not the further retreat of anti-imperialist forces, as the CPGB explain it above, – but exactly the opposite, – the turning point in the revival of the international anti-imperialist revolution, stifled by long-learned revisionist philistinism and ignorance of Marxism-Leninism on every question.

Irish nationalism remains on the brink of a historic triumph, a revolutionary victory against all the odds and of vital significance for the revolutionary interests of the proletariat worldwide, helping the crucial revival of Leninist science so ludicrously abandoned by these CPGB frauds. Build Leninism. Without revolutionary theory, there can be no revolutionary practice bringing socialism in the longterm. Spread the *EPS Review*.

Douglas Bell

Hugh demonstrated that he remains confident that the Irish conflict is firmly into the endgame.

In the short-term however, he predicted more bombs but noted that even this could not be certain. It was the most difficult period the intelligence services had ever had to interpret.

On the plus side, he believed that significant sections of the IRA's army council now favoured peace. And he ruled out internment as "a short-term palliative but a long-term disaster".

"The current situation is worrying and unsettled.

"The difficulty is it seems to move from day to day. There are people in Sinn Féin who devote themselves solely to politics but the control of the movement at the top is clearly linked. There are members of provisional Sinn Féin on the army council and there are members of the army council on the political talks level of

Sinn Féin."

Sir Hugh said he did not believe Mr Adams and Mr McGuinness could deliver a ceasefire. "You would need another two or three to come along with them. That can change, because people talk about the seven-member army council but other people can be co-opted, so it isn't often a straight vote.

"I think they play the situation as it's going and they're not sure which way to go."

He rejected rumours of a split within the IRA or between Sinn Féin and the IRA. "I don't think the IRA's going to split and I think they would go to enormous lengths to ensure that it did not split. I have no doubt significant sections of the army council want peace.

"I think the difficulty is that some have been associated with violence for so long they don't trust the British, they don't trust the Unionists and now they're at loggerheads with the Americans.

"I do not see a split in those terms [Mr Adams and Mr McGuinness leaving the IRA behind] and you could potentially see more violence rather than have a split."

Reinterpreted, Annesley's remarks might be quite revealing.

As the tortuous events since the IRA's ceasefire 21 months ago have clearly demonstrated (and events long before that too), the really serious debate and uncertainty is all in the camp of imperialist reaction and petty bourgeois opportunism around the doomed colony of 'Northern Ireland'.

The national-liberation struggle's position could not be clearer from the start: to wage guerrilla war against the colony's status and against the British police-military dictatorship which established it at bayonet point in 1921 and which has held the colony together in emergencies ever since; and to campaign politically worldwide to expose the intolerable and incurable outrage that is Partition, and expose the deliberate criminal neglect by British domination which allows this impossible contradiction to continue without ever taking a serious positive initiative to end this colonial nonsense once and for all.

Sinn Féin and the IRA have plainly been adamantly for peace from the outset, – for the only possible peace there could be for the Occupied Zone of Ireland, namely a completely new settlement of the ongoing colonial problem in the direction of eventual reunification and complete self-determination for Ireland.

It is the British imperialist side which has the real difficulty about whether to continue with the war or politics, – as Annesley himself indicates

when ruling out internment as "a short-term palliative but a long term disaster". That shows where the real internal conflict lies, – and how explosively deep and divisive it is. The chief officer of the counter-revolutionary armed forces says don't even think about any attempted new clampdown on the national-liberation struggle. Obviously other British imperialist voices, political mostly but maybe police-military ones too of a different persuasion, are agitating for precisely the opposite course, – renewed attempts at total armed repression of the national-liberation movement.

And how deep and bitter those disagreements must be, and clearly not just about internment, for which only a tiny minority voice has been raised hitherto. Undoubtedly the old and discarded 'tougher repression' notions have only surfaced again because the main block of bourgeois imperialist opinion, – while so far against going back to all-out clamping down (which was a disastrous failure), – is nevertheless completely split and paralysed about exactly what to do next.

Nor are these doubts even about just the general question of whether or not to adopt a harsher tone towards Sinn Féin or a more conciliatory one, – in the light of the most recent jolts to the peace process. As Annesley himself again hints he remains confident "that the Irish conflict is firmly into the end game". Alongside all the other things he said as well, about the fear of more mainland bombing, etc, – he is likely to have in mind his own certainty that it is imperialism which has decided to call it a day in this unwinnable war, meaning that in the long run, reunification will be conceded. So the doubts splitting the bourgeois-imperialist camp must be not about a really harsher line towards Sinn Féin but, about how to try to manipulate the propaganda war next, which is desperate to conceal the fact that any concessions at all are being made to the IRA and Sinn Féin in the peace process.

So who is "worried and unsettled" and why? There can be no doubt that it is the imperialist camp, and Annesley immediately spelled out why in the very next sentence: "There is a possibility of further bombs".

All the nagging uncertainty of the situation was superficially at the Republican door, not knowing whether to call a new ceasefire or not, and when, – according to Annesley, formally.

ZBut the boot is on the other

foot in reality.

It is monopoly-capitalism and British imperialist prestige which has just had half a billion pounds of damage done to its major commercial centre in the North West of England. And Annesley's own language gives the clue as to where the real worries are about the huge cost of many more wrong judgements, – "the most difficult period the intelligence services had ever had to interpret".

Back channel negotiations only ever began with IRA/Sinn Féin (in secret) in the first place because of the unsustainable cost to ailing British imperialism of trying to maintain colonial security in the Occupied Zone, – unofficial talks which were speeded up when the cost to imperialism's crucial City of London financial industries from the devastating bombing there had started to become economically and politically intolerable, with important international institutions threatening to pull out of London (and Britain) completely if better security could not be guaranteed. It is a neat sly trick for the London Establishment to have so protected their own golden Square Mile now that the guerrilla war is obliged to choose easier provincial targets, but the cost of such devastation is still borne by British impe-

rialism overall and its institutions. And the half a billion pounds damage in Manchester is a sickening body blow to British imperialism.

No wonder Annesley admits that the ruling class is "worried and unsettled".

It is this huge cost if London gets it wrong in the subtle propaganda war being fought against Sinn Féin and the IRA that is making this "the most difficult period the intelligence services had ever had to interpret".

And it is on this battle for prestige, and on all the bluffs and double-bluffs being called, that all speculation is at its most tense. Some observers of the Irish national struggle wonder if the IRA/Sinn Féin has not tried to drive too hard a bargain, forcing London towards impossible humiliation but with no great benefit to the national-liberation agreement which has already been roughly worked out by all parties, including Washington the key player, in all the preliminary secret negotiations. This view interprets the Manchester bombing as looking like trying to force British imperialism to publicly eat humble pie (over having tried to insist on a prior IRA ceasefire before Sinn Féin could be allowed into the formal public negotiating chamber), and to force an SF welcome anyway, without any IRA cease-

fire. And this is thought to be an unnecessary blow too far.

Anti-imperialist speculation stresses the opposite consideration, – namely that still nothing remains guaranteed about the British ruling class conceding a completely new self-determination deal for Ireland, basically involving the longterm dismantling of the hated and moribund colony outrageously and falsely entitled 'Northern Ireland' in its original Partition configuration with a built-in Orange-colonist dictatorship to rule unchallenged. And because it is not guaranteed, and because the British ruling class tried to impose such provocative propaganda humiliations on the national-liberation movement during the sterile 18 months of the first IRA ceasefire, – then the national-liberation struggle is only acting with enormous maturity, firmness, wisdom, and far-sightedness to insist now on no more pre-conditions or face-saving games from London, trying to pretend its uninvolved in the conflict, – but frank peace talks instead between the major warring parties, – the IRA and Sinn Féin on one side, and the defeated British imperialists and their Orange colonist stooges on the other, – with the interests of Washington, Dublin, and the 'constitutional' nationalists as essential back-

ground involvement to sort out the messy business of the actual complex settlement.

There could be much more to this than just a gratuitous rubbing of British ruling-class noses in the dirt. It will be a complex settlement. It would be as well that the final resolution of all the historic problems of the Irish national question should be demonstratively seen to have been settled by the national-liberation movement's prominent public involvement in the talks, without any pre-conditions, – as be evident from the small print of the final agreement.

To that extent, all the reactionary propaganda disinformation, speculating about an IRA/Sinn Féin split, might serve a useful purpose. What would happen if the national-liberation movement did become split over the extent to which historic national aspirations had been satisfied by the proposed new agreement, and how might last-ditch reaction try to capitalise on such a split if it were to occur?

National-liberation movement tactics in Ireland are not the proletarian revolution's business anyway in a manner of speaking, especially in a foreign country. If IRA/Sinn Féin say they insist on it becoming clear that full peace negotia-



Scores of media people from around the globe listening to the Sinn Féin delegation excluded from the Stormont talks on 10 June

tions are to be opened with the national-liberation struggle with no preconditions whatsoever, then it is the clear duty of revolutionaries everywhere to declare full unconditional support for the right of Irish self-determination to fight for its independence in any way it chooses. It might be added that in the light of the extremely complex and touchy delicacy of the Irish national question in particular, it would be as well to leave no stone unturned to ensure that the next settlement should create no great impression of historical business still unresolved, for fear of sparking off yet more splits in the Irish national movement so bitterly divided in previous generations, and open up yet another period of the troubles.

Very little more is in fact required of London, – having already given way on all the major issues such as no prior decommissioning, a neutral chairman, decommissioning to be left for the end of the negotiations, prior British relaxation on treatment of prisoners, etc, etc. Imperialism only needs to curb the arrogance of its own self-deluding propaganda and start listening to the public-opinion voices which have been saying that the Manchester disaster was unnecessary from a British monopoly capitalist point of view. If a deal is to be done, then do it, – without provoking the national-liberation struggle into having to demonstrate any more its determination not to be discriminated against, or unnecessarily be disregarded in any way, – especially not for just such trivial considerations of rescuing a bit more lost face for the clapped-out and humiliated British colonial ruling class to be able to pretend that it has “not given in to crude terrorist threats” or allowed the “democratic process to be hi-jacked by criminal gunmen and bombers”, etc, etc, etc.

It was a curious admission for Annesley to make that one of the national-liberation movement's difficulties was that “they don't trust the British, they don't trust the Unionists, and now they're at loggerheads with the Americans,” – a whole rogue's gallery of imperialist and colonialist treachery without any obvious suggestion from Annesley that it would be unusual for Sinn Féin and the IRA not to trust them. The message is clear. The next move for the further building of trust and confidence for getting a complete new settlement for Ireland must rest with the imperialist ringmasters of all economic and

political developments in the ‘free’ world.

And when Annesley adds that “you could potentially see more violence rather than have a split” between Sinn Féin and the IRA, all genuine anti-imperialists on earth would find it difficult to avoid concluding that such an outcome would therefore be for the best. The Irish national-liberation movement has been one of the most significant anti-imperialist struggles of the modern era, and of particular importance for the fate of the working class in Britain and the fight for revolutionary socialist theory. More power to Sinn Féin's anti-imperialist elbow. Manchester was a British imperialist mistake, not a national-liberation movement mistake.

Attempts to read internal factional significance into remarks by Gerry Adams do not bear much fruit:

two questions: has Mr Adams sought a ceasefire from the IRA and does he continue to support the IRA's “armed struggle”?

Confronted on Irish radio yesterday by those questions, Mr Adams said Sinn Féin wanted to “see an end to the armed struggle”. He continued: “We're not involved in it and we do not advocate it.”

Mr Adams said Sinn Féin understood how in certain conditions armed actions were seen as legitimate: “That has been the international experience.” But he added: “I want to see an end to armed struggle. That is the clear, concise, non-complicated answer to the question.

“The reality of the situation is that there was no armed struggle for a year and a half. The reality of the situation is that those of us who were trying to move the process forward were slapped in the face by the British government.”

Turning to the recent IRA murder of an Irish policeman and the Manchester bomb, he said: “I wish there had not been the killing of Garda McCabe in Adare. I believe that it should not have happened and the news that individual IRA volunteers were involved makes it even worse from my perspective.

“I wish that the bomb had not happened in Manchester. I wish that there weren't British soldiers on the streets of the Six Counties. I wish there wasn't discrimination. I wish there hadn't been Unionist domination. I wish that our island wasn't partitioned.

“But the reality is that we deal with the objective situation and the conditions which exist in making peace. And making peace is very difficult.”

These are nothing more than the exact polite fictions which were agreed between London and the national-liberation movement from the start for public consumption so that the necessary negotiations for a completely new deal for Ireland could go

ahead without unnecessarily prematurely provoking the ‘No Surrender’ colonist community in the Occupied Zone into some kamikaze UDI (armed unilateral declaration of independence) as Smith carried out for 14 bloody years to try to prevent Britain's Rhodesia colony from becoming Zimbabwe, and which Paisley had threatened to the extent of ‘relighting the Carson trail’ with midnight armed rallies dressed in battle uniforms.

Much more significant are the steady flow of comments and articles by the misnamed ‘Ulster Unionists’ indicating that they know that the old colonial-dictatorship game of ‘Northern Ireland’ is up and that the hated Partition, one of the most monstrous injustices in history, must go:

For the first three-quarters of this century, Ulster unionism was a model of such ethnic mobilisation. Although there were always small groups on the fringes, a remarkable unity was constructed around the churches, the Orange Order, and the Unionist party. But, with the onset of the “Troubles” and the introduction of direct rule, the Ulster Unionist party lost its power and its sense of direction.

Forced to choose between going along with or opposing London's often erratic reforms, Ulster unionism fragmented. Brian Faulkner, the last Unionist prime minister of Northern Ireland, led the liberal wing into the 1974 power-sharing executive, and his opponents formed and reformed a bewildering kaleidoscope of alternative parties and paramilitary groupings.

How much of the Union you want to preserve and how badly you want to preserve it were the big issues in 1974. But there always was another question, which is now becoming clearer: why do you want to preserve the Union?

UVF now attract admiration (and a small but not trivial vote) for their combination of civic unionism, a dose of socialism, and a relaxed attitude to many of the old taboos. They espouse power-sharing, the introduction of such constitutional safeguards as a Bill of Rights, and will tolerate low-level functional cross-border links. For this, they are accused of treachery by the No Surrender unionists.

So unionists differ in rationale, in intensity, and in how far they will go in appeasing northern nationalists.

There is much to argue about in just how far they should go in altering democratic traditions to give power to the Catholic minority, in how much they can do to safeguard individual civil rights, in how they might try to promote equal opportunity or create mutually advantageous relationships between Northern Ireland and the Irish Republic. But in the end, unionists are unionists, committed to remaining part of the United Kingdom. If the present talks are to create a popularly endorsed replacement for government by quango and decree,

they must recognise that bottom line.

Just as revealing in their own comical way were the idiotic proceedings on the first day of the ‘Northern Ireland Forum’ which mud-stirring British imperialism set up to run parallel with the all-party talks (and to which Sinn Féin scored a record 16% poll) as a sop to ‘No Surrender’ colonialism as an exhibition of the ‘democratic majority process’ which is alleged to be the decisive factor in all civilised existence (except when it suits imperialism to ignore polling results such as the 1918 general election in Ireland (unpartitioned) which gave Sinn Féin 80% of the vote and seats (in the island overall) on a platform of total independence for all of Ireland there and then, – completely ignored by London in favour of Partition imposed at bayonet-point), – and alleged to be something properly feared by the ‘men of unprincipled criminal violence’, Sinn Féin. Just listen to this ‘democratic’ farce as even admitted by the anti-national-liberation movement capitalist press:

War hero Mr Gorman, 73, is one of the Ulster Unionist Party's few Roman Catholic members. He was asked by Sir Patrick Mayhew, the Northern Ireland Secretary, to be interim chairman of the forum, intended to promote dialogue and understanding among the province's warring parties.

After four hours of procedural wrangling, Mr Gorman had alienated most of the 93 members present - Sinn Féin's 17 delegates stayed away because they believe it is a Unionist plot to return to the Stormont days, although it has no legislative powers.

At one stage SDLP leader John Hume walked out, at his wits' end over Mr Gorman's gentlemanly chairmanship.

His colleague Eddie McGrady was trying to make a point of order. Mr Gorman invited him simply to address him from the floor. When Mr McGrady pointed out that a point of order was the correct method, Mr Gorman replied: “No you don't Mr McGrady, I've been listening to you for 20 years.”

At another stage Mr Gorman could not recognise one speaker. “You've got the light behind you, which is a great policeman's trick when interrogating a suspect,” he said.

Mr Gorman won the Military Cross for knocking out a German tank in Normandy; yesterday, though, he kept standing on mines - and there was little sympathy from those present.

Pettiness and bloodymindedness may be the hallmarks of Ulster politics, but yesterday should have been relatively simple. The main business was to elect a chairman and select members for rules and business committees. But it soon descended into a replay of what took place at Stormont earlier this week, with

Unionist in-fighting over which party was the most important.

Mr Gorman was piggy in the middle, unable to satisfy either side as points of order came thick and fast.

The exasperation from some of the other parties eventually boiled over. "It's make-your-mind-up time daddy," cried Hugh Smyth, a street-wise Shankill Road loyalist as Mr Gorman pondered whether to accept an Ulster Unionist proposal the Democratic Unionists said was illegal.

Mr Hume said impatiently: "Let's sign, set up the rules committee and get home." Afterwards he refused to comment on Mr Gorman's performance.

Others were less reticent. Ian Paisley, who had mercilessly hunted Mr Gorman throughout the afternoon, said: "The Ulster Unionists put him up as a puppet. Of course his appointment was just a little stunt - 'we want to have a Catholic who will be a nice man!'"

Drumcree and British state paralysis two more nails in the coffin of a divided Ireland, crumbling Orange veto desperation preventing orderly retreat by British imperialism*

[EPSR No 862 16-07-96]

(*but see letter on page 46)

The events of the last week throughout the occupied zone of northern Ireland richly confirm the analysis made by the *EPSR* that the history of the last twenty-five years has been the history of triumphant Irish nationalism against moribund British imperialism which, under the pressure of its own economic and political collapse as a key player in the inter-imperialist game and having been fought to a standstill militarily by armed national revolution, has been seeking to withdraw from its last colony at a snail's pace with as much face saving integrity intact from its wretched colonial domination of the Irish people.

Contrary to bourgeois press commentators and fake anti-leninist lefts who see Drumcree as a defeat for the nationalist leadership an end to the misnamed "peace process" (in reality the orderly retreat process for British imperialism) and the setting back of the Irish struggle a quarter of century [...] the events at Drumcree and the subsequent political fallout demonstrate the exact opposite.

The bogus triumphalism of Orange lodge fascism at Drumcree is more likely to go down in history as their final hour than their finest hour. The detail of the *volte face* of the RUC, the subsequent lying cover-up of Major and Mayhew, of their

The SDLP MP Joe Hendron called it a pantomime. And the Progressive Unionist Party's Billy Hutchinson said: "He has to go; he was meant to be an interim chairman for 45 minutes - 45 seconds was too long."

The forum meets again in a week, when Mr Gorman is likely to become the first casualty of the talks.

This reveals all the sick posturing of 'Unionism' in its twilight, the phoney colonial culture which wanted to pretend it was a legitimate British-Irish nationality, based on the 'democratic will of the majority'.

Historically, so-called 'Northern Ireland' was always a pestilential degenerate pantomime. It has ended up identifiably so in its last empty Forum performance, just waiting for closure. Good riddance to bad rubbish. Build Leninism.

Douglas B.

involvement and the disastrous political fall out only serve to demonstrate that the general sweep and tide of history falls on the side of national liberation and a united Ireland and against British imperialism and its Orange fascist stooges.

Further, once the balance of class forces and historical

A masked Catholic boy amid the flames in Belfast



process are set in train, any reactionary attempt to reverse the tide only ends in defeat, and is more likely to accelerate the historic process than slow it up.

The best that the Orangemen can hope for from the *volte face* at Drumcree was that it was an indication of the dithering sclerotic paralysis the British state has collapsed into as it tries to deal with its own demise and defeat at the hands of Irish nationalism, the Mayhew statement that it was a simple local policing matter for the chief constable may have been a genuine expression of British state despair wanting to wash its hands of the thorny problem of having to deal head on with the unresolved issue of the orange veto:

Words such as "watershed" and "momentous" have been used so often in relation to Northern Ireland in recent years that their meaning is in danger of becoming devalued. But there is little doubt that the events of last week merit both of those terms and more. Furthermore, the watershed is one of a most disastrous kind.

The sight of riots, petrol bombs and destruction is bad enough, but the longterm consequences of what has happened in the past week are even worse. The rule of law has been fundamentally, perhaps fatally, undermined and it may be that the Troubles, which many had hoped had run their course, - are being regenerated before our eyes.

The Government gives every appearance of either not understanding what is happening or of being in denial. The impression given by Sir Patrick Mayhew, in a series of slightly giddy television appearances, was that the problem lay among three elements: Unionists, nationalists, and the local police

force. There was no evident recognition that in the course of the week a large amount of authority had been transferred from the Government to the men on the streets. Sir Patrick told one incredulous interviewer to cheer up.

What began at Drumcree on Sunday last as a problem over a march developed, as thousands of Orangemen took to the streets in an effort to bring the province to a standstill, into a fundamental issue of the rule of law.

The eventual decision to reverse the original ruling and allow the Orangemen to march along the Catholic Garvaghy Road was defended by Sir Hugh Annesley, the chief constable, and by Sir Patrick on purely pragmatic grounds. If the RUC had not forced the march through, Sir Hugh argued, the security forces could have been overwhelmed and many deaths might have followed. There was no other mention. Sir Patrick explained breezily.

Whilst the wish of many in the British establishment to wash their hands completely of Ireland continues to be a recurring despairing theme for serious consideration:

This Protestant upheaval was far less widespread and far less focused than the huge workers' strike insurrection of 1974. Since then, in spite of the bloodshed, there has been steady progress towards equality of opportunity for Catholics, and that cannot be bombed away. War weariness on both sides led to the 1994 ceasefire and remains a fact. Both sides? The British public and government - are weary too.

One real casualty of last week is the dream of an independent Ulster - a "Euroregion" with allegiance to Brussels rather than to London or Dublin. Sadly, foreign soldiers are still needed - not just to contain the IRA, but to protect Catholics against

Protestant aggression. But the question which will not go away is why those soldiers have to be British. The “peace process” seems hopeless now. Peace itself, after some fashion, will stumble back to Northern Ireland, knocking on one door after another until somebody dares to let it in. But I do not think it will be secure until there are new uniforms on the street, whose blue berets are a metaphor for nothing.

That can mean the UN or Nato, but both mean the Americans. It is the last resort, but perhaps the only hope. When the first American patrol moves up the Lower Falls, and when the Stars and Stripes flutter above the guardposts on the Foyle bridges at Derry, then the madness can slowly begin to drain off the land.

whilst the sheer economic burden to a state whose public finances are already on the verge of bankruptcy cannot be underestimated:

AS the human cost of the Ulster crisis rose again yesterday, so will the astonishing financial burden on taxpayers. Each resident on the mainland now subsidises the Northern Ireland population by around £3,100 a year. The Government spends at least £3.3 billion a year more in Northern Ireland than it receives in taxes from the province, according to the Institute of Public Policy Research. Other costs bring the total to £5 billion, or 2p on income tax and that excludes the £900 million spent on building insurance against IRA terrorism on the mainland. The annual security bill is £1.5 billion. The RUC costs £584 million for 8,489 regular police and 3,202 full-time reserves. Another £150 million pays for the prison service. Other protective services, including MI5 and intelligence operations, take the total cost of law and order to £858 million. In addition, the cost to the Defence Ministry of deploying 18,500 troops is officially £522 million. But lost opportunities for cutbacks mean that in reality it is at least double.

Benefit

Every area of Government spending in Ulster is higher because of the troubles. Billions are spent padding staff numbers in local government, administration and other public services to curb unemployment and reduce public disorder. Yet the social security bill is £2.7 billion a year, a third of public spending. At least 144,000 households get housing benefit, and about 18 per cent of adults claim income support. Unemployment is massaged down by persuading 73 per cent of over-16s to stay at school, compared with 65 per cent in England. Almost 40 per cent go on to higher education. Millions of pounds go in grants or social projects. And companies are paid huge subsidies to open factories. Around £263 million will be given in grants to industry and public corporations this year. Estimated public spending this year is £4,707 a head in Ulster, £2,266 in England, £2,803 in Scotland and £2,311 in Wales.

An even worse scenario for the bowler hat and broly brigade is that the *volte face* was a failed attempt to face down the orange veto as it historically must be and will be if further movement in the orderly retreat process is to be achieved.

The direct involvement of London in the subsequent *volte face* is beyond doubt whatever Mayhew and Major are saying now:

The disorder came as it was disclosed that the army would have opened fire on Orangemen with live ammunition if the Royal Ulster Constabulary had insisted on holding the line against marchers at Portadown last week.

Security sources disclosed details of the assessment given to Sir Hugh Annesley, chief constable of the RUC, before he backed down on Thursday and allowed loyalist marchers to parade past nationalist homes. Annesley gave way when told that soldiers would be forced to use real bullets if the thousands of massed marchers tried to break into Catholic residential areas.

The chief constable confirmed this was the warning he received, and told *The Sunday Times* he acted to avoid such bloodshed: “There was no question of asking the army to open fire on members of the public,” he said.

The British state intervening, threatening to shoot Orangemen, puts an entirely different perspective on the events at Drumcree and may confirm the Orangemen’s worse nightmare. It might be that the march down the Garvaghy Road after a failed attempt to recreate the Protestant workers strike of 1974, may be the British state attempting to organise the orderly retreat of a spent force that has historically had its day and can only exacerbate problems for imperialism as it attempts to save as much face as possible in the looming defeat at the hands of revolutionary nationalism:

The vast majority of Ulster Protestants are Unionist. They fear that their political identity and culture will be engulfed by a Catholic Nationalist Ireland — just as many northern Catholics fear being hemmed into a Protestant Ulster.

That anxiety along with a sense of political powerlessness has grown acutely since the Anglo-Irish Agreement in 1985. The agreement, which first gave the Irish government a say in the affairs of Northern Ireland, was signed by the British and Irish governments without consulting the main Unionist parties. When 250,000 people turned out on the streets of Belfast to protest against the agreement, their protest was ignored.

With that came a sense of alienation from the British Government. The Irish government, they felt, was openly and actively pursuing the interests of the Northern Ireland nationalists.

The British Government, on the other hand, later proclaimed in the Downing Street Declaration that it had “no selfish, economic or strategic interest in Northern Ireland”.

Now, the perception of most Protestants is that if the British government could find a way to extricate itself from Northern Ireland without precipitating a civil war, it would do so.

There is also an almost total disillusionment with the “peace process”, especially since the collapse of the IRA ceasefire. It came to be seen as a means of extracting concessions from the Unionists, underwritten by the threat of heightened Republican violence.

Unionists were left both isolated and defiant — the two essential ingredients for a siege mentality. And in sieges, symbols become of supreme importance. Unionists feel that pressure from both hard-line Republicans and the Irish government plays an increasingly important, secret role in the governing of Northern Ireland.

Incidents which might seem minor in any other context — such as the banning of the national anthem during graduation ceremonies at Belfast’s Queen’s University — suddenly take on a huge significance. To Unionists such incidents say: “Your day is over”.

In the meantime it is the political fall out of the Drumcree events that have most significance, if the rest of the world needed reminding of the brutal oppression of the Irish at the hands of British imperialism who divided Ireland and maintained a bastard statelet with nothing but the rule of arbitrary violence and intimidation but much more importantly of the justice, legitimacy and rational sanity of the cause fought for by IRA/Sinn Féin, then Drum-

cree and the subsequent events painted the picture vividly.

Many press reports have contrasted the failure of the Orangemen to recreate the success of Protestant Workers strike of 1974 and their subdued triumphalism following Drumcree, with the strength of the nationalist backlash and determination of Irish Nationalist Youth in confronting the Army and RUC, and the discipline and order shown by the Sinn Féin leadership. A phenomenon which can be explained by the historic balance of class forces in the forward march to a United Ireland.

Dimbleby in his *Panorama* interview was practically scathing in his criticism of Major for the disastrous handling of the events which have alienated the Irish Government, united all strands of nationalism from Dublin to the SDLP, the Church, Sinn Féin, ‘brought Northern Ireland to the brink of Civil War’ and wrecked the Peace process. To which Major limply replied “well lets not concentrate on the past let’s look to the future, shall we”?

The real fear expressed by Dimbleby and behind the ferocious row between Dublin and London is that the process for an orderly retreat by British imperialism and an orderly transfer of a United Ireland to Dublin may have been lost, with the spectre of deeper Leninist revolutionary understanding boiling up from an increasingly confident revolutionary nationalist cauldron.

Build Leninism! John Haynes

Actual events in the international and class struggles are the only objective test of a correct Marxist analysis. Perceptive theory about the latest developments in the world imperialist crisis, confirmed by revolutionary struggle, is the best ‘programme’ by far.

[EPSR No 863 23-10-96]

[...]Britain is a weak link in the imperialist chain, which is why its humiliation at the hands of the Irish national liberation struggle is such an important and heroic story, simply not recognizable in the CPGB’s idiotic dirge about the IRA/Sinn Féin being forced to abandon its fight “by becoming the latest ‘victim’ of enforced US imperialist pacification. Where? When? How? Who noticed? The CPGB tries to reply to EPSR views (to be dealt with subsequently) but still, Trot-like, cannot put a time

or place on the ‘betrayal’ of the revolution.

They want to give up trying. Tales of a Sinn Féin/IRA sell-out are a defeatist nonsense.

The CPGB ‘reply’ then simply invents things the EPSR has never stated in order to knock down so many Aunt Sallies, specifically, mainly, that EPSR positions represent “so much praise upon the Stalinite bureaucracy”; or “there is always JV Stalin who can save us all the time and effort and build ‘communism’ for us”; or “why do we

need a Communist Party at all with all these 'surrogates' and 'substitutes' floating around, – Red Army, JV Stalin, ANC, Gerry Adams, etc"; or "uncritical cheerleaders for Sinn Féin/IRA"; or "the national-liberation struggle is the preserve of nationalist movements"; or "communists can emerge like supermen after the national liberation stage"; or "pro-IRA internationalism is flowering inside the British working class"; and much more such gibberish, not one word of which was uttered by the letter to CPGB (see below). Just who "has taken leave of his senses", (to quote some more CPGB nonsense)?

To identify Trot defeatism as a fake 'revolutionary' petty-bourgeois mentality fantasising only about the 'perfect revolution' implies no support for Stalinist revisionism at all, which is where the CPGB began life, not the EPSR. To see the Sinn Féin/IRA national-liberation struggle as a defeat for British imperialism does not remotely imply an uncritical approach to the laughable ideological limitations of petty-bourgeois nationalism, or that national-liberation struggles must be the preserve of nationalist movements (Cuba, Vietnam, and China to some extent, are obvious proof of the opposite, communist leadership). It would have been better if there had been communists around to lead the Irish national-liberation struggle. To see that British imperialist setbacks are the route for British workers to break from a pro-imperialist position is not remotely the same as saying that "pro-IRA internationalism is flowering inside the British working class".

The CPGB is just lying and distorting to make its 'reply', and still failing to explain how the defeat of apartheid was a 'setback'. The overthrow of reaction by revolutionary struggle cannot always proceed directly to the total victory of the socialist revolution, as Vietnam showed, after the French defeat, via a negotiated outcome, – especially when the ANC and SACP leadership is non-communist or even anti-communist. But to see the overthrow of apartheid as a victory for imperialist reaction is just perverse silliness, lacking the slightest grasp of historical development. Ditto in Ireland. The CPGB suffer from Trot sectarianism of the most blinkered self-aggrandising kind, just like their crooked failed guru Yurukoglu, or that other degenerate Trot hero, – the rat-fink Orwell (see next *Review*), stooge of the British imperialist secret police.

Even the bourgeois media has started dishing the dirt on this latest disgrace for failed British imperialism, – willy nilly informing workers of the important real retreat by colonialism, just the opposite of the CPGB's demoralising nonsense about Sinn Féin and the IRA giving up:

The Order did not come out of William of Orange's famous victory over James II at the Battle of the Boyne in 1690, but from a much less epic skirmish, the Battle of the Diamond, a glorified sectarian row at a County Armagh crossroads in 1795. It was inspired, not by the historical reality of William of Orange, but by the need to give the sanction of the past to contemporary events. Its founders were embattled people forging a weapon for present conflicts.[...] One, embodied in initiation rituals and unseen by outsiders, is a way of giving a Biblical resonance to the often squalid realities of sectarian competition. Anthony Buckley of the Ulster Folk Museum, who has had more access to the secret rituals than most outsiders, notes that most of the Biblical texts used in them emphasise a common situation: "that of an individual or group living in a foreign land or among sinners or heathens".

The texts alluded to on banners and in emblems and rituals "provide object lessons in how the Israelites and later the Jews dealt with a very similar situation of having inherited a promised land which had hitherto belonged to somebody else". The ideal they inculcate is that of men who have been tried and tested, tempered for the hard struggle for survival in a harsh political landscape. The Garvaghy Road, to religious Orangemen, is a local version of the plains of Jericho.

The other is its ability to present an appearance of unity at times of division. The Order really is experienced by many Protestants as a social space in which religious and class differences can be set aside.

The danger of disunity, moreover, has seldom been so obvious. The once formidable monolith of Ulster Unionism has fractured. At the elections for the Northern Ireland Forum in May, no fewer than five Unionist parties won seats.

The depth and ferocity of these divisions was on public display at the opening of the negotiations last month, with Paisley and McCartney accusing Trimble of selling out the Union, and the loyalist fringe parties accusing the other Unionist parties of conspiring to exclude them. Never before has Unionism been so openly divided within itself.

The appeal of the Orange Order as a symbol of Protestant and Unionist unity is, in this context, obvious. The rallying-call from Portadown may be based on a spurious notion even of Orange tradition itself, but it revivifies the simplifying myth of a steadfast people defending its ancient rights.

David Trimble and others in the Unionist leadership must know how thin this illusion really is. Even if the Orangemen win, the prize for vic-

tory – the futile gesture of walking down a street protected by ranks of armed policemen – is pathetic.

When such symbols take on such importance for their own sake, it is clear that the confident unity of purpose they are meant to be symbols of really is a thing of the past.

Exactly as the EPSR has always explained, the tide of history is ousting outdated British colonialism.

A new Ireland, no longer still partly an imperialist possession, is being born, – not socialist revolution, of course, as only Trot-fantasy 'revolutionaries' suggested it could be, but an important anti-imperialist national-liberation revolution nevertheless, successfully fought for arms-in-hand against overwhelming odds. Only anti-Marxists could fail to appreciate this tremendous achievement. Build Leninist science. JH

Letter to Weekly Worker, CPGB.

Your 'peace' bomb article (20/6/96) reads like a case history of the Trot mindset. You are determined to see defeat (*Revolution Betrayed*) whatever happens so that you can mentally wallow in 'perfect revolution' fantasy-land.

Why avoid the simpler explanation that the Docklands and Manchester guerrilla war operations were a continuation of the 25 years previous guerrilla war? Because that would undermine your determination to believe that Sinn Féin/IRA have sold out. Hence, 'peace' bombs.

As 'proof' you quote a republican source saying 'no ceasefire unless Sinn Féin is at the talks'. But forcing British imperialism into a negotiated retreat from the original gerrymandered 'No Surrender' Partition was precisely the aim of the national-liberation struggle, so how does forcing talks on procrastinating London equal sell-out?

These 1996 IRA operations were "not a breakaway aimed at restarting the war against British imperialism", you say. No, they're part of same war. It has not ended yet. The only confusion is in your heads. What you are really trying to say is that what hasn't restarted is a revolutionary socialist war. True, but ludicrously irrelevant. It has always been a national-liberation war, but for all that, a mighty blow against imperialism nevertheless. And not sold out, or defeated.

It was indeed "a very loud knock at the negotiating door" as you say with another sneer. But how does it differ from 25 years of previous loud knocking (other than being more damag-

ing and dismaying to imperialism than ever)??

The republican movement "left isolated"? It has succeeded in putting unprecedented international political pressure on imperialism in recent years, culminating in at last forcing 'new deal' talks (after 75 years of 'No Surrender' obduracy, maintaining the fictitious 'separate country' of non-existent 'Northern Ireland'); and winning 40% of the Irish voting strength now in the Occupied Zone, an astonishing achievement against the modern world's anti-'terrorist' propaganda.

What wouldn't the CPGB give to be just a fraction as 'isolated' among English workers.

Exactly when did the IRA become a 'victim' of the New World Order? And what mortal blow was struck by imperialism precisely?

You can no more put a date and place on this defeatist fantasy than Trotskyism ever could on the development in the 1920s which was supposed to prove that the Soviet Union had ceased to be a workers state building socialism and had "sided" via the Comintern, with "the bourgeois order" to take a "cynical counter-revolutionary role" (*Transitional Programme* 1938).

You have the defeatist mentality of the petty-bourgeois 'left' which rallied to Trotsky whose slanders began as early as the 1923 *New Course* declaring that nothing now lay ahead of the Soviet workers state but "ossification", and by 1940 was dementedly gloating about "the new aristocracy's...incapacity to conduct a war" (*Stalin - Hitler's Quartermaster*); and that "Stalin cannot make a war with discontented workers and peasants and with a decapitated Red Army" (*German-Soviet Alliance*); and that "The level of the USSR's productive forces forbids a major war" (*The Twin Star: Hitler-Stalin*).

As German imperialism discovered after wiping out 'advanced' West Europe, some "ossification".

Only the Trotskyite petty-bourgeois defeatist mentality could treat the overthrow of apartheid as a setback, as you do. Imperialism only retreated to a peaceful settlement with the ANC to avoid an even worse revolutionary defeat later on. The same in Ireland. But these are not defeats but victories over imperialism, by revolutionary armed struggle.

Your conclusion "without the British working class behind it, Irish national-liberation can't win" is the heart of your prob-

lem. Marxist science declares a completely contrary reality: that until Britain is forced to concede Ireland its full independence, then the British working class will never break from imperialist domination, (see *Economic and Philosophic Science Review No 858* - (p35 this book)).

Real life is proving it. The more British 'control' gets humiliated by the IRA and Sinn Féin, the more British people say 'Get out of Ireland'.

Your sour defeatism undermines the national-liberation struggle. Marxist recognition of its titanic achievements cheers it on.

Letters: The national question

The correspondence in last week's *South West Bulletin* (No 179) on the national question clarified most things excellently but still contained one unfortunate formulation, – the one declaring "enthusiastic support for the Irish self-determination struggle" which then adds its "further recognition" that British (and therefore world) imperialism has been pushed back precisely by this revolutionary nationalist armed struggle.

Philosophically, these are the wrong way round.

The right to self-determination is not an absolute principle. Marxism has never dealt in absolute principles of any kind. It is not a morality.

The right to self-determination is recognised as a sound guidance to what will be practical common sense in most cases involving the national question. Ignore it at your peril. Make intelligent use of it wherever pos-

sible to drive the class forces of the world imperialist bourgeoisie back further. Transcend the national sovereignty question in order the better to eventually to reach the full flowering of everyone's national aspirations via the full flowering of every person's aspirations in a fully rational communist world.

But the more crucial needs of that wider anti-imperialist revolution must be seen as potentially taking precedence over any nation's right to self-determination seen as an absolute principle of struggle. The Leninist Revolution was sensitive to the national question more than any regime in all previous recorded world history, but the importance of the security of the whole Soviet Revolution required many national self-determination movements within Soviet boundaries to be challenged "enthusiastically". Equally, Tibet's self-determination claim is obviously being used today by world imperialism solely to try to undermine the Chinese workers state.

It is the Irish national-liberation movement's enormous success in humiliating British imperialism which deserves the "enthusiastic support", not its "struggle for self-determination" as such. Emotionally close to the action, it is difficult to separate the two in the mind. But try it, say, for the Tristan da Cunha liberation front, or the Faroese national independence movement, no doubt highly worthy causes if they exist, but not apparently shattering part of world imperialism yet. When they do, Marxist enthusiasm for their success will know no bounds. Reg Potts

can no longer even grasp what keeps them divided, or what is the process for trying to rebuild some sort of anti-imperialist struggle and unity.

As endless quotations from Marxism-Leninism can verify if it is not just plainly self-evident, the only way towards ever-greater measures of unity is via ever greater measures of agreement about what has happened and is happening in the world, and what are the forces which can do something about it, and how is it to be done.

The last thing workers need to help them towards greater revolutionary unity is to hear endless subjective-idealist sectarianism about whether "the practice of leader centralism in the guise of democratic centralism is incompatible with a multanimous party that is structured to ensure equality of opportunity in the independent collective elaboration and articulation of "ideas" or whatever, – column after column of which pedantic academic nonsense appears regularly in the press of some "non-ideological" contenders for the role of revolutionary leadership.

What is needed is a fight to the finish, for example, to demonstrate whether or not it makes sense to demand that British imperialism should dismantle its colonial partition of Ireland, disarming every aspect of colonist society, before getting out, or just demand that British imperialism get out and leave civil war chaos behind it, causing the Irish even more suffering from the British-bayonet-imposed colonial partition; and whether or not Marx's understanding of British workers putting chains on themselves by supporting British imperialist colonisation of Ireland required or anticipated British workers helping to overthrow imperialism in a socialist revolution in order to resolve their predicament, or whether it merely envisaged British workers agreeing to a British imperialist withdrawal from Ireland (for whatever reason or under whatever excuse) in order to help begin lifting imperialist domination from their own backs; and whether or not it infringed a proper appreciation of Irish workers' right to self-determination to call for British dismantling of its colonial partition before it left, or whether a truer respect for Irish rights would see British imperialism suddenly pull out without notice or preparation in utter chaos, with the colonial partition community still fully armed and organised, leaving

Irish workers to face the civil-war mayhem to deal with "as they themselves decide", etc; – plus countless other matters which it would be helpful to clarify so that British workers could decide if they were being offered a worthwhile new lead or not, after the collapse and historical disgrace of Labour's "reformist" pretensions.

When workers can see a party which describes the actual world struggles to them in terms of what the immediate main reactionary imperialist enemy is, and what might lead to its defeat in order to lead on towards even bigger and better defeats for imperialism subsequently and elsewhere as well, and then demonstrates that precisely this revolutionary view of history is what is working out, – then the workers' own revolutionary consciousness and determination will strengthen, building up ever greater unity and potential for unity.

No supposedly 'methodological' or 'organisational' aspect of theory, such as arguing that the launching of a polemic to settle disputed issues of political theory via a victory over other tendencies represents a 'vanguardist' approach, distinct from a supposedly 'Marxist-Leninist' approach which would polemicise in order to develop rapprochement among communists by "collectively resolving demarcations", can itself be satisfactorily sorted out except by implicit or explicit reference to actual historical disputes in the struggle for revolutionary leadership which saw Marxism or Leninism triumph over an actual revisionist or anti-scientific disaster.

The appeal to Leninist theory to demonstrate with chapter and verse that only historically proven or historically provable correct understanding is worth aiming for, is in general an appeal to the historical validity of the whole of Leninism for its accepted reference points.

It is because of this that anti-communists have increasingly begun to drop the usual pretence of being 'Leninists' in order to actually start challenging whether there was any historical value in Leninism at all, (the deceitful route that the degenerate philistine Gorbachev pursued, tolerated by the rest of the complacent bureaucracy, to dismantle the dictatorship of the proletariat and move from defending the Soviet workers state to destroying it).

Reconfirmation of every aspect of Marxism-Leninism as embodied by successful revolutionary history should be

The best programme is a correct analysis of modern world history, constantly brought right up to the minute, dissecting the dominant world imperialist crisis, and examining the history of the dictatorship of the proletariat and its further development, the only possible answer to that crisis.

[EPSR No 864 30-07-96]

[...]Anti-communism has been the greatest reactionary triumph in all capitalist history, sowing divisive chaos and ignorance deep into the workers movement worldwide for generations over the nonstop grotesque disinformation put out by bourgeois propaganda about the achievements of the workers states.

Bias and prejudice due to anti-communism has so corrupted modern society, with the connivance of vast philistine sectors of so-called 'left' or 'progressive' opinion, that now not only has a 'Red Scare' rod been made for every protester's back, whether communist or not, but the average levels of performance in the workers movement

the permanent practice of every serious socialist movement.

Far from it being 'bad' to 'keep going on about Ireland or the Soviet Union' or whatever, – it is the only possible route back to a serious revolutionary party in Britain and the world.

Only in the course of making a sensible analysis of world history, – incorporating all that was proved correct in Marxist-Leninist theory by the whole experience of overthrowing imperialism and building workers states and the national-liberation movements – can any worthwhile statements be made at all about the present class struggle and how world social development should proceed henceforward.

In other words, all theory is merely concentrated human experience, and political theory is nothing but the historical record, variously distorted, ignored, or distilled correctly.

The real meat that all anti-communists truly want to chew on is a total challenge to Leninism itself, but many of the more discreet anti-communists (like more than half the British 'left') are still too uncertain and mealy-mouthed to come out with it openly.

What the petty-bourgeois fake-'left' hate about Leninism is its ruthless championing of the dictatorship of the proletariat, and its merciless assault on factionalising dilettantism.

It was Leninism which blitzed the 'pro-Soviet' rank-and-fileist Kronstadt revolt. It was Leninism which tore up the results to the post-October-1917 Constituent Assembly elections. It was Leninism which routed several 'national independence' revolts in the southern republics and elsewhere using implacable Soviet force. It was Leninism which decided to construct socialism inside Soviet boundaries on its own, in the absence of any spread of revolution into Europe. It was Leninism which re-introduced such free capitalist market measures as were necessary for economic expediency. It was Leninism which sought temporary peaceful coexistence deals with Western imperialism in order to give the USSR a bigger reconstruction breathing space before the next imperialist warmongering. It was Leninism which suppressed factionalising inside the ruling Communist Party because of the danger to the workers state security. It was Leninism which hired bourgeois experts at above average pay to help develop Soviet state and economic power. It was Leninism which granted concessions to imperialist

monopolies to exploit Soviet resources which the USSR was in no position to exploit as successfully itself. It was Leninism which set up a powerful state security police. And so on, and so on.

All of these unavoidable historical developments, and scores more besides, were all subsequently attributed to Stalinism alone in additional bogus demoralising accusations which totally dominated the planet in the aftermath of Lenin's death as the Soviet workers state under its Bolshevik Revolution continued to flourish and strengthen, threatening the spectre of world communism as it developed.

The enormous actual revisionist damage inflicted by Stalinism was tragically bad enough. But the vain cultism, the paranoid suspicion, the bureaucratic fear to encourage ever wider and deeper democratic involvement, and the arbitrary tyranny, which this defeatist retreat from Marxist-Leninist philosophy allowed to flourish, was in turn ludicrously embroidered upon by bourgeois anti-communism to further its real anti-Leninist aims.

Central to this greatest propaganda/disinformation coup in all history, – by the imperialist bourgeoisie or by any other challenged ruling class, – was the turncoat role of the Trotskyite and state-capitalist 'left' in the West.

Until decades of fundamental lies in basic Western education, greatly facilitated by the fake-'left' pursuing their bitter and vengeful anti-Soviet vilification path, – are unlearned, – then the generations of workers and intellectuals who fell for anti-communism will have continued to make a rod for their own backs.

The Soviet Union may be no more, – but there is only one dictatorship of the proletariat, only one basic form of the workers state and its security relations with the outside world, and only one basic form of socialist planned economic development and its essential social infrastructure. Condemn 70 years of Soviet workers state development (and East European development); and avoid (or hope to) having to comment on China, Cuba, and Vietnam, – and the whole historical fight against the imperialist free-market forces has been abandoned for all time.

There is no alternative to the dictatorship of the proletariat. There is no alternative to the workers state and its difficult security with surrounding im-

perialism in the possibly short or long interregnum before the completion of the world socialist revolution. There is no alternative to planned socialist economic development plus its essential social infrastructure.

And in terms of its actual colossal unrepeatable impact on world history dominating

the 20th century, there is no alternative to the experience of the Soviet workers state as the first great achievement running society without a free-market capitalist imperialist ruling class dominating society via its half-hidden dictatorship of the bourgeoisie.[...]

RB

British colonial dominance driven further into retreat. Ignorance on the national question, and fear of revolutionary working-class dictatorship, is combining to confuse 'left' policy on Ireland and the programme for Britain as well. Lenin explained things better.

[EPSR No 866 13-08-96]

The further indications of imperialist defeat in Ireland over the weekend provide another good example of how the dissection of just one small sample of the international balance and conflict of class and national forces can reveal the pattern of the overall world struggle and provoke better insights into particular difficulties elsewhere.

The fight to complete Irish self-determination is sometimes linked in a bogus and confusing way to remaining issues of the national question inside the rest of the 'United Kingdom', so termed. Such artificial connections to the 'democratic deficit' and 'demand for self-determination' concerning Scotland and Wales (or English regions) largely pander to nationalism, – aroused by the local bourgeoisie as a diversion to what is really posed by capitalism's crisis which is the socialist revolution and the workers state.

Firstly, to deal with the latest developments which, as the highest point yet in the evolution of all the class and national forces relevant to the battle in Ireland, potentially always offer the clearest picture, if interpreted correctly, of where the present situation has come from and where it could and should go to next.

The squaring up to each other over the militaristic parades is symbolic of the whole historic conflict between the Irish population (routinely mislabelled 'nationalist' or 'catholic') and their British colonial-settler conquerors (routinely mislabelled 'loyalist' or 'Ulster Unionist' or 'protestant').

The Occupied Zone of Ireland (routinely mislabelled 'Northern Ireland') is the parts of six of Ulster's nine counties which were seized by force and the threat

of force by British imperialist forces in 1921 at the negotiated conclusion of the 1918-1921 Irish national-liberation war which saw eventual full independence for the 26 counties (out of the 32) of Ireland comprising the present Republic.

The retained 'British' territory with its artificially gerrymandered 'border' was then turned into a bogus 'new country' called 'Northern Ireland', with roughly two-thirds of its population being the remnants of the colonising settler community (British loyalist) and one third being the native Irish, permanently trapped inside the built-in Orange-fascist tyranny, and permanently cut-off from their nation's self-determination in the 26 counties of the Republic.

It is misleading to liken this British imperialist tyranny, dictated at bayonet-point in modern living memory, with the murky 'voluntary union' between Scotland and England at the end of the feudal period so as to win better joint spoils in the coming capitalist-colonialist epoch, and the even more dubious takeover-merger between English and Welsh feudal monarchical interests of an earlier period still.

A modern revolutionary national-liberation war was fought by the Irish, formally ending in 1921 only because of British imperialist threats to reinvade and utterly destroy the whole of Ireland if Partition was not agreed, and not remotely because of any Irish 'agreement' with the disgraceful dictated 'peace' conditions. The national-liberation war was bound to continue in some form or other, at some stage, to complete Ireland's self-determination as a bourgeois right. For the full flourishing and emancipation

of the workers of Ireland, of course, only the socialist revolution is of any use. A re-united Ireland will be just as vulnerable to the underlying reality of all difficulties in the modern world, – the crisis of the capitalist system, – when there is one Ireland as when there are two.

But in the concrete political and economic circumstances surrounding Great Britain and Ireland in the 20th century, the struggle to complete the full self-determination for the Irish people against the long-declining power of British colonial imperialism, fast losing all its positions and influence internationally, was inevitable.

Not surprisingly, it was the petty-bourgeois nationalism of Sinn Féin and the IRA which won the leadership of the civil-rights/self-determination movement which unfolded with real historical purpose and venom at the end of the 1960s, – given that the politics of all the ‘left’ and ‘socialist’ rivals to the Provos were so castrated and confused by their anti-communist sectarianism. It is possible that a serious powerful Leninist movement might have been able to capture the leadership of the national revolt, as was happening in Cuba and Vietnam, etc, but there was not a scrap of leadership available in Ireland (or in Great Britain) with even a glimmering of a correct world-revolutionary outlook. The Provos were easily the most determined and clear thinking national-guerrilla force, and they won the leadership contest hands down.

The SNP (Scottish Nationalist), Plaid Cymru, and others have attempted to establish a similar ‘self-determination/ democratic deficit’ challenge to British imperialism on behalf of Scotland and Wales, but in these cases it is just an anti-communist petty bourgeois diversion to provide the possibility of attacking London’s rule without getting involved in denouncing the capitalist imperialist system because of its incurable crisis which is what is really dictating economic and political conditions and widespread social discontent, disruption, and unease. Such bourgeois nationalist diversions need attacking as such.

On a strict grasp of the bourgeois right of self-determination, the arguments are just wrong anyway. The SNP already can be voted in on a total independence ticket, and if it won the vast majority of Scottish seats and decided to meet as a completely independent parliament in Scotland (as Sinn Féin

did in 1918 as the overwhelming winner of the all-Ireland elections, founding the Dáil in Dublin and getting war blitzed for doing so), there is not the slightest chance that English army units would then invade Scotland to deny this fully ‘democratic’ Scottish bourgeois right. This is not 1918, British imperialism no longer rules the world, and in fact is now so weak that it cannot even defeat the tiny forces of IRA/Sinn Féin drawn from a population of half a million. A Scotland self-determination struggle, forced to fight by an English army invasion, would have a nearly six million population to call on. The referee would have to stop the fight in the first round to save the English from further punishment. Exactly the same is true for Wales if Plaid Cymru won a vast majority of Welsh seats for immediate independence from England.

The Irish trapped behind the military-colonial Partition have no such bourgeois-democratic right to self-determination. The bogus ‘Northern Ireland’ Occupied Zone was specifically constructed precisely to prevent them ever being able to exercise such a theoretical right by ensuring that the Irish MPs elected would always be outnumbered in the OZ by the Ulster Unionist (British colonialist) MPs, – while still enabling London to say that the Irish “have every democratic right” to campaign fully about all their grievances, and therefore do not need to resort to “terrorism”.

And the nature of any ‘democratic deficit’ which exists in Scotland and Wales is obviously very different from what was imposed on the Irish in the Occupied Zone, where virtual racist apartheid was inflicted in the commercial workplace and all public sector appointments, plus permanent grotesque discrimination in all such matters as housing, amenities, law-and-order, etc, – and all of it backed by endless open tyranny of abuse, intimidation, and victimisation by both the official state forces of the ‘Unionist’ colony, plus the even more savage persecution by the unofficial armed ‘loyalist’ gangs like the UVF, UFF, etc, etc, etc, etc. Such systematic racially-based officially-condoned fascist-imperialist tyranny against the Scots in their own homeland, or against the Welsh in theirs, by English forces is unheard of and unheard of. Thus there is no comparison between the self-determination claim by Irish nationalists discriminated against in the Occupied Zone, and the

claim by Scottish nationalists that the capitalist system run in Scotland, Wales, and England by Scots, Welsh, and English (and foreign) ruling-class capitalists is ‘unfair’ to Scotland.

Whatever ‘deficits’ exist are created mainly by the workings of the monopoly-capitalist free market, and the English capitalists themselves have just as many grievances against how they get carved up by US, Japanese, German, and French capital, etc, as the Scots do about how the market gives London an advantage. What do those recommending a capitulation to Scots bourgeois nationalist claims wish to see happening in England, – that the English nationalists should be tail-ended when they complain about the ‘democratic deficit’ with the European Union or other international trading arrangements? ‘No’ to EU withdrawal; just bring down capitalism.

There are real or imaginary ‘deficits’ all round under imperialism by its very nature as a monopoly-accumulation/exploitation system. Greater ‘national self-determination’ under continuing capitalism is the reactionary direction in which every craphead petty-bourgeois political tendency will degenerate as the world economic crisis deepens, – just as they all so degenerated towards social-chauvinism in 1914 in the Second International, (founded by Engels and officially Marxist one hundred percent), – with the exception of the Leninist party, of course, and a couple of other continental groups.

But the only real answer to these ‘democratic deficit’ postures is to get rid of the imperialist free-market system. Any continuation of the imperialist free market after any ‘democratic deficit’ rearrangements will see hardly any real or worthwhile changes in the workings of the capitalist system at all. Monopoly-imperialist economic power will continue to strengthen its domination of the planet whatever happens. It is totally the wrong epoch for capitalism to be able to fabulously extend ‘democracy’ on a local, – or international, – basis.[...]

[...]A workers state in Scotland means the social revolution. It is not a wages demand.

It is an incomparably more advanced level of political struggle than tail-ending the SNP for a pointless ‘right to self-determination and a federal republic’, which does not challenge the real depths of the capitalist SYSTEM crisis one little bit.

Of course the Scots, and every other nation, must always have the ‘right’ to anything they choose for themselves, but this vague abstract bourgeois right is simply not saying anything relevant to the present crisis where the integrated and assimilated proletariat of Britain is facing a unified-state ruling class in all-out conflict over the only next viable stage in the history of civilisation, – the overthrow of decadent monopoly-imperialist class power by the dictatorship of the proletariat, meaning the workers of Scotland, England, and Wales taking the power away from THE ruling class. If the deliberate organisation and political agitation towards this end gets known in Scotland popularly as ‘for a Scottish workers republic’, it will not affect the class political essence of what needs to be done.

All this confusion over basic theoretical questions has then begun clouding Marxist clarity over Ireland.

In the *Weekly Worker*, Martin Blum has again challenged part of the EPSR’s position, declaring it ‘idealist’ and ‘stageist’ as well as ‘wishful thinking’ to call on British imperialism to dismantle its colonial partition before leaving, which allegedly breaches “the unconditional right of the Irish to self-determination which includes dismantling imperialist structures as THEY see fit, not calling on the British ruling class to ‘clean up its mess’”.

In other words, let potentially one million Orange-led colonist population keep all their official and unofficial arms and state-dictatorship institutions (RUC, Special Branch, local army units and army intelligence, MI5 detachments, prisons and prisons service, etc, etc,) and then let the Irish ‘clean it up themselves’ in order to get a good feeling that they have been allowed the ‘unconditional’ right to complete their country’s reunification and full emancipation ‘themselves’. In other words, a total bloodbath.

To which the half-million Irish still persecuted inside the Occupied Zone will all say together: “Thanks a lot, Martin’. And even if the complacent 2.5 million Irish in the south decided to lend a hand, it would still be a colossal bloodbath.

This is all just naive posturing, and nothing to do with Marxism. Unconditionally, it is the right of the Irish to fight to end imperialist colonisation in any way they choose. Unconditionally, it is the right of the 32-county Ireland to decide the country’s future themselves,

after imperialist colonialism has withdrawn.

Requiring the British to dismantle their armed partition tyranny and take their murderous hardware away with them does not remotely cast doubt on the achievement of Irish independence. On the contrary, it underlines the strength and victory of that achievement. In no way does requiring British imperialism to dismantle its colonial-partition tyranny confer some 'progressive' role on imperialism. On the contrary, it adds to British imperialist humiliation for all to see that the foul structure imposed at bayonet-point in 1921 is a historical abomination which the whole world wants to see swept out of sight and existence as soon as possible. Calling on the British to dismantle their monstrous police-military-dictatorship state structure implies no more 'progressive' behaviour than if they just quit Ireland anyway, without dismantling, (instead of the reactionary alternative which is to still try to hang onto the colony). In fact, just pulling out and leaving a disgraceful infamous bloodbath behind, if the British ruling class was minded to head off in such a reactionary direction, might imply some nasty strength and resilience left in the moth-eaten imperialist lion.

In reality, it is a defeated historical entity.

Not least in importance in drawing up demands to give political leadership, what is going to happen anyway in Ireland? Are the British just going to pull out and leave the mess behind? Or are they slowly going to dismantle the 'Northern Ireland' state machinery and leave power in the hands of bourgeois reunification on an all-Ireland basis? Clearly via latter, - as is already happening, - under the pressure not of a 'progressive turn' by British imperialism, but under the pressure of an undefeatable revolutionary guerrilla war which has begun to be far too costly for moth-eaten British imperialism to sustain for much longer (the

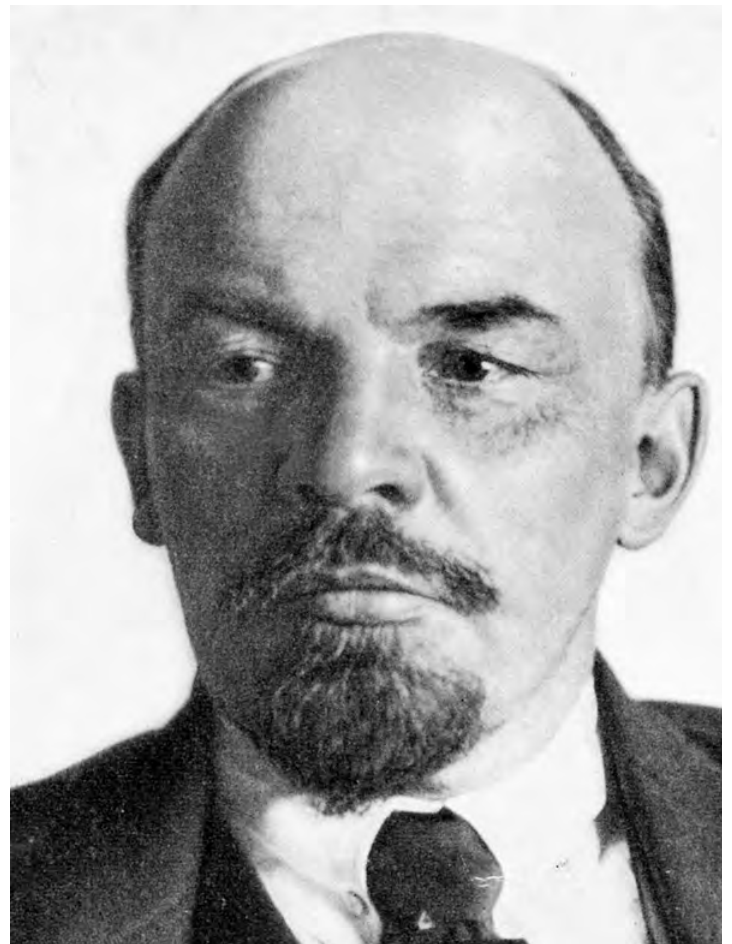
At first Marx thought that Ireland would not be liberated by the national movement of the oppressed nation, but by the working-class movement of the oppressor nation. Marx did not make an Absolute of the national movement, knowing, as he did, that only the victory of the working class can bring about the complete liberation of all nationalities. It is impossible to estimate beforehand all the possible relations between the bourgeois liberation movements of the oppressed nations and the proletarian emancipation movement of the oppressor nation (the very problem which today makes the national question in Russia so difficult).

However, it so happened that the English working class fell under the influence of the liberals for a fairly long time, became an appendage to the liberals, and by adopting a liberal-labour policy left itself leaderless. The bourgeois liberation movement in Ireland grew stronger and assumed revolutionary forms. Marx reconsidered his view and corrected it. "What a misfortune it is for a nation to have subjugated another." The English working class will never be free until

re-construction of Manchester centre alone is now to cost more than £1 billion, plus the shattering of English bourgeois confidence, and growing English working-class contempt for Britain maintaining any hold on Ireland at all), & has long been threatening to destroy London's reputation for security and commercial advantage, and has been causing terrible splits in the British ruling class; and simultaneously under the pressure of Britain's imperialist-rival 'allies' (particularly the USA and the European Union) who have long been urging London, for various reasons, to admit defeat in Ireland and get out, - in as dignified and orderly manner as possible, observing only one significant condition, that the withdrawal should be so hidden and confused with propaganda that on no account should any victory for the IRA/Sinn Féin national-liberation war be detectable in all the 'peace' manoeuvring. And who falls for it?

It is the inability for 'left' posturing to see any defeat for imperialism at all within the negotiated peace process that leads to false historical analogies with events such as Vietnam, where US imperialism scrambled out, hanging onto the skids of its helicopters, - a different situation entirely with no colonial Americans involved at all.

In Ireland, the task is to neutralise the past dominant colonial-governor role of the 'loyalist' community. This is not stageism but a real and significant historical development in the decay of imperialism. The inability to grasp this results from confusion that this is an epoch of imperialist "resolution of hot-spots" instead of an epoch of imperialist crisis; and that the British socialist revolution is the real key to Ireland's complete self-determination instead of Marx's clear understanding that reality was the other way about, that English workers would remain tied to imperialism until Ireland won its independence:



Ireland is freed from the English yoke. Reaction in England is strengthened and fostered by the enslavement of Ireland (just as reaction in Russia is fostered by her enslavement of a number of nations!).

Things turned out differently. Both the Irish people and the English proletariat proved weak. Only now, through the sordid deals between the English Liberals and the Irish bourgeoisie, is the Irish problem being solved (the example of Ulster shows with what difficulty) through the land reform (with compensation) and Home Rule (not yet introduced). Well then? Does it follow that Marx and Engels were "Utopians", that they put forward "impracticable" national demands, or that they allowed themselves to be influenced by the Irish petty-bourgeois nationalists (for there is no doubt about the petty-bourgeois nature of the Fenian movement), etc.?

No. In the Irish question, too, Marx and Engels pursued a consistently proletarian policy, which really educated the masses in a spirit of democracy and socialism. Only such a policy could have saved both Ireland and England half a century of delay in introducing the necessary reforms, and prevented these reforms from being mutilated by the Liberals to please the reactionaries. *The right of nations to self-determination* (May 1914)

The capitalist press itself confirms the latest situation. The national-liberation movement is succeeding, led by petty-bourgeois nationalists, - a victory for the IRA/Sinn Féin, and a defeat for British imperialism (and all imperialism). The colonists are having to accept that their dominance is to be negotiated away at the peace talks. Hence their symbolic climb-down over their previously unchallengeable right to parade triumphally all over 'their' province wherever they wanted. And now even the Labour worms are getting the message that their masters, the British ruling class, are giving in over Ireland, and dismantling the 'Unionist veto', i.e. colonial power:

Drumcree has made the IRA's case more eloquently than its own members could ever do. The past

month has seen the concept of 'consent' broadened to take on a quite new meaning in the politics of the province. In the past it has been applied to the need for Unionist consent to any constitutional change. Since Drumcree, Sinn Féin has demanded that loyalists should only be allowed to march through Catholic areas if local people consent. This is bitterly resented by Unionists, who see it as an infringement of an unconditional right.

This argument reflects the broader political debate and the need for the consent of the nationalist community, including those represented by Sinn Féin, to any new political structures. It has been suggested that this has been orchestrated by Sinn Féin. Unionist politicians point out that the local groups which have organised resistance to the Orange marches have been led by men who have served sentences for IRA offences. Mr Hume had tried to broker an agreement between the Apprentice Boys and the Bogside

Residents' Group, but without success. Appeals from church leaders and business people had gone unheard. By Friday morning the city seemed set for a weekend of violence. Then came McGuinness' plea for tolerance and, suddenly, the Bogside Residents' Group accepted the arguments for compromise. In Derry yesterday one Sinn Féin member said: 'The British have kept us out of the talks, ignored our supporters. Well these are the alternative negotiations — on the streets.'

Back on the bus to Derry, the Apprentice Boys heard on the radio that their grand committee was still behind closed doors deciding what to do. The passengers rolled their eyes. Another surrender was imminent, and as we got off the bus in the Protestant-dominated East Bank of Derry, it was confirmed. The Apprentice Boys had decided not to walk the walls at all.

SHADOW Northern Ireland Secretary Mo Mowlam believes the current round of peace talks is likely to fail and is considering a new initiative under which a Labour government would strip Unionist leaders of their veto on political progress.

Rumours that she is privately thinking the unthinkable, including cantonisation or repartition, are firmly denied, but sources close to Ms Mowlam say she has been holding detailed discussions on a Labour peace strategy. Labour sources believe leading Unionists are not reflecting a grassroots desire for peace. They point to initiatives at local level that have shown a greater degree of political co-oper-

ation since the proclamation of the IRA ceasefire in August 1994. They also cite Protestant businessmen who have taken an open-minded approach over issues such as cross-border co-operation, especially in the context of possible economic and monetary union.

Clive Soley, chairman of the cross-party Commons Northern Ireland Select Committee and one of the Labour politicians with whom Ms Mowlam most frequently discusses Northern Ireland, said last night: 'If the current round of talks makes no progress, and many of us are pessimistic, then no party should have a veto. It will be incumbent on the British and Irish Governments to proceed in whatever way they think necessary to stabilise the situation and move the political process forward. Our fear is the present peace process has run into the sand and got into a situation where it is impossible for republicans or Unionists to agree an outcome.'

Labour accepts senior Unionist politicians cannot be bypassed entirely, but believes more needs to be done by London to dictate the agenda. It is also being argued that decommissioning paramilitary weapons will have to be sidelined as a precondition, regardless of Unionist objections, as it is clear neither Protestant nor Catholic paramilitaries will hand over arms before a final settlement.

Certainly imperialism wishes to try to keep control of the process, as best it can. But the process is one of relentless imperialist decay and defeat. Build Leninism. RB

Failure to identify the epoch as one dominated by inter-imperialist conflict has kept the left divided by continuing chaos. The 'new world order' is a myth, and the collapse of revisionism has created far more opportunity than damage. Ultra-leftism's combination of relentless defeatism with wild revolutionary fantasies reveals petty-bourgeois subjectivism aplenty but nothing about the real world. Militant syndicalism still a wider problem than just round the SLP.

[EPSR No 868 09-07-96]

Continuing confusion over what stage has been reached in the crisis of the imperialist system and in the international class struggle is why the 'left' of the labour movement in Britain (and elsewhere) remains

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hopelessly split on everything. What to do about the Labour Party; what the Liverpool dockers strike represents; what

attitude to take to Scargill's Socialist Labour Party; what to make of the collapse of CPSU revisionism and the Soviet Union; how to regard the failed Trotskyite entryists; etc, etc, are complex questions still keeping workers in disarray.

A middle-class mentality of anti-communist defeatism and anti-Marxist philistinism

lies at the heart of these difficulties. Large sections of the workers movement have been permanently cowed by decades of blistering anti-Soviet and anti-communist propaganda in ways that are sometimes hard to detect, especially when this retreat is covered up by an aggressive posture of ultra-leftism, — a widespread phenomenon resorted to by many more sects and tendencies than just the Trotskyists and state capitalists.

To fully overcome these weaknesses, the whole history of the anti-imperialist revolution worldwide from 1917 onwards is eventually going to have to be thoroughly reassessed and re-digested in unending open polemic and debate by the whole movement.

Until 70 years of anti-communist propaganda and petty-bourgeois cynicism and philistinism have been regurgitated and neutralised, the socialist cause will continue to remain on the run, — hounded and confused by middle-class ideological opportunism and muddle-headedness of all descriptions.

The route back towards at least nominal universal allegiance to Marxist science, such as prevailed just before and after the Bolshevik Revolution in 1917, is best served by continuously systematically analysing the latest (i.e. highest) point of development of the worldwide conflict and balance of class and national forces which must of necessity always shed more light than ever on all anti-imperialist struggle that has gone before, and therefore provide ever-clearer guidance on what ought to happen next, — (provided, of course, that the analysis of the latest movement of class forces is correct, as seen from the vantage point of furthering the world socialist revolution).

The most widespread common current mistake remains the delusion that US imperialism really has been able to impose a powerful and intimidating 'new world order' for repressing the revolutionary movement, coupled with an undialectical estimation of the Soviet workers state's revisionist liquidation as a 'setback' for the working class.

The defeatism and incorrect perspectives on these questions gives rise to class-biased misunderstandings and unstable subjectivism on just about every other issue in the contemporary political world such as Ireland, Islamic fundamentalism, Blairism, the SLP, trade unionism, and the economy, etc.

A generally pessimistic out-

look on how US imperialism is now supposedly able to impose a pacified settlement (i.e. a defeat) on every 'hot spot' of anti-imperialist struggle around the globe is frequently coupled with an ultra-left frenzy about "missed revolutionary opportunities" here, there, and everywhere.

Both attitudes spring from the same deep lack of confidence about the world socialist revolution which is basically influenced by middle-class experience of the colossal postwar economic boom in the West, unprecedented, and of the most phenomenal ideological onslaught in all history, sustained anti-communism on every cultural front, also unprecedented.

This is the fundamental class position of most modern 'Trotskyism' (any responsibility for this shallowness that is down to Trotsky's own much deeper but historically flawed philosophy is not addressed here) which has hitherto continued to see the need for some opportunist 'connection' with 1917 while accumulating more and more spontaneous hostility to the core of Leninism, — the science of proletarian dictatorship and all its vast historical implications (see last *Review*).

The struggle in Ireland provides a classic illustration of how gloomy petty-bourgeois perspectives in Britain, for example, have alternately latched onto the national-liberation fight in a delirium about 'imminent fullscale socialist revolution' being possible, — only instantly to lapse back into the blackest vision of 'betrayal', 'defeat', and 'imperialist victory', etc, as soon as the frenetic subjectivism of their 'revolutionary analysis' proves wrong.

Socialist revolution is simply not what has been taking place in Ireland; and all of the current Trot demonising of Gerry Adams as 'selling out' in order to 'do a deal with British imperialism' so as to become a 'future Irish President', etc, reflects only on the subjective confusion of Sinn Féin's 'exposers' and misses all of the highly revealing and interesting developments in the actual conflict between petty-bourgeois nationalism and imperialism (see innumerable past *Reviews*).

Maverick socialist revolutions in advance of or out of step with the general contemporary trend of the world revolution are not impossible, of course, as Cuba demonstrated. And the role of the subjective factor in finally making the revolution, once the revolutionary opportunity has arisen, is a crucial understanding of all who seriously

try to grasp Marxist-Leninist philosophy and the vital part that revolutionary theory must play in the real emancipation of civilisation (from class-war turmoil).

Spontaneous upheavals which help to transform entire situations are also well understood, especially with regard to Ireland where Lenin properly trounced all his 'Marxist' rivals by his ecstatic welcome of the 1916 Easter Rising 'putsch' by petty-bourgeois nationalists which others denounced as a 'useless harmful diversion' but Lenin rejoiced in as an inspired act of heroism and defiance which indicated huge revolutionary trouble in store for British imperialism and which would help ferment it, and not just in Ireland.

But all of these considerations are simply irrelevant to the plain fact that most Trots have tried completely misleading their followers and all workers about what is actually happening in Ireland.

It has not been a socialist revolution from the start. It has been a national-liberation struggle. And while communists might have led it, and it would have been better if they had led it, and proper to take it uninterrupted, as far as possible, into the socialist revolution if they had led it, – the leadership in reality was overwhelmingly captured by Provisional Sinn Féin, and a hugely important, influential, and triumphant national-liberation struggle then ensued.

That is what has happened, which is the first thing for Marxist-Leninist science to get right. Secondly, it is precisely a Marxist-Leninist outlook which says that in this instance, national-liberation was no 'limitation' on the revolutionary struggle, that it was a clear and important triumph over imperialism in its context, and that the further 'revolutionary opportunity' to damage imperialism some more rests exactly with being able to see what a setback for all imperialism, and for British imperialism especially, this defeat in Ireland was and still is.

British imperialism may well be the coming weakest link in the imperialist chain, or one of them, just as Russia was in 1917 – but declining British imperialism managed to get out of an entire empire without being toppled directly by socialist revolution; and the long retreat from Ireland which began in the 1960s, has been further immunised against a revolutionary socialist takeover

by having created tame Green Toryism in the South in an earlier epoch, by having cemented the Partitioned bit of Ireland into a constitutional part of the UK proper, and by having left in place there a majority population of the most rabid imperialist-minded British reactionaries imaginable.

To casually see an 'easy opportunity for socialist revolution' in these circumstances is evidence either of miraculous powers of dialectical materialist analysis which would have had even Marx and Lenin gasping with admiration, or else of extreme foolishness and light-mindedness.

Expressing this frustrated mania for 'socialist revolution at all costs' in its milder form of only seeing Ireland as a 'stepping stone to further revolutionary development' which Sinn Féin allegedly has sold out and undermined, in no way hides the petty-bourgeois class essence of this approach.

The objective circumstances of what is the likely outcome on the ground are still being ignored. The objective value of that national-liberation struggle for a serious longterm non-subjective perspective on the world socialist revolution is missed entirely.

The only thing emerging from these situations is the frustrated impotence of middle-class 'revolutionary' dilettantism which has infected the affluent Western world like a plague ever since the Soviet proletarian dictatorship was established in 1917, and which was even more mightily reinforced after the establishment of proletarian dictatorship in China and East Europe following the 1945 debacle for imperialism's deliberately-created counter-revolutionary aggressive offensive, – but which has never once itself built an atom of 'socialism' anywhere, or remotely threatened to topple any bourgeois ruling class anywhere, or defeat imperialism anywhere, or even run a model 'democratic' and 'efficient' party anywhere.

The daft cries of 'stageism' in these circumstances are just part of the same ultra-left 'revolutionary' fantasy, and not remotely attempting any serious further investigation of the progress of the actual national-liberation struggle.

The completion of Ireland's self-determination (following the partial independence conceded by British imperialism after the ferocious national-liberation war of 1918-1921) has never been off the historical agenda. It was Marx himself

who first identified Irish bourgeois nationalism as destined to play a key role in the emancipation of the people of Ireland because of the continuing imperialist character of the relationship with England, because of the weakness of the reformist leadership of the English working class, because of the weakness of revolutionary socialism in the Irish working class, and because of the special difficulties created by the Orange colonial mentality in Ulster, later to become (partially) the partitioned-off Occupied Zone of Ireland, where the imperialist corruption of the working-class colonist population was a thousand times worse than the pro-imperialist corruption of the English working class.

Lenin summed up this situation in his May 1914 work *The right of nations to self-determination*:

[See quote on page 49]
[...]

No one wants a 'stage-ist' wait for the completion of Ireland's national-liberation before the decks are better cleared for the uninterrupted onward march to the socialist revolution in Britain and Ireland. It just happens to be the outcome of the actual historic international balance of class and national forces in this particular conflict, – as already well scientifically analysed by Marx and Lenin themselves. Why do 'Marxists' find it so difficult to accept that a situation described by Marx and Lenin should have been proved so accurate, and farsighted?

Ridiculing Adams for his alleged 'bourgeois glory' personal ambition is just pathetic and cheap. Would the same jeers apply to Bobby Sands, MP, in the same leadership with Adams, who starved himself to death (along with nine other Irish revolutionary nationalists of colossal courage and determination) in order to beat imperialism? Adams has served his time in concentration camps, under brutalising interrogation-arrests, and in active service of various kinds. These knee-jerk Trot reactions about 'Adams the sell-out traitor' once again only tell about the subjective mental mess of the ultra-'left' insulters, and provide no objective analysis at all about the actual conflict between Irish national-liberation and British imperialism.

Going through all the different moments and phases of the Irish national-liberation campaign to pick out this or that occasion when 'the revolutionary-socialist working-class character of the struggle had nearly

gained the upper hand', etc, is equally unrewarding, – insulting to the tactical and strategic political and military revolutionary abilities of the IRA/Sinn Féin in so successfully leading the mass movement for so long, – and conceited about the would-be 'achievements' of arm-chair revolutionary socialists sitting safely on the sidelines in England. It is just silly sour grapes to doubt the enormously-respected leadership position which Sinn Féin and the IRA have won on sheer merit, ability, intelligence, and dedicated hard work and sacrifice.

The reality and significance of the national-liberation victory in Ireland is missed because Trots are viewing it through the wrong historical perspective.

World imperialist crisis is the overall perspective, and British imperialist decline within that crisis provides the immediate arena for struggle. Let the subjective factors of revolutionary organisation, determination, and activism flourish as never before; but the objective conditions of the international balance and conflict of class and national forces remains the most powerful determinant of what progress can be made towards the world socialist revolution at any time.

Irish national-liberation has a chance because its own heroic and ferocious revolutionary fight has staggered unconfident and enfeebled British imperialism, and because it has suited daggers-drawn British imperialist rivals to let London bleed a bit by half-sympathising with Irish nationalism, and because some solution has been demanded before the armed revolutionary features of the struggle gained even more widespread international popular credibility as the way to battle against monopoly-capitalist interests of a colonial or neo-colonial character.

The victory will precisely be a re-united bourgeois Ireland at some stage, – but none the less a victory for all that, since the complete and reunified independence of Ireland was exactly what the foul skulduggery of Partition was determined to prevent for all time, in the brutal arm-twisting imposed by British imperialism (then still the world power) in 1921 on the threat of total annihilation of all Ireland, – establishing the fictitious 'Northern Ireland' as an inalienable constitutional part of the United Kingdom proper, permanently. The strength and skill of the political and military triumph of the IRA/Sinn Féin alone has put

a stop to all that, – a colossal historical achievement.

By concentrating on the hold-ups to the final formal concession of eventual reunification of Ireland and the virtual dismantling of 'Northern Ireland', as a separate British country, as it used to be, – defeatist middle-class ideology has tried to make out a case for saying that since the Soviet Union's collapse, all anti-imperialist struggles, Ireland's included, have been doomed to 'hot-spot pacification' by the now almighty US-imperialist 'new world order'.

This is all complete fantasy. It is a mis-assessment of the always-phony 'Cold War balance' which never prevented US imperialism from doing 90% of the colonial skulduggery it wanted to get away with internationally, even before the USSR's liquidation by revisionism.

It totally misses the key role played by sharpening inter-imperialist crisis in the wretched class-collaboration deals made by US imperialism with Gorbachev & Co. And it applies to Ireland in a wholly mindless way an imaginary schema which is all wrong anyway, – the loss of the USSR not only having very little effect on the vast majority of world situations, but the demise of revisionism also being as much a positive development as the dismantling of the Soviet workers state was a negative one.

Despite the supposed Cold War threat of 'Soviet retaliation', Western imperialism carried out more than 200 acts of colonial war, armed counter-revolution, 'domestic' putsches, key lethal assassinations, murderous embargoes and blockades and the like, grotesque bribery and propaganda interventions in other countries affairs, etc, etc, etc, since 1945 – among them such major anti-communist and pro-imperialist operations as the defeat of the left in the Greek civil war; the bloody suppression of the Malaysian national-liberation movement; the prolonged French and American colonial wars against the peoples of Indochina; invasion and attempted occupation of the North Korean workers state; interference to prevent the communist liberation of the whole of China; countless onslaughts on national-liberation struggles in Asia, Africa, and Latin America, including the assassination of such outstanding revolutionary leaders as Patrice Lumumba, Amilcar Cabral, etc; brutal repression of the Algerian independence war; massacre of the entire Indonesian communist party;

crushing of the nationalist revolution in Iran in favour of the Shah; constant collusion to achieve the Zionist colonisation of Palestine; installation of the Saddam reactionary clique in Iraq; armed sabotage of the Arbenz revolution in Guatemala; overthrow of the Allende regime in Chile; armed destruction of the Sandinista revolution in Nicaragua; overthrow invasion of the New Jewel revolution in Grenada; occupation of Panama to bring down Noriega nationalism; endless armed intervention against Dominican Republic and Haiti, and counter-revolutionary attempts against Cuba; criminal air-blitzes against Libya, Lebanon, Somalia, Egypt; outrageous endless counter-revolutionary subversion against East European workers states; etc, etc, etc, etc, for more than 200 such reactionary operations since World War II, – and all of this long before Gorbachev's liquidationist agreement with Reagan was even dreamed of.

Against this virtually endless catalogue of world wide Western counter-revolutionary tyranny which imperialism got away with before revisionism's final self-liquidation, – what **unusual** setbacks have been suffered since? The loss to Cuba of its economic trade with Russia (which nevertheless was only some less-than-totally-satisfactory defiance of an unchallenged complete US blockade anyway) is one obvious blow, as would be the notional loss of the previous Soviet commitment to defend Cuba and to supply arms, (although with Moscow's inaction over the not-unrelated and scot-free US imperialist counter-revolutionary savagery against Chile, Grenada, Nicaragua, and Panama, – it is less than certain that Khrushchev's 1963 threat to go to war with the USA over Cuba would ever have been repeated). The unrestrained US military savaging of Iraq is another 'United Nations' aggression which the USSR might have acted to restrain, on a good day. Likewise the NATO aggression against the Serbs. But on both these issues, there must be some doubt that if US imperialism had been determined to go the whole hog anyway, the Soviet Union would then have intervened militarily. And to what great purpose, it must be asked, would the Soviet workers state have intervened in any case? – on behalf of reactionary Saddam nationalism and reactionary Serbian nationalism, neither of which was worth any positive support. Just to frustrate yet more US imperialist intrigues to add to the more-than 200 opera-

tions since WWII? Hardly likely, and hardly worth risking world nuclear war over.

The loss of the East European workers states, the increased isolation of the remaining socialist states, and the loss of the example of the Soviet workers state itself as the most outstanding living challenge to the 'indispensability' of free-market-forces-democracy and a world imperialist bourgeoisie, – are much more serious considerations.

But once again it must be asked, what has been lost in practice? Degenerated by revisionism, Moscow and Beijing had long since ceased any worthwhile cooperation as far as their influence on completing the world socialist revolution was concerned, the major issue facing civilisation. The workers states in East Europe were likewise utterly castrated by revisionism and incapable or unwilling to do much for the cause of the socialist revolution internationally, – cheap books and travel apart.

And the Soviet example of planned socialism in action had always been unable to prevent the West from creating as much anti-communist propaganda out of Soviet misfortunes, mistakes or crimes, as inept revisionism was capable of deriving pro-communist propaganda from.

And how was the problem of revisionism, – that complete block on the revival internationally of the world revolutionary philosophy of Marxism-Leninism, – to be overcome anyway? It is nice to think that the Leninist struggles of the *EPSR*, for example, could have in time transformed themselves into the subjective party-building factor to change the whole of history. But hardly realistic. What in fact has happened is that moribund revisionism has finally pursued the logic of its essentially class-collaborating philosophy to its now-obvious conclusion, and liquidated itself, – dying the death that was its due because it refused or was incapable of coming back to revolutionary life.

The workers states perished too for the best reason of all, – as a living demonstration that the building of socialist society is either the most conscious rational act of the whole of civilisation requiring profound leadership and an unprecedented democratic mass involvement, or it is nothing.

With the degeneration of revolutionary theory, the workers states themselves were doomed, – unfit to survive.

With the failure to identify

the retreat from theory as the real crime of Stalinist revisionism, the fate of the remaining workers states must be regarded as still in the balance, – especially in the light of the continuing delay in the resumption of revolutionary socialist advance elsewhere on the planet, which might spark off a renewal of Marxist-Leninist science everywhere.

But what all this 'gloom' establishes, of course, is the possibility at last of clearing up the mass of confusion bequeathed by revisionism internationally, always impossible all the time that the Soviet workers state itself still survived, hopelessly crippled by theoretical leadership-degeneration, but still enough of a living achievement of what the dictatorship of the proletariat could create following the overthrow of the bourgeois ruling class, and what would still be worth repeating everywhere if possible, even in its enfeeblement.

With the Soviet workers state still in place, – such a colossal historic gain, – the dethronement of revisionism would always remain blocked by the natural human conservatism of fellow-travelling acolytes, apologists, and opportunists. With the lamed Soviet workers state no more, – and gone too (or disappearing) all its unthinking loyalist parties in the capitalist countries, – then the revival of Marxist-Leninist science can begin again on a far wider scale.

But apart from all this, the notion that the collapse of the Soviet Union had any direct deleterious effect on the Irish national-liberation struggle is a bit obscure anyway, (as some Trots argue in order to cement their view of universal defeats for anti-imperialism at the hands of the now unchallengeable US 'new world order').

Firstly, in most regions of the world, US imperialist behaviour is hardly much more aggressively brutal and offensive now than it was before; and certainly on Ireland, no Trot has yet been able to specify any date on which Washington's attitude to the Irish national-liberation struggle is alleged to have taken a turn for the worse. On the contrary, most of the superficial evidence would suggest that American sympathy for Irish emancipation has grown faster and become more blatant in the last five years than ever before.

That is certainly how the beleaguered Orange colonists see it, – and Sinn Féin and the SDLP too, and Dublin.

Secondly, Moscow's role in its last revisionist five years

was increasingly to identify itself internationally with every reactionary 'anti-terrorist' stunt got going by the West, signing deceitful imperialist 'peaceful methods' declaration after declaration. So how was the loss of that particular prop to imperialist reaction a blow to IRA/Sinn Féin?

At this point, these Trot-defeatist arguments spread wings and take off for never-never land. Worldwide pessimism is the answer. "It is not just in Ireland that imperialism has forced anti-imperialist struggles into retreat. The only gain for anti-apartheid in South Africa was to allow blacks to become bourgeois, and to have a black president at the head of an imperialist state. The PLO have been denied their rights in Palestine and fobbed off with a bantustan. With reactionary Islamic fundamentalists now in charge everywhere, there is no revolution at all any more.

The former centres of anti-imperialist struggle have been pushed back further than the total reaction now taking Afghanistan back to the Middle Ages," etc, etc.

Well, Islamic fundamentalism is certainly a reactionary ideology, and it is being manipulated by forces which bear not the remotest good will towards the dictatorship of the proletariat and the socialist revolution.

But all such matters need analysing in their dialectical motion, not statically. Why, where, and how did fundamentalism come in? Only by mouthing the most outspoken revolutionary promises of all, and the most thoroughgoing anti-imperialism of all, - in Iran in 1979 to rouse the downtrodden masses of South Tehran to oust the Shah and the hated Western imperialist domination by a total revolutionary upheaval before the slow-witted revisionist communist party saw the opportunity, seized the chance, and made a blistering socialist revolution out of the spontaneously developing uprising. And from such an understanding, it is utterly impossible to conclude that the tide of history is running in imperialism's favour and against the world socialist revolution unless one's head is stuck on back-to-front, upside-down, and lodged firmly up one's own rectum anyway.

Fundamentalism is conducting a desperate race against time to try and hold back a rampaging spontaneous revolutionary ferment which is sweeping the entire Middle East (and further afield) in the light of the humiliating collapse into total paraly-

sis and pro-Western toadyism of the previously dominant Arab and muslim bourgeois national-liberation movements, - all the way from Morocco to Pakistan and beyond.

Of course Hamas, Hizbollah, and Islamic Jihad are for a thoroughly reactionary ideology. But they mouth revolutionary fight (which puts Arafat's degenerate bourgeois nationalism on the well-merited path to class-collaborating pro-imperialist oblivion) because they dare not leave the door open for all-out proletarian-dictatorship-communist revolution which is inevitably coming up the line fast. Does that make the Intifada and the rapid development of Arab guerrilla-war skills a victory for imperialism? Is the undermining of Arafatism a victory for imperialism?

To thus conclude is so incurably pessimistic that it is a wonder that these Trots can even bother getting out of bed in the morning any more. Clearly the world revolution continues on the march, endlessly temporarily held back and diverted here and there, - but relentlessly on the march everywhere.

The genuine Afghan tragedy was merely the Soviet revisionist tragedy in advance, possibly the saddest cost of all. But that was part of the insoluble problems created worldwide by revisionism, not strictly an aspect of the dialectical complications of the Middle East revolution. But even so, the greater historical driving force has even managed to have a bizarre final word in this sorry episode whereby some groups of fanatical Islamic fundamentalists, recruited for reactionary service in Afghanistan in the pay of Western imperialism, are now turning against that imperialist influence to demand some serious accommodating to certain Koranic ideals, - which nowhere are really possible because of the world imperialist economic trade-war crisis and the totally corrupt stooge existence lived by every pro-imperialist regime throughout the entire Arab and muslim world.

Islamic fundamentalism remains totally barmy, and in the wrong epoch by a feudal era or two. But equally barmy Puritanism made the great English Revolution of the 17th century. And Islamic fundamentalism will in the same way only be able to latch onto the direction history is taking anyway, and not significantly hold it back, in the great socialist revolution of the 20th and 21st centuries. The class economics of capitalist production will decide which

direction history can move in. And imperialist exploitation is already far too advanced throughout the Arab and muslim worlds to head off the proletarian socialist revolution now. Fascism? Of course fascism is a danger. But tyrannical dictatorship in the service of imperialist reaction is nothing like the full description of what historically is meant by fascism. Such reactionary dictatorships are ten a penny throughout the imperialist world throughout the imperialist epoch. But there was only one real fascism, - the recourse by an advanced imperialist power, - the most advanced in some ways, - to extreme barbaric jingoistic militarism in order to settle accounts primarily with all rival imperialist powers. Islamic fundamentalism hardly

fits the bill. It is a diverted Third World national-liberation movement. And far too late for any decisive longterm role in the imperialist epoch anyway. The Iranian ayatollocracy is already deep in crisis. Fundamentalism at best can only hold on for as long as it takes for the international communist revolution to get going again. Which will not be for very long. Everywhere that US imperialism now looks, there is growing spontaneous revolutionary trouble, - from Mexico to Korea, from Russia to southern Africa. Universally, communist revolutionary theory is what is lacking. Universally, it is the one thing that petty-bourgeois defeatist ultra-leftism is hopeless at. Build Leninism.[...]RB

Ireland illustrates how not just widespread anti-Soviet opportunist ignorance prevails, but the possibly even more disastrous basic misunderstanding of what Marxist-Leninist scientific socialism is all about.

[EPSR No 876 22-10-96]

[...] The CPGB's *Weekly Worker* continues posturing mightily about its credentials as the nucleus of the 'revolutionary party' of the future, but it continues wavering all over the place on the very fundamentals of both a correct world view and a correct Marxist method, and yet seems determined to make itself immune to criticism on either count, in spite of all its protestations about 'rapprochement' and an 'open struggle between various tendencies'.

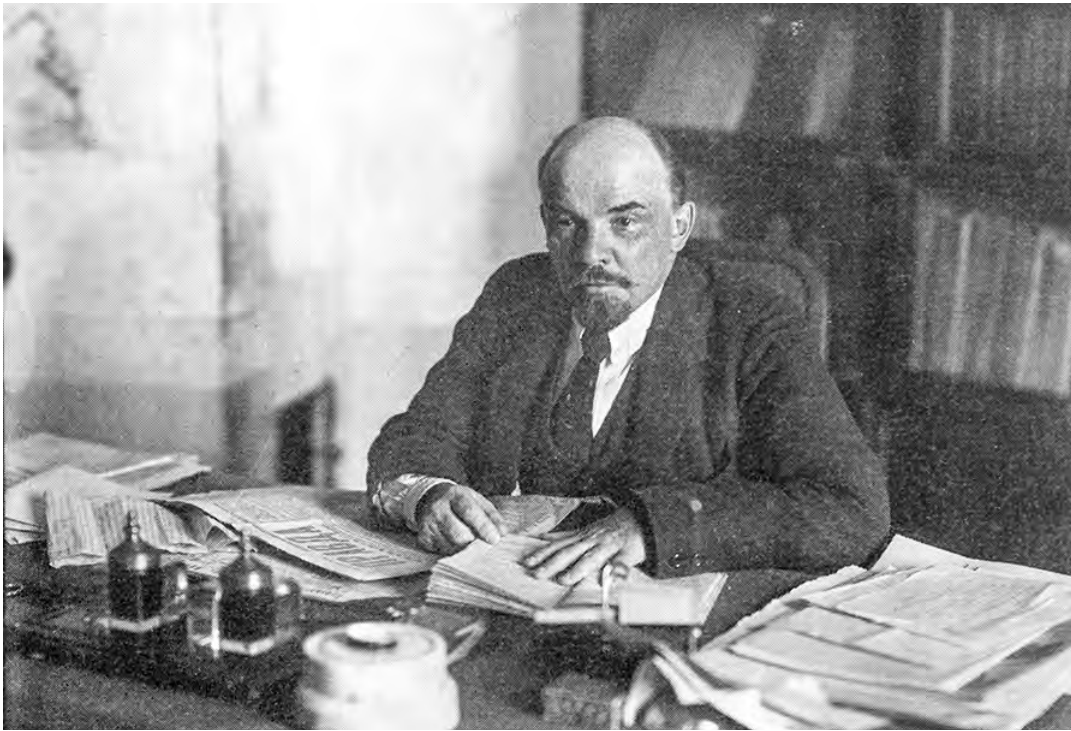
Lenin is quoted on the need for open polemics within the struggle for correct communist leadership, but the whole point of Bolshevism is misunderstood, which was to establish which line was the right one and to then move on, freely admitting one's own mistakes and learning the lessons from them, but insisting that others' mistakes be driven out by the correct line as well, allowing factional differences to be kept incubating only in the event of new developments occurring which warranted reopening of old issues, and only to the extent that the incubated differences were not totally incompatible with the correct line of the party anyway, making sure the party was not held back by divisive factionalising or unnecessary picking at old wounds. Lenin was for unity, but believed that the split

was the only way to get there, - unity needing to be based solely on fundamental agreement about the world. He wanted to drive out Menshevik nonsense, not embrace it to death.

All of such Leninist approaches certainly required decisions to be made sooner or later. The *Weekly Worker*'s problem is that half its polemics just go on endlessly about purely formal and contentless aspects of communist struggle, round and round in circles. The other half which more usefully dispute actual developments in the international class and national struggle (from whose progress alone, real lessons about a correct world view and correct Marxist methods can be learned), - are likewise left to just drift on, or are even suppressed.

To give an example, a major challenge has been made in the *EPSR* and in letters to the *Weekly Worker* on the defeatist outlook of the CPGB, particularly over Ireland, South Africa, and the Middle East where the US imperialist New World Order is said to have been scoring endless victories over revolutionary and national-liberation struggle.

The question of a correct perspective on the world is the most crucial ingredient of all struggle for revolutionary theory, without which a successful revolutionary party will never be built. But *Weekly*



Worker replies to this polemic have been all over the place, full of daft mistakes and contradictions.

Yet quietly in the *WW*'s news coverage and commentary, the line on the IRA's alleged sell-out and capitulation to US imperialism has gradually been toned down, but without any acknowledgement that this was happening because mistakes had been made previously. And at the same time, further polemics on this dispute from *EPSR* comrades have been not printed, especially when highlighting major gaffes by the CPGB as outlined in the following letter the *Weekly Worker* chose not to publish:

"In reply to the Ted Jaszynski letter of Sept 19, the eventual imperialist support for the black bourgeois-nationalist revolution in South Africa was obviously to avoid an even worse overthrow of apartheid (a great feudal-colonial bastion for reaction throughout Africa which the West had backed solidly) by possibly communist revolution. But eventually being forced to give in over apartheid was a defeat for the world imperialist system and reaction, not a victory for imperialism at all.

Once the inevitability of national-liberation had been accepted by the West, there was no chance that conditions for an immediate socialist revolution would be allowed to develop (i.e. could not be avoided for the present).

The Ford piece of June 20 which started this argument made no mention at all of "a great victory for the South African masses", and you have only introduced these words on Sept 19 because you cannot defend Ford's formulation which was wholly defeatist, labelling South Africa's national-liberation, alongside the IRA, as "a victim of the US-dominated New World Order - i.e. the negative resolution of revolutionary situations" where imperialism is "imposing a 'democratic' and 'peaceful' settlement" (original emphases and commas).

That lays the whole stress on a non-

existent socialist revolution and the clever 'triumph' of US imperialism in avoiding it. It is historically bankrupt for missing the whole point which is that in the end, against all the previous vicious imperialist support for the apartheid regime, - open and covert, trading and financial, technological and military, cultural and diplomatic, etc. - revolutionary struggle defeated apartheid and to that extent defeated the imperialist system.

Thus in broad historical terms, the overthrow of apartheid was a defeat for imperialism, not a victory.

And your problem is that you do not understand the epoch you are living in. You are philosophically defeatist, not just misleadingly inaccurate. And nowhere was this more revealed than in TJ's astonishing gaffe in his Aug 29 letter, about which *WW*'s subsequent silence speaks eloquently about your seriousness.

This authoritatively asserted that "previous thorns in imperialism's flesh are gradually being brought to book".

One of the named 'victims', the scarcely stable or formidable Saddamist apology for bourgeois nationalism, had within days administered one of the worst humiliations to US imperialism ever, physically wiping out two entire CIA agency networks of hundreds of traitorous Iraqi operatives which had cost hundreds of millions of dollars and five years effort by the might of US imperialism to put in place, and winning such universal sympathy that Washington's alliances in the region were left in ruins.

The key to this debacle was the character of the epoch, - splits in the crisis-ridden imperialist camp, and the ultimately irresistible rise of the revolutionary East, the historical forces which will eventually clinch the triumph of the world socialist revolution (see the lengthy analysis in *Economic and Philosophic Science Reviews* 870 & 871 or Lenin's '*Better Fewer, But Better*' and the mistaken West European orientation of the CPGB's draft programme), and which push Saddamist and Islamic-fundamentalist reaction to successfully antagonise US imperialism.

Is it not time that your hopelessly defeatist and incorrect world view was gradually brought to book? Do you feel no responsibility at all for such glaring mistakes in your paper, misleading the working class?

You will also be proved dismally incorrect about Ireland too. British imperialism's ludicrous 'Northern Ireland' colonial anachronism is finished, defeated by revolutionary national-liberation struggle, however slowly and gradually the doors are opened to Ireland's reunification. You are indeed being fooled by the present appearances of London dictating terms to Sinn Féin. The significant historical negotiations were on the walls of Derry where the Apprentice Boys colonialism was prevented from marching. Drumcree was the false signal, to defuse more Orange diehard reaction. Keep watching.

The self-liquidation by unreformable revisionism which opened the door to the destruction of the Soviet workers state by counter-revolution, was obviously a contradictory development, - a tragedy but in the end part of the necessary deck-clearing if millions of workers worldwide were to be freed from their loyalty to the USSR which sadly also meant their loyalty to the grotesque class-collaboration with imperialism and the anti-revolutionary corruption of Marxist-Leninist theory which the CPSU represented finally, via its gradual decades-long bureaucratic stupefaction.

Outrage at anti-communism and anti-Soviet slander in no way contradicts positive views that the anti-revolutionary CPSU leadership had by 1990 become more of an obstacle to world socialist developments than the continued existence of the Soviet workers state was a benefit. The "enormous leap forward in revolutionary struggle worldwide" was a description of forthcoming developments made possible by revisionism's disintegration, not of something that is supposed to have happened already, as you imply. Your confusion is self-inflicted.'

A fortnight after not printing or commenting on that letter, *WW* slipped the following paragraph

into its front-page item on the sensational humiliation of British imperialism from the national-liberation struggle's double bombing of the Lisburn Barracks HQ of the colonial power:

The IRA's bomb in the Six Counties stole the Tories' thunder. With the 'peace process' clearly off the rails, all the rhetoric against 'men of violence' could not hide the fact that Major's tough talking has failed to bring any results for imperialism, even in this arena.

Now this is a remarkable change of language from *WW*'s original June 20 position ridiculing the IRA's "peace bomb" in Manchester as part of a desperate plea by the

"isolated revolutionary nationalist movement"

in which

"Gerry Adams wants the best deal he can get, - under an imperialist-brokered settlement".

And "hardly surprisingly" because of this isolation,

"the IRA cannot see any end to the war in the Six Counties and has become a victim of the US-dominated new world order i.e. the negative resolution of revolutionary situations...imposing a... settlement" (original emphases).

But no acknowledgement as to why this dramatic change in the line.

The suspicion grows that as well as a catastrophic inability to face up to a bad mistake it has made, the *Weekly Worker*'s bizarre reading of Lenin's open polemics as meaning unstructured eclecticism, - allowing as many views to be put forward as can get into the paper, - has resulted in one CPGB voice fundamentally contradicting another voice in the same issue.

In an editorial 'letters' piece in the eternal empty rigmarole with the RDG and ISG refugees from the SWP, the Oct 10 *WW* stated the following astonishing nonsense:

The comrade is irked. Apparently, because both the ISG and the RDG "share a state capitalist view of the former USSR", they "should be in a more advanced state of rapprochement". Why? Surely at root the rapprochement process must be about Party and programme, not this or that understanding of the USSR. Organisations built on common-denominator politics do not lead revolutions; they split.

Craig asks the ISG comrades: "How (could you) consider unity with the non-state capitalist CPGB and not talk to the RDG?" Well, comrade, maybe the ISG leadership had a better understanding of Partyism than you display in your article. Perhaps they understood that the process was not about labels or ideologies, but, fundamentally, what we all as revolutionaries understand by democratic centralism and Party.

And yet in the very same issue of *WW*, and addressed to the very same state-capitalist counter-revolutionary mentality, it is correctly insisted that fundamental differences in

world view are absolutely crucial to whether communist unity is even remotely to be considered:

The latest issue of *Socialist Worker* fails quite miserably to address the real issues raised by the Afghan catastrophe. Hardly surprisingly though, as it refuses to recognise that there was even a revolution in Afghanistan in 1978. For it, all that happened in that year was that a "group of army officers staged a coup and put the party in power". Worse still, if we are to believe *Socialist Worker*, the effect of this "coup" was actually to "increase poverty in many parts of the country. That drove many of the poorest peasants to ally with their old landlords in rising against the regime in the name of Islam" (October 5).

From such a reading you would get the distinct impression that it was the revolution of 1978 which was responsible for the subsequent war and bloodshed, not the brutal imperialist-backed counter-revolutionary forces. Indeed, the SWP seems quite keen to provide 'excuses' for the Islamic counter-revolution. Thus, we are told that "When the Russian troops left the country the war had created incredible suffering" – if only the Red Army had not intervened, things would have turned out OK, we presume. As for US imperialism, we are blandly told that it made "much of the plight of Afghanistan while the Russians were there". Weasel words which exonerate the bloody role of US imperialism.

Still, we should not be surprised. Unfortunately, *Socialist Worker* has a history of playing the reluctant cheerleader of Islamic counter-revolution. We saw this over Iran, where the SWP actually supported the bloody Khomeini regime on the grounds that it was 'anti-imperialist' (or, at least, 'anti-US').

The SWP is consistent in that it cannot bring itself to condemn the Taliban as "reactionary" either. Which is a bit curious really, as the February 1987 edition of *Socialist Review* stated that a mujabadeen victory "would probably produce a reactionary fundamentalist government well to the right of Khomeini" – the same edition, of course, called for a Soviet withdrawal from Afghanistan.

The SWP was not alone, it has to be said. The Revolutionary Communist Party's now defunct *The Next Step* argued along similar grounds, saying that Soviet withdrawal was necessary, as it enabled the US to use "the Afghanistan conflict to gain a foothold in Central Asia" (February 26 1987). *Workers Power* also replicated these specious views.

Revolutionaries who cannot tell a revolution from counter-revolution, or are afraid to label reactionaries for what they are, will mislead the working class, if not sabotage the revolution itself unless they are capable of openly correcting these mistakes.

And an article on Afghanistan in the previous Oct 3 *WW* issue declaimed outright counter-revolutionary anathema on groups for getting it wrong, and not even on anything as important as the USSR, a position [] which is fundamental to all questions of revolution or counter-revolution, but merely on the more obscure Afghan question:

In 1989 *The Leninist* described those leftists who saw a Soviet withdrawal as the best condition for the Afghan working class to assert itself as being blind to reality. In 1989, *The Leninist* said: "The blood of Afghan progressives is not only on the hands of the mujahedin, the imperialists and Gorbachev. It is on the hands of the RCP, the SWP, the Euro-communists and all those who refused to defend the Afghan revolution. You are all guilty and we shall make sure that the working class never forgets your crime."

In cases such as these, communists are loathe to be proved correct. The mutilated body of Mohammed Najibullah serves as a bloody reminder of your betrayals.

This same piece, incidentally, also contained one of the most public and barefaced non-apologies for a serious political mistake that has ever had the nerve to be published:

As *The Leninist*, precursor of the *Weekly Worker*, said in issue No 2, the Soviet intervention "represented the extinguishing of the flame of the revolution" and that if it was not recognised as such "the revolution will either have to suffer major amputations or face death" (*Spring* 1982). Yet, paradoxically, the Soviet intervention shored up the length of time the PDPA government survived.

With the Soviet pull-out in 1989, it was clear the PDPA would not survive, yet many including the US Secretary of State – thought its collapse would be imminent. That the Najibullah government survived nearly four years was testimony to the support in the cities for many of the changes the revolution had delivered.

So in 1980 workers are agitated worldwide to oppose any Soviet intervention to rescue Afghan revolutionary progress from imminent throttling at birth by overwhelming CIA-backed counter-revolutionary subversion massively from Pakistan by the most reactionary tribal and religiously-benighted forces imaginable. It was catastrophically wrong advice. But by 1989, and still by 1996 in this CPGB review article, no explanation is forthcoming about what lessons have been learned by the *Weekly Worker* from this colossal mistake.

Certainly the CPGB was by 1989 in a position to correct its earlier mis-analysis, and to denounce others for the same mistake it had originally committed. But what lessons had been learned about the CPGB's faulty methods, or faulty world view, or faulty estimation of the epoch we are in, or complete misunderstanding of the Soviet workers state, tinged probably with their own milder version of Euro-communist anti-Sovietism and anti-communism? Would not those important conclusions, if ever they were drawn, be equally as important to reproduce now, or write down now for the first time if that would be the case?

On the earlier CPGB insistence to RDG that party and programme principles were far more decisive for communist unity than agreeing with each other about what the world looked like, an attempt may be made to claim that Lenin's "One Step Forward"* epic recording the birth of the Bolshevik tendency was all about the principles of party rules, and nothing else. This, of course, is a common and complete misconception.

The fiercest split was certainly over the definition of party membership, but embodied in that conflict was the whole spirit of Lenin's understanding of all the vexed political questions also argued about at that Congress such as the class role of the peasantry, the problem of Great Russian chauvinism, the decisive role of a single-minded party organ as the main organiser and educator of the party, and the crucial question of a professional revolutionary organisation reaching agreed decisions and acting upon them versus a loose federation of independent individuals and dilettante groups who could basically do what they liked without any organisational control or discipline and yet could still claim as decisive a say in the party's affairs and direction as they could muster.

All were matters hurtling towards a need for decisive resolution by the main group of Leninist revolutionaries who were already massively active and influential in Russian revolutionary affairs precisely by virtue of their agreement on the Leninist world view, already so distinct from that of Martov, Plekhanov, Trotsky and the rest, and within a few years to become so completely hostile to the rest of the RSDLP's social-chauvinist, or social-pacifist, or conciliatory positions, leaving the Bolsheviks completely uniquely identified in the minds of the workers of Russia. Have these indecisive purely formal wrangles around the CPGB's as yet amorphous and empty rapprochement activities remotely this urgent and decisive character of the RSDLP Second Congress?

No, there are not only no strands with anything like a Leninist coherence, but there is not even the vaguest agreement on what it means for a party to have a united world view, or how important it is.

There is even a doubt that the CPGB itself has got one. No, for the moment, this *Weekly Worker* rapprochement is just going round in aimless circles, going nowhere fast.

Once more by way of example, interesting developments on Ireland are yet again being ignored by *WW*. All the signs are still towards an international political deal which will effectively put a constitutional stop to the former existence of the British 'Northern Ireland' colony, already de facto dead, and buried, – the Orange-fascist supremacy and the 'legal and eternal' Partition abandoned for ever, and Ireland's reunification

only now a matter of time and demography, – a massive revolutionary triumph over imperialism, arms in hand, by national liberation forces, exactly as the *EPSR* has described it all along, and not remotely a victory for imperialism as the CPGB dilettantes describe it.

Major's Bournemouth speech curiously promised legislation on decommissioning in the autumn. How could that happen without a serious all-Ireland political settlement? And this hint was followed by the sudden Unionist backing down to allow discussion on a new deal to precede decommissioning wrangles. And all of this followed the IRA's devastating Lisburn bomb which utterly humiliated British imperialism and its colonial occupation once again.

Let the British bourgeois press, so bitterly hostile to the armed national-liberation struggle, itself recount the signs:

SENIOR Government sources last night welcomed a "significant breakthrough" in the Ulster talks process, when David Trimble's Ulster Unionists reached agreement with the nationalist SDLP on the terms for an agenda.

The deal, which has eluded the parties for four months, means that substantive negotiations on the province's future can finally begin.

The joint UUP/SDLP proposals are close to what George Mitchell, President Clinton's special adviser and the talks' chairman, proposed at the start of the year.

They suggest a full plenary session of the talks will open without the decommissioning of weapons dominating the agenda. This has now been downgraded to the second item, and significantly makes provision for "mechanisms necessary to enable further progress to be made on decommissioning alongside negotiations".

The move has delighted all parties in the talks except Ian Paisley's DUP and the UK Unionists led by Robert McCartney. "It means decommissioning will never take place, they will talk and talk but nothing will be done about it," said a party source. "They are paving the way for Sinn Féin's entry into the talks."

At the weekend the Progressive Unionist Party spokesman David Ervine, who is associated with the Ulster Volunteer Force, warned that rapid progress in the talks was the only hope of maintaining the loyalist ceasefire.

Marjorie Mowlam, shadow Northern Ireland secretary, also held a meeting yesterday with 12 loyalist inmates of the Maze prison in a further sign that loyalists will maintain their ceasefire. UVP and UFF inmates earlier told their political representatives they supported the view that the ceasefire should hold.

Sir Patrick Mayhew, the Northern Ireland Secretary, said: "There are increasing signs of hope that we will get now into the substantive busi-

ness.

In a speech to supporters in north Belfast, Sinn Féin president Gerry Adams said the key to another IRA ceasefire lay in John Major's hands.

If the *EPSR* is wrong about Ireland, a major rethink on the

epoch would be required. If *WW* is wrong, it must do the same.

Without revolutionary theory, there can be no revolutionary practice. Keep struggling to build Leninism.
Douglas Bell

CPGB again gets nationalism wrong. And without correct revolutionary theory, all boasts of correct revolutionary organisation are just blather. Interpreting the current world struggle is the basis of Marxist-Leninist science, provided mistakes are admitted, corrected, and learned from, - - and not covered up in the way the CPGB avoids embarrassment, over Ireland, etc. The *EPSR's* line, by contrast, stands firm.

[*EPSR* No 879 12-11-96]

[...]

The CPGB is for 'rapprochement' where it can encourage a huge eclectic stew made up of other sectarians who also don't mind going round in endless abstract circles about largely formal questions of democratic structures, regroupment processes, organisational and programmatic fetishism, and very little serious objective discussion about what is actually happening in the world, on which alone the crucial questions of the epoch we live in, and the perspectives ahead of us, can be resolved.

In particular, this CPGB posturing just drops polemics like a hot brick when the cut and thrust of debate comes too close to revealing bad mistakes which the *Weekly Worker* has made in the actual poor leadership it gives to workers in spite of all its insistent claims to being 'the revolutionary party nucleus.

All summer, the *EPSR* has been challenging *Weekly Worker* about its defeatism over the Irish national-liberation struggle (which insisted that Adams had sold out and that the IRA was now only letting off 'peace' bombs to try to win a few more scraps off victorious imperialism), and its defeatism over its epochal perspective that the imperialist 'new world order' was systematically crushing all anti-imperialist struggle everywhere.

The last comment sent to *Weekly Worker* on October 20 for their own publication if they wanted it, again looks like it has

gone the same way as the previous letter in the series, sent on September 25 but not published (see *EPSR* 876), - swallowed up in all the 'openness' which prevails at the CPGB. It read:

'What has happened to the IRA's "peace" bombs? Have you run out of inverted commas?

What has happened to your June 20 characterisation of the IRA as "a victim of the US-dominated New World Order - i.e. the negative resolution" of "hot-spots" where imperialism is "imposing a 'democratic' and 'peaceful' settlement" on the Irish national-liberation struggle?

Without a word of explanation, you slyly slip into your Oct 10 front page the following:

"The IRA's bomb in the Six Counties stole the Tories' thunder. With the 'peace process' clearly off the rails, all the rhetoric against 'men of violence' could not hide the fact that Major's tough talking has failed to bring any results for imperialism, even in this arena." (*original commas*).

Surely this indicates that at least a minor shift in the international balance of class and national forces involved in imperialism's crisis has taken place between June 20 and Oct 10, if not a very major one as most independent-minded observers of your muddled hopping-around would agree is signalled?

Is it really possible to train confident knowledgeable communist cadres with such light-minded inconsistency from their main published organiser and educator?

As Lenin explained in *Left-wing Communism*, communist wisdom does not rest on avoiding making mistakes. It arises from being capable of recognising your mistakes, and correcting them easily and quickly. A leadership which cannot admit to being wrong, and learn how it came about, is unlikely to start getting things mostly right.

Another astonishing gaffe you failed

to deal with came in your Aug 29 letters reply which declared that "previous thorns in imperialism's flesh are gradually being brought to book" and named Saddam's Iraq regime as one of these 'victims' of New World Order defeats, just days before a Saddam coup wiped out hundreds of CIA counter-revolutionary agents in Iraq which the CIA had spent five years and hundreds of millions of dollars in training, - humiliating US imperialism to the whole world's satisfaction.

And yet to appear is a letter sent Sept 25 examining this startling evidence that you are being hopelessly misled by your incorrect characterisation of the period of history we are in, as obviously are your readers. You clearly have a serious subjective-idealist problem in coping with mistakes, which gravely challenges your Marxist-Leninist credentials, let alone your revolutionary leadership credentials.

Your Oct 3 Afghan article was classic self-incrimination.

Disarmingly, you admit that at the start of the 1979 USSR intervention, your publication said that this

"represented the extinguishing of the flame of the revolution"

and that

"the revolution will either have to suffer major amputations or face death".

You casually add in your 1996 review:

"Paradoxically the Soviet intervention shored up the length of time the PDPA government survived",

but then not one further word about how you could have got things so wrong, or what lessons you drew from such a terrible mistake.

You first try to turn workers against the Soviet intervention as being bad for revolutionary progress in Afghanistan. Later you accept that intervention was a good thing, and denounced the fake-'left' who cheered the 1989 Soviet withdrawal as having

"the blood of Afghan progressives on the hands of the RCP, the SWP, the Eurocommunists, etc. You are all guilty and we shall make sure that the working class never forgets your crime."

Good stuff, but a word or two about what you misinterpreted in 1980 would be even more useful to communist cadre training.

All of what needs to be done on this Afghan issue by a serious leadership is covered up by the inane use of the word "paradoxically" to cover your confusion. There is no paradox involved. You were just plain wrong.

Far from learning any lessons at all, your new confusion over what epoch we are in is again now misleading workers about what is going on and what ought to be going on, especially over Ireland and the crisis of imperialism.'

But why print challenging stuff like then when the *Weekly Worker* can be bulged out with another long RDG rigmarole about a dual-power federal constitution?

The *EPSR* is not unwilling to debate the role of programme and what should be in it. But the

best programme, as 1917 proved, is the ability of a revolutionary leadership to reorientate the struggle on an almost daily basis.

The Marxist-Leninist experience for being able to do that successfully, is gained from the constant battle to interpret the world correctly in a regular publication which becomes the party's organiser (see *What Is To Be Done*). If you get it wrong about what is happening in Ireland, go as deeply as possible into why the misanalysis was made, what has not been understood about the fundamentals of Marxist-Leninist science which set up such a mistake. The same party struggle should take place over all other mistakes, - over the tactical gaffe towards the SLP, for example; and most importantly over the *Weekly Worker's* wrong assessment of the Soviet revisionist liquidation and its implications; over the defeatism towards US imperialism's bogus 'new world order'; over the national question in Britain; over where the decisive completion of the world socialist revolution will take place; etc, etc.

Getting all these things wrong as the CPGB regularly does, means that an enormous amount more of polemical struggle is going to be needed before the Marxist-Leninist wisdom to write the definitive communist party programme is going to appear. But tragically, the *Weekly Worker* looks like seeking to avoid such polemical struggle on the things it gets wrong.

The *EPSR's* struggle for Marxist-Leninist science, on the other hand, continues to go from strength to strength, - continuing its themes of the deepening crisis of imperialism; the steadily mounting revolt by anti-imperialism worldwide; the ever-sharpening inter-imperialist conflict; the threat of imminent all-out trade war and a markets collapse; the significance of the emergence of the SLP; and on a more minor but very special question, the continuation of British imperialism's snail's-pace withdrawal from its moribund colonised parts of Ireland, falsely and monstrously partitioned off by 1921 bayonets and Downing Street's threat of all-out war to destroy Ireland, - the so-called 'Northern Ireland'.

The *EPSR* will have to learn some gigantic new lessons if it has misunderstood the situation in Ireland, but for the moment, all the evidence worth considering points steadily still in the direction of some fudged cobbled-together 'settlement'



which will effectively signify that the old hated 'Northern Ireland' monstrosity will no longer continue in the old way, and will begin to be dismantled in favour of a snail's-pace reunification of Ireland. In other words, what is still being negotiated is a victory for the IRA/Sinn Féin national-liberation struggle and a humiliating defeat for British imperialism and its 1921 colonial outrage.

And the EPSR will continue, as always, to pursue its analysis to give leadership to the working class and correct orientation to the whole of anti-imperialist struggle, backing its judgment until proved wrong. Only by such methods will a new revolutionary leadership in Britain eventually be built.

Rhetoric continues against the "men of violence", but the fine print suggests that the real men of violence, the British imperialists, are getting down to further serious discussions with Sinn Féin, the SDLP, Dublin, the American Irish lobby, and the nationalist community in general about finding some settlement mechanisms which will enable the old 'Northern Ireland' to at last be abandoned but without sparking off a bloody last-ditch UDI by the fascist-thug dreg-remnants of the old colonial 'loyalist' and 'unionist' order.

All the information comes from bourgeois publica-

tions, which was how much of Marxism-Leninism worked things out in the first place. But it needs interpreting.

When the bourgeois clique announced on Nov 4 that the IRA was "rethinking its use of violence", it did not mean that the whole Western World had fallen for the twaddle printed in the *Weekly Worker*, but that a new deal was in the offing with Sinn Féin for further progress towards the settlement.

Other capitalist press snippets confirmed this:

The Northern Ireland political development minister, Michael Ancram, welcomed the Ulster Unionists' agreement with the nationalist SDLP on a five-point agenda, which cleared the way for negotiations to begin.

At the centre of the discussions was a report prepared earlier this year by the US senator George Mitchell, who headed an international commission. It proposed decommissioning in parallel with substantive negotiations involving all sides and the British and Irish governments.

But the debate could drag on because of differences between David Trimble's Ulster Unionists and the Rev Ian Paisley's hard-line Democratic Unionist Party. Mr Paisley claims decommissioning has been sidelined.

Gary McMichael, leader of the Ulster Democratic Party, which has links with the paramilitary Ulster Defence Association and Ulster Freedom Fighters, welcomed the movement in the talks. Senior loyalists also confirmed the progress had

eased pressure on their ceasefire.

But Robert McCartney, leader of the UK Unionist party, threatened to leave the talks, claiming they were "to the utter detriment of the pro-union people".

THE Sinn Féin president, Gerry Adams, yesterday tried to draw a veil across reports that he is working with the Government — through the Social and Democratic Labour Party leader, John Hume — on a basis for a new IRA ceasefire. "The least said sometimes on these matters the better," said Mr Adams of a report that the Government is to publish a statement outlining its conditions for admitting Sinn Féin to all-party talks in the event of a new ceasefire.

But the Democratic Unionist leader, Ian Paisley, said: "My information is that the civil servants from both the Irish government and the British government, at the highest level, have been having negotiations indirectly with Gerry Adams through John Hume."

Asked whether the DUP would stay in the talks if Sinn Féin was included

he said: "I wouldn't think so."

But diehard 'unionism' is being squeezed out anyway, and the miraculous triumph of the national-liberation struggle by the tiny abandoned Irish community locked in behind the Partition barbed wire of 1921, will be completed, a colossal world-historic victory over imperialism for revolutionary struggle, arms in hand. But this is the message, of course, which the bourgeois establishment (and the *Weekly Worker* defeatists, for some strange reason) do not want the people to grasp, which is why the confusion-mongering and propaganda deceptions must go on at all costs.

It is the job of Marxist-Leninist science to cut through all this nonsense smokescreening to explain what is really happening in the world of imperialist crisis.

Build Leninism.
Douglas Bell

National-liberation triumph

[EPSR No 882 03-12-96]

British imperialism's enforced snail's-pace withdrawal from the Occupied Zone of Ireland creeps on despite the Tory Government's latest propaganda stunt, - revealing more concessions via a pretended rebuff to the lengthy secret talks.

But prior decommissioning of IRA arms is now completely

dropped, as is the provocative demand for any ceasefire to be declared 'permanent'.

Sinn Féin will enter talks soon after a ceasefire, and a timetable for agreeing a new Ireland will be set.

Paisley is right to see a "sell-out" of the old 'Northern Ireland' racket, now doomed. DB

**[...]defeatist Trots get it wrong again.
..imperialism is getting beaten, not
anti-imperialism, in Occupied Pal-
estine as in Occupied Ireland. Inter-
imperialist conflict is king. Blairism will
be irrelevant. France's class-war tur-
moil is the future.**

[EPSR No 897 01-04-97]

[...]

The hopeless injustice, intolerable tyranny, and sheer anarchic mismanagement of the international imperialist 'market' system is a perspective not greatly in fashion with any section of the bourgeoisie, including its middle-class Trot 'revolutionary' posturers.

While posing as such 'socialist' tearaways that they cannot bear to see Scargillism (which they pretend is reactionary Labour Party Mark II-ism) imposed on the working class, even by Scargill's own party, – the reality is that their real mentality is unrelieved petty-bourgeois defeatism. What they really think is that imperialism is unbeatable everywhere. Their 'revolutionary' posturing is just a dilettante's game.

They have particular contempt for the ability of the smaller national liberation struggles to achieve much on the anti-imperialist front.

Regular EPSR readers will be aware of how throughout 1996, the *Review* relentlessly exposed the ignorant fearfulness of these born individualist pessimists [see earlier this book]. In unguarded moments, they declared how the IRA had capitulated completely to irresistible US imperialist 'imposition of a peace process' which was simply going to disarm the IRA and leave the national-liberation struggle with nothing, and the British imperialist colony of the Occupied Zone (so-called 'Northern Ireland') completely intact.

When the IRA exploded this ignorant philistine defeatism, the CPGB Trots still sneered "peace bombs". Only later did they drop this nonsense, without a word of explanation, of course, as to what was the meaning of all this slanderous disinformation in favour of the imperialist propaganda machine, which for decades has been reassuring British public opinion that 'terrorism' was bound to be defeated, that there was no way in which it could ever win anything, and that it was on the very verge of surrendering at that very moment,

etc, etc, etc.

So how does Labour's offer of immediate peace-settlement talks involving Sinn Féin fully at the table at once if a ceasefire is in place, reflect on this defeatist Trot perspective?

It further blows it right out of the water. At this historic juncture, the IRA are unbeatable, and well the British Establishment knows it, as Blair will already have been told.

Britain's imperialist 'allies', to gather international goodwill and credibility where they can, also continue to advise the UK to create a completely new settlement for the whole of Ireland, finally ending the hated and infamous colonial partition of that cruelly maltreated country, imposed at bayonet point in 1921.

In detail, any foreign policy of imperialism can always change dramatically overnight.

But what CPGB petty-bourgeois defeatism always gets completely wrong is the general trend of history. All their posturing is in the end completely anti-Marxist, as well as being completely futile.

Bourgeois propaganda is their only true sustenance. They are anti-communist and counter-revolutionary in the deepest possible way, always easy prey

to big bourgeois propaganda, whether for 70 years against the workers states; or against Scargill's tactics in the 1984-85 strike, demanding a ballot along with the Establishment; or ridiculing the SLP now; or belittling the Irish national-liberation struggle, falling for such hokum as the following, unusually exposed in one of the capitalist press's own reports:

IT IS dangerous to read newspapers casually. That's how the germ of a myth is planted. Next thing you know, it has grown into a fact. A glance at a headline, a swift scan of the introduction, a note of the picture caption, and you are on your way to a firmly held misconception.

Take the stories which informed us to prepare for a new American ambassador to Ireland. President Clinton, the *Times* pronounced 10 days ago, "is about to make a decisive shift in his policy on Northern Ireland ... while at the same time slapping down Jean Kennedy Smith."

Two days later the *Daily Telegraph* told us that Kennedy Smith "is expected to be recalled by President Clinton because her strongly pro-nationalist views are now at odds with White House policy on Ireland."

But, significantly, there were no sources.

And there was also a rash of lies, said-to-bes and expecteds, and a succession of tell-tale weasel phrases: "likely to be recalled"... "tenure appears to be ending"... "Clinton poised to recall".

There was all sorts of important supporting evidence. For instance, Kennedy Smith's recall hinged on the appointment of Madeleine Albright as Secretary of State. The *Times* said she had asked for talks with Northern Ireland Secretary Sir Patrick Mayhew during a visit to London later this week, something her predecessor never did during his years in office.

With great authority, the paper's diplomatic editor, Michael Binyon,

wrote: "Her decision is a clear signal that during the second Clinton Administration policy on Ireland will revert to the State Department... The second signal...is that Mrs Kennedy Smith has decisively lost influence, both in the White House and in the formulation of US policy on Ireland."

These signals were picked up by the *Telegraph*. Its page one story paraphrased Binyon, telling us that the "pro-Adams ambassador" was losing her job because "the policy of aligning America with Gerry Adams and John Hume, the SDLP leader, while maintaining a distance from London, has failed."

Then a picture of Kennedy Smith in the *Times* with an interesting caption: "Stays as Dublin ambassador."

In a strikingly bald-faced climb-down, the story rescinded every claim in its previous report. Albright would not be meeting Mayhew. Kennedy Smith was not being recalled. Clinton was not changing his stance. The State Department was not taking primary responsibility for Irish policy, which would remain with the National Security Council.

But this factual reverse was not reported straight. It was fatuously suggested that the reason for these reverses was entirely due to the *Times*'s previous story. "The 'green lobby' swung into action," it said, after "the *Times* reported that President Clinton was planning to replace her."

Is the *Times* seriously asking us to believe a US president's policy can be switched in six days because of a report in a foreign newspaper? In fact, Clinton must have responded even faster to the *Times* because Albright was able to tell a congressional hearing as early as Tuesday, only three days later, that Kennedy Smith was staying at her post.

SINCE neither the *New York Times* nor the *Washington Post* carried any story about the Dublin ambassador's future, we are asked to believe that the American president now responds to the agenda set by the *Times*. The *Daily Telegraph* didn't even have the grace to mention the complete reversal of its story.



A British Army commander and an RUC officer chat with a masked UDA leader in Belfast

So what are we to make of this episode? I turned to the *Irish Times* for some enlightenment. Its excellent Washington correspondent Joe Carroll tried to trace the source of the *Times* and *Telegraph* reports, an easier task in a political world which is far more open than Britain's.

He concluded that the alleged US briefing was more likely to be "an attempt to cover up the real sources, which could be nearer Whitehall."

Carroll also said that the vindictive reports about Kennedy Smith "spring more from an anti-Kennedy bias in some of the British rightwing press than from the facts." What a strange, almost juvenile, way to deal with a problem as important as that of Northern Ireland.

The capitalist press, of course, has got nothing to boast about, any section of it, in its coverage of British imperialism's humiliation at the hands of the

IRA's armed and revolutionary national-liberation struggle, which all the bourgeois, including the petty-bourgeois Trots, would love to kid themselves was not happening.

A completely new deal for the whole of Ireland, dismantling the hated and infamous partition, may yet still not be reached for one reason or another, by way of historical hold-ups looming everywhere to render British imperialism paralysed from achieving anything any more.

But the trend of the future is unmistakable. Imperialism is falling ever deeper into unsustainable and intolerable crisis for everyone. Abolish capitalism. Build the SLP. Build Leninism.

RB

Tarnished free-market glitter and unanswered questions on pensions, Europe, crime and poverty, mental health, Ireland, etc., – capitalism cannot solve its problems. Complacent cynicism and deliberate Trot middle-class disruption continue[...] but a disciplined mass workers party is the only next step forward for socialism.

[EPSR No 900 22-04-97]

[...] Even in one telephone box, these rival 'Trots in unity' are clearly all working to separate jigsaws anyway, each to his own.

The proof is there. This hostile 'democratic' anarchy trying to wreck the SLP's national impact and to confuse local branches with hopelessly biased accounts of past disciplinary wrangles on the constitutional question, – represents solely an alien class philosophy, that of petty-bourgeois individualism, bitterly opposed to workers collective-party discipline.

Until class war is waged on this subjective-idealist mentality which has wormed its way into the SLP, there will be no end to this disruption.

Far from wanting 'only to help build the SLP', such elements have a deep and incurable class bias always towards irresponsible shallowness and adventurism in everything they do, and not just in their wrecking attempts on the SLP.

Throughout last summer, these posturing ultra-left dilettantes repeatedly published slanderous and damaging disinformation against the Irish national-liberation struggle, sneering that the IRA and Gerry Adams had 'sold out' to US

imperialist pressure and were about to abandon their fight for reunification and Ireland's full independence at last.

Without the slightest deep understanding or thought about the historic crisis for British imperialism still occupying part of Ireland, this dangerous and irresponsible gibberish continued to be held to, solely for the purposes of boasting 'how pure Trotskyism would have solved this liberation struggle in minutes where mere nationalism has abysmally failed and is now humiliatingly capitulating'.

What criminal nonsense from start to finish, serving only the cause of the Orange-fascist bigots of the British colonist community occupying part of Ireland whose very life-blood is their dream that one day they will 'triumph' over the 'Fenian bastards' for good; and serving only the British Tory Establishment which loves to pretend that it will never be forced to capitulate to ending the monstrous and hated division/Partition of Ireland by armed revolutionary struggle.

Throughout the summer, and permanently, the EPSR has explained to the CPGB Trots that the whole of British imperialism is suffering a historic crisis of

identity, based on catastrophic relative economic decline from earlier world-dominant positions, and that this crisis must also undermine British imperialism's remaining illegitimate domination-relationships with Ireland.

Revolutionary socialists might have led that continuing national-liberation struggle in Ireland as they did in Vietnam. (But that would hardly have been Trotskyites, who have never led any workers struggle successfully, anywhere in the world.)

But it was the Provisional wing of the Sinn Féin/IRA nationalists who in fact understood the historical situation best, and gave the brilliant leadership which has transformed the Irish population of the Occupied Zone into, now, dedicated and unrelenting opponents of continued British (colonist) rule, including the crucial civilian support for the armed revolutionary struggle.

Individualist petty-bourgeois Trot brains are simply uninterested in such conscientious struggle to provide a consistent Marxist analysis of matters like Ireland, as the EPSR has done. They are only interested in posturing their latest ultra-left adventurism (any subject will do, – anti-Scargill, anti-Sinn

Féin, anti-Castro) to demonstrate to their sect and their rival sects in the 57-variety Trot swamp that they are the 'real' new 'revolutionary' leaders that the world has been waiting for.

This stuff is no joke. International anti-communist agencies of world monopoly imperialism have invested billions in ensuring that Trotskyite sects, without end, will for evermore plague the workers movements of the world to keep them from ever coming to Marxist scientific clarity ever again.

Their vicious and endless abuse of the EPSR began from the moment that phony entryism into the SLP had been conclusively demonstrated to be merely a cover for all-out Trotskyite wrecking of whatever purpose Scargillism had set out to achieve.

Their lies and disinformation about the EPSR, – a harmless 'scissors and paste' comic as they themselves dismissed it earlier, – have reached crescendo as they realise that the SLP leadership is sticking to its firm grasp of party-building disciplinary requirements; and that their 'good socialist' claims have been undermined by a far superior grasp of Marxism.

Build the fight for revolutionary theory.

Joe Harper

[...]Socialism must start analysing in detail why pro-capitalist policies are doomed to catastrophic failure on law & order, education, employment problems, and public welfare. On international matters, New Labour is just a tool of US imperialism. Their biggest lie is that the market is sorting out world economic problems. In fact things are heading for disaster.

[EPSR No 904 20-05-97]

[...]All over the so-called 'restored' Palestinian areas, the power of imperialist money is still just buying out the land-holding rights of the impoverished Palestinian population, giving the Zionists ever greater economic might over the whole country. The best land, the best water resources, the best other natural resources, the most important urban property, – all still continue to be subject to Zionist colonisation even inside the co-called 'restored Palestinian areas', the reservations.

When will it stop? It won't, until Arab revolution forces it

to stop.

Where is New Labour on this monstrous modern colonialism? Totally subservient to Western (mainly US) imperialist dictates.

Even on Ireland, – British imperialism's last own individual colonial scandal, – the Blairites will only do what the imperialist establishment tells them to do.

Because some of the loudest voices within sick and enfeebled British imperialism in fact have been advocating withdrawal from the Occupation of Ireland for some time, a new settlement arrangement for the Occupied Zone of Ireland (so-called

'Northern Ireland') might still be on the cards. The first open talks with the national-liberation movement are now to begin following Sinn Féin's stunning electoral successes at the recent polls, with all the old nonsense about 'no discussions until violence is ended' being temporarily dropped.

But at the same time the fatuous dictatorial pompousness of the cretinous 'British imperialist democracy' stumbles on farcically, pettily and vindictively denying the elected Sinn Féin members their rights at the Westminster vaudeville, only making the British government (New Labour) look utterly ridiculous in the eyes of the rest of the world.

New Labour's US imperialist masters in fact want Blair & Co to reach a new settlement for the Occupied Zone which will allow the Irish living there to act as though they are living in part of Ireland (for most purposes) but allow the diehard

British colonial remnants (the Orange fanatics) to continue pretending that they are still living in part of Britain.

It will be an interesting tussle to see whether the New Labour stooges of the imperialist system are more cowed by the diehard British establishment which fears giving up the toe-hold on Ireland, or by the US imperialist establishment, backed by some British (and Irish) capitalist voices, which all want a new settlement (effectively opening the door to Ireland's reunification at last after 76 years of colonial Partition tyranny which has needlessly prolonged the age-old British imperialist persecution and exploitation of Ireland.)

Where the cowardly Blairites leave no room for doubt is in the certainty that they will be loyal US imperialist stooges everywhere else on the planet, not uttering a peep about their bogus 'ethics' humbug[...]
RB

'Criminality' [...] is an indictment of capitalism itself, [...] Alienated youth want something better, and the capitalist rat-race cannot provide it. And the 'free market' anarchic racket is now breaking down, and under attack, right across Europe and beyond. Protesting of all kinds keeps on growing. And Ireland demonstrates how imperialist hierarchies can be defeated by determined liberation struggles. Educate workers in Marxist science.

[EPSR No 905 27-05-97]

[...]The 18-year struggle of the *EPS Review* for an objective grasp of world developments would be nowhere without the struggle for a Marxist method.

From the beginning, the *Review's* analysis of British colonialism's difficulties in the Occupied Zone of Ireland proceeded from fundamental principles, allied to observations being systematically pursued in the first place with the aim of standing up or disproving the theory that was needed to start with.

British imperialism was historically collapsing worldwide, retreating from empire in all directions, and finding it impossible to keep up its former world-market pretensions as the great military and industrial power.

The imperialist industries of

the Occupied Zone of Ireland (shipbuilding, war manufactures in general, etc) were a wasting asset and close to becoming a complete debt-laden liability.

And the native Irish population of the Occupied Zone were becoming even more of a headache, refusing any longer to put up with the reactionary colonial administration of their local British overlords, descendants of the original colonial plantation of the 17th century sent in from England and Scotland to pacify Ireland (particularly its most rebellious north-eastern province, Ulster), and now utterly corrupted gauleiters, parading fatuously in their militaristic Orange-lodge freemasonry mafias.

With US imperialism sensitive to a huge Irish-American

vote in the USA at every election, and also historically predisposed to ever-humiliate Britain a bit further away from its past colonial glory, – it was also on the cards that Washington would favour an end to the troublesome colonial Partition of Ireland (which was now causing so much embarrassing trouble to the 'free West' in world headlines as British troops and local British colonial police imposed a brutal police-military dictatorship on the Irish national-liberation movement, including barbed-wire concentration camps for detention without trial; torture barracks; shoot-on-sight death squads; judicial frame-ups and endless police-state harassment of all Irish citizens in Britain; supergrass provocations and entrapment; secretly controlling Orange-fascist street-fighting mobs; etc, etc.)

And with Common Market Europe hardly sympathetic to Britain's self-deluding colonial past glory either, it was a reasonable assumption that sections of the British Establishment itself would soon begin to doubt the wisdom of militarily hanging on in to the troublesome Occupied Zone of Ireland.

But when the police-military dictatorship actually began to get the worst of it in its colonial war against the Irish national-liberation forces (the armed struggle by the Irish Republican Army, and the political campaigning led by the Sinn Féin party), the odds began to mount that Britain would soon start thinking seriously about getting out of Ireland, and leaving behind some sort of condominium with Dublin which would in time blend itself naturally in with the reunification of Ireland, at long last putting right the infamous and unworkable Partition of Ireland imposed in 1921 at bayonet-point.

At regular intervals, there followed the Anglo-Irish Treaty, the Statement of Intent, the Downing Street Declaration, and finally the Peace Process talks themselves for a 'completely new settlement' for Ireland, backed by a direct input from the US Government itself in the form of Senator George Mitchell and his Commission.

Britain is getting out of Ireland, – at a snail's pace admittedly, because of Western horror at the possible world conclusion that Britain is getting out because it has been beaten by revolutionary armed national-liberation struggle, – a fact which has had to be covered over and disguised at all costs.

Hence the dog-in-the-manger

determination for years to try to force Sinn Féin and the IRA to acknowledge some kind of 'defeat', (or at least of stalemate, in agreeing to now go to the conference table for a 'peace process deal to complete the details of British imperialism's intention to finally get out of Ireland), – by agreeing to 'prior decommissioning', etc, and all the rest of the shabby gimmicks which were tried on.

But Britain is getting out of Ireland. But for sticking to this Marxist scientific analysis, which has been consistently backed by real-life developments themselves which is the only proof of anything, – the *EPS Review* has found itself consistently vilified by rival supposed 'Marxists' who jeer that the *EPSR* is 'super-optimist' or 'looking at the world through the rose-tinted spectacles of unreformed Stalinist euphoria', etc. All of which abuse is just an excuse for the unrelieved defeatism of the Trotskyite petty-bourgeois posturing whose ultra-leftist idealism has been denigrating non-stop the workers states' achievements since 1922 out of anti-communist class malice.

The real mentality of middle-class Trotskyism is that it does not want revolutionary proletarian dictatorship ever to succeed anywhere. So all their pretence about the 'tragic failure' of the Soviet workers state, for example, for 75 years was total posturing. The Trots revelled in every setback.

And still they do today. The CPGB Trots could not wait last summer to write off the Irish national-liberation struggle as 'total capitulation and surrender by the IRA to the US Imperialist New World Order', sneering at Gerry Adams as being only out for some state position for himself from Dublin and London, and jeering the IRA for letting off gutless 'peace bombs' to confuse their 'betrayed' followers (when the ceasefire was in fact discontinued precisely because the Irish national-liberation movement had not the slightest thought of 'surrendering' but was in fact winning the 'peace process').

Other groups of Trotskyite subjective sectarians variously jeered throughout the long national-liberation struggle that the whole concept was a 'betrayal of anti-imperialism, and murderous treachery to the workers of Ireland', etc, etc, – living vicariously in their ivory towers of 'perfect socialist revolutions only, accepted', etc.

A Leninist leadership of the national-liberation struggle of course would have been the best



▲ Resolving the issues behind the prison conflict were long down the list of the British government's priorities

option if it had come about, but it didn't. The anti-imperialist struggle was led by nationalist forces. But what a magnificent triumph, against the worst that imperialism could throw against it, that has turned out to be!

And valid worldwide for inspiring new struggle after struggle by armed revolution against no matter what enormous odds in favour of the dominating reactionary forces.

But all that idiot Trotskyite subjectivism can see everywhere is defeat, defeat, defeat.

Socialist News showed its lack of Marxist awareness and its contamination with petty-bourgeois defeatism in November in declaring that the

"current peace process in the North failed a long time ago".

This was written from the best possible motives of condemning the Tory government's contemptibly arrogant treatment of Sinn Féin in attempting to prise out some 'defeat' concessions if only in words. It went even further in its ignoring of Marxist historical science by subjectively predicting that

with the totally bi-partisan Mo Mowlam, it is also a certainty that little can be expected from a changeover of Westminster administration.

Well, we shall have to see. But this does not sound anything like a Marxist analysis.

As the *EPS Review* has explained, it was a confused, paralysed, unconfident, and divided Tory government which was coming to the end of its reign in

the most recent faltering moves in the peace process, vulnerable to Ulster Unionist ambush in the Commons (which could govern what might have been vital election-timing), and generally disregarded all round as to its firmness of leadership.

But none of that altered much about the wish of key parts of the British Establishment to press on with a deal to get out of Ireland as quickly as decently possible, and with as little evidence of a national-liberation struggle victory as possible, – or about the wish of influential US imperialist forces to see through a New Arrangement for the Occupied Zone.

As the *Review* explained, it was a fair bet that a Labour government would in fact be much more guided by powerful US imperialist and powerful British Establishment voices that favoured a new deal, virtually ending for good the old colonial nonsense of so-called 'Northern Ireland' as it used to exist in all its shameful reactionary misery and tyranny.

And so it seems to be proving. Everything is now going the way of the national-liberation struggle.

In recent days, Mowlam has gone walk-about meeting Irish residents associations; the Unionists have exploded at the 'electoral boost' which that allegedly gave Sinn Féin in its new surge in last week's local elections (following its impressive showing in the general

election); Roisin McAliskey has been released on bail to have her baby; and on the very sensitive question of Ireland's prisoners-of-war, two IRA men were last week transferred from British gaols to their homeland.

Mowlam is now going walk-about getting her latest instructions from Washington, and in the process of preparing for this visit and commenting on the first-ever open talks being renewed between Sinn Féin and British government officials, she uttered her now notorious re-

mark that the 'settlement train' would soon be leaving the station, and it would go "without the Unionists too" if they tried a boycott, as well as without Sinn Féin if the needed new ceasefire was not forthcoming, which it will be of course.

But that the boot is now very much on the other foot was clear from Adams' confident remarks that a new IRA ceasefire would very much depend on the British government providing 'proof' of a 'credible peace process' being resumed, – in advance spelling out such 'confidence-building measures' as the transfer of IRA prisoners back to Ireland, which duly took place.

There is still much that could go wrong with this delicate diplomacy, but for the moment, the historical forces look set to produce the obvious historical result of an end to British colonialism in Ireland.

Marxist science is crucial for the liberation of mankind. Only conscious revolutionary forces will finally be able to exploit all the correct historical advantages in the international balance of class forces to achieve the overthrow and abolition of capitalism and to make it stick.

Only parties of Marxist science have ever led such successful struggles for the building of workers states of planned socialism without a bourgeois capitalist class. Some of these collapsed again later, true. But only because of a clear abandonment of Marxist science as was explained then in countless *EPSR* analyses.

Build Leninism. Build the SLP.
RB

Logic-chopping Trot posturing to derail the SLP has nothing to do with socialism but everything to do with subjective individualism. The Trotskyite world view is thoroughly reactionary defeatism, as their sectarian record on Ireland shows. Build Leninism.

[*EPSR* No 906 03-06-97]

[...] In booting out these petty-bourgeois class forces who are hostile to the mass-party-led real interests of the working class for socialism, the SLP is losing absolutely nothing, except present, and future, enemies of its cause.

Everything about them is a complete fraud. The CPGB has just had to admit that its 'raprochement' hoax, whereby the entire 'left' would eventually

come together under their own 'reforged' CPGB umbrella, – has collapsed in complete ruins, exactly as *EPSR* Leninist science said must happen.

The 'unity' sought was to be on the basis of declarations of intent, followed by interminable rigmaroles disputing with each other at enormous length about trying to write the 'perfect' party programme and organisational rules, arguing with each

other completely in the abstract about future state structures and the like, — much as medieval ‘philosophy’ argued about how many angels could dance on the head of a pin, and a bit like the above-reported squabble over a publication for openness or an open publication.

Sorting out real political differences, - over Ireland, over Soviet self-liquidation, over Tiananmen, over Cuba, over the ‘New World Order’, over the imperialist economic crisis, over New Labour, over tactics towards the SLP, etc, etc, - - the only way that unity can ever be reached between any socialists, and the only possible basis for Marxist science, - - was ridiculed as irrelevant. [...]

[...] Socialist Labour would lose even less from its stock of scientific political understanding by dispensing with the services of these middle-class Trot infiltrators.

The *EPS Review* repeatedly challenged the CPGB last year for regularly misleading (such readers and influence its paper has) by condemning the Sinn Féin/IRA national liberation struggle as having sold out to US imperialist pressure in the peace process.

The Trots regarded Gerry Adams as a traitor who was out for a fat job in bourgeois government, and sneered at the eventual heroic resumption of the guerrilla-war struggle by the IRA as mere ‘peace’ bombs.

Theirs was the blinkered outlook of defeatism, a prominent characteristic of much of the philosophy of the petty bourgeoisie.

Obviously from its very position, the middle class can never conquer its fear of either being crushed from above by the big bourgeoisie, or being crushed from below by the dictatorship of the proletariat.

Its permanent outlook is negative, always only hoping to just avert total disaster, and never confident of a really positive outcome.

So the pattern of petty bourgeois political opportunism is always touched with defeatist expectations.

The resumption of the epoch-making armed struggle by the Irish national-liberation forces last year to confound paralysed Tory imperialism, drew the following response of total pessimistic gloom from the CPGB:

publicans in the north facing monolithic opposition, with all bourgeois parties singing with one voice, and no independent working class voice to be heard.

This failure has meant that it is not just the republican struggle upon which imperialism is wreaked its revenge. The British state has wielded its weapons of oppression, steeled in the north of Ireland, against the working class on its mainland. Troops against the miners in 1984-85, police tactics against anything from anti-poll tax demonstrators to anti-road and even anti-live animal export demonstrators. Repressive legislation, honed against revolutionaries in the Six Counties, has been brought home in the Criminal Justice Act.

It seems increasingly clear that this bomb and the IRA statement to end the ceasefire were part and parcel of the strategy of negotiations and commitment to the ‘peace’ process.

This was not a breakaway aimed at restarting the war against British imperialism.

Republicans in the north, left isolated by the lack of solidarity of workers in Britain, now see little alternative.

The ending of the ceasefire in these circumstances does not contradict the fact that what is taking place is an imperialist-brokered peace in the context of the US-dominated new world order.

The *EPS Review* pulled apart this ludicrously one-sided view of contemporary history in subsequent weeks.

But far from convincing the Trots that in the international balance of class forces which dictated the pattern to world events, the fight by anti-imperialist forces was having by far the most profound effect, - the CPGB then published even worse unrelieved misery about the Irish national-liberation struggle:

The armed struggle has been a total dead end. There was never any possibility of any return commensurate with the time, effort and sacrifice that was put into it. It could never work.

When the ceasefire was declared there was an air of triumphalism in and around the republican movement and a belief they were on a ‘high road’ to a united Ireland.

There was a certain arrogance given what they perceived to be very powerful ‘allies’ - the Dublin government, the US and so on. Of course, the reason why they formed this sort of alliance is rooted in their political nature. They lack any class perspective.

Even so, the triumphalism has faded: a certain disillusionment has set in. Impatience and discontent is expressing itself.

Among the rank and file there is a deeper disappointment and a feeling that they must re-examine how they got into this cul-de-sac. This re-examination must involve facing some painful truths. You would have to be a fool not to understand that the strategy that was presented to them simply has not worked.

But as the *EPS Review* has argued with chapter and verse time after time, real life events totally refute this relentless pessimism of the Trotskyite petty-bourgeois mentality which can only ever see any good in its own conceited individualistic pronouncements.

Real events have taken an even bigger hand ever since to repeatedly suggest that the *EPSR* perspective, based on a Marxist historical-materialist under-

standing of British imperialist decline in a world of imperialist decadence, was far more accurate.

Last week’s *Review* brought all the latest evidence up to date to predict that a new settlement for Ireland, - basically getting rid of the old artificial ‘Northern Ireland’ colonial racket once and for all (in all but name), - was now more on the cards than ever because of increasing Washington, Dublin, European Union, and Sinn Féin pressure, coupled with a new government in London more malleably opportunist than ever. (see *EPSR* 905).

Even the CPGB Trots can suddenly see that their unadulterated defeatism might expose their reactionary class instincts too much if they are not careful, - so the following appears in their latest *Weekly Worker*:

The truth is that SF/IRA’s policy of using both the bullet and the ballot box has been successful in winning it support. It has also been successful in edging it ever nearer to full-blown direct negotiations with the British government, to a situation where SF will be a major player in talks leading towards an agreed settlement.

No more of “the armed struggle has been a total dead end....It could never work....you would have to be a fool not to understand that the strategy simply has not worked”, etc, of 12 months ago.

But not a word of explanation either as to what class confusion in their brains could get things so wrong.

And least of all not the remotest chance of any Trot admission that the Leninist science of the *EPSR* may prove to have been correct after all.

But also, not quite a complete abandonment of their old pessimism either. These petty-bourgeois defeatists, posing as ‘revolutionaries’, can never change their deeply flawed class character.

So they immediately add to the above admission, the following renewed philosophical gloom on world prospects as a whole. Middle-class pessimism rules!!:

This does not mean that British imperialism is about to be forced out of Ireland. The ‘peace process’ is about the IRA ending its heroic resistance to the British occupation in exchange for concessions - perhaps including the setting up of new all-Ireland institutions. The fact that SF is looking to the USA to supervise the process emphatically shows that any settlement will be overwhelmingly on imperialist terms.

So the ‘bullet and ballot-box success’ instantly becomes a triumph without a victim or defeated party, the Trots are obliged to imply by their class philosophical benightedness. ‘Imperialist terms’ still rule!

But surely British imperialism said ‘no concessions’ to the bullet and ballot-box strategy?

All-Ireland institutions were precisely the aim of the national-liberation struggle, - the beginning of the end for the artificial nonsense of ‘Northern Ireland’ as a separate country, and above all as a continuing British colony, under an unrestrained local colonial tyranny, - the Orange-fascist freemasonry.

The ‘new settlement’ will not be on ‘imperialist terms’ at all, but clearly on nationalist terms. That was the whole point of the struggle, and the whole point of the solution.

And Sinn Féin do not even necessarily have to be included directly in the negotiation of the settlement. All that is required is for London, Washington, and Dublin to finally announce “this is the proposed new deal for Ireland” and for Sinn Féin to say “fair enough” to end the armed national-liberation struggle.

Paisley is not at the talks either, and it remains to be seen if an armed Orange die-hard reaction is mounted when the take-it-or-leave-it terms are announced.

Only in the fantasy individualist philosophy of Trotskyism are things seen in terms of ‘if Adams does not get an important job, will Sinn Féin cooperate?’

This is the pointless subjective-idealism of ivory-tower Trot ‘revolutionaries’ coming out. The précis of a Marxist textbook they read years ago tells them, they imagine, that a nationalist solution is not a revolutionary socialist solution, which is the only ‘real thing’, etc.

The SLP would be well advised to preserve itself from such sectarian anti-Marxist childishness anywhere in its ranks.

It is now a fact of history that the anti-imperialist struggle in the Occupied Zone of Ireland has been led by nationalist Sinn Féin and the Irish Republican Army, not by Leninist revolutionary socialists (and certainly not by Trotskyists who have never led anything anywhere).

So the ultra-left Trot fantasies about a socialist revolution to oust British imperialism, the Orange colonists, the Dublin Tories, and the guerrilla-war nationalists, all simultaneously, to create a 32-country socialist paradise in one go, - have always been irrelevant since Provisional Sinn Féin began to capture mass support for an armed national-liberation struggle led by revolutionary political opposition to the British colonial status quo.

In comparable examples,

Since the collapse of the Soviet Union, liberation struggles and hot spots throughout the world are being resolved in imperialism’s favour.

The failure of Irish republicans to take any other course is a failure of the whole of the working class oppressed under the same British state. It is this failure that has left re-

the whole of Marxist-Leninist history can immediately be seen lining up behind this national-revolutionary struggle, still building for a Leninist movement to take matters forward to the socialist revolution as rapidly as possible, but meanwhile acting in unconditional support of the national-liberation fight to maximise the defeats and humiliation for the imperialist system, – and cheering on every national-liberation triumph as Lenin did the 1916 Easter Rising, and not pouring defeatist scorn on such achievements as the Trots always manage to come out with, and as the anti-Leninist petty-bourgeois ‘lefts’ did in 1916 to Lenin’s utter contempt.

It has also long been obvious that because of the peculiarities of Irish history and its unending British imperialist domination, nothing would ever be resolved in Ireland until the national-independence question was finally settled once and for all by the total liberation of a 32-county republican Irish nation once again.

And even more wisely, Marx himself explained that until the whole of Ireland was at last again ‘free’ of British imperialist rule, the working class of Britain itself could never gain their own freedom, i.e. socialism.

Those who deride ‘all-Ireland institutions’ (on the way to eventual complete reunification, and implying the termination now of the former ‘Northern Ireland’ colonial set-up for ever, in all but name) as virtually meaningless and as not possibly representing a defeat for British imperialism, – are pouring scorn on one certain essential development on the way to the socialist revolution, (which they merely posture so emptily about).

Such sectarian defeatism is guaranteed to miss the new rich developments now imminent in the Occupied Zone which could potentially shatter Orange-colonial resistance to a new agreement for Ireland in a matter of months.

Speculative it may be, but the fascinating political lessons which might be about to emerge make it a wasteful shame not to offer an early comment.

The brutal slaughter of an RUC traffic constable by fascist-loyalist bar thugs after an off-duty pub argument about the policing of the recent Orange-march provocation at Dunloy, – could become the sort of incident that could prove the turning point in Unionism’s steady decay.

Trimble and other UUP leaders have come under enormous

pressure from Washington, London, and Dublin since last summer’s Orange-triumphalist outrage at Drumcree.

All the signs have been of the colonial establishment in the Occupied Zone running the risk of a nervous breakdown as they have tried to cool aggressive Orange die-hards without losing control over them, and at the same time be seen to be doing enough in Washington and London’s eyes to still be credited as the most respectable social authorities in the province.

A piece of unspeakable Nazi savagery such as the kicking to death of Officer Taylor, precisely just for defending a ‘moderate policing’ line on the Orange marches, – is going to cause the Unionist bigwigs unending difficulty and embarrassment, – if Sinn Féin, the SDLP nationalists, and Dublin play their cards right.

Trimble & Co might be shamed into paralysis if a new Drumcree stalemate should arise this summer with all the risks now of further RUC deaths at the hands of drunken fascist-Orange mobs.

And without the ‘respectable’ Ulster Unionist bourgeoisie to confidently give some credibility to these triumphal tribal reactionary rituals, this summer might finally see just how determined and tough these Nazi colonial thugs are, and intend to remain.

It has always been a likely scenario that when, one day, power-sharing policing was going to be obliged to come down heavier on the Orange provocations than on the justified nationalist resistance to this primitive tribal intimidation, – matters might quickly escalate out of hand initially but would possibly then show within months that there was no real substance after all to these endless loyalist threats to declare UDI and wage civil war if ‘pushed too far’ into a nationalist embrace on an all-Ireland institutional basis.

This bestial colonial killing outside Kelly’s Bar in Ballymoney could just prove to be the catalyst which sets off the whole demise of Unionist intransigence.

And if not this pointless fascist murder in the name of a past which can be no more and which must give way now to a reunified-Ireland future not far ahead, then some other catalyst could well break the reactionary spell of futile, decadent, and bogus ‘loyalism’. Outdated colonial stubbornness, killing and tyranny cannot survive. Build Leninism.

Adam Carr

Slanderous anti-communist ideology should be exposed and demolished in mass SLP education. Scientific understanding of the historic crisis of the imperialist system is the only way to rout petty-bourgeois defeatism. Without the development of theory, socialist practice & struggle will remain limited.

[EPSR No 908 17-06-97]

[...]defeatism is one of the chief philosophical characteristics of the petty bourgeoisie.

Nor is it a phenomenon confined to just the anti-leadership dissidents who tried, and failed, to destroy the SLP and its unitary constitution.

Defeatism is not far from much of the confusion on the devolution question on which *Socialist News* has had a couple of stumbles, a highly complex political matter providing yet more opportunity for better and deeper analysis than anyone has come up with yet, another chance ignored by these ‘useless’ critics.

Defeatism has crept in on some coverage of Ireland, too.

Predictions of the peace process failing in Ireland need re-examination.

Predictions that the fall of the Tory government will make no difference to the positions of the British imperialist Establishment need re-examination.

Evidence continues piling up for a different perspective, – a reluctant but inevitable snail’space retreat by a clapped-out colonial administration in the Occupied Zone of Ireland (the artificial ‘Northern Ireland’) under pressure from a steady shift in the international balance of class forces.

The dramatic successes in parliamentary and local elections for Sinn Féin, the political party of the national-liberation struggle, are the stark reminder to everyone that indomitable popular support, which makes the IRA armed guerrilla war impossible to defeat, continues to soar relentlessly.

This is the unignorable basis for the view, – steadily growing in strength in London, as well as in Washington, Dublin, and wider around the West for more than two decades, – that “something has to be done about ‘Northern Ireland’”.

It is a long slow development, but landmarks such as the Anglo-Irish Treaty (1985) and the later Statement of Intent,

Downing Street Declaration, Mitchell Commission, and the Peace Talks themselves, etc, all keep pointing in the direction of a completely new settlement for the Occupied Zone which will put an end to the old ‘Northern Ireland’ in all but name (and that will disappear too in time), and somehow allow the Irish in the OZ to live as though in part of Ireland, and those descendants of British colonialism, who wish it, to live on as though still in part of Britain.

The premier party of the British ruling class, the Tories, got bogged down in the end by their overall political weakness, divisions, and indecisiveness, – particularly stumbling, therefore, on the most difficult part of the imperialist retreat, – which was to avoid at all costs any semblance that British colonialism was finally giving up control because it was being forced out by revolutionary national-liberation struggle.

But attempts to push the IRA into symbolic ‘surrender’ gestures such as prior decommissioning or meaningless ‘renunciation for ever’ of guerrilla war, have failed miserably.

Washington, Dublin, and EU pressure will now be tremendous on the replacement government in London to get on with the peace process.

Those sectional voices inside the British Establishment, who have long wanted to get out of Ireland, will be more insistent too. And New Labour is exactly the right sort of pro-imperialist opportunism to enjoy the limelight.

The die-hard Ulster Unionists still need reassuring to keep their potential armed backlash (against a new settlement) to a minimum, – so some old soothing words and gestures get used such as ‘no reunification in my lifetime’, and no Commons entry yet for Adams & McGuinness.

But beyond this, open negotiations start with Sinn Féin, – a first, – to get a new ceasefire;

Mowlam warns the Unionists to get on the peace train or be left behind; Adams confidently calls for proof by London of a 'credible peace process', naming repatriation of IRA prisoners to Ireland as a symbol, – and two go back; Roisin McAliskey is let out on bail; Mowlam goes walkabout with Sinn Féin residents associations, and then to Washington for more 'new settlement' collaboration; and Ireland foreign minister Dick Spring contradicts Premier Bruton, on the eve of a new government in Dublin, to declare with Sinn Féin that its dramatic vote increase means a 'vote for peace'.

The first agenda item for Clinton in Downing Street was a new settlement for Ireland; and Mowlam flew to Dublin for further negotiations immediately after.

Enormous difficulties remain, – bourgeois nerves stretched to breaking point by the IRA's ruthless determination to meet continued British colonial occupation with relentless and inextinguishable guerrilla war, reminding London and the rest of the West, dismayed by revolutionary struggle, to get on with the settlement, and open the closing chapter on the hated and intolerable Partition of Ireland.

Blair's comment after this latest armed action in Lurgan that "it is a signal that Sinn Féin and the IRA are not interested in peace and democracy, and prefer violence" ranks with the classic hypocrisy and stupidity of the whole history of British imperialist tyranny over Ireland.

The British occupation of the Six torn-out counties of Ulster since the 1921 Partition (leaving three Ulster counties behind because they had too many Irish living in them!) has always survived entirely because of being armed to the teeth and ready to kill and persecute and torture and terrorise Irish nationalists, and put them in concentration camps without trial at times, bringing death and tragedy and ruin to tens of thousands of Irish families in that 76 years of infamous gerrymandered dictatorship which was the total contradiction of 'democracy' from first to last. So the Irish fought back to end this unjust armed tyranny, and pushed for a more just solution to Britain's colonial problem which could bring peace to Ireland, and won worldwide support for the justice of their national-liberation fight, – only to be told by the idiot Blair that "they can't be interested in peace and democracy".

But fortunately, the sound-

bite words of a Labour prime-minister stooge for the imperialist system are frequently not to be treated too seriously. Blair will end up doing what the Establishment wants him to do.

The general consensus in imperialist circles internationally remains that a completely new settlement to terminate British colonialism in Ireland remains the best way forward for all concerned. And 'conference-table harmony' between the Irish national-liberation movement and the local & London representatives of the British empire which has always been oppressing them, may no longer be regarded as a crucial if hard-to-stomach ingredient.

The idea is now being floated of putting an imposed new deal to a referendum as early as next spring, possibly leaving out the stage of all-party talks altogether now, which provide Unionist die-hard colonists with such inflammatory material, insisting that they 'cannot sit down to talk with murdering terrorists', etc., – which point also rubs British imperialism's face in its own sores mess, its failure to get anywhere near to defeating the IRA.

An imposed settlement, – worked out behind the scenes by London, Dublin, Washington, and the 'Northern Ireland' Office, – could try to balance the minimum of immediate concessions to the nationalist perspective of eventual reunification of Ireland, with enough guarantees of a stable peace at last to win over a small minority of the colonial (British unionist) population to give an overall victory for a referendum in the Occupied Zone of about 51% to 49%, agreeing a new constitutional arrangement.

With the Orange extremists now split over how far to push their intransigence, a further referendum split in the Unionist-colonialist ranks could prove to be the thin end of the wedge which could finally convince the Loyalist die-hards that their 400-year game of colonial mastery and bigotry was now nearly up.

The idea that breakaway Unionist gunmen might stage an IRA-style last-ditch rebellion against an imposed settlement, – thus continuing the Troubles for another 30 years, – is a defeatist notion reflecting only the subjective pessimism of middle-class observations.

British imperialism has no future. Therefore its Orange-colonising offspring has no future either.

Irish national aspirations, on the other hand, have an endless

future, and inseparably connected with a restoration of the whole of re-united Ireland to the Irish people.

One day, the colonisers who choose to remain 'Irish' will have to accept this. Once the British imperialist connection is cut at last, – at least in perspective if not totally in practice all at once, – then the game of 'never surrender' is up to all intents and purposes.

Any last-ditch putschist skirmishing would prove very short-lived if the Western powers chaperoning the new arrangement for Ireland made it their business to see that it was shortlived.

Much of such attempts to outline the next stages of impe-

rialism's ever-worsening crisis, of course, speculative.

But such perspectives are vital for inspiring confident anti-imperialist struggle.

Taking theory into practice is not fatal if it proves wrong, – because it is only practice which can demonstrate the truth of anything.

It is the failure to take any theory into practice, – and therefore the likely absence of any practice at all, or at best only very impressionistic, shallow, and episodic practice, – which is the real burden for the socialist movement.

Defeatism is the essence of having no real theory of world development. Build Leninism.

Jack Bradshaw

Assertion of unionist 'rights' cannot defeat the Irish national-liberation struggle, nor conceal the foul stupidity of British Empire triumphalism. The Drumcree nonsense does not mark the revival of Loyalism but just one more broken strand in the thin rope which is all that is now just keeping the 'Northern Ireland' colony from its final disintegration. Labour naïvete and Orange reaction exposed again. Sinn Féin vindicated once more. (+ add-on – Irish aspects of Trot defeatism infiltrating the centrist SLP)

[EPSR No 911 08-07-97]

The colonist mafia in the Occupied Zone of Ireland made a fool of Mo Mowlam in the latest virility tests over who keeps power, but it will make no difference to the ultimate perspective of bringing to an end the hated and intolerable Orange colonial state.

Hanging onto British imperialism's last toehold in Ireland by police-military dictatorship and intransigent Orange-colonist thuggery is not a viable option.

The balance of world forces moves inexorably against continued imperialist-colonialist domination of the planet, no matter how much nonsense is spoken about the supposed US imperialist 'new world order'.

And still undefeated after 900 years of resisting British imperialist domination, the Irish national-liberation struggle will not only never give up, but from here can only be seen as going from strength to strength.

The supposed 'state' called 'Northern Ireland' was always

a historical abomination, established in 1921 by shameful British imperialist brutality, and continued for the next 70 years by the even more criminal fascist-apartheid tyranny of the Orange Order, the RUC, and the B-Specials, now replaced by 'Loyalist' gangsters.

It is a nazi-colonial 'tradition' and the aggressive insistence on parading their triumphalism once more down the Garvaghy Road sums up its whole rottenness, pointlessness, and doomed futility.

This ignorant parading of past supremacy by the vindictive and the feeble-minded who cannot wake up to modern reality is a fitting symbol of the British Empire mindset itself which has similar difficulty in adjusting to present-day requirements throughout British society.

The British ruling class overall is backward and degenerate, typified by its farcical 'Royal Family', its sclerotic aristocracy, and its never-ending 20th

century humiliations in international trade-war and power struggles.

The ridiculous posturing of the bowler hats and rolled umbrellas in Drumcree, to provoke hatred by insisting on 'tradition', sums up the decaying influence of the British bourgeoisie which has learned very little from its 20th century setbacks, and is really incapable of great change.

The same decadence applies to the entire performance of the British Establishment over its Irish colonial mess.

Although obliged for decades to accept that in general the continuation of a colonial role in Ireland was no longer tenable, and although eventually getting out has been actively discussed, and planned for, throughout the modern Troubles, the entire Establishment, (- civil servants, police chiefs, generals, secret service bosses, big business, the press, and the politicians themselves,) - has never stopped just stumbling forward reluctantly, delaying, losing its nerve, trying endless propaganda smoke-screens and provocations, etc, etc, to put off the inevitable moment when the nettle of Orange-colonial intransigence has finally to be grasped.

And that is what these marches are all about, - avoiding giving the die-hard Orange backlash the chance to declare: 'We can yield no further. We are being betrayed. We must fight or go under'.

But that barrier to a new settlement for Ireland has got to be gone through at some point, and it will be soon.

The Labour lightweights have come into a situation which was already largely mapped out a long time ago, and is fixed for the foreseeable future.

A new settlement for Ireland will abandon the old 'Northern Ireland' colony for ever (in all but name) and replace it by some form of condominium with Dublin which will allow the Irish to feel they are now living in part of Ireland again, but allow the dying British colony to feel that they are still part of Britain.

International pressure from Western imperialism, particular powerful and influential from Washington, is fully decided on this solution to a very unpleasant 'free world' festering sore.

The collapsing imperial position of Britain postwar meant that it could see for itself that it could no longer manage effectively a rebellious colony in the north of Ireland, or would need it, - and that pressure from the rest of the West to call it a day

was inevitable too.

Blair and Mowlam have been at Washington and Dublin's beck and call non-stop over an Irish settlement ever since coming into office, so the planned snail's-pace final retreat from Empire is still firmly in place.

But as with everything the British Establishment touches, especially when the Labour 2nd XI management is temporarily in charge, - the muddle and indecision about actually getting things done is always slightly farcical, and inept.

All the more is this true over the very fraught and painful Irish situation, where authority and land connections go back so many centuries for the British ruling class, and where every sector of the Establishment remains reluctant and divided about the final solution, and where intrigue, revolt, and treachery within the ruling class itself over policy on Ireland is as fresh as the 1914 Curragh mutiny by British army officers against the Liberal Home-Rule-for-Ireland bill, and the associated Tory Party support for the Carson threat of armed UDI with his Ulster Volunteer Force.

All these elements are still present today, - albeit in a slightly farcical form the second time around.

But then 'New' Labour is equally farcical the second time around, - so it is the halt, the lame and the blind leading the blind, the lame, and the halt, - or vice versa.

And it sounds it:

Ms Mowlam said the judgment of the chief constable was that the public safety of all people in Northern Ireland was better protected by the decision to let the parade go ahead.

"I respect and support his judgment. The law must be upheld, but I want to make clear that the way ahead for the future is a new arrangement designed to ensure that the pain of these events can be put behind us for good."

Many in the nationalist community would be angered by the decision. "I would have preferred it otherwise. Nevertheless I appeal to all in the nationalist community to understand that overall public safety across Northern Ireland has to be the chief constable's main concern. "I understand your feelings and I will address them in legislating on the issue. I am only sorry that option was not open to me this summer."

Reacting to Garvaghy residents' accusations she had betrayed them, she insisted: "No one has been betrayed."

There have been a number of signs since her arrival that Ms Mowlam has at times struggled to master her portfolio, in spite of the amount of time she put into visiting Northern Ireland and making contacts in both

camps while in opposition.

Last month she promised that whatever decision was made about Drumcree, it would be announced several days in advance of the parade. This surprised some observers, since it would obviously give whichever side came off the worst sufficient time to organise their resistance.

Ms Mowlam then pledged that she would inform the Garvaghy Road residents of the decision personally, which again caused some consternation because it effectively removed any element of surprise which the security forces might judge beneficial to their operation.

This has only compounded the plight in which she now finds herself, since in her comments last Friday it seemed that she was minded to ban the Orange parade.

The question that people across the community are now asking themselves is: did she jump or was she pushed? Ms Mowlam did nothing to clarify those questions in a press conference at Stormont yesterday, an hour after Mr Flanagan had briefed the press that his choice had been between "two evils".

And this is from a section of the capitalist press which has been so Labour-loyal to resemble a fan club, the *Guardian*.

But what does it mean? Probably that Mowlam accepted assurances that the longterm settlement was still the 'game plan' only to discover that the RUC might still be toying with dreams of yet frustrating it through a series of 'operational mishaps' leading to 'unexpected consequences', etc.

The leaked document implying that there was never any intention of allowing the discussions with nationalist residents to decide the outcome of the decision for or against Drumcree, would also indicate that intrigue and sabotage remain major actors in the seething mess of the 'peace process' in Ireland.

But the feeble RUC comment that it was only the balance of threatened violence which swayed the decision in favour of permitting the Drumcree march, - an astonishing admission, - shows how far down the road the settlement negotiations have now moved since the Tories collapsed in paralysed indecision; - and the unusually forthright remarks of Bertie Ahern heading the new Fianna Fail government in Dublin confirm this impression:

The taoiseach said the forcing of the Orange parade down Garvaghy Road was "a bad decision... It is a bad day for all of us."

Mr Ahern said he had conveyed the Irish government's position to Tony Blair. "I think the decision today makes life difficult for everybody. I can well understand the nationalists' fury."

There has also been an unusual amount of capitalist media acknowledgement, - in press, radio, and TV (as well as lots of die-hard British imperialist reactionariness from some commentators and 'interviewers'), - of just how backward is the Orangemen's last colonial stand:

The Ulster Unionist leader, David Trimble, took part in yesterday's Drumcree church service, but did not join the parade as in previous years.

He said that the Orange Order had made every effort to reach a compromise with the town's nationalists. "That was originally a Protestant area. The Protestants have been driven out of it and the Orange Order not going down there is equivalent to saying 'Yes, we have been driven out'."

Passing through loyalist estates, marchers were greeted by large hand-painted banners. "There are no nationalist communities in Portadown," proclaimed one. "Only areas temporarily occupied." Fifty yards further on, another read: "One-way traffic - no turning. By order of Portadown Loyalists."

"Och, yes! We couldn't not march down that route. It's tradition."

There is only so much wide-eyed, disingenuous talk you can take, and some sort of reality promptly returns as soon as you actually witness an Orange march through a Catholic area. There can be few spectacles on earth less festive or non-political; they are grim-faced affairs, bristling with hostility. Sinn Féin complain of their "triumphalism", a word which sounds like propaganda until you watch a parade go by, and then you see what they mean. And, after all, that's the point.

As political symbolism goes, the decision last summer to allow the march through, after days of threats and violence, is as good a metaphor for Major's Ulster policy as you'll get; when push came to shove, so to speak, the Unionists had to be appeased.

For Mo Mowlam, this is the moment to make it clear that rituals designed only to provoke can no longer be passed off as "traditions", and that marching through Catholic areas is a "historic right" which the loyalist community, in the interests of a more peaceful future, can no longer exercise. It is also the moment to demonstrate that, if the decision to re-route the march is made, the RUC's mind cannot be changed by a few good kickings and some brotherly appeals to loyalty.

"Ah well, there'll be a blood bath either way," Protestants in town promise.

"If we lose Drumcree, we lose Northern Ireland," Protestants in Portadown keep repeating. Nothing in Northern Ireland is ever that simple. But if they "win" Drumcree, this particular scab in the province's scars will keep on bleeding.

THERE is a prevailing view in Northern Ireland this weekend that Robert Saulters, Grand Master

of the Orange Order, is a victim of circumstance and the right man at the wrong time. It wasn't always so.

When Mr Saulters was elected to the leadership of the exclusively Protestant organisation last December, a journalist with a sharp memory reminded the Belfast accountant what he had said about Tony Blair's marriage to his Catholic wife Cherie.

At last year's 12th of July celebrations, Mr Saulters said the Labour leader had "already sold his birthright by marrying a Romanist and serving Communion in a Roman Catholic church".

Picked up on the comment, Mr Saulters dug his own grave a little deeper by saying that Mr Blair was "disloyal" to himself and to his religion in marrying a Catholic.

His press minders, anxious to relaunch the Orange Order under moderate colours, visibly blanched. In private they groaned at another own goal. The Order was supposed to be changing; this sounded more like a return to the 18th century.

A republican source commented earlier this week: "It's a win-win situation for us. Either they force the parade through and support for the IRA goes up when people see the RUC cracking Catholic heads, or they stand up to the Orangemen and Sinn Féin can claim a victory over the SLP by saying John Hume's party never faced down the loyalists and won."

Addendum No 911: Trot anti-leadership defeatism on Ireland within the SLP

[...]After proudly presenting old polemics and motions by Alan Gibson of Vauxhall against other Trots, this phony SLP *Marxist Bulletin* cannot wait to launch out on the really barmy Spart hobby horses of denouncing the Irish national-liberation struggle as a 'failure'; denying the right of a national-liberation struggle to wage guerrilla war against the metropolitan territory of the colonial power; and demanding that a category they describe as 'protestant workers' should not "be forced" to live in a united Ireland "against their wishes".

Opposing SLP policy (and opposing Marxism), this joke SLP *Marxist Bulletin* declares that nationalist reunification of Ireland "would not benefit the working class". This is because the epoch-making national-liberation struggle by Sinn Féin aims solely to achieve a "capitalist peace", these Spart lunatics explain.

The challenge to British imperialism's colonial domination that a successful national-liberation struggle would bring, as lauded by Marx and Lenin, has unaccountably disappeared from the perspectives completely.

And the heroic armed struggle which had not just the total

Despite Mr Saulters' conviction that the lesser danger for his brethren is to waive their right to march this year, the signs are that in Portadown — citadel of Orangeism — his is too subtle a response.

The fundamentalists are rallying behind their drums and flags and preparing to march towards a disaster set to engulf all the province.

It will not be a disaster because Sinn Féin and the IRA will indeed surge in support as a result of this reactionary Orange mayhem, and the only serious solution for the imperialist crisis in Ireland will again become obvious, — eventual reunification of Ireland, — if it has not remained still obvious throughout these latest reactionary RUC/Orange hiccups.

"The IRA is the only answer" the TV cameras were for the first time reporting nationalists as declaring on the streets of the Occupied Zone this week. "And no ceasefire".

The Lurgan propaganda set-up against Sinn Féin has failed, as was inevitable and probably expected to fail.

The process towards a new settlement for Ireland must be pressed on with, and will be.

Douglas Bell

sympathy of Marx, Engels, and Lenin but their enthusiastic support on many occasions, — that has now all been revised in Spart minds as merely "indiscriminate acts of terror against civilians" in a section amusingly headlined "Do bombs have a socialist programme?".

What this academic sectarian nonsense cannot grasp, of course, is that the final emancipation of the working class by socialist revolution cannot always be achieved immediately and directly by simply abolishing capitalism, — a point which should be obvious from Marx's famous warning to the English working class movement that "no nation which oppresses another can itself be free", telling workers in Britain that they could never get to socialism for themselves all the time that they backed their 'own' country in its repression of Ireland.

And the ending of that particular aspect of repression, opening all doors for much further developments for the workers of Britain and Ireland, — was not seen as the abolition of capitalism in Britain or Ireland, but simply as the ending of British colonial rule in Ireland.

And yes, Marx, Engels and Lenin knew all about these so-called 'protestant workers'

who do not want Irish national-liberation, and understood them as stooges for continued colonial rule, just as workers in Britain were (and are to this day).

Playing the reactionary 'Orange card' to whip up lumpen proletarian-colonist sentiments for the 'Loyalist' cause is an old trick which even the dimmest political observers well understood even in the 19th century.

It would take these nutty US-influenced modern Spart academic Trotskyite opportunists to have gone so far backward in their political understanding. The pity is that they can claim to represent the SLP.

But they are not remotely espousing SLP policy, and could not conceivably be said to be just 'discussing the issues'. These Sparts have their own insane reactionary policy on Ireland. They are now seeking to poison the SLP with it.

Some fainthearted elements in the SLP have worried that too wide or sharp an attack on entryists, or sectarian policy takeover bids, might lead to too great a membership haemorrhage or give rise to too much

'strife in the SLP' publicity. This is exactly the same daft calculation and threat that the Trots themselves have been boasting about and banking on, of course.

And it is all complete codswallop.

This is a case of empty kettles making the most noise. There is a temporary rash of Trotskyite defeatism because of the briefly passing mood of setback in the international anti-imperialist movement due to the final tragedy of revisionist retreat in the former Soviet workers state. But this petty-bourgeois "everything is rotten" eruption is still dwarfed by the potentially huge mass of class-conscious workers coming back into the fight, and is already dwarfed in practice inside the SLP.

Their dissident 'conference' in London was a farcical failure, as will be their attempted onslaught on national Congress in December. The anti-leadership Trots will be utterly trounced again, — as they are systematically being trounced now in all their current running attempts to disrupt the party leadership [...]

Historic victory over imperialism for Ireland's national self-determination will at last help free British workers from the shackles of chauvinism, fulfilling Marx's prediction. Imperialist decadence is swept aside by determined revolutionary struggle. Nationalism remains limited, but bogus 'lefts' who can only see defeat in Ireland and all around them, are much more of a deadweight. Doomed imperialism comes out second best in the guerrilla war, the political struggle, and the peace diplomacy. The new settlement will bury the old discredited colonial set-up for good. Subjective Trot muddle only exposes its own treacherous inadequacy. The Marxist grasp of history is vindicated.

[EPSR No 913 12-08-97]

It is a triumph for the Irish national-liberation struggle that a new constitutional arrangement for Ireland will be put to a referendum next May.

Unionist threats to veto the proposals which eventually emerge, will be ignored. The London, Dublin, and Washing-

ton governments will have to call the bluff of any 'No Surrender' Loyalist attempts at armed resistance.

The intelligent calculation is that the new settlement, at last recognising the constitutional rights of the whole Irish nation in Ireland, will also win

substantial support from the ex-British colonial community in the north because it guarantees peace.

Thus the die-hard Orange fanatics who are currently screaming that the suggested talks process 'has given in to every IRA demand' will easily be outnumbered in the vote.

In spite of disloyal splits and leaks from British Establishment circles in the Northern Ireland Office and other reactionary quarters, the nettle has finally been grasped of refusing to allow the Unionist 'decommissioning' stunt to delay progress any longer.

Sinn Féin's final clarification demands were that there was to be no question of any weapons being surrendered until substantial developments towards a final settlement were in place.

The pathetic game by backward Unionist leaders to imply a 'defeat' for the IRA by having weapons handed in before an agreement has been reached, has been seen off.

Gerry Adams' statement calling for an IRA ceasefire spelled it out that "the decommissioning issue would not be allowed to block negotiations", – a British government assurance, as is the release of more Republican prisoners-of-war as a "confidence-building measure".

Adams also stressed that "Sinn Féin, the SDLP, the Irish government, and Irish-American opinion shared commitment to significant and substantial change" in Ireland, and also to eventual "equality and demilitarisation".

"There will be no return to Unionist domination" Adams added.

This shows that the ultimate perspective is for British police/army rule to end in Ireland, and a formula will be worked out to let the Irish in the north feel they are constitutionally a part of Ireland while allowing any British colonial diehards to feel that they are still constitutionally a part of Britain.

The eventual outcome clearly, however, will be a reunited Ireland, exactly as Sinn Féin's national-liberation struggle has fought for.

All-out civil and military revolt was renewed in 1968 by the Irish national-liberation struggle to bring down the British colonial statelet mischievously labelled 'Northern Ireland'.

First the illegitimate colonist regime had to be suspended, replaced by the power reality of a British police-military dictatorship, repressing the Irish population openly instead of more covertly as before.

Now a completely new settlement for Ireland is to be worked out, which will replace the old 'Northern Ireland' monstrous tyranny, burying it for ever.

This triumph for the Irish national-liberation struggle contains colossal lessons about the whole of modern world history.

For various reasons and in various ways, all sorts of half-hearted or bogus 'socialists' either seek to completely deny or misrepresent this Sinn Féin/IRA victory, or else seek to play it down.

These purely subjective responses in turn reveal more valuable lessons about current elements in the international balance of class forces which make up the modern world.

The EPSR will consistently explain how its attempted Marxist-Leninist scientific analysis of the overall situation affecting the Occupied Zone of Ireland has led it to successfully identify from the start the slow but sure development of this national-liberation triumph and its enormous international significance, – exposing fake-'left' and other petty-bourgeois propaganda which relentlessly wrote off Sinn Féin/IRA as 'isolated', 'pointless', 'sold out', or 'defeated', and even as 'reactionary'.

The 'socialists' who do not think this victory over colonialism worth mentioning are simply revealing their parochial small-mindedness. They lack imagination.

Although not on the epic scale of the combat, suffering, and inspiration of, say, the victories over imperialism in Vietnam, Algeria, or South Africa, – the heroism of resistance and sacrifice demanded by the Irish struggle was at times and in places every bit as great, and the political and operational ingenuity was always outstanding.

Hunger strikes and guerrilla-war 'terrorism' have seldom been first-choice tactics of Marxist-Leninist revolutionary struggle, but the courage and determination of this nationalist fight in Ireland properly captured the entire world's imagination and attention, backed up as they were by overwhelming political success in organising Irish working-class resistance to the British military occupation, and to the continuing colonial establishment and propaganda.

Against phenomenal odds and disadvantages not least from the treacherous opportunism of most of the British 'left', Sinn Féin nevertheless won the international ideological conflict with Britain, whose im-

perialist decadence simply could not defeat the IRA or outsmart Sinn Féin's politics.

Guerrilla war put up a challenge which British imperialism could not ignore or cover up. Sinn Féin's phenomenally energetic political organisation and, to a limited extent, its ideological combativeness ensured that British colonialism's failure could not be hidden from the world.

Sheer hard political work plus ferociously gutsy working-class resistance to non-stop terror-intimidation by the British colonial state and its 'loyalist' armed-fascist supplementary brutality, – provided an international demonstration of how magnificently the anti-imperialist fight can be fought.

Particularly for Western Europe, the sheer dimensions and quality of Sinn Féin's political achievements in agitational propaganda and organisation among the Irish working class should have captured everyone's imagination, regardless of the head-start which the nationalist orientation gave them.

Sinn Féin's sustained political argument has been of the highest order of discipline, and has produced some impressive leaders. The British 'left' has always preferred opportunist manoeuvring to correct political argument, and its poverty of organisation and its confusion of direction shows this only too clearly.

The limitations of Sinn Féin's nationalism are obvious to Marxism-Leninism, and the EPSR has never lost sight of this or ignored referring to it.

But opportunist criticism of Sinn Féin/IRA by the British 'left' has always been even further from a real grasp of Marxism-Leninism than has nationalism.

The Irish national-liberation struggle has to be judged both on its own aims and on the pattern of possibilities, within the actual anti-imperialist campaign as it developed in the Occupied Zone, and in its historic international context.

It is utterly useless academic posturing, posing as 'Marxism', to try 'analysing' the colossal impact on (and reflection of) the international balance of class forces by the struggle in Ireland through infantile dismissals of Sinn Féin's aims and achievements as 'not revolutionary socialist'.

They were not meant to be. The dream was to topple the British colonial statelet against the most enormous odds and under the worst possible conditions imaginable.

With the cunningly vile partitioning of Ireland already accepted ancient reality, and with the establishment of the great postwar boom, unprecedented in all capitalist history, – the anti-imperialist struggle in the Occupied Zone faced a seemingly impossible task.

The population of the southern Republic was completely dead to any further disruptive anti-imperialist fight. World opinion, brainwashed by anti-communist propaganda, was disposed to ignore repression of all revolutionary or 'terrorist' struggle, no matter how brutal the clamp-down.

The workers movement in Britain, under its Labour-TUC leadership, went along with Labour's automatic vicious hostility to the Sinn Féin/IRA fight. The misnamed 'Protestant' working class in the Occupied Zone (the proletarian contingent of British colonialism) was even more reactionary than the British working class on this subject.

And the Irish in the Occupied Zone were made backward by their Catholic domination north and south, by the class-collaborative lethargy emanating from Dublin, and by their own limited share in the postwar imperialist boom, reflected by the SDLP's dominance of Irish politics in the Occupied Zone and by the normal chaotic and philistine confusion on the 'left' reflecting the whole muddle of West Europe and of world revisionism.

Against all these colossal odds, and despite their fight having been written off as 'finished' more times than can be counted, it is the national-liberation struggle which has magnificently prevailed.

The peculiar decadence of British imperialism and its historic crisis are specific to this dramatic outcome, but there is much in this Sinn Féin/IRA triumph to reflect on the international balance of class forces in general.

With the end of Empire and the end of Britain's serious participation as a leading independent rival for international imperialist hegemony, the troublesome British colonial toe-hold still on Ireland, – to 'guard the back door' and to 'deny Ireland to any rival power as an ally', etc, – became a daft anachronism.

When increasing economic difficulties for Britain meant that the military-industrial value of the Northern Ireland colony was becoming more of a burden than a help, and when political ferment in the Occu-

pied Zone began to grow really costly, – the questions began to be asked in earnest: 'What do we need this cross to be borne for?'

'Loyalty' to the 'loyalist' population was the last consideration. Mutual contempt was growing fast as Britain's imperialist twilight deepened gloomily.

The main problems were how to get out without letting it be seen to be a victory for the national-liberation struggle fought as a revolutionary guerrilla war; and how to get out without playing into the hands politically of Orange-colonist intransigence which could make any amount of chauvinistic trouble for any government seen to be 'betraying British national interests' or 'abandoning British people to terrorism' or 'reneging on a solemn promise of eternal Britishness, forged in blood' or 'capitulating a region of Britain to the tyranny of a benighted Catholic state', etc, etc.

Time, and the sheer determination of the Sinn Féin/IRA fight has finally forced British imperialism's hand, urged on to a 'settlement' by the rest of Western imperialism which likewise hates the thought of a revolutionary national-liberation struggle victory but fears an even more radical revolt, – and more widespread than just in Ireland, – could follow if British repression does not stop soon or cannot be camouflaged better.

The rival imperialist powers also have no problem with Brit-

ain having to admit to yet another humiliating defeat, thus undermining its international reputation and political/economic positions even further, to their own advantage.

Hence, finally, all the ultimately irresistible pressure for a 'new settlement for Ireland', – which basically means that the old 'Northern Ireland' colony-partition racket will be no more, abandoned in favour of some sort of dual-power condominium by London and Dublin which will temporarily allow the Irish in the north to feel that they are again living in part of Ireland, but allow the diehard British remnants of colonial-mindedness to still posture and feel that they are part of Britain.

The name 'Northern Ireland' might live on for a brief while, as a final gesture to quieten reactionary colonist sentiment to prevent any danger of an armed UDI (unilateral declaration of independence) by the more extreme 'loyalist' gangsters and their Orange-bourgeois mentors, – but only temporarily will the reunification of Ireland as one independent Republic be delayed.

All of which has been clearly signposted since the early 1970s, and all of which has been accurately analysed each week by the *EPSR* since its foundation at the end of the 1970s.

Fake-'left' posturing has consistently got everything wrong. Half of the Trots, eaten up with their Labour-loyal opportunism or their anti-communist posturing as academic 'Marxists', have

written off this titanic anti-imperialist struggle as thoroughly 'reactionary', on the grounds that the so-called 'Protestant working class' could never respond to Irish nationalism.

But if this community is more properly described as the colonist proletariat, then there is no reason ever to expect them to respond to an Irish nationalist appeal.

So how can they be made anti-imperialist, – i.e. Anti-colonialist?

There is only one obvious way, and that is through the **defeat** of the British colonial toe-hold as it stood.

Presumably, all sorts of class combinations **might** have defeated British imperialism's colonial anachronism in Ireland. Presumably, all kinds of 'lefts' **could** have led such a liberation war.

In practice, only the Provisional Sinn Féin/IRA movement did manage to lead and organise a really serious anti-imperialist struggle. The die was cast. The anti-imperialist struggle in Ireland would henceforth be dominated by the profound significance of the Sinn Féin/IRA national-liberation war in the Occupied Zone and on the British mainland.

But still the reactionary 'left' objections persisted: How could such nationalist struggle lead to any wider acceptance for the possible outcome of greater Irish independence?

Obviously through one of the classic developments of all anti-imperialist struggle, – through

the **defeat** of imperialism.

Only with the humiliation of Britain and its ridiculous colonial vestiges is it possible to imagine the ex-colonial proletariat in the Occupied Zone enthusiastically taking up a genuine anti-imperialist struggle by moving on to what might **subsequently** emerge as desirable and **possible** in the post-colonial settlement, – namely a move towards a socialist revolution which alone at last can obviously satisfy the aspirations of everyone living in Ireland.

But weirdly, the one thing which the entire fake-'left' usually agrees on is to avoid seeing any serious defeat for imperialism in the Irish situation.

As ever, all the Trots start, continue, and end with their own subjective prejudices, not with objective reality. If the reality of actual outcomes of world political situations does not suit their prejudices, they simply distort the record or implications of the reality. Never has a Trot ever been found to reconsider the basis for their anti-communist prejudices as a result of world developments.

Thus, *Militant* and Spart versions of Trotskyism, for example, will continue in this period to see the triumphant national-liberation struggle against imperialism as merely a reactionary leg-up for 'green nationalism' which can only be to the 'terrible detriment' of the misnamed 'Protestant working class'.

The CPGB-type Trots, on the other hand, simply see continued imperialist domination and no victory for anyone but Washington's 'new world order' dominance.

But the prejudices are really identical, and unchanging, whatever actually happens in the world.

Ultra-left posturing of the Trotskyite 'perfect permanent revolution' variety only thrives on the renowned petty-bourgeois class mentality of defeatism.

For the endless posturing of these 'super-revolutionary' armchair socialists to be all the time 'correct', then every other struggle against imperialism must of necessity always end in 'failure'.

Lo and behold, the Russian Revolution was a 'failure', the Chinese Revolution a 'failure' before it had even started. The Cuban Revolution has never been able to drag itself out of the 'failure' league. The 1984-85 Miners Strike was 'obviously a failure'. The SLP is already a 'failure'. No surprise at all, really,

Bloody Sunday: 30 January 1972. One of the Paras' victims.



that the Irish national-liberation struggle must be accounted a 'failure'. After all, the historic national-liberation movement which ended the era of direct European colonies in the Third World, did ultimately end only in 'failure', because 'perfect socialism' has not even remotely been started anywhere yet, so 'there's the proof' etc, etc, to the end of time, presumably.

But real history works completely differently, of course. The working masses of the world rejoiced at the triumph of the Bolshevik Revolution, and cheered even more at the success of the Chinese Revolution 32 years later, with the international communist movement still growing for long after, until revisionist petty-bourgeois ideology once again reconquered the workers movement completely.

After 70 years unbroken advance by the ideas of revolutionary communism, a brief temporary relapse has set in based on the ability of the exceptionally-long-running postwar imperialist boom to finally convince the weakest revisionist minds in the communist movement that the 'free market' was a better instrument all round for human progress than was centralised state economic control.

Once that ludicrous thesis has exploded in everyone's faces during the near future, then communist revolution will resume its surge forward again, including the recapture of previous gains temporarily lost.

The international revolutionary movement has never been motivated on 'failure'. The Paris Commune can be said to have 'failed', and Marxism had to learn some crucial lessons from the setbacks.

But never has Marxism ever presented the Paris Commune as anything other than a magnificent step forward for mankind.

It is **crucial** to learn from all the mistakes made. But it is even more crucial for mankind to be inspired by the sensational advances made by communist revolution and the workers states which have been set up in the 20th century, pushing the capitalist-imperialist system aside.

But the petty-bourgeois mentality which cannot appreciate the triumph of the Irish national-liberation struggle which it has actually lived through, is never going to have the imagination to grasp the mighty historical significance of the communist revolutions which have transformed the 20th century and undermined

imperialism for good.

The CPGB's latest prejudices putting down the Sinn Féin/IRA achievements start out from their anti-communist fixation that the workers-states' history of the 20th century has only left imperialism in command of total global domination, imposing settlements on everyone at will.

National liberation movements the world over have been forced to sue for peace. In Ireland too freedom fighters gave up all hope of driving the British occupying forces out of the Six Counties, instead seeking to reach an accommodation which would allow them to end their resistance with honour intact.

Any 'progressive' who can write this insane defeatist bilge (as the CPGB did on July 24 **after** the IRA had captured the world's imagination with another generous ceasefire offer in return for British imperialist guarantees that this time, there would be purposeful talks about a completely new settlement for Ireland), – is just a daft reactionary.

And congenital Trot pessimism has a quick bucket of water for any notion of British imperialism being forced by the renewed national-liberation struggle of the past 17 months to resume all-party negotiations but this time without the built-in frustrations to a new settlement which London encouraged last time. 'There is no progress. It is reaction all the way' these defeatists declare:

A united Ireland brokered by Bill Clinton and magnanimously handed down by imperialism would be quite a different thing from one imposed on it through a military victory or a revolutionary uprising. It would guarantee that reaction would prevail, just as it did when an orderly transition to home rule was negotiated in 1922 and anti-imperialists defeated.

A straight 'military victory' by a tiny nationalist population (half a million) fighting **within** the country of the metropolitan power itself (population 55 million) is just fantasy-gibberish by total airheads, of course.

But on the much more realistic scale on which the Irish national-liberation struggle has actually been fought, it was precisely a 'military victory' and a 'revolutionary uprising' of sorts which precisely lay at the core of British imperialism's undoing.

The monstrous police-military dictatorship over the Occupied Zone for nearly 30 years including concentration camps (years-long detention behind barbed wire at The Maze without even the semblance of a trial); jury-less 'courts' convicting for 30-years sentences in prison for mere suspicion of IRA involvement, voiced anonymously; torture barracks at the Gough military headquarters

which even the imperialist European Court had to denounce; midnight terror raids systematically on every nationalist community in the Occupied Zone; terror-massacres such as Bloody Sunday, Loughgall, Gibraltar, Killtown, etc; inhuman frame-ups for 20-year prison terms on mere 'suspect Irish' on cooked-up 'evidence'; random repressive tyranny on any Irish demonstrations via plastic and rubber bullets; etc, etc; – none of all this has been able to smash the IRA into submission or to terrorise the Irish population in the Occupied Zone and beyond into abandoning support and protection for the national-liberation struggle.

This was Irish nationalism's 'military victory' and 'revolutionary uprising' all rolled into one, and registered by the steady political advance made by Sinn Féin on every front, even trouncing British imperialism at its own bent 'parliamentary democracy' electoral racket.

And it is simply a ludicrous historical falsification to merely describe 1921 as 'reaction prevailing' and 'anti-imperialists defeated'. In 1921, British imperialism was still all-powerful in worldwide colonial matters, and at that point had only accepted one 'defeat' in its entire imperialist history, losing the American War of Independence in 1776.

Nowhere else had the British Empire been **forced** into total defeat and retreat, – until 1921 in Ireland when the **triumphant** war of national-liberation **forced** British imperialism to concede independence to the Republic of Ireland (as it became) in 26 counties, managing to hang on to only the gerymandered boundaries of six counties because of the strength of the colonial British population there.

In the same year, not all the 500 million population of India could force the British out, being slaughtered into submission again. But the tiny Irish nation triumphed in spite of the utter barbarism and murderous scorched-earth tyranny which British imperialism inflicted all over Ireland, eventually accepting a failure to win militarily however.

Did it matter? The Irish national-liberation was a colossal symbol to anti-imperialist struggle the world over. Only people without the slightest regard or capacity for objective reason could sum up Ireland's first national-liberation war of the 20th century as "a guarantee that reaction would prevail".

Only the incurably preju-

diced could so distort reality purely to suit their own current subjective posturing as being a 'reliable political leadership', naturally of the 'super-revolutionary' kind.

This relentless self-justification of the CPGB's own naïve & pathetic misunderstandings comes out blatantly further on.

Idiotically, these Trots decided during the first IRA ceasefire that the 'peace process' was nothing but a cover for a complete capitulation to US imperialist domination, and an utter defeat for the national-liberation struggle. Adams & Co were described as having sold out completely.

When the guerrilla war was dramatically resumed, wiping out Canary Wharf and later the centre of Manchester, – these maniacal subjectivists then fumbled out the phrase "peace bombs" to hide their own silly embarrassment and confusion.

Even more idiotically, these poseurs now try yet another cover-up over their 'defeat' stupidity, returning like a dog to its vomit:

Despite the huge damage done to the British establishment – both materially and morally – we described that explosion as a "peace bomb". The purpose was to force Major's hand, not resume a full-scale offensive.

This must be as near insanity as it is possible to get without being certified.

Was the national-liberation struggle's aim to wage war on British imperialism until it conceded the death of the partitioned 'Northern Ireland' tyrannical colony, – or was it the IRA's purpose just to carry on bombing British town centres until there was not one left intact?, – which is the only possible meaning of these crazy self-justifying remarks.

Further expressing their complete philistine amateurishness as supposed 'Marxist theoreticians', these criminally-irresponsible middle-class dilettantes spew up even more filth in their latest 'analysis', infantilely lumping one anti-imperialist nationalist struggle with another, and producing utter confusion:

Given its entrenchment in the imperialist peace process, the Palestinian Liberation Organisation can no longer act as any progressive expression of the Palestinian people, but rather can only act as imperialism's policeman in the area.

Similar developments cannot be ruled out in the Six Counties. The actions of the Continuity Army Council have been more modest and contained than Hamas.

Undeniably the peace process retains overwhelming support. But a revolutionary culture is entrenched in the masses throughout the north of Ireland. It is for this reason that the IRA is embedded in the nationalist working class, acting as its militia

against the forces of the state and its loyalist supporters. It would not be difficult for it then to use its prestige to move against any discontent that arises with the peace process. Turning that organisation into a police force for imperialism rather than against it.

This sounds like support for genuine 'sectarian terror' in backing some tiny group of nationalist extremists against the main Sinn Féin/IRA national-liberation movement.

Of course the IRA is an authoritative force within the nationalist community. How could it be anything else in the midst of a war against imperialism?

Of course it is possible that Sinn Féin may support, or even help form, part of a new hybrid-state authority under the new settlement for Ireland. But that has been the fate of every national-liberation struggle in history.

What these 'super-revolutionary' Trots wish to imply, but never want to say openly, is that really all national-liberation struggles are a reactionary waste of time, by their own positing ultra-left standards. Is it possible to utter more infantile and deceitful nonsense??

Their 'justification' for obliterating the entire national-liberation epoch of modern history as being virtually worthless comes closes to open admission in the following childish 'reasoning':

In previous issues of this paper we have indicated that imperialist-negotiated settlements have very little to do with any genuine ending of conflict – a permanent feature of imperialism, any 'peace' being merely the prelude to another war. Thus rather than acting as cheerleader for the process, as much of the left has done, we have encouraged revolutionaries to address the post-settlement tasks.

So, the imperialist epoch is one of wars and revolutions. Already it has lasted at least 120 years by the minimum reckoning. Worth a detailed analysis or two? "No, not really. Just tell them there will be another war along in a minute, and then get onto the really good bit about how socialist revolution is the only final answer to it all".

So much for 100 volumes of detailed Marxist history of the significance of national-liberation struggles, pre-national-liberation struggles, other tortuous national questions, other independence struggles of all kinds, the Jewish question, modern imperialist states and cultural-national autonomy, the impact of colonial wars, the element of anti-colonialism in inter-imperialist wars, the rights and wrongs of supposedly

70 'progressive' imperialism versus 'reactionary' imperialism, the notions of 'super-imperialism' and 'aggressive' imperialism as

opposed to 'decadent' imperialism, the shake-up to imperialism by neocolonialism, etc, etc, etc, -- all Marxism-Leninism is 'a bit of a waste of time, really,' – imply these Trots. 'Just listen to our advocacy of the socialist revolution. That's all you need', seems to be the message of these ivory-tower dwellers.

For the record, the historical position of decadent British imperialism in Ireland is clearly not remotely comparable with the circumstances surrounding US imperialism's 'chosen race' hit squad newly colonising Palestine.

In the context of unending inter-imperialist conflict, there is just room temporarily for British imperialism to individually fade out a little further without too much damage to the world order. Both Hong Kong and Ireland can be seen as highly symbolic in their own ways, but not crucial.

An Arab revolutionary national-liberation victory over Zionist imperialism would be dynamite for the struggling US imperialist 'new world order', however.

Clearly, in one sense, the PLO can be described as temporarily acting as imperialism's policeman against further Arab revolt.

But for how long? And when, and to what extent, will the insult of a token derisory 'Palestine autonomous area' nevertheless turn into its opposite because the pressures of the Arab revolution will eventually prove irresistible, even if Arafat starts going kosher.

Further revolutionary and imperialist-war turmoil is inevitable throughout the Middle East, and it will be a major historic turning point.

More revolutionary turmoil is not at all ruled out in Ireland and the British Isles generally. But are the circumstances there remotely **usefully** comparable to the chaotic and explosive Middle East situation?? Not really. But it suits irresponsible Trot small-mindedness to pretend so, because it gives them a sneaky chance to imply Gerry Adams as a neo-colonial policeman, the way they somewhere loosely, vaguely and inaccurately try to write off the PLO's current confusion and paralysis threatening real harm to the Palestinian position.

Sinn Féin has spread no such chaos in the way it has outmanoeuvred British imperialism and genuinely soft and compromising Irish nationalism of the SDLP variety. All this Trot drivel is utterly bankrupt and useless, – or genuinely reactionary.

Long having suffered total censorship by the bourgeoisie, Sinn Féin could do without further misrepresentation by the fake-'left' petty bourgeoisie. It speaks excellently well on its own behalf, and any serious-minded workers organisation struggling to build a socialist anti-imperialist movement in Britain would not hesitate to give great publicity to the national-liberation struggle's achievements:

SINN Féin took another step towards next month's negotiating table when Gerry Adams held two-and-a-half hours of talks at Stormont with the Northern Ireland Secretary, Mo Mowlam.

It was Mr Adams's first face-to-face meeting with a government minister since the new IRA ceasefire was called and he used the opportunity to tell Ms Mowlam that he was looking for a united Ireland, but indicated that joint sovereignty would be an acceptable down-payment.

"We want an Ireland free and independent. Sinn Féin enters negotiations as an Irish republican party seeking to promote the broad nationalist objective of an end to British rule in Ireland," he said.

"Partition is wrong. It is a failure of the past which must be put right." In his view, the claim by the British of sovereignty in Ireland "is the key matter which must be addressed in negotiations."

He said: "An internal six-county arrangement cannot work. There has to be fundamental constitutional and political change. The status quo is unworkable."

Mr Adams urged the British government to play a constructive role in "persuading" unionists to reach a democratic agreement on Irish reunification – a role Tony Blair has already declined.

Mr Adams added that unionists had nothing to fear. "Sinn Féin is not threatening unionists' heritage or identity. Unionists are an intrinsic part of Ireland. "Republicans don't want you to leave it, nor do we wish to dominate you," he told them.

After the meeting, Mr Adams said the main item had been the ending of the Union. "We will keep this issue on the agenda until it is resolved," he said.

Mr Adams, who led a five-member delegation, including party strategist Martin McGuinness, said the discussions had been "business-like" and a step in the right direction. It was "now certain" Sinn Féin would be included in the talks process when it resumed in September, he said. Although he had shaken Mo Mowlam by the hand and welcomed her as the first woman to be British Secretary of State, there was a sting in the tail.

"We also want her to be the last British Secretary of State, we want to see Ireland free of British jurisdiction – that is our goal and aim," he said.

The Secretary of State emerged separately to declare the meeting constructive. She welcomed the IRA ceasefire as a positive clear step.

"The first two weeks have been

very positive and the advice is that it is holding very well," she said.

She had "urged Sinn Féin to work to achieve the earliest possible decommissioning of all paramilitary weapons". Sinn Féin has already said the IRA will not hand over a single bullet until a peace settlement has been signed.

As for Mr Adams's agenda of a united Ireland, she said Sinn Féin was able to bring any proposal to the negotiating table, just as she expected unionists to do the same.

"We will have a whole host of views on the table. The nature of the talks process is to negotiate and discuss and do what I hope will happen, which is reach an accommodation on a constitutionally balanced statement."

Mr Paisley lambasted Tony Blair after they met in Downing Street yesterday, accusing ministers of being in cahoots with Dublin and Washington.

"Such a government is not in itself free, but rather a slave to the blackmail of IRA violence," he said. "The fact is that the IRA/Sinn Féin has bombed its way to the negotiating table and nothing less than the empty chairs of the unionists at that table will demonstrate the rejection of this Iscariot act of betrayal."

Mr Blair last night resigned himself to rejection of the decommissioning document but officials will be working on resolving differences until the last minute.

But the small loyalist parties linked to paramilitary organisations angrily accused Mr Paisley of betraying the unionist people.

David Ervine, leader of the Progressive Unionist Party, said: "If unionism is prepared to run away when it is most needed, at a time when Northern Ireland is in its greatest need... it's a shame."

The Northern Ireland Secretary, Mo Mowlam, admitted that a defeat over the decommissioning paper would be a setback but on BBC Radio 4 *The World at One* she stressed. "I am hopeful we can still move the process forward."

In the Commons, Tony Blair said: "I know why members of the Unionist parties felt they had to vote against the decommissioning agreement, but I am pleased that the leader of the Ulster Unionists is not walking out of those talks. We're going to try to find a way through."

But Mr Paisley declared the process over. The only peace train running was the one for Dublin.

"There is nothing there for Unionists or its people and those who believe in law and order. The gunmen have taken over the process. The battle lines are now drawn. The Government has surrendered to the IRA."

The Sinn Féin chairman, Mitchel McLaughlin, said he regretted the Unionist decision but he believed there would be substantive talks at some stage. "The peace process is alive. I think the attitude of the Unionist politicians is at variance with their own community. Those who refuse to engage in negotiations threaten the process," he said.

The Ulster Democratic Party,

which is linked to the Ulster Defence Association, earlier called for the vote to be suspended. But afterwards spokesman David Adams said: "It is back to the drawing board. We have to put our heads together to find another way forward."

The IRA can make its own mortars, landmines, rockets and grenades and has developed sophisticated triggering devices, using radio, light and radar. Just before the 1994 ceasefire it had perfected a new, more powerful, explosive, combining finely ground agricultural fertiliser, icing sugar and diesel fuel.

As Sinn Féin spokesmen often say when ridiculing the decommissioning debate: "How do you decommission icing sugar?"

The intelligence and security services, including senior MI5 and RUC officers, privately adopt a pragmatic approach. They say the IRA has demonstrated that homemade bombs, backed up by Semtex explosive, pose as much of a threat as arms.

Explosives, rather than weapons, have caused the damage in recent IRA attacks on the mainland.

Though the RUC has a broad idea of the extent of the IRA's arsenal, security sources also point to the difficulty in measuring the significance in practical terms of any decommissioning programme.

There is some evidence of a change of attitude within MI5 under its new director general, Stephen Lander. Security sources are acknowledging that there is no security solution, only a political one, in Northern Ireland.

They have even expressed concern in recent months about the difficult position Sinn Féin leaders such as Gerry Adams and Martin McGuinness were facing with elements in the IRA Army Council.

The establishment bourgeoisie in Britain have no reason to consider the Irish national-liberation struggle with anything but fear and loathing. But now that British imperialism is being forced to do a deal with Irish nationalist militancy, then some sneaking admiration for Sinn Féin is beginning to creep into the capitalist lie machine:

Six months after the first ceasefire, Adams urged Republican activists to direct their energies to a new front; the "sound of angry voices and marching feet". In response, residents' coalitions were established in Nationalist areas through which Orangemen marched. Before then, Orange marches were tolerated by a peaceful but resentful Catholic population. But portraying Nationalists as victims of British-backed loyalist supremacy is essential to keep the Sinn Féin bandwagon rolling.

Judging by a recent conversation between Adams and Sinn Féin members, the purpose of residents' coalitions was to face down the Orangemen — and to wind them up. Adams said: "Ask any activist in the north did Drumcree happen by accident and they will tell you no... three years of work on the Lower Ormeau

Road, Portadown (Drumcree) and parts of Fermanagh and Newry, Armagh..."

This year, residents' coalitions everywhere, apart from Drumcree did face down Orangemen, forcing them to cancel or re-route marches. By avoiding confrontation, Unionism then occupied the high ground. Adams wrested it back by announcing another IRA ceasefire was imminent. British officials have long respected Adams for his tactical brilliance.

The Ulster Unionist Party leader David Trimble threatened to pull out of inter-party peace talks, claiming the Government had shifted its ground on decommissioning. Trimble wanted guns handed over before and during substantive peace talks. The Government required the IRA only to consider handing them over during talks. If Trimble votes against the de-commissioning proposals this Wednesday, he, not Adams, will be called the saboteur of peace.

Adams's hardline stand on decommissioning was the last of his four conditions for a new ceasefire to be agreed by the Government. Sinn Féin also demanded admission to peace talks afterwards, a deadline for talks and confidence-building measures. Tony Blair agreed Sinn Féin's entry to talks only six weeks after a ceasefire, set a deadline of next May for talks to be completed, and promised to repatriate 10 IRA prisoners to the Irish Republic.

Adams had faced down John Major, who relented on his refusal to meet the demand for clarification of the *Downing Street Declaration*. After the ceasefire, the Government said Sinn Féin would not be admitted to talks until the IRA changed its pledge of a cessation of violence to "permanent". Three months later, Major had made the working assumption that the ceasefire was permanent

GETTING to the peace conference table on the IRA's terms has been one of Adams's major goals since he devised the Long War strategy in the 1970s. By broadening the IRA's appeal into politics with the Armalite and the ballot box, Sinn Féin became so popular it threatened constitutional nationalism in the SDLP.

This led to the 1985 Anglo-Irish agreement which ensured a consultative role for Dublin in the running of NI, while guaranteeing Unionists that it would remain part of the UK. Publicly Adams attacked the treaty as a sell-out. Privately he hailed it as the most important development since partition in 1921.

Adams persuaded the IRA that the struggle needed to be broadened further with its 1994 ceasefire backed by a pan-nationalist alliance of the SDLP, Dublin and Washington. When the IRA laid down its arms so far short of the goal of a united Ireland, an ex-British Army general saluted Adams for his courage, as did the former NI Secretary Peter Brooke. They had in mind the fate of IRA commander Michael Collins, who in 1922 settled for partition and was assassinated. What no one realised was that Adams must have also

agreed to follow the IRA back to war if that's what it wanted.

What appears to be the real strategy was set out in a document circulated before the ceasefire, called *Tactical Use of Armed Struggle*. It suggests the IRA's first ceasefire was merely a tactic to get to the conference table, and that the IRA will retain the option of a return to violence in the event of major blocks at the peace talks; presumably why it has deliberately not prefixed the new ceasefire announcement with the word "permanent".

Having got the IRA to the negotiating table with its armoury intact, Adam's position as overall head of the Republican Movement now seems unassailable. There will be no split as long as he leads it. The IRA must be confident that the supreme commander will continue to advance steadily on all fronts, however long it takes.

First there was a joint paper from Gerry Adams and the SDLP leader John Hume, familiar language for peace process watchers, except with an added twist. "We regret that despite our collective efforts, inclusive and meaningful negotiations were not put in place and that the unprecedented opportunity created by the IRA cessation of August 1994 was wasted.

"Our principal concern is that this dreadful mistake is not repeated," the two leaders of Northern Ireland's Catholics said. The blame for the past 18 months of IRA bombs and killings therefore lay with John Major.

In Dublin prominent Irish American figures such as the New York publisher Niall O'Dowd had gathered once more, just as they did in August 1994. The symbolism of their presence did not go unnoticed: The pan-nationalist alliance that Mr Adams had put together three years ago was rebuilt, with support from America and Dublin.

The active involvement of President Clinton, who has had to authorise personally a waiver of entry restrictions for Mr Adams seven times, is again crucial. Meanwhile, Mr O'Dowd waited impatiently in his Dublin hotel room for the announcement everybody wanted to hear.

Then came the statement from Mr Adams that together with Martin McGuinness he had provided "a detailed report and assessment to the IRA" and had urged the IRA leadership to restore the cessation of August 1994.

Mr Adams again blamed Mr Major's government for "renewing" on its commitment to inclusive peace talks, but he also put the boot into the former Irish taoiseach John Bruton, accusing him of making mistakes. With both the villains of the Irish peace process removed from power, the prospects of rebuilding it improved considerably.

The peace process slithered slowly downhill, with the downfall of Mr Reynolds's government in murky circumstances and his replacement by the anti-Provo Fine Gael leader Mr Bruton.

Republican experts all agreed that Mr Adams and his comrades required sensitive handling, qualities

with which the inheritors of the pro-Treaty legacy were never equipped.

It was obvious Mr Adams never believed that decommissioning would be allowed to grow into the beast which it became, but then he had not budgeted for the fact that in constitutional politics there are no safe bets. If Mr Reynolds had survived, doubtless he would have exerted pressure on Mr Major to rethink. After the IRA ceasefire ended in a cloud of Canary Wharf smoke, Mr Adams faced a much steeper hill to climb than he had in 1994. First of all, the volunteers had a much clearer idea of what was on offer in return for an end to the violence.

But there was the prospect of a form of covert joint sovereignty, or at least a stronger and steadily increasing input from Dublin into the affairs of Northern Ireland. This could lead, through political work alone, to the effective dismantling of the British state in Ireland over a period of some 10 years, the grassroots were encouraged, somewhat optimistically perhaps, to believe. There were the rising electoral fortunes of Sinn Féin, once just an adjunct to the IRA, a cheerleader on the sides, now a formidable political party breathing heavily down the neck of the moderate and greying SDLP. Three separate election tests resulted in dramatic successive rises in the number of Sinn Féin votes cast. Today nobody scoffs at the prospect of Sinn Féin supplanting the SDLP as the main voice of northern nationalism by the next Westminster election.

In the late 1970s Mr Adams was among those republican leaders who formulated the idea of "the long war". Today that concept persists, if it has been radically modified. A campaign of military attrition alone will not sap the will of Northern Ireland's Protestants to believe themselves to be British, nor did it ever have a hope of convincing London to depart regardless of Unionist feelings.

The republican movement is in for the long haul. It will never relinquish its objective of breaking the constitutional link with Britain, but it is more prepared now to work for it by other means. So when the Provisional IRA ceasefire is declared its ardent supporters can be confident that the republican movement is in far healthier shape than it was in August 1994.

Three years ago, the IRA had abandoned its precondition of a timeframe for political talks. Today both governments agree it is a good idea. Three years ago there was no commitment to address the issue of what to do with the hundreds of paramilitary prisoners languishing in jail.

Today there is.

And three years ago Northern Ireland did not know the taste of life free from the daily grinding cycle of murder, reprisal and counter-murder. 1995, the year of the imperfect peace, reawakened a dormant appetite on both sides of its divided community.

Peter Robinson, the deputy leader of the Democratic Unionists, said: "Why would the IRA not declare a ceasefire? They have got everything they have asked for."

He said any cessation of violence

would be merely tactical and extract further concessions from the Government. He added that he had no intention of sitting at the negotiating table with Sinn Féin if they were included on the basis of a ceasefire called in these circumstances.

Ulster Unionists want the peace that existed for Northern Ireland's first 50 years, when Protestants controlled every state job, almost all council housing, gerrymandered the electoral system, armed the notorious B-specials and had their country described by their prime minister as "a Protestant land for a Protestant people".

The problem for those Unionist leaders is that their Protestant land now looks very different to most Protestants than it did 20 years ago. At that time, a proud Unionist father could say to his son: "Come with me to your Uncle Frank in the Orange Order and he'll sort you out a job." Now he can only say: "Come with me to your Uncle Frank in the Orange Order and he'll sort you out a bowler hat. You can wear it to the dole office." So most Protestants have less and less reason to support the Union. Which is why, whereas in 1974 the Ulster Workers' Council could mobilise virtually every Protestant in the Province, now Orange marches appeal to a few hundred, and if likely to face opposition can be called off.

And a British bourgeois willingness to accept that the national-liberation struggle has won and that a new settlement is now the sensible solution, putting the redundant Orange-colonist mentality in its place, – is now being openly expressed:

In 1997 the political situation is very different, and a strong new government in London is much better placed to call the Unionist bluff. There is a recognition that the IRA's sting will not be drawn before the talks produce an agreement, if indeed it can ever fully be drawn at all, and that only a real agreement will ensure that the IRA does not return to violence.

Sooner or later, it is going to be necessary to challenge the strand of Protestant politics and opinion which absolutely rejects all compromise with Catholic Northern Ireland as a sell-out and surrender. Mr Blair knows this, and so, even better, does Mr Trimble. There will never be a perfect time to take on Ian Paisley, because the outcome will always be messy. But now is probably the least worst time that we are likely to get. There is a new and determined British government. There is now an IRA ceasefire. Mr Trimble's party is in the ascendant over Mr Paisley's and there are no elections in the offing. The small loyalist parties with paramilitary connections are in favour of the talks, not against them. And the Orange Order has already shown that immediate rewards can be won by pressing the case for compromise. Mr Paisley's brand of rejectionism has not run out of steam, but it is huffing and puffing. Mr Trimble cannot escape being denounced for joining the talks, yet if he keeps his nerve he will emerge the stronger for doing so – and so shall we all.

It can now be seen more clearly that calling the Orange bluff, or grasping the nettle of Orange intransigence, – is the key to a way forward in Ireland.

The great obstacle to the longstanding wish by sectors of the British Establishment to get out of Ireland and get out of the endless humiliation and cost of not being able to defeat the national-liberation struggle, – has been the Unionist threat of UDI, creating a more bloody armed mess than is there already. The former British-colonial settlers in Ulster, the 'Loyalists', have extremists who might fight.

But the majority of the misdescribed 'Protestant' population know that the Partition of Ireland at British-army bayonet-point in 1921 to preserve some colonial privileges over the native Irish in the northeast corner of the island was a cruel injustice to the war of National liberation fought and led by Sinn Féin and the IRA from 1916 to 1921 to free most of Ireland. It was also a messy compromise which was bound to cause more trouble, which it has done, non-stop, ever since. Like the whites in South Africa or the whites in Rhodesia, these descendants of colonial settlers will only go so far in risking destruction by resisting majority rule (of the Irish over the whole united island) eventually.

Before long, the 'catholics' (i.e. the Irish) will be in a majority in the northeast six counties as well, – so why bother wrecking the country and themselves by refusing to give way partially now to what must inevitably be

accepted in due course?

Total chauvinist bigots like Paisley and Patton say that giving up tradition's Orange marching routes means immediate total surrender to Papal domination from Dublin and to Fenian violence.

It may come to a war of UDI. But some Orange minds seem to be prepared at last to admit that this old colonising bluff has now been called, and has shown the whole 'resistance' project to be completely out of date.

They are triumphalist, not tradition, marches, – rubbing the colonised Irish noses in the dirt.

The British Empire cannot maintain this costly war-torn toe-hold domination of part of Ireland any longer.

And world opinion says that British military resistance of the national-liberation struggle is wrong, – and that the civilian paramilitary back-up by the Orange marches, is wrong too.

Blair and Mowlam are out of their depth, – fooled by RUC diehards over Drumcree, but still desperate to do the bidding of the Washington, Dublin, EU consensus of a New Settlement for Ireland which will open the door for ultimate reunification.

Irish national-liberation steadfastness is achieving a massive triumph over imperialism.

Douglas Bell

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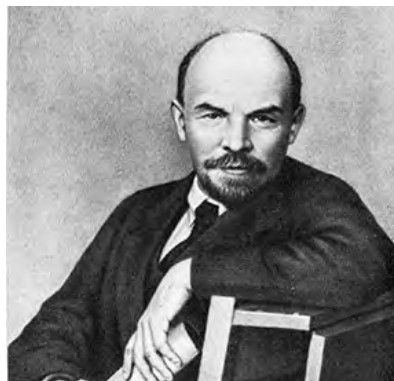
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- Part Five covering the GFA and the long-drawn out implementation will follow.

1981 Hunger Strikers

