

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 5 (September 1997 – February 1999)

The victory for anti-imperialist forces demanding a new settlement for Ireland is of vital interest for workers in Britain and beyond, New Labour's reactionary muddle on everything else has been bypassed. 'Decommissioning' hypocrisy doomed as a disruption to talks agenda on political solutions + MI5 Gestapo revelations.

[EPSR No 916 02-09-97]

Whitehall's invitation to Sinn Féin to fullscale negotiations on a completely new settlement for Ireland while the national-liberation forces still remain fully armed is an acceptance by imperialism that it has been defeated.

Despite continued incur-

able British intransigence and muddleheadedness, the Irish national-liberation struggle has now established its historic triumph over colonialism.

The IRA guerrilla war and the Sinn Féin political offensives have proved unbeatable, and have demonstrated an ability to

damage Britain militarily and in its world diplomatic reputation to such an extent that London is now certain it can only suffer more harm the longer the conflict goes on.

The bone-headed hypocrisy of the 'unionist' colonial community is the remaining great obstacle to a new and far more just peace treaty between Britain and Ireland, rearranging the totality of relations far more to the eventual benefit of Ireland's full independence in political terms.

Thus the criminal injustice of the 1921 Partition peace treaty imposed on the Irish national-liberation war by a wounded but still too powerful British imperialism will at last be overturned.

The inbuilt sectarian colonial tyranny of the bogus country of 'Northern Ireland', an artificial historical monstrosity which

Orange fascist colonists at Gavarghy Road demanding their "traditional" triumphalist intimidation marching "rights" over the Irish republican population

could never survive, will be no more.

This will help complete a tremendous epoch of national-liberation struggle which has transformed the appearance of monopoly-imperialism's planet and which has helped to prepare the ground for its true ultimate socialist transformation.

Only worthless cynics and absurdly-posturing fake-'lefts' continue to sneer 'what victory?', 'what peace process?', in the face of this great historical turning point.

Most of directly-ruled empire at finance-capital's disposal has long since disintegrated, of course.

But the fact that much colonial intransigence lingered on, – and that the states of national-democratic revolution did not escape far away from the financial clutches of imperialist exploitation and NATO-power bullying, – together demonstrated that monopoly-imperialism is still the establishment force to be reckoned with in history.

And it is a **revolutionary**

national-liberation struggle which has had to defeat imperialism once again.

The British imperialist establishment resorted to every brutal repressive measure known to 20th century colonial-fascist tyranny, using the full might of a destructive propaganda machinery and the armed state. It is a dying force, however, and one increasingly out of touch with civilisation's requirements now.

Expressed in a million and one different ways, the powers of monopoly capitalism are now creating far more problems for mankind than they can solve.

Irish national-liberation is therefore a clearcut guerrilla-war victory for independence, but it is also a revolutionary triumph over imperialist control in general, and thus an event of possibly far more wide-reaching significance.

It cannot be stressed strongly enough, or soon enough, that this retreat by British imperialism has nothing whatever to do with any greater 'liberal farsightedness' by New Labour compared to the Tories, which does not exist.

It is probably a New Labour government which is going to agree a new deal with Ireland, but it is a policy which has long been half-imposed by more important and powerful imperialist forces than remain under the British flag.

The Irish national-liberation struggle has won its credibility and 'respectability' on the world stage, where imperialist forces in general felt that the British ruling class's disastrous war was doing the system no favours at all in Third World eyes, and where US imperialism in particular had its own massive 'Irish' vote to consider, invariably sympathetic to the continuing fight for full independence for Ireland against its ancient British imperialist oppressor.

It is imperialism in general which prefers a new settlement for Ireland involving the Sinn Féin/IRA national-liberation struggle, rather than let a patently unjust situation fester on in revolutionary bitterness which could easily give rise in time to even more far-reaching revolutionary aims and organisations than the nationalism and mild socialism of Adams & Co.

And the decrepit London Establishment is not making quite the degenerate mess of the Irish policy as is afflicting most other activities of the New Labour regime – because Blair & Co are not in sole charge. The input from Washington and Dublin is

going to be all-important in taking this fraught 'negotiations' phase through to a successful referendum next May which will get a majority vote for a new arrangement for Ireland.

Diana death imbecilities permitting, Adams and McGuinness will be in Washington this week for a triumphal welcome by the Irish-American lobby, fully endorsed and joined in with by the Clinton administration.

In this way and others, colossal pressures are piling up on the intransigent colonist 'unionists' to at last drop their 'no surrender' insistence that the Occupied Zone of Ireland should remain part of the British Empire.

For the moment, diehard 'loyalist' propaganda is generally still banging the same old drum of mind-numbing hypocrisy about how 'democratic' parties should not be asked to sit down in talks with 'terrorists' who still have their 'guns under the table', etc, – ignoring the reality that the superbly-armed British imperialist police-military dictatorship, – the historic cause of all Ireland's troubles, – will be dominating the talks, and the 'loyalist' community, which has easily the biggest private arms supplies and the most 'terrorist' gunmen, will have most party representatives at the negotiating table.

But London has already finally called the bluff of the colonists on this matter, and dictated that the provocative anti-IRA propaganda gimmick demanding prior or early 'arms decommissioning' from the nationalists, – to imply they have been defeated or should be regarded as having been defeated, – will not be allowed to delay real negotiations any longer for a new political settlement for Ireland which will make loyalist-dictatorship and national-liberation arms no longer necessary.

Mo Mowlam's latest words on this colonist smokescreen for hiding their own 'no surrender' intransigence did not repeat London's 'no veto' guarantee to Sinn Féin, but made it obvious in other ways that a substantive political agreement was the way out, and that the decommissioning gimmick would not be allowed to get in the way:

'Look, you cannot force people to decommission. This has been the problem of the last 27 years. So if you cannot force them, you have to put a process in place and work to build trust and confidence between the different parties so that momentum is built up, and as that happens, then numerous options become possible.'

She said she could not reasonably expect the IRA to disarm totally by the end of May since 'there is no such thing as "total decommissioning" as we all know. We don't know how much weaponry they have. I am not setting amounts, deadlines and times. I am just saying that progress must happen in parallel.'

She said it would be for the decommissioning body to look 'at a whole host of ways to facilitate the process of handing over weapons'. She did not rule out the possibility that the IRA will be allowed to hand weapons over in the Republic, regarded by some as a symbolically less difficult act for an IRA determined not to give any impression of surrender to a foreign power.

If all the parties do finally reach the moment of substantive talks, she says, she wants them to discuss the *Framework Documents* offered by the two governments in 1995 as 'their best guess of what an accommodation would look like. But it is not set in stone. A devolved assembly in some shape or form would make sense for Northern Ireland. We also need an accommodation that takes account of nationalist wishes for some kind of relationship with the South and the Unionist desire to continue the Union. I do not think those two are beyond the wit of mankind to get so that both sides get something of what they want. No one is going to get 100 per cent of what they want. We all have to change, all of us.'

And the steady decline of British imperialism's position in the world during the 20th century has slowly been forcing the former colonial community into new thinking, – the continuance of their old sectarian and gerry-mandered artificial statelet of non-existent 'Northern Ireland' having been rendered unviable by the unbeatable magnificence of the Irish national-liberation struggle:

Intriguingly new, more flexible, articulate and socialist voices have also emerged in the shape of the Progressive Unionist Party and the Ulster Democratic Party. The UDP shows a contempt for Paisley's immobilism, exemplified in a published article by David Adams, a leading UDP figure. Urging Unionism to accept the Government's proposals for cross-border bodies and ridiculing the DUP's promise to mobilise mass resistance, he asked: 'What will be the protest this time? A Carson trail, a Save Ulster Campaign, fire-arms certificates waved defiantly on a darkened hilltop or a good old-fashioned raid on a defenceless village?'

So, given this new realism within Unionism, and new tactics inside the IRA, what can the British Government propose at the coming talks? The outlines of the deal are clear enough, since they are set out in the *Framework Documents* produced in February 1995. The *Documents* will form the basis of substantive talks between all the parties after 15 September. They were not intended as a blueprint, but instead

as an assessment of what might be acceptable to all the parties.

Intricate proposals for internal government were heavily informed by the ultimately abortive Brooke-Mayhew talks between all the constitutional parties and also by a paper written by the Ulster Unionists entitled '*A Blueprint for Stability*'.

It proposed a 90-strong legislative assembly for Northern Ireland elected by proportional representation with a system of committees constituted in proportion to party strengths in the assembly. These committees would head the executive departments of the Northern Ireland Office. A weighted majority would be required to pass contentious legislation – in effect a nationalist veto. There would be no Prime Minister or separate executive, only a separate panel of three, elected within Northern Ireland to liaise between the assembly and the Secretary of State. The panel is supposed to operate by consensus.

It also proposed a North-South body, the nearest the IRA are likely to get to a united Ireland for the foreseeable future. The body would have 'consultative, harmonising and executive functions'.

The body's executive functions would cover sectors involving 'a natural or physical all-Ireland framework (e.g. water), EC programmes, marketing Ireland abroad and culture and heritage.

The two governments, the paper said, would also make proposals on the harmonising arrangement between North and South in the areas of agriculture and fisheries, industrial development, consumer affairs, transport energy, trade, health, social welfare, education and economic policy. All decisions would be reached by agreement between the two sides.

For a while, 'Northern Ireland' will continue in name, but it will once again be part of Ireland, no longer a British colony, and its obvious eventual future will be to be reunified completely back into the Irish Republic.

Aware that the game is up, Trimble & Co of the majority 'unionist' party seemed resigned to defeat in their latest agitation for 'protestant paramilitaries' (i.e. terrorists) to have prison conditions eased the same as has been done already for Republican prisoners-of-war. What happened to the line about 'purely democratic parties should not be asked to sit at the negotiating table with those who condone armed terrorism'? Now, instead of demanding hypocritically 'all gunmen to the gallows', Trimble is demanding 'let the loyalist gunmen have eased prison conditions too'.

Already, more restricted guidelines for RUC rubber-bullet deployment are being examined by the Northern Ireland Office. The 'no surrender' colonial mentality looks increasingly doomed. Irish national-liberation is heading for a historic

victory.

Predictably, internal loyalist armed feuding has already broken out as the recriminations begin about how and why the old colonial supremacism has been lost and undermined.

Armed gang-fights and assassination attempts involving the UDA, the UVF and the LVF have been reported in recent days from Derry, Belfast, and Portadown. Billy Hutchinson of the PUP political wing of the UVP has predicted a mini-civil-war

The beginning of the end for the British colony in Ireland.

[EPSR No 918 16-09-97]

The latest colonist talks-boycott because of a rogue bomb in South Armagh is just yet another daft gimmick to cover up the debilitating splits in the Unionist camp.

British imperialist weakness is forcing New Labour to finally fulfil Whitehall plans to get out of Ireland at last, where the national-liberation struggle has proved unbeatable.

Trimble's last-minute attempts to gain a colonist-majority veto over a settlement, or over talks themselves if no IRA guns are decommissioned upfront, have been axed.

Blairism remains the stooge of imperialism, but it is in imperialist interests to concede to national-liberation in Ireland, preferable to communist revolution.

The Unionists will also all swallow this Sinn Féin/IRA triumph gradually, – so as to hang onto some power themselves.

The Republican press grasps this well:

It now seems that there are strong and growing tensions within the Ulster Unionist Party regarding all-party-talks and the peace process which cut across both the leadership of the party and its grass roots.

There are those within the UUP who while they would rather negotiations at Stormont were not happening at all, feel at this stage that it would better to go in, while other elements prefer a complete boycott of what they see as a slippery slope towards political and constitutional change. The indications are that Trimble's leadership of the party is insecure and John Taylor in particular is reportedly snapping at his heels.

Trimble attained his leadership of the UUP through the votes of the hardline Ulster Unionist Council by virtue of his stance at Drumcree and did not receive the vote of even one unionist MP. He may therefore feel somewhat in hock to the more extremist ele-

ments within his party.

But increasingly, this scene resembles the dying days of minority colonial rule in South Africa with the whites splitting and recriminating in all directions, and wild-men threatening all kinds of last-ditch mayhem. But all effectively doomed by history and the power of the national-liberation fight. The despicable 'Northern Ireland' colonial tyranny should go the same way.

Douglas Bell

ments within his party.

Trimble may stall in an effort to placate all sections of his party and safeguard his own tenuous leadership position. But what he needs to recognise is that opting for 'proximity talks' is merely delaying the inevitable by erecting an extra hurdle for himself.

In the meantime, before they enter any sort of talks at all, unionist tactics are to wring as many 'concessions' or privileges from the British government as possible. The primary one is a further reiteration by the British of their commitment to the unionist definition of consent That is what Trimble will have sought from British Prime Minister Tony Blair during their meeting in Downing Street on Wednesday.

While the DUP have denounced the Stormont talks and refused to have any dealings with them at present, it is believed that Ian Paisley and Peter Robinson fear being left totally in the wilderness and would be quite keen to enter proximity talks if it becomes a realistic option. Unionist mass street demonstrations and disruption are not an appealing or realistic alternative at this stage. Particularly without UVF or UDA support. Meanwhile the parties to which those organisations are linked the Progressive Unionist Party (PUP) and the Ulster Democratic Party (UDP) need the safety blanket of UUP involvement in the talks to participate. If the UUP don't go in it seems inevitable that the PUP and UDP will also stay out.

Despite what they wish to convey unionist opposition to sitting down with republicans is not based on any great principle. Rather it is a tactical position adopted in order to forestall real political negotiations. We know this is the case because on a daily basis in council chambers across the Six Counties unionist councillors are talking with Sinn Féin, negotiating with Sinn Féin and even making alliances with Sinn Féin.

Unionists do not want negotia-

tions because the political *raison d'être* of unionism, as it has been since 1920, is to maintain the status quo in the Six Counties. They see negotiations, quite logically, as the harbinger of political change and that is what they wish to prevent.

While such a negative and predictable unionist strategy has the advantage of consistency, it is not without flaws. Although the union remains in place Unionist strategy did not prevent the British government proroguing Stormont, imposing Direct Rule, signing the Hillsborough Agreement and the *Framework Documents*, all of which the unionists claimed were a "sell-out" and a "betrayal" of the Union. Unionist spokesmen continually say that they will not sit down with Sinn Féin because they do not trust the intentions of republicans. However, they know as everyone else does that trust is only something which develops through dialogue and negotiations. It is true that unionists are suffering from a lack of trust, but it isn't a lack of trust in republicans. They know exactly where republicans stand on all of the major issues. Their real fear is based on their continuing and increasing lack of trust in the British government.

Both decommissioning and consent will rumble on as issues, but the shape of the final deal put to the people of Ireland will be decisive, – as the IRA explained in their now notorious 'interview' last week, reproduced below. Any reasonable way forward for the whole of Ireland will be hard for the colonists, a tiny minority in reality, to thwart:

An Phoblacht. The announcement of a renewal of the IRA cessation on 20 July came as a major surprise to most political commentators. What were the key factors or changes in the political climate which influenced the decision to restore the ceasefire?

IRA: Our announcement of a restoration of the cessation of August 1994 certainly did appear to catch most political commentators on the hop. But then many of these commentators regularly call it wrong, particularly with regard to our position.

In any case, the key elements which influenced our decision were that the new British Labour government moved with some speed after taking office to deal with the need for all inclusive negotiations and the new Fianna Fail-led government in the South moved to help put a peace process back on the rails from an Irish point of view.

The previous British government, under John Major, had

imposed a number of blocking mechanisms or obstacles to prevent inclusive and meaningful peace talks taking place. The British government had known for sometime that before the IRA would again consider a cessation of military activity they would have to address four key issues:

- 1) The removal of the precondition of decommissioning;
- 2) Setting a timeframe for any talks;
- 3) Immediate entry into talks for Sinn Féin on the basis of its democratic mandate;
- 4) Confidence-building measures by the British government.

The new British government moved publicly and speedily to address these issues. They removed the precondition of decommissioning, they set a timeframe for substantive talks of between now and May next year, they made it clear that such talks would be substantive and inclusive when they were convened on 15 September and that bilateral meetings would start almost immediately after any announcement of an IRA cessation. They also gave public commitments to move on a series of confidence-building measures, including POWs, the Irish language and issues of equality of treatment.

Both London and Dublin governments have also committed themselves to the start of negotiations on substantive issues from 15 September.

An Phoblacht: Do you believe there will be all-party negotiations on 15 September?

IRA: Well, I believe that all-party negotiations are absolutely necessary for the resolution of the conflict between the British government and the Irish people. I therefore believe them to be inevitable. Those elected representatives who would refuse to participate in all-party negotiations are wreckers trying to hold back the tide of history. For our part, we took an initiative in August '94 to enhance the potential for a meaningful peace process. That historic opportunity was run into the sand. We now have a second opportunity. We have played our part in restoring the total cessation of August '94. It is for others to play their part and rise to the challenge this renewed opportunity presents them.

An Phoblacht: Sinn Féin has affirmed the Mitchell Principles. Do you have a view on that and what of your own view on the Mitchell Principles themselves?

IRA: Sinn Féin is a political party with a very substantial democratic mandate. What they do is a matter for them. But I think all republicans should understand and support them as they do what

they believe is right and necessary to bring about a lasting peace. Sinn Féin's stated commitment is to secure a peace settlement which both removes the causes of conflict and takes all the guns, British, republican, unionist, nationalist and loyalist, out of Irish politics. The Sinn Féin position actually goes beyond the Mitchell Principles. Their affirmation of these principles is therefore quite compatible with their position.

As to the IRA's attitude to the Mitchell Principles *per se*, well, the IRA would have problems with sections of the Mitchell Principles. But then the IRA is not a participant in these talks.

An Phoblacht: Let me go to the issue of "consent". Is there confusion out there as to the republican version of consent?

IRA: There shouldn't be but there is no doubt that the British and unionists have quite deliberately muddled what should be a clear concept by interpreting consent to mean a political veto. In doing so they have tried to introduce a new precondition into the equation in the same way as they previously tried to make decommissioning a precondition.

For republicans any political consent requirement must have a straightforward 32-County context. It must recognise the properly-defined parameters of nationhood and self-determination as understood in international law. Any consent requirement must be defined within the context of British withdrawal and encompass all the people of Ireland. It cannot therefore be shaped with regard to outside impediment or interference. The idea that a minority grouping in Ireland, situated within the Six Counties, should have a veto over political progress in the island as a whole is anathema to republicans. Unionists, after all, are in the majority in only three of

the 32 Counties of Ireland. I have no doubt both the unionists and the British would be among the first to object if someone was to pick any other three counties and suggest they be afforded a similar veto.

An Phoblacht: In the past the IRA has said there will be no decommissioning. Has your position changed in any way with regard to this?

IRA: No, our position on decommissioning has not changed in any way at all. I don't think anyone has ever realistically expected us to agree to decommissioning this side of a political settlement. There is no historical precedent in Ireland for such a demand. Those who raised the issue in the first instance and who continue to hype it are interested only in creating an excuse for their own refusal to engage in meaningful negotiations. The seriousness with which they take the issue can be fairly well measured by their lack of focus on any need to decommission the guns of the RUC, the British Army or the 100,000 and more other 'legally'-held guns in the Six Counties.

Decommissioning on our part would be tantamount to surrender. It was irresponsible of the last British government to try to use the opportunity provided by our initiative in August 1994 to secure an IRA surrender. It would therefore be doubly irresponsible if the present British government went on that same fruitless pursuit again. Decommissioning should not be allowed to become a distraction from the need for meaningful negotiations. Those with a genuine interest in developing a peace process which has the potential for producing a just and lasting peace will have no interest in decommissioning beyond the point where all guns are silent.

Trot petty-bourgeois defeatism still cannot stop getting it wrong about Ireland. Subjective idealism can never see the wood for the trees. Sinn Féin's assured progress towards the eventual ending of the hated and reactionary-Partition will prove crucial for British workers' emancipation.

[EPSR No 925 04-11-97]

One of the clearest examples of a hostility-to-theory being the philistine essence of all 'ultra-left' petty-bourgeois 'revolutionary' sects, is the Trots' treacherous position on the Irish national-liberation struggle.

The defeatism typical of the

middle class has been analysed by EPSR in the opportunist posturing of the CPGB *Weekly Worker*, the *Militant* (Socialist Party), the Sparts, and others in the various forms this subjective idealism takes. Routinely, the national-liberation struggle is

belittled for its anti-imperialist value because of not being 'the proletarian socialist revolution' which it clearly could not yet be, and was not meant to be.

Equally dumbly, the armed revolutionary war to complete Ireland's self-determination and full independence by ending the British colonial statelet in the Occupied Zone in the north, is regularly deemed to have "failed, and been abandoned" on the imaginary grounds that US imperialism, 'now the sole superpower', is with its allies able to 'impose settlements on every hot-spot in the world', etc.

The false conclusion drawn from these false premises, is that Sinn Féin and the IRA have 'sold out' to a 'British imperialist peace settlement'.

A traditional fence-sitting sect, – the RCG whose *Fight Racism, Fight Imperialism* took 6 months in 1979-80 to say anything about Solidarnosc counter-revolutionaries in Poland, and even then still dithered, unwilling to show any enthusiasm for backing the Polish workers state which was the only realistic channel for a continuation of anti-imperialist policy in Poland, – is still hedging its bets.

Its sly opportunism on Ireland won't join the rest of the Trots and quite spell out their defeatism, but neither will it write the story in the spirit and understanding of the national-liberation struggle's great triumph over British imperialism.

Every paragraph of the following *FRFI* excerpt slyly implies that, more likely, it might be going all wrong rather than a colossal historic victory which will see the end forever of 'Northern Ireland' as it was, – a monstrously reactionary sectarian British colony:

For the nationalist working class, the talks will mean nothing as long as British troops remain on the streets, POWs remain in prison and loyalist gangs, in collusion with the RUC, attack nationalist homes.

Although Sinn Féin has stated they will be putting forward a republican agenda at the talks calling for a united Ireland, any agreement reached must be approved, firstly, by 75 per cent of those involved in the talks and, secondly, by a majority of the British parliament. Martin McGuinness, quoted in the Irish *Sunday Tribune*, said that 'a united Ireland would not emerge from the current all-party negotiations on future constitutional and political structures for the north.'

The northern Irish statelet is based on discrimination and sectarianism. A strategy based on attempting to democratise it will fail. The statement by the IRA that it will not decommission any weapons this side of a political settlement is in part a recognition of that political reality.

The car bomb detonated outside the RUC station in Market-hill, Armagh on 16 September, and claimed by the Continuity Army Council IRA, points to the fact that there is a sizeable trend within the nationalist community who are opposed to the pre-

sent strategy of Sinn Féin.

Communists and socialists in Britain continue to demand the release of all Irish POWs and call for troops out now!

But the crucial reality is the exact opposite of all this subjective disbelief.

Imperialist forces really have been forced by military and political national-liberation struggle to concede that the guerrilla war out of Ireland cannot be defeated, and that an organised retreat conceding the ultimate reunification of Ireland would be far less damaging for British imperialism than continued humiliation at the hands of the IRA and Sinn Féin.

Of course a united Ireland will not emerge directly out of the new settlement, which will be for a variety of interim cross-border arrangements, – to save the face of the British and their hardline Orange colonist community.

But the reactionary fiction of 'Northern Ireland' will effectively be no more (as an 'independent part of the British state' on occupied Irish soil), – that is the issue. And that is what the 'No surrender' colonist diehards said could never happen, and what British imperialism said it would never be forced into conceding by 'terrorist violence'.

Well it wasn't terrorist violence, but an unbeatable all-round national liberation struggle, – a revolutionary challenge, arms in hand.

It is a colossal historic victory over imperialism, although you would never know it listening to the dismal petty-bourgeois subjective idealists, – the Trot bogus 'ultra-lefts' who only ever talk about one thing, – their own self-importance as the greatest undiscovered revolutionary leaders of the age, and their own, in reality, philistine anti-theory ignorance, opportunist treacherousness (keeping their distance from much anti-IRA hysteria in Britain by their own sneers at the tactics and perspectives of nationalism), and armchair-socialist fantasies.

The great Sinn Féin/IRA triumph is, of course, a nationalist victory, – not a victory for Marxist-Leninist proletarian revolutionary struggle. But it is an immeasurably important success against imperialism which has been able to have, and will continue to have, tremendous significance for the class war of the working class in Britain.

Firstly, imperialism can be defeated, no matter what unbelievable odds and monstrous dictatorship tyranny is unleashed against anti-imperialist struggle.

Secondly, by eventually at last freeing British workers from being party to, however unwillingly, the colonial domination of another nation, the Irish national-liberation struggle finally makes it possible for the British working class to set about its own emancipation from capitalism, no longer held back by pro-British imperialist sentiments which in the past have made a majority of British workers easy stooges for reactionary imperialist ideology in every direction.

Some of the greatness of these far-reaching historical achievements comes through in the sound political sense, far-sighted dignity, and enormous feeling for justice and appropriate sensitivity in the firm-but-diplomatically-fair opening statement by Sinn Féin to the new settlement negotiations which have finally begun at Stormont, — printed in full for the record:

SINN Féin proposes the following principles and requirements as necessary elements of a new democratic accommodation and settlement — and the process of achieving them — acceptable to all of the people of Ireland.

1. The essential principles of a durable peace and political stability are freedom, justice, democracy and equality. By general consensus the status quo has failed. What is required is a national political consensus on these matters which is best expressed in the form of a national representative democracy.

2. A fundamental criterion of any new structures and processes must be that they will provide lasting peace and stability. A crisis management approach will not produce a durable solution. Partition has failed. The absence of a lasting and satisfactory settlement of relationships between the peoples of both islands has contributed to continuing tragedy and suffering. The first principle must be the right to lasting peace and stability based on justice.

3. It must be recognised that the new Ireland can come about only through agreement and must have a democratic basis. Agreement means that the political arrangements for a new and sovereign Ireland would have to be freely negotiated and agreed to by the people of Ireland.

Britain's policy of maintaining the Union between Britain and the Six Counties is a direct impediment to and interference with the right of the people of Ireland alone to determine their development. It is a direct barrier to reaching the necessary democratic agree-

ments by the people of Ireland alone. There exists an inextricable link between Britain's policy of maintaining the union and the division and conflict we are attempting to resolve.

4. Britain's policy of maintaining the union should be changed to one of ending the union so as to create viable conditions in which the people of Ireland can find agreement on the exercise of national self-determination without external interference or impediment. In the *Downing Street Declaration* the British government agrees that it is for the people of the island of Ireland alone to exercise their right to self-determination. The British government, without qualification, should act upon that position and encourage, facilitate and enable the agreements which are for the people of Ireland alone to determine.

5. A democratic agreement, in effect a national political consensus, is for the people of Ireland alone to determine. This is an issue of national self-determination. National self-determination is universally accepted to mean a nation's right to exercise the freedom to determine its own political, social, economic and cultural development without external interference or impediment and without partial or total disruption of the national unity or territorial integrity. Agreement on how the principle of national self-determination is to be exercised is a matter for the people of Ireland alone to determine.

Britain must help to create the conditions which will allow the negotiations process to flourish.

The British government has a duty to develop the negotiations process so as to give effect to the essential principles of a durable peace and political stability and thus promote reconciliation between Britain and Ireland and between two major traditions in Ireland.

6 The issue of consent and its application is an important matter in the attempt to secure agreements which are for the Irish people alone to determine. Consent must be universally applied to the people of Ireland. Universal application of consent precludes any sectional approach.

Agreement requires the consent freely given of nationalists and Unionists alike. The concept of consent needs to be a positive enabling factor, proactively pursued in the search to secure the required agreements.

It must not be abused in an attempt to ward off or prevent agreement. Whether in the form of a veto to a minority section of the people of Ireland, as a camouflage to a British govern-

ment policy objective to maintain the union, or as a coercive measure used against nationalists to further deny national and democratic rights.

Consent is the product of democratic agreements. It can only be achieved in Ireland through the exercise of the principle of national self-determination.

7 An essential requirement of an approach based exclusively on dialogue, negotiation and non-coercion will be the building of a true process of trust and reconciliation. In this, equality of treatment is of the essence. While the clear evidence is that political independence is the surest way to guarantee equality, it is nonetheless incumbent upon the British government, which currently has the direct responsibility, to bring about equality of treatment if trust and reconciliation are to be achieved. Equality — political, social, economic and cultural — is a fundamental right. These issues are issues of rights which do not require any negotiations. The British government should, independently of the process of negotiation, outline a programmatic approach on issues of equality.

The validity of both the nationalist and the democratic rights of every citizen on this island must be accepted and upheld.

The building of a true process of trust and reconciliation must take particular account of, and be sensitive to, the position of those who have suffered directly from violence and injustice from whatever source. In building trust and reconciliation, appropriate and timely action will also be important on the various issues relating to those who have been imprisoned in the context of the conflict. All such prisoners must be released.

8 A new beginning, if it is to lead to a comprehensive, lasting resolution of the conflict must adequately address the totality of the three central relationships currently involved — within the Six Counties, within the island of Ireland and between the people of these islands.

9 It will be essential that the commitment of the Irish and British



governments "to remove the causes of conflict, to overcome the legacy of history and to heal the divisions which have resulted" is met and that they will work in close partnership and collaboration. In addition to their shared functions, each government will have important separate roles in the process also. Above all both governments must fully honour their commitment to foster agreement and reconciliation leading to a new democratic political accommodation encompassing all the relationships involved.

10 Lasting stability can be found only in the context of new structures in which no tradition will be able to dominate the other, in which there will be equal rights and opportunities for all, and in which there will be provision for formal and effective guarantees for the protection of individual human rights and of the communal and cultural rights of both nationalists and unionists.

11 Civil and religious liberties and rights must be guaranteed and there can be no discrimination or preference in laws or administrative practices, on grounds of religious belief or affiliation; government and administration must be sensitive to minority beliefs and attitudes and seek consensus.

12 New arrangements must provide structures and institutions including security structures with which both nationalists and unionists can identify on the basis of political consensus; such arrangements should strengthen stability and security for all the people of Ireland.

13 New arrangements must ensure the maintenance of economic and social standards and facilitate integrated economic development.

14 The cultural and linguistic diversity of the people of all traditions North and South, must be preserved and fostered as a

source of enrichment and vitality.

15 It is clear that the building of a new Ireland will require the participation and co-operation of all the people of Ireland. In particular it is essential that the people of the south must wholeheartedly commit themselves and the necessary resources to this objective.

16 The desire of nationalists is for a united Ireland in the form of a sovereign, independent Irish state to be achieved peacefully and by agreement. Such a form of unity would require a general and an explicit acknowledgement of a broader and more comprehensive Irish identity. Such a unity would, of course be different from both the existing Irish state and the existing arrangements in the Six Counties because it would necessarily accommodate both traditions. Such unity would offer the best and most durable basis for peace and stability.

17 It is essential that any structures for a new Ireland recognise to the extent necessary the diversity as well as the unity of the people of Ireland and ensure constitutional stability.

18 It is essential to have unionist agreement and participation in devising and determining the structures of Irish unity and in formulating the guarantees they require. The best people to identify the interests of the unionist tradition are the unionist people themselves. It would thus be essential that they should negotiate their role in any arrangements which would embody Irish unity.

19 The achievement of agreement requires an effective process of negotiations involving the political parties as well as the two governments. Addressing all of the relationships involved, the task of the process will be to secure agreement and the maximum degree of consensus on the nature and form of future constitutional, political and institutional arrangements and structures. Having regard, *inter alia*, to practical and legal requirements the agreed outcome of this process and the agreed means by which it will have to be ratified are for the people of Ireland alone to determine. The role of the British Government will be to enable agreements.

20 An internal Six-County arrangement cannot work. There has to be fundamental constitutional and political change. The partition of Ireland has failed. The political settlements imposed by the Act of Union 1800 and the Government of Ireland Act 1920, subsequently reinforced by the Northern Ireland Constitution Act, 1973, have failed the people of Ireland and the peoples of these islands. They have failed the funda-

mental criteria of providing lasting peace and stability.

21 Participation in the negotiations is a right dependent only on the democratic mandate of the participants. The participation of duly mandated parties is not a privilege to be given or withheld.

22 The process of negotiations should be as transparent as possible so as to build public confidence in the process itself and to create a sense of public ownership.

23 The objective of the process of negotiations must be a new political dispensation, representing an honourable, democratic agreement between the two major traditions with which both can live and which is based on an agreement which is for the people of Ireland alone to determine and for full respect for the concerns, rights and identities of all. There must be a rejection of any concept of victory or defeat.

24 Agreement on an overall settlement will require, *inter alia*, a democratic accommodation of the differing views of the two main traditions, which takes full account of the conflict of identities. The objective of such an accommodation is to ultimately resolve the conflict of political allegiances. In terms of specific constitutional legislation the required agreement and the two governments must ensure that, in regard to the people of the Six Counties the constitutional changes should be such as not to diminish in any way their existing citizenship rights and their birthright to be accepted as being British or Irish — or both — as appropriate and desired

25 Agreed arrangements — especially constitutional arrangements — based on a new democratic accommodation must reflect as fully as possible the rights of both major traditions, and promote cooperation between them.

They must even-handedly afford both traditions parity of esteem and equality of treatment in all spheres. They must enhance and facilitate the development of a truly pluralist ethos throughout the island of Ireland.

26 The consent of the governed is essential to the stability of any political arrangements. This is why the essential requirement is for a new democratic accommodation in the form of an agreement which is for the people of Ireland alone to determine. Institutions and structures forming part of new political arrangements must be accepted by both major traditions as essential elements of an overall settlement which is honourable and democratic, and must therefore enjoy widespread public support from within both traditions. In this context, and in the

context of the totality of relations, it is widely accepted that there can be no internal six county settlement. The precise structuring of relationships in the context of the totality of relationships, and the securing of the endorsement and consent of both traditions will be a matter for the all inclusive talks process. In this regard, institutions and structures will be needed which, while respecting both the requirements of identity and the diversity of the people of Ireland, would enable them to work together in all areas of common interest. Such structures would, of course, include institutional recognition of the special links that exist between the peoples of Ireland and Britain as part of the totality of relationships, while taking account of newly forged links with the rest of Europe. Such institutions must be democratically accountable and must in their functions be open and transparent.

27 The comprehensive, systematic, effective and entrenched protection of human rights — civil, political, economic and social — should underpin the establishment and operation of agreed institutions and structures. Human rights should be guaranteed, including, if necessary, internationally, on a basis of equivalence throughout all of Ireland, for example, by incorporation of the European Convention on Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms and the enactment of a comprehensive Bill of Rights into domestic law, irrespective of the constitutional context and of any possible future changes to it. Critical issues in this regard, will be the administration of justice and policing — specifically, the development of changes and reforms which will secure the unequivocal support, participation and confidence of all sections of the community.

28 Particular attention must be paid to the protection of the rights and identity of any community which finds itself in a minority position. It should be the duty of the state in such a situation vigorously, imaginatively and sensitively to protect and promote the interests of such a community, while also upholding the equal rights of the majority tradition.

29 The achievement of greater and more equally-shared prosperity, the promotion of equality of opportunity and fair participation in the labour market, the eradication of discrimination, and the empowerment and inclusion of marginalised and deprived communities and groups, are not only vital in themselves, but also have the capacity to create a more stable social environment in which new political arrangements are

more likely to take root and command public confidence. These goals should be, and must be, vigorously pursued.

30 Mutual understanding and contact between individuals, groups, communities, organisations and institutions have an important role in the elimination of barriers of suspicion, in the creation of mutual trust and in the building of confidence and should be further promoted and supported, including financially. Education will have a particularly significant function in this regard. In the matter of schooling, parental choice should be respected and facilitated, including the preferences of those parents who choose integrated and Irish-medium education for their children. There is a need to extend and strengthen programmes that increase contact between pupils and teachers within the Six Counties and between schools North and South and in Britain. In addition, greater emphasis must be devoted to exchange and mutual understanding programmes and to making the history and full cultural heritage of the people of the island in all their strands, and its relationship with Britain and with the rest of Europe, available in all schools throughout Ireland.

31 New arrangements should also incorporate a strong European dimension.

32 Each of the foregoing principles and requirements would apply and have equal validity in all constitutional situations and under all of the institutional frameworks, which may be envisaged.

Conclusion

A VIABLE OPPORTUNITY now exists "to remove the causes of conflict, to overcome the legacy of history and to heal the divisions which have resulted", to set aside the failures of the past and to build a democratic, just and equal society in Ireland which is fashioned by the people of Ireland alone to meet our needs. Everyone shares a responsibility to bring about a real and lasting peace in Ireland.

Republicans have demonstrated the political will to face up to our responsibility in this. This is evident in the initiatives we have taken, both unilaterally and with others in Ireland to advance the search for peace. The courageous initiative taken by the leadership of the Irish Republican Army on 20 July in restoring its cessation of 31 August 1994 is most significant.

Our long-standing position has been one of willingness to enter into dialogue with a view to removing the causes of conflict. Democratic, political and practical imperatives clearly require the involvement of all political views

if a democratic resolution is to be sought and achieved.

Much difficult work lies ahead if the potential that currently exists is to be realised to the full. Sinn Féin look forward to a constructive dialogue with the other participants in this process.

It still could all go wrong for the eventual full self-determination for the whole of Ireland which the talks clearly envisage, – possibly blown off course by any extraordinarily rapid maturing of the far greater inter-imperialist world economic crisis that will go on raging ever more fiercely as the future months go by. A totally demoralised and petrified British ruling class could reach the point of being terrified of making any concessions or admissions at all (such as are clearly involved in its readiness to concede steps towards a reunited Ireland, totally independent of Britain in terms of state control). At the moment, Britain is conceding a peace agreement not from strength, but from the cool understanding that getting out now might be far easier and less costly than getting out later on, if Ireland's full independence were to be frustrated for

British colonial foot-dragging, not Republican differences, are the real threat to a new settlement for Ireland. The national-liberation movement's popularity will soar, led by Sinn Féin, whether or not New Labour capitulates to Orange-colonial truculence. Trot muck-raking along hoped-for cracks in nationalism only accentuates the irrelevant uselessness of all petty-bourgeois 'revolutionary' subjectivism.

[EP SR No 926 11-11-97]

Reactionary pro-imperialist interests in the 'Northern Ireland' Office, in Dublin, and in the London Establishment are still doing all they can to sabotage the 'peace process' in Ireland (which puts an end to the misnamed and ill-begotten colony).

Non-stop harassment of nationalists in the North by the RUC, the British Army, and the Royal Irish Regiment has been intensified, if anything, in recent months since the renewed IRA ceasefire.

Damaging leaks of secret inter-governmental papers were perpetrated to try to block the election of Mary McAleese as

yet another period of unending 'troubles'.

But what if the British imperialist government's position and reputation in general, became severely weakened overall by world economic disasters, – and to such an extent that a new backs-to-the-wall defiance developed, which took the view that Britain dare not make any more retreats for the time being on any front at all, – for fear of inflaming its own masses into total revolt against a feeble Establishment? Such an overall catastrophe for British imperialism could undermine its controlled withdrawal from any further continued colonisation of part of Ireland (which is the new deal being negotiated at Stormont).

Hopefully, there will still be enough time and continued stability for British imperialism to wisely finally retreat from its ill-starred colonisation of Ireland in reasonably good order, so as to live to fight another day on a number of other far-more-important imperialist-survival fronts which the inter-imperialist international economic crisis is steadily stoking up.

Douglas Bell

President of the Irish Republic on suspicion of her nationalist/Sinn Féin sympathies.

Now, artificial excitement is being fanned about supposed 'splits' in the IRA and Sinn Féin by breakaway groups who have resigned, denouncing the 'peace process' as a sell-out fraud.

There is no sell-out; there is no fraud – yet; and there are no serious splits – yet.

Exactly the opposite. Sinn Féin's national-liberation political movement is soaring higher than ever, – now becoming popular not just because of its epoch-making achievements in undermining imperialist-orchestrated political obstacles

and diversions to negotiating with the undefeated armed national-liberation struggle, – but also because of its dynamic reformist threat to the corrupt and complacent capitalist status-quo in the South. Sinn Féin/IRA are revolutionary nationalists, not revolutionary socialists, but their surging popularity will currently be an acute cause of uncomfortable embarrassment for pro-imperialist reactionaries everywhere.

Part of the aim of the 'splits' publicity by reactionary propaganda is precisely to put a cloud over Sinn Féin's image so that its popularity should not swell too greatly; but it is almost certain that such tactics are doomed whatever splits develop, and however much doubt is thrown on the 'peace process'.

Sinn Féin has an outstandingly capable and mature political leadership in depth, and it is this which is encouraging such a huge surge in support, north and south of the artificial Partition border.

It has also demonstrated itself to be an extraordinarily tough, single-minded, and creative leadership.

Its total dedication to ending the cursed and hated Partition as an intolerable and unsustainable blight on Ireland, – an unmitigated disaster and failure which must be cleared away, – is its unanswerable claim to widespread respect.

Within that capability, Sinn Féin's capacity to abandon the 'peace process' yet again if the British Establishment really does try to engineer nothing but a sell-out of nationalist aspirations and does nothing to force the colonist 'unionist' reactionaries to accept the ending of their colonial domination-tyranny, – should be taken for granted.

Only the defeatist blinkers, subjectively obscuring the vision of ultra-'left' middle-class 'revolutionary' posturing in Britain, have joined the reactionary propaganda extremists in 'seeing' Sinn Féin 'defeated' at every turn, or 'selling out'.

Typical of this demented Trotskyite ego-centrism which sees the whole world only as confirmation of its own cleverness and its own emotional impressionism, the CPGB failed 'entryists' into the SLP have persisted in spreading their 'Sinn Féin defeated' nonsense.

The latest hook on which to try to hang their class pessimism of the subjective-idealist petty bourgeoisie is by presenting McAleese as the 'British' candidate for the Dublin presidency.

"Her background leaves McAleese ideally placed to further British imperialist interests,"

declare these CPGB sleuths, to the surprise of the whole of Ireland who saw how she was targeted surreptitiously by imperialist intelligence circles as the 'Sinn Féin' candidate.

"McAleese, in common with the other four candidates, tried to put across her predecessor's 'caring, sharing' image during the campaign. In line with this is her backing of the simplistic call for peace – based necessarily on a version of the status quo."

So they were all 'British candidates' in other words, – i.e. because none of them was a 'revolutionary socialist' of the fantasising Trotskyite variety.

It is yet another symptom of incurable political solipsism. If these infantile poseurs in charge of a printing press are not in the picture, then the picture just does not exist.

The national-liberation struggle is meaningless to 'go-ahead Trotskyism'. If the CPGB are not leading the fight, then 'nothing will change'.

The 'status quo' will never be altered by these 'daft Irish nationalists', therefore, according to this flat-earth philosophy, – whatever the changes in Dublin, or whatever happens, in other words.

In fact, they don't have a 'story' about the Irish Presidency at all, since they would have written exactly the same empty drivel whoever had won, Dana included.

There is one dogma only; "Trotskyist-led socialist revolution is the only reality. Nothing else matters. National-liberation revolutions are non-existent."

Or as they put it in the CPGB *Weekly Worker* fraudsheet:

Another small step in the imperialist-sponsored 'peace process' was taken last week with the election of Mary McAleese.

Or with anything else that happened, of course.

The subjective pessimism of these born losers is briefly stirred by the notion that the maverick Continuity Army Council might bomb its way to mass nationalist support so as to really see IRA/Sinn Féin 'defeated'.

But no, the misery soon descends again:

Leading CAC members have previously been kidnapped and threatened with a single bullet by the IRA. No one would be surprised if that threat was carried out – while the state looked the other way. No doubt the death of two or three leaders would be put down to a 'republican feud'.

But what would this fleeting Trot fantasy about a CAC triumph be worth to them anyway? If it happened, it could only be denounced as the next useless sell-out for refusing to

sing the full CPGB 'revolutionary socialist' hymnsheet, as they would be bound to do.

So in other words, even the wildest Trot fantasies are only dreamed up to help prove the Trot predictions 'correct', - namely that Sinn Féin/IRA have 'failed' and 'sold out' to the British imperialist status quo.

In the real world, of course, away from this loony arm-chair-socialism, the tortuous procedure continues for getting British imperialism off the hook of its 'Northern Ireland' colonial catastrophe by negotiating a completely new political arrangement for the whole of Ireland, by May 1 next year.

And the very real threat to the conclusion of this national-liberation triumph, continues, of course, in the as yet unfettered provocations of the 'unionist' die-hards and the colonialist mentality of the imperialist Establishment.

The tyranny on the ground of the police-military dictatorship over Irish nationalism, - which is all that the bogus 'country' of 'Northern Ireland' has ever stood for, - grinds on sourly and futilely as the colonial twilight deepens more gloomily. The sordid wretchedness of this continuing reactionary nonsense is worth recording in detail, - as bitterly experienced by the national-liberation struggle, driving them on, - and as totally ignored by the 'free press' of the glorious Blairite 'democracy':

On a daily basis the RUC is targeting people in nationalist areas in what must be a policy backed at the highest level.

Even the talks process itself is being targeted by the RUC. In what Gerry Adams described as "a clear breach of confidentiality", the RUC held one of the party's negotiating team and scrutinised

papers relating to the Stormont Talks.

Delegate Siobhán O'Hanlon was returning from Stormont on Wednesday 8 October when she was stopped by the RUC on the Monagh Bypass in West Belfast. O'Hanlon was held for over 30 minutes while confidential papers relating to the business committee, the decommissioning commission and two other subcommittees were read by the RUC.

"WHERE'S fucking Rosemary Nelson now?... She'll not fucking get you out of this." These words were spoken by a member of the RIR as he dragged Lurgan woman Cristin McCauley from her car late at night on 7 October.

She was driving home when she was stopped at the RIR checkpoint. "It was a frenzied attack," she said. "One of the RIR dragged me from the car. He was screaming, he kept going on about my solicitor Rosemary Nelson. They made me stand at the side of the road and refused to get the RUC or give me a 'gold card' (a unit identification card) when I asked for them."

When at last the RUC did arrive Cristin was allowed to go. She has since made a statement to her solicitor and a formal complaint about her treatment.

Co-incidentally on the same night, Cristin's solicitor Rosemary Nelson was stopped at another RIR checkpoint and harassed. She was returning from a meeting in a car driven by a friend when the car was stopped.

Ms Nelson will meet with UN Special Rapporteur Param Cumaraswamy this Friday to detail incidents of threat and harassment she has faced as she represents her clients.

Since the events on Garvaghy Road on 6 July the 3rd Battalion of the RIR, stationed in the North

Armagh area, has been involved in numerous incidents of harassment against the nationalist community, mainly in the Lurgan area.

One law firm alone has recorded over 30 complaints including serious assaults. One of the most serious occurred on 8 July when a man from the Kilwilkie area was set upon by members of an RIR patrol.

That same night the RIR were going around Kilwilkie shouting, "where is the wee bastard whose eye we shot out"; a reference to 13-year-old Gavin McKenna who was almost blinded when in April this year a British soldier shot him in the face with a plastic bullet.

On 20 August a car belonging to a Lurgan republican had its tyres slashed while it sat in the grounds of Craigavon Area Hospital. An RIR patrol was in the area at the time.

One man who spoke to *An Phoblacht*, Paul Gillespie, said that he was stopped and detained for no reason on Saturday 11 October as he drove into Charles Street. A RIR foot patrol spotted the Lurgan man who has a history of harassment from this regiment.

In February of this year during a week long curfew in Lurgan's Kilwilkie Estate Gillespie was set upon by an RIR man who headbutted the young man in the face.

"There was no checkpoint," maintained Gillespie. "One RIR man spotted me and signalled to one further up the street to stop me. They held me for about 30 minutes saying that I had not answered their questions properly. Although I had, and had complied when they searched the car."

When the RIR refused to get the RUC and refused to return his license Gillespie drove home. Shortly afterwards the RUC arrived at Gillespie's home to return his licence.

Meanwhile, both the RUC and RIR have targeted Colin Duffy

since charges of killing two RUC men in Lurgan were dropped three weeks ago.

Duffy has been stopped and checked a number of times and his car searched, but the most serious incident happened on Thursday 9 October on Lurgan's main street when an RIR man spotted him and walked into the road to block the car.

The RIR searched the car and then asked to carry out a body search which went without incident until the soldier doing the search "yanked up my trousers by the belt. It was pretty sore around the testicle area," said Duffy.

Duffy's wife, daughter and a nephew who witnessed the assault were in hysterics especially as the car was surrounded by RIR, with another three manhandling Duffy.

Duffy was arrested and taken to Lurgan RUC Barracks and held for two hours before being released.

THE APPEARANCE in a Belfast courtroom of a ten year-old-boy from Ardoyne in North Belfast on Monday 20 October highlighted the level of sectarianism endured by even the youngest members of the nationalist community.

The judge was forced to dismiss the case, questioning why a ten-year-old was even there in the first place. He levelled strong criticism against the RUC for pursuing what was clearly a serious example of base sectarianism against a minor.

Ten-year-old Francis Booth's ordeal began with his arrest last spring by the RUC who described him as "a main rioter in the Ardoyne area".

Francis had been rifle-butted across the head by a British soldier from the 3rd Battalion Parachute Regiment and thrown into an armoured personnel carrier in Flax Street. He was then held illegally for over an hour, being driven around the area before being thrown out. Following the incident Francis's parents registered a complaint against the crown forces.

"A classic tactic by the RUC of issuing counter charges against anyone pursuing a complaint against them," was how local Sinn Féin Councillor Mick Conlon described the whole disturbing saga.

"The crown forces should catch themselves on. It's utter nonsense to describe a ten-year-old school-boy as 'a main rioter'. The paras and RUC must be withdrawn immediately if the people on the ground are to have any faith in a future settlement."

DURING last week's Roslea Martyrs commemoration march the RUC took personal details from nationalist marchers which they then claimed were lost when,



during a scuffle with loyalists, the information "fell out of an officer's hat".

The RUC have since visited the homes of several people in the Fermanagh area who were on last Sunday's march and informed them that their lives could be in danger as the information had gone missing.

When challenged about the missing details by Sinn Féin Councillor Gerry McHugh the RUC told a Sunday newspaper that the details "fell out of an officer's hat" and are most certainly in the hands of loyalists.

Sinn Féin Six-County Chairperson Gerry O hEara described the RUC excuse as "pathetic and unbelievable" and said, "it is almost laughable but for the fact that many nationalists in the past have been killed due to information passed on by the RUC." He called for the complete disbandment of "this discredited force."

A series of events to mark the bicentenary, including a ceili, exhibition and Anniversary Mass, culminated with a re-enactment of the 22-mile-journey from courtyard to graveyard. "In the tradition of the United Irishmen," said O Caoláin, "it is our aim, as republicans, to achieve freedom and unity for our country and our people".

The inclusive sentiments and spirit of accommodation shown by organisers and participants stood in stark contrast to the animosity and sectarian bigotry displayed by loyalists objecting to the commemoration earlier that day. In a series of furious attempts to disrupt the proceedings, loyalists staged a number of attacks along the Enniskillen to Roslea route.

Shortly after 1pm around 80 people left Enniskillen courthouse, led by a colour party displaying the flags of the United Irishmen, and pallbearers carrying three symbolic coffins.

Although the ethos of the United Irishmen was non-sectarian, commemoration organisers voluntarily re-routed the parade away from the predominantly Protestant village of Maguiresbridge.

But confrontation was the only loyalist agenda. Accompanied by Dunloy Orange Order representative John Findlay and Joel Patton of the Spirit of Drumcree faction, around a 100 loyalists had been bussed in from Ballymena and Portadown to "support" the hastily constituted 'Combined Loyalist Residents of Fermanagh'.

At the junction of Tempo and Dublin Road the parade was halted by the RUC. "We were told the road ahead had been blocked by loyalists," said Sinn Féin Councillor Brian McCaffrey, one of the event's organisers. The RUC said they were unable to clear the route."

Parade organisers decided to avoid any confrontation by leaving the area and re-assembling the parade further along the route at Lisbellaw.

As people attending the parade boarded buses and cars to travel away from the area, loyalists outraged at being deprived of their prey, turned their anger towards the RUC. "Fenian lovers" chanted the loyalist mob as an RUC vehicle was ransacked, overturned and burnt.

But it wasn't long before the RUC revealed their true colours in what nationalist marchers have described as an attempt at "Bumtollit mark two".

A mile from Maguiresbridge, the parade was halted by the RUC. "Buses carrying loyalists were allowed to drive right into the rear of the parade," said McCafferty. "We were effectively hemmed in with the RUC blocking the route ahead." Loyalists disembarking from a bus attempted to grab a nationalist at the rear of the parade.

With a high embankment at either side of the road and loyalists already in nearby fields, parade organisers decided to avoid confrontation by travelling by bus and car to reassemble further along the route at Nutfield Crossroads.

"Vehicles were stoned, loyalists were seen noting car registration numbers while others took photographs of people attending the parade," said McCafferty. "In one of the most serious incidents a car was driven at the coffin bearers narrowly missing them."

RUC HARASSMENT of young nationalists across the Six Counties has risen dramatically during the last number of weeks. Both Sinn Féin Youth activists and ordinary nationalist youth have been targeted.

On 2 September several young people from Ardoyne in North Belfast claim that both the RUC and British Army threw stones and bottles from the inside of Land Rovers.

On 20 September British paratroopers stationed at the Old Park Barracks physically assaulted four youths aged 15, 16, 14, and 15, and made derogatory remarks about their families.

On 3 October a North Belfast youth was hospitalised after being hit on the head with a rock which had been thrown from a British Army Land Rover. This was followed by three days of constant petty harassment from the 6th to the 8th as youths were stopped and threatened with legal action for jay walking.

On 10 October a young nationalist was badly beaten by the RUC as he left a city-centre bar. The

man left the bar and was waiting for a taxi when he was attacked by several RUC men. He was subsequently brought to Grosvenor Road Barracks and charged with disorderly behaviour. The 20-year-old received stitches to his head in the Royal Victoria Hospital several hours later, and is currently seeking legal action.

Reports have also been received by *An Phoblacht* that British Army soldiers stationed in North Belfast continually provoke young people coming from youth clubs with verbal harassment and waving of union jacks.

Sinn Féin Youth spokesperson Eoin O Broin told *An Phoblacht* that: "What seems to be developing is a pattern whereby young people are being constantly harassed and provoked by members of both the RUC and British Army. The situation is particularly bad in North Belfast, where in Ardoyne and Old Park this is a nightly occurrence. Why at a time when we are all working so hard to build the peace process and resolve this conflict are crown forces intent on provoking our young people. It should stop immediately."

BREANDAN Mac Cionnaith, chairperson of the Garvaghy Road Residents Coalition, was manhandled and prevented from handing a letter of protest to the British prime minister at Craigavon Civic Centre on Monday 13 October.

Earlier a unionist councillor had handed a letter to Blair without interference. "When a reporter tried to report the incident an RUC man struck her across the face," Mac Cionnaith said.

Blair earlier curtailed his Civic Centre visit when it became clear to him that two councillors, Mac Cionnaith and Joe Duffy, representing the Garvaghy Road area would be present. Blair, accompanied by Mowlam and Trimble, had been due to meet all councillors and members of the Craigavon District Partnership.

Mac Cionnaith later said that it was clear "that Garvaghy Road is an issue that the British government wish to run away from. The very least that Blair could have done was to have the courtesy to accept our letter. Instead he chose to depend upon similar tactics that forces under his control employed on the Garvaghy Road in Portadown on 6 July. If they believe they can sweep the events of this summer under the carpet, then they are sadly mistaken."

In the letter the residents said the decision to force the march through was "morally wrong and totally unjustified". It expressed the community's lack of confidence in the Secretary of State and in the parades commission. It

also called upon Blair to institute an independent investigation into all the events and circumstances surrounding this year's march along the Garvaghy Road.

PAT TREANOR, a Sinn Féin councillor from Monaghan, who was in Belfast on 14 October to meet a representative of the Ogoni people from Nigeria, was stopped and detained by a British Army patrol about four miles outside Armagh city as he returned home. Treanor was held for 45 minutes and had his car searched thoroughly. The British soldiers carrying out the search also read documents he was carrying.

THE RUC tactic of trying to recruit informers was again exposed this week in North Belfast.

Sinn Féin Councillors Paddy McManus, Mick Conlon, Bobby Lavery and Danny Lavery have all documented details of approaches over the past four weeks and have urged anyone approached to contact their local office, priest or lawyer if worried about being targeted by the RUC. As part of their budget the RUC are having to justify a 'slush fund' for informers and have recently been extremely active in ensuring this money is kept at its existing high level.

Twenty-year-old Gary Hutchinson from the New Lodge Road area told *An Phoblacht* on Wednesday of his ordeal at the hands of his RUC persecutors:

"A few weeks ago the RUC stopped me on the Woodvale Road, which is a loyalist area. They began to caution me regarding minor traffic offences and told me someone would 'be in touch soon'.

"One of them signed a form under the name of a Constable Finley of Oldpark RUC Barracks. He then gave me a 'producer' to give into Oldpark barracks within seven days.

"I phoned up looking for an extension while my insurance agency provided me with up-to-date documents and the RUC must have got my telephone number by using the 1471 British Telecom system. Meantime, I was facing rioting charges regarding trouble in the area in July.

"The phone rang last Monday night, and a voice said, 'This is Antrim Road RUC. Regarding your court case, we can sort all that out, as well as the motoring charges. Gary, we can get all this forgotten about. My name by the way is 'Constable Brian'. Can you talk OK? Is anyone sitting there with you?'

"I told him to go away and I was going to see my lawyer who has

since told me he knows no RUC member in that barracks by that name."

More worrying for the Hutchinson family is the fact that just the next day his partner spotted a red car parked in Spamount Street containing two uniformed RUC men and three in plain clothes. She was then followed with her children down to Donegall Street and Upper Library Street. From that incident earlier this week their phone has been ringing in the early hours but no one answers, yet Gary Hutchinson is convinced it is 'Constable Brian' probably using a mobile phone as he cannot get the number from BT.

"I am asking the RUC Chief Constable is he aware of his forces' activities and their sinister threats about loyalists killing me and my family and their intention to mark me out as a possible undercover agent. With an IRA ceasefire in place I would have thought this harassment would have ended. Obviously the RUC are still on a war footing and as out of control as they ever were."

IN A CONCERTED attempt to recruit informers the RUC in Lurgan have offered cash inducements to each of six Lurgan men who were arrested in the past two weeks.

One man was told by a plain-clothes RUC man: "There's an open wallet, money is no obstacle." He then offered him £5,000 to supply information about republicans from the Kilwilkie area. This man also believed the RUC were following him as he spotted two men watching him as he collected his girlfriend from work the week before he was arrested.

The six were arrested in two batches of three and told they were to be questioned about rioting and hi-jacking in the town during July after the Garvaghy Road crisis, however none was actually questioned about this during the 36 hours they were in custody. All were offered cash to work for the RUC, or as one Branchman put it, "to help us".

One 19-year-old was offered £1,000 but the RUC said he could only collect the money after he supplied information.

The RUC threatened one man within minutes of offering him money: "You'll be getting into your car one day with your wife and two kids and you'll all be blown to bits." he was warned.

Sinn Féin Councillor John O'Dowd said he has been inundated with complaints from local people about the behaviour of the crown forces in the area in the past month. He added: these attempts to recruit informers are sinister in the extreme. People

should be aware it's happening and should they be approached in this way be sure to contact a solicitor, councillor or priest to highlight the incident. It needs to be exposed."

South Belfast Sinn Féin Councillor Seán Hayes has disclosed that two of his constituents were approached by the RUC last week to work as informers:

"A young man was pressurised by the RUC to spy on republicans using the Sinn Féin advice centre on the Lower Ormeau Road. He was also offered money."

"Another man travelling from Short Strand to Liverpool for a soccer match was also approached to act as an informer."

Hayes pointed out that "these attempts to coerce people into informing, the continued saturation of nationalist areas by the British Army and RUC, raids on homes, harassment of people, the reinforcement and fortification of military bases and the continuing military agenda are in stark contrast to the Mitchel Principles that the British government signed up to."

The RUC officer was threatening Armagh city's Sinn Féin Councillor Seán McGirr. The threat came in the wake of increasing crown forces' harassment of republicans in Armagh city. Ominously, a few days earlier, a well-known loyalist linked to King Rat and the LVF, was seen driving around Armagh city. The loyalist killer stopped to make enquiries about a relative of Seán McGirr.

On Tuesday 7 October McGirr was driving from Caledon village towards Armagh City when an RUC car passed in the opposite direction. "The RUC vehicle turned to follow me," Seán said. On the outskirts of the city, Seán drove into the tourist centre at the Navan Centre: "I thought the RUC would be less likely to harass me in front of witnesses." In the car park however eight more RUC cars were waiting. "We were surrounded. Two passengers in my car were threatened with violence and an RUC officer threatened me with a loyalist death squad attack."

Later, Armagh Sinn Féin Councillor Noel Sheridan was targeted harassment, this time by the RIR. On Tuesday evening an RIR patrol stopped outside Sheridan's home. For over 30 minutes the patrol stopped and questioned people in the street. One person who approached the councillor's house was held and questioned in detail. Two days later, Brian Cunningham, a Sinn Féin councillor from Keady was visiting a constituent when he was followed by a joint RUC/British Army patrol. The patrol surrounded the house, searching

outhouses and ground immediately adjacent to the building. "It's just petty harassment," says Cunningham, "there's no need for all this".

Thirty-eight-year-old Gerard Scott, from Poleglass, was at Woodbourne RUC barracks following a drink-driving incident when he was told there were two men at Grosvenor Road Barracks who wanted to speak to him. "I thought they wanted to breathealyse me," said Scott. At Grosvenor Road, Scott was taken to an interview room by two plain-clothes men, one of whom spoke with an English accent. The two men questioned him about a well known West Belfast republican. "I told them I'd heard of him but didn't know him but they said I must do and told me they would give me £5,000 for setting him up." Frightened and "eager to get home", Gerard "agreed wholeheartedly", promising to return the following day to discuss the matter further.

When Scott failed to keep the appointment, the family was subjected to a series of telephone calls and a visit by RUC officers with a sniffer dog. The RUC phoned over 30 times in a 24-hour period. They just kept ringing. I told them to leave us alone but they wouldn't go away."

The father of five, who is already receiving medical treatment for depression, now feels under intense pressure from the RUC. He attempted to take his own life. Fortunately his suicide attempt was interrupted when his wife, Julie, returned home unexpectedly.

Sinn Féin Councillor Alex Maskey said Gerard Scott's story was not an isolated incident: "This is the third time in two months individuals in West Belfast have been approached by the RUC and asked to help set up the same republican."

In a further recruitment attempt by the RUC, a 42-year-old father of three from County Tyrone was approached by the RUC and offered £1,000 to "uncover an AK47 in Kildress and provide information about who was involved in Teebane". The man was also offered a weekly £100 "to

keep an eye on" named people.

THE Garvaghy Road Residents Coalition have condemned the arrest of a local man after his home was raided by the RUC. In the early hours of 15 October the RUC arrested the man and questioned him for four hours on the events of the Garvaghy Road on 6 July. A spokesperson for the residents told *An Phoblacht*: "We believe that this morning's raid and arrest is an indication that nationalists in Portadown can expect widescale arrests over the coming weeks." He asked if the RUC Chief Constable can say how many of the RUC members who ran amok on the Garvaghy Road on 6 July this year are to face arrest and interrogation.

THE last two weeks have seen persistent harassment and attempted recruitment of nationalists in County Tyrone. Sinn Féin's Francie Molloy said that most of the activity was concentrated around Dungannon and Coalisland and that a single mother and the nephew of Rose Anne Mallon, shot dead by loyalists in 1994, were among those targeted.

The RUC asked the single mother to supply information on local people after she was taken to Dungannon RUC Barracks and questioned about a minor offence. The RUC gave her a contact name and phone number and told her things could be easier at Christmas if she helped. The woman refused and reported the incident to her local Sinn Féin office.

In another incident, two Loughshore fishermen spotted undercover members of the crown forces taking photos of their homes from 'dug-in' positions. Another young man who has been the target of continued harassment was stopped in Anne Street in Dungannon and photographed from an unmarked car while he was held for 30 minutes.

Another man, whose aunt was murdered by loyalists, was twice targeted by the RUC. In the first incident, last Thursday 30



October, he was stopped under new traffic legislation but then the RUC tried to search his car under the EPA. Later the man was followed out of Coalisland by an unmarked RUC vehicle and was then stopped in the loyalist area of Tomnamore. where the RUC insisted they would search his car. No reason was given for the search, but the man still agreed to the search provided it to be done at the barracks. He was then dragged from his car and cautioned, accused of obstructing the search. In another Coalisland incident two republicans were followed by an RUC man known to them. The crown forces are clearly guilty of harassment," said Molloy, "they are also clearly gathering information on people for no reason. It is a worrying situation."

FARMERS in South Armagh are reporting such a high level of British Army helicopter activity that it is becoming a threat to their livelihood. With nearly 350 helicopter flights to and from Crossmaglen Barracks over the last three months there is a serious risk to cattle and sheep stampeding out of fear of these low-flying aircraft. In August and September two funeral services in St Patrick's Chapel had to be halted as low flying helicopters coming into Crossmaglen caused so much noise over the chapel.

The newly-formed South Armagh Farmers' and Residents' Committee has said it plans protests aimed at ending the dangers from helicopter flights.

MONDAY morning sees the arrival of Dr Param Cumaraswamy from the UN Commission on Human Rights. He will investigate abuses suffered by defence lawyers acting for persons charged with republican activity.

In a week where a solicitor was called a "Provo bastard" by an RUC detective in the presence of an official of the Independent Commission for Holding Centres in Armagh's Gough Barracks and Lurgan solicitor Rosemary Nelson was twice a victim of harassment, the UN lawyer will launch an investigation into the range of RUC misconduct issues over the past ten years.

Mr Cumaraswamy has told the British government he wants to cover not just the abuses of defence lawyers but also RUC denial of a solicitor's presence during interrogation and the absence of video or audio recordings in holding centres. He also wants look at the way the right to silence works in the Six Counties, and how emergency laws have been abused.

The UN lawyer will also investigate the UFF murder of Pat Finucane in 1989, weeks after Douglas Hogg complained to the House of Commons that some lawyers in the Six Counties were close to 'terrorist' organisations.

But the longstanding Establishment majority for getting British imperialism out of this colonial disaster, now dominating via a 'Blairite government', will eventually have to make the rearrangements for ending this particular old-colonial tyranny.

Either the 'unionists' finally negotiate sensibly, or a new deal will be imposed. Either way, this imperial state structure and its deplorable racist culture will have to go.

And that will mean a tremendous shattering of the status quo, – and an immense victory over imperialism, with worldwide significance and impact.

From early on in the current 'troubles', British imperialism was half convinced to get out of Ireland. The hated colonial regime was costly, doomed in the long run, no longer viable economically because of Britain's demise as a world colonial power, and had become strategically out-of-date as a 'guarded back door to Britain'.

But imperialist inertia ruled, – plus the potential dilemma of swapping armed nationalist revolt for even nastier armed 'loyalist' reaction to any changes in the dictatorial Orange set-up.

British imperialism, – and world public opinion, – had to be forced to recognise the undeniable insistence of the Irish national-liberation struggle for completion of Ireland's independence via ultimate reunification under a Dublin republican government.

Full reunification will not come immediately on May 1, 1998. But the termination of 'Northern Ireland' as it has been as a colonial-dictatorship separate state, forever independent of Ireland, – as founded at British bayonet-point in 1921, – that will be guaranteed.

A more dramatic transformation of the status quo could not be imagined. And progress towards Ireland's socialist revolution could never have started without it, in the given circumstances.

Equally certainly, – as Marx established more than 100 years ago, – the real perspectives for the British socialist revolution can only begin to come into view once the government of Britain is no longer, – supported by its working-class electorate, – repressing an Irish colony. "No nation which represses another can itself be free".

The notion that all the colossal developments in Ireland are purely for the maintenance of the unchanged 'status quo' is certifiable.

For Blairism, Ireland represents the one area where some genuine 'progress' can be claimed, – thanks to the decolonisation *fait accompli* which the Sinn Féin/IRA national-liberation struggle forced, and which majority opinion in the British Establishment has long been disposed to accept. But in the last-stage wretchedness of RUC/Army tyranny, the cowardly fundamental uselessness of the Blairite pro-Establishment posturing, – just timid stooges of the big bourgeoisie, – is fully in evidence.

Why do Blair/Mowlam & Co not put an immediate stop to this depraved police-military dictatorship? Because their puppet-masters in the permanent Establishment have not

yet told them that this is what comes next in the 'government' business programme.

The mechanical brainlessness of Trotskyism dogma equates all who are not CPGB-type 'revolutionaries' as identically 'stooges of imperialism', however, all capitulating to the same unchanging 'status quo' of the imperialist 'new world order'. Thus in this Alice-in-Wonderland philosophy, the Blairite wretches who fail to challenge RUC tyranny are identically 'stoogelike' to the 'status quo' as the Irish nationalist victims of this dictatorship whose armed revolutionary struggle has in fact undermined it irrevocably. So much for sick Trot 'philosophy'. Build Leninism.

Meanwhile, the anti-imperialist struggle continues temporarily to be carried forward heroically by the national-liberation struggle led by Sinn Féin.

RB

Inter-imperialist markets turmoil quickly alters perspectives for revolt against America's political domination, worldwide. Saddam is a mild irritant compared to what is coming in the Middle East. Only Blair sucks up to US humbug. Zionists ready to split. Genocidal crime against Palestine will have to be reversed. The fight for the-ory more crucial than ever. Trot stab-in-the-back destroys themselves, not Sinn Féin. Trot defeatist ignorance and deranged fantasies face extinction.

[EPSR No 927 18-11-97]

The colonisation of Palestine to create 'Israel' is simply an impossible barbaric nonsense which is historically doomed, – just as apartheid South African colonialism was doomed, and just as the sectarian 'unionist' British colony in Ireland behind the evil barbed wire of the Partition monstrosity was also doomed.

Nothing the West can now do, – short of a further UN Resolution abolishing the 'Israel' state and starting again, – will ever appear other than a further humiliation and torment to the long-suffering and cruelly-wronged Palestinian nation.

So the Middle East resentment of all that US imperialism does because of its intolerable injustice towards the Palestinian cause is set to run and run and run.[...]

[...]However, within that general

inevitable perspective, parties of determinedly-trained revolutionary leadership will be essential, fully capable of analysing every complex question facing society.

An enormously greater battle than ever is called for, – and constant training, – against revisionist and Trotskyist confusion.

Seeing more and more of a correct Marxist-Leninist analysis of the world fall into place is gratifying and encouraging but it wants to be only the springboard for the far greater intensive efforts to master revolutionary theory which will be required ahead.

The new international revolutionary movement on its way will be far vaster and more sophisticated than anything seen before, and will have to develop a revolutionary leadership

qualitatively and quantitatively infinitely superior to anything that has gone before. The fight for comprehensive revolutionary theory and understanding has barely scratched the surface yet.

The anti-communist philistines of revisionism, tankism, and Trotskyism will continue to snipe from the sidelines, but genuine mass movements, once they begin, will sweep aside all such subjective muddleheadedness and ultra-left counter-revolutionary biliousness, and respond to Leninist science.

The Trots and revisionists will always be defeatist about mass movements because in their petty-bourgeois subjectivism, they actually fear and dislike mass movements, or scorn the need for them, – especially the dictatorship of the proletariat, which every ultra-left smartarse in the West vilified in East Europe for 70 years and failed to defend it.

Trot defeatism has also always sneered endlessly at nationalist mass movements too, denying the obvious role they have been able to play in different circumstances in the history of anti-imperialist struggle.

The Sinn Féin/IRA revolutionary national-liberation triumph to undermine the British colony of 'Northern Ireland' (which in its old hated form will disappear constitutionally with the new settlement for Ireland next May), is under constant Trot vilification just because it does not fit their purely armchair-socialist visionary fantasy of "what ought to be happening there, – continue the armed revolt to drive all of capitalism out of the whole of Ireland".

The Trots won't do this in England, of course, because it would interfere with their armchair-socialist fantasising, – but they are in ecstasy publishing instructions to the Irish national-liberation struggle about what to do, and publishing denunciations of Gerry Adams & Co as 'sell-out opportunists and mindless thugs', etc.

But because of a mass of complex historical circumstances, socialist revolution is simply not immediately on the agenda in Ireland. At the moment, temporarily in the world, direct socialist revolutions are not on the agenda anywhere. In Ireland, the overwhelming opportunities are for the colossal task of completing Ireland's national-liberation struggle against British imperialism to set Ireland on the road towards complete independence and reunification. Infantile Trotskyite narrow-mindedness can only

see any historical progress short of an all-out socialist revolution as a betrayal.

The anti-SLP scandal sheet, the *Weekly Worker*, is at it again this week right on cue. At great length, the last *EPSR* issue warned of the imbecilic amalgam of far-right and far-left which would renew attempts to rubbish Sinn Féin/IRA on the grounds of minor splits which have developed over the extraordinarily complex and tortuously difficult negotiations process which will finally terminate the old 'Northern Ireland'.

Step forward the imbeciles. On Nov 8, the *Daily Telegraph* somehow proved that the splits demonstrated that the still-bombing Continuity Army Council breakout could not be operating effectively "without the acquiescence of Sinn Féin/IRA". On Nov 13, the *Weekly Worker* chortled that "simmering discontent among republicans with the IRA ceasefire and the leadership's whole strategy" has come to a head.

"At least a third of active republicans"

were ready to split, it went on, and

there is already a degree of cooperation on the ground between members of the IRA and the Continuity Army Council, – perhaps even joint membership.

The *Weekly Worker* again warned the splitters that the Sinn Féin/IRA leadership would be out to kill them:

We have previously pointed to the danger that republican dissidents have historically faced when they oppose moves to end armed resistance. The official leadership has been prepared to make an exception to 'peaceful methods' in such circumstances. Nevertheless, at present the leadership may be constrained by the force of membership opinion from acting directly to crush its rivals.

The entire historic national-liberation struggle which has routed die-hard British colonialism in the Occupied Zone of Ireland in nearly 30 years of brilliant guerrilla-war triumphs, masterly political tactics, legendary heroic suffering, and exemplary mass-movement leadership is then totally dismissed by these Trot imbeciles as just "suing for peace".

"The IRA may be undefeated, but it is suing for peace nevertheless"

is how they slyly put it this time, aware of the ridicule that the *EPSR* has exposed these ultra-'left' frauds to.

And they also try to tone down this time their stock defeatist 'reasoning' for their treacherous scorn of the Irish national-liberation triumph, – again aware of how events have proved the *EPSR* correct in dismissing their awe of the US imperialist 'new world order'

as a grotesque misreading of history.

Previously, these CPGB Trots always referred to how effortlessly and irresistibly "US imperialism is imposing 'peace processes' on all the hot-spots in the world" – including Ireland, meaning that US intervention was effectively defeating the Irish national-liberation struggle and forcing Sinn Féin/IRA to "sue for peace".

In their original naff characterisation of the epoch, the *Weekly Worker* Trots particularly stressed how US imperialism was imposing its diktat on all the Middle East 'hot-spots', specifically identifying Saddam Hussein as having been neutered and about to be wiped out completely.

Most dogs return to their vomit, but the CPGB prefer to keep quiet about their infamous attempts to mislead the workers movement into defeatist stupidity.

Pretending not to be running away from their crass ignorance so as not to have to be seen apologising for their inability to understand the first thing about world politics, these Trot snivelers put in a heavily doctored version now, – to try to create the impression of not running

away while in fact running away from this particular nonsense as fast as they can. The tamer version now is that "many anti-imperialist movements today can see no hope of military victory". And it is still utterly defeatist and meaningless bollocks.

This is the epoch of world-shattering imperialist crisis, and hence another period of wars, and revolutionary wars, and socialist-revolutionary wars. The Trots inability to apply one scrap of Marxist-Leninist science to current practical political analyses and struggles means they simply ignore the reality of the Sinn Féin/IRA national-liberation triumph; ignore the explosive revolt throughout the Middle East; and ignore the profound political implications of the staggering imminent world-markets crash of the imperialist system.

Marx wrote half of *Das Kapital* based on capitalist press and other bourgeois reports. If read and excerpted correctly, the capitalist press is relating right now about its current collapse.

Trotskyite defeatism cannot even see it, let alone draw crucial political conclusions from it. Build Leninism.

Royston Bull

Renewed anti-communist propaganda blitz is a measure of the imperialist slump-difficulties. Conscious theoretical struggle more needed than ever. Trotskyism supplies the nastiest counter-revolutionary lies, - on Ireland, China, the anti-imperialist movement in general. Scientific Marxist perspectives must be worked for. Free-market economic crash is scuttling the US imperialist 'new world order'.

[*EPSR* No 930 09-12-97]

[...]The theme of 'Bolshevik butchery and violence' ran through all these latest counter-revolutionary propaganda stunts, – against Lenin, Stalin, China, Mandela, and Sinn Féin. It is the masterstroke of all 'human rights' individualism. If a revolutionary struggle is forced to turn to violence by the brutality of counter-revolutionary reaction, there will always be an opportunity for mindless petty-bourgeois 'democrats' to campaign endlessly that 'mistakes' have been made as an excuse for an anti-revolutionary stance.

And always in conjunction

with this occasionally half-plausible case of 'unjust violence' comes the conspiracy theory of 'betrayal'.

The counter-revolutionary psychology of middle-class individualism can thus always be anticipated like an open book by serious-minded workers.

All the attempted disruption of the SLP's anti-imperialist development has hardly deviated from this basic grotesque pattern, – accusations of 'violence', 'injustice', 'lack of democracy', and 'betrayal of the revolutionary cause', etc, etc.

It is still a bit premature for the 'unjustified killing' accusa-

tion to be yet made against the SLP, but interestingly enough, such propaganda levers **are** currently being pulled by the same counter-revolutionary petty-bourgeois mentality against the revolutionary achievements of the Sinn Féin/IRA national-liberation struggle.

The Trotskyite swamp, attempting to coordinate most of the virulent anti-SLP slanders, has this week re-vomited its lying nonsense about the Irish question, – once more accusing the Republican leadership of wishing to assassinate any opponents of the current SF/IRA line and become scabs for the imperialist camp!

The *Weekly Worker's* anti-communist guru John Bridge has spewed up the following defeatist misery, alleging that for opportunist/careerist reasons, Gerry Adams & Co have capitulated to US imperialism's invincible 'new-world-order'-domination which these armchair revolutionaries are certain will only ever be defeated under their own CPGB leadership!!!

Their latest sneering put-down of an actual revolutionary struggle, – the triumphant national-liberation drive to force British imperialism to terminate the old colonial nonsense of 'Northern Ireland' as it existed in tyrannical sectarian infamy until now, – runs as follows:

"The state remains in control of all areas of the Six Counties, has a vastly superior array of weaponry and manpower, and continues to hold scores of Irish prisoners of war. The ruling class is still united in its approach to the Irish question in general, and the 'peace process' in particular, while the catholic/nationalist population is divided.

Diplomacy can never positively succeed unless it is backed up with armed power and mass support. With the present orientation, that possibility is receding.

The IRA was fully aware that its military strategy could not bring about a united Ireland. The imperialist New World Order underlined that in no uncertain terms.

The republican movement has its own independent aims in opposition to those of British imperialism. But militants, whether in Ireland or Britain, who think that those aims will be achieved through this US-sponsored 'peace process', are labouring under a sad illusion.

Death threats have been made against the Continuity Army Council, have been made by the IRA. If you believe that progress can only be made through negotiations, then you start to view potential disrupters as your enemy. And in this context, action taken to crush the dissenters objectively places you in the imperialist camp."

Adams and McGuinness are being fingered as the Michael Collins and Arthur Griffith of today, and are thus being fingered themselves for assassination, – all on the completely barmy assumption that the Sinn Féin/IRA leaders want to butcher the tiny handful of Republicans who have resigned

in protest against the colonialist delaying tactics in the new-settlement talks.

These degenerate petty-bourgeois 'revolutionaries' will stop at nothing in their demented hostility to the communist-Leninist traditions of struggle.

No self-respecting workers party should tolerate their counter-revolutionary disruption, born of anti-communist individualist conceit, for a minute longer than necessary.

"IRA split" screamed their delighted headlines three weeks ago, in chorus with the black-propaganda hopes of the reactionary capitalist press trying to undermine the national-liberation drive. But of course, there will be no returning to this lying vomit, – to correct it or apologise; – now that it is clear how tiny and irrelevant the few resignations were, – and least of all any mention that some resignations have already been withdrawn.

These Trot methods are those of total amorality in politics, – any filthy business will do just as long as it disrupts the revolutionary struggle.

Anti-communist scepticism, born of this middle-class counter-revolutionary degeneracy, has just resurfaced in the SLP's *Socialist News*, pouring out defeatist misery against the Chinese workers state.

This decrepit Cold-War mentality slithers out puppet-like on the strings pulled by the latest championing of 'human rights and liberty' from...Hollywood monopoly-capitalism!!!

The Chinese workers state is massacring everybody, declares the US imperialist film industry with its well-known concern for historical truth and accuracy, so therefore it must be true agree two armchair revolutionaries, writing in *SN*.

"Poverty has grown alarmingly" under socialism in China, declares one of these 'socialists'. And 'corruption' is history's verdict on the Chinese Communist Party, apparently. Edgar Snow, you laboured in vain.

"Social conflict is rising"; "workers are at the absolute mercy of their employers"; "effective worker action is repressed"; "large-scale industrial accidents commonplace"; "growing regional inequality"; "unresolved national questions"; "China has all the problems of Asia's crisis-ridden capitalist economies"; "appalling social and environmental costs"; "turbulence on the horizon"; "rising worker resistance"; "CP losing political control"; "civil war soon"; etc, etc.

A more ignorant and obscene encouragement to counter-revolution could hardly be imagined. What a disgraceful insult to the SLP, and to the heroic achievements of the Chinese revolution.

The second anti-communist blast lauds the 1989 game-plan for counter-revolution behind the Statue-of-Liberty-toting individualists and Western-lovers who rocked for 'freedom' with their Hong Kong pop stars.

The 10,000 spivs, opportunists, and half-wits on Tiananmen Square, – none of whom could wait to get to the West, – allegedly represent the future of revolutionary socialism, according to this deranged *SN* contribution. The other approximately 1,200,000,000 Chinese who properly ignored this tiny trivial Tiananmen posturing, apparently represent capitalism!!

Now, it is certainly the case that the Beijing regime has given up all public allegiance to the future world socialist revolution, and is now widely employing some capitalistic economic management methods for organising parts of industry and agriculture, – all of which is potentially very worrying.

But the really decisive further revisionist retreat in the direction of Gorbachev's liquidation of the dictatorship of the proletariat is actually what this bogus SLP 'revolutionary' is calling for!!!

The counter-revolutionary code for this is to preach "democratic means" as opposed to "any form of tyranny". For the record, for serious-minded students of Marxism-Leninism, there are only two forms of state power possible in the modern world, – either the dictatorship of the proletariat, or the dictatorship of the bourgeoisie, more fraudulently presented usually as the "democratic free market" or "parliamentary democracy". It is no secret what the Trotskyite counter-revolutionary haters of the workers states have always preferred.

The new anti-Stalin diatribe from the capitalist book publishers, – compiled by a Trot, – will have all the anti-communists purring with delight, – a pictorial record of Stalinist propaganda falsifications, and other publicity excesses.

From the system which gave the world the Gulf of Tonkin incident (when a completely fictitious Vietnamese 'attack' on a US warship was used to justify open American imperialist war on the Vietnamese national-liberation revolution), the most historically notorious among literally thousands of outrageous imperialist provocations and deceptions this century, – such fastidiousness is a bit thick. Stalin, at the time of the most famous doctored photograph, merely foolishly tried to hasten the decline of Trotsky's

state-leadership reputation. The whole 'free world' connived in the blatant US propaganda stunt to bomb, napalm, and poisonously defoliate the whole of Indo-China back to the Stone Age.[]

[...] Beijing revisionism is a problem, but defending the Chinese workers state's proletarian dictatorship form is a well-worthwhile immediate objective, plus hopes that the imperialist crisis will yet make all the next most decisive moves in world history, saving China from known or inadvertent counter-revolutionary dangers springing from its present class-collaborative international outlook, and capitalist-management internal economic reorganisation.

The world imperialist crisis will eventually make a far more significant impact on contemporary world historical developments than anything that Beijing revisionism could conceivably get up to, could do.

And a revival of worldwide mass revolutionary leadership will come then, not from revived revisionists, but from new Bolshevik movements on the front line of the international class struggle.

Similarly, the actual outcome and steadfastness of the Sinn Féin/IRA bourgeois nationalist movement's revolutionary struggle to terminate British colonial 'Northern Ireland' as it existed to today, is not guaranteed.

But British imperialism's standing in the world, hampered on all sides by superior forces in the inter-imperialist trade-war crisis, can only get weaker, suggesting a continuation of the reluctant conviction (of long standing) in London (that the Irish national-liberation struggle is undefeatable, and that a compromise solution for a snail's-pace eventual acceptance of Ireland's reunification should be negotiated,) – will prevail.

It is no secret that reunification will not be conceded immediately next May 1 when the new arrangement for Ireland is due to be signed, but it is now universally expected that an agreement will be reached for ending the 'Northern Ireland' sectarian colony as it has constitutionally existed until now, to be replaced by a whole variety of inter-state executive bodies and administrative organisations covering all Ireland, under Dublin-London dual power, which will eventually pave the way for the reunification of that country.

What have 'agents of impe-

rialism' got to do with it? It completes the national-liberation of Ireland, – against British imperialism's initial bitterest wishes and most stubborn military resistance, – which is a great triumph for a revolutionary national-liberation struggle to have achieved, which will inspire anti-imperialist struggle worldwide, and which will be welcomed by genuine revolutionaries for all time in all lands.

Everything about the SLP's Trot 'revolutionaries' is a complete hoax. They do not even really want to debate the SLP's unitary constitution which they are everlastingly attacking in order to substitute factionalism. All they really want to do is to drag the whole world anti-imperialist movement back to its

pre-Leninist weaknesses, – such is the reactionary depth of their petty-bourgeois individualism. Even inside their own defeatist sects, they really only come alive at the opportunity to become oppositionists, – as is happening currently to the split-in-all-directions 'Left Opposition' against the SLP, and also to most of the individual factions within that swamp.

Trot anti-communism is a far worse affliction than even petty-bourgeois anarchism which has been the deserved butt of Marxism for more than a century, – because it is far more pretentious and bitterly paranoid, – the summit of all that is rotten about subjective-idealist individualism, and the perfect material for real counter-revolutionary treachery.[] RB

To refuse to tell the working class as frequently as possible and in as much detail as possible about the rapidly escalating world imperialist economic crisis would be the most patronising complacency and Philistine foolishness, and suicidal for a would-be party of socialist leadership. The SLP has been ill-advised to neglect this work hitherto. Such advice is of a piece with recent misleadership of the SLP that the 'peace process' in Ireland was dead.

[EPSR No 931 16-12-97]

[...]non-Marxist methods sadly coincide with the anti-communist stupidities of the Trot sects fringing the SLP whose unthinking subjective impressionism renders completely ludicrous their claims to be expert practitioners of Marxism-Leninism.

The EPSR has been exposing the fraudulence of the CPGB's 'Leninist' pretensions for nearly 17 years, and with great success recently in denouncing the *Weekly Worker's* anti-Marxist fraud of factional entryism, and their background unstable basis in believing that the whole world is firmly in the grip of the US imperialist 'New World Order'.

This defeatist gibberish persuades them to see the Sinn Féin/IRA national-liberation triumph against British imperialism as a 'sell-out capitulation' and Adams, and McGuinness as 'agents of imperialism', driven into retreat by unbeat-

able US imperialist pressure. Likewise, they see the whole Middle East as dancing to any tune US imperialism cares to play, – completely at variance with the observable facts on the ground which show the exact opposite, – an increasingly explosive situation throughout the entire Middle East which is clearly heading rapidly towards renewed anti-imperialist revolutionary upheavals, – as fully detailed in countless past *Reviews*.

The sourness of Trot defeatism about Ireland is particularly gross and reactionary, denying the brilliance of this enormous anti-imperialist triumph which is being hailed as a great inspiration by revolutionary socialists worldwide.

Of course the immediate gains of the 1998 settlement will be limited to bourgeois national-liberation dimensions; but firstly, in these highly unequal circumstances of the tiny

northern nationalist population against the whole might of British imperialism, this was a necessary and crucially important stage to have to go through; and secondly, only the eventual reunification of Ireland and the completion of its formal political independence from British colonialism could possibly be the basis not only for Ireland's further advance towards the socialist revolution, but for Britain's development in that direction too, as Marx long ago spelled out plainly when telling British workers: "No nation which oppresses another can ever free itself from oppression".

And as the EPSR has regularly explained in enormous detail since the early 1980s when it first became clear that British imperialism was not only now too historically enfeebled (economically, politically, militarily) to win a colonial war in Ireland but no longer had the stomach to try, and was looking for a way to get out without appearing to surrender completely to the Sinn Féin/IRA national-liberation armed struggle, – the 'peace process' continues to go from strength to strength, on the way to eventually completing Britain's snail's-pace withdrawal and the ultimate reunification of Ireland.

Last Thursday's historic descent on Downing Street by the Adams-McGuinness Sinn Féin delegation was an outstanding triumph, which had Orange-fascist colonial reaction reeling and will have tremendously re-inspired the colossal worldwide support that the Irish national-liberation struggle has already won by its heroism and phenomenally competent political leadership.

A 'sell-out' by 'agents of imperialism'? This was not quite how the bilious *Guardian* saw it with its well-tuned reactionary hatred of seeing revolutionary struggle triumph over bogus 'democracy':

Out on the pavement there were two dozen camera crews and a hundred or so reporters. Some, from what used to be known as the Tory press, tried to persuade Mrs Restorick to denounce Adams and the talks. But she was too cool and composed for any of that.

"Do you want revenge against the people who shot your son?" they demanded.

"No" she said.

"Do you think that the people who support murder and who will not condemn it should be invited into the headquarters of British democracy?" they insisted.

"If anything can help to stop the killing, to keep the talks going, to find a compromise, then it's worth it," she said.

But they didn't give up. Was she

aware that Adams had been a senior IRA man?

"If the Berlin Wall can come down, and Nelson Mandela can be president of South Africa, surely they can sit down and talk here."

This woman could handle Jeremy Paxman, John Humphrys and Robin Day simultaneously. She could give courses on how to handle the media, at a thousand pounds a day.

Meanwhile we learned once again that there are some people who cope with grief by demanding blood and vengeance, and some who cope by trying to protect others from what they have suffered.

Inside, Tony Blair was shaking hands with everyone and they were all soon on first name terms. But what they said hardly mattered, and can scarcely have been new to anyone present. Only the pictures counted, the powerful image of these men walking through our nation's most important doorway. As always in the new politics, the cameras were far more important than the words.

After an hour they emerged and gave a press conference. Mr Adams's great contribution to the Irish scene is that whereas old IRA men made blunt, irreconcilable demands, he has found a new, cuddlier, vocabulary to disguise his blunt, irreconcilable demands.

"The hurt and grief and division which has come from British involvement in Ireland must end," he said. This translates as "we insist that you do what we say". So does: "We must move on from the old, failed agenda, towards a new agenda."

"We call on David Trimble to take a positive leadership role," meant "we call on David Trimble to do what we say". As codes go, it's pretty easy to crack.

But the 'liberal' press also has to make it somehow seem right that revolutionary struggle should now be accepted as having earned a full say in bringing about a completely new settlement for Ireland, – and so a reporter was despatched to discover that the ordinary folk of badly-bombed Manchester were glad that negotiations were now trying for a fairer solution:

"It goes a lot deeper than Red or Dead, mate. You're lucky it was just your job you lost. You haven't got soldiers on your streets, have you? Don't you understand what they're fighting for?"

As Clive rattles on, John looks slightly taken aback. He thought everyone thought the IRA were bastards.

Not so long ago, it seemed like they did. Just last spring, when the IRA were closing motorways and scuppering the Grand National, the mainland public were locked into their favourite old defiance – Gerry Adams was scum. But the views I kept hearing in Manchester this week spoke of something very different.

"I always had a particularly negative view of the IRA, even before the bomb," began one young man. "I hate violence. Despite it. But people

resolve violence through talking — so how could I say Blair shouldn't meet Adams? I'm pleased."

A well-heeled elderly woman declared Adams a terrorist, not a politician — "but if people aren't prepared to talk to him, then we're back to square one, aren't we?" Her husband couldn't say he was happy, exactly, about the meeting — but he felt sure it was right.

And so it went on, and not only in Manchester. The *Sun* — the *Sun!* — gave space yesterday for Blair to justify the meeting, and the father of Tim Parry, who was killed aged 12 by an IRA bomb in Warrington in 1993, predicted public "outrage", but urged support instead.

But where is the outrage? Watching TV interviewers challenge Mo Mowlam about the meeting, there was a sudden sense that something had changed — that they were stuck on old questions which most people have stopped asking. How has public opinion moved so far in a matter of months? Some might say it proves the IRA were right all along — that with enough mainland bombs, people would eventually get fed up enough to want it sorted out. There is an element of truth in this — but when they bombed Harrods and Hyde Park and the rest, people just dug their heels in.

There are several reasons for the shift. The ceasefire has clearly been crucial.

This is still not the whole story. The giddy speed of mood-change reveals something important about mainstream mainland opinion on Northern Ireland — that far from being solidly entrenched, it is in fact extraordinarily suggestible.

Most Britons have never been to Northern Ireland, find the whole affair a bit of a mystery, and are apparently willing to buy whatever version they're sold.

Given such flimsiness then, there is a danger that we underestimate the importance of mainland public opinion to the Troubles. What matters most are self-evidently the feelings of the Northern Irish; any solution must be one with which they can live, or it is no solution at all.

But the mood of people in Basingstoke or Burnley also matters — and not only on the simple moral ground that they must acknowledge their role as British citizens in Ulster's problems, and that disengaged carping about the evil IRA will no longer do. If the public are persuaded that Ulster is not after all, an intractable mess ruined by unreasonable fanatics who will never allow peace, the Government will finally be held to account for finding a solution.

Any success until now has been acclaimed as a marvellous bonus, but failure has never been the Government's fault. Those lunatic terrorists were always to blame — an excuse Major made grateful use of when he tested the patience of the ceasefire too far.

In presenting Adams as a man he can do business with, and Ulster as a problem he can solve, Blair is taking a big risk. Without the escape clause to fall back on, he has to succeed.

It's a commendable risk, and does him much credit. We should



hope it's not taken with the private thought that, public mood on Ulster being so suggestible, he can always re-invent Adams as the devil if need be. Caution is understandable, and Blair appears sincere. But the sooner he shakes hands with Adams in the public gaze, the sooner we can be assured that failure is no longer an option.

Not exactly a ringing endorsement of the triumph of Sinn Féin/IRA in making possible at long last a completely new future for Ireland, eventually free of all the old liberation 'troubles' caused by British imperialism, but at least a partial admission of what a stupid disaster the whole long resistance to colonial change has been.

Blair is doing nothing but go along with the inevitable retreat which the British imperialist establishment had long ago seen as necessary, — and which most of its imperialist allies, — Washington included, — had long been telling London to get

The colonial UDI threat will have to be faced down.

[EPSR No 932 06-01-98]

Imperialist-stooge political manoeuvres and renewed blackmail threats of 'loyalist' violence are still circulating in the run-up to next Monday's due date for resumed negotiations on a new arrangement for Ireland.

They could continue hovering until any leadership from the imperialist-stooge community finally accepts historical reality and agrees that the old colonial game of dominating part of Ireland with a gerrymandered artificial 'Northern Ireland' statelet is finished, or until the London government, propped up by Washington, the EU, and Dublin, imposes a new settlement on or after May this year.

on with, — (obviously, to head off the likelihood of communist revolution if national-liberation revolution was continually made to fail).

And the continuing soaring volcano of international imperialist crisis, all the time in the background, only reconfirms the general dilapidated infirmness of British imperialism, going nowhere but into the knackers yard, in a perspective of cut-throat inter-imperialist trade war and market collapses everywhere, — all completely missed by the non-Marxist 'Marxists' as the only setting in which to try to analyse British imperialism's intentions and actions in Ireland, and the likely world imperialist responses.

Far from it being wrong to 'speculate' about the next stages of the international economic crash, — analysing the future steps is the only sensible thing for a workers party hoping to overthrow capitalism, to do.[...]

Royston Bull

to the Irish national-liberation movement.

The 'unionist' whingeing about "too many concessions to the Republican interests" will continue, possibly getting louder all the time as an obvious international plan for a framework deal, bringing Ireland's reunification closer, becomes clearer.

But yelping and complaining about being forced to abandon past cherished 'no surrender' posturing was inevitable.

Armed rebellion by the 'loyalist' die-hards against London is less inevitable (although it may still happen, or a gesture of it).

As the EPSR has consistently explained for 18 years, the historical forces of the epoch of imperialist crisis are what convinced London long ago to finally get out of Ireland just as soon as a new settlement could be disguised as not a retreat in the face of armed revolutionary national-liberation struggle.

These same forces gave colonists awareness ultimately that the 350-year racket of British colonial dictatorship over all or, now, part of Ireland was no longer sustainable, and no longer made sense from British imperialism's point of view in the government in London, or from world imperialist bourgeoisie's point of view.

The UDI threat has been notoriously brandished menacingly several times before, most notably by Paisley himself, wearing battledress camouflage, and prancing around midnight bonfires before a few thousand supporters yelling 'no surrender' and waving firearms certificates.

But all the talk of resuming the 'Carson trail', — resurrecting the armed 'unionist' revolt-preparations against Home Rule for Ireland just prior to 1914, —

was just that, all talk.

The lumpen-proletarian gangs of 'loyalist' armed thugs are a nastier threat, but once again face the problem that Paisley came up against, – namely that the vast majority of the 'unionist' community no longer share these imperialist-colonialist illusions and above all else want a peaceful quiet life in Ireland.

Even the most stubborn and obtuse 'unionist' leaders have now reluctantly accepted, – at least by their actions if not by their words yet, – that the old colonial racket of a gerrymandered dictatorship must come to an end, and that the Irish dimension, or 'Republicanism', must at last have its role accepted in the government of the whole of Ireland.

The vicious and hypocritical sticking point of this wretched 'loyalism' remains the lying nonsense that the 'majority' in 'Northern Ireland' should still have the majority say, – which means continuing the old discredited colonial domination of the Occupied Zone (six carved-up counties of Ireland) under another name.

Which is complete nonsense. It is the majority wishes of all Ireland which must prevail eventually, – which should have happened in 1919 after Sinn Féin won nearly 80% of the seats in a British-organised postwar general election, running on a total independence platform.

The British colonial scuttle from Ireland crawls on, more endangered by New Labour's ignorant amateurish clumsiness than anything else. New deal abolishes 'Northern Ireland' as was. Maze antics signalled 'unionist' and British acceptance that national-liberation war has won, and that no attempted reversal will be tolerated. 300 years of 'no surrender' intransigence ditched for a 'Get out of jail, free' card. Bogus 'unionist democratic politicians' capitulate too. Idiot British press and New Labour propaganda untangled. CPGB fake-'left' imbeciles exposed again. Negotiating blueprint gives green light to a new Ireland.

16 [EPSR No 933 13-01-98]

The deepening world economic crisis will further incline British imperialism to continue with its

That clear democratic expression of majority opinion in Ireland (then unified as it had always been) was ripped up by British colonial bayonets which imposed the hated Partition of Ireland in 1921 after a brutal war of repression.

The troubles of the uncompleted national-liberation struggle have been brewing ever since.

Complete reunification is unlikely to be part of the specific new arrangements coming into force after May, but a clear path towards that final justice for Irish independence will become unmistakably clear.

It is in the rotten interests of the privileged 'loyalist' community to try to embarrass London as much as possible over their hoped-for 'majority' veto on progress, meaning a blocking vote by the 'majority' colonial community within the gerrymandered boundaries of the artificial 'Northern Ireland' statelet. It is the steady squashing of that racket in the talks which is causing the 'loyalists' to create such tension now, – aided by the uproar caused by INLA's ultra-left refusal to accept a British imperialist diplomatic surrender to national-liberation struggle, insisting on military annihilation as well.

The proposed new deal for Ireland is likely to survive it all. DB

talist Establishment will have more than its hands full trying to stave off national bankruptcy as well as major corporate failures without having to suffer simultaneous damage and humiliation from a national-liberation war which Britain cannot win.

Contrary to the idiotic lack of understanding in the British capitalist press of British colonialism's disastrous Irish crisis, the current London government of Blair & Co **is in danger of fouling up Britain's withdrawal** through incompetence rather than 'responsible for its success through greater insight or a more delicate understanding.'

Mowlam's Maze antics were a clumsily theatrical ploy forced on New Labour by its own permanently muddled thinking and the puzzled resentment this was stoking in the beleaguered colonist community.

Firmer leadership, coming from a firmer grasp of the unchangeable historical realities facing ailing British imperialism in its poisoned Irish colony, would have clarified all these questions long ago and would have put the 'loyalist' murder gangs on far plainer notice that their little reign of localised terror against the Irish was over.

The Maze reassurances that, yes, the 'loyalist' state-sponsored fascist thugs would also be let out of jail when the Irish nationalist prisoners-of-war are released with the signing of a new agreement for Ireland after May 1, – were made necessary by growing evidence that New Labour is capable of making a mess of most things, – (even the most simple matters which have already been agreed by longstanding British Establishment policy such as this slow-moving eventual withdrawal from Ireland), – because of all the Blairites' incessant image-posturing.

The largely ill-informed, insecure, and talentless individuals who lead New Labour had to go to the Maze 'loyalist' psychopaths, recruited from the dregs of fascist colonialism, to clear up confusion of their own making.

The demented spin-doctoring surrounding these New Labour philistines could obviously not forbear trying to make propaganda capital even out of this Maze stupidity, – subsequent capitalist media gibberish wittering about how the Irish situation had been "transformed" by..."a woman's touch". As Steve Bell brilliantly ridiculed this nonsense, – "more tea, Mad Dog?".

But 800 years of British imperialist intransigence towards Ireland are not finally put into reverse because of hormonal patterns in an individual minister. Slightly weightier matters of history, – to do with the decline and fall of British imperialism, in the twilight of the whole epoch of capitalist colonial-imperialism, – have put the completion of Ireland's formal political national-liberation on the agenda.

This same image-obsessed news-management by the paranoid petty-bourgeois New Labourites then craved some attention for Blair himself on Irish matters, conveniently far away in Japan when the potential Maze pratfall went off, but then dynamically giving fulltime leadership attention to Irish difficulties thereafter, – all on the phone from Japan!!

What a star! What bollocks. The *Framework document* has been agreed for ages by London, Dublin, and Washington as the only possible basis for the peace talks. The only thing 'new' about all this was the refreshed dimwittedness of the British capitalist press, the *Telegraph* in particular, printing any old nonsense rather than come to terms with its colonialist withdrawal symptoms as it dawns on them (and on Mad-Dog Adair) that there really is to be a new deal for Ireland, and that the old colonial flog 'em and hang 'em gerrymandered dictatorship over the Irish natives in the Occupied Zone is to be no more, with sectarian random slaughter of native citizens ruled out as well.

The Maze reassurances told the 'loyalist' fascist death-squad thugs that armed disruption of the new deal for Ireland would not be tolerated, and that British police-military offensives would come down exclusively on them if the new arrangement for Ireland was not tolerated. In return, they would be immediately free to start new carpet-bagger lives alongside Trimble, Paisley, & Co trying to cash in on the new public and commercial opportunities that the new settlement for Ireland, – on the way to a reunified country, – would initially bring.

The disgusting Maze show of imprisoned fascist-colonist thugs was exploited by New Labour and the capitalist media to disgracefully imply some equivalence between these 'loyalist' crooks and killers and the genuine prisoners-of-war of the astonishingly successful guerrillas of the Irish Republican Army who took on the full might of British imperialist

power, in Ireland and in the colonial metropolis, and fought it to a standstill.

There is no comparison whatever, but what these loyalist death-squads do represent is an important factor. They form the lowest echelon of British colonial repression, using age-old random localised terror (protected by British army and police regimes) to create permanent fear in nationalist communities and to try to undermine IRA recruitment and organisation.

Mowlam's obscene Maze display was a sly and indirect way of publicly recognising that British violence, in all its nastiness, really does lie at the root of Ireland's age-old troubles, and of also announcing that this violence was now being prepared for permanently standing down.

The end of the road for the Maze thugs symbolises the end of the road for British colonial thuggery in general.

Also symbolised by the 'understanding' Mowlam reached with the 'loyalist' killers, (that they will be out of jail provided the new arrangement for Ireland is accepted), – was the reality that the worst 'no surrender' colonialist intransigence has already, in fact, accepted that there will be a new deal, and that the old 'Northern Ireland' colonial outrage will be no more.

Imposed by British bayonet point in 1921 after having been massively rejected by the whole of Ireland in British-run 'democratic' elections in 1918, the colonial statelet of 'Northern Ireland' was supposed to become a separate country for all time, and a part of Britain for all time. To any proposed changes in that, there was supposed to be 'no surrender', – never.

In all the confusion of last week's Maze theatricals, with Trimble visiting the imprisoned 'loyalist' terrorist thugs too, and assuring them also that they would be freed as soon as a new deal for Ireland could be agreed, – the main 'Unionist' party leaders, and the fringe 'Unionist' party leaders, all virtually publicly accepted, – at last, and for the first time, – that there will be a new deal for Ireland. The 'no surrender' reactionary nonsense is now in the dustbin of history where it belongs.

By the Maze acknowledgement that armed struggle was king, British imperialism also publicly acknowledged for the first time that all its own earlier propaganda about "never negotiating with terrorism" and pretending that far from a

national-liberation war, Ireland was just a police action against 'criminal' terrorist gangsters, – was also empty nonsense, now abandoned as well.

Real power never lay in any 'democratic' pretence at all. Real power is imperialist dictatorship, until challenged by national-liberation war. The success of the Sinn Féin/IRA challenge is now being acknowledged. And the lowest of the low-life of British colonial violent domination has to be credited too, in the unappetising form of the Maze 'loyalist' death-squads.

Only the Paisleyites, and Ross (of Trimble's own Official Unionist Party), and the more single-minded counter-revolutionary sections of the capitalist media, bothered raising voices and eyebrows at the laughable hypocrisy of London and 'unionism' now publicly taking unnecessary tea with truly mad-dog terrorists, and at a stroke demolishing all those earlier posturing decades of "no compromise with 'men of violence' ever. 'Democratic' voices only to be heard in any negotiations."

Mowlam naturally publicly insisted that there had been no negotiations. All seriously-minded people know differently.

London's massive propaganda confusions over this Maze farce will also eventually fail to conceal another decisive historical fact, long denied: namely, that the entire colonial concept of 'Northern Ireland' has been a catastrophic failure, and a monstrosity. What, otherwise, could be the possible explanation for this final abandonment of 'no surrender'? The IRA has not driven the British colonial forces from the field of battle. But yet the 'forever, no surrender' status of the old 'Northern Ireland' colony is being given up. Why? Because it was a shameful historical failure, despised worldwide where Irish national-liberation heroism is admired, i.e. practically everywhere.

It is quite moving now to hear someone like David Irvine, leader of the 'loyalist' Progressive Unionist Party, speak regretfully about the latest butchery of an Irish civilian, Terry Enright, and admit it is an intolerable tragedy which should never happen again, – that a new agreement for Ireland is needed where Irish national-liberation rights are finally guaranteed all over Ireland, their own country.

It is even more moving to realise that this entire transformation has only come about because of the heroic struggle and inventive brilliance, political and military, of the Sinn Féin/IRA national-liberation

revolutionary struggle, defying (against all the bitterest odds, torments, deaths, and defamations), the British imperialist erstwhile intention to ignore that struggle, and to destroy it by murder and slander and injustice of every conceivable vile kind.

The bizarre phenomenon of fascist-thug killers being rehabilitated in the full glare of publicity is paradoxically an indirect credit to the scale of this Sinn Féin/IRA national-liberation achievement, – turning the whole modern history of Ireland on its head. No more old 'Northern Ireland', but a completely new Ireland. In such a transformation, **everyone** gets a chance of a new start, even the most psychopathic fascist-colonial thugs.

Paisley's relative quietness is interesting too; a 'no surrender' uproar of earthquake proportions might have been expected to engulf Trimble & Co for their blatant effrontery of no longer 'disowning' such brazen terrorists as the Maze 'loyalist' inmates after a lifetime's 'democratic methods only' posturing, – an astonishing turnaround which Paisleyites quickly grasped would be the green light for 'unionist' dealings with nationalist 'terrorism' henceforth, – i.e. proper negotiations with the Sinn Féin "front for the IRA".

Is the commercial petty-bourgeois essence of even Paisley's colonialism getting the better of such upright 'democratic' 'no popery' principles too? Will even the Paisleyites eventually join the rest of the 'unionist' stooges for British imperialism, and get jobs and fulfil paid public functions in all the new quangos and commercial developments which steps towards a reunified Ireland would be likely to spawn (given any continuation of international marketing activities, not yet blitzed out by the world crisis)?

Any exploitation of reunification measures of an economic or public-affairs kind wants to be taken advantage of rapidly by post-colonial bourgeois opportunism because the situation in Ireland, as everywhere else, will be soon transformed again (once the world markets-slump and international corporate-crash irresistibly spreads planet-wide); – and Sinn Féin, which will grow even more massively popular in the near future, both north and south, has a powerful socialist tendency within its philosophic make-up.

The discredited 'unionist' colonial stooges should also take their chances while they can because some sections of

the British capitalist press are turning a bit anti-'loyalist' now, in the new climate:

Question: when is a ceasefire not a ceasefire? Answer when it is declared by loyalist paramilitaries. Of the 20 political killings in Northern Ireland in 1997, 15 have been attributed to loyalists despite the occasions on which they adopted their notorious "no claim, no blame" policy. In other words, when it suited, they have refused to admit their misdeeds.

Some murders were particularly brutal. Virtually all the victims were chosen at random; they were Catholics in the wrong place at the wrong time. In March, John Slane, 44, was shot dead in his west Belfast home. On May 8, Robert Hamill, 25, was beaten horribly after leaving a function in Portadown, dying 11 days later. Within a week, 61-year-old Sean Brown, chairman of his local Gaelic sports club in Bellaghy, Co Deny, was abducted and killed. Six days later William Harbinson from north Belfast was handcuffed and beaten to death in an alleyway.

The butchers rested from their program until July 15, when 18-year-old Bernadette Martin was shot in the head while asleep in her boyfriend's house in Aghalee, Co Antrim. Her crime: she was a Catholic and he was a Protestant.

It was thought that the restoration of the IRA ceasefire on July 19 would end the loyalist sectarian blood-letting. But five days later 16-year-old James Morgan was kidnapped as he hitched a lift to his home in Annsborough, Co Down. The lad was savagely beaten to death before his killers dumped his body in a water-filled hole.

For the next five months Catholics seemed able to go about their business without looking over their shoulders. Then, on December 5, Gerry Devlin was shot dead at his Gaelic sports club in Glengormley, Belfast.

Two days after Christmas, the republican INLA killed the leader of the Loyalist Volunteer Force, Billy Wright in the Maze prison. The LVF had been responsible for most of the deaths throughout the year and Wright was suspected of having directed atrocities from inside jail. His henchmen immediately retaliated by shooting Seamus Dillon, a security guard at the Glengannon Hotel in Dungannon, Co Tyrone, and wounding five others. They followed that on New Year's Eve by shooting dead Eddie Treanor, 31, in a north Belfast bar.

These murderers have not restricted themselves to Catholics. In the bitter internecine feuds between the various splinters of extremist Unionism, Robert Bates (multiple killer of Shankill Butcher notoriety), Stuart Hunter and Glen Greer were all killed by their loyalist chums.

In March, the Presbyterian minister, the Rev David Templeton, died from injuries inflicted 45 days before by a loyalist gang who, resting briefly from religious bigotry, revealed their homophobic bent. They also showed that the rule of law, a law administered by a largely Protestant police force, means little

to them either. In June, 15 men from loyalist bands were arrested after an off-duty RUC officer was kicked and beaten to death outside a bar in Ballymoney, Co Antrim.

It is said that these killings are carried out by groups which have nothing to do with mainstream Unionism. Nor even with the so-called fringe loyalist groups, such as the Ulster Volunteer Force (UVF) and the Ulster Defence Association (UDA), which have declared cease-fires.

But the sham has been exposed. In the months before the IRA cease-fire, when the UDA was boasting of its peaceful intentions, it was involved in planting bombs beneath cars belonging to republicans. Proof emerged in July when a 34-year-old UDA member from Lisburn, Brian Morton, killed himself while making a booby-trap bomb.

In the New Year's Eve attack on the north Belfast bar, virtually everyone with any knowledge of the incident believes its members helped the UVF. The truth is that the loyalists have been doing all they can to provoke the IRA and to foment any split. They know the IRA is regarded as solely responsible for all of the problems in Northern Ireland, and that they can get away with any amount of cruelty without a peep from the British-based press.

None of what I have written about loyalist barbarity will surprise people on the island of Ireland. But the people in England, Wales and Scotland are largely ignorant of such matters. Many of these deaths have passed without comment. Some papers haven't even mentioned them.

So there is no public pressure on the Government to deal with loyalists on the same terms as they have done the IRA. Having done all they can to subvert the peace process, the loyalists now openly threaten to abandon it. This latest sabre-rattling has all the hallmarks of 1974 when the Protestant majority were facing the prospect of sharing power with their Catholic neighbours. Then the Ulster Workers' Council strikes forced Westminster to back down.

The Progressive Unionist Party, the fringe loyalist group, said last night it would be attending Stormont today. It had threatened to withdraw over what it saw as the republican agenda of the talks.

The resumption of talks was overshadowed when the renegade Loyalist Volunteer Force murdered doorman Terry Enright early yesterday outside a Belfast club. He was the UVF's third victim since the killing of its leader, Billy Wright, 16 days ago.

Mr Enright, a father of two, was linked to both Gerry Adams, the Sinn Féin president, and David Ervine, leader of the DUP. It is unlikely Mr Enright's killers would have known that Mr Adams was his wife's uncle. But they would have been aware that relatives of Mr Ervine own the city centre nightclub where he was working.

Mr Ervine believed the club was targeted to undermine his conciliatory approach. He said: "A fine

young man has lost his life caused by an obscure group of headcases receiving political direction from anonymous but seemingly respectable politicians intending to damage my political philosophies and attitude."

Detectives also know that Mr Enright had refused entry to two loyalists suspected of drugs dealing. They had subsequently threatened him. Witnesses said Mr Enright was singled out and was shot several times.

He worked with both Catholic and Protestant youngsters, and one of his friends was the DUP's Billy Hutchinson, also a community worker. Mr Hutchinson said: "I am gutted. I'm just at rock bottom." Deirdre Enright, the victim's widow, said: "The gutless cowards who gunned him down killed someone very special. Unlike them, Terry was working tirelessly for many years to bring about peace, community harmony and a better life for all, especially young people."

There were suggestions last night that the Ulster Freedom Fighters, suspected over the New Year's Eve killing of Eddie Treanor, were involved. The paramilitary group's leaders in the Maze met Mo Mowlam, the Ulster Secretary, three days ago.

The car used in the attack on Mr Enright was found burned out in loyalist east Belfast in a stronghold of the Ulster Defence Association and UVF.

Amid such gloom, Mr Blair said he was "cautious and optimistic that we can get a proper settlement in Northern Ireland because I believe there is much goodwill there".

But what is now different from 1974, of course, is the further decline in the historic fortunes of British imperialism, plus even more frightening disaster-perspectives for Western imperialism as a whole, now menaced with the most devastating world slump in history, - hardly the most confident position from which beleaguered British imperialism could hope to continue bossing around the Irish in part of Ireland:

Mowlam's discussions with loyalist and IRA prisoners in the Maze illustrated how the talks have been held hostage by the paramilitaries. Her protestations of "taking risks for peace" and "leaving no stone unturned" were becoming increasingly unconvincing.

Yesterday, one of those stones was Michael Stone, a man serving life sentences for the murder of six Roman Catholics. Before cameras were allowed into the Maze on Thursday, his last appearance on television had been firing a pistol and throwing grenades in Milltown cemetery in 1988. On Thursday, Padraic Wilson, the IRA's "officer commanding" explained how his comrades enjoyed a regime based on the demands of the 1981 hunger strikers. "The conditions that we have now are the conditions - and more - which we set out to achieve in those days," he said.

Perhaps the ultimate recognition of that status was the very presence of Miss Mowlam in the Maze yesterday. Terrorists, both inside and outside the Maze, had undoubtedly become key figures in the talks.

Wilson, 38, was happy enough with the regime. Had prisoners got what Bobby Sands and nine other republican prisoners died for on hunger strike in 1981, a recognition of political status? "Yes, and more," he said. Nobody asks them to do any work; there is free association within the wings; and they can wear what they like..

There was collusion at the Maze yesterday. The IRA and UDA both used the same term to explain why they thought wild stories about the Maze had appeared in the press - "disgruntled prison officers". Funny that, so did Mr Mogg.

Prison officers, and there are 1,220 at the Maze, thought it a little strange. But Mr Mogg's aside to photographers was perhaps an insight "You know," he told them, "I rely very much, on the paramilitaries to be able to run this place."

Miss Mowlam's gamble in going to the Maze and the announcement by UDA prisoners which followed were seen as having bought time for the Stormont talks which had seemed close to collapse when the DUP and DUP threatened to pull out.

Gary McMichael, the DUP leader, said: "It was a symbolic recognition by Mo Mowlam in coming to see the prisoners, and that they and the issues at the heart of this crisis, were being taken seriously."

Miss Mowlam said she had told the prisoners: "Nobody is going to get anything unless we have a talks process. Talks are the only way forward."

She also handed them a 14-point document pledging to work towards a settlement while continuing to combat terrorism.

Ms Mowlam, who has been accused of setting a dangerous precedent, confirmed she would go back to see convicted terrorists if necessary.

That position has proved con-

troversial in Northern Ireland, and Lord Alderdice, leader of the Alliance Party, launched an angry attack last night. He said that the loyalist paramilitaries had hyped up the situation, and Ms Mowlam had fallen into their web. "Both she and they can claim a great victory, thoroughly ensconcing them as the important arbitrators of our future, not democratic politicians."

The *Observer* has also learnt that Mr Blair's plans were discussed with UVF and UDA prisoners during a meeting at the Maze with the Ulster Unionist Party last Tuesday - before other parties at the talks were given details.

Because of this British imperialist weakness, a tremendous anti-imperialist triumph still remains in sight in Ireland leading to the official constitutional deletion of the infamous 'Northern Ireland' poisoned colonial statelet, to be replaced at the peace process talks by north-south Irish institutions, east-west Anglo-Irish institutions, and a proportional-representation local government pattern.

SLP anti-communists, hovering around the *Weekly Worker* predicting the death of the SLP, reconfirmed their reactionary notion of 'progressive' politics by again condemning this peace process, disputing capitalist media speculation that the talks were collapsing:

"The loyalists can cause problems, but they remain in essence supporters of imperialism. The state can always hope to buy them off through a combination of stick and carrot.

That is why talk of the ending of the 'peace process' is misplaced. There have been many setbacks and no doubt these will continue. But when both the principal adversaries, - the British state and Sinn Féin/IRA, - are determined on a settlement from above, only the actions of the masses from below will be able to stop it."

Weird, or what?



Padraic Wilson, the IRA's commanding officer at the Maze

It takes a particular form of middle-class, sectarian, ultra-'left' stupidity to oppose a revolutionary national-liberation struggle victory over imperialism where circumstances make that a remarkable breakthrough, bitterly resisted for decades by imperialism. The pretence that these fringe SLP nutters only oppose a Republican triumph over the dying British colony "because a socialist revolution is immediately possible against capitalism all over Ireland" when the present circumstances do not remotely indicate any such thing, – will be believed only by the most gullible and treacherous anti—communists, who understand nothing of Marxism-Leninism.

The essential sick defeatism of this bogus 'revolutionary' posturing dovetails well with the Trotskyite cynicism of much of the 'progressive' capitalist press, such as the *Guardian* which unflinchingly is always the most perceptively counter-revolutionary and anti-communist rag where developments towards real proletarian power come into view.

The petty-bourgeois philosophy of cynical individualism hates the potential for proletarian-dictatorship workers states worse than any other ideological support for 'parliamentary democracy' (i.e. capitalism). It hates Sinn Féin's mass revolutionary credentials more than anything, and is glad to help stir propaganda confusion sown by 'unionist' intransigence and New Labour muddle-headed weakness over the latest Irish developments.

But misleading headlines aside, the negotiating text submitted by London and Dublin to start the talks still embraces the essential historical shifts which will gradually mean a new Ireland:

Propositions on heads of agreement:

Balanced constitutional change, based on commitment to the principle of consent in all its aspects by both British and Irish governments, to include both changes to the Irish constitution and to British constitutional legislation.

Democratically elected institutions in Northern Ireland, to include a Northern Ireland assembly, elected by a system of proportional representation, exercising devolved executive and legislative responsibility over at least the responsibilities of the six Northern Ireland departments, and with provisions to ensure that all sections of the community can participate and work together successfully in the operation of these institutions and that all sections of the community are protected.

A new British-Irish agreement,

to replace the existing Anglo-Irish Agreement and help establish close co-operation and enhance relationships, embracing:

- An intergovernmental council to deal with the totality of relationships, to include representatives of the British and Irish governments, the Northern Ireland administration and the devolved institutions in Scotland and Wales, with meetings twice a year at summit level.

- A North/South ministerial council to bring together those with executive responsibilities in Northern Ireland and the Irish Government in particular areas. Each side will consult, cooperate and take decisions on matters of mutual interest within the mandate of, and accountable to, the Northern Ireland assembly and the Oireachtas [national parliament] respectively. All decisions will be by agreement between the two sides, North and South. Suitable implementation bodies and mechanisms for policies agreed by the North-South Council in meaningful areas and at an all-island level.

- Standing intergovernmental machinery between the Irish and British governments, covering issues of mutual interest, including non-devolved issues for Northern Ireland, when representatives of the Northern Ireland administration would be involved.

Provision to safeguard the rights of both communities in Northern Ireland, through arrangements for the comprehensive protection of fundamental human, civil, political, social, economic and cultural rights, including a Bill of Rights for Northern Ireland supplementing the provisions of the European Convention, and to achieve full respect for the principles of equity of treatment' and freedom from discrimination, and the cultural identity and ethos of both communities. Appropriate steps to ensure an equivalent level of protection in the Irish republic. Effective and practical measures to establish and consolidate an acceptable peaceful society, dealing with issues such as prisoners, security in all its aspects, policing and decommissioning of weapons.

This announces from the very beginning the proposed suspension of the 1920 Government of Ireland Act whereby British imperialism proclaimed the sovereignty of 'Northern Ireland', the start of all the troubles and the only reason for the existence of clauses II and III in the Irish Constitution pronouncing the six counties part of Ireland. That sovereignty, that monstrous act of colonial annexation, is at last to be suspended for re-examination, – admitting everything that the Irish national-liberation struggle has been declaring ever since.

The named 'Northern Ireland assembly' is the bitterest pill to swallow, but in appearance and in propaganda mischief-making terms only, giving Trimble

chance to gloat.

But devolved local government with built-in proportional-representation power-sharing provisions is in the first place a huge advance on any 'democracy' British imperialism has ever conceded anywhere before; and secondly it is exactly the identical local government power-sharing which 'unionist' intransigence destroyed in 1974 with a general economic strike to force the London government to back down.

But most important of all, this PR assembly, in the new conditions of 23 more years of reactionary bloody resistance to the national-liberation struggle, and all the subsequent splits in 'unionism' because of the degenerate pointless mayhem of this 'no surrender' reaction, – will not remotely be easily controlled by UUP diehard colonialism which has always pretended to prefer death to any collaboration with the Irish Republic.

And this hard-to-control assembly whose PR will give a massive new spread of representation, (especially within the 'unionist' community now seething with new thoughts about getting away from the old colonial laager mentality) – will be constitutionally operating to a framework of the North/South ministerial council, and not to Westminster.

The parity between this assembly and the Dublin parliament is another pill to swallow, but the enthusiasm for all-Ireland cooperation will quickly erase that hurt, and enthusiasm for such developments from half the assembly, will start sweeping practical reunification forward in no time, – already well under way from a variety of

previous economic and administrative collaboration between north and south. This artificial parity between northern and southern parliaments is continued into the wider council embracing all the devolved governments of Britain and Ireland, but once again the actual cooperative development of Ireland, which will rapidly appeal to a majority north and south, will see Ireland speaking with one voice before too long.

The permanent interstate collaboration between London and Dublin governments is to continue at the summit of these institutions, covering all issues affecting the six-county population which are not devolved for assembly local government control (which are mainly envisaged as health, education, environment, agriculture, tourism and economic developments).

The only permanent new civil-service structures envisaged are the executive and administrative bodies to carry out, at an all-island level, all the future agreements between the north and south of Ireland, whose different immediate-past traditions will require a period of hard-working harmonisation.

This is clearly a blueprint for a new Ireland, and clearly it carries on where the Anglo-Irish Treaty of 1985 and the *Framework Document* of 1995 left off.

And this has been the immediate response of the Paisleyites, who denounced the abandonment of the 1920 sovereignty act, and declared that Trimble would soon be disowned by all true 'unionism' for the betrayal of 'Northern Ireland', a historical turning point long overdue. Royston Bull

Pace of ruling-class surrender over Ireland quickens. Middle-class muddleheadedness, both right and 'left', gets worse, but cannot save Orange colonialism. Trot-Telegraph alliance spreads total rubbish. Bloody Sunday humiliation for British Establishment. Defeatist 'lefts' crawl gracelessly away from their vomit. Huge and growing all-Ireland popularity of Sinn Féin's grass-roots politics will challenge the international imperialist crisis.

[EPSSR No 937 10-02-98]

If the imperialist system's worldwide crisis problems do not overwhelm it before May

1 (and the hysterical nonsense and confusion in the West over Iraq shows how close to collapse

is the past pattern of unchallenged US hegemony), then the British imperialist scuttle from its Occupation of part of Ireland will be into its end-game. The triumph of the revolutionary national-liberation struggle will be on its way towards completion through a new settlement which will effectively write **'terminated'** on the colonial essence of 'northern Ireland' (which has lasted since Partition was imposed by British bayonets in 1923).[1921?-ed]

The scuttle is at last turning from its routine snail's pace into almost crab-like speed as the crucial moment of 'Unionist' swallowing more than 300 years of 'No Surrender' defiant posturing (backed by a germy-ramdered police-military dictatorship, of course) draws to a climax.

As the *EPSR* has documented for the last 19 years, the British bourgeois-imperialist press remains very confused (and confusing) about this painfully gradual collapse and defeat for British imperialism, – and the petty-bourgeois 'left' press remains even more confused (see below).

But capitalist realism also still breaks through due to the system of commercially-competing newspapers and television, and due to splits in the Establishment which are also reflected in the media, – and the latest slithers towards the eventual culmination for the Irish independence movement (after 800 years!) can be read between the lines:

A paper on the North-South council tabled jointly by the British and Irish governments was thin on detail, a sign of the difficulty officials have had in framing proposals acceptable to both the Unionists and the nationalist/republican parties. But the ambiguity is also deliberate: it allows each party to put its own gloss on the document.

The document does not explicitly say the new council will have executive powers but the Irish government, Sinn Féin and the SDLP believes it is implied in a later reference in which the two governments restate their commitment to the joint British-Irish *framework document* agreed in 1995, which does contain the promise of executive powers.

"This paper gives us a firm basis on which to negotiate the precise powers, functions and composition of North-South institutions," said SDLP leader, John Hume. But at a press-conference the Ulster Unionist MP Jeffrey Donaldson, tore up a copy of the joint framework document. It was not an impulsive gesture as he had half-ripped it before taking his seat on the platform.

20 After the Unionists' apparent victory on the two governments' publication of the *Provisional Heads of Agreement* a fortnight ago, the pen-

dulum swung back towards Sinn Féin and the SDLP yesterday. The new paper made it clear that the 1995 *Framework Document* favoured by nationalists, was back at centre stage.

David Ervine, leader of the Progressive Unionist Party, one of the small loyalist parities closely linked to the paramilitaries, described the atmosphere in the talks as "shit". But the crucial point was that no one walked out and that they were holding discussions.

Despite theatrics – from the Ulster Unionists – in ripping up a document – they negotiated with the other parties on new British-Irish proposals for a North-South ministerial council. It is the crucial issue.

Although Mr Trimble and Mr Adams are both in the talks, the Ulster Unionist leader has so far refused to agree to a bilateral meeting.

Mr Blair, asked by reporters if it was time for direct negotiations between the parties, said: "I very much hope people do engage in this talks process."

The state of relations between the two parties was underlined when Mr Adams disclosed that the Unionist MP Ken Maginnis told him he did not talk to "fucking murderers" when the Sinn Féin leader tried to talk to him. President Clinton, in spite of his personal crisis, telephoned Mr Blair yesterday for a talks update and to urge the participants to keep the process moving forward.

In reality, there is no "pendulum swing" to and fro, favouring first the 'Unionists' and then Irish nationalism. This is merely how the pathetic British middle-class choose to avoid recognising that British imperialism has been humiliated by a revolutionary national-liberation struggle from an initially tiny dedicated movement of resolutely anti-imperialist nationalists and socialists, – Provisional Sinn Féin and the Provisional IRA.

In reality, the British Establishment decision to get out of Ireland because the national-liberation struggle could not be defeated, was taken in the early 1980s after powerful Republican political successes (huge election successes; the defeat of 'criminalisation' by the hunger strikes and by 'dirty' protests of the blanket-men; the massive community organisation and support which Sinn Féin began developing; etc) had started to match the remarkable popular protection which IRA activities were receiving which was making it so difficult for the British police-military dictatorship to combat the guerrilla war.

The hiccups in this steady retreat have been connected with temporary British government embarrassments increasing London's concern to never let it become too obvious that the scuttle was on because of a revolutionary national-liberation struggle, – which would have

sent out all the wrong messages around the world from imperialism's point of view.

In periods such as the near-minority vulnerability of the Major government in its latter stages, the need to slow down on an observable pattern of British retreat from Ireland because of its weakened international imperialist position is obvious. Too-emphasised an atmosphere of defeat and failure in general can lead to a change of mood and the fall of a vulnerable government.

And any humiliation for British and US imperialism in their current warmongering posture in the Middle East could just mean some postponement of the May deadline for north/south referendums on a new deal for Ireland, for example.

But that aside for the moment, the general plan for new arrangements for Ireland crawls ahead, including a proposed return-visit by the US imperialist president around the referendum time to hope to give it more authority so that devastated 'Unionism' does not stage a revolt, and to give British bourgeois opinion more opportunity to cover up the reality of the ignominious British retreat at last from colonial-imperialist Occupied Ireland.

Trimble, Maginnis, Donaldson, & Co. will eventually be glad to talk detailed new arrangements with Dublin, Sinn Féin, and the Irish nationalist destiny of Ireland in order to achieve for themselves whatever preserved bourgeois-society positions they can rescue as their 'Northern Ireland' colonial fiefdom is gradually merged back into an eventually reunited Ireland in a few years time. And their LVF gunmen stooges will finally abandon forever the terror-tyranny methods of rule which alone have maintained the British colonial domination to this day.

This will leave a bad taste in the mouth, as their spokesman Ervine so graphically put it, but they will swallow it all nevertheless.

As naïve, bewildered, and useless as New Labour is, even Blair & Co should just about be able to muddle through to the end of the process to help Dublin and Senator Mitchell impose referendum terms sufficiently reunification-oriented (in the long term) to secure peaceful nationalist agreement, but without antagonising diehard Orange-colonial reaction so much as to create an anti-referendum 'unionist' majority.

So if world economic crisis or Middle East humiliation have

not blown the whole imperialist system off course by then, and if the pathetic Blair regime is still intact, a completely new deal for Ireland should be being voted on by early summer.

But remarkably, much bourgeois ideology is still pumping out propaganda disinformation to conceal this story of national-liberation triumph (which helps the anti-imperialist struggle everywhere).

Even more remarkably, it is the defeatists from the sour Trotskyite fake-'left' who are most dismayed and disoriented at this British imperialist humiliation.

Most remarkably of all, the *Weekly Worker* Trots join forces with the *Daily Telegraph* to express their discomfort at such developments, the reactionary Tory rag going even further than the Trots to convince itself that suddenly, Irish nationalism has been defeated in the talks process, not British imperialism, – in spite of the British Establishment's total failure to contain the IRA guerrilla war in 30 years of trying in the modern period.

These very British middle-class views are reported by the CPGB in the following manner, commenting on the widespread capitalist press nonsense about "Nothing for Sinn Féin" as the final phase of talks began in London with new joint Anglo-Irish documents:

Most interesting was the response of *The Daily Telegraph*, whose previous line was to call for the ending of "the long-running farce called the 'peace process' (January 10)". Instead of even contemplating negotiations with the "terrorists", whose challenge to the integrity of the United Kingdom should be crushed by whatever force necessary, the *Telegraph* demanded an agreement with the "constitutional parties".

The *Daily Telegraph* has persuaded itself that the government has come to its senses at last. Its correspondent Tony Harnden, writes:

"The plan is based on accommodating the aspirations of Ulster's constitutional parties.

"Mr Blair's plan, as one which copper-fastens the union, cannot be acceptable to the republican movement."

On that basis the editorial in the same edition of the paper gives the scheme its stamp of approval:

"The proposal is one around which sensible unionists and nationalists in Northern Ireland could gather. It could, just, turn the terrorist-driven 'peace process' into a democrat-driven peace plan. It could even, unlike Labour's other devolution ideas, actually help the union."

The *Daily Telegraph* concludes:

"Sinn Féin/ IRA... will surely now consider ending their own ceasefire quickly, and quitting the talks."

Strangely though, there was barely a murmur of protest from Sinn Féin.

Its clear priority is to lure the UUP into serious negotiations so as to establish itself as

the main 'respectable' republican party in place of the SDLP.

Only Ian Paisley's Democratic Unionist Party and the smaller UK Unionist Party are still declining to take up their seats. The DUP, still hoping to win a bigger space for itself by crying 'sellout', claimed forlornly that it represented the majority of unionists. Its co-thinkers of *The Daily Telegraph*, while completely misreading SF/IRA's likely reaction to Blair's plan, have assessed the scheme's orientation rather more accurately.

The clear picture is presented that it is the Irish national-liberation struggle which is being humiliated, giving comfort to *Daily Telegraph* ultra-imperialist reactionaries because it supposedly crushes anti-colonial revolt by the bog-trotters, and to *Weekly Worker* ultra-'left' reactionaries because it supposedly upholds what they claim to prize most dearly, – a totally abstract sectarian idea in their armchair-socialist heads, namely that only Trotskyite-led '**real socialist revolution**' can ever amount to serious anti-imperialist progress.

The entire 20th century of anti-imperialist triumphs gives the lie to this psychological condition of paranoid self-loathing, typical of the English petty bourgeoisie.

And events in Ireland are daily giving the lie to it too, – as seen in the capitalist press response two weeks later (see first quotes) when the Ireland merger proposals of the 1995 *Framework Document*, still fully operative, began to be spelled out in detail again.

In one slimy little (Jan 29) *Weekly Worker* sentence, then the 'left' of bourgeois ideology hinted at its own doubts that it has the faintest idea of what are the real historical processes at work in Ireland, or that it is worth listening to at all on the subject (or any other, come to that). Despite repeating its assertion that

"The 'peace' process is about a negotiated end to armed or violent resistance",

the Trots concluded mysteriously:

The whole 'peace' process remains fraught with uncertainty. It is continuing to cause new tensions across the board in the Six Counties – tensions that could be replicated within the British state itself. As a settlement nears, the possibility of increased violence becomes ever more likely.

One week later came the February bombshell of the long-awaited London announcement that a judicial inquiry would be reopened into the 1972 Bloody Sunday massacre of defenceless Derry citizens by the British army of occupation. The humiliation of British imperialism, – the essential historical movement in the whole Irish question, – was becoming plainer.

Parts of the bourgeois establishment took it on the chin, printing the following admissions for the first time:

PRIVATE A of the 1st battalion Parachute Regiment made this first-hand account shortly after Bloody Sunday. His statement to the Widgery

tribunal was altered by senior officers.

"ONE night in 1 January 1972, I was sitting with the rest of my 'muckers' of the anti-tank platoon in the barrack when Officer B came in and informed us that we were due for an operation in Londonderry the following day.

"As I looked at my friends, I could see that after all the abuse and nights without sleep, frustrations and tensions, this is what they had been waiting for. We were all in high spirits and when our Officer B said 'Let's teach these buggers a lesson – we want some kills tomorrow', to the mentality of the blokes to whom he was speaking, this was tantamount to an order."

After arriving in Derry and hearing the noise of the riot, Private A went on: "Adrenalin was running. There was excitement in the air. I know I speak for the majority when I say that the common feeling amongst us was: please let us be called in – we'll go nuts if we miss a chance like this.

"Then I heard Officer C's voice on the radio: 'Machine guns and anti-tanks, mount up and move in'.

"(I should mention that while we were in the church yard four of five yards away from me I saw a pall of duct and chips of concrete fly from the ground. It didn't occur to me until minutes later that we were under fire.)

"I was with the leading group of half a dozen as we reached a small garden at the corner of Kells Walk. At this point, approximately a hundred yards short of the crowd, Private H went into the kneeling position and fired at the centre of the crowd from behind a low wall some two feet high which ran around the garden. Private G immediately

jumped down beside him and also opened fire. Just beyond the wall on the pavement Private F also commenced firing.

"Opposite us I could see [other soldiers] helmeted and blackfaced in a standing position, pumping off rounds at quite a rapid rate. In the initial 30 seconds I would say that a hundred rounds were fired at the crowd. After an eternity of time-less moments and sighs, Officer C's voice came on the radio and ordered a ceasefire. I knew the blokes were getting in while the going was good, as people with gleeful expressions were running up from the rear and elbowing their way through to get into the firing-line. I shouted the order, 'cease fire' and ran along the line tapping them on their shoulders.

"Privates D, F, G, H and myself then leapt the wall, turned right and ran down Kells Walk into Glenfada Park. A group of some 40 civilians was there running in an effort to get away. Private F fired from the hip at a range of 20 yards. The bullet passed through one man and into another and they both fell, one dead and one wounded. He moved forward and fired again, killing the wounded man.

"Private D shot another man at the entrance of the park who also fell on the pavement. A fourth man was killed by either G or H. I can no longer recall the order of fire or who fell first, but I remember that when we first appeared, darkened faces, sweat and aggression, brandishing rifles, the crowd stopped immediately, turned to face us and raised their hands. This is the way they were standing when they were shot."

After the shooting the soldiers returned to their armoured personnel



carrier, known as a 'pig'. "When we got into the 'pig' everyone including myself was laughing and joking on an intense wave of excitement as we worked out how many rounds we had fired. Several blokes had fired their own personal supply of dum-dums." [This is the first admission that illegally held non army-issued bullets were fired, though never admitted to Widgery]. "Private F for one fired 10 dum-dums into the crowd, but as he still had his official quota, he got away with saying that he never fired a shot in the subsequent investigation. This happened with several people in my vehicle."

In preparation for the Widgery tribunal soldier A gave his account to army interrogators: "I rattled off everything I had seen and done. The only thing I omitted were names and the manner in which people had been shot. Apart from that I told the truth which I wanted to convey."

"Then to my utter surprise one of these gentlemen said: 'Dear me, Private, you make it sound as though shots were being fired at the crowd ... we can't have that, can we?' and then he proceeded to tear up my statement. He left the room and returned 10 minutes later with another statement which bore no relation to the fact and I was told with a smile that this was the statement I would use when going on the stand. I was amazed."

This is an edited version of soldier A's account of Bloody Sunday, obtained by the freelance journalist Tom McGurk and first published in The Sunday Business Post in Dublin on March 16 1997.

Lord Widgery's inquiry was speedy. Nicra had taken 538 statements from eye-witnesses. He looked at 15 of them, and judged the evidence of 40 soldiers more reliable. There was no forensic examination of the area. Nor did Lord Widgery visit it.

He reported: "None of the deceased or wounded is proved to have been shot whilst handling a firearm or bomb. Some are wholly acquitted of complicity in such action; but there is a strong suspicion that some others had been firing weapons or handling bombs and that yet others had been closely supporting them."

Others disagreed. Hubert O'Neill, the coroner, said the army had run amok, shooting innocent people. "I would say without hesitation that it was sheer, unadulterated murder."

I should emphasise that such a new inquiry can only be justified if an objective examination of the material now available gives grounds for believing that the events of that day should be looked at afresh, and the conclusions of Lord Widgery re-examined. I have been strongly advised that there are indeed grounds for such a further inquiry. We believe that the weight of material now available is such that these events require re-examination. We believe that the only course which will lead to there being public confidence in the results of any further investigation is for a full-scale judicial inquiry into Bloody Sunday to be set up.

Bloody Sunday was a tragic day

for all concerned. We must all wish it had never happened. Our concern now is simply to establish the truth, and close this painful chapter once and for all.

"Madam Speaker, members of the families of the victims, like the member for Foyle, have conducted a long campaign to this end. I have heard some of their remarks over recent years and have been struck by their dignity. Most do not want recrimination. They do not want revenge. But they do want the truth. I believe that it is in the interests of everyone that the truth is established, and told. It is also the way forward to the necessary reconciliation which will be such an important part of building a secure future for the people of Northern Ireland."

Disgusting as are these weasel words of Blair, reading from a script long-prepared by the British Establishment which knows it must get out, – and with sufficient contrition to hope to lessen the impact on public opinion of nationalist righteous indignation, – they nevertheless show slightly more grasp of reality than the creepy response of the *Weekly Worker* Trots. Without withdrawing or apologising for a word of all the past disgraceful CPGB disinformation on Ireland about Adams, McGuinness, & Co 'capitulating to British imperialist intransigence in order personally to obtain preferment within bourgeois society' – the *Weekly Worker* Trots now admit that the reality of British imperialist retreat could wreck the British Establishment!!

For months, sneers that the Adams 'retreat' was causing catastrophic 'splits' within Sinn Féin and the IRA. Suddenly, without a word of explanation, the trend of history (the 'triumph of the imperialist New World Order in putting down 'hot spot' after 'hot spot') is completely reversed, and it is the British Establishment which is facing 'splits':

Blair's strategy carries the risk of provoking damaging splits within the British ruling class. At present most sections continue to back him, but events – in Britain as well as in the Ireland – could yet conspire to create deep schisms capable of throwing up a crisis, not unlike the Tory-backed Carson rebellion before World War.

Why would part of the British Establishment want an army-officer mutiny behind a renewed 'Carson rebellion' if Irish national-liberation was merely continuing to 'capitulate' to the bogus 'peace' process imposed by 'US imperialist domination'?

Again without a word of explanation for their previous years of criminal disinformation on Ireland (a vow of self-destruction or eternal silence would be even better), these petty-bourgeois fake-'left'

degenerates also start admitting more of the reality which Marxist-Leninist science has been faithfully recording (EPSR) for the past nearly 19 years:

The media have undergone a remarkable transformation in their coverage of the annual marches held in London and the Six Counties to commemorate Bloody Sunday. After more than two decades of either studiously ignoring them or painting them as a cover for terrorism, the BBC actually publicised this year's London march in advance. The sole purpose of the event, according to radio news bulletins, was to demand an enquiry. In previous years the marches have been characterised by militant calls to support the IRA, to drive out the British imperialists as the only way to ensure that the events of 1972 are never repeated. This year however, the marchers, including elements of the revolutionary left, took up the cue: "No more Bloody Sundays - public enquiry now!" was the most frequent chant. Within days the government could be presented as having acknowledged a legitimate request.

Unbelievably, this swamp of conceited guru-worship even manages to 'report' this bit of capitulating British-Establishment reality as though it were either a) due to some Trots joining the nationalist march; or b) part of some dirty collaboration with the government. What cannot be admitted by these cretinous subjectivists is that this triumph over British imperialism is anything to do with the colossal successes of the Sinn Féin political campaigns at the head of the entire revolutionary national-liberation struggle which the British police-military dictatorship could not defeat. To admit that would be to admit the bankruptcy of their entire Trot 'perfect revolution' existence.

Just to show their new grasp of reality is not a fluke, and cockily swaggering with their new 'British retreat' posture (but still without a word of explanation of what it all means, or how things have 'turned round', or what happened to their previous criminal disinformation), the Trots admit even more:

Another change has been seen in the attitude of army establishment figures. Last weekend BBC television showed a documentary, *Remember Bloody Sunday*, first screened in 1992. At that time the commanding officer in Deny, Lt Col Derek Wilford, was asked if he considered the victims to be innocent. "Oh no," he replied, "I can't believe that. That would be to believe that my soldiers were wrong... There is no innocence in a riot."

Six years later he is singing a different tune: "One cannot help thinking we were taken there to teach them a lesson, to go in knocking a few heads and show them they cannot have a no-go area." Already laying the groundwork to pass the buck back to the government, he added: "[Such an action] has to come from higher than the brigade commander. The germ of it must have started in London."

If the result of the Widgery report had been a foregone conclusion, so too will be the findings of the new enquiry set up under judge Mark Saville. He will declare the



'innocence', of all the victims, criticise the 'mistaken' actions of the armed forces and perhaps even apportion some blame (the more serious the 'overreaction', the lower will be the rank of its perpetrator).

This will entail risks for Blair. If blame, or even neglect, is established in bourgeois law, that will leave individuals or the army itself open to civil proceedings. Indeed the government has so far refused to rule out "blanket immunity" from prosecution. For that reason army officers like Wilford are feeling distinctly edgy. This was reflected in the reluctance of George Robertson, the secretary of state for defence, to go along with Blair's move. He admitted he had initially opposed a new enquiry.

However, the changed policy could have serious repercussions within the British establishment. The upper ranks of the armed forces will not take kindly to having their true record exposed and sections of the Tory Party are outraged by what they view as criticism of an operation undertaken to re-establish 'law and order' in Derry. For these elements the questioning of a 'successful' military action is nothing short of an assault on British values (and the existing UK constitution). The Hague leadership itself is unenthusiastic.

The Daily Mail has for its part launched a campaign to defend the army's record, along with its condemnation of "IRA apologia" in the shape of recent films based on events relating to Ireland – *Some mother's son*, *In the name of the father* and now *Resurrection man*.

This latest film recounts the story of the 'Shankill butchers' who kidnapped Catholics at random and tortured them to death in Belfast. While the *Daily Mail* was complaining that such 'one-sided' representations give a distorted picture of reality, the Loyalist Volunteer Force threatened to launch another "unholy war against the nationalist community".

But subjective conceit must still have the last word within the Trotskyite swamp. Despite all these admissions that it is British imperialism which is really on the run, the CPGB line on Sinn Féin 'capitulating' to class-collaborating compromise with British imperialism is still half hinted at:

'All these "pro-republican" initiatives are just to keep the old bogus "peace" trick imposed by fooling Sinn Féin's followers. And even conceding the Bloody Sunday inquiry has its sinister negative purpose of "destroying the value of Bloody Sunday as propaganda for the IRA", the massacre giving the IRA its biggest-ever recruitment boost.'

Such wilfully misguided and egocentric stupidity is dangerous to the working class.

But some brands of Trotskyite disinformation are even more despicable than this *Weekly Worker* variety. The ultimate in posturing 'revolutionary' diletantism is the RCP and their *Living Marxism* glossy trash which nowadays can only bear to be known as 'LM' magazine.

This trendy depravity specialises in coming up with 'new' soundbite gimmicks to shock people with:

"Sinn Féin is fast becoming the New Labour of Northern Ireland"

is their latest wheeze:

"The Blair-Adams summit at the end of last year was a symbolic meeting of minds... Sinn Féin stands at the entrance to the corridors

of power, set to play the role of gendarme in the government of Northern Ireland."

Echoing the *Weekly Worker*, these RCP Trots, who laughably never expressed anything but contempt for the Soviet workers state as "the chief counter-revolutionary gendarme on earth", declare that

"the end of the Cold War had a demoralising effect on national liberation movements, all of which were forced to abandon their struggles".

If the Soviet Union was nothing but a counter-revolutionary menace, how has its disappearance managed to have "a demoralising effect on national liberation movements"?

Sneering at Sinn Féin's "electoral politics" as though the Marxist-Leninist tactic of using election platforms to further the politics of a revolutionary campaign had never been invented, these irresponsible poseurs slanderously assert that

"by the early 1990s, violence became a tactical barrier to the further push towards mainstream politics".

But the armed revolutionary national-liberation struggle has precisely in the 1990s finally completed the blasting of British colonialism into total retreat (at last conceding the termination of the old gerrymandered colony status and the perspective to reintegrate the six-county Occupied Zone back into Ireland, – an inevitability **never** conceded before), – reopening armed hostilities in 1996 because of British Establishment constipation, and only offering a new ceasefire 7 months ago after new London guarantees of purposeful negotiations towards a new settlement for Ireland.

More ludicrously and Goebels-like still, *LM* then states that Sinn Féin "has demobilised its base of popular support" in favour of 'respectability', – "no longer directed by the grassroots".

Not only is this the **exact** opposite of the truth, but it also completely misses possibly the most important **Revolutionary** phenomenon of all about the national-liberation struggle, – the colossal success of Sinn Féin in building a grassroots mass movement which has transformed the political position of anti-imperialism, trouncing the British Establishment and 'Unionism' at every turn, as well as providing such backing to the guerrilla war as to make it unbeatable.

That popular mobilisation behind the politics of independence and social justice has also led to successful mass pressure for widespread economic and political agitation too, with Sinn

Féin now easily becoming the most dynamic force for change both north and south of the border. Socialism is obviously not the aim or possibility of a negotiated settlement with British imperialism to terminate its gerrymandered colony ruled by police-military dictatorship, but Sinn Féin contains far more genuine and realistic socialist aspirations than all the Trotskyites in Britain and Ireland put together, – as events will prove, and as the Sinn Féin record in local government and national agitation has already demonstrated.

Adams & Co are supported now with more genuine mass enthusiasm, – approaching grass-roots **revolutionary** proportions, – than ever before.

The sour Trot defeatists counter this objective reality with imbecile abstract nonsense saying that "Sinn Féin support for a new structure for

Ireland means SF support for a new police force". This is just a provocative-idiot way of saying that a capitalist state will still exist after May 1 in Ireland. Yes it will, but so will one still exist in Britain. So does that mean that all socialist and revolutionary agitation in Britain must also be equated with being in league with New Labour? This is the logic of the madhouse.

The capitalist state will still rule all 32 counties of Ireland after May. But with the momentum of Sinn Féin's national-liberation **revolution** still rising, the struggle to then transform Ireland into a workers state building socialism will be infinitely further advanced than developments in Britain, still largely paralysed by sectarian subjectivism (Trots and other anti-communists) rife in the labour movement.

Build Leninism everywhere.
Douglas Bell

Sour Goebels stunt to stitch-up Republicanism is last desperate gesture to save face by failed British rule. But the degenerate 'Northern Ireland' colony remains doomed.

[EPSR No 938 17-02-98]

The cynical sting in imperialism's tail as it prepares the final scuttle from the colonisation of Ireland is to try one last propaganda humiliation of Sinn Féin so as to cloud the impression of a victory for national-liberation struggle.

The sick calculation is that Sinn Féin will not rock the boat too much at this insult out of its knowledge that colonialism is finished anyway, and that all that is now being waited for is the new settlement for Ireland to be couched in the British-imposed referendum.

And in view of the farce of non-existent 'negotiations' hitherto due to London allowing the 'Unionists' to refuse to talk, it is further poisonously calculated that Sinn Féin might consider boycotting the talks in retaliation, (putting all the onus on London to come up with something worth voting for in the referendum, or face the inevitable consequences of renewed national-liberation struggle).

This vicious game of bluff and double-bluff in the propaganda war over the real meaning of the forthcoming 'peace settlement' is part of a huge conspiracy to pretend that armed revolutionary conflict in particular has won nothing, but rather has lost Sinn Féin its political position

at the last minute because of its association with the IRA.

Into this disgraceful conspiracy have stepped the ignorantly naive Blairites and the nastily subservient Ahern regime (Fianna Fail) in Dublin, – 'reformist' imperialist stooge parties which would like nothing more than to see principled revolutionary struggle dishonoured and their own class-collaborative spinelessness remain in favoured positions.

But the realities will stay the same as they have always been. The reactionary colonial statelet of 'Northern Ireland' has been a humiliating historical failure for British imperialism which imposed this Partition fascist outrage at bayonet point in 1921.

The Orange 'Unionist' colonial-bourgeoisie thugs who ran this gerrymandered police state thereafter have been utterly defeated by the political brilliance of Sinn Féin and by the unbeatable heroism of the armed guerrilla-war national-liberation struggle which the entire police-military might of British imperialism was incapable of suppressing despite its barbaric record of concentration camps, torture barracks, shoot-to-kill, judicial frame-ups, supergrass subversion, endless midnight terror raids, 'loyalist' fascist death-squads, etc, etc.

The peace process is only about extricating defeated British imperialism from this stinking vicious disaster but with just one overriding concern that the settlement arrangements should become so confused that no clear victory for armed national-liberation struggle should be discernible.

This final fit-up of Sinn Féin in association with the IRA is the last piece in imperialism's rotten propaganda jig-saw. And all the bourgeois parties to the talks, including London, Dublin, and Washington, are likely to go along with it.

It is a disgraceful insult to Sinn Féin and the IRA who have single-handedly created the anti-colonialist conditions which have alone made this whole peace process possible, and it poses a huge dilemma for Sinn Féin to deal with.

The last 30 years of punishing cost to the colonised Irish population suffering within the 'Northern Ireland' police state cannot lightly be re-proposed for another period of years via renewed IRA armed ultimatums just to counter sickening imperialist propaganda stunts, especially with the proposed new deal in sight in May which will embody colonialism's capitulation to national-liberation struggle through eventual paths towards Ireland's reunification. Such threats to London would only increase feeble British imperialism's difficulties in defusing the colonial bourgeois nastiness it created in 'Northern Ireland' which are nightmarish enough to start with.

And a retaliatory boycott of the 'talks' part of the peace process, farcically non-existent at present, in order to allow retreating British imposition to be seen to be clearly responsible for any success or failure of the final referendum terms, thus leaving Sinn Féin free to wash its hands of any cocked-up unworkable proposals, – has the disadvantage of the national-liberation movement not being visibly organically connected to the settlement which is its achievement alone.

But a redoubled Republican propaganda offensive is certainly in order, and looks like taking place. It is certain that Aherne could not remotely hold such a successful mass rally as Sinn Féin organised in Dublin last night (to denounce bourgeois-imperialist duplicity, and to urge on a sensible, democratic self-determination end to the colonial misery of 'Northern Ireland').

More concentration on the continuing viciously violent

role of the capitalist state is undoubtedly called for. In answer to Trimble's pious humbug demanding that the national-liberation movement "now forswear forever all violence" before re-entering the talks, let Sinn Féin make the same demand of the RUC and the British army whose representatives at the talks are Trimble and Mowlam.

The essence of all the impossible contradictions and troubles for 'Northern Ireland' from the start has been the role of the RUC and what it stands for, – a gerrymandered fascist-colonial state, – and it is still going on within recent weeks, – as *Republican News* excellently identifies:

DIANE HAMILL, whose brother Robert was kicked to death by loyalists in Portadown within 15 yards of RUC members in a Land Rover, told Sunday's Bloody Sunday rally that her family would fight until they got a full public inquiry.

"Like the families of Bloody Sunday, who have campaigned for so long to gain justice, we intend to secure justice for Robert," she told the crowd.

In a moving speech she asked: "Why did the RUC officers not stop the crowd from gathering? Why did they not warn him that the crowd was there? Why didn't they heed the warning of a passerby that there would be trouble?"

"Why didn't they intervene and give him first aid which would have been so crucial in saving his life? Why didn't they fire one plastic bullet, or any type of bullet in the air that would have saved his life? Why did the crowd feel safe to attack my brother within 15 yards of an RUC jeep?"

"In these changing times we refuse to wait 26 years until they decide to tell the truth. We intend to pursue the RUC for dereliction of duty. We believe the RUC is responsible for Robert's death as much as the people who kicked and kicked him as he lay on the ground."

Diane Hamill said her family will launch private prosecutions against the RUC and those they believe are responsible for Robert's death. They also intend having an independent public inquiry. "Robert died because of the hatred towards Irish Catholics in this society, especially in Portadown."

"For his sake and the sake of justice, we intend to see his killers pay for their crime and hold the RUC accountable for the way they have treated my family and treated nationalists over the last 70 years," she said.

And in answer to Aherne's despicable dissembling that "he had

not listened to RUC disinformation, but to the British prime minister" on the latest frame-up, let it be made clear that Mowlam and Blair are being completely manipulated by the brutally experienced hierarchy of that incorrigibly fascist police force.

And when the RUC has been forced onto the defensive by national-liberation resistance, the British army has entered the fray to reinforce the armed repression, such as the Bloody Sunday massacre in 1972 of unarmed citizens in Derry for which apologies and restitution are now at last going to have to be made following the admission last week that the Widgery judicial tribunal was a ludicrous Goebbels-like whitewash.

Throw Trimble and Mowlam out of the talks for representing the RUC and the British army who have not the slightest intention of even desisting from arbitrary fascist violence until they are eventually forced to in the reunification aftermath of the new settlement, let alone forswearing all such brutality for all time.

And Republican propaganda needs to keep up its excellent work exposing the failed colonial essence of 'Northern Ireland' and the miserable defeat there of wretched British imperialism:

Trimble needs to understand that a return to Stormont rule or a Six-County assembly is not an option.

The fall of Stormont did not mean an end to the nationalist nightmare, it did not establish justice. The contemporary experience of Irish nationalists living in the North remains akin to the days of unionist rule.

Two anti-discrimination acts have failed to redress an unemployment imbalance against nationalists who remain unfairly represented in the higher echelons of the civil service.

And in the place of the B Specials we have an expanded RUC supported by the RIR whose handling of the continuing sectarian onslaught on nationalists has since 1922 changed only in terms of the technology deployed.

The actions and words of unionist councillors at local government level, in 1998, display a mindset of exclusion and notions of superiority.

Belfast City Council in particular is a bastion of discrimination where Sinn Féin, the largest single party in the Council, is denied positions of authority as a matter of course. The party is further systematically excluded from the various boards and authorities which run education, health and other services.

When Sinn Féin expresses its opposition to a Six-County assembly, it is not dragging up the past as has been accused but it is reflecting the current reality for nationalists.

There is no indication that unionists are prepared to treat nationalists fairly – on the contrary, they have shown themselves arrogant and unreformed since the collapse of Stormont.

Indeed David Trimble this week denied that there is any discrimination and underplayed, the nationalist nightmare as a state of disadvantage.

He refused to elaborate on what unionists foresee as the relationship between a unionist-dominated assembly and any all-Ireland bodies.

When the Strand One negotiations opened on Monday, Sinn Féin presented its arguments against an assembly in the Six Counties.

It posed questions to the unionists seeking answers to the concerns of nationalists. The party listened intently to what the others had to say, but satisfactory answers were not forthcoming.

Sinn Féin has actively participated in, all three strands of the talks process and has emphasised the need for everything to be on the table and for nothing to be agreed until everything is agreed.

The status quo has failed, but unionists have proved to be completely opposed to the fundamental change which is essential for a democratic peace settlement.

David Trimble needs to understand that this is not the basis for successful negotiations. He is not real if he believes he can simply ignore the rest of the island. A negotiated settlement absolutely requires sincere engagement.

For its part the British government must realise that if all-Ireland institutions are subordinate to a unionist-dominated assembly they will not have the dynamic to move towards a lasting democratic settlement. It therefore must implement an equality agenda and take steps to impress on the unionists the need to move away from old certainties.

SINN Féin President Gerry Adams has accused unionists of "a conspiracy of silence" during the loyalist killing spree of a few weeks ago compared to their reaction to recent killings. "It is of particular note that the Ulster Unionist Party has responded with great speed to implicate Sinn Féin in these killings and is threatening to indict Sinn Féin. People will not be fooled by this cynical and selective attitude by unionists," Adams said.

He was speaking after the deaths of prominent loyalist Robert Dougan and Brendan Camp-

bell, a drug dealer from West Belfast.

The UDA leader was shot dead as he waited in his car outside a textile factory in Dunmurry on the outskirts of West Belfast. Shortly before 1pm on Tuesday, a lone gunman approached Dougan and shot him several times in the chest. He died at the scene.

Dougan has been described as a close associate of UDA leader Jim Guiney, shot dead by the INLA last month. Dougan was a prominent loyalist from the Suffolk area of Belfast who had survived two earlier gun attacks. A car, believed to have been used in the shooting, was later found burning in the nearby Twinbrook estate.

Meanwhile Portadown UVF leader, Mark "Swinger" Fulton claims he has been targeted by the UVF. According to Fulton, a masked gunman fired two shots at him as he arrived at a relative's flat in the Westland Road of Portadown.

In a remarkable coincidence, Fulton had telephoned Peter Robinson of the DUP only 24 hours earlier, claiming his life was in danger. DUP spokesperson David Ervine dismissed Fulton's allegation, saying the incident was stage-managed.

On Monday night, less than 12 hours prior to the Dougan killing, convicted drug dealer, Brendan

Campbell was shot dead as he left a restaurant on the Lisburn Road. A lone gunman chased Campbell down nearby Brooklands Street, opening fire at close range. Campbell, who had survived an earlier gun attack, was dead on arrival at Belfast City Hospital.

A woman companion was also injured during the shooting. She was hit in the back and neck. Her condition has been described as "stable."

Expressing sympathy with the families of the latest people killed, Gerry Adams said the killings "once again highlighted the reality that while there is a peace process there is not peace."

Commenting on the RUC saturation of the Twinbrook estate following the death of Robert Dougan, local Sinn Féin Councillor, Paul Butler accused the RUC of "felon setting" by labelling three young men arrested in Twinbrook as 'IRA suspects' and linking them to the Dunmurry killing.

"The reaction of the RUC to this killing stands in marked contrast to their lack of response to the killing of Catholics," said Butler.

The three men, two of whom live in the estate, were badly beaten by the RUC.

Above all, the need is to keep building a Leninist anti-imperialist understanding. RB

Ireland's self-determination rights remain on course to replace beaten colonial status of the north regardless of obscene propaganda stunt against the Republican struggle. Ludicrous government public-relations gimmicks could blow up in Blair & Co's faces. Trots spread middle-class hatred of triumph by Irish national-liberation forces, using foul lies. SF makes no mistake about British state violence remaining the main enemy to peace.

[EPSR No 939 24-02-98]

The failed tyranny of Partition is still to be dismantled by defeated British imperialism, regardless of the idiotic 'suspension' gesture against Sinn Féin.

Moira and Portadown over the weekend will have been a hardly-needed reminder to the London establishment that it cannot afford a continuation of the 30-year national-liberation war.

The clumsily-engineered 'ejection' from the talks of its main architects and principal participants Sinn Féin, is just a piece of wretched face-saving for

the despicable Orange-colonist bourgeoisie with their ridiculous 'No Surrender' posturing, for humbled British imperialism, and for the nervous bourgeois establishment in Dublin looking over their shoulder at Sinn Féin's surging popularity throughout Ireland.

The last-minute vicious propaganda war unleashed against Sinn Féin is unlikely to be connected to any last-minute decision by British imperialism to abandon its retreat from colonised Ireland.

As last week's EPSR had al-

ready analysed before the theatrical bluffing in Dublin had been performed, London remains committed to the termination of the 'Northern Ireland' colony. Its devious game with Sinn Féin's suspension aimed to carry on covering up the causes of that colonial defeat. An accommodation with Irish national self-determination interests is wanted which will not make it too obvious that the failed colony has been driven to termination by guerrilla-war armed revolutionary struggle.

As far as the pro-imperialist bourgeois conspirators are concerned who last week stitched up Sinn Féin just to damage its reputation, the deal with Irish nationalism is still on. The capitalist press itself made this obvious this week:

THE PRIME MINISTER will inject fresh impetus into the Northern Ireland peace process this week by signalling that he believes that a detailed agreement can be reached by early April, in time for a referendum north and south of the border in May.

Tony Blair's optimism is said to stem from his assessment of the differences between the parties.

It may also be a deliberate message to the political parties — especially Sinn Féin — to the effect that he is intent on reaching an agreement, despite the violence bedevilling Northern Ireland.

Downing Street is determined that the talks will not be derailed by recent attacks, including Friday night's bomb explosion that injured 11 people outside an RUC station in Moira, County Down.

Number 10 has been told by the security forces that the bombing was not the work of the IRA and will not require Sinn Féin being expelled from the all-party talks.

Mr Adams will meet the Irish Prime Minister, Bertie Ahern, early this week and Mr Blair will decide soon whether to grant Sinn Féin's request for a meeting. One source said it may be difficult during the fortnight they are excluded from the talks, but Mr Blair may meet Mr Adams and Sinn Féin chief negotiator, Martin McGuinness, if he feels this will forestall a walk-out.

Mr Adams said his party's decision on whether to return to the talks in Belfast on 9 March would depend on the response from the two prime ministers.

Mr Adams has cancelled a fundraising trip to the United States this week because of the crisis. However, he is expected to go to Washington for the annual St Patrick's Day celebrations at the White House. Downing Street emphasised that it saw no need for him to be refused a visa.

What is less obvious is whether this belated propaganda stunt to suspend Sinn Féin has damaged the national-liberation struggle or had the opposite effect, and whether the inde-

pendence movement will take these insults lying down.

The play-acting in Dublin went badly. The Green Tory government there began to have second thoughts about whether the trumped-up "suspension through terrorist connections" would decrease Sinn Féin's popularity as planned, or increase it because of the brazen humbug and recklessness of this attempted insult.

Sinn Féin's triumphant Monday-night rally in Dublin almost torpedoed this 'disciplinary' farce, it ending in a token suspension, after Sinn Féin's legalistic challenge had held things up for days. It remains to be seen whether this attempted magisterial wrist-slapping does more to increase Sinn Féin's previously rocketing 32-county-wide popularity, or to decrease it.

These fake-'nationalist' Green Tory parties in Dublin could find themselves swept aside at the polls by Sinn Féin if the eventual settlement towards reunification of Ireland is still widely seen as largely the achievement of Sinn Féin and the national-liberation struggle.

The specific ploy of the 'suspension' was to try to sow in people's minds the idea that Sinn Féin could only **lose** by being associated with the guerrilla-war resistance ('terrorist violence' by the IRA.)

But in real life, of course, it is precisely because it politically represents what the armed revolutionary national-liberation struggle has been fighting for that Sinn Féin has become such a commanding and popular force in Irish politics, and in the world beyond.

Paradoxically, the daft suspension trick has, if anything, possibly drawn more attention to this crucial connection between armed revolutionary struggle and Sinn Féin's success than might otherwise have happened.

For immediately people began asking if Sinn Féin's IRA connections were not the very reason for **keeping** them in the talks at all costs, otherwise whose guns and bombs were the 'peace talks' meant to silence?

People also began to ask: What if Sinn Féin refuse to rejoin the talks? Who will sell the new peace settlement for Ireland to the nationalist struggle in the north then?

The reality of the strong position that Sinn Féin's brilliant 30-year national-liberation struggle has won for it is half acknowledged in the very latest begrudging capitalist-press admissions, raking over the

debris of the foolish imperialist propaganda stunt:

SINN Féin made clear yesterday that it will use its short suspension from the negotiations on Northern Ireland's future as a lever for concessions, when it said it would postpone a decision on whether to return to the talks until after meeting Tony Blair.

Party leaders Gerry Adams, Martin McGuinness and Mitchel McLaughlin said in separate speeches and interviews yesterday that although Sinn Féin remained wedded to its peace strategy its supporters were becoming increasingly disenchanted with the talks.

It was essential to meet Mr Blair before deciding whether to go back to the conference table on March 9, six working days away. Downing Street said last night it was considering Sinn Féin's request.

Although the party says it does not speak for the IRA, each of the three leaders believed the IRA ceasefire was intact. Suspicion for the 500lb car bomb which devastated the Protestant village of Moira, Co Down, on Friday fell on the splinter group Continuity IRA. Eleven people suffered minor injuries.

Sinn Féin's demands to see Mr Blair pile the pressure on him. He has met it three times since it entered the talks in September. But having stressed he was only seeing Sinn Féin because it was a talks participant, it would be difficult for him to meet its leaders while it is excluded.

The Irish government exacerbated Mr Blair's problems. David Andrews, the Foreign Minister, said Bertie Ahern, the Taoiseach, had agreed to Mr Adams's demand for a meeting. He believed Mr Blair would do the same. Mo Mowlam, the Northern Ireland Secretary, grimaced but said nothing.

Mr Adams, the Sinn Féin president, yesterday denied that it was engaged in "political shadow boxing". He told a gathering in Enniscorthy, Co Wexford: "There can be no question of Sinn Féin being anything other than totally wedded to bringing about a democratic peace settlement. But I am being asked 'Where is the consensus?' by people on the ground, republican activists particularly."

Mitchel McLaughlin, the Sinn Féin chairman, said on BBC TV's *Breakfast with Frost*: "We are being challenged by our supporters to demonstrate that the talks process has any efficacy."

The two governments want the talks participants to move away from the media spotlight for intensive negotiations. Finland, Austria and Switzerland have offered to host the discussions.

Mr McGuinness, Sinn Féin's chief negotiator, said on GMTV's *Sunday Programme*: "Most people within the talks have come to the conclusion that if the participants were to talk for the next 50 years they would not agree a deal. So I would welcome any attempt by both governments to move forward decisively to encourage all the parties to engage in intensive negotiations, over a short period."

The Ulster Unionists are opposed. Reg Empey, a negotiator, said: "If there is a blackout, people will think it is a sell-out. The idea of getting us into an aircraft hanger in the Arizona desert with the Government controlling the water supply is a crude Leninist-type tactic. I won't do it."

The colonist-state Orange thuggery has retreated a long way since the days of 'No Surrender; not an inch' to any Irish sovereignty being reestablished over its remaining colonised territory in the north-east in parts of Ulster's nine counties. Now these imperialist die-hards are thinking in terms of much more modest 'victories' of only jibbing against dehydration torture before they finally sign up to a new Ireland, which will shatter for ever the old exclusively British sovereignty of the bogus 'Northern Ireland' statelet.

It is with the national-liberation struggle above all else that the forthcoming new 'peace settlement' for Ireland must be signed.

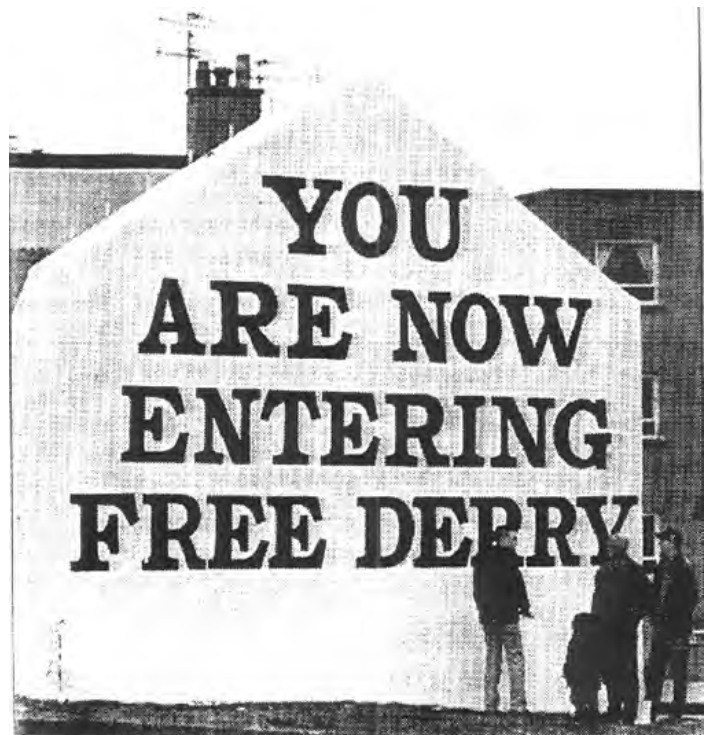
It is only because of that most recent 30-year phase (of the 800-year-long independence struggle) led by Sinn Féin and the IRA that there is a 'peace process' at all.

If their triumphant political and guerrilla-war offensives had not made the British colony called 'Northern Ireland' ungovernable, then the imperialist establishment in London would never have reluctantly agreed to at last withdraw from its police-military dictatorship over part of Ireland.

Thus it is just a pitiable charade that the British imperialist establishment, their Orange-fascist bourgeois-colonial stooges in the Occupied Zone, and the Green Tory establishment in Dublin have decided to smack Sinn Féin in the mouth with a dead fish to try to take them down a peg or two in the run-up to the referendum test of the new settlement.

It would be a fascinating kick in the face for imperialism if this propaganda stunt all backfired on its reactionary authors, – if, instead of Sinn Féin being made to look small, it was the "suspend Sinn Féin from the talks" conspiracy which drew widespread public ridicule.

As the *EPSR* has never ceased to explain in more than 18 years of commentating on the snail's-pace British imperialist retreat from Ireland, something could always go wrong because of the immense strains on the ruling-class establishment in London to preserve a "we're still in charge" posture regardless



of having been humiliatingly defeated by Sinn Féin and the IRA.

The attempted propaganda insult to Sinn Féin, authors of the peace process, of banning them from negotiations for two weeks as 'punishment' for a failure to keep faith with purely democratic methods, etc, – has pushed London's **secondary** concern (to save face as well as the primary concern of reaching a peace agreement to end the guerrilla war which was causing such embarrassment) awkwardly right into the forefront.

If this manipulative stunt continues to go as badly as it did all last week in Dublin, – with Sinn Féin getting masses of free publicity and popular sympathy, and the Green Tories becoming increasingly anxious that they had made a bad tactical mistake in going along with London's propaganda agenda, – then British imperialist humiliation could become a vast explosive issue.

A foolish calculation was advised (on the New Labour government of ignorant and naïve opportunist philistines) that Sinn Féin and the national-liberation struggle would, albeit reluctantly, nevertheless accept an insulting suspension from talks in return for being satisfied that the referendum settlement is now only 10 or so weeks away.

British imperialist face-saving might still just get away with this cynical ploy. But if it does all blow up in their faces (figuratively and literally), then all dignity will be utterly shredded. If London still wants a deal, but the national-liberation struggle has voted with its feet to tell these wretched propaganda

manoeuvrers to go to hell, then New-Labour-managed British imperialism might find itself having to go back cap-in-hand to Sinn Féin and be virtually publicly acknowledged as having to plead with Irish nationalism for a new negotiated-settlement process.

Such a crisis for the London establishment would spectacularly highlight the one thing which British imperialism's retreat from colonised Ireland wanted to obscure, – namely that the failed colonial statelet called 'Northern Ireland' is being irrevocably dismantled and rearranged because the armed revolutionary national-liberation struggle could not be defeated.

Facing such public humiliation, it is hard to predict exactly what the paranoid and demoralised British imperialist establishment might do about it. This propaganda stunt against Sinn Féin has been a ludicrously impudent, ill-advised, and risky business. Even devastatingly greater pressures could fall on the London regime if this public-relations gimmick goes tragically wrong, overwhelming London in shame. Such a general catastrophe for imperialism would not be unwelcome. But the historically justified and approved new deal for Ireland might become an incidental casualty.

Either way, one small detail of this mess might be worth reflecting on to possibly learn lessons from.

To set Sinn Féin up for this monstrous hypocrisy, the god-fathers of all class and sectarian terrorism and violence in the Occupied Zone, namely the Brit-

ish imperialist colonial regime, first prepared the 'precedent' legalistic ground by suspending the 'loyalist' UDP thug representatives from the talks.

To kick fascists out of 'civilised democratic proceedings' might seem a reasonably token gesture at rationality, and not worth too much thought either way.

But seen now, it looks much more like utterly bogus rationality which might well have been engineered just to set a 'precedent' trap for Sinn Féin.

The very worst 'men of violence' at the Ireland peace talks are undoubtedly the representatives of the British army and the RUC, – Mowlam and Trimble. They and their predecessors have maintained a police-military dictatorship (effectively a fascist state) in the Occupied Zone from 1921 onwards.

And it is by no means a spent force. By far the overwhelming volume of CURRENT fascist violence of all kinds, – sectarian persecution; judicial frame-ups; violent terror raids; permanent casual brutality and bullying on the streets; imprisonment and mental-torture tyranny; non-stop sickening harassment of all kinds; etc, etc, – is perpetrated by the official state forces that Mowlam and Trimble represent. And the Green Tory representatives of the 26-county Ireland capitalist state do not have much cleaner hands either, – still hounding Republicans mercilessly when it suits them, even if no longer to the same volume as the British colonial regime or as in earlier decades.

The representatives of 'loyalist' fascist thuggery, on the other hand, while a disgustingly unpleasant historical phenomenon, have never matched this official state violence in volume or decisiveness. Thus the capitalist-imperialist system's hypocritical thrust at Sinn Féin was set up by its humbug about 'loyalist' fascist thuggery (UDP/UFF).

And in any case, what are 'peace talks' about in the first place if not an agreed negotiated settlement between class and national warring parties whose violence against each other has ended up creating the prospect of a deal between them which might end some of the destruction and suffering to mutual benefit. It might almost be argued that the best qualifications for being in the talks to start with was by being precisely a major party to the violence, or representatives of a major interest in the great historical battle. It could further be argued that it is precisely the Alliance and

SDLP creeps who are most out of place in these peace talks by representing nothing but failed 'democratic' subservience to 800 years of past illegal and intolerable British imperialist violence against the Irish nation and its land.

The Mitchell principles were a piece of 'democratic' nonsense from the start, – a posturing charade designed to help cover up British imperialism's embarrassment at being forced at last to negotiate a peace treaty with an unbeatable worthy foe who had previously been dismissed as 'criminal trash, representing nothing and not deserving anyone's attention'.

The only 'peace talks' game on offer was worth taking up in order to get to a new settlement for Ireland which will in time transform the colonisation nightmare out of existence, and bring reunification at long last to Ireland in due course.

But the hypocritical stench of 'democratic peaceful means' being spouted by imperialism, – the most sustained system of the worst violence in all human history, – should have been underlined in anti-imperialist propaganda at every turn.

Exactly as *Republican News* routinely does so successfully, Mowlam and Trimble's RUC should be even more loudly denounced for its violence and tyranny at the same time that the UDP/UFF murders are being condemned:

AFTER weeks of slaughter of nationalists, during which the RUC covered up who was responsible, the British government has launched a document on the future of policing in the Six Counties.

Launching *Your voice, Your choice*, on Monday, Direct Ruler Mo Mowlam said the proposals aimed to bring the RUC closer to the community.

If anybody felt the document was ever going to seriously address the problem of policing, this was dispelled when in an interview for a Sunday paper, Security Minister Adam Ingram commented that nationalist mistrust of the RUC is "overstated and overplayed by certain political groups".

His dismissive comments are an insult to all those who have suffered at the hands of that force and when the following day Mowlam said that there would be "elements of the nationalist community who see weaknesses in the document" she missed the fundamental point that the RUC is not and never will be acceptable to the nationalist community.

"Changes had to be kept in perspective. Change was not going to

happen overnight but slowly and surely," she said, and added that the RUC was going to be open and accountable.

When it comes to leaking the personal details of nationalists to loyalist death squads, perhaps the RUC could be identified as open, wide open.

During the Drumcree Crisis of 1995, attempts to re-route an Orange parade away from the nationalist Garvaghy Road was met with open (there's that word again) revolt by members of the RUC.

But accountable? The RUC weren't even accountable to their own Chief Constable. Faced with mutiny, Hugh Annesley decided beating Taigs off their own streets was the better option.

A year later Ronnie Flanagan came to the same conclusion. Since its foundation the RUC has been in the front line of defence for the status quo.

It has been the bulwark of oppression against nationalists in the Six Counties, responsible for torture, death and wholesale and systematic attacks on nationalist communities. Its sectarian attitude to the nationalist community has created a deep pool of anger and mistrust.

It beggars belief that the British government will suggest that nationalists don't feel strongly about the RUC, or that a little tinkering would make everybody feel much better.

If Mo Mowlam believes the RUC can be reformed, she's not just wishing on a star, she's on another planet. The RUC has to be disbanded.

At the same time, the whole anti-imperialist movement should strive to give maximum publicity to the national-liberation struggle's exposure of the wilting resolve of SDLP 'democracy' when faced with the truculence and deviousness of imperialist propaganda positions in the negotiations:

SINN Féin talks negotiator Gerry Kelly struck a raw nerve with the SDLP this week when he accused its deputy leader Seamus Mallon of favouring the failed approach of marginalisation.

"All other things to one side, many people are asking why on earth has the SDLP conceded an assembly to the unionists, particularly given the overwhelming historical and contemporary evidence about unionist abuse of institutions which they control.

"No one has yet been able to point to one institution or body in the North, dominated by the unionists, in which there is no discrimination or inequality. Do we really want a Belfast City Council or Lisburn Borough Council with

even greater powers?

"It is also, I presume, a matter of some satisfaction for Mr Trimble that sections of the SDLP are attacking Sinn Féin both inside and outside the negotiations room.

"Mr Mallon accuses us of stepping outside the 'nationalist consensus.' Does he favour Trimble/Mallon in place of Hume/Adams?

"For our part Sinn Féin is determined that the unionists are not allowed to regain powers — which all of the contemporary evidence shows they will misuse and abuse. Any structures which Sinn Féin ultimately agrees to will have to be both bigot proof and veto proof.

"Our party leader has made it clear that Sinn Féin will not be diverted into bickering with the SDLP when what is required is the maximum focus by nationalists in pursuing a truly democratic peace settlement," he concluded.

Speaking at the annual Kevin Coen/Joe MacManus Memorial Lecture in Sligo, Kelly expressed the disappointment of many nationalists at the position taken up by Mallon.

In his address to an audience of 200 people, the Sinn Féin negotiator emphasised the need for the talks to consider all issues. "This process must cover all of those issues which are at the heart of this conflict and which need to be resolved if a lasting peace settlement is to be found. These are constitutional and sovereignty issues, demilitarisation, including the release of political prisoners, the equality agenda, new political arrangements and structures.

Calling for equality and demilitarisation to be implemented immediately, he said. This process is not simply about institutions. It is about the issues which affect people in their everyday lives."

Explaining that the Hume/Adams initiative envisaged inclusiveness and maximum cooperation between Sinn Féin and the SDLP on agreed positions to bring about a comprehensive settlement, he said that all other failed efforts dating back over the last quarter of a century had agendas with minimalist positions, exclusion and marginalisation.

Accusing Mallon of favouring such an approach, he continued: "I can understand that in times of change, there will be huge challenges for everyone, especially the leadership of political parties. The nature of electoral politics, and perhaps Séamus Mallon's relationship with his own party, may make it difficult for him to reach beyond a narrow party-political view. But that is part of what Hume/Adams requires of both Sinn Féin and the SDLP."

Saying that both parties have a duty to cooperate, Kelly said: "Many nationalists are disap-

pointed at the position taken up by Seamus Mallon. As a member of Sinn Féin's talks delegation I can assure you that Mr Mallon's recent solo run is nothing new. Some of you will recall that before Christmas he agreed an agenda with Mr Trimble which excluded, and would have prevented discussion on critical issues such as equality, demilitarisation, sovereignty, and prisoners."

The undisguised hatreds and hostility between British colonial interest and the Irish national-liberation struggle (which continue to fuel the attractions of a negotiated peace settlement), continue to find their classic expression in the regular Sinn Féin demand for a complete end to British sovereignty in Ireland, the cause of all Ireland's problems with sectarianism and the national question.

But despite the massive eruptions of this underlying conflict in a variety of ways just in the last few weeks alone, the ultra-'left' petty-bourgeoisie in Britain, – an entire social class of anti-communist individualists, – persists in its lunatic destructive disinformation campaign to brand Adams & Co as treacherous sell-outs, deep in league with British imperialism to do a deal to betray Ireland's self-determination interests in return for posh jobs under ongoing British sovereignty.

Certifiable as this irresponsible crap is, – the product of conceited gurus from a background of underemployed academics, – this viciously disorienting middle-class propaganda nevertheless has to be ploughed through to build up working-class experience of subjective-idealist disruption at work, undermining communist philosophy.

The latest reactionary sophistry from the *Weekly Worker* Trots refuses to revise its cynical defeatism that

"with the balance of forces heavily favouring imperialism's 'new world order'.... the IRA wants to negotiate an end to its resistance to the British occupation of the Six Counties",

– in other words the Republican movement has capitulated and crawled into bed with British imperialism.

A complete lie and a total fantasy are how this infantile disorder of ultra-leftism tries to coordinate the above nonsensical quotes (from their Feb 19 rag) with reality:

"Some kind of all-Ireland institution"

28 is on the way, the Trots admit, – aware that something more than just an IRA/Sinn Féin sell-out must be going on, – and will

be seen to be going on by most sane workers.

So it is a retreat by British imperialism after all, eh?

No, not a bit of it, is the profounded Trot reply. Quite simply,

"Blair seeks to establish a new consensus in the UK and Ireland through far-reaching constitutional reform".

Which is news probably even to Blair. He is, of course, known to be barmy enough to have possibly wittered some such nonsense in his endless sound-bite drivel. But to be barmy enough to actually believe Blair knows what he witters about in his empty soundbites, – "consensus, not division; constitutional, not arbitrary; reform, not reaction; far-reaching, not narrow; the UK and Ireland, Ireland and the UK", etc, etc. One can imagine the speech.

To this acceptance of fantasy as reality, the CPGB Trots simply distort the national-liberation movement's position via a monstrous falsehood. They declare that Sinn Féin/IRA "negotiate with the British state in its guise of 'impartial arbitrator'".

That is just a despicable Goebelsian **lie**. 'An end to British rule as the only way to end the hostility between Sinn Féin and the British government' was how Gerry Adams ended his dramatic denunciation of the final Dublin Castle negotiating session last week. British sovereignty as the **cause** of Ireland's troubles, has been Sinn Féin's constant refrain, and will remain so.

Slandorous deception after deception follows in this sordid subjective scribble which has one aim only, – to try to cover these CPGB Trots' past imbecilities on Ireland and to rescue their tattered reputation as understanding something about politics.

But glaring contradictions make it a hopeless quest. The final sneer is against Sinn Féin's alleged class-collaborating cowardice:

"Gerry Adams most meaningful reaction was not to threaten an immediate, all-out resumption of military activities, but to challenge the legality of SF's exclusion in the courts".

Sneer, sneer.

But just paragraphs earlier, it is reported, SF/IRA

"demonstrate to Blair as well as to its own besieged community that it remains a military force to be reckoned with. The killing of Dougan also served as a warning to the loyalist murder squads, while veiled threats about the consequences of SF's expulsion served a similar purpose. As Gerry Adams put it, 'The question could be better put in terms of how influential [with the IRA] we would be if we were dumped out of the process.'"

After 30 years triumphant and unbeaten struggle, and still a

national-liberation machine which can demonstrate its military force at any time it wants to with impunity (on the Trots' own admission), why seek an explanation for Sinn Féin's political campaigns (equally successful over the past 30 years) in capitulation and cowardice? Why not try the much simpler explanation that for the moment, it is not judged necessary to resume fullscale guerrilla-war activities. It was judged necessary to resume the war in Feb 1996 when Major's negotiating constipation had reached total blockage. A further 18 months war on British imperialism shifted that. Now peace negotiations are on again for a new political deal for Ireland which will at last put the skids under British colonial rule there forever.

But Trots are not interested in objective reality, only in subjective self-promotion, individualism, and the conceited defeatism which insists that "everything is rotten" (in Lenin's memorable characterisation of Trotsky's idealism which was only ever interested in how its own personal brilliance could shine.)

And so illogical non-sequiturs follow one after the other. Why do Blair's fantasy 'consensus' dreams require "some kind of all-Ireland institution"? No explanation. Why do the British negotiators need "to **pretend** to uphold the Mitchell principles" if imperialism has not surrendered anyway. In the face of an IRA capitulation, what reality needs to be concealed by this pretence? It only makes sense to pretend that "exclusively peaceful means" are valid for

British bourgeois propaganda lies cannot hide Irish national-liberation victory.

[EPSR No 941 10-03-98]

The damaging nonsense from the propaganda war surrounding the peace talks in Ireland reflects the desperate danger of the armed conflict itself, a mixture of civil war and national-liberation war at its bloodiest, and potentially catastrophic. The colonist and nationalist communities in the Occupied Zone could end up trying to wipe each other out completely.

The imbecile capitalist press in Britain is geared to all manner of possibly lethal disinformation and bluff, both out of its profound ignorance of any scientific understanding of the modern crisis of the imperialist system, and out of its red-raw partisan sensitivity to any 'slurs'

the peace talks if imperialism wishes to hide the reality that it is the armed revolutionary national-liberation struggle **alone** which is forcing the British establishment to give up its Ireland colony, and that London (and other interested parties) wish to cover up that reality as best possible.

Workers Power Trots, another failed entryist clique which tried sectarian sabotage of the SLP, exploded with anti-Sinn Féin hatred and vomit in its February issue, alleging that the entire years-long talks process has been a conscious capitulation by the Republicans to a 'Unionist' veto on any constitutional change to the six-county colony "because the Sinn Féin strategy has failed".

With even more ludicrous lies than *Weekly Worker* dares try to get away with, the *Workers Power* dilettantes jeer that Sinn Féin has deliberately neglected "mobilisation of the nationalist community in a mass struggle against the British occupation", and has also failed to "address exploitation in the six counties", etc.

But mass mobilisation on EVERY aspect of persecuted nationalist life in the Occupied Zone is precisely what Sinn Féin has been so brilliant at, surging forward in council election after council election, and general elections too, because of SF's unparalleled and revolutionary representation and mobilisation of the Irish masses, a record of achievement which has even begun to win 'unionist' working class votes. Victory to the anti-imperialist struggle.

Royston Bull

implying British decadence and failure as part of that crisis.

The more incompetent and decrepit the British imperialist state has become, the more chauvinistically does the whole beleaguered range of British bourgeois opinion seek to deny this truth to itself, utterly fearful of what a total failure of the British capitalist state would mean for the future of their class, – bourgeois and petty-bourgeois alike. Ireland provides astonishing examples of this complete lack of objectivity, all the way from the screaming rightwing of bourgeois ideology at the *Mail* and *Telegraph*, through the fake 'liberalism' of the *Guardian* middle class, to the



British troops use a travelling gallows

bogus 'leftism' of the Trot petty bourgeoisie. Not a single section of British bourgeois opinion can face the truth about Ireland, even now when the British imperialist-colonialist game is almost up, and the defeat of the colonisation attempt is finally being conceded. Lies and distortions are still all that middle-class ideology can come up with.

The truth is simple. British colonial Black and Tan terror contained and then split the Irish national-liberation struggle in 1921 which had sought to implement the all-Ireland election result of 1918 which gave overwhelming victory for Sinn Féin and immediate Irish independence. Parts of six of Ulster's nine counties were ripped off at bayonet point to establish the gerrymandered 'Northern Ireland' colony as 'part of Britain for evermore, never to be surrendered' and ruled by a permanent police-military dictatorship under the Orange-order bourgeoisie, colonial-imperialist-minded, and hate-filled against the Irish nationalist minority, trapped inside the new artificial border.

This Orange-order bourgeoisie was always doomed as a permanently festering sore of injustice and humiliation to Ireland's legitimate national aspirations, on ALL its territory.

The renewed national-liberation war by Sinn Féin/IRA over the past 50 years has finally convinced the British imperialist establishment to dismantle this ill-fated colony, the bogus 'state' called 'Northern Ireland'. British imperialism's worldwide decline and enfeeblement, plus the invincibility of the guerrilla war and the Sinn Féin political offensive, plus pressure from world opinion and Irish America to end the permanent gerrymandered colonial dictatorship that was 'Northern Ireland', finally prevailed.

The trick has been to open the

door for British sovereignty to pull out but without giving hardcore Orange-fascist 'loyalists' the chance to declare armed UDI and challenge London's decision to eventually restore Ireland's reunification; and also to avoid being seen to have capitulated to armed revolutionary national-liberation struggle. Hence now these vast confusing propaganda wars over the peace talks.

A new settlement short of immediate reunification has always been the plan from the start of these negotiations more than 20 years ago, but one where the all-Ireland dimensions gain increasing influence, eventually leading to full reunification. The explosive key to this whole understanding is that the 'Northern Ireland' statelet, as was, will be no more, and under entirely new management.

As sops to the majority 'unionist' population, many of the insulting old features of 'northern Ireland' will still remain temporarily. But the essence, and more importantly the perspectives, of this part of Ireland will be changed fundamentally, – and irrevocably. Full reunification will thereafter be only a matter of time and demographic change.

What is wrong with admitting all this? Not a lot, but hurt Little-Englander nationalism just cannot do it. Rightwing bourgeois ideology just gets apoplectic, alternately fuming or crowing over 'capitulation to' or 'triumph over' the 'terrorists' as the propaganda wars highlight different aspects of the coming settlement and the tortuous 'negotiation' process, the main concern of which is to save face as much as possible for 'unionism' but without appearing to snub Irish national interests too painfully.

The *Guardian* 'liberal' bourgeois ideology concentrates on covering up any historical analysis which could confirm a Marxist view of capitalism's overall fate. It stresses Sinn Féin/IRA 'setbacks' in particular. This week it has headlined a ridiculous lie that only now, allegedly, is Sinn Féin accepting publicly that reunification will not happen immediately, – all so that it can scream "Adams retreats", etc. But a settlement short of immediately reunification has been British imperialism's obvious way out for years, understood by everybody. Today the *Guardian* runs a massive

sympathetic interview with Bernadette Sands, attacking Sinn Féin from the 'left' to say that anything it does achieve will be a betrayal from what it ought to have achieved.

This is the Trot petty-bourgeois posture, receiving its usual nationwide publicity from the *Guardian* sympathisers.

The Trots themselves maintain their provocative criminal slanders that the whole peace process has no aim and no outcome other than to allow Sinn Féin/IRA to abandon the armed resistance and the fight for greater self-determination.

But between the lines and in the small print of the bourgeois ideologists own newspapers, the scale and picture of Sinn Féin/IRA's colossal achievements in forcing 'no surrender' colonialism to at last negotiate a further imperialist retreat, become clearer:

As the multi-party talks on Northern Ireland's future enter what the two governments are calling the end game, Mr Adams delivered what amounts to a wish-list to Bertie Ahern, the Irish prime minister. His conditions to agreeing a political settlement include cross-border bodies with executive powers, the dismantling of the RUC, the withdrawal of the army, and the release of all republican prisoners.

Sinn Féin feels that Dublin has failed to fight strongly for the nationalist agenda, and has allowed itself to be led by Tony Blair's administration.

Mr Adams's minimum demands for Sinn Féin's agreement to a deal

include that all policing and judicial issues come under the remit of the cross-border institutions, which he insists must have executive powers. He demands a bill of rights, guaranteed by a new all-Ireland constitutional court, responsible to a north-south council. The Northern Ireland assembly would have no veto over decisions made by the cross-border bodies.

He wants voting rights for northerners in all Dail and presidential elections and referendums, and sets Sinn Féin on a collision course with Mr Ahern over constitutional changes. Mr Ahern is prepared to alter articles two and three of the Irish constitution to delete the republic's territorial claim as part of an overall settlement. Mr Adams says there is no deal if those changes go through.

Mr Adams, addressing a rally at Milltown cemetery in west Belfast to mark the 10th anniversary of the SAS killings of three IRA terrorists in Gibraltar, said any deal would be regarded by Sinn Féin as an interim agreement. "Republicans want to go much further and we will go much further." That angered Unionists.

How much or how little of all this is conceded immediately is not really the point. The issue is that 'Northern Ireland' should be no more, as it was, and must start changing at once, and in the right direction.

And endless hints, too numerous to mention, in the capitalist press itself, indicate that this is exactly what is going to happen. The whole of bourgeois ideology has been wrong-footed by the brilliant success of the Irish national-liberation struggle.

Douglas Bell

Mitchell deadline and flood of anti-Unionist revelations show that British imperialism has told Orange colonialism that 'No Surrender' must go at last, opening the door to gradual reunification of Ireland. The Irish national-liberation struggle has won. Imperialist criminal history has been humiliated.

[EPSR No 944 31-03-98]

A series of damaging scandals, indicting British Army, RUC, and Orange ruling-class involvement in terrorist murder of Catholic and Irish nationalists, is accompanying the final colonial scuttle from Ireland.

US Senator George Mitchell chairing the peace talks on behalf of Western imperialism which is embarrassed by this last vestige of colonial tyranny in Ireland, has given Unionists an April 9 deadline by when to cease their reactionary obstruction to a new political settlement for Ireland.

The avalanche of exposures of

murderous wrongdoing by the past colonial administration of the six-county Occupied Zone (infamously created as 'Northern Ireland' and 'British for ever' by British bayonets in 1921 and ruled by a semi-fascist gerrymandered dictatorship ever since) is to help undermine the remaining resistance to change.

Leaks to the *Sunday Telegraph*, and United Nations involvement, indicate that the British authorities themselves have been obliged to cooperate in this self-humiliation so as to defuse the potential embarrassment of an armed UDI by hardcore

Unionists. It has long been obvious that the London imperialist Establishment has reluctantly agreed that the colonial status-quo must be abandoned, putting all the pressure now on Trimble & Co to accept giving it up peaceably.

Mitchell's deadline could not be blunter, or more clearly aimed. It is only the colony's Unionist leaders who are refusing a deal, or even to negotiate constructively for a completely new Ireland, open eventually to reunification.

But the 'No Surrender' bleat has been steadily weakening for ages. This colonial tyranny has long known that the writing is on the wall. The terms of the new deal will be imposed by referendum whether the Unionist bosses agree to negotiate or not.

A possibly unauthorised leak has infuriated the Paisley diehards by revealing how government control will actively manipulate public opinion in the six counties to vote yes in May, by achieving and pushing favourable opinion polls, suppressing unfavourable sentiment, and by other spin-doctoring tricks.

Meanwhile, the most embittered remnants of the semi-fascist 'loyalist' and 'Unionist' camp are splitting apart in murderous recriminations.

The LVF killers and hired gunmen, gaoled at the Maze, have been hunger-striking against being locked up 23 hours a day, – imposed to prevent further assassinations in the prison after David Keys was tortured and killed in his cell last week for spilling the beans over the Poyntzpass pub slaughter three weeks ago, – another peace-wrecking murder provocation in a segregated village with all the signs of more skulduggery by Unionist authorities. Keys was a longstanding agent provocateur for the Special Branch of the RUC, an investigation by *Republican News* reveals (see quotes below**).

Republican News also details (see quotes**) the outline of a UN report about to be published which exposes the routine harassment of defence lawyers by the RUC, determined to persecute Irish nationalism regardless of the law. And a book it publicises, due out in the USA next month, exposes an entire secret command structure for Unionist colonial diehards, – within the Army, the RUC, the Unionist parties, the Northern Ireland Office, and among big business in the Occupied Zone, – detailing specific murders which this Ulster Loyalist Central Coordinating Committee

has sanctioned in the past to try to derail the peace process.

The *Telegraph* revelations are, if anything, even more sensitive for humiliated British imperialism, exposing as they do the outrageous cover-ups organised from Whitehall whenever previous inquiries have been forced to be held into suspected RUC wrongdoing, and into British Army assassination squads and the use of undercover *agents-provocateurs* recruited from criminal killer elements.

The precise reasoning for all this belated washing of dirty linen in public remains obscure, but that it is clearly part of the convoluted negotiating process for getting British colonialism out of Ireland at last is unmistakable.

All this humiliating pressure to dismantle the old police-army colonial structure clearly signals the defeat imperialism has suffered at the hands of the armed revolutionary national-liberation struggle of Sinn Féin/IRA for the past 30 years.

The huge pressure on Trimble & Co to now abandon their 'No Surrender' nonsense and accept the dismantling of the colonial political set-up tells exactly the same message of imperialist defeat.

And yet the idiot Trotskyites of the CPGB (and other sects) still insist that it is Sinn Féin/IRA which has capitulated to 'imperialist domination', and that Adams & Co are just 'careerist sell-outs'. These anti-communist provocateurs need consigning to the dustbin of history alongside the similarly failed petty-bourgeois ideology which also thought mistakenly that there could be no surrender to mere Irish nationalism, (forgetting that from a Marxist point of view, the national-liberation triumph was the obvious necessary preliminary to freeing the British and Irish masses from national-question confusion, holding both back from clearer socialist understanding.)

The defeat of imperialist colonial skulduggery is a victory for workers everywhere. DB

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CALLS to disband the RUC will grow in coming weeks with the publication of a United Nations report linking the RUC to loyalist death squads and the publication of a book in the US which claims that high-ranking RUC and UDR officers ran a campaign of political and sectarian assassinations against northern nationalists in the late 1980s and early 90s.

The United Nations' report into the treatment of defence lawyers

in the Six Counties is expected to embarrass the British government when it is released at the end of this month. The report is thought to contain information linking the crown forces with loyalist death squad activity and is expected to establish that those lawyers defending republicans have been subject to intimidation, harassment, intrusive surveillance and death threats from the RUC.

Around the same time, award-winning journalist Sean McPhilemy will publish his book, *The Committee*, which presents evidence that a covert loyalist organisation, the Ulster Loyalist Central Co-ordinating Committee, whose 60 members were drawn from a cross section of the unionist community, selected targets and assisted loyalist gunmen to execute the kills.

Dr Data Param Cumaraswamy, a special envoy of the UN Secretary General is to release this report on the independence of judges and lawyers around 31 March. It will be presented in Geneva at the UN Commission for Human Rights in front of representatives of 53 governments and more than 2,000 representatives from leading human rights' groups.

The issues of RUC interrogation methods, denial of a solicitor's presence during questioning, the absence of audio recording and the right to silence will be assessed.

A source described the report as, "politically, extremely sensitive". He said: 'This report is going to have the effect of a bomb. No one can accuse the UN of being partial. The United Kingdom is a member of the UN and therefore this report is going to be a true slap in the face for London and the securocrats who have refused to take responsibility for the flaws in the justice and policing system.'

Dr Cumaraswamy spent ten days in Belfast and London in October last year. During his visit to the Six Counties, he called for a full judicial inquiry into the murder of Belfast solicitor Pat Finucane, killed by the UDA in February 1989. He has seen hard evidence of crown forces' involvement in the murder as well as reports on the Brian Nelson case. UDA Intelligence Officer Nelson was an agent with British Military Intelligence — he organised the Finucane killing.

Dr Cumaraswamy is said to have been very affected by a visit to Mr Finucane's family and has expressed great concern about the words of Home Office Minister Douglas Hogg, who told the British parliament just weeks before the murder that certain Irish lawyers were "sympathetic to terrorists".

During his stay in Belfast, Dr Cumaraswamy also criticised



the Law Society for refusing to protect its members from RUC threats. He regretted that only some 20 of the 1,400 lawyers and five to ten barristers courageously defended politically sensitive cases on behalf of clients ill-treated in prisons or interrogation centres. These lawyers are subject to death threats from the RUC, conveyed through their clients in holding centres.

The special rapporteur visited Castlereagh and Gough holding centres. Speculation is mounting about the way that Dr Cumaraswamy might have been forced to censor parts of his report. A source added: "Another weak point may be the fact that lawyers under threat are reported to have rarely documented or formally made complaints to the RUC or the Law Society."

The report is currently in the hands of British governmental agencies who are said to be extremely nervous about its timing. At such a critical time in the peace process, Dr Cumaraswamy's assessment may well prove that there is no alternative but the disbandment of the RUC.

According to McPhilemy, Committee members included senior officers of the RUC and UDR/RIR officers, prominent businessmen, solicitors, politicians and clergymen, who availed of the services of loyalist assassins known as The Jackal and King Rat (Billy Wright). Senior unionist politicians, named in his forthcoming book, *The Committee*, were aware of, or assisted the group, says McPhilemy.

A primary source of information, believed to have been used by McPhilemy, names a third loyalist killer, formerly a close public associate of Wright and currently believed to be leader of the LVF, as a member of the Committee.

A leading political figure within unionism, prominent during the Drumcree crisis of 1995 and whose name is known to *An Phoblacht*, is named by McPhilemy as one of five "Committee Associates". McPhilemy accuses the senior unionist politician of protecting the murder conspirators and dubs him leader of the political wing of the ULCCC. If a libel case currently being taken by McPhilemy against the *Sunday Times* proceeds to London's High Court, some of

those named in the book will be called to the witness box. The senior unionist politician named in the book, "would be given the opportunity to respond", says McPhilemy.

"If McPhilemy is right, then the RUC is as corrupt as the police forces in El Salvador and Chile which ran their own death squads during civil wars there," concludes a critic in the USA who reviewed *The Committee*.

Sean McPhilemy is an award winning documentary journalist and his book is set to take Irish America by storm. Publication outside the constraints of British libel laws has allowed McPhilemy to name names. Twenty-three members and five associate members of the covert committee are identified in the book. An RUC Assistant Chief Constable and Head of Special Branch (retired) is named as a member and two RUC Inspectors are named as associate members. A source also names a further three RUC officers, as well as two majors in the RIR.

Central to the Committee was the involvement of an 'Inner Force' within the RUC controlled by a group of senior RUC officers, the 'Inner Circle'. According to McPhilemy, the RUC Inner Force "routinely assisted the loyalist death squads to assassinate republicans and Catholics whom the committee had selected for elimination".

Evidence of a covert grouping known as the 'Inner Force' within the RUC first came to public attention at the height of the collusion controversy of 1989. On 2 October 1989 in an interview carried by the *Irish News*, an unidentified RUC officer claimed a secret grouping within the RUC had been formed with the twin aim of "removing suspected terrorists" and "bringing

down the Anglo-Irish Agreement". The group claimed to have members in every RUC division across the Six Counties. A year later, a documentary made for Channel Four's *Dispatches* programme reiterated earlier claims of an RUC Inner Force. The film company who made the documentary for Channel Four, was Sean McPhilemy's 'Box Productions'.

"Collusion between the loyalists and the RUC/UDR Inner Force was formal, structured and systematic," writes McPhilemy, "involving an unknown but sizable proportion of the locally recruited security services in Northern Ireland."

The documentary and later the book details four specific loyalist murder attacks claiming direct involvement of the Committee and the RUC's 'Inner Force'.

1) The murder of Sam Marshall and attempted murder of Colin Duffy and Tony McCaughey, 2) the murder of Belfast solicitor Pat Finucane, 3) the Cappagh murders and 4) the sectarian murder of Denis Carville.

The murder of Denis Carville was planned by the Committee as a 'revenge' attack for the IRA killing of a UDR soldier, Colin McCullough. They wanted someone who was in the same situation, a young man sitting with his girlfriend in the car."

In the book, McPhilemy alleges that two on-duty RUC officers belonging to the 'Inner Force', acting on instructions from 'The Committee', selected a victim by checking his licence plate and running the details through the RUC computer to confirm it was registered to a person living in a Catholic estate. According to McPhilemy, they then met Billy Wright at a nearby hotel, guided him to the site and pointed out the car where Carville was sitting.

The 'operation' to murder three Lurgan republicans was discussed by the Committee in an East Tyrone hotel three weeks prior to the attack, claims the author. The Committee selected a loyalist gunman, 'The Jackal', to lead the death squad but left the organisation of the attack to members of the RUC. A source claimed RUC officers were in two cars at the scene. This claim was later confirmed during an extradition hearing in the USA.

Speaking to *An Phoblacht*, Colin Duffy said at the time of Sam Marshall's death allegations of crown force collusion were dismissed by many people as 'republican propaganda' but "growing evidence, which has come to light over many years, increasingly confirms our initial analysis to be correct. Collusion has often been portrayed as the result of individual rogue elements," says Duffy, "but clearly, collusion in loyalist killings is structured, organised and lies at the heart of the sectarian operation of this Six-County state."

These forthcoming exposures of the RUC will raise demands that the force be disbanded as an urgent element of the current peace talks. It is becoming clear that the sectarian RUC is an obstacle in the way of peace in Ireland.

Keys was a leading member of the UVF in East Belfast and was in charge of the loyalist groups drug operations until 1996 when he went with the breakaway UVF. In November 1996 Keys was shot five times in what was thought to be an attempted execution authorised by the UVF leadership. After the attempt on his life Keys went to live in Banbridge in County Down.

But while Keys was a UVF drug dealer he was also working as a Special Branch agent. He attempted to recruit another man, also a drug dealer, to work as an RUC informer. A relative of this man's approached Sinn Féin Councillor Sean Hayes to say that his relative feared for his life.

Hayes now wants RUC boss Ronnie Flanagan to disclose the full details of Keys association with the RUC at the time of the Poyntzpass killings.

Keys, who also served in the RIR for a time, was charged along with Banbridge men Stephen McClean, Noel McCready and Ryan Robley, all ex-members of the UDR, with killing Damien Trainor and Philip Allen. McCready and McClean were dismissed from the UDR in 1990 and 1993 respectively, while Robley completed his commission. All three men, along with Keys, moved to the UVF wing in H-Block 6. It is widely believed that Keys made statements to the RUC which implicated the other three.

Keys' body was found in a cell last Sunday morning. He had been badly beaten and had his wrists cut and was strangled before being hung up with a sheet. It is thought he was tortured before he was killed.

News reports now link Keys to the brutal murder of Armagh woman Ann Marie Smyth who was found dead with her throat cut in East Belfast in 1992. Reports also claim he systematically beat his girlfriend over a two-year period.

Meanwhile, Sinn Féin Councillor Alex Maskey has challenged the RUC to confirm reports that they recovered the weapons used in the Poyntzpass murders.

"If these claims are true, why are the RUC withholding the information? I challenge the RUC to disclose the forensics on these weapons and their history." Maskey also asked: "Why is it taking so long for the RUC Chief, Ronnie Flanagan to give his assessment about which loyalist group was responsible for planting the bomb in Carnlough over two weeks ago and the sending of parcel bombs to a number of nationalists?"

"Is it because he knows that it was the UVF and the UVF and it would be counter-productive to the RUC political agenda to have both loyalist parties expelled from the Stormont talks at this time?"

SINN Féin last night demanded a judicial inquiry into one of the murkiest controversies of the Troubles as fresh evidence emerged of army collusion with loyalist paramilitaries in the assassination of suspected IRA terrorists.

The nationalist SDLP called for further investigation after the publication of details from classified security force files indicating that the army agent Brian Nelson was involved in 15 murders, 15 attempted murders and 62 conspiracies to murder.

The documents, disclosed in the *Sunday Telegraph*, reveal that a covert unit of military intelligence recruited Mr Nelson, a former-soldier in the Black Watch, and infiltrated him into the Ulster Defence Association. He was one of 100 agents run by 50 officers in the Force Research Unit (FRU).

The files detail accounts of Mr Nelson's meetings with his army handlers between 1987 and 1990. His role was to ensure that "proper targeting of Provisional IRA members [took] place prior to any shooting".

Mr Nelson, paid £28,000 a year, apparently saw his role as an army agent helping the UDA to assassinate "only legitimate targets".

At least one of his victims had no terrorist connections. Terence McDaid, aged 30, was shot dead by the UDA in May 1988. The intended target was his brother, but Mr Nelson had given the wrong address.

One issue that appears not to be addressed in the documents is the UDA's killing of the Belfast solicitor



for Pat Finucane in February 1989. Mr Nelson is said to have told his army handlers two months before Finucane's shooting of a plan to murder him.

The UDA unwittingly prompted the collapse of the army's arrangement with Mr Nelson in the summer of 1989 when it murdered Loughlin Maginn. It boasted then that its intelligence was so good that it only targeted terrorists and published a confidential security force file identifying Maginn as an IRA intelligence officer.

Amid a political outcry, the RUC announced an official inquiry into whether the security forces were colluding with loyalist paramilitaries to kill republicans. John Stevens, Deputy Chief Constable of Cambridgeshire, was appointed to head it. According to the files, the FRU mounted a successful rear-guard action to prevent Mr Stevens uncovering its relationship with Mr Nelson.

Mr Stevens planned to arrest him on the relatively minor charge of possession of information likely to be of use to terrorists. Mr Nelson fled to England and a fire destroyed much of the material gathered.

He was arrested on his return to Belfast, and ignored advice from his

handlers to deny his role as an FRU agent.

Mr Nelson alone was charged with offences arising from the affair, after consultation with Sir Patrick Mayhew, the then Attorney General. He was persuaded to plead guilty to five charges of conspiracy to murder, and there was no trial. He was jailed for 10 years and now lives in England.

Successive governments have denied claims that military intelligence was involved in murdering IRA members.

The army said yesterday that the "serious" allegations were thoroughly investigated. No charges were brought against its personnel.

Mr Adams, Sinn Féin's president, said yesterday that Sir Patrick's involvement in a deal in which the murder charges were dropped raised questions about the involvement of the Thatcher and Major governments in an "illegal and murderous" strategy.

One Sinn Féin source said: "This is bigger now than Bloody Sunday. That was one incident, however horrific. This is a conspiracy over several years involving the political and military establishment.

"It is much more dangerous for the British administration." •

and Paisley threatening an instant bloodbath, – just as he had "always predicted would happen".

A different aspect of the sourness of British reaction came from BBC *Panorama* last night which slyly twisted its whole 'report' to the question of was the new halfway-house deal yet another 'betrayal' by Sinn Féin leaders which would only spark off yet more 'Troubles' just as Michael Collins' halfway-house deal did in 1921. This sneakily tried to plant the notion that the blame for the last 77 years murderous tyranny and bloody sacrifice lay at the door of Irish nationalism instead of on British imperialism which imposed the 1921 Partition under the threat of all-out war on Ireland if Sinn Féin did not accept.

And if the whole civil-war and national-liberation-war troubles explode again now, it will once again be solely the responsibility of decadent British imperialism which lacks the guts or ability to admit the injustice of its entire colonial record, or to take the firm steps to put things right, – as should happen now with the 'Unionist-loyalist' gangsters being put in their place by British state actions to accept the immediate reunification of Ireland. The resistance to it would then be over in months. As it is, there is likely to be some backlash, – and possibly from both sides opposed to concessions in any direction.

But this latest British fudge is not comparable to the 1921 armed Partition of Ireland. It is the exact opposite of that. It is an international declaration by British imperialism that it intends at last to shortly get out of Ireland for good, as opposed to the 1921 declaration of a "British Irish territory permanently for the rest of time, to be called 'Northern Ireland'."

The name will still remain for a short while. But the reintegration processes for Ireland, to be launched by this new agreement, point only to the eventual reunification of Ireland.

And there is no comparison, either, between the strategic choice facing Irish nationalism in 1921 and the prospects now. Ireland was one country in 1921 and the overwhelming majority had already told British imperialism to get out, including at the 1918 democratic elections conducted by British colonialism over all Ireland. If Partition had been rejected, and had not been imposed at bayonet point, Ireland would surely have had its whole independence, all at one go, within a decade or two, and almost certainly after 1945.

The heroic Irish nationalist struggle of the late 20th century has always had to fight from a complete minority position, in complete contrast to 1921, – a minority within the new 'country' of 'Northern Ireland', and a minority within the Irish population of Ireland as a whole, – most of whom have been corrupted into apathy and complacency by an easier life in the Republic.

But despite this tiny minority position, the Sinn Féin/IRA national-liberation struggle, still outpooled even by the catholic SDLP within the Occupied Zone, has nevertheless fought this British colonial tyranny to a standstill.

In such circumstances, to accept a negotiated snail's-pace withdrawal deal from British imperialism counts as one of the most colossal anti-imperialist triumphs in all history, and makes abundant strategic sense.

The gibbering Trotskyite idiots who from their armchair-socialist positions deride Gerry Adams & Co as 'careerist bourgeois politicians selling out to imperialism' sound as much like agents for the British Establishment as do the BBC.

But the greatest gainers of all from the colonial retreat will be the British working class and the struggle for socialist consciousness here.

For as long as the British working class remained dominated by its own imperialist government, repressing another nation, – for just so long would it remain impossible for British workers to triumph over the imperialist system themselves.

Colonial attitudes utterly corrupt any notions of socialist consciousness within a working class, as Marx pointed out noting the anti-Irish racism rife among British workers last century where the immigrant Irish in England received the worst 'colonial' treatment. Sadly, some anti-immigrant racism

Another Easter defeat for colonialism's rotten record in Ireland. British imperialism is on its way out, humiliated by revolutionary nationalism; and the new deal will take Ireland's reunification a huge leap forward. The ending of colonialism in Ireland will speed the fight for socialism in Britain, – and everywhere else.

[EPSR No 945 07-04-98]

Although the detailed agreement for a new Ireland has still to be revealed and then campaigned for, it is already well beyond doubt that the essence of the event historically has been the triumph of Irish national-liberation struggle over 'No Surrender' British colonialism.

These 'peace process' negotiations would never even have been thought of if the British imperialist diktat of 1921, – the monstrous Partition of Ireland at British bayonet point, – had continued to have its way behind its vicious Orange-mafia ruling class fronting a police-military dictatorship within permanently gerrymandered artificial boundaries.

The heroic fight by Sinn Féin/IRA which has trounced the British ruling class politically and worn down its military resistance by guerrilla-war armed revolution, has finally forced the imperialist system to retreat

and abandon the unjust and intolerable colonial status-quo of the bogus statelet 'Northern Ireland'.

Ireland's immediate reunification, the only justice, will not be conceded yet. But that this whole process is about dismantling the infamous tyranny of the 'Northern Ireland' colony is unmistakable.

Enfeebled British imperialism has been admitting its defeat at least since the 1985 Anglo-Irish Treaty. The whole game since has been all about concealing the victory of the Sinn Féin/IRA armed revolutionary struggle, and about saving face all round for the British so as to avoid as much murderous 'loyalist'-thug backlash as possible.

The initial 'Unionist'-colonist-response to the Mitchell draft agreement today underlined that problem, with Trimble's party expressing deep gloom, the Alliance posturers demanding Blair's immediate presence,



will linger on. But this retreat by British colonialism from Ireland, – at last in effect admitting that it has been wrong in

its treatment of the Irish, – will make the anti-racist fight that much easier.
Douglas Bell

Imperialist misery and Orange-colonist splits are the real indicator of Irish national-liberation victory. Establishment face-saving and propaganda spins cannot hide the defeat of British-state claims to a part of Ireland. Government negotiation of official treaty merely confirms what the unbeatable Sinn Féin/IRA campaigns have already won in the real political world. Path towards Ireland's re-unification now formally opened. Colonial injustice halted by revolutionary struggle. Trot bile simply lives off envy and fear of serious anti-imperialist movement. Blair & Co were irrelevant.

[EPSR No 946 14-04-98]

In spite of the best bourgeois-press attempts to hide the real significance of the Ireland settlement in a mass of confusion, disinformation, and wishful thinking, – the bitter response of reactionaries like Tebbitt, Paisley, some commentators, and Trimble's sidekick Donaldson tell the true story of Sinn Féin's triumph.

The flagship of old British colonialism, the *Daily Express*, told it best:

WE have been bombed into yesterday's surrender and, as a result, we will now be blackmailed into many further retreats until Ulster is ruled from Dublin. British democracy has sustained a total and unmitigated defeat, which has cracked the foundations of the State.

The hijacking of the word "peace" by the agreement's supporters should not blind us to the truth. Murderous violence, which never stopped, will not now end as by magic, for it has just been rewarded handsomely.

Even if this were not so, an ancient war such as this cannot be settled by a cloudy form of words and a few compromises. What we have in Northern Ireland is a classic ethnic conflict – two rival groups, neither willing to be ruled by the other. Nowhere has human genius found any permanent and civilised solution to such rivalry.

So, while the signing of yesterday's piece of paper is an achievement of diplomacy, the fruit of great technical skill, patience and hard work, it must be tested against reality.

The worm in the rose is the original sin of the whole project. It was designed to appease the demands of

the IRA. Just as dangerous, it is also meant to buy off the Protestant murder gangs.

To do this, it must outrage the promises given by British political leaders for three decades that they would "never give in to terror". People who cheer today will be shocked tomorrow at how swiftly the most revolting killers are released from their guarded guest-house at the Maze.

Meantime, the front-line of combat against terror, the Royal Ulster Constabulary, will be subjected to a politically correct inquisition designed to make it "acceptable" to nationalists – that is, ineffective against the IRA.

These measures will be for good. They will destroy any idea that the British Government is ready to use force and authority to combat the IRA. But the political parts of the deal will not be so lasting. The Ulster Assembly must castrate itself as its first political act. It will set up the real new government of Ulster, a cross-border authority which gives Dublin ministers power to intervene in the province's affairs.

And if "progress" towards unity is too slow, the "Continuity IRA" or some other subsidiary of Sinn Féin, can let off a bomb, or leave one lying around. Sinn Féin only supports the agreement as a station on the way to its final, fascist goal.

The mooring ropes which bind Northern Ireland to the UK will be loosened, then untied, and a slow drift towards Dublin rule will begin.

What could go wrong? Well, what would you describe as wrong, when the whole thing is an insult to democracy, law and justice?

The people of Northern Ireland could reject this imposed peace at

a referendum. The people of the Republic could torpedo the plan by refusing to vote to change their constitution.

The Unionist Party could split asunder, ousting Mr David Trimble for signing a document which defies its whole purpose.

What we have signed up to is further ethnic cleansing of Protestants from the West of Ulster, rising power of intimidation and protection rackets in the terrorists' enclaves, internecine assassinations, a big bomb in London to hurry things along, a quiet flight of educated and prosperous Protestants, and continued beatings and murders by IRA or UVF gangsters.

Much of this is confused half-truths or downright misleading, but what it does get across is that imperialism has been humiliated by armed revolutionary national-liberation struggle, despite all the recent promises of 'no surrender to terror', and centuries of earlier 'no surrender' posturing to Irish nationalism's legitimate liberation fight. It also bluntly admits that the real government of Ireland is now half-way into Dublin's hands (where all of it belongs, in terms of purely nation-state sovereignty.) Predictions of further guerrilla-war terrorism, however, are likely to prove hopelessly ignorant, almost implying violence and mayhem for its own sake.

The Sinn Féin/IRA struggle has not been remotely anything like that. It was a highly disciplined and competent guerrilla war directed solely against the British capitalist state and its sectarian agents and backers, – in the Occupied Zone of Ireland and on the mainland. Most fringe armed violence has had purely sectarian aims and thrived by taking advantage of the unstable civil-war conditions. A period of transitional stability, on the way to Ireland's reunification which would eventually end the whole basis for nationalist civil-war conflict, could quickly see an end to sectarian killings of all kinds.

A huge propaganda attempt has been made to imply that Sinn Féin had to give most ground in the final negotiating flurry, and ended up very far from its United Ireland ambitions.

This deliberate confusion-mongering entirely misses the point of the whole historical movement taking place. Yesterday, 'Northern Ireland' was the sole reality, – an unquestionable part of the British state for all time, established by British bayonets in 1921, enshrined in British law, and governed ever since by utterly intransigent British colonial ruling-class whose religion was "No Surrender any

further to Irish nationalism".

That reactionary gerrymandered imperialist fortress, – a by-word for brutal discrimination and non-stop judicial terror against Irish nationalist dissent by the persecuted minority, – has now crumbled irreparably. That is the movement of history. That is what has climaxed in a new settlement this past week.

How much immediate progress has been made towards Ireland's reunification, – the only ultimate justice, legitimacy, and sensible administration, – is a different question, and small negotiating points may not have all gone Sinn Féin's way for the moment.

But what has been achieved is a victory which can only be described as one of the most miraculous successes ever by a national minority in a revolutionary stand and armed guerrilla-war. This has sensationally routed the minority 'democratic' rights which imperialism tried to fob off Irish nationalism, which could only have meant continued injustice and frustration under the stifling Orange-colonial tyranny, permanently set.

Now the door has been forced open wide again for the completion of Ireland's legitimate national aspirations for reunification of all its territory in the not-too-distant future.

Yet the one thing which reactionaries of EVERY description promised time and time again was that NEVER would any further concessions be made to Irish nationalism as a result of guerrilla-war actions by armed revolutionaries and their political representatives in Sinn Féin.

To look at what Sinn Féin and the IRA have allegedly 'not yet achieved' is to have missed the plot utterly on Ireland. Only the middle class, with their instinctive hatred of all seriously successful anti-imperialist revolution this century, – the bourgeois out of dislike of any violence disturbing the status quo, and petty-bourgeois Trots out of their anti-Stalinist fear of proletarian dictatorship, – will hate acknowledging this Irish national-liberation triumph.

The longterm overwhelming general impression on international working-class opinion, however, will be that British colonial-imperialist decadence has been monumentally defeated.

Even the carefully manipulated bourgeois reports give the game away:

HE SUDDENLY looked very old, and his powers of scathing response were hit by the stutters. Ian Paisley was in trouble.

His former supporters, working-class loyalists, were taunting the North Antrim MP and Northern Ireland MEP. One 22-year-old had three screamed words of advice for the founder of the Martyrs' Memorial Church: "Shut your mouth."

Amid chaotic scenes, Mr Paisley's new foes ruined his press conference at Stormont, called to denounce the treacherous negotiators at Castle Buildings. He once persuaded them to appear on rolling hills clutching firearm certificates to demonstrate opposition to the Anglo-Irish Agreement. He has marched them up the hill too often.

Now their political representatives, from the Progressive Unionist Party and the Ulster Democratic Party, are younger, urban and working-class. And, unlike Mr Paisley's Democratic Unionist Party, they were in the talks. Nobody had been so rude to him before. "What about that big house you've got?" one heckler cried, underlining the financial division they had once been prepared to ignore because of Mr Paisley's uncompromising Unionism.

He was 72 on Monday. But he seemed to age as he was greeted with shouts of "Grand old Duke of York. Go home". One called: "You are a dinosaur. Your days are over." Another shouted: "You ran away from the talks. You are too old to run."

Mr Paisley hollered back, but the press conference descended into farce. He was on the outside, and there are those who wonder if he is finished, cut out of Northern Ireland's future. It looked like the end of an era.

One of the shouted comments early yesterday was to link the DUP with the Loyalist Volunteer Force. It is enough to send Mr Paisley into fits of apoplexy.

His former supporters, linked to the rival mainstream loyalist terror groups who are on ceasefire, are behind the accusation. It is based on the appearance of former DUP MP for Mid-Ulster Willie McCrea on a platform with LVF leader Billy Wright. He also spoke at Wright's funeral service in December.

The LVF is one of a growing number of small terrorist groups opposed to the ceasefires and to the negotiations at Stormont. It has murdered nine people, one of them Protestant.

SITTING in his front room, beneath a framed sketch of Orangemen marching to Drumcree parish church, Ivor Young has little doubt what the peace process will mean for Northern Ireland.

"Of course there is going to be a bloodbath," he predicted yesterday before the agreement. "If the deal goes through, true loyalists will fight back."

Mr Young's doom-laden prophecy may appear as an irrelevant symbol of outdated, entrenched hatred.

But his opinion cannot be dismissed out of hand. Mr Young is typical of disillusioned hardline loyalists, whose vote will count at the referendum scheduled for May 22. He is also typical of many Protestant

voters in David Trimble's constituency of Portadown.

More than 70 per cent of the town is loyalist and the reminders of it are everywhere, on most walls of the housing estates that surround the high street and on the red, white and blue kerbstones. This is one of the most staunchly loyalist populations in Ulster.

The former home of the murdered loyalist terrorist Billy Wright, it is the epicentre of support for his Loyalist Volunteer Force, which has condemned the peace process. It is also the venue for the most contentious parade in the Orange marching season, down the nationalists' Garvachy Road to Drumcree church. Around here, people feel they owe the peace process nothing, and the republicans even less.

Already there are plans for marches and rallies, coordinated by Mr Young's Concerned Protestant Committee. "What they have all done up at Stormont doesn't matter a bit," he said.

"Ninety-nine per cent of the people around here will never let Dublin run our country. Nothing can happen without our support and we're going to make sure they don't get it."

These views are echoed, around the town; true loyalists would never sell out Ulster, true loyalists would never sit down with the IRA, true loyalists will never roll over and take this.

The finger of blame has been pointed at Mr Trimble. "The people here are sickened by what they have heard," said Mark Proctor, a Protestant community worker. "It's no big surprise they sold us out because we always knew that Trimble would be weak. He's finished here because he didn't listen to the people who elected him. They will never trust him again."

And even though Paisley, the absolute epitome of 'No Surrender' Ulster Unionism, may be played down as 'past it' (although he got the biggest UV vote of all at last May's general election), the official UUP's embarrassment at their defeat is harder to conceal. The attempt to present Trimble as the brave 'winner' of the peace, with 'the union still safe', etc, and the 'principle of consent still guaranteed', etc, is undermined by the reported reality.

What emerges is that Trimble & Co, facing certain defeat whatever they did, opted to put the best spin possible on the least immediately painful deal possible, and then nervously hoped for the best, Blair & Co likewise.

But the strain of the humiliation of all past arrogant bombast now destroyed - ("we will **never** sit down to negotiate with representatives of armed terrorism until every last weapon and ounce of semtex has been destroyed", etc, etc) - has split the Ulster Unionists all ends up:

Mr Trimble, who has put his career on the line, is trying to contain a growing revolt among his parliamentary colleagues. Six of his fellow nine Ulster Unionist MPs are opposed to the deal.

They include four long-time opponents of the peace process, along with Martin Smyth, MP for South Belfast, who is due back from Australia tomorrow. But the real threat to Mr Trimble comes from Jeffrey Donaldson, the 35-year-old MP for Lagan Valley.

Mr Donaldson, seen as a future leader, stormed out of Castle Buildings on Friday as Mr Trimble led his delegation into the conference room to deliver his agreement. He voted against it at an Ulster Unionist executive meeting on Saturday.

Mr Trimble carried the day, after a tetchy four-hour meeting at party headquarters, by 55 to 23.

But the real crunch comes on Saturday, when his 800-strong ruling council delivers its verdict. Defeat for Mr Trimble would scupper the deal. It would also finish him as leader, a fate that befell his predecessor Brian Faulkner when he signed the ill-fated Sunningdale agreement in 1973.

William Thompson, MP for West Tyrone, who will campaign for a No vote in the referendum, predicted Mr Trimble's demise. "I don't really see in the end how he will survive because he will have split the party. I can't see people buying this agreement, and his position will be untenable."

Unionists are uneasy over proposals for cross-border institutions, an accelerated programme to release convicted terrorists, and fears that Sinn Féin members could be part of a new assembly without any IRA guns being handed over.

And uneasy about a lot more besides, and that is putting it very mildly indeed in bourgeois news-speak written by utterly unimaginative hacks who haven't the faintest grasp of history being made.

For this is not just the end of this illegitimate dictatorial colonial paradise for the gerrymandering Orange bourgeoisie who will now have far less guaranteed protection for the unchallengeable permanent rule which they relied upon previously (see below). This is also the shattering of the ages-old British imperialist mythology and dreams.

British imperialism has been soundly routed yet again. Not only does the sun now no longer 'never set' on the British Empire. With the dismantling of this final internally-contested colony in Ireland, it can now be stated that the sun no longer ever even rises on the British Empire any more, - anywhere (meaning the bully-boy Empire where the natives required periodically repressing to 'let them know their place'. Not in the Occupied Zone of Ireland any more.)

Trimble can boast all he likes about 'the Union being preserved', but it isn't so. Temporarily, 'Northern Ireland' was always going to continue for a while as transitional new arrangements for Ireland get under way, but British citizenship is all that is being preserved (for those that want it), - which was always guaranteed anyway. "The territory of Northern Ireland as an inalienable part of Britain" is no more.

The six counties ripped out of Ireland at bayonet point in 1921 and run thereafter by an Orange-colonial dictatorship will now increasingly come under joint rule by Unionists and Irish in the local assembly, by Belfast and Dublin as far as the extensive new cross-border developments are concerned, and by Dublin and London on all matters of supreme legislative authority, - as the Agreement itself makes abundantly clear:

Democratic institutions in Northern Ireland

A democratically elected assembly in Northern Ireland capable of exercising executive and legislative authority. It will be subject to checks and balances to ensure unionists cannot dominate nationalists, as they did in the previous Stormont parliament until it was abolished in 1972.

A 108-member assembly will be elected by PR (STV) from existing Westminster constituencies. The assembly will exercise full legislative and executive authority in those matters currently under the remit of the six departments of the Northern Ireland Office. Operating where appropriate on a cross-community basis, it will be the prime source of authority in respect of all devolved responsibilities. There will be safeguards to ensure that all sections of the community share power.

Key decisions requiring cross-community support will be designated in advance, including election of the chair of the assembly, the First Minister and Deputy First Minister, standing orders and budget allocations.

The chair and deputy chair of the assembly will be elected on a cross-community basis. There will be a committee for each of the main executive functions of the Northern Ireland Administration. The chairs and deputy chairs of the assembly committees will be allocated proportionally. Membership of the committees will be in broad proportion to party strengths.

The First Minister and Deputy First Minister shall be jointly elected into office by the assembly voting on a cross-community basis.

Disputes between the committee and assembly over legislative competence will be decided by the courts. The assembly will meet first to decide its standing orders and working practices and prepare for the effective functioning of the assembly, the British-Irish Council and the North/South Ministerial

Council.

North/South ministerial council

A forum for ministers from Dublin and Belfast to promote joint policy-making with the assembly. It will develop consultation, co-operation and action within the island of Ireland — including through implementation on an all-island and cross-border basis — on matters of mutual interest.

All Council decisions to be by agreement between the two sides. Northern Ireland to be represented by the First Minister, Deputy First Minister and any relevant ministers, the Irish Government by the Taoiseach and relevant ministers.

The Council to meet in different formats: (i) in plenary format twice a year, with Northern Ireland representation led by the First Minister and Deputy First Minister and the Irish Government led by the Taoiseach; (ii) in specific sectoral formats on a regular and frequent basis with each side represented by the appropriate minister, (iii) in an appropriate format to consider institutional or cross-sectoral matters.

As soon as practically possible after elections to the assembly, inaugural meetings will take place of the three strands' new institutions. All three will meet regularly and frequently during the period between the elections to the assembly, and the transfer of powers to the assembly.

British-Irish Intergovernmental Conference

There will be a new British-Irish Agreement dealing with the totality of relationships. It will establish a standing British-Irish Intergovernmental Conference, which will subsume both the Anglo-Irish Intergovernmental Council and the Intergovernmental Conference established under the 1985 Agreement.

The Conference also will address the areas of rights, justice, prisons and policing in Northern Ireland (unless and until responsibility is devolved to a Northern Ireland administration) and will intensify co-operation between the two governments on the all-island or cross-border aspects of these matters.

In recognition of the Irish government's special interest in Northern Ireland and of the extent to which issues of mutual concern arise in relation to Northern Ireland, there will be regular and frequent meetings of the Conference concerned with non-devolved Northern Ireland matters, on which the Irish Government may put forward views and proposals.

It is accepted that all of the institutional and constitutional arrangements — an assembly in Northern Ireland, a North-South Ministerial Council, implementation bodies, a British-Irish Council and a British-Irish Intergovernmental Conference and any amendments to British Acts of Parliament and the Constitution of Ireland — are interlocking and interdependent and that in particular the functioning of the assembly and the North/South Council are so closely inter-related that the success of each depends on that of the other.

Policing and Justice

1: The participants recognise that policing is a central issue in any society. They equally recognise that Northern Ireland's history of deep divisions has made it highly emotive, with great hurt suffered and sacrifices made by many individuals and their families, including those in the RUC and other public servants. They believe that the agreement provides the opportunity for a new beginning to policing in Northern Ireland with a police service capable of attracting and sustaining support from the community as a whole.

2: They consider that this opportunity should inform and underpin the development of a police service representative in terms of the make-up of the community as a whole and which, in a peaceful environment, should be routinely unarmed.

3: An independent commission will be established to make recommendations for future policing arrangements in Northern Ireland.

Trimble's other boast of establishing the principle of consent is just mischievous nonsense. In the first place, there has never existed any realistic programme for bulldozing the colonist community into the Irish Republic without any consultations and negotiations at all. The idea of paying the Unionists back for their own past tyranny by such ruthlessness might please children's adventure book notions of comeuppance and justice, but more than one million utterly hostile (and armed and dangerous) Unionists in an all-island population of only 4 million would seem like a daft recipe for just more endless aggro, — IF the ending of the British colony could be negotiated in any other way.

Thus the more consent which can be wrung out of the disillusioned and demoralised parts of the Unionist community, the better it will be for the future all-island development of the new Ireland.

Secondly, the Unionist diehards' real point about 'consent' was in fact their determination to continue a **veto on any change whatever** to the colonial status quo they have enjoyed behind a police-military dictatorship since 1921. If they did not want any change, then there ought not to be any change. That is the foul nonsense the Unionists used to mean by 'consent'. And it has been utterly obliterated.

In fact, the boot is now on the other foot entirely. It is the Irish nationalist interests in the Occupied Zone who now hold the veto. If the Unionists do not cooperate sensibly with the new all-Ireland developments under

the North-South ministerial council, then all activities in the assembly (where the Unionists will temporarily hold a majority, albeit only exercisable with at least 40% minority consent), — will come to a complete standstill.

Thus it is the nationalists who have the 'consent' veto, and in fact a double one.

And it is all of this which clearly made Trimble's party the nervous losers throughout the final negotiations, — threatening to walk out, saying they could not touch the Agreement with a barge pole, and finally splitting anyway when no significant changes were made. A lot of lying disinformation has been put out about Trimble's supposedly successful last-ditch intransigence which hack brain-drivel implied had won the Unionists huge last-minute concessions.

A more sober reading of the capitalist-press admissions shows this to be exaggerated nonsense:

EARLY on Friday morning, the SDLP and the Ulster Unionists went into a long session to try to resolve their dispute over the nature of the assembly.

They ended with a deal: the North-South body would be enacted by legislation in the Dail and Westminster. Between the time it was elected in June and started to sit, a shadow, assembly in conjunction with the Irish government would agree six areas; where powers could be devolved to the new North-South bodies.

The Irish believe they neutralised a potential unionist veto by the proviso that, if six cross-border bodies were not established, the assembly would not be allowed to function. It seemed like the last stumbling block. Hume returned to the SDLP to be hugged by his comrades, and fell asleep.

There was a mood of celebration. Blair was informed at 5am that the deal was coming together. President Clinton was kept in touch by Mitchell. Yet by lunchtime on Friday, with the broadcasters predicting a signing ceremony by 7am, the euphoria slid away. The word 'hitch' was heard. John Hunter, a Trimble aide, emerged from Castle Buildings looking gloomy. "The party is mixed about this document," he said.

The 30-strong UUP delegation met to look at the final text. They faced the trauma of taking the plunge to end 30 years of conflict. John Taylor, who had his jaw ripped apart by IRA bullets, opened the two-hour meeting by saying he had 16 points of disagreement. Then the Lagan Valley MP Jeffrey Donaldson weighed in. He did not like the deal on decommissioning of terrorist weapons, or the promise to release IRA prisoners within two years.

Trimble spoke to Blair twice on the phone and took some of his most senior negotiators at 3.20pm to see Blair again. He asked what would happen if any office holder in the as-

sembly had links with a group still indulging in violence. The Prime Minister refused to offer any more amendments. 'This is what is going into the plenary and this is it,' he said. 'If we renegotiate on one front, the nationalists will renegotiate on another.'

Even Alastair Campbell, Blair's press secretary, pleaded with Trimble: 'If you don't accept this document, we will all be crucified. People will not understand.' It was close to a bust-up.

According Reg Empey, one of Trimble's closest confidants, the UUP were five minutes from walking out when Northern Ireland Office officials shoved a copy of a letter from Blair into his hands.

The letter reassured Trimble on two critical points: that politicians connected with paramilitary organisations which refused to hand over weapons would not hold office in any Northern Ireland government; and that, in the British Government's view, the process of decommissioning would have to begin immediately after the assembly came into being in June.

The letter was a tactical triumph for Blair. It enabled Trimble to outflank his opponents. Armed with the letter, he acted decisively and urged his party to accept the deal.

Contrary to media reports, this intervention by Blair saved the day, not the subsequent telephone call by Clinton at about 4.15pm. Blair asked Clinton to make the calls to the key leaders, including Trimble. As Mitchell explained, Clinton is a persuasive guy. He told Trimble: 'From where I am sitting people simply will not understand if this deal does not go through now.' If the unionist leader's backbone needed stiffening, Clinton helped.

Inside the plenary session Mitchell asked each of the parties in turn if they agreed with the terms in the document. All but two gave it their full endorsement.

Trimble said the UUP accepted it but he would have to report to his party's executive.

Then the propaganda battle between the parties began in earnest. Trimble, who was flanked by only one MP, Cecil Walker, insisted it had been a good day for the Union, before attacking 'the squalid dirty war of Sinn Féin'.

But Trimble's propaganda antics and the support the capitalist press gave him only fooled the most gullible.

The smaller print of the bourgeois coverage admitted more of the truth, and Trimble's own Unionist constituency is making little secret of how crushed and humiliated it feels:

Mr Trimble is fighting not just an internal party political battle: he is fighting for a deal that will change relationships within Northern Ireland and change fundamentally the nature of Unionism.

For senior Ulster Unionists who gathered at their Belfast headquarters at the weekend there were many reminders of the party's long

history. Inside the building, topped with a battered Union Flag, are posters, portraits and leaflets from election campaigns during the Troubles and back to Sir Edward Carson early this century.

The theme has been constant resistance to involvement with the Irish Republic. That looks set to change.

The MP for Lagan Valley, Jeffrey Donaldson, only 35 but tipped as the next leader, is manoeuvring to replace him, distancing himself from the settlement and positioning himself as a bridge between Mr Trimble and the hardliners. Looking distinctly unhappy as Saturday's meeting broke up, the MP said he intended going on holiday for the remainder of the week. Asked if he supported the hardliners, he said: "I am my own man."

Unionist history is full of failed and deposed leaders. Among the more recent Terence O'Neill, James Chichester Clark and Brian Faulkner. Willie Thompson, the hardline MP for West Tyrone, one of those who will work for a No vote in next month's referendum, said Mr Trimble's position was not as strong as it used to be. Willie Ross, the equally hardline MP for Londonderry East, opposed going into the peace talks and has seen nothing emerge to change his opinion.

Other dissident MPs include Roy Beggs, Clifford Forsythe and, possibly, the Rev Martin Smyth.

Mr Paisley and his party, frequently written off but commanding widespread support in the Protestant community in last year's general election, will be appealing

to the emotions of Unionists.

Outside the Ulster Unionist Party headquarters on Saturday a small group of protesters, some claiming to be disillusioned Unionists and some DUP sympathisers, shouted "sell-out" as the MPs, councillors and other senior figures left the building, but cheered MPs such as Mr Donaldson, Mr Thompson and Mr Ross.

One of the protesters, Paul Ferguson, aged 25 from Belfast, studying law at King's College, London, insisted he was not a member of any party but felt so strongly about the settlement he had gone along to register his support of the dissident Ulster Unionist MPs.

He felt let down by Mr Trimble: "We rejected Sunningdale, the *Downing Street declaration*, the *Framework Document* and the Anglo-

Irish Agreement and we have ended up with a worse agreement.

"We now have a de facto all-Ireland parliament in which the Unionists are entrenched as a minority." A more extreme, but hardly surprising reaction, came from a flute band, the West Belfast Shankill Protestant Boys' Club, marching only a block away. One of the band members said he would vote No in the referendum. His arms tattooed with "True Blue" and "United We Stand", he said: "The loyalist people have two choices: surrender or fight back."

He predicted that the Loyalist Volunteer Force, the paramilitary group that has not accepted the ceasefire, "will find quite a lot of support in the Unionist community".

But all such threats of renewed 'loyalist' violence sound mostly



A 'lift' — an army snatch squad arrests

like demoralised despair. British imperialist paralysis, stubbornness, and decrepitude has been the key to Unionist intransigence, and that has now been broken for ever by the masterly Sinn Féin political organisation and diplomatic fight, and by the unbeatable armed guerrilla war by the IRA, – in its final years blasting Britain's major cities at a totally unacceptable cost in terms of damage, humiliation, and lost prestige and business confidence. Blair had to agree.

The bourgeois Orange ruling class seem to be taking their cue from London too, leaving the Unionist firebrands, and the shamefaced sour losers alike, out on a limb:

Hardly the stuff of revolt. No shouts of sell-out, no placards accusing David Trimble of betraying the Union, but then that's not their style. This is Northern Ireland's so-called Gold Coast, the leafy wonderland north of Belfast where rich Protestants (and some Catholics) reside, unassailed by decades of sectarian violence.

They have done well out of the Union, some even out of the Troubles. Civil servants, judges, doctors, barristers and business people earn London salaries where the cost of living is among the lowest in the UK.

The deal triggered an emotional rollercoaster of reaction, from euphoria to trepidation and suspicion, but few predicted indifference, boredom even.

But how they react to the agreement is crucial. Despite deriding the Democratic Unionist Party leader Ian Paisley as a vulgar redneck, many could vote No in May's referendum, figuring a deal could grease the slope to a united Ireland and offer little in exchange: they have no sons in prison, no army house searches, no fear of gunmen spraying their pub.

"You'll make us out to be white South Africans, afraid of losing privileges when the blacks get a look in," said one Cyprus-tanned golf club member, who asked not to be named. "If the referendum was today it would get through 60-40, no problem. But in six weeks it could be different. People will have time to stop and wonder do they really want to go through with a heroic gesture."

Five miles away at Bangor Golf Club, more Argyle than cashmere but definitely Gold Coast, bar conversation turns cynical.

"Once the politicians take their seats [in the new assembly] they'll rake it in. Another 24 grand, easy. Add it all up and Blair wouldn't be getting as much." No one challenges the claims or the tone.

In spite of all this evidence that the old colonial regime is indeed on its way out for good, – quite like Smith's Rhodesian colonial supremacists and De Klerk's South African colonial supremacists beforehand, – some bourgeois ideological idiocy is still trying to insist that it is Sinn

Féin/IRA who have given up, and that the nationalists gave way on every contentious issue, such as 'abandoning the Irish constitutional claim to the occupied territory in the north', etc.

This is more academic gibberish, particularly favoured by the Trot petty bourgeoisie. Every contested negotiating position was a win for the nationalists, since every single change is an advance on the previous colonial-dictatorship status quo which has prevailed since 1921. And the point about the redrafting of the Irish Constitution to include the notion of reunification of Ireland by consent is utterly irrelevant. The Green Tory guardians of the Irish Constitution have done nothing to finally drive out British imperialism and end the colonial status of the north. It has been the entire triumph of Sinn Féin and the IRA. The Irish Constitution has played no part, and rewording it to embrace 'consent reunification' makes no difference to anything. It is purely academic.

Again, the capitalist press's own score of 'points won and lost', – all false because **all** the changes are solely a victory for nationalism, – nevertheless fails to hide the whole broad picture of British colonial retreat:

Britain has agreed to repeal the Government of Ireland Act 1920. And it has agreed to pass legislation allowing the Secretary of State to be empowered to hold further referendums on Northern Ireland every seven years if it appears likely to him or her that a majority of those voting would express a wish that Northern Ireland should cease to be part of the UK and form part of a united Ireland!

Who gave ground?

- Long-promised pledge by Dublin delivered in concession to unionist demands.

Northern Ireland assembly

Key points

Elections to a 108-strong assembly will be held in June. Local politicians will exercise executive and legislative powers over matters within the responsibility of the NI government departments (Finance and Personnel, Economic Development, Education, Health and Social Services, Environment and Agriculture). It will not have tax-raising powers. Key decisions to be taken by a majority of both communities in the assembly – so-called 'parallel consent'.

The assembly will be run by a first minister, deputy minister and up to 10 other ministers overseeing departments.

Who gave ground?

- Unionists have won an assembly but ceded ground by agreeing to a power-sharing executive and the system of 'parallel consent', ensuring a nationalist veto. David Trimble, who wanted a more dif-

fuse committee structure, now has to share power with Gerry Adams.

North-South bodies

Key points

A North-South body will be created, bringing together those with executive authority in Belfast and Dublin to exchange information, consult and co-operate. Those attending the council for north and south remain accountable to the assembly and the Irish parliament.

Who gave ground?

- The Unionists claim victory since the body is accountable to the assembly, but the nationalists say it has an executive, and therefore has independent powers. Any attempt to frustrate the North-South body will lead to the assembly being prevented from functioning by the British Government.

Human Rights

Key points

The British Government will incorporate the European Convention on Human Rights, set up a new Human Rights Commission and a powerful Equality Commission replacing the current disparate equality bodies in Northern Ireland. A separate Bill of Rights for Northern Ireland will be considered.

The British Government will also encourage the use of Gaelic where there is demand. The use of Orange symbols in public institutions, such as the RUC, will be ended, replaced by symbols that promote mutual respect.

The Government will scale down security as appropriate whilst an independent Commission with foreign representation will report by next summer on a new police structure. Finally, the British Government intends that all prisoners linked to an organisation on ceasefire will be released within two years of a scheme being enacted at Westminster by June this year.

Who gave ground?

- A huge victory for the nationalist equality agenda, although unionist paramilitaries will benefit.

Decommissioning

Key points

All participants reaffirm their commitment to 'use their influence' to achieve total decommissioning within two years of the agreement being accepted in referendums. Decommissioning schemes will be available from June.

Who gave ground?

- Sinn Féin will be able to take seats in the Assembly without decommissioning occurring. Previously the British Government had insisted on decommissioning before and during the talks process itself.

Unabashed, Trot defeatism relentlessly ploughs on insisting that 'all-powerful' imperialism has forced IRA/Sinn Féin to give up the fight. The CPGB *Weekly Worker* report presents the entire historic change as just the achievement of Mitchell, Clinton, Blair, and Ahem. Sinn Féin

and the IRA apparently have had nothing to do with it, incredibly enough:

For anyone who doubts the imperialist sincerity of the British government, just take a stroll around the castle buildings at Stormont or the government quarters in Dublin. British and Irish officials are burning the midnight oil. The current level of diplomatic activity has been described as "feverish".

"More work has been done in the past week than in the previous umpteen months." Tony Blair is now in Belfast to help the final push for 'peace'.

It has not been an easy ride for Mitchell or the forces of imperialism. The 'peace' process is inherently volatile. Crisis, setbacks and delays can surface at any time. This is clear. Hardly surprisingly, the US senator has been less than happy with the conduct over recent days of Blair and Bertie Ahern, the Irish prime minister. It requires some very deft manoeuvring on behalf of the British and Irish governments. Just one clumsy move there, one awkward or badly formulated phrase here, and perhaps.

But bit by bit, talk by talk, deal by deal, the forces of revolutionary nationalism – and those of counter-revolutionary loyalism – are being drawn into the diplomatic net. After years of hardship and frustration, the carrot being dangled by Mitchell and his backers might prove too hard to refuse. Lord Alderdice of the 'nonsectarian', pro-union Alliance Party summed up the collective desires of the pro-imperialist bourgeoisie in Northern Ireland: "Not only are most of the outline agreed, most of the detail is too. We are looking to get there. It's looking good". Even David Trimble sounded upbeat and positive.

Many are dubbing the current negotiations 'Sunningdale II'.

However, the differences far outnumber the similarities. The general world situation has changed out of virtually all recognition. The ignoble collapse of the 'socialist bloc' left only one superpower on the map – US imperialism. Naturally, the vastly increased clout of American imperialism narrowed the scope for manoeuvre for national liberation movements. Hence the defeat or – usually – the integration of revolutionary nationalist organisations (ANC, PLO, etc) into the imperialist framework. Nelson Mandela and Yasser Arafat are now loyal accomplices to the imperialists' plans and schemes.

Crucially, at Sunningdale the paramilitary forces were on the outside, frowning and scowling in. Now they are talking from the inside.

Sinn Féin/IRA might well acquiesce to an imperialist-driven deal. The pressure is immense.

As a petty bourgeois nationalist movement it is inevitably pulled between the rock of guerrillaism and the hard place of secretive, back-handed diplomacy with the imperialists – with the oppressed masses acting as pawns.

As part of the overall imperialist package, a snap referendum will be held on April 23 both north and south, with elections to the assembly this summer. The Blairite passion for rule by referendum – i.e., from above – continues.

This is all the most insulting counter-revolutionary idiocy, sneered out by cringing petty-bourgeois anti-communists, whose purely academic 'revolutionary' posturing only gets its own conceited satisfaction out of carping at all serious anti-imperialist struggles in the world, past and present.

The imperialist input has been solely to authorise acknowledgement of the national-

liberation victory and put as much propaganda spin as possible on the developments to play down the revolutionary defeat of British colonialism, especially its armed guerrilla-war aspects by a determined theoretically-astute minority movement.

The long-drawn-out decline of British imperialism, – self-deluding, sclerotic, and paralysed, – has caused a huge embarrassing problem for world monopoly-capitalism by getting embroiled in a brutal but failed colonial war against the Irish national-liberation movement. Having accepted defeat finally, world imperialism was on hand to help Britain quieten the outraged colonial die-hards, and cover up the message of the armed revolutionary 'terrorist' triumph as best possible, – for the sake of what little of the tottering 'New World Order' is still in place, besieged by uncontrollable world imperialist economic crisis and potentially catastrophic inter-imperialist trade-war, upheavals, to be followed for certain by devastating slump and massive revolutionary unrest everywhere.

Sinn Féin/IRA triumph on course for completion in a new Ireland. The humiliation for 'unionism' cannot be hidden. Only sly Trot disinformation and revisionist muddle-headedness can mimic Blair's nonsense and claim an imperialist victory. A nationalist defeat for imperialism can play a key historical role. Fake-'left' perspectives on the non-existent 'New World Order' are turning to gobbledegook. Economic collapse is destroying all bourgeois ideology. Build Leninism.

[EPSR No 947 21-04-98]

A further full week of bourgeois ideological confusion to distort the meaning of the new agreement on Ireland has only bamboozled the most backward (plus the revisionists and the Trotskyites, of course).

The deal is all about convincing mainstream 'unionism' that the colonial-domination game is up once and for all. The 'constitutional' barriers towards the reunification of Ireland must come down, and the Irish nationalist half of the population within the colony's gerrymandered boundaries must now be allowed full voice on the six

Bourgeois nationalist achievements are obviously not the final solution against imperialist crisis, – neither in Palestine, South Africa, or Ireland. But no one ever said they were, – merely an inevitable stage in those cases on the way towards a proletarian socialist revolutionary ultimate settlement of accounts with decaying imperialist domination and economic exploitation, – everywhere.

But only posturing counter-revolutionaries could fail to honour the tremendous achievements of national-liberation struggles when they occur, as in Ireland now. And the greatest value of all from this long-inevitable victory (as the *EPS Review* has explained and chronicled for 18 years) is the emancipation at last of the British working class from being corrupted partners in ongoing colonial repression of Ireland, which would have guaranteed for eternity their own continued repression and exploitation. Socialism can now move forward in Ireland and Britain. Build Leninism. Royston Bull

counties future.

Development of the area's economic, social, political, and constitutional interests must henceforth be by all-community consensus, replacing the bigoted Orange dictatorship of the past, – and all measures **must** be subject to harmonisation with developments in the south in all key aspects of society.

If the release of all the prisoners-of-war from the national-liberation struggle plus the complete restructuring of the police and the judiciary does, along with all the other changes, help to replace armed

conflict and reduce sectarian violence, then the massively security-checked border could soon disappear completely, extensively undermined, as it already has been by years of official inter-state relationships and commerce, and by even more local marketing needs and influences.

In these completely transformed circumstances for Ireland, a steady retreat in the north from the mentality of historically-condemned colonialism, plus relentless demographic trends in favour of the nationalist population, could see it making sense **universally**, before much longer, to continue taking harmonisation all the way to complete reunification of the formerly foully and catastrophically partitioned Ireland.

The Sinn Féin/IRA national-liberation struggle, the important catalyst for this enormous upheaval, will almost certainly fully support and participate in these great changes, and exert growing influence to see that they become an ongoing process, – its republican-socialist ideals notwithstanding.

Only Trotskyite and revisionist sectarianism fails hopelessly to grasp the simple fact that although it is only a bourgeois-state rapprochement which is taking place in order to bury the scandal of defeated and disgraced British colonialism in Ireland, these enforced steps towards final full self-determination for the Irish (i.e. reunification) nevertheless mark a colossally important victory for a guerrilla war revolution led by a convinced handful, represent a humiliating defeat for imperialism, and contain enormous opportunity and significance for the struggle for socialism in Britain itself.

First, however, the propaganda war currently raging to hide the message of the tremendous Sinn Féin/IRA victory. This has conferred unlikely sainthood on David Trimble, mainstream 'Unionist' leader, – surely one of the most unpleasant, bigoted, and narrow-minded specimens that British colonialism has ever produced.

Trimble has been required to play the role taken previously in history by Ian Smith, Le Klerk, and the like, – graceless, snarling, cocky, posturing **loser**, – bribed heavily to as best possible try to put a brave smile on the face of imperialist humiliation at the hands of mass revolutionary struggle.

Forget the nonsense about "the Union is safe". Consult Paisley & Co on that explosive

setback. The 'union' is bugged, and it will now never be put back together again in its classic British-colonial form.

Trimble's game is to put as much dignity as possible into the mainstream 'unionist' bourgeoisie's acceptance of a vastly reduced political role, officially regarded, from the emotional heights of old-style colonialism, – "A British Protestant land for a British Protestant people. No surrender, Never," etc.; – and to act as a lightning rod to catch as much flak as possible directed by diehard 'unionists' against the 'honour' of Western imperialist world domination. With Trimble to denounce and jeer at, Paisley will anticipatedly feel less need to ridicule the general hypocritical cowardice and opportunism of the imperialist system itself, crushing 'terrorism' brutally when it suits it in one place, but giving in to it slyly in another place when brutality, and bribery, and ruthless self-interest no longer can command any worthwhile victory, or where the threat of costly defeat soars too dangerously. Trimble had to front for a much-humbled colonial-bourgeois ruling class which had decided to accept its imperialist mentors' offer of half-a-loaf where once it had controlled all the bread and all the bread-making.

Very feebly, the British capitalist press itself grasped and recorded just fragments of the 'unionist' pain and transformation, – hiding it for the most part because it reflects the British bourgeoisie's own pain and humiliation in having been **forced** by Sinn Féin/IRA into finally accepting that massive changes were now inevitable in the whole government of Ireland, effectively eliminating its 'British' province.

The 'unionist' debacle was written of thus:

A change took place at the weekend, more significant than has yet been realised, the biggest since the Ulster Unionist Party was founded early this century. The vote of its ruling council was more than just a vote of confidence in their leader David Trimble, who had negotiated the political settlement at Stormont: it was a break with the party's inglorious past.

Throughout their history, the Ulster Unionists have defined themselves in a solely negative way: total opposition to involvement with the Irish Republic. The weekend vote was for a settlement which will see Unionists actively engage with ministers from Dublin.

The Unionist community is divided. Mr Paisley's rival but smaller Democratic Unionist Party will campaign ferociously against and Mr Trimble's own party is split with half his MPs opposed to the settle-

ment. If the party is to survive the demographic change that 30 years from now could see Catholics outnumber Protestants in Northern Ireland, it has to change.

The 750 members of the council voted on a motion to back Mr Trimble's negotiation of the peace settlement. But they were also voting, and they knew it, on whether to transform their party from the old one associated with bigotry and opposition to Dublin to a new one prepared to reach an accommodation with their nationalist neighbours in Northern Ireland and with the Irish Republic.

At 2.40 pm, the old Unionist Party was voted away.

Two sets of protesters lined the entrance. They looked identical, both waving Union flags and the Red Hand of Ulster. Both were drawn mainly from the small parties linked with the loyalist paramilitaries, some being men who had been convicted of sectarian killings.

One side shouted support while the other chanted abuse. "Gerry Adams and the Pope support Trimble," one of the latter group shouted.

Inside the ballroom, Mr Trimble got a standing ovation on entry from two-thirds of those present, while the remainder slowly and grudgingly also rose to their feet. He was heckled at various points in his speech.

It marked a historic turning point for the party, which is remodelling itself and is discarding much of its old "No surrender" baggage.

Amendment tabled by Willie Ross and the Rev Martin Smyth, two of the five UUP MPs opposed to the agreement, was defeated 515-238. Several UUP dissenters said they would still vote No in the referendum and William Thompson, the West Tyrone MP, said he would not rule out joining the Rev Ian Paisley's campaign against the agreement.

Scores of rival loyalists had to be kept apart by RUC officers outside the Europa hotel before the meeting. An angry group against the agreement heckled delegates and were in turn heckled by members of the Ulster Democratic Party, the UDA terrorist group's political wing.

There are signs that the split in the UUP will be mirrored by one within the Conservative Party. Its leader, William Hague, has not yet convinced some of the Right to accept more contentious parts of the deal.

Andrew Hunter, former chairman of the Tory backbench Northern Ireland committee, may campaign for a No vote in the referendum. He told *The Observer* that the prospect of loyalist and republican prisoners being freed within two years was 'morally unacceptable'.

David Wilshire, another backbench Tory who takes a close interest in Northern Ireland, denounced the agreement as 'another sell-out to the men of violence'.

Next week, Mr Trimble will embark on the next phase, entering into a broad "Yes" coalition to campaign in the referendum alongside the Alliance Party and John Hume's Catholic nationalist SDLP, a coalition that is in itself a testimony to the new-look Unionism.

As with the national-liberation

settlements in South Africa and Rhodesia (now Zimbabwe), one factor playing a part in the enforced scuttle by the British colonial community, was what were the best prospects to be hoped for out of the turmoil for ongoing commercial interests?

Trot and revisionist posturers sneer at this juncture, but entirely pointlessly. It is a nationalist revolution which is lowering colonial imperialism's colours in Ireland, – steps towards completing the full self-determination and reunification of Ireland.

The historical struggle there has not been remotely close to being a socialist revolution, and only complete muddleheads have suggested otherwise. Republican Sinn Féin clearly does have socialist aspirations, and an excellent understanding of such matters, with a huge revolutionary socialist potential at some stage. But that is for a period of the imperialist crisis yet to come.

At the present stage of British imperialist difficulties, what made sense in Ireland was to maximise the national-independence hostility to continued British colonial control. Against all the odds, this has been triumphantly accomplished. British rule has been thoroughly humiliated internationally, and suffered catastrophically costly damage internally. It has been **forced** to abandon its infamously failed and degenerate colony. This is a colossal victory for **all** anti-imperialist interests, everywhere, for all time. The ultra-'left' dilettantes' sneers reveal only their own irrelevant stupidity.

It is the best of several bad options which has helped decide British bourgeois interests in general (colonial ruling-class included) that surrendering to this agreement will at least give them some kind of commercial future, – as the capitalist press itself, again, has been totting up:

Five years ago gross domestic product per head in the Republic overtook that of the North: a symbolic reversal of fortune. Ireland earned itself the title of Celtic Tiger. This year the Republic became Europe's fastest-growing economy.

Politicians in London know that economic health is a most important inducement to Northern Ireland's politicians to give their full support to the peace agreement.

Cross-border authorities with executive powers could mean that the North will begin to share in the South's prosperity. Adam Ingram, Minister for Economic Development in the Northern Ireland Office, said that it was up to people to make something of the opportunity.

Last month he pointed to the small

rise in unemployment in February as evidence that Northern Ireland has economic challenges ahead.

He said: 'If we are to confront and overcome those challenges, we need stability. In simple terms, agreement means investment, jobs and prosperity – the alternative could mean the opposite.'

The province is now one of the most economically backward parts of Britain. A study by Jonathan Michie of Birkbeck College, London, and Maura Sheehan of Queen's University in Belfast suggests the North has most to gain from union with the South.

Michie said: 'Northern Ireland is totally out of step with the rest of Britain and isolated from Ireland, it is falling between two stools. It has not benefited from Ireland's prosperity, because there have been no cross-border bodies with executive powers.'

Cross-border bodies could implement economic policies on harmonising investment, taxation and infrastructure in order to spread economic prosperity northwards.

In the short term, Northern Ireland will need lots of help. Chancellor Gordon Brown is to announce new aid in addition to the existing subsidy. This amounts to £3.2 billion a year – more than £2,000 per person and a third of the province's income.

Half of this funds the policing of the conflict, which Michie argues would no longer be needed. The other half funds benefit payments.

Although 12,000 jobs, many security-related, depend on the conflict, the Department of Economic Development, says the boost to tourism from peace could create 20,000 jobs. Tourism benefited from each break in hostilities.

South of the border, the Industrial Development Agency points to rapid development since 1987. Wage agreements between bosses, unions and the government and improved infrastructure have helped win investment from computer firms Hewlett Packard and Intel, and the investment was worth £1.48bn and 4,000 jobs. A spokesman for IDA, Michael Flood, said: 'Each year breaks the previous year's record for foreign direct investment.'

Tourism soared by 67 per cent in Northern Ireland after the ceasefire was announced in 1995, according to the Department of Economic Development. The collapse of the ceasefire in February 1996 hit tourism immediately, but the number of holidaymakers is still above pre-ceasefire levels. Some studies predict that stability will mean 20,000 new jobs. Tourists made 1.43 million trips to Northern Ireland in 1996, spending £206m.

Tourists made 4.7 million trips to Ireland in 1996, and spent £1.25bn. The Irish tourist board estimates the industry is worth £2.1bn.

These joint all-Ireland interests are obviously expressed purely in free-market terms at the moment, which are coming under far worse clouds in due course (from the world imperialist crisis) than the local colonial-sectarian conflicts

have involved. But continued divisions from the national question, unresolved, could only ever cause unnecessary further complications for the future struggle for socialism anyway. So nothing whatever is lost by exploiting for now **all avenues** for maximising leverage on incompetent British imperialism to terminate its failed colony in Ireland.

To some extent also, rational economic investment (to the degree that imperialist investment has rationality within it) is in any case not only not harmful in itself but is obviously the historical basis for the development of the revolutionary proletariat anyway. Which all makes Trot sneer at nationalist political and constitutional advances, greased by commercial gain, even more irrelevant.

Sinn Féin, on the other hand, has shown enormous party discipline and maturity by continuing to stress the all-round advantages of a new-settlement peace-agreement for ending the liberation war, and by allowing the spotlight to fall on the internal 'Unionist' conflict as the essence of the painful historical change which imperialism must now impose on its own defeated side.

Still calmly responding to the endless propaganda provocations from the ignorant British capitalist media, Sinn Féin have insisted on a party-wide considered response to emphasise their much greater longterm ambitions for ultimately total Irish emancipation, – reunification and socialism, – while conveying their unruffled confidence all the while in the final outcome of what British imperialism had been forced to concede, plus their confidence about what even more important conclusions – these initial transitional arrangements will make possible.

Even the capitalist press, so relentlessly hostile to Sinn Féin's revolutionary historical triumph, could not avoid reflecting this calm assurance:

Mr Adams believed that it was possible to cherry-pick from the deal. He said: "I have always made it clear that while our goals and principles must not change, our strategic objectives, strategy and tactics must be constantly reviewed and rooted in objective reality.

"We will not be caged in, psyched out, intimidated, cajoled, patronised or bought off. We have our eye on the prize, the prize of freedom."

Mr Adams's closing remarks in Dublin last night were heavy with clues. He conceded the deal was no settlement, but said it could aid the next phase in the push for Irish unity: "It clearly can be transitional.

It clearly can be the basis for advancement. But the big challenge for us is how to make these advances.

"We need to assess our attitude to the assembly in the light of its relationship with the all-Ireland institutions and the whole package. Can we use all of this to advance our political goals?"

Mr Adams will argue that the dramatic switch in policy to take seats up in a partitionist body is necessary to allow Sinn Féin to play its part in the North-South bodies. It is also poised to overtake the nationalist SDLP and would then be a key player.

There were the odd voices of dissent during discussion, but it was little more than letting off steam. Sinn Féin stands on the brink of an historic leap.

Republican News, meanwhile, has carried on with restrained confirmation of the Agreement's crucial points for anti-imperialist progress:

Key points in the document include an assembly of 108 members, elected by PR from the existing 18 Westminster constituencies. It would have a Chair, a First Minister, a Deputy First Minister and up to ten Ministers with responsibility for the existing 110 departments.

These would be elected by the de Hondt system of PR from the 108 members, as an attempt to ensure proportionality. Those holding these executive offices would take a 'Pledge of Office' to carry out their duties in accordance with stated principles. In addition to the ministers, it is proposed to have committees with an advisory role and powers of scrutiny of legislation.

Those elected to Ministerial offices would be compelled by legislation to participate in cross border executive structures, a North/South Ministerial Council, 'participation... to be one of the essential responsibilities' of office.

The powers of such an assembly would not be immediate, a shadow period would serve to allow time to identify its work, with this task to be complete by October 1998.

A joint parliamentary forum would also be developed, while the creation of a 'Civic Forum' would allow for the participation of trade unions, community groups etc.

Under Constitutional Issues the talks document continues to set the 'right' to self-determination on the Island as a whole in the context of accepting that this right must be achieved and exercised with and subject to the agreement and consent of a majority of the people of Northern Ireland. Polls to test such a position cannot be held more frequently than every seven years.

While the Government of Ireland Act 1920 is being repealed,

the Irish Constitution will move from defining the nation in geographic terms to viewing it in terms of its people.

Where in one section of the agreement there is a 'recognition of the birthright of all the people of Northern Ireland to identify themselves and be accepted as Irish or British, or both...' Article 2 as amended would state that it is the 'entitlement and birthright of every person born in the island of Ireland, which includes its islands and seas, to be part of the Irish nation.'

Article 3 will now affirm the 'will of the Irish nation, in harmony and friendship, to unite all the people who share the territory of the island of Ireland' while 'recognising that a united Ireland shall be brought about only by peaceful means with the consent of a majority of the people, democratically expressed, in both jurisdictions in the island.' A second part of Article 3 will allow for the creation of institutions with executive powers and functions which 'may exercise powers and functions in respect of all or any part of the island.'

Mechanisms for the introduction of 'an accelerated programme for the release of prisoners, including transferred prisoners' would be introduced, with a fixed time review process setting release dates, and with any remaining 'qualifying' prisoners (that is, prisoners whose organisations are on ceasefire) to be released at the end of two years.

An independent commission on policing will be established, with the aim of delivering 'a fair and impartial system of justice to the community'. Such an approach would seek 'a police service that can enjoy widespread support from' and be seen 'as an integral part of the community as a whole.'

Demilitarisation including the removal of security installations, the removal of emergency powers and the Offences Against the State Act will occur, while the Agreement seeks the completion of decommissioning within 2 years of an agreement being reached.

The Irish language is to be given recognition, with the British pledged to 'take resolute action to promote the language', including such areas as education, consultation with the Irish speaking community and with the improvement of access to TnaG in the Six Counties.

The fake-'left' British petty-bourgeois press, on the other hand, has tied itself into all sorts of knots, – predicting failure for this peace agreement, or a complete sell-out by Sinn Féin/IRA; or a total triumph for imperialism. From the *Morning*

Star to the SWP these anti-Leninist armchair 'revolutionaries' have been boosting their own pathetic egos at the expense of Sinn Féin/IRA whose brilliant strategy has been utterly submerged in scarcely credible Trot and revisionist confusion.

Representing the smug 'best face' of both these anti-Marxist degeneracies, the *Weekly Worker* is once again a good barometer of muddleheadedness on the 'left', its laughable attempts to pose as 'theoreticians of the broader picture' coming particularly badly unstuck on this occasion.

After a classic impressionist opening, – taking formal imperialist congratulations to Dublin and London, – from Chirac, the Queen, and Clinton, – as 'proof' that the 'revolutionary situation' in the Six Counties has been "resolved negatively", this fraud CPGB boldly restates its current main historical perspective, – that 'imperialism has triumphed again', – in Ireland as everywhere else, – because it is now without challenge:

Easter's settlement must be set against the broad background of the US dominated New World Order and the associated period of reaction ushered in by the ignominious collapse of bureaucratic socialism in Eastern Europe and the USSR. Objectively bureaucratic socialism was the opposite of working class socialism. Despite that, not least because of mutually reinforcing cold war ideology, working class militants subjectively identified with it as a positive break with capitalism and a system of social organisation to be emulated.

That grand illusion of the 20th century has been utterly destroyed. But unfortunately not by the self-liberating activity of revolutionary proletarians. It is capital and its cult of the atomised family and the alienated individual consumer which stands triumphant as humanity psychologically prepares itself for the next millennium of the common era. Seemingly history has been thrown into reverse gear.

Ever since the 27th Congress of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union in February 1986, where Mikhail Gorbachev offered the US cooperation in dealing with what he cynically called "international hot spots" – i.e., revolutionary situations – imperialism has had a free hand to reassert its divine right to rule, rob and rape the planet. The New World Order was baptised in the blood sacrifice of 100,000 Iraqi soldiers. The 1992 Gulf War was used to send an unmistakable message – we are in the era of Americana Rex. Today, there being no rival superpower, the World Trade Organisation – an extension of Gatt and US hegemony – ruthlessly dictates economic policy over whole tracts of Africa, South America and Asia. Transnational corporations thereby enjoy unfettered access to national markets while millions are enslaved and impoverished through massive state debts. As to the USSR, it is only a history book memory – nostalgically mourned in Britain by Stalinites, Scargillites and Trotskyite defenders of so-called 'proletarian property forms'.

The robber capitalism of Russia, Kazakhstan, Azerbaijan, etc. gestated and emerged from within 'official communism'. Eastern Europe has likewise been transformed. Moreover it exists within the Nato sphere of influence and Poland, Hungary and the Czech Republic are being actively

readied for EU membership.

In step with each of these developments the capitalist order has been stabilised in the "international hot spots". Nicaragua, Angola, Mozambique, Namibia, Cambodia, Palestine, South Africa and now Northern Ireland have seen deals struck and the forces of revolutionary nationalism tamed or/and integrated into the machinery of state and government.

Besides the US dominated New World Order the Northern Ireland peace deal has to be understood in the context of Blair's drive to remake the UK constitution.

This make-believe fantasy has very little connection with reality.

Only after 1986, we are told, does imperialism "reassert its divine right to rule", – rob, and rape the planet". So what were the French doing butchering Algeria throughout the 1950s; what were the Americans doing for 10 years in the 1960s, dropping more devastation than was caused in the whole of World War II; what did Zionist imperialism inflict non-stop on the Palestinian people and neighbouring Arabs from 1948 onwards in six major wars; what was British colonial 'scorched-earth' policy doing to Malaysian villages in the late 1940s, and again to national-liberation movements in Kenya, Aden, Cyprus, Suez, etc, etc, well before 1986.???

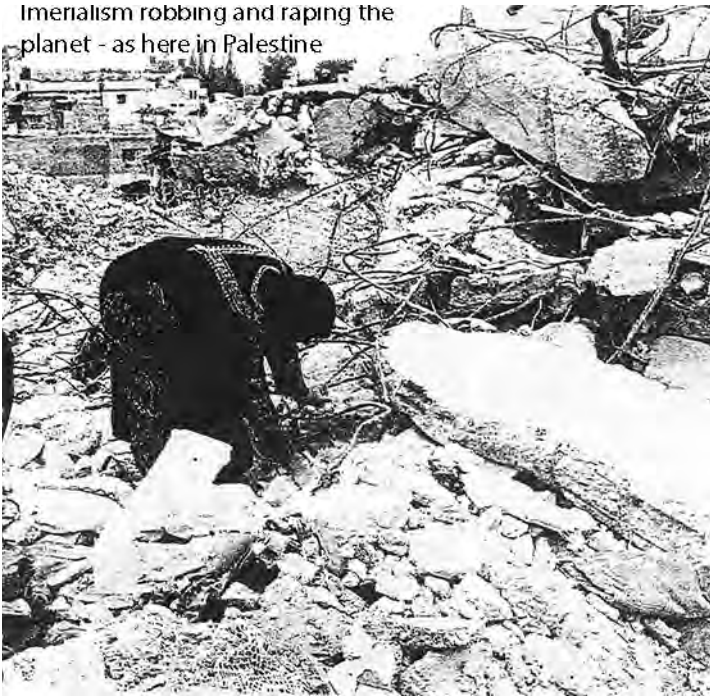
What imperialism was doing there, of course, – and in more than 200 other colonial wars, coups, police-actions, etc, etc, inflicted on the anti-imperialist struggles since 1945, – was continuing its never-ceased role to "rule, rob, and rape the planet".

This historical gibberish about a non-existent "post-1986 reassertion" is so as to justify two bits of further shamefaced nonsense.

One is the fact that these CPGB revisionist-Trot creeps liked nothing better up to the mid-1980s than to smugly boast themselves about being part of the "official world communist movement" which they used as their socialist right to talk down to all other 'communists' with utter contempt. Desperately wanting to hide their 'Stalinist' years, these opportunists have not only invented the Gorbachev betrayal as the all-time revelation of rotteness, but taken it further as 'proving' that there was never any socialism in the USSR in the first place.

This marks the second purpose of the 'fateful 1986' gibberish. By **now** stating that there never even was any socialism in the USSR, they hope to obliterate their own past 'Stalinist' mistakes completely, making awkward questions irrelevant about 'when had they had enough of Stalinism', and getting round

Imperialism robbing and raping the planet - as here in Palestine



the even more awkward question about exactly when and how is the historical 'mistake' of Stalinism to be characterised, and what should have been done about it? Etc.?

This *Weekly Worker* way out is the laziest philistinism, – historically worthless, intellectually bankrupt, and totally dishonest too.

Far from just a 'book memory', these "so-called proletarian property forms" were not only the most important historical reality ever, but they totally **dominated** all bourgeois ideological concerns **throughout** the century, **and still do**.

Anti-communist propaganda and anti-Soviet lies and disinformation still obliterates all sensible investigation of the actual achievements of Soviet history, and their colossal impact on the whole shape of this century.

The whole political-fascist character of the 1930s inter-imperialist arms race was governed by Western fear of the Soviet proletarian-dictatorship property forms. The entire shape of the second great inter-imperialist world war (WWII), the most devastating event in all human history, was controlled by the role the USSR played. The very existence of the postwar movement for colonial freedom, which dismantled every physical Western empire which had hitherto commanded three quarters of the planet, depended on the power, influence, and example of the Soviet workers state and then soon after of the Chinese workers state, both completely dependent for their role on their proletarian-dictatorship forms of property.

To this day, Cuba remains an

object of quite astonishing US imperialist fear, hatred, lies, sabotage, and criminal blockade **solely** because of the example its proletarian-dictatorship property forms hold up to the rest of Latin America, shafted relentlessly by US-dominated capitalism.

China is vilified mercilessly by still the overwhelming majority of international bourgeois propaganda. North Korea is universally despised and ridiculed with endless lying propaganda just because of its planned socialist order.

Any serious-minded worker can work out what the monopoly-capitalist system fears so much about workers-state property. Fake-'left' opportunists, on the other hand, completely swallow bourgeois imperialism's own propaganda about the free-market system's 'invincible superiority', and hence lazily swallow every morsel of dirty anti-communist propaganda thereafter, – e.g. 'Shostakovitch was either crap or a complete anti-communist; Prokofiev was either complete crap or a total anti-communist; Soviet space achievements were either complete crap or the work of total anti-communists; the Red Army was either complete crap or run by complete anti-communists; Soviet mass literacy was either complete crap or run by anti-communists; Soviet higher education and science was either non-existent or inspired solely by anti-communism; Soviet mass cinema-going, theatre-going, concert-going, and book-reading was either non-existent or only took place at gun-point; the world's first free health-service and universally-guaranteed basic living standards

were either entirely imaginary or people were forced to accept them by universal KGB torture; etc, etc, etc.

Long-gestating leadership theoretical bankruptcy caused the self-liquidation of the Soviet workers state, not any lack of reality about its proletarian-dictatorship property forms, – as all the Trots and revisionists should be more aware of than anyone else since they all participated in it for so long (i.e. the ex-Stalinist Trots).

And to connect the present robber-capitalism to the Soviet workers-state **system** is criminally irresponsible distortion from so-called 'Marxist-Leninists' and 'communists'. Maybe as many as 20,000 individual former Communist Party members could now be named as current robber-capitalist barons, maybe only 2,000, who knows? But that would still leave 20 **million** former Communist Party members, who used to keep the Soviet state motivated and running successfully, who have remained ordinary exploited workers, – or 999 communists who grabbed nothing out of the leadership theoretical debacle, for every one that managed to individually flourish under the capitalist counter-revolution which swept in as soon as Gorbachevism began to dismantle the dictatorship of the proletariat (to the cheers of the idiot Trots and revisionists in the West).

There has been no great imperialist resurgence. Its 'right to rule, rob, and rape the planet' never went away. This degenerate free-market system has temporarily reclaimed state-power in East Europe, that is all, and it is making an appalling mess of things there too, – so much so that despite a non-stop avalanche of anti-communist propaganda saturating Russia since 1991, it is to the leadership of the Communist Party, dull as it is, that most ordinary voters now turn because it is associated with "proletarian property forms", which were the basis for the far more serious existence and far more worthwhile perspectives under the USSR.

These fake-'lefts' are shallow and unconfident petty-bourgeois opportunists who have actually started to believe capitalism's propaganda against workers-state property forms and not just bourgeois ideology's anti-Stalinist hysteria.

'Bureaucratic socialism' (i.e. Soviet planned economic, diplomatic, political, and social achievements) have all been "the grand illusion of the 20th century" and have been completely

got the better of by "capital and its cult of the atomised family and the alienated individual consumer" who all now "stand triumphant". "History has been thrown into reverse gear".

This renegade scuttle into the arms of anti-communism is following a similar liquidationist path to all earlier generations of revisionists.

[...]Most bizarrely of all, these fake-'lefts' don't even believe their own pro-imperialist propaganda. Having pretended that Blair has 'pacified' the anti-imperialist movement in Ireland, hanging onto Washington's 'New World Order' coat-tails, these anti-theory opportunists then peculiarly admit that 'Unionism' is being forced into "a fundamental change in its nature" by the new settlement.

But why, if the rebellion has been "resolved negatively"?

And even more so, why is the 'Tory right' then depicted as being

"tempted by extra-parliamentary methods, – including a united front with Ulster. It is very germane to recall that back in 1912-14, the Tories illegally conspired to scupper Irish home rule. They financed Carson's armed rebellion against the Liberal government, and promoted mutiny by the officer corps.

"The biggest political demonstration so far this year has been the 750,000 strong Countryside Alliance. Only a simpleton could imagine that display of privilege, arrogance and rural reaction was merely about hunting foxes. It was the Tory right flexing its extra-parliamentary muscles."

Yes, but why would they want to, or need to, especially re-creating the Ulster Rebellion, – if "the oppressors have overcome the violence of the oppressed", as these fake-'lefts' describe the new Agreement on Ireland???

These fake-'lefts' are clearly seriously disturbed people these days, and it can only be ascribed to yet another indirect effect of the appalling crisis the imperialist system is helplessly tumbling into which is going to make nonsense of ALL bourgeois and petty-bourgeois ideology once again. These anti-communists can feel the humiliation coming and are being destabilised by it.

And the clearest Marxist science of all in the Ireland situation, they miss. Marx explained that workers in Britain could never emancipate themselves for as long as they supported 'their country' (Britain) repressing another (Ireland). And the 'British' population in Occupied Ireland will never fight for socialism until the colonisation of Ireland is ended. Only the Agreement can free all workers of the national question disability. It signals enormous progress.

Royston Bull

'No Surrender' Orange colonists foul-mouth their way towards sectarian political extinction, routed by Sinn Féin. IRA's position of strength confirms nationalist victory. Only fake-'lefts' manoeuvre to keep imperialist propaganda lies circulating, falling for Blair's ridiculous PR posturing. The old notorious RUC's abolition, plus British military withdrawal, complete the plans for imperialism's retreat. Workers struggle in Britain will benefit vitally. Build Leninism. Ditch cowardly fake-'left' philistinism.

[EPSR No 949 05-05-98]

The snail's-pace crumble to defeat over the last decades by the old British colonial order in the Occupied Zone of Ireland is speeding up dramatically.

The die-hard 'unionists', – humiliated by the new Agreement on Ireland, which formally accepts an end to British imperialism's role and therefore opens the door to Ireland's reunification in the not-too-distant future, – are condemning themselves to impotent exclusion from Ireland's affairs under the pressure.

The most reactionary Tory Empire wing of the British ruling class, for whom Thatcher and Tebbit were prize stooges, has bellowed its helpless hatred of the new settlement.

A majority of the Ulster Unionist MPs has doomed itself to being on the losing side, saying 'No' in the May 22 referendum on the deal, which will then become LAW and unrepeatable. The mafia godfathers of the colonised zone, – the Orange Order freemasonry, – has also resigned itself to defeat rather than 'dishonour'.

And the IRA has now well and truly rubbed all their noses in the debris of their failed colonial empire by emphasising loud and clear that there will be no decommissioning at all of its revolutionary organisation and its arsenal of weaponry until all the new arrangements for Ireland (which embody the capitulation by the old British colonial status quo) are firmly in place and working.

The entire aim of all bourgeois propaganda around this snail's-pace withdrawal from the colonisation of Ireland has been to conceal imperialism's defeat in it all, – especially being

a retreat **forced** on it by the armed revolutionary national-liberation struggle of Sinn Féin and the IRA.

So what should any sane anti-imperialist press be doing? Stressing the spectacular **triumph** of the unbeatable guerrilla-war tactics and the phenomenally successful political campaigns and initiatives by Sinn Féin, – in the Occupied Zone, in Ireland, in Britain, in Europe, in the USA, and worldwide, – in splitting and confusing imperialist unity and in undermining imperialism's control.

But what are all the posturing ultra-'left' petty-bourgeois 'revolutionary' groups up to in the swamp of 57 varieties? Continuing to preach their defeatist gloom; completely denying the now accepted catastrophic **failure** of the 'eternal' British colonising dream of 'northern Ireland' (ripped out of the grasp of Irish independence in 1921 at British bayonet-point through Partition), and instead pouring scorn on Sinn Féin/IRA for 'their sellout and failure'!!!

But it is vital for the British workers movement to have this crucial historical lesson brought home to them, in verifiable events happening around them now, of imperialist decline and astonishing success for revolutionary working-class organisation.

Trot muddleheads, and their defenders, who have peddled their daft defeatism in recent months about the 'failed peace process', etc, should all now hold their hands up. The shallow and posturing middle-class fake-'left' learn nothing from history because of their utter anti-theory philistinism. They

abuse Marx and Lenin's writings for trivial propaganda purposes. They never seriously study Marxist-Leninist science, and always refuse to polemicise with those who do study it such as the *EPSR*.

Workers have been misled on a crucial lesson about an international historic balance of class and national forces, – not by just a 'mistake' but by willfully sectarian dogma, followed by even worse cover-ups, as now, to still try to justify their past defeatism, – for example isolating trivial unrepresentative pretences of 'an imperialist triumph'. The working class deserves an accounting from such posturing muddleheads and those that back them, or they should forever hold their tongues.

The current obsession of the 57 Trot varieties (on which they base their whole deranged notion of 'yet another victory in Ireland for imperialist-imposed New World Order settlements') is the fact that the Blair regime, currently running the foyer for the behind-the-scenes British imperialist management, – is putting the same spin-doctor inane grins on this as on every other imaginary 'policy triumph'.

But the ridiculously incompetent and out-of-their-depth Blairites, whose very survival depends wholly on public-relations gimmickry (for as long as such stunts can last, which will not be very long) is the very last government likely to frankly acknowledge that in the long-ago prepared Agreement on Ireland, it was accepting that imperialism had to gracefully admit defeat.

And British imperialism, after a whole half-century of such retreats from Empire, is by now well-practised in presenting its endless defeats as 'common-sense negotiated peace-victories, all-round, for everyone'. British imperialist governments have **never** declared: 'Let us face it; we have been trounced; let us get out'.

But the reality is there for all to see it who want to see it. The grubby fake-'left' have gone on endlessly about 'destructive splits' in the Republican and nationalist movements, particularly in Sinn Féin and the IRA, – caused 'inevitably' by the supposed 'sell-out by Adams & Co to the imperialist-imposed "peace" which will betray everything the anti-imperialist movement has fought for', etc, etc.

But now, these criminal disinformation sheets like the *Weekly Worker* shut up completely about their 'Republican splits' lies and

distortions, and deliberately dishonestly refuse to draw the obvious proper conclusions from the real splits which are taking place, – the utter demoralised devastation of 'unionism' in Ireland, the thorough routing of the old colonist community because of the total humiliation of the historic defeat of their rotten Empire dream of a 'British Ireland for ever' which is now crashing in ruins about their ears, with the mournful dying echoes of 'No Surrender' gradually fading.

The capitalist press would love to tell the story of 'humiliating defeats and splits for Sinn Féin and the IRA' if it could, and the *EPSR* has chronicled the many attempts by *The Guardian*, *The Telegraph*, and others to retail this wishful-thinking but entirely erroneous message. And the British media bourgeoisie's hatred for the revolutionary essence of Sinn Féin and the IRA is as bilious today as ever.

But even the capitalist press finally has to admit something of reality to its readers, and tell some stories against its own past prejudices and wishful thinking, – otherwise it would collapse completely.

The facts and admissions from the reactionary camp are clear: The new Agreement formally constitutes the ending of British colonial rule in Ireland, (and therefore a triumph for Sinn Féin and the IRA); and the only 'hope' now for the demoralised colonial community is to defeat the referendum, or to wreck the New Ireland developments which will follow, which will set Ireland firmly on the path to reunification.

The 80,000-strong influential Orange Order mafia is gathering all its strength to achieve a 'No' vote at the moment (subject to any reprieve they can wangle out of the out-of-his-depth Blair on Thursday), thus splitting the 'Unionist' camp even further. Why would they do that if it is Adams and the IRA who have allegedly 'submitted' to an imperialist-imposed peace?

The capitalist press records its own British imperialist side's subversive despair:

Unionists are split and Orange Order members amount to nearly one tenth of voters.

Mr Blair will meet Orange leaders at Downing Street on Thursday to try to persuade them to change their views. He is likely to fail, though they say they will go with open minds.

The Orangemen are angry about the proposed amnesty after two years for convicted terrorists; the prospect of Sinn Féin taking part in a power-sharing executive while the IRA holds on to its arsenal; and

reform of the RUC. They worry, too, that the Irish government will have too much influence over Northern Ireland.

George Patton, chief executive of the Orange Order, said: "None of us is going to London with closed minds, but I think it will take an awful lot of convincing. This is a green document and there is nothing in it for unionists."

However, nine of the 13 Unionist MPs at Westminster are now opposed to the deal, including six Ulster Unionists. Five of these — the exception is Jeffrey Donaldson — have written to their leader, David Trimble, to emphasise that they will campaign hard against the deal. They will join Ian Paisley's Democratic Unionist Party and Robert McCartney's UK Unionists to launch an anti-agreement campaign tomorrow.

Some believe they can win, but most are looking at subsequent tactics. They want to promote candidates opposed to the agreement who will wreck the assembly.

Willie Thompson, MP for West Tyrone, said: "The No campaign is gathering momentum. We may not win it because of the nationalist vote but what we will see is that a majority of Protestants will reject it. That will produce a majority of No Unionists in an assembly, enough to kill it off."

Willie Ross, MP for East Londonderry, said: "What's the point of winning a referendum if you lose two thirds of the Unionist electorate?"

The same capitalist newspapers are also reluctantly obliged to admit that all their previous headlines — speculating on 'humiliation', 'setbacks', and 'splits' for the IRA and Sinn Féin, — have come to nothing, almost acknowledging that the Republican nationalists have gone from triumph to triumph:

THE IRA'S assessment of the Good Friday agreement, published in the republican newspaper *An Phoblacht* yesterday, is a fine piece of work. It skilfully reconciles difficult aspects, and manages to pile more pressure on Unionist leader David Trimble.

It paves the way for the Sinn Féin leadership to push through its preferred policy switch at the reconvened Ard fheis (annual conference) on May 10. The executive will in effect request that delegates rubber-stamp participation in the proposed Northern Ireland assembly — anathema to many republicans.

The media yesterday focused on the IRA's statement which read: "Let us make it clear that there will be no decommissioning by the IRA. This issue, as with any other matter affecting the IRA, its functions and objectives, is a matter only for the IRA, to be decided upon and pronounced upon by us." This should have come as no surprise. It was a simple reiteration of IRA policy, and, despite noises from the two governments, they realised long ago that the IRA was not in the business of handing over its arsenal. Nor will it be.

The IRA's restatement is designed

to strike a chord with the hardliners among Sinn Féin delegates.

The IRA's aim is to reassure the hawks, while signalling that they can back Gerry Adams, Sinn Féin president, at the Ard fheis. It is telling Sinn Féin members that it intends to mount a determined monitoring campaign of the party's approach.

The IRA's statement also makes life uncomfortable for Mr Trimble. His Achilles heel is the issue of decommissioning. Mr Trimble once said he would not sit down with Sinn Féin at Stormont if the IRA had failed to hand in weapons. He was eventually faced with a choice of leaving the talks, or allowing decommissioning to be parked in an offshoot committee. He chose to stay, and is pleased that he did. But he is vulnerable to Democratic Unionist Party criticism over the issue.

He said: "It's long past time for the IRA to stop this prevaricating. They must genuinely seek peace, or they must be left behind and denied the benefits of this deal."

Mo Mowlam, the Northern Ireland Secretary, said: "If these arrangements are going to work, then everyone involved will have to give up violence for good, and decommissioning is an essential part of the package." But she said there were positive aspects in the IRA's response.

Gerry Adams, the Sinn Féin president, welcomed the IRA statement. He said: "We want to see total decommissioning right across the board. We will continue to press for that in a proactive way."

It would be wrong to focus solely on IRA weapons, he said. "What did people expect the IRA to say? Let us not make decommissioning a block to preventing progress."

That appeared to pave the way for Sinn Féin to endorse the deal at a special Ard fheis (conference) in Dublin on May 10. Its leaders want the vast majority of delegates to back their recommendation that Sinn Féin should take up its places in the assembly.

The second, less explicit, message of the statement is more significant — though shrouded in republican-speak. It is similar to Gerry Adams's speech two weeks ago at the Ard fheis when there were contributions at crucial points by senior ex-IRA men, such as Martin Meehan and Joe Cahill, indicating acceptance of the Good Friday agreement.

There is a subtle switch in emphasis. While even the most uncompromising of IRA supporters would find most of the language comforting, the odd phrase jumps out.

After stinging criticism of the British and the planned referendum, the statement says: "However, the Good Friday document does mark a significant development" It later praises Sinn Féin, wishing it further success in developing its peace strategy.

Yesterday's IRA statement points to acceptance, but it also puts in place elements of Sinn Féin's strategy for the coming months. Tony Blair's letter on Good Friday to soothe Mr Trimble on decommissioning is a vague promise Sinn Féin would be blocked from full participation in

the assembly if the IRA fails to hand in its weapons. His comments yesterday seemed a little ambivalent too.

Willie Ross, one of the six Ulster Unionist MPs against the agreement, said: "It would now be very, very foolish to go down the road of accepting this deal in the light of what has been said."

Another, Jeffrey Donaldson, whose Lagan Valley constituency includes Lisburn, said: "It is clear the IRA intends to pocket the concessions it has got while it retains the capacity to return to violence."

The IRA's own statement in fact frankly admitted, as Sinn Féin leaders have already done, that this initial Agreement is only just a start for their socialist ambitions for full self-determination for the people of Ireland, north and south, and is merely a temporary stage on the road to complete reunification (and more besides).

But what it also makes absolutely clear is that it is the national-liberation struggle which has been negotiating from strength, prepared to allow the saner majority of ordinary 'unionist' people, — plus the British imperialist Establishment who have also had enough of getting the worst of the guerrilla war, — to vote for a peaceful settlement, negotiated henceforth, for the insoluble problems and contradictions created by the old failed and hated British colony which is now no more:

The Leadership of Oglagh na hEireann have considered carefully the Good Friday document.

It remains our position that a durable peace settlement demands the end of British rule in Ireland and the exercise of the right of the people of Ireland to national self-determination.

Viewed against our republican objectives or any democratic analysis this document clearly falls short of presenting a solid basis for a lasting settlement. In our view the two imminent referenda do not constitute the exercise of national self-determination and voters' attitudes to the referenda should be guided by their own view and the advice of their political leaders.

However, the Good Friday document does mark a significant development. But whether or not this heralds a transformation of the situation is dependent totally on the will of the British government.

Accordingly, we will carefully monitor the situation. There appears to be yet another attempt to resurrect the decommissioning issue as an obstacle to progress.

The IRA commitment to assisting the search for justice and peace is a matter of public record. This commitment remains. Let us

make it clear that there will be no decommissioning by the IRA. This issue, as with any other matter affecting the IRA, its functions and objectives, is a matter only for the IRA, to be decided upon and pronounced upon by us.

We are mindful of our responsibilities and of the need for continued vigilance during these challenging times.

We are aware also of those who will resist any dynamic for change. They need to face up to the reality that peace demands justice, equality and national rights for the people of Ireland.

We commend the efforts of Sinn Féin. They can be confident of our desire to see all republicans engage in their decision-making process at this time in a constructive and positive way.

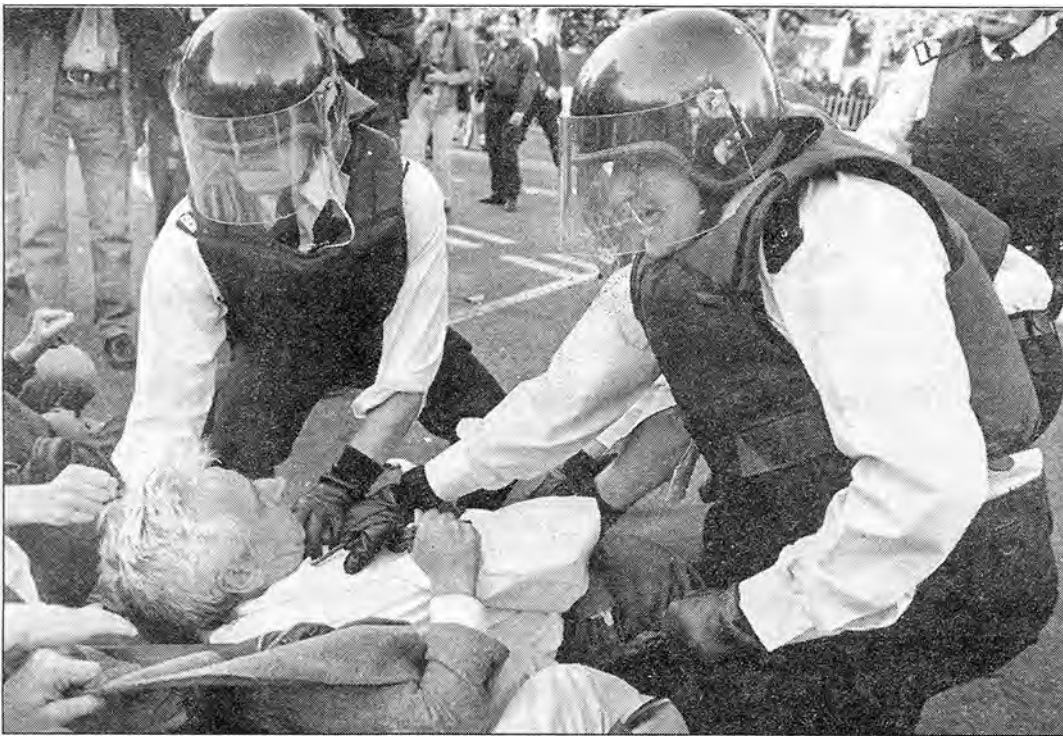
We wish Sinn Féin further success in the development of their peace strategy. It remains clear that movement towards a lasting peace is a shared responsibility of all political leaders.

We face the future united, committed and dedicated to the struggle for Irish Unity and Independence.

The 'will of the British government' means that realistically, London will have to **oblige** or **force** the 'unionists' to comply with the spirit and the letter of the new Agreement, and precisely not "wreck it" is the die-hard Orange fascists are threatening to attempt. And it is only at this point that there has been 'New World Order' imperialist pressure on the situation, — propping the decadent British Establishment up to do the sensible thing and accept defeat in colonised Ireland, and arrange to get out now rather than let the national-liberation revolution drag on for ever, probably eventually provoking a fullscale communist revolution (in Washington's fears).

The biggest problem in all this is effectively defusing the RUC as an incorrigible colonial-state sectarian force, — a tricky operation because of die-hard colonist resistance within its ranks, and because transitional policing of the remaining 'unionist' fascist gun-squads, still determined on physical elimination of the Irish population in the Occupied Zone, rules out immediate total disbandment of the RUC.

For this major dismantling-of-Empire task, the British Establishment is appointing Tory political heavyweight Chris Patten, the man trusted to impose the colonial scuttle on the reluctant Hong Kong colonial bourgeoisie, someone already experienced in tricky retreats where saving face is all-important for avoiding too belligerent



• Police battering nationalist protestors at an Orange Order march

a die-hard backlash.

In effect admitting the past Orange-colonial tyranny of the police-military dictatorship which has ruled the Occupied Zone, the new Agreement declares that:

"Northern Ireland's history of deep divisions has made it highly emotive, with great hurt suffered, and sacrifices made by many individuals and their families...The Agreement provides the opportunity for a new beginning to policing with a police service capable of attracting and sustaining support from the community as a whole. This Agreement offers a unique opportunity to bring about a new political dispensation which will recognise the full and equal legitimacy and worth of the identities, senses of allegiance, and ethos of all sections of the community. This opportunity should inform and underpin the development of a police service representative in terms of the make-up of the community as a whole, and which, in a peaceful environment, should be routinely unarmed."

The annex calls for a model 'human rights' framework including "open, accessible, and independent means of investigating and adjudicating upon complaints against the police" (which would be a revolution in itself compared to the former colonial tyranny), and also for "scope for structured cooperation with the Garda Síochána".

In other words, Ireland is on the way to a reunified IRISH national police force, – as, once again, the die-hard 'Unionists' have spilled the beans on.

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But Unionists campaigning for a 'No' vote in the May 22 referendums condemned his selection as a signal that Britain

is preparing a colonial-style pullout from the province.

The Ulster Unionist MP William Thompson, who has broken ranks with party leader, David Trimble, over the Good Friday accord, said: "Most Unionists will remember Mr Patten as he stood lowering the Union Jack on Hong Kong. What we find in Northern Ireland is that the British Government are slowly but surely lowering the Union Jack."

Now clearly, a capitalist-state police of any description is still only a feature of the imperialist-crisis epoch as yet unresolved, with all the reactionary menace for the working class, in Ireland and everywhere else, contained within that slump and war-threatened perspective.

But serious students of Marxist-Leninist communist revolutionary science have always explained that, – in the circumstances of the Occupied Zone's tiny revolutionary-nationalist forces, the size of British imperialism and the Orange colonial bourgeoisie, and the bought-off passivity of the Green Tory bourgeoisie in the south since 1921, – winning widespread international support for a national-liberation struggle (sufficient to wage a guerrilla war on British interests which could not be defeated) has meant a colossal historic breakthrough against imperialism.

Not only will it have enormous knock-on encouragement for anti-imperialist struggles worldwide, but it will also have the effect of at last freeing the working class in Britain from its age-old chauvinist enslavement

to 'loyalty' to the British imperialist state. As Marx explained, workers in Britain could never emancipate themselves from capitalist exploitation all the time that they backed 'their own' British imperialist state against 'rebellious subjects' in the colonies. Sympathising with the British army against IRA terror was poisoning relentlessly the British working class. At least that ideological trap will now be ended.

Thus there is much to be gained from albeit a victory for bourgeois national-liberation in Ireland.

The fake-'left' will still nevertheless sneer at the 'police reform' aspect of Irish nationalism's reunification triumph, casting doubt on both its likelihood and on its worthwhileness. Armchair-socialist 'revolutionary' wisdom declares: 'Just abolish the RUC and don't replace it.'

As the Republican movement points out, it would be nice if the British ultra-'left' would abolish the police force in Britain first, to show the rest of the world how 'easy' it all is.

But there are other considerations too, as the EPSR has explained before. In a nationalist (bourgeois state) reunification, what would be the point of deliberately alienating and roughing up what would be a quarter of the population of a reunited Ireland? What would be the point of so persecuting the old colonist-'Unionist' community as to make them undyingly hostile to the new all-Ireland arrangements, and potentially relentlessly rebellious, – a repeat, in reverse, of the sectarian-state nonsense

perpetrated by the Orange-colonial community in the Occupied Zone in the first place?

In particular, inside a bourgeois state which will have its own police force, what would be the point of totally alienating every single trained RUC policeman? Logically therefore, the annex to the Agreement provides for the possibility of some retraining and redeployment of police cadres as well as for the educational and ideological ethos that a completely fresh approach to policing will require in the new constitutional arrangements.

Anecdotal evidence indicates that the RUC reform will be a serious undertaking. Mowlam confided to Sinn Féin that the biggest headache in the British Establishment's painful disengagement was how to sack 10,000 RUC policemen.

Other capitalist press leaks indicate humane ways of cushioning the transformation to precisely avoid causing great dislocation, upheaval, and resentment:

HOW is the government going to "reform" the Royal Ulster Constabulary?

Drastic change in the constitution of the RUC, which is (at least) 92 percent Protestant, is an integral part of the peace agreement. But it seems almost impossible in the teeth of opposition from all the unionist parties in Northern Ireland, supported in Britain by the *Daily Telegraph* and the *Daily Mail* in full cry.

Northern Ireland secretary Mo Mowlam has a plan, however, and for once the treasury and Gordon Brown will not begrudge the funds to finance it. No less than £1.4bn has already been set aside to make the agreement work. A large slice of this will be spent on vast pay-offs for policemen.

There will be one big payment available on instant retirement to all officers regardless of age or service, and this will be topped up by other benefits such as "enhanced pensions" to anyone over 45. While the money is on offer a big propaganda campaign will insist that the RUC as constituted is far too big for a peaceful country, as Northern Ireland will obviously soon be, and should be drastically (though humanely and generously) pruned. A mass acceptance of these astonishingly generous terms is widely forecast. It will be followed by a recruitment policy based on "positive discrimination" (i.e.: only Catholics need apply).

On top of the police reform, the Parades Commission is programmed to take such a strong new line against provocative triumphalist Orange marches that the two leading token 'loyalists' on the Commission have resigned in despair, and the Commission's first Report has had to be delayed at Downing Street's request until the

referendums have been held on May 22, so likely is it to enrage the crumbling 'Unionist' cause.

In addition, the Paisleyites are ranting and roaring about another 'betrayal' which they claim to have discovered via a leaked document:

The DUP claimed yesterday that the Government intends to start withdrawing the army from Northern Ireland and dismantle its bases from October. Ian Paisley jun said that a leaked document obtained by the party lists the timescale for a wave of withdrawals and base closures. "They are talking about the whole lot going in less than three years."

Base dismantling was part of a process of "irreversible change" discussed at a military conference on April 17, according to the document.

And with IRA prisoners-of-war being repatriated now to prisons in Ireland preparing for the accelerated release programme which the Dublin government has already initiated, the national-liberation triumph of the new Agreement on Ireland becomes abundantly clear.

The majority of 'unionist' bourgeois in the former Occupied Zone will also quickly adjust to the new opportunities for being even more successful bourgeois than the greater economic opportunities (for the moment, at least, until the world slump starts to devastate capitalist economies everywhere) from merging relations with the Republic will provide, – the European Union's 'Irish Tiger Economy' now having outstripped Britain in international competitiveness league tables.

Republican opinion has begun to relax over the Agreement, realising the total difference between the dubious judgement in 1921 (which accepted half-a-loaf at a time when the anti-colonial epoch was fast approaching, which forced the divestment of all empires totally, without any Partition frustrations being built in to cause the last 50 years of additional unnecessary 'Troubles',) – and the new negotiated agreement which is about one thing only, – the ending of British colonialism's remaining half-a-loaf.

This letter, commenting in *Republican News*, avoids mentioning the triumph over imperialism, and, indeed, all triumphalism in order to explain dialectically how the artificial brute-force 'democratic majority' of Partition has now been turned against itself by the forces of history acting against 'Unionist' supremacy, and skilfully manoeuvred into meaningful constitutional compromise by the irresistible Sinn Féin/IRA national-liberation struggle:

The potential for progress lies in the way that real political forces have already been realigned in the wake of the Agreement. The details of the compromise are not as important as the fact that a compromise was actually done.

Republicans often think a compromise is a sign of weakness, which can only shore up the political position of the enemy — and indeed this can often be the case.

But in the present case the compromise has broken the back of unionism. It has split the forces of the UUP, and isolated Paisley, and has seen the national democratic forces emerge united and stronger than before. (This unity will of course be fractured if Sinn Féin rejects the Agreement.)

This did not happen because of the details of the compromise but because of the concept of compromise itself. There will always be a hardline element within unionism which sees any compromise with "Papistes", regardless of how reasonable, as betrayal of the unionist cause.

Indeed they are quite correct in this, for the whole essence of unionism is about walking all over the rights of nationalists. The concept of compromise entails the concept of equality — and it is this which "traditional unionism" cannot contemplate.

But there are many ordinary unionists who couldn't be bothered with sectarian nonsense and just want to get on with life, and who are quite prepared to cut a deal with nationalists. It is this constituency which will vote for the Agreement along with the rest of nationalist Ireland.

The Agreement thus opens up the possibility of a new demarcation of democratic forces — all based upon the concept of compromise, equality and reasonableness. Although in a formal sense this means the continuation of partition for the immediate future, it would have the effect of isolating, dividing, and destroying hardline, (or traditional) unionism.

And "traditional" unionism — with its notions of supremacy — is the very pillar upon which partition was built.

An intriguing scenario is now possible. The hardline unionists who have made such a song and dance about the "democratic majority" of the Six Counties are slowly going to realise that they have positioned the Sword of Damocles over their own heads. It seems fairly certain that a majority of citizens in the Six Counties — SDLP and Sinn Féin supporters plus the moderate element of unionism — will vote for the Agreement. Even if a majority of unionists stay with the hardline position and vote against it, it doesn't matter. They will no longer be, by their

own definition, the "democratic majority". Unionism can be hung with its own rope.

The situation will emerge where the mass of the people in the six counties will be ranged against an outpost of bigotry and sectarianism.

Objectively this puts this 'Six-County majority' into the same camp as the Irish people as a whole on the issue of the Agreement, thus creating an embryonic 32-County Movement with potential for further democratic advance.

It is quite possible that the hardliners will be able to wreck the assembly, the North-South bodies and the Agreement. But they will be destroying what the "majority" wants, demonstrating to all that their support for "democracy" was nothing more than a pretence to disguise their squalid sectarianism. Their antics will further isolate them.

In the absence of an IRA campaign, it will be clear to all that the problem in the Six Counties is not "terrorism" but the inability of a section of unionists to behave with common decency towards their fellow citizens.

It is therefore essential that republicans give this Agreement their support and let the world see who the real wreckers are.

Sectarianism is the principal force which sustains partition. As it is gradually defeated (or rather as it defeats itself) and retreats in ever-decreasing circles, the back of partition will also be broken.

Correct characterisation of the epoch as one of imperialist crisis is the best way to recognise the overwhelming evidence of British imperialist retreat in Ireland. Fake-'left' defeatist poison alone fails to hail the Sinn Féin/IRA anti-colonial triumph. Blair's spin poorly conceals setback for British Establishment which would have loved to have crushed the Irish national-liberation struggle, if only it could have.

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Whatever the result of the referendum on the New Agreement abolishing the old colony of 'Northern Ireland', it is crucial for workers everywhere to understand the essential **retreat** by British imperialism which has made this deal possible.

Because of ingrained subjective defeatism based on an

But still the people who brilliantly understand the balance of class, nationalist, and internationalist forces which have been so superbly exploited to achieve this history-making anti-imperialist development, – Sinn Féin/IRA, – remain criminally traduced by conceited petty-bourgeois ultra-'left' posturing in Britain, – the out-spoken middle-class 'revolutionaries' who invariably end up creeping back opportunistically under the Labour Party's wing.

Some of the Trots are beginning to lose their nerve over denouncing this tremendous national-liberation achievement, – with the CPGB, for example, now all over the place in drawing contradictory conclusions about the total confusion the fake-'left' is now in over this **actual** trouncing of imperialism, – telling lies to misrepresent different positions in order to cover up their own chaos, but stubbornly still refusing to withdraw their cynical defeatism that "the 'peace' of the oppressors has overcome the violence of the oppressed", – i.e. imperialism has won and Sinn Féin/IRA has sold out.

The British workers movement needs to put up a determined, conscious, and deliberate fight to expose and oust these petty-bourgeois disinformation defeatist wreckers from any credibility at all in the labour movement. Build Leninism. RB

unhealthy **class** position, the majority of 'left' commentaries on Ireland have been fooled by imperialism's cover-up propaganda, and still fail to grasp the **enormous** significance of colonialism's surrender.

The national-liberation struggle led by Sinn Féin/IRA has for the last 30 years been subjected to the most murderous repres-

sion, the most vicious brutalisation, the most vile persecution, and the most foul vilification conceivable.

"Satanic, bloodthirsty, heartless, terrorist monsters" was the general line of condemnation of Adams & Co.

No inhumanity, victimisation or torture could be considered 'too much' for anyone thought connected to the Irish national-liberation struggle.

Thus three young Irish activists were deliberately shot dead in cold blood on the streets of Gibraltar by a British Army-M15 unit when they could easily have been challenged and arrested, unarmed as they were. And this blatantly illegal 'judicial' execution was complacently accepted as OK by manipulated British public opinion.

Systematic shoot-to-kill extermination of suspected 'terrorists' became so routine in the Occupied Zone of Ireland (and not uncommon in British police actions too) that an 'inquiry' had to be held to cover it up.

But so virulent was the hatred that had been built up against the Irish that when the Deputy Chief Constable of Manchester John Stalker, against all the odds, attempted to make an honest report exposing these police/military illegal killings, he was outrageously fitted-up himself for some non-existent 'criminal suspicions' about his Manchester career, and taken off the case.

Such frame-ups of anyone thought remotely sympathetic to the Irish nationalist cause or who could be fitted-up as 'guilty' of any connection with guerrilla-war activities, – continued in rigged court-case after rigged court-case, contemptuously using the silliest flimsy 'evidence', – all with the aim of thoroughly 'demonising' the Irish national-liberation struggle for wanting to force Britain to end its colony there.

To increase the hatred of the Irish and their cause, hundreds of freedom-movement activists and their supporters were put in concentration camps without trial, – caged like animals behind the barbed wire of the Long Kesh concentration camp for years.

Hundreds more 'suspects' were brutally tortured at the special interrogation units at Gough Barracks and Castlereagh Barracks in the Occupied Zone.

And in the most gruesome tyranny of all, ten young Irish patriots were slowly allowed to starve themselves to death in the world-shattering hunger strikes of 1980/81 in pursuit of the principle of being allowed

prisoner-of-war status instead of being victimised as 'common criminals'.

The whole Irish population of the colony were systematically terrorised for years by random midnight intimidation raids by the police-military dictatorship which would routinely smash up a score of homes every night in pretend 'arms searches'.

At British airports or other entry points, any Irish person at all has had to face regular deliberate harassment for the past 20 years.

Throughout the same period on the pavements and highways of the Occupied Zone itself, known sympathisers of the Irish nationalist cause have been routinely arrested or detained literally **hundreds** of times on completely bogus grounds, – some prominent lawyers, for example, who were prepared to defend Sinn Féin suspects, being regularly 'lifted' three or four times every week.

And Sinn Féin itself, of course, was declared virtually illegal at one stage, and the voice of Gerry Adams was banned from being heard on all radio and television. He officially became a non-person. If his words had to be reported, an actor had to be used to say them.

But the British ruling-class Establishment, pressed by its imperialist 'allies' who were embarrassed by this colonial tyranny right at the core of the West's most 'democratic' leading member, finally cracked because of the IRA's non-stop and undefeatable guerrilla-war, and because of Sinn Féin's unbreakable successful political campaigning in support of the national-liberation struggle.

Ways of getting out of Ireland had been thought about off and on for more than 20 years by the London Establishment, and firm outline blueprints have existed for a dozen years at least. The bombing destruction of London and Manchester finally convinced British imperialism to organise yet one more retreat from Empire, – but as always so that it would look anything but like a tail-between-the-legs defeat.

The final historical reality is that long-weakened British imperialism was at last obliged to get out of Ireland by armed revolutionary struggle which it could neither defeat nor contain too easily, suffering hideously costly blow after blow to its cities, – and to its prestige.

Lengthy secret negotiations with Sinn Féin finally produced the outlines of a 'peace agreement', – basically the New Agreement now being put to the

referendum.

The colony of 'Northern Ireland' is to be no more. The 'No Surrender' Orange dictatorship, gerrymandered by the Partition racket imposed at British bayonet-point in 1921, is to be dismantled by proportional representation and a built-in nationalist veto on any further 'Unionist' colonial domineering or anti-Irish (anti-Catholic) triumphalism; and by obligatory North-South coalition government over many areas of life in Ireland; and by joint Dublin-London authority over any matters which cannot be agreed. Every institution of 'Northern Ireland' is to be totally transformed by various reforms; etc, etc. The injustice and humiliating failure of the whole 'Northern Ireland' colonial project has at last been acknowledged and accepted by London.

This amounts to a colossal **victory** for Sinn Féin/IRA. It is one of the greatest anti-imperialist triumphs of this or any other epoch. And it is of particular tremendous importance for workers in Britain, corrupted by the chauvinism which inevitably accompanies the fate of Britain's armed forces in the field. Generations of workers in Britain have been corrupted into anti-Irish racism and jingoism by this colonial war. Now it has been lost, British workers themselves can struggle much more objectively against the British imperialist economic system, and therefore much more successfully. As Marx said, workers in Britain would never be able to free themselves from servitude to imperialist economic exploitation all the time that Britain's colonisation of the Irish nation continued.

The brutality, persecution, and hatred, – piled up against the Irish national-liberation struggle by British imperialism for decades, – was a serious colonial war which successive governments would have rejoiced at being triumphant in. Plenty of boasting and disinformation was spun out over the decades implying that Sinn Féin/IRA had failed and were about to abandon the struggle.

Had that ever happened, the victimisation and persecution of those Republican revolutionary fighters would have known no bounds.

As it is, the hate-filled inflammatory rhetoric and judicial frame-ups have all been abandoned. The 'terrorists' and the 'political voices of terrorism' are now important negotiating partners for British imperialism to achieve a 'diplomatic settlement process'. And as

the *EPSR* has already analysed in detail from the Agreement document, the new deal is entirely on national-liberation terms, – effectively for the programmed termination of the former 'Northern Ireland' colonial get-up, opening all the doors for eventual reunification of Ireland.

And the evidence of this from the British capitalist press and the British colonial traditions themselves continues to pour out unmistakably, – as already voluminously recorded in the *EPS Review*. All the serious alarm is that the 'No Surrender' hardline colonial backlash will vote against the Agreement in order to stage a last-ditch fight to defend the status quo.

The entire Agreement campaign, – long prepared by the best imperialist propaganda minds in Washington, the European Union, London, and Dublin to put the spin on things to hide the victory for armed revolutionary struggle which is in none of their longterm capitalist interests, – has been built around the concessions needed to keep the IRA on ceasefire and prepared to accept a negotiated settlement of its aims, coupled with the frantic wish to avoid too much 'Unionist' humiliation so as to keep the backlash vote 'NO' to less than 50%.

This battle is still going on for the soul of 'Unionist' colonialism, with the newer working-class 'unionist' parties more inclined to reject the old bourgeois colonial hierarchy than the more conservative middle-class elements, – as the capitalist press is still reporting:

Chris McGimpsey, an Ulster Unionist Party Belfast city councillor, said his main concern is the opposition to the agreement within the ranks of organisations such as the Orange Order. McGimpsey, a liberal unionist, is worried that the referendum campaign has created deeper divisions within unionism than ever before. 'I fear some people will never speak to each other again. The wounds within unionism will run deep,' he said.

The No campaigners clearly capitalised on the Balcombe Street gang's appearance in Dublin. Within 24 hours they had put posters of armed terrorists up around Belfast and in the main unionist daily paper, the *Ulster Newsletter*, with a warning that the men in masks would soon be running Northern Ireland.

This was apparent at the loyalist Ulster Democratic Party's rally in Belfast. Instead of the usual anti-republican rhetoric, speaker after speaker denounced established unionist figures such as the Rev Ian Paisley and Robert McCartney.

One leading UDR member even put on a Paisley mask and dog collar to warm up the masses before their political leaders spoke. And they loved

it. The rally was the starkest example yet of the new hostility of urban loyalist militants towards Paisley, the man they and their fathers have followed for the past three decades.

One over-excited Ulster Defence Association supporter shouted up to the platform: 'Paisley is a bastard.' Gary McMichael, the UDP's leader, cried back: 'I couldn't possibly comment on that.'

BUT FOR law-abiding middle-class unionists undecided on how to vote, the sight of terrorists of any hue — Docherty or Stone — on temporary release, swaggering in front of TV cameras, was too much. Peter Robinson, deputy leader of Paisley's Democratic Unionist Party, warned voters that there could be hundreds more similar spectacles if the agreement is passed and the prison gates open.

Unionists were furious at the decision to free republican inmates from the Maze for last week's Ard Fheis. They claim Northern Ireland Secretary Mo Mowlam acted unilaterally to free the prisoners last Saturday.

Mowlam stands accused not only of gross insensitivity but also of failing to keep Tony Blair and the rest of the Cabinet informed about the issue.

McGimpsey is worried by the failure to win over the middle classes and their representatives: 'I believe the Orange Order's opposition is inflicting more damage than Paisley and McCartney combined. District after district is rejecting the agreement, and don't forget there about 60,000 to 70,000 Orangemen out there.'

Blair had to be shepherded out of the Balmoral complex via a back entrance when Paisleyites staged an angry protest. The rural show is a haven for the rural Ulster Protestant farmers who provide the backbone of evangelical 'No surrender' Paisleyism.

Despite Blair's assurances, the Yes unionists have come under unrelenting fire throughout the week. A senior commander in the Ulster Volunteer Force told the *Observer* his organisation could not come out and urge everyone to vote yes.

The embarrassment and humiliation is the inescapable problem of their own rotten colonial heritage, — agreeing to build a 'No Surrender' gerrymandered dictatorship to begin with in the artificial 1921 Partition imposed by British imperialist military force and based on anti-Irish-nationalist hatred. And if, against the odds, the 'NO' vote should prevail, if will only ultimately add to doomed colonialism's humiliation, because Britain would only have to **impose** a decolonisation deal at the end of the day.

And Robinson's indignation at the release of 'terrorist' prisoners is the most appalling hypocrisy. The 'No Surrender' unionist bourgeoisie has survived for 76 years solely on the 'judicial state terrorism' of the gerrymandered dictator-

ship called 'Northern Ireland', backed by the anti-Irish-nationalist tyranny supplied by British courts and hit-squads and other specialist firepower. The 'B Specials', who formed the civil reserve for the RUC and the British Army in time of emergencies, effectively played the role that the 'loyalist' gun-fascists like Michael Stone have played for the last 20 years, — basically to terrorise the nationalist population at every opportunity. Only with the greatest reluctance did the 'unionist' colonial bourgeoisie eventually agree to the disbandment of the 'B Specials'. And Paisleyite politicians have notoriously swaggered in front of fascist killers like Billy Wright and his LVF ('loyalist' volunteer force) ever since.

In the light of all this, it is a tragedy that fake-'lefts' are still trying to teach workers in Britain to ignore all these vital historical lessons of imperialism's decline and of national-liberation struggle's triumph. Even the SLP's *Socialist News*, while correctly concluding with a list of 'Unionist' retreats since the Hunger Strikes, conveys the wrong impression in the first two-thirds of the piece with such statements as

"Post-1989, the imperialist powers have pursued what could be called a systematic peace offensive to 'resolve' various conflicts around the world on its terms, in favour of its local allies...."

"The Agreement (in Ireland) reflects this generally unfavourable balance of forces...."

"The problems are evident. The Assembly is a partitionist body...."

"The amendments to the Dublin constitution do away with the geographic claim to the whole of the island of Ireland and enshrine consent, i.e. the Unionist veto...."

Fortunately, this defeatist tone, which hovered over an *SN* article on Ireland in October wondering if there would ever be a deal, is eventually cleared up by describing Unionism's retreats.

But the confusion about an 'imperialist peace offensive' is very damaging, written of in these 'New World Order' terms and US imperialism's 'hit list', — all utterly misleading.

The catastrophic economic crash in the Far East which all the imperialist and IMF intervention in the world can do nothing to resolve, — that is the only worthwhile test of this 'New World Order', and it is complete disaster, as was always obvious (see the previous 10 years issues of this weekly journal).

As discussed elsewhere this issue, imperialist **crisis** is the governing factor of all this century's developments, — insoluble capitalist **crisis**. As part of this slowly maturing third great

imperialist crisis this century, British imperialism has been steadily relatively declining for decades. That is the key to the outcome in the Irish national-liberation struggle.

American imperialism's **apparent** counter-revolutionary successes elsewhere, and **apparent** total domination over all present and future world developments, — are pure delusion (see other article) all the time that in reality, the international market economy is in fact plunging ever more rapidly and irrevocably towards the greatest **crash** in history, and towards the greatest **collapse** of capitalist regimes ever.

In other words, it is the revolutionary anti-imperialist success of Sinn Féin/IRA which is really reflecting the true pattern of history, — **not** the temporary setbacks in Nicaragua or Grenada or Occupied Palestine,

which are only a prelude to even bigger anti-imperialist triumphs to come.

The real pattern has become visible earlier in Ireland because of the unevenness in development of capitalism, — which is inseparable from the squabbling splits in the imperialist camp which will increasingly mark failed summits like this present one (see other stories). Imperialism is doomed to insoluble contradiction and conflict. The system will fall-down at its weakest points, — and then bring the whole capitalist-market racket down with it.

The weak-point fallibility of the imperialist racket has never been concealable in Ireland to a Marxist-Leninist examination, — only to hopelessly flawed petty-bourgeois Trotskyism and every other fake-'left' confusion. Build Leninism.

Douglas Bell

Referendum registers the beginning of the end of 800 years of repressive British involvement in Ireland, driven out at last by nationalist resistance. Relentless bourgeois propaganda campaign to kill the truth about the Sinn Féin/IRA triumph, backed by middle-class Trot lies. Brilliant national-liberation-struggle strategy far more in tune with Marxist science than all the empty 'socialist' posturing by petty-bourgeois 'revolutionaries' in their Islington armchairs. Marx and Lenin vindicated on Ireland against Trot revisionist imbecilities. Anti-IRA 'left' provocations expose bankrupt Trot philosophical methods. Phoney 'New World Order' base for anti-communist defeatism is destroyed by the reality of the actual revolutionary situation now emerging worldwide. Trot contradictions on USSR get sillier and sillier.

[EPSR No 952 26-05-98]

A small but significant majority of the 'unionist' (British imperialist) mentality chose to vote with the Irish nationalists in the Occupied Zone to produce a huge united support for a completely new deal in Ireland.

And there is only one answer to the big question of what brought about this astonishing

historic CHANGE which effectively puts an end to Britain's 'Northern Ireland' colony as it has existed since the 1921 Partition.

Only the armed and revolutionary national-liberation struggle led by Sinn Féin and the IRA has transformed a 'No Surrender' situation established

"for all time" 78 years ago.

Ludicrously, the British bourgeois media, led by the BBC and the *Guardian*, tied themselves in knots to avoid recognising this obvious **revolutionary** reality.

Newsnight almost constipated itself in trying to pose the natural question of "why the change now, after so long and after so much suffering", etc, but in seeking every way possible to avoid giving the answer.

Inadvertently, it was Lord Fitt, – 'Gerry Fitt the Brit', as he was contemptuously known to the Irish working class for his lifelong SDLP subservience to British imperialist parliamentary 'democracy' dictatorship, – who innocently gave the answer in saying: "Gerry Adams has brought his Sinn Féin a long way since he used to lose his deposit challenging me for election in West Belfast".

The 'long way' was to eventually force the world to accept that the Sinn Féin/IRA national liberation struggle had won unshakable allegiance among the whole Irish working class in the Occupied Zone, which made the IRA unbeatable and Sinn Féin unignorable.

And it won that loyalty because of Sinn Féin/IRA's principled and unwavering hostility to the British imperialist **cause** of the difficulties for the people of Ireland.

That **triumphant** struggle by Irish nationalism ended at this stage by producing The Agreement just voted on, – a compromise.

But that brilliant political manoeuvre, which split the 'unionist' diehard 'No Surrender' traditions to smithereens, has won an overwhelming majority for new arrangements in the Occupied Zone as a whole and in its relationships with the rest of Ireland, – which will create an irresistible platform before long for completing the reunification of Ireland, the only realistic future for that country.

'Northern Ireland', – as was, – is no more. That retreat by British Empire is now a constitutional fact, – irreversible. There is nothing more for Ian Paisley & Co to shout 'No Surrender' to, – (apart from the clearing up of just a few institutional bits and pieces), – and the utter pointlessness of that will become universally accepted fairly quickly. As the crowds on the streets of the Occupied Zone sang on Saturday, "the dinosaurs will soon be no more".

The sick sad BBC bourgeoisie insisted keeping on saying misleadingly that it was the Irish Republic which had "given up its constitutional claims to

the north", etc, and on allowing worried Trimbleites to repeat foolishly, not believing a word of it, that "the union is now safe for all time", etc.

But the Agreement, – a halfway house to reunification, – speaks for itself. And the Irish Constitutional claim on the north has **always** been inoperative and purely decorative, never achieving a single thing towards the stated objectives. And these constitutional clauses claiming the whole of Ireland as the territory of the Republic, have not been abandoned in any case, – merely reworded to express the reunification aim as needing to be achieved "by consent".

That is not there quite yet, but consent to the Agreement has been won, – and plainly won by revolutionary war, no matter how much Blair, Trimble, and the bourgeois propaganda machine try to cover this up.

The defiant hostility spat out by Paisley & Co, – declaring they refuse to surrender to 'terrorists', and they will refuse to be 'governed by terrorists' (under the new power-sharing Assembly and joint ministerial councils with the Republic), – which won the vote of two 'unionists' out of every five, – has obviously not been mistaken.

The new Agreement clearly is a compromise with the national-liberation revolutionary armed struggle. In return for the IRA's ceasefire, the colonial community is getting the opportunity to participate legitimately, peacefully, and democratically (after a style, with proportional representation and a built-in nationalist veto on any anti-settlement Assembly decisions) in the new Ireland.

This far-sighted compromise deal by Sinn Féin/IRA for calling off its revolutionary war, has been eagerly embraced by feeble British imperialism in London, and by a majority of the ordinary 'unionist' people when no longer dominated by an Orange-colonist dictatorship in the Occupied Zone.

This reactionary influence has been finally routed in the only way that it could have been done in present circumstances, – by the national-liberation movement first inflicting an endlessly punishing guerrilla war, – and then by offering a generous peace, just generous enough to get a slight majority of the 'unionists' eager for the bait, and a shattering majority of the population of the Occupied Zone overall.

The national-liberation movement's calculations and negotiating skills, reflecting their colossal and well-deserved

political prestige, – have proved a complete triumph, – one of the most remarkable political-revolutionary achievements of this or any other century.

And all dependent on the unbeatable victory of the revolutionary guerrilla war, – a victory **because** unbeatable, and unbeatable **because** of the invincible support given by the Irish working class which responded to the highly principled **revolutionary** consciousness of Sinn Féin/IRA.

And how British bourgeois propaganda **hates this reality**.

Newsnight bored on and on and on trying to get McGuinness to say that the all-round compromise **agreement**, – dismantle the colony but no instant constitutional reunification, – was the same as saying that Sinn Féin/IRA now saw that "violence was no longer the way". For this insulting gibberish, which would get high marks in a British university logic course but could be seen through as illogical nonsense by the average four-year-old, – we have to pay an obligatory TV tax of £91.50 a year.

Revolutionary war **was** the way to get from A to B, and it remains valid **for ever**, even though B has now been reached.

The *Guardian* bourgeois propaganda was even more nervous about the terrifying implications of the epoch-making **agreement**, – a triumph for the anti-colonial struggle, – being clearly seen by the whole world as having been won by armed revolutionary war.

On the very last day of the referendum campaign, they published an astonishing stunt by a supposed IRA prisoner of war which wrote off the entire national-liberation war from the Hunger Strikes onwards as a completely failed and futile gesture, destroying countless lives and achieving absolutely nothing.

This bizarre piece of total contradictory confusion denounces the pre-Hunger Strike truce-attempt as "disastrous" and "virtual surrender", (quoting the alleged verdicts at the time of McGuinness and Danny Morrison), but then denounces that new Sinn Féin leadership even more savagely for going back on the offensive against British colonialism.

The same 'defeat' could have been accepted 20 years earlier at the time of the 'disastrous truce', it is alleged, – and with "much less suffering"; and by accepting 'defeat' now, the cheering Sinn Féin Ard Fhein was like "turkeys celebrating Christmas", etc, etc.

This piece of vicious propaganda, entitled "We, the IRA, have failed" and complete with Goebbels-standard cartoon of a grimacing hooded IRA volunteer with a white surrender flag dangling from the barrel of his AK47, – presumably is exploiting the position taken up by Bobby Sands sister who launched the small breakaway from Sinn Féin called the 32-county sovereignty committee, for it offensively plays with the idea that the Bobby Sands hunger strike to death in 1981 was a particularly 'useless sacrifice' in the entirely 'pointless' IRA/Sinn Féin 'renewed offensive' from that date.

But worldwide, the ten heroic young Irish working-class patriots who starved themselves to a terrifying death to denounce British colonialist tyranny, – are universally regarded as the unanswerable basis for unending British imperialist political humiliation thereafter, and unchallengeable Sinn Féin/IRA moral superiority.

Specifically, the current generation of IRA political prisoners have near-unanimously endorsed Sinn Féin's negotiated-settlement strategy, as everyone knows.

Even more to the point, *Republican News* recently-printed the following concluding paragraphs of a lengthy collective view of things by IRA prisoners:

The events of recent years and those of recent weeks have their similarities between where the pows found themselves in 1981 and where we as republicans find ourselves in 1998. Our struggle is far from over. We have advanced our struggle. We have taken wider views of our strategy and tactics. We all know where we want to go. We need to decide on how we get there but most importantly we must go there together.

On Saturday 3 October 1981 the pows issued a lengthy statement summarising the background to the Hunger Strikes of 1980 and 1981. We outlined in detail the reasons for ending the Hunger Strike. We concluded by stating: "Lastly, we reaffirm our commitment to the achievement of the five demands by whatever means we believe necessary and expedient. We rule nothing out. Under no circumstances are we going to devalue the memory of our dead comrades by submitting ourselves to a dehumanising and degrading regime."

Was the Hunger Strike worth it? Yes. Is this struggle worth it? Yes. Is this struggle over? NO!!

Beirigi Bua.

Republican Prisoners,

H-Blocks.

Long Kesh

So what was the point of this



● Peaceful Dublin marchers pass Garda riot-squads at the GPO



one maverick 'IRA prisoner' statement, so completely out-of-touch with prevailing IRA prisoner opinion, and published so amazingly prominently and at such length in the *Guardian* on referendum day, – and of views too which logically demand a resumption of IRA guerrilla war, – which is the one thing *Guardian* bourgeois propaganda would **hate** to happen worse than anything else conceivable??

The point was fascist disinformation propaganda more vile than Nazi Goebbels techniques could ever have dreamed up, – and all to conceal the blindingly obvious, – namely that it was precisely the national-liberation guerrilla war which **succeeded**, and has made important new history for all the world.

As usual, it is the petty-bourgeois fake-'left' who play the key role in helping to stretch ruling-class propaganda on this 'failure of armed revolution' to cover potential doubts among workers who suspect all capitalism's lies.

Just in case anyone with socialist leanings should be wondering about the contradictions between 'anti-terrorist' crusades one minute, and deals with a confident-sounding Sinn Féin the next, – a whole range of sinister middle-class 'revolu-

tionary' groups are on hand to speak authoritatively from the alleged "uncompromising anti-imperialist point of view" and swear that "Sinn Féin and IRA have sold us out", etc.

All 57 varieties of Trot defeatist treachery have been at it this very weekend, with one typical rag (*Weekly Worker*) asserting that Sinn Féin support for the Agreement, forced on an unwilling 'unionist' tradition, in fact meant that this Irish national-liberation struggle now "recognises Partition and British jurisdiction", and means that "while continuing Partition is written into the Agreement, the IRA is to end its armed resistance".

To prevent a lynching for these treacherous Goebbels-style big lies, the Trots pretend that they are only saying what the capitalist press is saying, quoting the *Daily Telegraph!*

Now the first point is that Marxism has indeed always quoted from capitalist sources to prove a point or two. But only, of course, when it makes a

point **against** capitalism. How is a *Telegraph* claim, that the IRA has won nothing, any different from what anyone would expect any reactionary British imperialist rag to spread disinformation about in order to save face?

What would be news would be if *The Telegraph* should admit, after decades of false triumphalist screaming that "IRA terrorism is on the run; is an incompetent failure; would never be surrendered to; etc, etc", – that in fact the Irish national-liberation struggle had, after all, been successful, and that the IRA had in fact won.

And amazingly, what has been *The Telegraph's* verdict this week? On Sunday, it declared the following under headlines proclaiming "victory for the IRA" and "It is a sell-out" over reports from 'unionist' strongholds:

RELIEF, euphoria and republican triumphalism greeted the announcement in Crossmaglen yesterday that Ulster had said "Yes to peace".

"The IRA have won. We're getting our country back," shouted a pensioner celebrating with a whiskey in

Keenan's Bar opposite the fortified RUC station in this fiercely nationalist town.

"It means my children will have a future and a say in their own affairs," said Francie McDermott, a builder.

For the 3,600 people in Crossmaglen, situated in the "bandit country" of South Armagh, the vote represents an end to a seemingly unending cycle of violence.

But for diehard republicans it also signalled "victory" for the IRA, implying the release of paramilitary prisoners within two years, and the possible removal of the British Army from the town.

Daniel McCrory, a 32-year-old local farmer, voted Yes. "It's a fantastic result," he said. "Hopefully they [the British] will be gone soon. It's definitely a bad day for the Unionists."

As tricolours fluttered in the breeze, local people gathered in the main square to discuss the historic news.

"The most important thing is the size of the vote in favour, which seems to be massive. It also means Sinn Féin will have a very big say in the new assembly," said one jubilant nationalist.

IN STAUNCHLY loyalist Ballymena yesterday, the news from the referendum count in Belfast was as dispiriting as the constant drizzle.

"I am totally deflated. It's a slap in the face," said one man, a taxi driver. "I am a law-abiding citizen and there's no way we want to see murderers walking around the streets."

Watching the referendum results in the Moat Bar on the outskirts of the North Antrim town, Stephen and John, two members of an Orange marching band, reacted gloomily to the result but insisted that the level of Unionist support for a No vote had given them hope.

"We both voted No because, quite frankly, we don't think we will have any involvement in our own country," John said.

"At the moment, the level of the Unionist vote is a victory to us because the majority of Unionist people didn't vote Yes. David Trimble needs the majority to go with him if he wants to make a go of it."

Stephen, who works in an engineering factory, agreed. "The No vote is significant in North Antrim. There's not going to be a split in the Unionist ranks; not here on the ground." As they heard the referendum result, the people stood in the light rain and shook their heads. The Good Friday agreement had sold them out on almost everything they ever believed in, they said.

Earlier at the King's Hall count headquarters in Belfast. Ian Paisley had arrived to cries of "Bring on the loser", chanted by those supporters of rival loyalist parties who had campaigned for a Yes.

As Mr Paisley left the hall within minutes of hearing that the people of Northern Ireland had voted three to one in favour of the agreement, supporters of his party jostled and pushed their rivals.

Outside the hall the chaos continued when there were scuffles between journalists and members of Mr Paisley's entourage as they attempted to clear a path for their visibly shaken leader.

To further taunts of "loser, loser" and "dinosaur". Mr Paisley punched a fist in the air and shouted "Ulster forever. We got our majority." He told a questioner at a press conference to "shut up. I'm running this".

In a loyalist Belfast bar in the city, four men, who said they had been friends for years, summed up the split that the referendum had caused in Unionist ranks.

Two voted Yes while the others opted for No, although they could all sit together over a beer and discuss where their country went from here.

One of the men, aged 52, said: "I had to vote No because I could not stand the thought of Gerry Adams and Martin McGuinness getting into power. I don't think the violence will ever stop because too many people have lost mothers, fathers, brothers and sisters. There is too much hate."

Another, aged 48, agreed and added pessimistically: "We have been sold down the river. Generations of my family have fought to remain British and this Yes vote will basically mean that in about 10 years there will be a united Ireland."

But the two others sitting at the end of the same table were pleased with the Yes vote, hoping the majority would be big enough to bring some change to the province.

One said: "Voting Yes was the only way we could try to stop the violence and try to get some change."

Or in other words, the foul

"No Surrender" colonial triumphalism which has poisoned the minds of British descendants for generations in Ireland, has at last been forced to drop its chauvinist injustice by the relentless Irish national-liberation struggle, spearheaded by the victorious IRA guerrilla war.

Trot posturing on the Agreement referendum was to boycott it! Paisley would have been pleased.

These fake 'Marxists' display their insulting ignorance, typical of the self-righteous petty bourgeoisie, when discussing Ireland's reunification and an end to British colonial involvement.

"Transition to a united bourgeois Ireland? As if communists have the slightest desire to see such an outcome," posture these fraudulent supporters of the mis-named *Leninist* magazine.

So what was the Marxist-Leninist view?

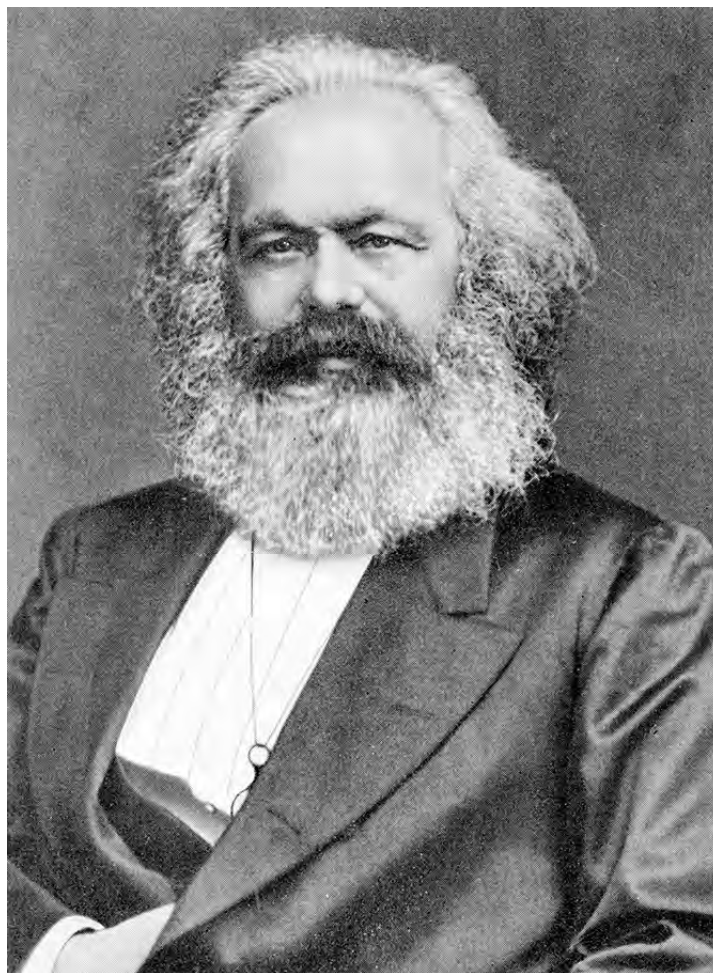
Lenin explained the reasons for the change in Marx's viewpoint as follows:

"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...."

"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 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!)." (*Collected Works*, Vol. 20, p. 440.)

In his letter to Vogt in 1870, summarising the repeated communist line at the First International debates, Marx explained the task as to convince chauvinism-riddled English workers that until the Irish **national** question had been resolved in Ireland's favour, then the English working class would always remain enslaved to capitalist exploitation itself:

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."



And in a letter from the General Council to Swiss workers in 1870, Marx repeated his scientific certainty that ending the colonising Act of Union of 1801, which would make Ireland a separate bourgeois country again, was "a precondition to the emancipation of the English working class", and memorably declared that: "Any nation that oppresses another forges its own chains".

"We are communists, not nationalists" pout the Trots. No, you are neither. You are philistine imbeciles whose posturing around the workers movement with an expensively-produced weekly newspaper becomes increasingly sinister.

Marx, Engels, and Lenin were real communists, and they here explain the most elementary ABC of the science which views the international balance of class and national forces as an endlessly-developing dialectical **whole** when trying to give leadership to the international anti-imperialist struggle.

These sick *Weekly Worker* Trots, having shown they have no serious understanding of, or interest in, the national question in Ireland with their 'boycott the referendum' pose, purely to draw attention to themselves, – unerringly dabble much more purposefully in inventing new provocations to assist bourgeois propaganda

with.

With truly galling insolence from such fence-sitting dilettantes, the Trots insist on knowing if Sinn Féin or its political supporters in Britain are going to support the "physical elimination" of any nationalist breakaways who continue to wage "anti-imperialist struggle" ignoring the IRA ceasefire.

As if the national-liberation struggle did not have enough reactionary provocateurs to deal with in the non-stop BBC, capitalist press, and Orange-colonist baiting about "When will Sinn Féin hand in the IRA's weapons", and "Should Sinn Féin be allowed a role in the Assembly if they refuse to denounce violence as a political method", etc, etc, etc, ad infinitum, – without having these artificially fabricated provocations to deal with from the bogus 'left'?

As if the working class in Britain did not have enough centuries of anti-Irish chauvinism and speculative contempt to get rid of without such bogusly-created academic conundrums.

The **only** interest the British socialist revolution has in this conclusion to the national question in Ireland is to give as clear anti-imperialist support to the triumphant Sinn Féin/IRA strategy as possible, – unconditionally.

The only fantasy "what if" worth dealing with, is 'what

would be the appropriate way to deal with counter-revolutionary middle-class individualist disruption at some future stage of the British socialist revolution after it has already been proved beyond all further historical dispute that the very firmest proletarian dictatorship is the only chance for workers states to survive and eventually flourish while centres of imperialist sabotage still remain on earth?.

And if Trots wish to challenge the validity of such an academic question, let them take that as the answer to all of their own endless academic questions.

Or alternatively, let the Trots define their provocateur's question a bit more precisely. Let the hypothetical question about future armed struggle be a choice between the benefits for the existing realities and possibilities of further anti-imperialist mobilisation of mass working-class support in Ireland as offered by Adams, McGuinness, & Co (who could be assassinated by rejectionist gunmen, backed by their Trot supporters in Britain), – or as offered by INLA or CPGB leaders (who could be killed by IRA gunmen).

Which "physical elimination" will these *Weekly Worker* dilettantes think is good fun to speculate over in this case? And whose elimination do they really believe the mass of anti-imperialists in Britain and Ireland would back if such idiotic fantasy was not merely an extension of futile Trot provocations but became actual reality?

Workers who are serious about the anti-imperialist struggle should start making mental notes now about whether an under-siege workers state in Britain would or would not allow irresponsible middle-class provocateurs to remain in charge of a printing press under the dictatorship of the proletariat at which was still surrounded by centres of imperialist counter-revolutionary intrigue.

More *Weekly Worker* ignorant abuse pours out against *Lalkar*, which the comrades there will certainly be able to deal with, but one daft thrust deserves general comment. The Sinn Féin/IRA national-liberation struggle has "weakened" to the point of the IRA "ending armed resistance" to this "imperialist-imposed negative resolution" of the 'hot spot' in Ireland, and has "sued for peace" in these "New World Order conditions" due to the "removal of the USSR major counterbalance to global imperialism" which has "greatly weakened all forces of national liberation", etc, etc, – these de-

feastist Trots allege yet again.

Having always hated having to defend the dictatorship of the proletariat in East Europe, these class-collaborative Stalinist-revisionists-turned-Trots, who lifelong have adapted a careerist path further and further away from Leninism, – have in reality been as pleased as any Trots with the revisionist CPSU shameful eventual self-liquidation and liquidation of the proletarian dictatorship.

Now the *Weekly Worker* Trots make a virtue of this reactionary relief.

"There is no contradiction,"

they now declare,

"in declining to mourn for the Soviet Union on the one hand, and acknowledging that its fall has strengthened imperialism on the other",

– without offering a word of explanation as to why they assert there is no contradiction.

The *EPSR's* long responsible struggle for Marxist-Leninist science on such matters avoids such daft contradictions in the only way possible, – by seeing through the fraud of bogusly "strengthened imperialism" to the imperialist-crisis reality which is the only basis on which to analyse the **entire** development of reduced Cold War conflict in the Reagan period (due to murderously sharpening inter-imperialist trade-war conflict (on a world financial and political-influence scale) between the USA and Germany, Japan, etc) leading to suicidally expansive class-collaborative revisionism by the relieved bureaucratic muddleheads around Gorbachev.

With the sharpening of imperialist crisis towards a new revolutionary epoch (South Africa, Ireland, Palestine, Indonesia, etc), – ending moribund CPSU revisionist influence on the world proletariat, holding it back, became increasingly important.

It is an academic historical issue now as to whether the revisionist-led self-liquidation of the USSR's proletarian dictatorship was the only way to break this deadening influence on the international workers movement. The crucial point is that the revisionist perspective of "peaceful coexistence and class-collaboration all the way to the collapse of imperialism and the parliamentary road to socialism" has been dealt a mortal blow, and such organised party influence on the working class is now fatally weakened, – opening the door to renewed Leninist revolutionary science to recapture the leadership of the international proletariat.

The whole colossal list of Soviet achievements due to firm proletarian dictatorship, spreading the benefits of socialism internationally so triumphantly halfway round the world, – will remain unconditionally supportable for all time. The fatal revisionist weaknesses in leadership remain to be learned from for all time.

Eventually, world progress demanded imperatively that the time had come to surmount Moscow-related revisionist influence worldwide. Soviet-camp liquidations happened to be a part of how that came about.

More light may be shed on how 'necessary' such a development can be regarded, with hindsight, depending on how well any of the remaining workers states adapt to the new revolutionary anti-imperialist period now opening up. Will Castro embrace it or not? Will Beijing embrace it? Might Moscow have embraced it (which was the original agitational hope for Leninists)?

It is academic now. The new revolutionary situation developing worldwide dwarfs such considerations.

Build Leninism.

Royston Bull

Futile last-ditch destabilisation only draws attention to the epoch-making scale of the British colonial retreat in Ireland, and to the magnitude and significance of the national-liberation victory. Sinn Féin's electoral triumph further humiliates the British Establishment's lying propaganda and the defeatist gibberish of the fake-'left'. Success in the national-democratic revolution could prepare the ground for successful socialist revolutionary struggle in the international economic crises ahead.

[*EPSR* No 957 07-07-98]

The childish stunt by die-hard 'unionism' to choose a road to parade along in order to cause maximum irritation, is a weird foot-stamping gesture **after** the smacking.

The Orange-colonist freemason's effort to wreck the New Agreement for Ireland by defying its new laws is an attempted last stand by bitter colonialism, shattered by the immensity of the changes now approaching.

The dying spirit of British Empire just cannot stomach the reality that after 800 years, direct colonial rule over Ireland is at last coming to an end.

This reactionary bellyaching by the Orange Lodges, the traditional core of British imperialism in Ireland, demonstrates clearer than anything what a triumph for the Irish national-liberation struggle the New Agreement has been, and exposes the propaganda-spin by Trimble, Blair, the Trots, and others (to save face) that the deal 'consolidates the Union and British control, and was **imposed** on Sinn Féin/IRA by imperialism standing firm', – as

so much lying nonsense, which should not fool even a half-wit.

This pathetic last stand by the Orangemen also shows to what a confused and degenerate condition the British imperialist spirit has now been reduced.

The artificial gerrymandered 'Northern Ireland' game had already been effectively lost for ever in the very negotiations themselves with Sinn Féin/IRA which British colonial intransigence had always vowed would **'never'** take place.

That **'no surrender'** obduracy was further seen to be demolished when the terms of the Agreement itself were finally published to a background of open Paisleyite contempt, and crippling splits in 'mainstream Unionism'.

More nails were driven into the artificial colony's coffin by the 71% Referendum support for the New Agreement, and then by the 77% support for pro-Agreement parties at last weekend's election count, with Sinn Féin winning the biggest increased vote of all, growing now to very significant propor-

tions (see below).

Yet now that the death of British colonial-domination is virtually all over bar the shouting, these sad relics of the past turn out to make an exhibition of themselves to show how hurt they really are, – and how defeated, in spite of all the lying propaganda about 'Union consolidated', etc, – but on an issue which can only underline their wretchedness.

What ludicrous 'cultural tradition' are they kidding people they wish to preserve by **insisting** that their military-formation marches, in full regalia behind the aggressively warlike loud Lambeg drumbeat, singing the songs of British supremacy, MUST go right through the heart of the Irish nationalist ghettos???

These last few remnants are seriously deranged people living in the wrong age entirely.

And now their constant hypocrisy, covering up centuries of their own colonial unpleasantness, has so twisted their minds that they now wish to present themselves as **victims** of 'apartheid', not its perpetrators for hundreds of years.

"Apartheid did not work in South Africa or in the southern states of the USA and it will not work in Northern Ireland" their idiot spokesman at Drumcree said yesterday, implying that by being stopped from provocatively parading through the Irish nationalist ghetto in Portadown, the town's overwhelming 'Unionist' (colonial-minded) majority was somehow being restricted to a ghetto of its own.

"We are being denied freedom, our liberty, and our rights", explained another. And this after 77 years of **blatant** repression and discrimination against the nationalist Irish population, imprisoned behind the infamously-imposed **partition** of 1921 (by British bayonets in defiance of the all-Ireland 1918 election vote for full 32-county independence), – which became **notorious** worldwide and was the obvious reason why the IRA's guerrilla-terrorist war won such international sympathy.

But this sick humbug does not even look as if it expects to be believed any longer.

This is a defeated community and a defeated tradition, passed by as far as history is concerned. British imperialism has simply lost its position in the world during this century, and lingering colonial domination of any part of Ireland has been no longer viable (or worth being burdened with) for decades.

The final symbolic routing of

this rotten Orange-colonial defiance of change is one of the only snags left on the transformation agenda, and it is unlikely to put any brake on progress. The bogus 'tradition'-pretence for a Garvaghy Road parade by Portadown Orangemen could all be sorted if the Lodge Grandees would simply acknowledge the existence of the nationalist Irish residents there, and talk to them.

But it is precisely **that** which gets to the nub of the problem, for this Orange obstinacy is simply the same Unionist '**no surrender**' determination **never** to even consider discussing with Sinn Féin/IRA any change to the 1921 colonial partition, **ever**, – or with anyone else.

This later became a refusal to negotiate "while Sinn Féin were in the same room". Further on, this was changed to "no talks with the Sinn Féin godfathers of terrorism until the IRA had been completely disarmed". Later still, this was again amended to "no negotiations until a start had been made to the decommissioning of IRA weapons". Then this 'stand' was abandoned to read "prisoner releases only in parallel with IRA weapons decommissioning". And so on, and so on.

Now these Orange colonial die-hards swear they will not talk to the 'terrorist' leader and Sinn Féin 'representative' of the Garvaghy Road residents until hell freezes over, etc.

It is just more stupid bluff and spite. These are dog-in-the-manger 'democrats'. If 'democracy' (i.e. their artificial Partition 'majority' deliberately gerrymandered at British imperialist bayonet-point in 1921) cannot proceed along its old corrupt path of total jobs, housing, and 'justice' discrimination in favour of pro-imperialist Unionist-colonist mentality and against the nationalist Irish, – then these Orange bigots, (who imposed a **real** 'apartheid', through the hopelessly and brutally biased RUC and 'B' Specials), would prefer to wreck democracy completely (meaning the capitalist-system 'rule of law' and 'parliamentary order', etc).

In the long run, this colonist backlash is doomed, – as even the capitalist press (which dementedly insists there has been no Sinn Féin/IRA victory in Ireland) is having to admit:

It was Billy Wright who orchestrated victory two years ago when the Orangemen went down the nationalist Garvaghy Road after a five-day stand-off. It was violence that paid dividends. After his Loyalist Volunteer Force shot

dead Michael McGoldrick, aged 31, a taxi-driver from nearby Lurgan. Sir Hugh Annesley, then chief constable, relented for fear of further loss of life.

But there was no Billy Wright yesterday, and the anger seemed resigned. UVF men were there, but they were promising to wait and see what the Orange Order's secret plans might be.

Ronald McConneil, aged 22, said: "I will be here until we win. I will be here for the rest of my life if it is necessary." Niall Cinnamon, aged 33, thumped his chest, and it was as eloquent an explanation of Orangeism as any on offer. He was there for his culture, his heritage and his country.

What they all meant was that Drumcree is the acid test. What happens here tells them who is winning in Northern Ireland.

Orangemen, Unionists, Protestants – the words are sometimes taken wrongly as synonyms – won last year. They were quickly pushed through at the appointed hour, to the fury of the residents.

That Catholics, nationalists and republicans – all lumped in together – have achieved a ban this year underlines Orange fears that the Good Friday Agreement is a sell-out and Northern Ireland is the commodity that is being hived off to Dublin.

Mr Young said: "We can see what is happening. The British government is selling out to Sinn Féin/IRA, not necessarily openly. It's proving to the Protestant people that violence does pay.

"Drumcree is our line in the sand. If we concede on this, we might as well say we are finished in our own country. We will never say that. It is inconceivable. There will be no more re-routing.

"Why should we talk? Do they want us to crawl on our knees to them? Never."

But this desperate colonist bid for sympathy is unlikely to succeed. The general anti-imperialist tide of 20th century history is against them, and sour vengeful Union-jack-waving about how the world OUGHT to be, or OUGHT to have been, will temporarily win some chauvinist popularity as the international trade war threatens Britain's fading standing in the world pecking-order more and more, – but has no serious future.

Rebel 'unionist' hopes for bloodied Orange heads at Drumcree (so as to further destabilise Trimble's position as the furtive reluctant, trying to make the best of the Unionist surrender to 32-county Irish nationalist reality), don't look too certain either, and won't last long anyway. Generous and reasonable offers like that of the Irish nationalist residents of the Garvaghy Road to accept negotiated Orange parades in future years **provided that it was agreed at direct compromise talks between the residents and the Orange Order NOW**,

and provided that the Orangemen would freely accept the Parades Commission re-routing order for **this** year, – will have their decisive impact on ALL public opinion eventually, (in spite of the deliberate British Establishment and British capitalist media blackout on this telling fact this time round which shows up **exactly** who is being 'awkward' and where are the only 'extremists').

Everything is running Sinn Féin's way in spite of all the colossal British imperialist attempts to hide the scale of the Irish national-liberation triumph and to belittle the tremendous achievements of Sinn Féin/IRA in particular.

Sinn Féin's rise to 17.6% is the biggest single increase of any major political force, up more than 2% since the 1996 Forum elections, and giving the four major parties in the Occupied Zone almost equal visibility, – Trimble's Unionists, the Paisleyites, the SDLP, and Sinn Féin.

Sinn Féin now commands 45% of the nationalist vote in the Occupied Zone compared to just 30% six years ago, and has become the third-widest supported party over all Ireland, after Fianna Fail and Fine Gael.

Sinn Féin's 17.6%, now just 50,000 votes behind the SDLP which topped the poll in the Occupied Zone, was a devastating exposure of the reactionary bias in the capitalist media 'forecasts'.

Prior to the Assembly elections, there was non-stop media propaganda predicting "an SDLP triumph, – just reward for what everyone acknowledges was their major role in the peace process". The outstanding opinion poll was that in the *Irish Times*, just 9 days before the ballot, which gave the SDLP 25% and Sinn Féin 10%.

And halfway through voting day, an *Irish Times*/RTE exit poll still only gave Sinn Féin 13%. It had in fact polled 17.6%, the biggest increase of any party.

The serious-minded working people in the Occupied Zone of Ireland have far better grasped who has really delivered peace in Ireland, – the national-liberation struggle led by Sinn Féin/IRA, without whose fight imperialism would never have admitted the NEED to find and concede a New Agreement for Ireland, – the 'peace process'.

But the transition from acknowledged direct-action champions of Irish self-termination to being a major electorally-backed party at the end of a negotiating and polling process which, has necessarily inevitably been dominated by

relentless confusing bourgeois propaganda, – should not be underestimated.

It is a phenomenal political development, indicating a maturity of revolutionary understanding and determination which promises great things not just for Ireland's future but for the whole international struggle against the imperialist system in crisis.

The Sinn Féin/IRA achievement in a colossal 30-year war, – marked on the British imperialist side by the most sustained vicious vilification campaign ever known in this modern epoch of mass brain-washing techniques; backed by the use of concentration camps for mass imprisonment and degradation without trial; by infamous torture barracks condemned by the European Court itself; by non-stop police-military-dictatorship TERROR of relentless after-midnight raids on nationalist residential areas to literally wreck homes and totally intimate the whole Irish population; by the even-more-terrifying shoot-to-kill death squads which cold-bloodedly massacred dozens of Irish nationalist victims; by the slimy evil of supergrass bribery and corruption on an impoverished community; by rubber-bullet murderous tyranny to keep 'order' on the streets; by the non-stop harassment of anyone Irish through the Prevention-of-Terrorism fascist regime in Britain's major cities and ports of entry; by monstrous judicial frame-up of Irish people on wholly fabricated charges of 'terrorist complicity and conspiracy', forcing totally innocent Irish families to collectively suffer hundreds of years jail sentences purely as 'exemplary punishment' just for being Irish; etc, etc, etc.

To have overcome all that persecution and humiliation and yet still become a major mature mass political party which has earned the respect and admiration of not only the long-suffering Irish nation in the Occupied Zone but of international public opinion as well, – is a prodigious political achievement rarely equalled in all of history.

In almost every situation now, Sinn Féin comes up with a mature rational response whose tactics, strategy, and programme reflect the movement's limited but principled socialist aspirations, and serve the national-revolutionary cause excellently well. It is a model for aspiring anti-imperialist struggles worldwide.

Sinn Féin already had a far better grasp of, – and a far

greater ability to apply, – a struggle for socialism than any major party in Europe, in spite of its non-Marxist basis. It is leading the democratic revolution in exemplary fashion. It will be fascinating to see how the various elements in Sinn Féin respond to the requirements of the socialist revolution as they begin to predominate in the coming months and years.

For the moment, Sinn Féin is correctly driving forward the national-liberation revolution as quickly as possible towards its eventual guaranteed goal, the reunification of Ireland and the completion of the national-democratic revolution, – as described here by *Republican News*:

If the march goes ahead it would also be at variance with the resounding nationalist success in the Assembly elections. The Six Counties is so clearly not the place it was even a few years ago. Nationalists emerged from the election with their highest ever share of the vote — a total of 39.6%. It is further proof that the nationalist community is on the march, so to speak. They will no longer tolerate being classed as second-class citizens. They are saying that in the polling stations as well as on the streets.

By contrast unionists are split wide open and that has implications for the wider Unionist community. The intransigent elements within Unionism are currently engaged in a long term rearguard action. In the Assembly and as regards Orange marches, they want to cling on to old certainties. Slowly but surely they will come to realise the sort of changes that are inevitable. One of them is respect for the rights of their nationalist neighbours.

The unionist vote was split so much that, for the first time, a nationalist party, the SDLP, topped the poll, with 22%.

But the SDLP has polled as high in the past. The real winners within nationalism were Sinn Féin. Their 17.6% confirms their steady advance this decade from less than 11% until now they are the biggest party in Belfast and in the counties of Tyrone and Fermanagh. The result also makes Sinn Féin the third largest party in Ireland. Their combined vote throughout the island is bettered only by Fianna Fail and Fine Gael.

A further piece of good news for Sinn Féin came in the shape of a report which shows that the party attracted 80% of new nationalist voters. That is a vital statistic given the SDLP's aging profile and it points to Sinn Féin soon becoming the largest nationalist party in the Six Counties.

But the SDLP now has the opportunity to rebuild. The prospect of salaried political careers is likely to see an influx of personally ambitious young people into the party in the coming years.

The contrast between nationalism and unionism which this election has exposed is indeed stark. The sense of empowerment which the peace process has given to nationalists is expressed in a confident, coherent strategy – against a palpable fear of the future among unionists. For them, it is the slow, painful process of coming to terms with change.

David Trimble, in particular, personifies unionist confusion and division. He signed up to the Agreement in what was seen as a courageous step forward but ever since he has tried to change it in favour of his position. Instead of campaigning on its potential to bring a brighter future he focused on those parts — release of prisoners, IRA decommissioning, Sinn Féin in cabinet — which have caused him most difficulty. It was arguably the stupidest campaign someone in his position could have fought and the result was the Ulster Unionists' lowest ever vote.

Trimble continually lets it be known that he still refuses to talk to Sinn Féin, and still insists on an IRA handover of arms in advance of Sinn Féin participation in the Assembly's Executive and before the release of prisoners.

By contrast, while he uses this negative rhetoric, there is evidence that Trimble is lagging behind his electorate. The result of the referendum indicates that he would win support if he gave positive leadership.

Gerry Adams has said that Trimble is torn between his emotions and his intellect — emotionally he is against change; intellectually he knows it must come. When his emotions and intellect are aligned, then we will see progress, Adams said.

That progress can only come by working the terms of the Agreement but so far there is nothing to show that Trimble has grasped that reality.

His language betrays his agenda. He fought the election on a platform of minimum change and has yet to reveal a strategy to move into the new future described by the Agreement. Even when he made what was billed as a forward-looking speech, Trimble pointedly ruled out dealing with republicans.

But Sinn Féin now has enough seats to guarantee them two cabinet positions. Trimble as First Minister will be faced with the dilemma of having to deal with two Ministers at the cabinet table while at the same time refusing to talk with them. The inevitabil-

ity of a climb down should see an eventual end to the farce. But it may run for a few months yet.

For the moment, the Assembly will be suspended until September. The Agreement stipulates that its institutions be in place by the end of October — in particular the all-Ireland bodies — but Trimble's Ulster Unionists have said they are determined to delay until well into next year. It is yet another indication of Trimble's short term tactics. The desire to hold back the tide of change reveals the lack of a coherent strategy. That tide of change could begin on the Garvaghy Road, but that is up to the British government. It is their first major test. We'll soon know if they have passed it. Behind the scenes loyalist death squads are said to be preparing to strike against nationalists and there have been warnings to be extremely vigilant. It could be a tense few weeks.

Early indications already again show sound revolutionary-democratic tactics of driving ahead with the Assembly all-Ireland provisions to make the changed culture of Ireland irreversible, and to insist on the public admission of compromise by die-hard 'unionists' in all possible circumstances, to cement the effective capitulation of colonial domination inherent throughout the entire New Agreement.

Elsewhere, Sinn Féin is likely to insist on the essential spirit of the new Parades Commission mandate being applied, – namely respect and equality of rights for the 'host' community where the marches are intended to take place, but without allowing silly provocations to let the Paisleyites bring down the Agreement.

British bourgeois opinion is still devastated by Sinn Féin/IRA's revolutionary triumph, and still suffering divisions over how to keep concealing this truth while trying to force the national-liberation movement onto the back foot.

The *Guardian* nearly split itself in two in furious response to the scalded Tory decision to break with bi-partisanship and oppose the bill permitting early prisoner releases unless the IRA was going to be **seen** to be disarmed under the 'decommissioning' joke.

The chairman of the Scott Trust, owning the *Guardian*, became almost incandescent in support of Tory insistence that the bog-trotters should be **seen** to lie down by symbolically laying down their arms:

In the minds of many people, early release of paramilitary prisoners

was supposed to be woven round the de-commissioning of paramilitary weaponry. But the present Bill carefully does not make de-commissioning a precondition of the release programme. This is left instead to the judgement of Dr Mowlam, who can decide whether the IRA and others are "co-operating fully" with the de-commissioning process: a softening of the pledge Mr Blair wrote out by hand to secure the referendum result.

Ulster Unionists aren't alone in looking for proof of compliance. What happened on Good Friday is supposed to have been the transformation of a war strategy into a peace strategy. It was designed as a very big deal, the biggest for 80 years. It was an avowal that "only democratic and peaceful means" would be deployed: that "acts of violence or preparation for violence" would be renounced: that "co-operating fully" with decommissioning was a sworn promise. Yet John Hume and others suggest that to demand categorical evidence of this is to breach some kind of sacred covenant.

It is unacceptable to regard decommissioning as a threat to the honour of republicanism, and intolerable to think of Mo Mowlam as an accomplice in this delusion: another triumph of pragmatic rule-breaking.

Almost a spluttering heart-attack from indignation, yet still not daring to speak in anything but euphemisms. What a fogley! For the issue, of course, is nothing to do with anyone "regarding decommissioning as a threat to the honour of republicanism". The blunt issue is that the triumphant national-liberation struggle is not going to participate in any significant 'decommissioning' until British imperialism and its Orange-colonist stooges have completed their capitulation to the New Agreement (towards reunification of Ireland) **in full**, – setting up the all-Ireland bodies; dismantling the old RUC; writing equality into the law; etc, etc, etc, – and letting the political prisoners out, of course. Astonishingly, the *Guardian* editorial on the **same day** directly contradicted the Scott Trust chairman:

Except that is not what Mr Blair pledged. His exact promise was that prisoners would be "kept in unless violence is given up for good". That's a demand for the ending of violence but not the surrender of weapons – and the two are not the same thing. As John Hume and others have pointed out, a terrorist army can hand in arms on Monday only to buy new ones on Tuesday: the key question is whether they have truly abandoned violence. Successful peace processes around the world have always avoided the issue of disarmament for this reason: they know it is a red herring. Worse, it tends only to serve as an obstacle to peace. The paramilitaries resent the symbolic surrender that decommissioning represents,

while others can never be fully reassured that the hardmen won't re-arm at a later date. The Tories have made a major mistake by raising such a distracting, yet incendiary issue just ten days before Assembly elections in Ulster.

More and more interesting. But these wily snakes also speak with forked tongue. They cannot say either: "Let's face it. The IRA won. So let's stop all the bullshit about decommissioning". What they do is blow a fuse about the Tories for **nearly** giving the game away by Tory futile foot-stamping indignation, **after** the horse has bolted, trying to close the stable door with much tut-tutting.

And, of course, still missing the point entirely, because the mere pledge to "give up violence" is even emptier, – and more telltale of imperialist defeat, – than promising to cooperate on decommissioning **after** the colonial-capitulation New Agreement has been implemented and all the prisoners released.

It is the **deal** itself which rules, as is obvious, and that is the one thing which the tormented British bourgeois establishment cannot bear to contemplate, or even to mention.

The national-liberation movement is on ceasefire in return for a **new deal**, for Ireland. If imperialism and its Orange-colonial stooges carry the deal out, then the peace process will become real, and mutual decommissioning **by both sides** can begin. But until Ireland's reunification is well under way via ALL the provisions of the New Agreement, then there will be nothing doing.

But this simple fact cannot be grasped or dared to be addressed by the entire oceans of bourgeois ideological torment and confusion which have surrounded this entire Irish peace process.

And the great 'free press' just failed to notice the giant tell-tale story that Trimble, who had made the most empty propaganda about Blair's non-existent 'pledge' of no prisoner releases without decommissioning in place, – made sure he was **absent** from the House of Commons when the Tories were opposing the new release legislation, fumed about by the reactionaries above.

The New Agreement in Ireland is a brilliant success for the national-liberation revolution. More anti-imperialist triumphs could follow. Belated Orange truculence can only increase imperialism's humiliation. Douglas Bell

Epoch-making collapse of Orange rule confirms the colossal importance of Sinn Féin/IRA national-liberation victory, not least for the interests of the working class in Britain. British imperialist decline will undermine aggressive capitalist chauvinism and is the real story of the bogus 'New World Order', – the Western colonising conspiracy trying to control a planet which has outgrown exploitation tutelage and is demanding completely new justice perspectives which only socialism can provide. Triumphant revolutionary tactics in Ireland are a model for the whole world, humiliating fake-'leftism'. Anti-revolutionary propaganda scuppered by imperialism's worsening economic crisis.

[EPSR No 960 28-07-98]

The shattering of Orange Order dominance at Drumcree symbolises dramatically what a real turning-point in history is represented by the New Agreement for Ireland.

Only something as significant as the end of an era of colonial power could have produced such remarkable political theatre as the fullscale preparations there to unleash longterm civil-war disobedience, only to be followed by the most ignominious collapse.

For hundreds of years, the British rulers of Ireland, typified by nothing so much as the bowler-hatted Orange parades, have been addicted to reminding Irish nationalists regularly who is in charge. The bewildered behaviour of these die-hard colonists this year at Drumcree in discovering for real that they were no longer the masters of the situation, gave a glimpse of the size and quality of an enormous historical transformation. These intransigent reactionaries had been refusing to accept that the profound changes from the New Deal to their own lives and to life in the Occupied Zone would ever in reality get past their own resistance if they did not like them.

Drumcree was the Orange Order's first taste of this new way of life, and they hated it, and are now in an even worse state of shock for finding there was nothing they could do about it.

And the full meaning of what has been agreed with Irish national interests by foot-dragging surly British imperialism, still arrogantly haughty because of being **obliged** to do a deal, is still only just sinking in with all kinds of dependants, direct and indirect, on the imperialist status quo.

Ireland's new beginning has massive and important implications for everyone. Won by the past 30 years national-liberation struggle and guerrilla war led by Sinn Féin and the IRA, the Agreement was **forced** on British imperialism and a very reluctant colonist ruling class (the 'Unionists') in the Occupied Zone, reflecting Britain's imperialist decline.

At the same time, the triumph for national-liberation, and the revolutionary nature of the political campaigns and the armed conflict, provide a very different perspective for current international anti-imperialist struggle than the 'US New World Order' defeatism revelled in by the Trots (and bourgeois propaganda generally).

And that indication that all is far from well with the international imperialist economic system, and the implication that anti-capitalist revolutions might not be as far off as popular prejudice imagines, re-emphasises the significance of the indirect benefit from the Agreement for the working class

in Britain.

All the time that police-military campaigns to suppress 'terrorist' revolt continue not yet defeated, for just so long does racist chauvinism tie most workers to cheering on their own national flag in the conflict. In these conditions of jingoistic war, a workers revolt against their own capitalist state is unlikely ever to even start, whatever good cause might exist on other grounds.

Marx famously explained a hundred years ago that no nation which enslaves another can itself be free, and specifically analysed the disastrous spirit of class-collaboration with its own ruling class which workers in Britain nurtured due to their inculcated hatred of 'Irish terrorists', being put down at that time by the British authorities just as in the last 30 years (and just as always!).

Marx described the racist contempt (even worse at that time) with which English workers could be agitated against the Irish living in Britain whenever there was any colonial freedom struggles against the British occupation (then of all 32 counties of Ireland), or whenever divide-and-rule splits could be driven between English and Irish-origin workers (in the same locality) – over pay rates, or unemployment, or whatever.

The same thing is tried today by capitalist culture, splitting workers over colour and race issues, and still against the Irish, too, in many areas. And such racist divisions will continue to be inflicted on workers by capitalist culture, of course, all the time that capitalism survives.

But bringing to an end the extreme hate/conflict circumstances of when "our British boys" (army and police in Occupied Ireland) are being killed by Irish national-liberation fighters, will massively reduce the opportunities for the disruptive sowing of anti-Irish race-hatred.

The sense of slight embarrassment for Britain in all this (having for so long backed Orange-colonist intransigence to the hilt), – a shameful understanding, possibly more widely felt than has been made manifest in the media coverage of the great turnaround in Ireland, – will not harm the independent-mindedness of British workers either. There have been no searing admissions of British Imperialism's guilt or responsibility for the last 30 years' futile foot-dragging torment for the legitimate self-determination rights for the Irish in Ireland (through clinging on to the untenable and troubles-breeding

fiction-provocation of 'Northern Ireland, British for ever' when it is just a ripped-out part of Ireland, stolen in 1921 at British imperialist bayonet-point), – or for the 800 years imperialist domination before that, it might be added.

But the self-conscious edge to the sudden humiliating about-turn by the capitalist mainstream press after Drumcree, – at last denouncing the Union Jack-waving 'Brits' for the domineering fascist-chauvinist degenerates they really are, – showed a red-faced discomfort (in place of the guilt and remorse which imperialist reaction is incapable of feeling and expressing, even when cowed, as British imperialism has been by its spectacular failure in colonising 'Northern Ireland').

The less pride that patriotic English workers feel obliged to take in the record of "their country's" conduct in the colonial-racist tyranny over Occupied Ireland since 1921 (and for 800 years before that), the better for their own salvation in future struggles against the catastrophically international slump-ridden imperialist economic system.

The more that workers in Britain can identify 800 years of sordid mistreatment of Ireland with the English **ruling class** and its system, which were entirely responsible for that appalling record of brutality and disaster, – the less dangerously will they be held back by flag-waving class-compromising delusions when the need comes for them to put the boot into

the British capitalist state themselves because of its slump, unemployment, and war-mongering impositions, – all due shortly on a huge scale.

The compromise forced on British imperialism and on Orange colonialism over Ireland is, for English workers, not quite the classic "defeat of one's own ruling class" which was so crucial a part of Bolshevik-led revolutionary consciousness in the 1917 overthrow of the workers own state because of humiliating failure in disastrous military action abroad, – but it is a massive distance from "victory in foreign wars" by which a ruling class has traditionally cemented its domestic position under capitalism.

And by being seen as much more of a sad mishandled failure than as a success, Britain's involvement in Ireland has damaged British imperialist class-collaborating solidarity rather than enhanced it. Union-Jack triumphalism, which has been so massively important for the British ruling class in the capitalist era – and not least from its periodic bullying savagery against Ireland, – is definitely at an end re Ireland, both on the British Establishment's own behalf, and now also on behalf of its Orange Order colonial stooges in the Occupied Zone.

This is a great victory for the Irish nation, and a great victory for the working class in Britain too, as explained above.

The method of its gaining is of equally colossal importance for the working class – internationally, – a victory for revolution-

ary struggle, arms in hand.

Even if it was not self-evident in itself, the significance of this could be worked out from the absolutely phenomenal volume of propaganda disinformation and vilification this issue has aroused, and the amount of never-ending political wrangling it has led to, – still going on now.

Not 'national-liberation guerrilla war' but 'simple murder by criminals and terrorists' the British Establishment has insisted throughout. The huge internment, detention, and imprisonment sweeps have been not of 'prisoners-of-war and political prisoners', the authorities have insisted, but of 'common criminals'.

This deliberately humiliating attempt by vicious British colonialism to add insult to injury was famously fought back against, of course, by the history-making hunger strikes and dirty protests which the national-liberation struggle prisoners fought out bitterly for years with mounting and increasingly-important public support from the Irish population of the Occupied Zone, and internationally as well, – culminating in the ten Irish heroes of self-determination who starved themselves to death to prove their **political** incorruptibility, and their **political** superiority to British colonial cynicism.

The pitiless hypocrisy of this imperial opportunism by the colonial administration of 'Northern Ireland' was ludicrously kept up throughout the interminable negotiations, in



public, and behind the scenes, which 25 blood-stained years later, finally produced the New Agreement, now the law of the land.

By making Sinn Féin/IRA full parties to the Agreement, the British Establishment, – who have finally signed up after growing pressure from Washington, the European Union, world public opinion, and, increasingly, opinion inside Britain itself, – finally indirectly acknowledged fully the obviously permanent **political** legitimacy of the Irish self-determination struggle; and the programme for the release of the political and military supporters of all the parties to the Agreement within the next two years proves that they were all **political** prisoners and prisoners-of-war, and have clearly been so all along.

But to the last, this nonsense was kept going from the 'Unionist' colonial gangsters about keeping the Sinn Féin 'terrorists' away from 'democratic' power and involvement, and out of meaningful negotiations, and kept out until all their 'criminal weapons' had been confiscated by the police, etc, etc, etc.

And to the last, the British Establishment and capitalist press kept on considering and reporting these 'Unionist' propaganda points seriously in a never-ending effort to belittle Sinn Féin's credibility as a major **political** force, and to perpetuate, in the public's mind, confusion about the magnitude of British imperialism's defeat on the Ireland question, finally **forced** to negotiate a **political** deal with Sinn Féin/IRA which it had always sworn it would never do.

Even then, the imperialist negotiators could not forbear from provocatively and irresponsibly allowing the "decommissioning" nonsense to drag on endlessly, confusing the half-witted and the Trot reactionaries who wanted to be confused. Although there was never a question of the IRA agreeing to any disarmament unilaterally, or to much at all before the New Agreement is well in place and working, (particularly all the cross-border all-Ireland new arrangements and the six-country equality/cooperation transformation), – the imperialist aim was to still insolently allow the old propaganda distortions to linger on, implying that 'criminal gunmen' were being given a chance to 'go straight' provided they handed in their weapons to the 'forgiving, all-powerful authorities', and other such nonsense.

But British imperialism **had**

to make a new Agreement in the end because of the arms-in-hand **revolutionary** challenge of the national-liberation struggle's impeccable and invincible **political** position.

The British Establishment could not afford to sustain many more domestic defeats and humiliations such as the last two blastings of London Docklands and Manchester city centre represented. The material damage was colossal and increasingly unacceptable. The potential harm to internal political stability in Britain from the failed Irish policy was becoming threatening. The loss to Britain's prestige internationally was beginning to cause the danger of unsupportable commercial losses, particularly in the City of London where important international cogs in the wheel of London's crucial invisible-exports/services sector of the economy were threatening to quit if the war went on.

The bombing campaign against British imperialist targets in Britain and the Occupied Zone of Ireland amounted to not just an obvious national-liberation struggle, political through-and-through, but also to a highly significant level of very accomplished revolutionary-guerrilla war with enormous implications for all anti-imperialist struggle everywhere.

This was another reason why British imperialism was so insistent on denouncing 'terrorism' and refusing to give it any recognition at all, and why international imperialism to some extent always went along with Britain on this score, at least, because it suited their own interests to scotch the idea that revolutionary guerrilla war had any worthwhile role to play any longer in the modern world, – (even at the same time as these international forces felt obliged by public opinion to keep offering some sympathy and credibility to Sinn Féin).

But revolutionary guerrilla war is what it was, – and brilliantly successfully was it conducted, too, – one of the major all-time epics of the potential lethality of each determined minority-forces struggle once the appropriate area of public opinion begins to get mobilised behind the national-liberation-struggle aims and triumphant methods. Imperialism, beware!

Some of the sickest support for this British imperialist line (that this national-liberation struggle deserved no recognition as such, and deserved no support from any right-thinking civilised communities any-

where), – came indirectly from the petty-bourgeois wretchedness of the fake-'left'.

The Trots have never stopped a constant barrage of sneering at Sinn Féin/IRA, for "reactionary Green sectarianism" and "counter-revolutionary disrupting and murdering of what should have been a revolutionary socialist insurrection in Ireland", etc, – or else jeering at Adams & Co for now "betraying the IRA's military campaign" and for now "pursuing bourgeois careerism within capitalist political orthodoxy", etc, etc.

These imbecile Trot sects of middle-class subjectivism will of course claim that their 'constructive criticism' of Sinn Féin/IRA was no way intended to play into the hands of British imperialism's non-stop propaganda campaign of vilification, distortion, and misinformation.

But in such a clearcut anti-imperialist struggle for national self-determination as this, these pretended Trotskyite 'good intentions' are worthless humbug.

The vast British working class and middle class public knew only of Sinn Féin's political campaigns and the IRA's guerrilla war as challenging British imperialism. To hear from the supposed 'left' intelligentsia, as well as from the right-wing Establishment, what a bad destructive lot Sinn Féin and the IRA were with no conceivable worthwhile goals to achieve, – will have done colossal 'public opinion' damage among workers.

And what utter crap all this ultra-leftist blather was, – and still is, – as exposed in countless *Reviews* past.

There was never any equation between Green and Orange 'reactionary nationalism'. There was only a national-liberation struggle against a 'British' colonial ruling class. And there has been no 'socialist revolution' remotely in sight. It was always an imaginary fiction by bar-room 'revolutionaries' in England who saw themselves in their minds as superior 'revolutionaries and guerrilla leaders' to Sinn Féin and the IRA.

The later charge of 'betrayal' of the IRA by Sinn Féin and of 'bourgeois political careerism' is equally naff. The national-liberation struggle's aim was to force British imperialism into dismantling its monstrous, unviable and degenerate Orange colony in Partitioned-Off Occupied Ireland, and negotiating a completely New Agreement giving every opportunity for re-merging the affairs of both parts of Ireland, with an open

road to complete reunification in the fairly near future, with all "Never: No Surrender" colonist intransigence politically defused once and for all.

That is exactly what has happened, and not only is that why the guerrilla war can declare a ceasefire, but it is precisely **because** the revolution offered a ceasefire **from a position of strength** that the British Establishment finally grasped at the opportunity to renegotiate Ireland's self-determination without too much humiliating embarrassment, dragging a reluctant 'Unionist' majority along with it. It was a **national** revolution, not a socialist revolution.

And the national reunification now on the cards, developing on from the now legally-required re-merger of most of the affairs of the two parts of Ireland, will obviously initially be a reunification on the basis of bourgeois rule. The struggle for socialism can proceed much more readily as soon as the overwhelmingly irresistible claims for completed self-determination for the Irish in their own country have been satisfied by a negotiated end-perspective to the colonising occupation which hitherto had been declared to be permanently sacrosanct for all time.

This infamous Trotskyite provocation, refusing to even acknowledge the existence of this terminal perspective for "Northern Ireland", let alone its enormous historical significance, is still at its disruptive agitation, trying to persuade Irish workers to desert all trust in the Sinn Féin/IRA triumphant strategy on the ground that it has now "abandoned defending the nationalist population" capitulating to "complete British control once more" allegedly. The latest insulting version of this provocation declared on July 9 in the *Weekly Worker*:

Sinn Féin too is placing all its hopes on its former enemy. Far from mobilising militant republicans to defend the Garvaghy Road residents, SF president Gerry Adams said that the government's will to enforce the Parades Commission ban was the 'acid test'.

This is monstrous madness. Completely misrepresenting on obvious simple national-liberation tactic of putting British imperialism and its former Orange-colonial stooges at loggerheads over the Drumcree intransigence (in order to drive the wedge further and further between them), – all in the cause of 'proving' this defeatist prejudice the Trotskyites started out from to begin with, – namely that the all-powerful imperialist 'New World Order'

was **forcing** Sinn Féin/IRA to abandon its anti-imperialist strategy and programme and to accept permanent legitimisation, in Irish eyes, of the 'Northern Ireland' colony.

This is subjective idealism, the philosophical method of the petty bourgeoisie, at its most degenerate.

These Trots have a class-originated fixation about the strength of the imperialist bourgeoisie and its supposedly current all-powerfulness to impose anything on anyone anywhere under this 'New World Order'; and having begun with this notion in their heads, they are never going to let the facts, or practice, get in the way of a 'good theory'.

Marxist science, of course, operates in completely the opposite way, – formulating a theory in order **only** to test it in practice, and to discard it or amend it according to how the facts on the ground pan out.

The joke 'New World Order' is in ribbons just from its catastrophic inability to halt the international economic collapse alone, not having a clue what to do about the progressive crashing of markets spreading out from paralysed South East Asia and Japan.

But its military 'policing' of the rest of the world has long been a total joke too, – failing miserably in Haiti, being driven out of Somalia in disgrace, getting nowhere through its proxies in Colombia or Mexico, and even still being ridiculed and challenged by Iraq's Saddam Hussein, etc.

And the Pakistan and Indian nuclear tests simply ignored the 'new world order' completely.

And in Ireland, the No 1 stooge of this US domination, – British imperialism, – was clearly **forced** to do a deal with national-liberation 'terrorists' it said it would **never** negotiate with previously, and equally clearly **forced** to abandon defending the intransigence of its Orange-colonist bully-boys at last.

Sinn Féin's tactics have been exemplary. The Orange-colonist reactionaries **hate** the New Agreement and will do anything to wreck it or to see it wrecked. That was the whole point of its 'loyalist' provocations around July 12 and Drumcree, – to murder, burn out, and intimidate in order to get Sinn Féin/IRA to break the ceasefire, and give cause for tearing up the New Agreement.

The national-liberation movement could only have retaliated against known loyalist thugs with like-for-like violence, any-

way. The IRA has not been in a position to carry out widespread **direct** territorial defence of nationalist areas under threat of loyalist terror.

The smartest tactic by far was to oblige the dying moments of British sovereignty over the Occupied Zone of Ireland to live up to the new equality/self-determination agreement Britain has stage-managed, dramatically signalling to the whole world what a colonial climb-down there has been, and obliging British state force to finally bring it home to the Orange reactionary essence of the colony that the old days of the 'Northern Ireland' tyranny in **all** its aspects, are gone forever, or going.

Both the turncoat British capitalist press and *Republican News* commented in their very different ways on this extraordinary moment in history, – worth putting on record in line with the *EPSR's* consistent approach for nearly 20 years on Ireland, mapping British imperialism's reluctant longterm plan to effect a snail's-pace withdrawal from Ireland in the face of unbeatable guerrilla war and revolutionary political struggle, led by Sinn Féin/IRA, – while all the time trying to hide that imperialist retreat from the world.

The capitalist press is still at that same concealment, only this time hiding the fact that this is the first moment that the bourgeois-imperialist media have so clearly fingered Unionist intransigence as being the real cause of all the troubles, backed by British colonialism; still distorting the full national-liberation significance of the New Agreement (pretending that it is a Trimble achievement, and a deal for "decommissioning", when in reality it is a straightforward British capitulation to the age-old Irish self-determination struggle which Trimble had great difficulty in signing up to with any dignity, and which the armed guerrilla struggle will **supervise** all the way to completion before **mutual** all-sided demilitarisation and disarmament come into it); and blithely now insisting on such things as direct talks with the Garvaghy Road residents which were never remotely British capitalist press concerns in the past, being too busy vilifying and misrepresenting Sinn Féin and the IRA, the real heroes of the peace:

THROUGHOUT the Northern Ireland troubles, Orangemen, loyalists and unionists have made strong arguments against either power-sharing with nationalists or contacts with Sinn Féin, on the grounds that it would undermine

democracy. Majority rule was all that mattered.

Thus Ian Paisley could stalk Ulster's moral high ground while thousands of Orangemen stood on hillsides waving their gun licences in the air in frightening, if symbolic, defiance of the first Anglo-Irish Agreement.

These were the same loyalists who destroyed the 1974 power-sharing executive. Now, at Drumcree, these same Orangemen are attempting to destroy the new democratic structures which 72 per cent of the electorate voted to put in place.

The Orange Order's cries of 'Croppies lie down' still resonate with bigotry and sectarianism. The Drumcree 'siege' is still about the centuries-old Protestant triumphalism over Catholics, and to claim that a march with such a clearly intimidatory purpose is an exercise in civil rights is absurd.

But the real enemy of the extremist Orangemen camped out at Drumcree is David Trimble and the Belfast Agreement, with its power-sharing executive, its Sinn Féin representation, its cross-border bodies and its deals on decommissioning and prisoner releases.

For diehard unionists, who would prefer a police state to a civil society, provided nationalists are kept out in the cold, the siege of Drumcree is the last roll of the dice.

For the first time this standoff is between the Orange marchers and the law. The independent Parades Commission, the statutory body which rules on parades, has shown admirable determination. The RUC and Army have put up enormous defences to ensure that this time the Orangemen do not get their way by threatening mayhem.

With the stage set for widespread violence, the secret 'proximity' talks organised by the Government between Orangemen and the nationalist Garvaghy Road residents are the best hope for peace. They provide a face-saving device that will allow the Orangemen to pack up their tents in the face of the overwhelming democratic wishes of the Province.

The Government must not back down.

Republican News put it much better, justifiably revelling in the despicable Orangemen's discomfort, and settling scores with reactionary Green Tory journalism in Dublin:

DISARRAY amongst Orangemen continued this week with the resignation of several Orange Order chaplains and the threat of resignation from around 20 more who are reported as "considering their position".

Less than a week ago the Orange Order had been determined to turn back the tide of history. Massing on Drumcree Hill, the Order threatened not only to overrun the nationalist estate along the Garvaghy Road but overturn the Good Friday Agreement, scuppering the new Assembly before it had barely been launched. The Drumcree stand-off

had been building to a showdown, the 'settling' day threatened by Ian Paisley, but in the event, only the Orange Order was cut adrift.

David Jones, press officer for the Orange Order's Portadown district, was left floundering in the role of King Canute. William Bingham, Orange Chaplain for County Armagh spoke for a rising tide of dissatisfaction within the order when he called for an end to the stand-off and protests. In his pulpit address Bingham created a window of opportunity for the order to retreat with some dignity, but the Portadown lodge responded by voting unanimously to continue the protest.

A decisive statement by the Grand Masters might have made all the difference but, defensive in front of the media, they supported their "Portadown brethren" though without any obvious enthusiasm.

A spiral into disarray became inevitable. The threatened 100,000 Orangemen massing after the 12th dwindled to a couple of thousand as the order voted with its feet and stayed away.

Even in the heartland of Portadown, a rally addressed by District Grand Master Harold Gracey failed to muster the 15,000 expected by the organisers. Less than 2,000 turned out.

Drumcree began as an Orange show of strength but it increasingly demonstrated, beyond the threat of sectarian violence, the order's marginalisation. Politically the order was exposed as a spent force but it was a reality few Orangemen had time to come to terms with. Still determined to hold the line, David Jones said the deaths of the three boys in Ballymoney was the result of collusion between the British Crown forces and loyalists determined to discredit the Orange Order.

The fact that an articulate and educated man, an information technology officer for the Eastern Health Board, was prepared to indulge in such wild accusations indicated his desperation. He would later claim that weapons discovered during a crown forces' raid of Drumcree field may have been placed there by republicans.

Orangemen were in a hole but they were determined to keep digging. Meanwhile, the DUP were orchestrating a whispering campaign against the Quinn family in a last ditch attempt to distance the Drumcree stand off by claiming the motive was not sectarian. Ian Paisley Jr telephoned journalists to say that RUC sources had suggested the attack may have been the result of a domestic dispute and a family member had been arrested. It was a lie.

Spurious rumours began to circulate that the Quinn deaths

were 'drug related'. It was a desperate tactic, ineffective outside the order and only fuelling division within.

Film footage of Joel Patton of the Spirit of Drumcree denouncing Bingham as a "traitor" during the '12th celebrations' at Pomeroy encapsulated the contending forces with the order. Off camera Bingham was confronted again by Patton's supporters and unceremoniously thrown into a ditch.

That evening Bingham met with 19 other Orange chaplains to discuss their response to the 'crisis'. Resignation from the Order was one option considered, but the meeting was reluctant to leave the field open for Patton and his ilk.

When a statement supporting Bingham was released by two of his fellow chaplains, all three received death threats. For over a week, the violence of the Orange Order had been unleashed primarily against the nationalist community, now it was turning in on itself.

The new "hate figure", Bingham was increasingly portrayed as the saving face of Orangeism. Ruth Dudley Edwards of the *Sunday Independent* likened Bingham to Martin Luther King. Bingham "a great and courageous leader" had "saved Northern Ireland from collapsing into anarchy", wrote Dudley Edwards. In fact, as a prominent leader in the Drumcree stand-off, Bingham had played a key role in bringing the Six Counties to the brink of chaos. Dudley Edwards went further "If the Orange Order is to be saved, Bingham will have to become its Grand Master".

The Drumcree stand-off began with all pomp and ceremony by day... It ended with murder and mayhem by night. Founded 200 years ago in the wake of a sectarian pogrom in which 60 Portadown Catholics lost their lives, the Orange Order has flourished within the sectarian operation of the Six County state. Since the order's inception, "thousands of Catholics have been murdered, tens of thousands have been forced to flee.

For many Orangemen it must have seemed inexplicable when the order began to founder last week. "Three nil, three nil," ritually chanted Orangemen as they passed nationalist residents along the Cruimlin Road, but for once the murder of the Quinn children signalled more than just three more dead taigs.

The transformation could not have been registered more spectacularly. Now the whole world, – Trot sectarian idealists apart, living in their fake-'revolutionary' ivory towers, – can be in no doubt that a

historic turning point has been reached in Ireland.

First the Orange Order became painfully distanced from the rest of 'Unionism' as the Parades Commission, the RUC, and then Trimble all declared that the provocation against the Garvaghy Road nationalists should not so ahead this year.

Then the Orange Order itself split into feuding factions about how to mount their challenge to the new 'law and order'.

Next, lumpen support for the Orangemen began to drain away on all sides, faced with a clearly paralysed and inadequate reactionary leadership.

Finally, the call has come from the top of the Orange Order for a complete climb down, and for direct negotiations to begin immediately between the local Lodges and any nationalist residents group who wish to discuss their objections to being provoked with triumphalist colonising parades.

That is game, set, and match to the national-liberation struggle after 800 years.

That is the beginning of the end of 'Northern Ireland' colonialism.

Financial, trading, and administrative reunification of all-Ireland affairs covering much of the life of the Occupied Zone, plus steady demographic changes, will soon create a climate where any further resistance to the logical full reunification of Ireland will begin to melt away as being quite pointlessly in no one's interests.

With the triumphal privileges gone for ever, – legal, business, and administrative, – any remaining purely nostalgic or 'cultural' triumphalism is either going to rapidly die a death, or become completely transformed in its nature into something like Morris Dancing in England.

The Orangemen have gone out in spectacularly bad taste and ill grace. What more could have been asked of such a vicious and unpleasant relic of British empire in a country where its colonial tyranny has written some of the most savage pages of its frequently despicable colonial history.

Gerry Adams helped gently push them on their way as their Drumcree-threatened intransigence began to mount menacingly:

The issue of inclusive and direct dialogue, based on equality, is at the crux of this matter. The Orangemen refuse to talk. They refuse to accept the rights of nationalists to be consulted or for them to chose their own representatives.

In other words they refuse to come to terms with the reality that if there is to be truly a new era then no group has the right to dominate another group. I accept this is a difficult concept for unionism and Orangeism to embrace at this time.

This statelet was established as an Orange State, and the Orange Order was the cement which held unionism, — of all classes and social groupings, — together. The Orange Order is a sectarian, anti-Catholic organisation which has members well placed in all of the institutions of the state — the various unionist and loyalist parties, the civil service, the judiciary, the RUC, through the Churches, and sections of the business community. It has a vested interest in maintaining the status quo. It is against change. It has chosen the marches issue as the battlefield on which it intends to rally all those elements who are against equality and change.

The growing confidence of the nationalist section of our people, efforts to implement an equality agenda, and the need to build a new society on this island, is seen by Orangeism as a threat to its position.

But it is only through dialogue that the two sides, that is those of us who want change and those who feel threatened by change, will get to understand each others positions.

So, the main objective of all who wish to see these matters resolved must be to bring about dialogue.

The responsibility upon the British government must be to uphold the rights of all citizens to be free from sectarian harassment. If it genuinely means to do this, then the British government risks alienating substantive elements of unionism, if only on a temporary basis. So London, and the establishment on this island, have only come to this proposition reluctantly (as an example of other years on Garvaghy Road testify.)

The temptation now is for the pressure to be put on the residents because it will be suggested, as it has been already, that they need to make concessions to Orangeism rather than risk David Trimble's position,

This type of pressure on the residents also ignores the rights of the host communities to equality, justice and freedom from sectarian harassment as outlined in the Good Friday Agreement. Mr Trimble's new position, achieved through his support for the Good Friday Agreement, with all of these positions, compels him to take a non-partisan position on these matters and a proactive role in seeking their resolution.

He cannot refuse to talk. Only

last week the representatives of all of the political parties in this state, including many Orange leaders, were present at the inaugural meeting of the shadow Assembly. Unionists, including Orange members sit in local government with representatives of all of the other parties. and do business with them. The same thing must happen now it a voluntary accommodation is to be found to the current crisis.

The Garvaghy Road Residents Coalition have already put forward a five-point initiative to resolve the stand-off at Garvaghy Road. Unfortunately this was rejected by the unionists and the Orange Order. I would appeal to them to reconsider this initiative or to propose an alternative. In any case I would ask them to enter into dialogue because without dialogue an accommodation is impossible. With dialogue a solution is always a possibility.

In conclusion, I want to reiterate my call for all democrats to support the residents in the beleaguered nationalist areas, particularly on the Garvaghy Road. No community should have to endure the demonisation which the residents of Garvaghy Road or the Lower Ormeau Road are subjected to or the annual siege which these communities have to suffer.

There can be no backing down now in the face of pressure and threats from the massed ranks of Orangeism. The current difficult phase must be managed calmly and with an eye to the future. We must come down on the right side of history. And the right side of history is the side of equality and change. We cannot expect those who fear change to come on board until they know that they cannot stop it.

This represents some of the clearest, cleverest, and most determined anti-imperialist politics on earth at the moment, phenomenally steeled in bitter suffering and struggle.

It is insulting nonsense to suggest that such strength of political leadership arises from a movement which has "capitulated" to British imperialism as the sick Trots insist, and which would have failed to return to the revolutionary armed struggle, breaking their own ceasefire yet again, **if** British imperialism had failed to live up to its obligations to enforce the new law at Drumcree, killing the Deal.

Completely defeated by a masterful 30-year national-liberation struggle, Orangeism-triumphalism had little left to do but crawl away and die. Lemming-like, it committed political suicide at Drumcree.

The national-liberation revolutionary triumph in Ireland is nearing completion.

Build Leninism. Royston Bull

Omagh tragedy will only increase the pressures for getting on with the New Deal for Ireland, ending the colonisation cause of all the trouble and promoting its 32-county full self-determination cure.

[EPSR No 963 13-08-98]

Apart from diehard imperialist reactionaries at the fascist extremes of 'Unionism' and the BBC, the anti-Agreement bombing has helped convince most other participants that Sinn Féin's programme to press on with the new arrangements as rapidly as possible is the only sensible response.

Nationalist or loyalist resistance to the compromise deal will lose what little mass support it does have once the Agreement is put into operation, demonstrating that it will facilitate the only complete peace of a reunified Ireland eventually,

while at the same time forcing no cultural, religious, or political structures onto the old British colonial community which would create harm for them.

'No Surrender' colonial intransigence over the Occupied Zone of Ireland ('Northern Ireland', so-called) via police-military dictatorship is the only casualty politically, and in return for long-term peace to end all the life-and-limb civil-war casualties, even the vast mass of 'Unionist' bigotry and triumphalism will eventually be reconciled to it.

Sensing the rapidly-changing

mood, Trimble & Co were very cautious about exploiting the situation for too much sectarian advantage of trying to delay Agreement developments too obviously (complete equality agenda in the north, immediate cross-border government bodies with the south) by irrelevantly harping on against prisoner-releases and for quicker decommissioning, both of which would only help build up anti-Treaty nationalist resistance.

The faster the Deal presses on, the more futile and pointless will the Omagh tragedy appear, and the more will the wind be completely taken out of the sails of the dissident Republican splits, — exactly as Sinn Féin has explained to everyone.

It is precisely the IRA's still-fully-armed participation in the Agreement which gives the genuine compromise peace process its greatest conviction. The Republican extremes could doubt for ever the value of a Deal to which only a disarmed IRA were party. Participating fully armed, the IRA's approval proves that the deal means enormous progress for the national-liberation cause, as practice will demonstrate in time.

The British imperialist establishment and its current political office-holders, Blair & Co, still accept that the need is to get on with the reunification of Ireland process and snail's-pace withdrawal of British imperialism from Ireland, and have used Omagh only for stressing the need for the Agreement. The police-chief liaison, in these circumstances, only illustrates how the Agreement means the eventual end to the Border completely.

Even some of the capitalist-press/bourgeois propaganda around the Omagh tragedy has already begun to regard Ireland as just ONE country, with discussion of Ireland's affairs as seen 'in the north' and 'in the south', etc.

It remains a bourgeois-capitalist Ireland, of course, which was always obviously the only immediately practical historical possibility. But Sinn Féin remains the best-organised, ideologically-soundest party closest to socialism on earth. The crisis of imperialism could see it develop further.

Build Leninism.

Roy Bull

Omagh: *Republican News* comment reflects growing Sinn Fein political authority as leaders of the successful national-liberation struggle.

[EPSR No 964 25-08-98]

AFTER such an appalling tragedy it is difficult even to attempt political analysis. Only words of sympathy for the bereaved and maimed seem appropriate at such a time. Yet we must try to assess why this atrocity happened and how further deaths and injuries can be prevented.

Words such as 'psychopaths' and serial killers' have been used. In the heat of anger and grief this is understandable but the people who carried out the Omagh atrocity do not fit that description. The Omagh bombing was carried out by a splinter group which claims to be republican. The group brought about this tragedy because it is mired in militarism.

Any struggle which adopts the tactic of armed force is in danger of succumbing to militarism. Militarism means that military

considerations come before all others. The political nature of the struggle is obscured. The continuation of the armed campaign itself becomes the objective.

When this happens the tactic of armed struggle — rather than the political objective for which it is carried out — is elevated to a principle. In a protracted struggle such as that in Ireland the danger of militarism is increased. When the militarism of the state intensifies the war through repression the danger is greatest. Defeat looms for a struggle which allows itself to become caught in a spiral of conflict, losing sight of the political context, the strategic objectives, and ultimate effects of armed force.

Succumbing to militarism increases the danger to non-combatants because of ill-conceived or reckless military operations by the insurgents. It plays into the hands of the oppressive state because it greatly enhances the efforts of the state to isolate the insurgents politically.

There comes a stage where isolation is so complete that the insurgent group becomes

insulated from the political effects of its actions. That is, it becomes isolated from its own people. It falls back behind the defences of its dwindling support and unless it extricates itself from militarism by a change of strategy it is bound for certain defeat.

It is obvious that the splinter group responsible for the Omagh bombing is totally militarist. It has passed through the stages above and gone further. This group has no community or political support base upon which to fall back. Its minuscule support is confined to the immediate associates of its activists. Now, as revulsion at the Omagh atrocity grows, it faces a wave of repression North and South.

Republicans will not join in the clamour for more repression, such as 'selective internment'. There is a dangerous argument abroad now that "only a security response" can address this situation.

The danger here is that the cycle of armed repression and armed resistance, albeit by a very small group, could be intensified.

Recruits could be won on the basis of sympathy, as they surely must have been following the killing of Ronan Mac Lochlainn in Wicklow earlier this year by Gardai who could have arrested him. The reality is that only continued political progress can see the ending of this futile militaristic campaign.

What are the objectives of this group's campaign? Accusations

that they intended to kill a large number of civilians in Omagh seem wide of the mark. Nonetheless they bear full responsibility for the deaths. Their campaign itself is ill-conceived; their modus operandi was deeply flawed both in placing such a bomb in the middle of a busy street on a Saturday afternoon and, apparently, in their botched warning.

They themselves would argue that their aim is to destabilise British rule in the Six Counties. But anyone with a modicum of political sense can see that their actions strengthen the hand of those who most resist political change and who seek not only the maintenance of the status quo but a return to the failures of the past. Repression has moved to the top of the political agenda; the sterile decommissioning argument has been revived; the name of Irish republicanism has been sullied.

Irish republicans have given five years of commitment to the peace process and have made significant gains. The Good Friday Agreement, while far short of our ultimate goal of unity and independence, is now the political context of struggle, containing as it does the potential to move us closer to our goal. By agreement among the broad range of republican opinion the peace process is at the centre of republican strategy.

Republicans have always acknowledged that where a peaceful route forward — an alternative to armed struggle — is available,

then they are morally and politically bound to take it.

It is against this consensus among the republican people that the splinter group is struggling, rather than against British rule. There is no other logic or political purpose to their campaign. Their actions amount to sabotage

against Irish republicanism. Is this the purpose of people who claim to be republicans? Now is the time for them — and for those who might have considered supporting them — to step back and consider the futility of the path of militarism which they have chosen.

[An Phbolacht]

Bad emergency law irrelevant to Ireland and no answer to the worldwide revolutionary overthrow of the imperialist system on the way. Belated new posturing on 'terrorism' cannot conceal the triumph of the Sinn Féin/IRA national-liberation struggle. Trimble's handshake posturing just part of choreographed capitulation to a New Ireland. Subjective Trot confusion no match for Sinn Féin materialist understanding of the requirements of the national democratic revolution.

[EPSR No 965 08-09-98]

The sordid conspiracy to rush through bogus "anti-terror" legislation has been well condemned for its threat to international asylum and as counter-productive regarding Irish national liberation aspirations, but its role as propaganda-smokescreen has been less noted.

In the week of maximum choreographed development on the peace-process front, — beginning the real institution of all of the measures turning Ireland back into one unpartitioned country no longer under British colonial domination, — it was important for the imperialist establishment to stress the pretence of "no surrender to terrorism".

NOT admitting that the New Agreement on Ireland is clearly solely the historical result of the unbeatable national-liberation struggle led by Sinn Féin/IRA — has all along been the one great concern of Washington, Dublin, and London in brokering the compromise deal for ending the colonial infamy of the doomed and hated 'Unionist' order in the Occupied Zone.

The tyrannical fraud of 'Northern Ireland, a separate country, forever British', as established by 'legal Partition' at imperialist bayonet-point in 1921, — would have faced a NEVER-ENDING war of national-liberation, — spreading ever-more-destructively onto the English mainland (the final Docklands and Manchester

bombs e.g.) — if imperialist pressure had not finally forced the enormously far-reaching new compromise arrangements on the Orange-colonist ruling class and their corrupted, Union Jack-waving, 'British' working-class supporters in the 'Loyalist' areas of the Occupied Zone.

Avoiding too much humiliation for centuries of 'No Surrender' die-hard colonial triumphalism was the most sensitive difficulty.

Keeping up the pretence that the New Agreement represents no kind of victory for the Irish national-liberation struggle will remain a major British propaganda concern for as long as the imperialist Establishment lasts in London.

The bombing of Omagh by supposed 'Republican dissidents', — an utterly sterile and pointless gesture incapable of affecting the peace process in any way, — was a godsend for the international imperialist propaganda industry.

It enabled the Green Tories in Dublin, and the New Labour Tories in London, — on behalf of all monopoly-capitalist ruling-class interests everywhere, — to posture mightily about how vital it was to 'stand up to one of the most important challenges to modern democracy — "terrorism in all its forms".

But in reality, they have all just knuckled down to a compromise agreement which accepts the need to end the artificial

colonial-partition tyranny over the Occupied Zone of Ireland in response to what had precisely been labelled "terrorism" tentatively by Dublin, London, and Washington for decades, — namely, the Sinn Féin/IRA-led national-liberation struggle. Hence all the embarrassed reassurances that this emergency legislation would in no way be used against "members of the mainstream terror groups on ceasefire", — almost a commendable phrase so as to signal to the world that the Sinn Féin/IRA struggle is now being *de facto* accepted as 'legitimate' (along with all other combatants on either side of the national-liberation war who have also now accepted the peace deal that has been struck as the best available in the circumstances, from whichever side of the conflict the settlement is seen).

But hence also all the renewed cosmetic blathering about decommissioning by the compromised Unionist leaders of 'No Surrender' so as to at least try to paint Sinn Féin a little bit into a propaganda corner at this tricky moment.

But only the most naïve and reactionary will really be fooled by all this. Every worthwhile fighter for the anti-imperialist cause will have long since recognised the peace process as a giant victory for the Irish national-liberation struggle, arms in hand, — and will have wholeheartedly identified themselves with that colossal progressive triumph.

Only the sour splittists of petty-bourgeois Trotskyism will hold aloof (see below), — sneering as usual at all revolutionary successes which they are unable to claim personal glory for, or are incapable of experiencing genuine working-class sympathy with.

On the other hand, the bourgeois political godfathers of the necessary anti-colonial reforms in Ireland remain alert to the requirements of history, — Ahern, current chief of Green Tory Dublin, particularly so, stressing all week the importance of getting on as rapidly as possible with the whole implementation of the entire Good Friday Agreement as being the best way to halt 'dissident Republicanism' or any other current opposition to the peace process.

With ever-increasing authority and influence, the working-class leadership of Sinn Féin hammered home exactly that same message but with inimitable significance. All the reactionary propaganda smoke-screening about decommissioning should fool no one. It is

regularly made obvious that the entire Good Friday Agreement must be implemented to enable the national-liberation struggle to proceed (towards eventual open reunification of Ireland) on a permanently guaranteed peaceful basis.

It is precisely by the IRA having NOT decommissioned that gives the Agreement (that Sinn Féin is prepared to work with) ALL its validity for the Republican and Irish Nationalist movements. It proves, if proof were needed, that it was an Agreement WON rather than an agreement capitulated to, as counter-revolutionary Trotskyism insists.

The decision of the INLA to declare a ceasefire, and the capitalist press reports of Provo pressure on 'dissidents' to desist, all point to the ever growing authority of Sinn Féin/IRA within nationalist Ireland (north and south) as the decisive factor in the whole new future for every Irish interest.

The Trots, and all partisans of crap bourgeois 'democracy', will shrink back in horror. Serious-minded anti-imperialists will more readily understand the need for such firm class-leadership measures in what amount to revolutionary circumstances, the national-democratic revolution:

THE Provisional IRA has visited the homes of members of the Real IRA and told them to disband within a fortnight or face what was euphemistically termed "action", it was reported yesterday.

Members of the organisation — mainly ex-IRA personnel opposed to the peace process — were visited in their homes on both sides of the border by IRA representatives over a co-ordinated 90-minute period on Tuesday night. They were told the Real IRA must disband and stop interfering with Provisional IRA arms dumps or "action would be taken".

It is believed the message was relayed to about 60 leaders of both the Real IRA and its political representatives, the 32-County Sovereignty Committee.

The move — made before a statement by the Sinn Féin leader, Gerry Adams, that violence must become a thing of the past — was confirmed yesterday by the 32-Sovereignty Committee, which said: "In the last 48 hours threats have been received from fellow republicans.

"This sullies the name of republicanism and we want these people to stop making threats against us."

One man who was visited said: "Two men called at my door and said the Real IRA had no right to exist and accused it of misappropriating weapons.

"At other homes, Sovereignty members were told they had no right to speak against the peace process. Some were simply warned that action would be taken against them if they did not make amends within

a fortnight. Others were informed they would be shot."

The Real IRA, which has admitted carrying out the Omagh bombing in which 28 people died and more than 200 were injured, last month suspended "military operations" but has resisted calls to declare a ceasefire.

THE IRA is to demand that rebel republicans behind the Omagh massacre disband, it emerged last night

In an interview for this Thursday's *Republican News*, Sinn Féin's newspaper, an unnamed IRA spokesman says, the Omagh bombing committed by the Real IRA had damaged the republican cause.

The interview, and the decision to pre-publicise it will be seen as a clear sign of the IRA trying to demonstrate its commitment to the peace process, especially as it is publicly calling for rebel groups to cease military operations.

In the interview the IRA spokesman says the Real IRA, which announced a ceasefire after the Omagh bomb which killed 28 people and injured 220, must go further.

"This is not enough. They should disband and they should do so sooner rather than later," he says, adding: "In human terms it was a disaster of enormous proportions."

The Real IRA has been using the name Oglagh na hEireann, the same as the Provisionals. The IRA spokesman said of the rebels: "This grouping have done only disservice to the republican cause. They have no coherent political strategy, they are not a credible alternative to the Irish Republican Army."

The spokesman confirmed that the Real IRA comprised dissidents who broke away after an IRA convention. "Having failed in ... a bid for leadership this small number of individuals then resigned from our organisation and... set about trying to undermine both the duly elected leadership of Oglagh na hEireann and, by extension, trying to put themselves and their views in the proud tradition of 80 years of struggle.

"The reality is they are very few in numbers and have little or no support base, particularly in the occupied counties."

The spokesman also apologised for the IRA killing and burying people in the 1970s, dubbed "the disappeared". The IRA had now established a unit under a "senior officer" to trace the bodies to alleviate the "incalculable pain and anguish" caused to the victims' families, he said.

Allowing for bourgeois-press

embroidery, this sounds like correctly-forceful leadership in the impossible conditions of perpetual Western-imperialist ideological brain-washing which addles the class-combative thinking of every worker via a non-stop stream of twisted logic, disinformation, and total lies about the current world and its history, which is poured out relentlessly in films, television, radio, newspapers, magazines, books, school curricula, universities, theatre, pop music, art, and every other mind-warping avenue open to monopoly-capitalist domination.

Gerry Adams confirmed this national-liberation leadership authority in an unusual personal statement to suit the requirements of the inevitable bourgeois political form of the peace process:

MY POSITION on what happened in Omagh on 15 August is quite categoric. I have condemned it without equivocation.

This appalling act was carried out by those opposed to the peace process.

It is designed to wreck the process and everyone should work to ensure the peace process continues as it is the clear wish of the people of the island.

Sinn Féin has called for a complete halt to such actions and has urged all armed groups to stop immediately. Those responsible are aligning themselves with the forces opposed to a democratic settlement in the conflict here.

Sinn Féin is committed to exclusively peaceful and democratic means to achieve a way forward. We have to work politically to make the Omagh bombing the last violent incident in our country, the last incident of this kind. We are committed to making conflict a thing of the past.

There is a shared responsibility to removing the causes and to achieving an end to all conflict.

Sinn Féin believe the violence we have seen must be for all of us now a thing of the past, over, done with and gone. In particular, the two governments have the principal responsibility, as do the party leaders.

I am committed to play my part,



as is Sinn Féin. Our role in the peace process provides a substantial body of irrefutable evidence to support this.

The Good Friday Agreement has the powerful potential to take us forward and we must urgently press on with its implementation. Inclusive and honest dialogue is the only way forward in this country. We need to map a path out of the dark tunnel that people feel themselves to be in. There is much despair around and the vacuum that has been created must be filled.

This helped set up imperialism's Unionist stooge Trimble for his wretched equivocation about being willing at last to talk directly to Gerry Adams about running the new (temporary) compromise regime in the north, but not yet being willing to shake the Sinn Féin president's hand.

What a knob-head!

The whole world will be laughing at the pompous little squirt, the loser of Drumcree. In the longer-term historical justice of civilisation, of course, it is his throat that Sinn Féin would most legitimately be wishing to shake; but for this final 'peaceful' stretch of the road towards Ireland's reunification which will provide the final for-all-to-see confirmation of the triumph of national-liberation over British colonialism, – it is worthwhile letting diplomacy prevail.

All of the unionist and most of the mainland British spin being put on this peace process is obviously deeply offensive to Sinn Féin/IRA, and humiliating to the intelligence of the rest of the world, – especially all of the enforced diplomatic garbage which effectively equates the heroic deeds of the national-liberation war with the counter-revolutionary fascist violence by imperialist stooges of all kinds, – Loyalist-thug gunmen, shoot-to-kill RUC/SAS/MI5 assassination squads, racist-minded British military and police personnel, — and other mercenaries of all kinds.

There is no equivalence. Belief and bravery have inspired tiny guerrilla-war detachments to outwit, outlast, and outfight the forces of status-quo colonial-imperialism (with more than one thousand times the rebels' numerical strength and offensive equipment). It has been one of the most outstanding and inspiring guerrilla-war triumphs in all history.

Unfortunately, the way that the international balance of class & national forces is arranged at the moment, it means that outright military victory

over imperialism-colonialism (Vietnam or Cuban style) is not here possible. And so the release in triumph of all the national-liberation prisoners-of-war in the coming months is going to be partially visually marred by the sight of killer fascist thugs getting out of prison too, – their racist-sectarian murder rampages having allegedly 'likewise' been attributable to the national-liberation war-conflict conditions for which the imperialist authority (Britain) is accepting full compensation paying responsibility.

But Sinn Féin is showing sensible discipline in refusing to rise to the endless provocations of this type, and of the Trimble "no handshake" variety — (posturing that Gerry Adams cannot 'honourably' shake hands (which was the chivalric symbol of no hidden weapons) because of "all the IRA undecommissioned Semtex" etc, – when Trimble is only a prominent political figure himself because of something truly infinitely dishonourable, being the 'Ulster' frontman stooge for the naked British imperialist police/military dictatorship which has viciously dominated for 77 years via 'judicial' massacre; torture barracks; shoot-to-kill assassination squads; midnight terror raids; concentration-camp internment-without-trial; frame-up 'trials'; and every other fascist-dictatorship measure that can be imagined.)

The time will come for finally denouncing all of this officially on behalf of the people of Ireland, but has not arrived yet. Meanwhile, the compromise deal preparing British imperialist abandonment of its Irish colony and withdrawal from Ireland (to enable snail's-pace reunification to eventually take place) requires disciplined diplomacy to FORCE cooperation in the New Agreement structures from the reluctant Orange-colonist ruling class, the leftover remnants from the dying epoch of British imperialist dominance.

But the best of the workers movement internationally will not be confused by this relentless imperialist propaganda posturing "against all violence and terrorism". Only the sick bourgeois mentality of Trotskyism could have spawned the treacherousness of declaring "Orange and Green terror" to be "identical" and equally "deplorable". Healthy workers know the difference between national-liberation guerrilla war and the murderous sectarian thugery of British imperialism's hired mobs of so-called 'loyalism'.

The Republican movement will bite its lip for now over all this insolent imperialist-world propaganda (continuing to rot 'free-world' brains), but its own already highly-developed materialist political understanding continues to improve impressively, in these further *Republican News* comments on all the deliberate confusion being created around Omagh:

We've been down roads like this before. Republican bombs have killed, have maimed, have hurt and have destroyed lives. Republican bombs have, no doubt, had the potential to cause as much physical desolation and havoc as Saturday's bomb.

And to the world at large, one bomb is as bad as another, one loss of life as traumatic as another, one mistake as indiscriminate as another. To the world at large. But to republicans, it is different.

To the thousands of decent, selfless long-enduring republicans, who spent the best part of 30 years suffering the stigma of their political beliefs, bearing the brunt of media and public rebukes, the odium of unrelenting criticism because of IRA operations and actions, this was different. This was different to those who were all too aware of the pain inflicted in our names, and reluctantly accepted the use of physical force as the pain of last resort in face of a system that seemed to understand only force because it in turn employed only force.

It was different too, because in the grand plan of struggle, each component part, whether the difficult use of armed means, or the increasing use of political struggles and advances, each component part was seen to have a role to play, and each component part was a cog in a wheel which seemed certain, one day, of reaching the goal. We called that legitimacy, we defended it against all slurs, against all odds. And physical force and all the horror of force remained, we hoped, subject to a political goal, to an end justifying the means.

Saturday was different. It was different because it was an end in itself. It was different because it was not a part of a struggle, it was the struggle. It was wrong because it was not a mistake, not something that began as a legitimate action which went wrong, but as part of a reaction, as part of a campaign which is based on unreal analysis and misread circumstance.

The goal, like the earlier summer bombs, is to defeat those who believe that republicanism can be advanced—and republican goals secured — using changed tactics in changed circumstances. Our politics, in fact, were the true

target of the bomb; a provocation to reactionary unionism, to uncertain British politicians, to a Dublin administration under strain. The bomb was an attack on the peace process and its authors, an attempt to destroy not buildings, but the hope that conflict can be resolved and justice, freedom and a peaceful future for all our people secured. The bomb was an attempt to thwart the future.

The straightline 'logic' of Trotskyism's anti-communist degenerates will instinctively scoff at this understanding that the guerrilla-war terror tactics of the mainstream national-liberation struggle (Sinn Féin/IRA) were unconditionally acceptable (even when mistakes were made) because the struggle itself was historically correct, but that bombings by sectarian splittist imitators of that struggle should be condemned because their line and perspectives are wrong.

But Trotskyism's essential problem is precisely its shallow opportunism (just like the petty bourgeoisie), – gauging everything for manipulative effect and congenitally incapable of ever firmly grasping the main strands of profound dialectical historical truth, even denying such truth exists (see last three *Reviews*).

They are still at it now over Ireland, creeping along in all the cracks they can find, hoping to feed off any crumbs they can detect of Sinn Féin/IRA disagreements or mistakes, or any crumbs of trivial abuse against the national-liberation movement which they think they can get away with.

The latest *Weekly Worker* line runs as follows:

The peace bandwagon is gaining momentum. SF/IRA's central role is becoming more and more explicit. No longer the 'mindless thugs' with allegedly no support in the community, the IRA has become the 'acceptable face of terrorism'. SF is well on the way to achieving the bourgeois respectability it craves.

Like Trimble's UUP, SF is banking everything on the Good Friday deal. That is why Gerry Adams and Martin McGuinness were at first extremely reluctant to oppose the anti-democratic measures. Not wishing to appear to protect the Real IRA, they contented themselves with questioning the wisdom and necessity of the proposals. No doubt recalling how their own comrades have previously borne the brunt of the state's onslaught, they later expressed more forceful opposition. Despite that, today, far from waging war against the British state, SF is on the verge of participating in its institutions at the highest level — the Stormont government.

SF/IRA's abandonment of revolutionary anti-imperialism has left a vacuum.

IRSP leaders have declared themselves in favour of Marxism, Leninism and the working class. They are formally committed to the idea of a Communist Party. They, along with all Irish revolutionaries and socialists, must ensure that 30 years of struggle are not

*An Phoblacht/Republican News***Gerry Adams told the Tribune Rally at the British Labour Party Conference in Blackpool that British policy towards Ireland must change**

[EPSR No 970 13-10-98 (Socialist review section)]

BRITAIN created the problem in Ireland. British policy has sustained the conflict and divisions. This British government therefore has the major responsibility and role in initiating a strategy which will bring a democratic resolution and a lasting peace.

This must involve the British government joining the ranks of the persuaders in seeking to secure agreement between all sections of our people.

To achieve that we need a contract for peace between the parties in the Assembly, the people of Ireland and the two governments. We need a partnership which requires the active participation of all sections of our people; which seeks to consolidate the peace process; which plans the process of transition; and which manages the transformation of Irish society.

Change is also required in the field of justice. This means an end to repressive legislation. It means a new, unarmed, democratically accountable policing service.

But it must also involve investigating the almost 400 killings involving British forces which are described as 'disputed'. Inquiries into these, information about them, and criminal charges against those involved, have all been subject to a process of cover-up and legal protection which has sought to shield the state and its military wings from the legal consequences of their actions.

Since the creation of the northern statelet there has been collusion between those 'official' forces tasked with protecting it and a variety of loyalist organisations who killed, butchered and terrorised nationalists.

This collusion has become particularly sophisticated during this period of conflict as British Intelligence put the counter-gang strategies of past colonial wars into effect.

There is an enormous amount of information and evidence available to this British government on this issue. Probably the best known is the case of Brian Nelson, a self-confessed and acknowledged British agent who plotted the deaths of Catholics, including that of civil rights lawyer Pat Finucane.

In addition Nelson was involved in a combined effort by the UVF, UDA and Ulster Resistance, with the knowledge of British Military Intelligence, to import arms

illegally into Ireland. Little wonder the British Attorney General — at the time Sir Patrick Mayhew — authorised a 'deal' during Nelson's trial which saw murder charges dropped and Nelson given a minimum sentence.

Collusion, which saw hundreds of Catholics killed by loyalists and the role of British intelligence and elements of the RUC, UDR/RIR and British Army provide information for loyalist death squads must be thoroughly examined. Those responsible for this must be made publicly accountable for their actions. An independent, internationally based judicial inquiry, with wide-ranging powers of investigation, is essential.

This British government, through its Foreign Secretary Robin Cook, has taken on to itself the mantle of international protector of human rights. It should remember that those in glass houses shouldn't throw stones. In this case its moral indignation at human rights abuses in Kosovo or Bosnia or Burma or elsewhere in the world, however correct, would take on a greater and more believable import if it tackled human rights abuses closer to home.

THE EQUALITY AGENDA lies at the heart of this peace process and of the peace settlement which we have yet to secure. Equality cannot be an illusion. It must be a fact. And we must ensure that equality underpins the decision-making process and the delivery of services.

Equality means civil and political rights for unionists as well as nationalists.

Of course, Mr Blair will come up against resistance to change and resistance to the equality agenda. For those leading comfortable lives there is a perceived choice between something which they believe threatens their livelihood and the status quo which does not. I see this as a false choice. If properly handled the equality agenda will help bind people together and will produce benefits for everyone. Irish republicans do not want to replace one form of injustice with another.

What is required here is change. Change in the short term. Change which is sustainable. What is required are the goals and timetables for that change. What is required is an end to discrimina-

ing as 'Marxism-Leninism', by abuse of every rival anti-imperialist political strength in sight. Such is Trotskyism.

The rest of this diatribe is the same vainglorious deception. The Agreement is not introducing just a new 'Stormont government'. It is a lie.

Anti-imperialism continues in the living changing essence of the compromise deal which introduces all-Ireland government dimensions for the first time ever, so there is no 'vacuum', — another lie. And it is just not true that there was any Sinn Féin confusion or delay in pointing out the reactionary folly of bringing back internment because of the Omagh dissidents, — another lie.

As for working-class hegemony, the socialist politics of Adams, McGuinness & Co represent precisely that, but INSIDE Sinn Féin, and not uselessly outside it, like the IRSP, — INSIDE the heart of the national-liberation movement because of their correct understanding that this was the immediate important historical prize to be gained, — and not OUTSIDE its heart, like all the Trot 'socialist' posturers, — so at home in the petty-bourgeois 'revolutionary' swamp.

(And where, by the way, has the mention of the 'New World Order' got to which used to be the Trot ritual for explaining how all-powerful US imperialism was 'imposing' a peace-settlement on a totally reluctant Sinn Féin/IRA which had abandoned its struggle in complete despair, allegedly???)

Has the reality of total world chaos finally knocked at least some sense into Trotskyite heads? But why no mention of this quite dramatic historical transformation where the US imperialist all-powerful 'New World Order' is suddenly no more? Is it not worth at least a word or two?)

The broad national-liberation 'revolutionary unity against the British state' has already had a massively successful outing in the Sinn Féin/IRA successful political struggle and guerrilla war to force London to terminate its crude 'Northern Ireland' colonial tyranny; — but where were the Trot posturers? Jeering in non-stop from OUTSIDE.

And will the socialist revolutionary battle against capitalist crisis now continue? History will have to wait and see, but it is an easy bet that Sinn Féin's brilliant materialist grasp of how the available class forces could be marshalled for the downfall of the imperialist 'Northern Ireland' colony will take them light years closer to a socialist revolutionary understanding that all the Trots in the world will ever aspire to. Build Leninism. Royston Bull



wasted. In the new situation, just as much, as before, their central task is the striving for working class hegemony, building on the achievements of the last three decades.

For revolutionaries who recognise that the armed struggle has reached a dead end, for those who want to break out of the sterile confines of nationalism, there is a logical next step. The ending of the revolutionary situation in the Six Counties and therefore its possible spread to the south, means that Ireland is no longer the exception to the rule: Communists must as a first principle organise against their own state.

There must be a political struggle, uniting revolutionaries against the British state on both sides of the Irish Sea.

The deceitfulness and empty posturing is on an agent-provocateur level.

The actual real movement of history, which precisely has shifted British imperialist 'No Surrender' obduracy towards this New Agreement for All Ireland by accepting the validity of the national-liberation struggle, thereby transforming the IRA *post-facto* into "the acceptable face of terrorism", — is just completely ignored and suppressed in order to inflict some pointscoreing jeering against IRA/Sinn Féin.

The 'bourgeois respectability' jibe is yet another variant on the plain historical fact which all the Trots simply refuse to address, — namely that the national-democratic revolution which the reunification-liberation struggle represents — (getting rid of 'Northern Ireland' as a partitioned British-colonial tyranny) — is of necessity a 'bourgeois' revolution, — not yet a socialist revolution, nor pretending to be one, nor could it be one in the given circumstances of this particular corner of world history.

So the sneering serves no clarification purpose but does just the opposite, — completely obscures the actual historical situation currently in Ireland. And this ignorant philistinism is spewed up for one cause only, — to subjectively make the *Weekly Worker* gurus feel better about themselves and their hopeless confusion, masquerad-

tion and the provision of equality of opportunity.

The current impasse in the peace process and the uup's refusal to implement the Good Friday Agreement is not about the guns or the decommissioning issue.

It is about the unionists' refusal to fully embrace the kind of changes which are required if a genuine peace settlement is to be built. The divisions within unionism thus far are tactical. It is between those who won't countenance a new dispensation based upon equality and those who are prepared to do a deal, but only on their terms.

That is what is underpinning the uup's current position. Mr Trimble has skilfully utilised the difficulties within unionism to point up decommissioning as a make or break issue for his leadership even though this involves a complete revision by him of the Good Friday Agreement. He knows that Sinn Féin have an automatic right to ministerial positions and in my view he is reconciled to that.

But unionism historically has worked on the basis that it is in charge and it finds it difficult to embrace change and the notion of equality among all citizens. For many unionists their sense of being more equal than the rest of us is what makes them what they are.

Mr Trimble leads the more enlightened sections of unionism but even they find it difficult to give up their veto, even though it has been reduced to a mere shadow of its former self.

I have already made it clear that I can and that I will do business with Mr Trimble. That remains my position and my intention. The real question is whether Mr Trimble will do business with me, or anyone else for that matter. None of us can do this entirely on our own terms.

That may be hard for unionists to accept but it is the reality. Mr Trimble cannot say that he wants 'a pluralist Parliament for a pluralist people....' except for the republicans. That is the politics of the past — the old script.

The Good Friday Agreement is the first chapter — it is Act I of the new script. It must be implemented in full and within the clear timetable and chronology which it sets out in respect of establishing the Executive, the departmental structures, a fully functional all-Ireland Ministerial Council and the Civic Forum.

Unionists of all hues want the Assembly. But they cannot cherry pick or rerun the Good Friday Agreement or the referendums.

Under the Agreement there can be no Assembly without these interdependent and interlocking institutions. In other words there needs to be no further delay in

forming the Executive and the other structures. This must be done within the time frame set out by the Agreement.

To raise decommissioning now as a precondition is a clear breach of the Agreement. All parties are obliged to fulfil their commitments in all respects. Sinn Féin will fulfil its commitments. The two governments and the First Minister designate David Trimble must fulfil theirs.

THE ROLE of this British Labour government will be particularly critical. A lasting peace in Ireland will only be established if Tony Blair and his government are committed to that objective and to building it on a solid foundation of justice and freedom.

Mr Blair's generation of political leaders may feel little responsibility for the historic and contemporary state of affairs in Ireland. But if we are to build a partnership for peace which ushers in a new era for the people of Ireland and Britain then this British government must face up to that responsibility with absolute honesty.

British governments uphold and defend or promote British policy in British national interests. British policy towards Ireland at this time is to uphold the union. It is to uphold the partition of Ireland. There is no such thing as a neutral British government. It is not a referee. But to uphold the union that means using repression, denying civil and human rights, and defending inequality and injustice.

If there is to be change there needs to be new thinking within Labour. Just as in recent years Irish republicans have had to look hard at our politics, reflect on our mistakes and seek new ways of advancing our goal of Irish unity, the British Labour government must also look beyond current policy and encourage new thinking leading to a change in that policy.

The aim of democratic Irish opinion, democratic opinion in Britain and internationally must be to seek a change in British policy from one of upholding the union to one of ending the union. The working out of this policy change and the transfer of sovereignty should be done in co-operation with and consultation with the Irish government and the parties in Ireland. This is the main challenge facing Mr Blair and the rest of us. It is about doing the right thing by Ireland and the people of our island.

The future of the Union is not the only issue which we must deal with. There is a need for the equality agenda to move beyond aspirational rhetoric into a programmatic approach which seeks to right the wrongs which are part and parcel of political, social and cultural life in the north of Ireland.



THE starting point for Sinn Féin is the Good Friday Agreement. It took many years of hard work on our part and that of others, like John Hume and Albert Reynolds, to create the conditions for the peace process.

The process of negotiations was enormously difficult. Made more so by the refusal of the unionists to talk directly to republicans or to hold bilateral meetings with us. But eventually on 10 April we succeeded in constructing an Agreement which subsequently won the overwhelming support of the people of Ireland through referendum, and then again in the north, in the Assembly election.

Are there still problems? Of course. There are many. But in seeking to overcome them there is a principle involved, and this cannot be dodged or its importance underestimated, and that is the need for everyone involved to keep their word. All political leaders need to keep the commitments they made. Trust can only be created by keeping promises not renegotiating them.

The Good Friday Agreement was not a draft. It is the real thing and it is the basis for the building of this phase of the peace process.

Sinn Féin recognises that there are problems within unionism. In my opinion it is the unwillingness of sections of unionism to embrace change which is at the core of their difficulties. They may deny this but I believe that no matter about the rhetoric they may use, the resolve of the DUP and the UKUP, and of elements within Mr Trimble's party, is still to wreck the Good Friday Agreement.

THE RELATIONSHIP between Ireland and Britain has been a tragic one based on domination of one by the other. It has caused much pain and grief and anger. It is built on centuries of injustice and inequality and repression, and resistance to those.

It is a history of failure. It has led to division and hatred and great wrongs. We want to right that. We want to work in partnership with this British Labour government, the people in this room and

in this Labour Party, to overcome the fears, the suspicions, the legacy of our past. Our task is to chart a new course for the future; for the new millennium.

That means removing the causes of conflict. It means fulfilling the ideals and dreams, the expectations and hopes, that have been encouraged by the peace process and the Good Friday Agreement. It means bridging the distrust which exists. It means ensuring that our children never have to go through what we in this, and in previous generations, have experienced. It means being prepared to reach out and grasp each other's hand in friendship as we must grasp the opportunity for a lasting peace which now exists.

Since Labour won the general election there have been enormous changes — popular changes — but these changes have only scratched the surface of what is necessary. As Irish republicans our goal is clear. We want an end to the Union. An end to partition. And a new relationship between the people of Ireland, and between our two islands based on mutual respect and tolerance and democracy.

Immediately, we want equality and justice for every citizen, irrespective of race, creed, gender, political views or disability. This will not be easy. We face extraordinary challenges. This is an unparalleled period of transition in our collective history.

To secure this transformation we must seek and win a society of peace — a society in which people live together in mutual respect and work together in mutual regard for each other — a society in which peace is not a mere interlude between wars, but an incentive to the creative and collective energies of all of the people who live on this island.

In truth, this peace process is a journey, a journey of hope and discovery. A journey in which we must make real the promise of democracy; in which we must rise above the darkness of what has gone before. For Oscar Wilde democracy meant simply, 'the bludgeoning of the people by the people for the people'. That cannot be for us. The future, is not what we inherit but what we create.

WB Yeats wrote:
*I have spread my dreams under your feet,
tread softly, tread softly
because you tread on my dreams*

The dreams are the dreams of the men and women and children represented by Irish nationalists and republicans and unionists, and by this British Labour Party. It is time to set aside our prejudices, to acknowledge the difficulties which exist and to lift our heads

above the barricades of fear and our history for too long. It is time suspicion which have been part of to fulfil those dreams.

Long negative influences of Cold-War cynicism will only give way to a renewed communist spirit in the working class when a party of leadership starts to take on all bourgeois ideological confusion and routs it. Trotskyite misunderstanding of history is an immediately damaging threat to working class interests, e.g. on Ireland. Trot economic muddle-headedness is even more reactionary. 'No more Bolshevism' complacency is criminally disastrous misleadership. If the anti-communist prejudice within every 'reformist' illusion is not tackled, the fight against slump-crisis will be much harder.

[EPSR No 979 15-12-98]

[...] to build that new party of leadership, the recreation of a confident and dependable 'party spirit' is an essential requirement, and the obstacles to it must be overcome.

Solidarity in successful party struggle 'in the field' is one obvious priceless binding agent. A workers party, active along the right lines, stands a chance of becoming a winning party.

But the solidarity in action can only ultimately depend on broad theoretical agreement, which is easily the most important factor of all in party building.

And the indisputable key to getting ideological agreement in a party is one thing and one thing only, a **correct** analysis of **all** political phenomena from the point of view of building the surest and quickest route to proletarian revolutionary triumph, the only possible basis for constructing a truly new socialist society.

To get there, it must be a party that is able to discuss **everything**, – everything that is in the headlines, everything that people are discussing, everything that is used to brainwash the public into anti-communism and counter-revolutionary nationalism.

A party that wants to earn the trust of all working people as the future party of leadership, to be followed all the way to the very bold confident step of abolishing capitalism and

building a workers state in Britain, the only way a socialist society can be constructed, – must be able to demonstrate that it can handle **every** question of life and the community and philosophy **better than** all the spokesmen and women of a thousand brands of bourgeois ideology (including fake-'left' petty-bourgeois ideology like Trotskyism) all combined.

A workers party will never prove that by just running away from discussing difficult questions just because Trot counter-revolutionaries and other single-issue 'reformist' fanatics are out stirring up censorship lynch-mobs.

It will never prove it by allowing endless reactionary disruption by anti-communist factionalists who want to totally mislead the **whole class** struggle (to jointly overthrow capitalism) into the sterile and racist divisiveness of separate schools for black children and separate schools for white children, separate sections in the party for black workers, etc, etc. Debate is necessary, but once a debate has been comprehensively won by a majority of the party, then the party has to decide what is the **correct** line, and then move on.

It will never prove itself the total answer to **all** bourgeois ideology unless it constantly encourages the continuous developments required in the party's original (and inevitably time-dated) tactics & program-

matic starting points.

The immediate political composition of capitalist society and the broadest workers movement are changing all the time: Workers need constantly to be able to analyse everything that is going on around them, including in the labour movement around fake-'left' or anarchist trends.

It will never convincingly demonstrate its seriousness until it is prepared to accept its own mistakes, or mistakes committed in its name (over Ireland, e.g., or the extent of the economic crisis, etc), and correct them publicly.

Trotskyite articles on Ireland, e.g. have appeared in *Socialist News* which simply ignore, slightly, one of the most colossal triumphs of anti-imperialist national liberation struggle of all time.

Negative references to the joke imperialist 'New World Order' supposedly imposing a settlement on Ireland in favour of the Union-Jack waving colonial fascists and one which IRA/Sinn Féin did not want but were powerless to prevent (*SN* 12) are just hopelessly **wrong** and have the effect of the supposedly anti-imperialist SLP actually **harming** the anti-imperialist struggle there by spreading this biased anti-Irish propaganda to demoralise the heroic fight by Sinn Féin/IRA and demoralise its supporters in Britain.

And even though one strongly pro-Sinn Féin article was printed, nothing has been done in a tiny party like the SLP to keep this debate alive and ongoing so that the party is up-to-date on this issue and cementing better relations with Sinn Féin all the time, one of the most outstanding anti-imperialist parties on earth at the present time, and one with some of the greatest potential for becoming a ruling party (in all-Ireland) with more socialist content and intentions than any current ruling party in the West.

Now all of this may still be some distance away, but the May/June 1998 *SN* stance was entirely in the wrong direction. It lazily adopted the widespread Trot-defeatist cynicism which has insisted (*Weekly Worker* and elsewhere) that the imperialist order was imposing a settlement on IRA/Sinn Féin which the Republicans hated but were capitulating to, – abandoning the armed struggle and allowing Adams & Co to pursue opportunist bourgeois political careers.

For the gist of this defeatist nonsense to have appeared in *Socialist News* is a tragedy, especially if it remains uncorrected.

And if it is to lead the working

class in Britain, the SLP must become a party which can reach conclusions and take a stand in the further interests of the international defeat of the imperialist system, of which Blair's is the stooge representative government in Britain.

The Trots are wrong. Only the *EPS Review* has come remotely near the truth, and has printed it loudly and clearly throughout. The national liberation struggle has not remotely been abandoned, and the IRA is nowhere near capitulating.

It has offered a peace ceasefire so that a completely new Ireland can be put in place, – the Good Friday Agreement for cross-border bodies to begin adopting most of the government of all-Ireland.

When that *de facto* obliteration of the old colonial 'Northern Ireland' tyranny is complete, including a completely new police force, etc, not run by anti-Irish colonial fascists, – the national liberation movement will begin to stand down its armed struggle, simultaneously with all non-Irish arms being taken out of the struggle meaning the British Army, the sectarian RUC, and the criminal gangs of 'loyalist' fascist gunmen.

But the IRA has made it clear this week that there will be no de-commissioning until the British imperialist Unionists who wish to remain Ireland-dwellers (Trimble & Co) have started to actually implement and accept the new all-Ireland structure for that much-wronged land.

It is British imperialism which has been defeated, – by an undefeatable armed national liberation struggle – **not** the IRA/Sinn Féin.

So far, the *EPS Review* has been astonishingly accurate in its Marxist analysis going back 20 years, even being far more farsighted (and at book length) in 1982 and 1985 in seeing imperialism's **defeat** (longterm political defeat) in the outcome of the hunger strikes and the Anglo-Irish Treaty when Sinn Féin itself which initially could only see both events as a setback for the national liberation struggle (only much later changing its mind, to some extent).

Now, – to repeat once again (and it will be repeated a million times in the future), – none of this is related in order to prove who were the clever-dicks and who were the duffers around the British labour movement or the SLP.

The point is to argue that without a deliberate struggle for Marxist theory, any workers party will be immeasurably

poorer.

The same happened over the world capitalist economic crisis which the December 1997 Congress was told "may not come to Britain" solely because Trotspeak wished to undermine "cranky Marxism" and is also philosophically confused by imperialism's collapse because it puts Trot treachery to the Soviet workers state in such a bad light. (If the entire consumer glitz and high wage earning 'democracy' of the 'free world' collapses in fascist-slump degradation, what then becomes of all the Revisionist and Trot imbecilities about the workers states "being on the wrong path"? Basically, they were on the correct planned development path of slow-but-steady growth and product innovation (hampered by the need to meet colossal armed defence bills) and bureaucratic-but-equitable distribution and justice. By comparison with the ex-Soviet region's present plight, worsening all the time, it was almost a socialist paradise, as renewed communist revolutionary struggle will demonstrate, shortly forthcoming.)

Obviously, the *EPS Review* is not now the only source of struggle for advanced theory and understanding of how the world situation is developing which places the crisis of imperialism at the centre of its thinking, (or its posturing in the case of petty-bourgeois opportunist sources like the Trots); but the notion that "they were bound to be right some day, going on about the crisis for so long" which is how the *Weekly Worker* immediately tries to justify its own rotten past record, – (as the *EPSR* predicted would happen), – won't wash.

Firstly, the Marxist scientific understanding of imperialist crisis as the dominant driving force basically stimulating all other developments in this crisis epoch and as colouring the understanding of **all** other phenomena in world society, – is a very different question from merely now bringing in the general international economic worries as an occasionally influential factor in how politics is developing, which is how everyone else makes the crisis a 'central feature'.

Secondly, a huge part of the effect of discovering the influence of imperialist crisis on world events is as much looking back on past events with hindsight as looking forward to what will come as a result of world slump and market crashes.

And here, all the glib opportunists now parading their

grasp of how important this economic crisis is, begin to fall down horribly.

Take the partisans of the 'imperialist new world order' for example, explaining how the Irish national-liberation struggle was "forced to submit", or Saddam Hussein, or the Palestinians, or the South African national liberation struggle, etc, etc.

There is now a lot of non-submission going on; and the Marxist (*EPSR*) perception that the imperialist international economic system was deep in crisis from a long way back, as the *Review* consistently pointed out to everyone, proves that the imperialist bourgeoisie (led by the US ruling class) was the very **opposite** of coolly in charge of everything, controlling every development, – and super-confident about getting everything else right too. **Nothing** was being got right, and Washington has all the time been being undermined by its own certain knowledge that the economic crisis was already well out of control.

With hindsight, it can now be seen that US imperialism has bludgeoned its way around the world with anything but confidence that it 'knew what it was doing' and that 'everyone else would be wildly impressed and subservient to this American know-how of solving every problem under the sun.'

American imperialism has been acting in clumsy despair and confusion for much of the time, and riddled with ruling class self-doubt back home. The bizarre 'impeach Clinton' phenomenon is largely explained by this debilitating fear that everything is going wrong at the end of the 'American century'.

And it truly is. The other hopeless weakness in the line that 'we are all aware of the crisis now, thank you Marxists' is that capitalism's new-found critics still have not a clue, and do not want to have one, about exactly what are the revolutionary **political** implications of the market system's impending collapse.

All their old anti-communist rubbish about 'glad to get rid of that terrible Berlin Wall and those awful workers states' is going to come flooding back up the system to stifle these treacherous opportunists in their own nonsense.

Raw proletarian power will eventually be taking over everywhere which will make even Ceausescu's arbitrary regime look like a haven of peace, good sense, and enlightenment by comparison.

Many outsiders may not

like it in one sense. Trots will quickly find excuses for solidarity with 'bourgeois democracy' in denouncing it all. Genuine communist revolutionaries will agree with Marxist science that such proletarian dictatorship is the only way forward, and therefore is the most glorious potential advance for civilisation imaginable.

How rugged the struggle becomes in West Europe is not yet clear, but it is at least obvious that scores of 'miners ballot' incidents will be replayed in Britain, for example, but with much more hanging on the collective determination and strength of the working class than even the important strike to prevent coal industry destruction, – and with much more class-war bitterness and violence (from the state, etc) than even that titanic battle.

But above all, more and more complex questions of all class inter-relationships, 'democracy', the state, and revolution are going to be involved, as utter slump degradation pulls capitalist society to shreds.

Obviously the working-class party could take all this in its stride. But far better would it be for a party of leadership to start intensively educating itself in these matters now, and not deliberately go in the wrong direction by complacent nonsense about 'the crisis not coming to Britain' and anti-communist hysteria about "we don't need a super-Bolshevik party here", etc, especially when presented not as a contribution to rational discussion but as the rabid invective for a censorship witch-hunt.

As mentioned, one priceless advantage of fullscale world capitalist crisis once again becoming the central driving force of the whole planet's political developments is that the real significance for history of the workers states' achievements in the 20th century and their eventual liquidation by Revisionist (anti-Marxist) confusion, can begin to be reassessed.

As the last *Review* spelt out in graphic detail using capitalist press own admissions about how catastrophically things had gone in the former Soviet Union (and almost everywhere else in East Europe too) after the workers state (proletarian dictatorship) was deliberately broken up, — the USSR's bureaucratic, steady, stolid, and sometimes brilliant progress may look one thing when compared to the glitz and glamour of the seemingly endlessly booming West (especially on Bond St, 5th Avenue, or the Champs Elysée) but

looks something completely different when devastating slump and degradation has started to return to haunt the cream of the 'free-world' existence (itself always a fraud to start with since it was only ever based on appalling exploitation, poverty, and fascist injustice over much of the Third World).

Bureaucratic revisionist dolts they may have been running East Europe, but for the vast majority of the population, however political frustrated (and economically too) they may have felt themselves to be, – the reality was that they flourished healthily and lived in far more secure, equitable, educated, and culturally literate societies than certainly they have got now with the return of 'mafia capitalism'. (When or where has it ever been different, other than in appearance only in just a tiny few West European societies)?

Ordinary working-class people could never have enjoyed anywhere under capitalism even in boom times such healthy perspectives and social justice as Soviet life boasted.

Such newly-opening perspectives as these on the former workers states will plunge all past anti-communist propaganda into absolute crisis, including the whole sweep of political opportunism (from fake-'lefts' of all kinds (Trots, etc) to bourgeois-academic anti-communism (the press and TV, university departments and colleges, films and book publishing, etc)).

That entire anti-communist culture needs totally humiliating and destroying. They will continue to argue that 'yes, capitalist slump is getting nasty, but the old East Europe was still far worse', etc, to cover their backsides.

But rapidly deteriorating Western-society degeneracy and fascist slump will quickly make that observation irrelevant, and the ultimate degradation of renewed inter-imperialist war (a continuation of World Wars I and II) will make it even more disgracefully false and inappropriate. Communist revolution will eventually take over and do the rest.

All the time that still-generally-unrouted anti-communist culture carries on hanging round the workers movement, it will spread nothing but bogus theory, defeatist demoralisation, factional disruption, and witch-hunting slander. It is a class question of petty-bourgeois individualism and conceited opportunism. Down with it, and build Leninism.

EPSR

Fake-'left' again capitulates to anti-socialist brainwashing instead of fighting it. Until falsified anti-Soviet history taken on, bourgeois ideological nonsense reigns supreme. Latest Trot distortions of Marxist science exposed.

[EPSR No 981 12-01-99]

[...]A *Weekly Worker* attempt to prove past *EPSR* philosophical achievements "unscientific" has ended up in the usual swamp mess of endless distortions pretending that Marx favoured factional alliances as opposed to a firm party line.

The author's real target is Marxism itself, of course, – presenting it as "emancipatory" in allegedly embracing a variety of theories all at the same time.

The aim is to end up concluding that the *EPSR*'s longstanding perspectives on total imperialist economic crisis – catastrophe and revolutionary proletarian-dictatorship upheaval world-wide is "un-Marxist".

This Dec 17 piece is way out in suggesting that Marx's appreciation of theoretical achievements preceding his own is the same thing as regarding rival contemporary theories as all being potentially equally valid.

This non-sequitur builds on the essay's incomplete idea that competing theories lead to the truth (i.e. towards relative truth) when it is their putting into practice which is the crucial ingredient.

The 19-year battle to prove the *EPSR* right and everyone else wrong about Ireland, e.g. is a long-distance pursuit of theory (about British imperialist decline and world imperialist crisis) into the practice of seeing Ireland's completed national-liberation having at last to be conceded (under layers of misleading propaganda by an embarrassed Orange-colonist Establishment and by various anti-Marxist schools of petty-bourgeois defeatism and fake-'leftism'.)

The totally bogus charge against *EPSR* of 'refusing to consider an alternative understanding' is an irrelevant diversion until the correctness and worthwhileness of analysing the latest 30-year struggle in Ireland as a triumphant revolutionary defeat of imperialism and colonial occupation is demonstrated or disproved.

The school of purely academic Trotskyism loves this approach because it masks their own failure to use any understanding at all to give a lead to workers about this conflict which has

so bedevilled politics in Britain for a generation. (All other Trot schools of thought have simply got it wrong).

The 'inflexible dogma' dismissal of *EPSR* views without analysing them is doubly ignorant on the question of the workers states, where a long and often painful clarification process is still going on in the *Review*'s columns.

Tens of thousands of words have been struggled with in accounting for how the 'undefeatable' concept of Soviet anti-imperialist achievements and planned socialist achievements, now clearly wrong and badly misleading in one obvious sense, has begun to take on a different significance as a large and decisively important chunk of 20th century history, back from which civilisation will never be able to fully retreat, and which might yet resume a role of a model to be aimed for in many parts of a rapidly collapsing capitalist world of utter degeneracy and barbarism.

The *EPSR*'s 'dogmatic' championing of the dictatorship of the proletariat as the unavoidable essence of a truly new world order remains on course as the only still-viable understanding which explains

(1) both the Stalinist state's undoubted anti-imperialist achievements and yet fatal (ultimately) theoretical errors;

(2) how Gorbachev managed to make one revisionist mistake too many;

(3) why Tiananmen was a vital obstacle to yet another revisionist debacle and might yet spare China the pointless torments that the ex-USSR is now going through;

(4) the ULTIMATE bankruptcy of ALL national-democratic revolutions, Eurocommunist 'alternative economic strategies', and Trot 'pure rank-and-file democracy' illusions; etc, etc.

More historical practice will alone prove eventually what is 'dogmatic' and what isn't. Unlike the fake-'left', *EPSR* Marxist science will never just drop any analysis which starts to look wrong, but it will also never stop hounding the fake-'left' from the vantage point of correct *EPSR* theory.

However, it is only when things turn out right that theory becomes fact and begins reliably to "explain reality", which crucial bit Phil Sharpe again leaves out.

And to call this "prediction" with a sneer in Mystic Meg's direction is to miss the point with knobs on. The aim is not to predict but to precisely explain reality **while it is happening and before the history is completed**, i.e. before the facts are fully known or knowable.

What other choice does a workers revolutionary movement in living struggle have? To call this 'prediction' is simply another way for academic Trotskyism to take no stand on anything for giving a practical lead to the workers movement and its political education **in action**.

Far from "denying the importance of human activity and consciousness", the only point of the *EPSR*'s existence is the struggle to guide this in the right direction. It has, for example, agitated tirelessly for all anti-imperialists to give full support to the Good Friday Agreement as a defeat for the British colonial establishment and as ultimately demonstrating the truth of Marxist consciousness that workers in Britain would never be able to start their own emancipation (from capitalist exploitation) all the time that the continued colonial enslavement of Ireland remained in being.

It will also finally allow human activity and consciousness in Ireland to at last go beyond national-liberation preoccupations to deliberately building a specifically socialist revolution and the eventual victory over ALL imperialist influence (as opposed to 'merely' its direct colonial expression in the monstrous nonsense of 'northern Ireland' as was enshrined prior to the Good Friday Agreement and as is now being dismantled bit by bit.)

What lead has Phil Sharpe ever given to workers anywhere for developing "human activity and consciousness" on the Irish question? Has it been a successful intervention, explaining everything to everyone?? Or has he limped along behind the failed Trot defeatism about "Sinn Féin and the IRA abandoning the struggle and accepting the Partition status quo as imposed by the imperialist New World Order" etc, etc.??

Marxism does much more than "show the structural possibility for socialism", and plainly did it predictively (in the manner described above). The

whole first part of the *Communist Manifesto* is just one long 'prediction' of how all **future** capitalist developments will ultimately only **"inevitably"** create their own proletarian grave-diggers.

When else have such dramatically **revolutionary** developments that a century has contained (as have happened in the 20th century) been predicted in detail more than 70 years in advance in the midst of a completely different way of life which had not yet even remotely reached the height of its powers and which was to fool such a talent as Kautsky 70 years later as no longer being susceptible to revolution?

What is happening here is that under the guise of putting down 'mundane prediction', it is Marxism itself which is being rubbished.

The one prediction Phil Sharpe approves of was, of course, a complete anti-communist nonsense. There was no "crisis and collapse" of the Soviet Union "as predicted by Ticktin". The dictatorship of the proletariat was still achieving very impressive results when revisionist degeneracy deliberately broke it up in favour of the 'free market' and 'parliamentary democracy'.

All the Trot predictions had been **totally wrong** for 70 years, and were totally wrong at the end, too, because of this failure to grasp the most essential point of the whole of Marxist-Leninist science, – namely, that proletarian dictatorship alone holds the key to the whole future of civilisation. Lose that and everything is lost, as Russia has proved negatively, and China, after Tiananmen, has proved positively.

Of course the limitations on life from bureaucratic behaviour in the workers states, and the criminal injustices this could lead to, were appalling. But leaving aside the lethal consequences that flowed from the obviously still-inadequate Soviet workers state being thrust for 70 years onto the very front line of the international class war, which imperialism throughout fought more ruthlessly and powerfully than ever before, – it is a common observation by anyone who actually lived in the USSR for any length of time that the general predisposition to arbitrary bureaucratic viciousness and unreason in human behaviour in the British labour movement has always been infinitely worse and more depressing than ordinary existence ever was under the Soviet state, even at its most ridiculous.

Hopefully, there will no

longer be a front line against world imperialism when the first 70 years of a British workers state unfold, in which case bureaucratic arbitrariness might possibly avoid some of the tragic consequences that the world's first workers states experienced.

But does not the present theoretical and factional feebleness of the British 'left' and labour movement (which would make a workers state in Britain tomorrow a certain nightmare to start with) cause at least the suspicion that the Trot accusations about "defending the Stalinist bureaucracy" is not much more use than a shallow swear-word

when trying to get to grips with these hugely difficult questions?

On the world imperialist crisis, it is Phil Sharpe's 'predictions' which are just wrong. It is now rapidly heading towards worldwide revolutionary upheaval (see previous 10 million EPSR words for the full scientific analysis of this 'prediction'), but this is neither more nor less 'determinist' than the *Communist Manifesto*.

Developing consciousness and human activity, consciously fought for, will alone finally make it happen. [...]

EPSR editorial board

Reactionaries still failing to wreck or rubbish the Good Friday Agreement in spite of all the Goebbels campaigning by the BBC, and despite New Labour's cowardly half-heartedness over enforcing the deal. Sly admission of failed analysis by defeatist Trots still hides from workers in Britain the triumphant role of revolutionary political leadership in the Occupied Zone, and still misses Marx's crucial message about Ireland for the socialist struggle in Britain. More practical lessons in Marxist revolutionary political science in Ireland than the Walter Mitty Trots in Britain have ever day-dreamed. And it is only Trot defeatism itself which obscures the future of socialist revolution for ALL mankind. Latest reactionary propaganda stunt on 'punishment beatings' helped by Trot cynicism & inability to grasp historical context.

[EPSR No 983 26-01-99]

Trotskyite sects in Britain are being forced into second thoughts about their previous contemptuous dismissal of the Sinn Féin/IRA national liberation struggle as having "sold out to the US-imperialist imposed 'Partitionist' settlement".

These ultra-'left' academic circles are obliged to think again because of the obviously increasing signs that British imperialism was made to concede plenty, – and ultimately everything, – by the Good Friday Agreement, and has not felt able to renege on it so far.

As weak and reluctant as is the London-Dublin-Washington acceptance that unbeatable revolutionary struggle has required them to dismantle the infamous 'Northern Ireland' colonial tyranny, – the prisoner heroes of that national liberation war continue to have to be released in accordance with the Peace Agreement to end it.

And as frightened of reaction as Blair is (or as stupidly chauvinistic) to admit openly that the fight for Ireland's complete self-determination has unlocked the door for reunifica-

tion, the snail's-pace process of re-integrating the occupied Zone bit by bit back into an all-Ireland community has had to be proceeded with.

Fearful of Colonel Blimp reactions by the Tory Establishment in Britain (led by out-of-control ultra-right mafias at the BBC), Mowlem gave this timid year-end admission to the *Guardian*:

The decommissioning of paramilitary weapons is a clear obligation – an essential part of the Good Friday Agreement. But the Agreement did not make it a precondition for progress in other areas, and the Government is not about to start unravelling what the parties agreed.

We are preparing for the inaugural meeting of the new British-Irish Council: Chris Patten's commission on policing has been attending meetings across Northern Ireland – listening to local people. At the same time, a review of the general criminal justice system is underway.

Who would have thought a few years ago that Northern Ireland would be leading the way in the areas of equality and human rights? But it is true. Under the Agreement, two independent commissions will monitor and enforce what will be one of the most advanced legal frameworks in Europe for protecting basic rights and combating discrimination.

Also in accordance with the Agreement, prisoner releases are continuing only for groups maintaining complete and unequivocal ceasefires. Some 220 Loyalist and republican prisoners have been released on licence so far. Were the Government to stop prisoner releases on any pretext other than the ceasefires having broken down – as the Tories are pressing us to – we would be in breach of the Agreement.

Before Christmas – after another long night of negotiation – the Northern Ireland parties and the Irish Government achieved a major breakthrough on North/South issues. This agreement on new arrangements for North-South cooperation and implementation, was supposed to happen by October 31. That deadline was missed – as others have been in the past and, no doubt will be in the future – but the substantive progress is there nevertheless.

Decisions were also made on the structure of departments for the future government of Northern Ireland. A consistent feature of the work in recent months has been preparing people – both politicians and officials – for the transfer of power from Westminster to locally elected representatives.

As full of distortions, evasions, and half-truths as it is, this dimly-visible pattern of British imperialist retreat, imposed on them by the unbeatable armed struggle, the phenomenal success of Republican organisation on the ground in Ireland, and by the brilliant international

achievements of Sinn Féin political propaganda, – has helped jolt some Trots towards a very sour and twisted acknowledgement, at last, that the EPSR Marxist analysis for the past 20 years (that decadent British imperialism was gradually being defeated by the Irish national liberation struggle), – has some truth in it.

The following admissions are a far cry from the hitherto routine defeatism from the *Weekly Worker* (CPGB) Trot group about "the US imperialist New World Order having imposed a 'peace settlement' on Ireland to which the IRA had capitulated and with which Adams & Co would class-collaborate in pursuit of bourgeois political careers", etc, etc.

Without admitting that the non-stop EPSR attacks on such treacherous Trot nonsense have forced these conceited middle-class 'revolutionary' individualists to tone down their "socialist revolution now" demands and "stop the betrayal" insults, – the *Weekly Worker* is nevertheless starting to sing a slightly different tune currently, – still ludicrously subjective and wrong, of course, but not quite so reactionary as before:

The EPSR critique of my article refers to Ireland in order to indicate my supposed self-indulgent academic Marxism, and abdication of political responsibility in relation to building revolutionary Marxism. I think that what has motivated this criticism is the desire to establish differences between myself and the *Weekly Worker* about Ireland and the peace process. Well, *Weekly Worker* supporters already know I have differences with their perspective, and I have never hidden my views. But, in the world of the EPSR, differences between comrades is perplexing and requires Bolshevik explanation.

I would maintain that whilst Sinn Féin and the IRA have a bourgeois democratic class content in relation to policy and perspectives, they also have a proletarian mass base, and have opposed British imperialism successfully. This has resulted in the peace process, and has led to moves towards overcoming the sectarian nature of the Northern Irish state. In general bourgeois democratic opposition to imperialism has been limited and unsuccessful because the national bourgeoisie of an oppressed nation is still dependent upon the economic power of imperialism. Thus Rosa Luxemburg was right to suggest that the demand for national self-determination is only an attempt to transcend class antagonisms, but in practice expresses the domination of the national bourgeoisie over the proletariat. However, in Northern Ireland the proletarian mass basis of republicanism is expressed through principled anti-imperialism, even if this is not socialist anti-imperialism.

Proletarian revolutionary leadership and perspective cannot be achieved spontaneously. Realising bourgeois democracy does not represent a mechanical, objective and inevitable process, in which Irish republicanism will automatically accept the supposed ongoing logic of bourgeois democratic revolution merging into social revolution. A revolutionary party should attempt to win over Irish republicanism to a perspective that the bourgeois democratic revolution is not separated from the social

and proletarian revolution. In this manner the contradictory proletarian aspect of Irish republicanism is realised and becomes hegemonic.

However, if a revolutionary party does not intervene and try to establish dialogue with Irish republicanism, its bourgeois democratic aspects may become increasingly dominant, and the proletarian base will become subordinate and secondary. In contrast, the *EPSR* defines political leadership as cheerleading anti-imperialist struggles, and thereby effectively denies the need for conscious political struggle to establish the hegemony of a proletarian revolutionary perspective.

The differences within this Trot camp were unknown to the *EPSR* and are of no great interest. The *EPSR* criticism referred to was simply challenging **all** Trots to declare exactly how their own pretended 'anti-imperialism' had aligned itself with the crucially important **defeat** for imperialism which the Irish national-liberation struggle was administering, taking further the long-established Marxist science that the working class in Britain could never seriously **start** on its own anti-imperialist emancipation fight all the time that the colonial tyranny by Britain over Irish people remained tolerated and unrepudiated.

Instead of winning workers in Britain to a partisan involvement in the **defeat** of the remnants of British colonial domination over Ireland – (so-called 'Northern Ireland' as was until the Good Friday Agreement was signed), – Trots and non-Marxists of every description leave remained locked in their own subjective posturing as revolutionary leaders themselves, telling their tiny sects how they would have moved 'straight to socialism' etc, etc, - sometimes getting to the same stance more 'modestly' by simply regurgitating reactionary bourgeois propaganda (mainstream) that "the IRA realised it could not win", that "Partitionist majority will prevail", that "Ireland will give up its territorial claim to the North", etc, etc.

All such dreadful published nonsense by the 'left' in Britain meant that the important **international** anti-imperialist opportunity for a socialist leadership in Britain to have stood in unconditional solidarity with the anti-imperialist leadership in the Irish national liberation struggle was lost, – taken up only by the non-party Marxist influence of the *EPSR*.

And as an extension of this, it also means that one of the best and most effective socialist parties in the world, – Sinn Féin, – is not helping or influencing the British labour movement as much as should be happening.

Having missed the vital point

of standing up to be counted as this historic heroic **defeat** of British imperialism was unfolding, socialist groups in Britain can now only limp along behind Sinn Féin's increasingly impressive all-round development.

This wretched 'revised' Trotskyite comment above still misses this major consideration completely, – lost from view in the posturing academic avalanche of half-digested formal knowledge, posing as 'theory'.

The theory that is needed is to come to a decision on this colossal conflict against British imperialism, fought out in Occupied Ireland and in Britain over the last 30 years, – and precisely identify the importance of that stand for the struggle for socialism in Britain, – not all these learned generalisations about nationalist democratic revolution in the abstract which lead to no firm conclusion, and most of which is crap anyway.

The Trots still don't grasp that the whole point is to come off the fence, and not just avoid coming off it on the side of defeatism, shouting 'sell-out' at Sinn Féin and the IRA.

Workers everywhere are faced here with one of the great anti-imperialist struggles and **victories** of all time. But the wretched subjectivisms of these fake Trot 'revolutionaries', forever fearful of real working-class power when ever it has appeared in history (e.g. the workers states), and forever defeatist and opportunist because of their basically petty-bourgeois class outlook, – are too demoralised to even grasp this at all, let alone triumph in its full world revolutionary significance (as the above miserable Trot comments so mewlingly fail to do).

Historically, it is just not true that bourgeois-democratic national liberation has been "unsuccessful". Until 1945, virtually the whole world was the colonial world, under the domination of unbeatable Western imperialism. Clearly monopoly imperialism has only increased its wealth, and potential political & economic power since then, potentially capable of militarily destroying everyone and everything on the planet more effectively than ever before; and equally clearly, socialist revolutions have rarely followed the national-democratic revolutions which toppled colonialism, thus guaranteeing imperialism's continued flourishing.

But to fail to see the colossal difference between the relations of class and national forces which permitted direct world colonial rule, and the relations of class and national forces

which now demand 'independent sovereignty' for 190 nations (regardless of how limited their freedom of action in practice, due to the delay in the world socialist revolution) is to entirely miss the whole idea and content of historical progress itself.

National self-determination is obviously a fairly empty vessel **in the end**, which must either be filled by, roughly speaking, either conservative capitalist reaction or socialist progress (as the contemporary progressive forces of Irish national liberation will not need reminding).

But such equally plain facts of life are precisely what this potentially damaging and dangerous (and therefore deeply reactionary) Trot ultra-'leftism' wilfully ignores.

'Surprising' or not for the Trots, 'disappointing' or not for the fake-'left', the fact remains that out of the upsurge of anti-imperialist, anti-colonial, civil-rights struggle of 30 years ago with a variety of 'left' programmes in action, it was the movement now led by Adams, McGuinness, McLaughlin, etc, which captured the imagination and the leadership, and clearly rightly and inevitably so with hindsight, (as the outright Marxist communist *EPSR* said from its foundation 20 years ago).

The Trot and other 'left' frauds have been treacherously and pointlessly banging their heads against the brick wall ever since that end-1960s early-1970s turmoil, most of the bogus 'socialist' and 'communist' elements degenerating ever-more-relentlessly towards outrageous rightwing opportunism, both in Britain and in Ireland.

And still this *Weekly Worker* Trot poison is at it now in this 'revision', – still denying the crucial reality of purposeful revolutionary political **leadership** which has trounced British and world imperialism, – surely the most vital general political lesson of all to get across to the working class in Britain which has been bereft of any serious political leadership at all for decades, (and which only now, at long last, might be showing some signs of hopeful life around Scargill's SLP.)

It is an all-round party of working-class leadership which Sinn Féin has become, and with a programme far more socialist, and far more actively implemented in organising the people and giving leadership on every aspect of their lives, – far superior to anything else in the Western world, and on a par with anything else internationally.

And although as yet not ending up with a classic Marxist-Leninist outlook, Sinn Féin became the great party of working-class leadership that it is via the classic revolutionary requirement of developing a wide ranging theoretical grasp of the whole world situation (including studying things from a Marxist-Leninist perspective) in order to arrive at its ultimately brilliant active mastery of programme, strategy, tactics and propaganda which have constantly routed all the reactionary forces (all the tyranny, stunts, and ideology) ranged against Sinn Féin and the IRA.

Nowhere does this Trot drivel (above) even sense the importance of acknowledging this **triumph of revolutionary leadership** in Ireland, and what this means for the anti-imperialist and socialist struggle all over the world which has been saturated with defeatism for years, and really is now hampered with widespread paralysed cynicism that it is 'hardly worthwhile organising at all' to try to defeat the 'almighty imperialist New world order' (a bogus concept so idiotically peddled by the subjective petty-bourgeois misery of these armchair socialists).

And the above Trot supposed historical review still completely lacks the central ingredient for working out a successful revolutionary political programme as Sinn Féin did, – namely, correctly grasping the historical international balance of class and national forces to start with, and which direction they were heading in for the medium-term future. This academic attempted put-down of the *EPSR* does not merely get the historical context wrong. It shows not the faintest awareness at all of the very question of historical context.

Now, there is a belated Trot outline for political dialogue with revolutionary Republicanism to raise the question facing everyone universally of socialist revolution.

But not a word is said about the ludicrous Trot abuse Sinn Féin has had to suffer (for 30 years of actually **defeating** colonial imperialism) which ridiculed the national liberation struggle as being "a complete betrayal of the socialist revolution which is what is really needed", etc, etc, – totally in disregard of the historical context actually reached in Ireland in the late 1960s early 1970s, (the decadence and declining confidence of British imperialism but still in a booming imperialist world and a period of increasing Revisionist paralysis internationally.)

And also no apologies for, or reckoning with, the **lethal** Trot abuse of the Good Friday Agreement which helped encourage Republican splits to oppose the snail's pace dismantling deal British imperialism felt obliged to sign in respect of the doomed and discredited 'Northern Ireland' as was.

But without an honest accounting for the permanently catastrophically incorrect Trot 'advice' and 'programme' for the past period, – what standing does this Trot lecture have now for telling the Irish national liberation movement and its revolutionary supporters in Britain what steps 'ought to be taken next'?

It is just a joke of the most obscenely offensive conceitedness. It is the living embodiment of petty bourgeois subjective idealism, the same old 'permanent' Trot disaster.

The EPSR is no "cheerleader" – telling the truth from the start to Sinn Féin, Castro, the CPSU, the New Jewel Movement, the miners strike, the SLP, etc, etc, – all on the record. The question that was posed to this *Weekly Worker* anti-EPSR polemic over whose version of Marxism can claim to be scientific, was 'What is your record on Ireland?' for example, – the only proof of accurate analysis, perspective, and intervention there can be.

The EPSR correctly analysed British imperialism's historic decline from the start, and therefore its vulnerability to national liberation struggle in its now largely militarily and industrially useless Occupied Zone of Ireland, now hard to defend with anachronistic die-hard colonial rigidity (Orange fascism).

It explained the hopelessly incorrect international perspectives and allegiances of all Sinn Féin's supposed 'revolutionary socialist' rivals for working-class leadership (in Ireland and Britain). It argued immediately that the Hunger Strikes were a devastating political **defeat** for British and world imperialism which would have huge long-term calamitous consequences for British efforts to hang onto its artificial partitionist colonial tyranny, (when even Republican voices were talking of it being defeat for the national liberation movement.)

[The] EPSR immediately analysed the 1985 Anglo-Irish Treaty as the first widespread published reflection of that increasing British imperialist awareness, even at the height of Thatcherism, that the colonial occupation game had been rumoured in 'Northern Ireland' and

the incurably unstable status quo would have to be abandoned in due course.

A similarly accurate analysis followed of the *Downing Street Declaration* and the other papers which continued the theme of the undefeatability of the armed national liberation struggle and the Sinn Féin political revolution, accepting the need for a completely new status and continuously changing perspective for the Six Counties within a totally new framework for the whole of Ireland, – in other words the dismantling of 'Northern Ireland' as was, and the opening of the door to snail's-pace reunification eventually.

The hypocritical dishonesty of the above Trot jibe that the EPSR "denies the need for conscious political struggle to establish the hegemony of a proletarian revolutionary perspective" is breathtaking. Their entire anti-EPSR polemic has been against the *Review's* supposedly 'catastrophist' insistence that world imperialism is facing collapse and worldwide revolutionary upheaval, and that it is only the Marxist-Leninist grasp of Bolshevik-Party building and workers-state proletarian-dictatorship science that are the real priorities for the working masses and socialists everywhere.

The EPSR's lead in this "conscious political struggle" is unquestionable. Everything else is just one long whinge of Trotskyite subjective defeatism which **misleads** the working class on every struggle, domestic and international, – as over Ireland; with its anti-communism; its inability to explain the contradiction between the Soviet workers state's magnificent 70 years anti-imperialist achievements and its pathetic Revisionist self-liquidation debacle at the end; etc, etc, etc.

The fake-'lefts' never stop prattling about how they "would have done everything better" than has been achieved by all past revolutionaries, yet the only reality is that they actually assist the capitalist bourgeoisie's counter-revolutionary propaganda against every serious anti-imperialist struggle.

For 80 years, these petty bourgeois-minded Trot individualists have recycled every scrap of lying venom against the Soviet Union, China, East Europe, etc. They do nothing to combat the anti-communist brainwashing which has helped keep workers tamed in the West, but on the contrary everything to help the Red-baiting hysteria flourish.

This leaves the working class at the mercy of ALL capitalist ideology thereafter and not just the bourgeoisie's anti-communist freakouts.

These bar-room 'revolutionary' generals have played much the same role against the actual revolutionary achievements of Sinn Féin and the IRA. By not opposing the latest bourgeois propaganda hysteria against 'terrorism' and the like, the Trots effectively condone it.

The latest BBC/*Guardian* stunt over 'punishment beatings' is an example. For months, these *Weekly Worker* Trots have done nothing but sneer at the Republican leadership over its "sellout deal", alleging that the 'stifled democratic opposition' to it was likely to face being violently terrorised for breaking ranks.

This sort of sly finking is the absolute hallmark of this *Weekly Worker* sour individualism, – complete outcasts from any serious communist mentality or understanding, and utterly unconcerned about how their smirking black 'humour' plays into the hands of die-hard imperialist last-ditch stands (to yet try to derail Whitehall's majority acceptance at last of the need for British colonialism to slowly but surely dismantle all its remaining undemocratic and partitionist tyranny over Ireland's affairs).

No Trot in Britain will be heard arguing for a Marxist historical overview of these matters which all come down to the complete impossibility of any justice at all for the Irish under the sectarian partitionist colonial state tyranny, and to the need for the Irish national-liberation struggle to literally take the law into its own hands **on everything**, – from making

revolutionary war on the state itself, to imposing revolutionary justice on matters of discipline within its own community, which would go to pot completely under the deliberate destructive neglect of the 'state authorities' who have only ever been interested in pursuing their colonial war by any foul, dirty, disruptive means they can.

Any mistakes or abuse in revolutionary justice is tragic, and probably inevitable in every great revolution in history, but it is statistically utterly irrelevant and points only to the need to get on and finish the revolution against 'Northern Ireland' colonial tyranny (if people really think that the halfway house which will immediately replace the old Stormont racketeering will instantly deliver 'perfect justice'. The FAIT campaign is just being used by die-hard imperialist circles to yet try at this late stage to derail the Good Friday Agreement.

Irresponsible British-Trot stupidity on these kinds of question just helps aggrieved relatives to be ruthlessly exploited by the sinister hands behind such BBC/Fleet Street campaigns.

Fortunately, Mowlam again said yesterday that such sick agitation, while the New Labourite imperialist stooges do not mind it damaging Sinn Féin and the IRA, should not however be allowed to cause the Agreement to collapse.

The colonial-minded British Establishment's wise conviction that it had better get out of Ireland completely in due course, still holds. The national liberation triumph by Sinn Féin and the IRA is still on course.

Build Leninism.
Royston Bull

Ireland's national liberation fight continues to set the pace and direction of clapped-out British imperialism's snail's-pace retreat. The defeat of the 'Northern Ireland' colony will curb worried London from encouraging demoralised 'Unionist' intransigence. Facing economic crisis troubles, more liberation war disasters and humiliation is the last thing the weakened and divided British ruling class needs. More last-minute rushed deals are likely to keep the Agreement on track, but at the price of more Orange con-

cessions and compromise, not any renegotiation of the peace treaty for a new Ireland. Fascist reaction for a UDI historically not viable. Trimble's Assembly Executive posturing could prove barren. 'Gestures' are not the issue. Britain's cover-up can only stretch so far. Fulfilling the Agreement is the only way forward.

[EPSR No 984 02-02-99]

The Sinn Féin struggle in Ireland remains on course to deliver its history-making victory over dying British colonialism in the Occupied Zone in spite of a new blitzkrieg of anti-nationalist propaganda over so-called 'punishment beatings' and 'decommissioning'.

Die-hard colonist opposition to the Good Friday Agreement is heating its agitation up to fever pitch demanding an end to prisoner releases "until all 'punishment beatings' cease", and a denial of Sinn Féin's executive political rights "until the IRA starts decommissioning its weapons", etc.

These are blunt attempts by the Orange order to use hysteria for renegotiating the Agreement, and a veto threat to stop it working – if there is no renegotiation.

As has been predictable thus far, the majority British Establishment longstanding decision to eventually dismantle its failed colonisation called 'Northern Ireland' has stayed intact.

Regardless of its frenzied hate-making against the IRA and Sinn Féin, the capitalist press itself has had to admit this week, in between the lines, that the imperialist state has had to do a deal with a powerful national liberation struggle which cannot be lightly cast aside:

Sir Ronnie Flanagan, the RUC Chief Constable, said yesterday that despite a week of murder, abduction and at least two punishment shootings he did not support the Conservative Party's call for an end to the early release of prisoners. He was duty bound to support the terms of the Good Friday Agreement and the early release of prisoners was "an integral part" of those terms.

Tony Blair yesterday insisted the Northern Ireland peace process would move forward despite Unionist concerns.

In a joint interview with the US Vice-President, Al Gore, on *Sky News*, he said: "All the way through this there has been tremendous problems and every so often a barrier is thrown across the road. You

halt for a time and you have to try to work your way around it, and that's what we're trying to do."

In other words, the political revolution fought by Sinn Féin and the guerrilla war fought by the IRA have proved unbeatable, and British imperialism has had to sign a peace treaty with Irish Republicanism to bring this national liberation war to an end.

Typical of the cheating colonial treachery that Britain has inflicted on Ireland for 800 years, the Agreement aimed to create the greatest amount of confusion possible in order to hide the British imperialist retreat, while taking advantage of SDLP weakness and illusions to concede as little as possible so as to get a peace deal.

But up to now, Whitehall does seem to have understood that any attempt to step back from that minimum agreement for the snail's-pace dismantling of the old 'Northern Ireland', plus important measures towards Ireland's reunification, would go down disastrously badly with the national-liberation struggle.

And to have the war back again could prove colossally damaging for London, – being humiliating for governmental trustworthiness, embarrassing because of the ineptitude, and economically destructive (in terms of more potential huge bombing losses such as Manchester and Docklands; the vastly increased security costs; and the renewed flight of international currency trade and monetary businesses to rival financial centres abroad such as Frankfurt (which is already a threat to London's pre-eminence because of its Euro-management importance)). The Establishment majority in Whitehall would not lightly go back to war.

But to the background of 800 years of unvarying British treachery towards Ireland, even any sign of a London government reneging on part of the deal and renegotiating it, (in

the interests of the die-hard colonists or the prestige of the British imperialist state), could bring very painful and serious responses from the national-liberation struggle, where the hugely-respected leadership has already taken statesmanship to remarkable levels in these particular circumstances.

Having fought the Partition tyranny to a standstill, this phenomenal mass national-liberation movement, complete with its heroic ability to create and sustain armed revolutionary resistance to British colonial repression at its most savage and relentless, will bridle at the first hint of yet another betrayal by London.

Possibly the biggest problem for the British Establishment's clear thinking and resolve is the difficulties it faces longterm within the world imperialist crisis as a whole (which so undermine and split the ruling class), rather than the symptomatic intransigence of its Orange 'Unionist' wing as such, as menacing as that is.

Focussing clearly, London can tell its 'Loyalist' stooges that the tail must not be allowed to wag the dog; but the century-old decline of British economic imperialism can only ever destroy increasing portions of British Establishment confidence, clarity, and resolve, leaving any firm action on any subject the exception rather than the rule.

The Tory revolt from the normal bi-partisanship on Ireland probably is almost as much a result of Conservative Party aimlessness in general (rather than any specific reactionary confusion over a properly negotiated Agreement which the British imperialist state itself has signed – losing coherent agreed direction over the Euro and the German domination of the European Union, and over the equally charmless 'attractions' as well of going-it-alone, or becoming total stooges of utterly unreliable American imperialism.

But for the more small-minded Tories, with the more limited ambitions of just finding lost causes to whinge and bitch about a little longer, seeking to put the blame on others for their own ruling class's end-of-colonialism sclerotic uselessness and out-of-dateness, – this belated dog-in-the-manger footstamping against historical inevitability has some 'realistic' appeal because of the slight chances of some 'success', – throwing some spokes in the wheel of Ireland's justice at last.

Yet as easy as it might be for the more reactionary and

indisciplined loose cannon of the Establishment at MI5 and the BBC's pro-'Loyalist' TV and Radio to air confused and frightened Tory waywardness try and help the Orangemen wreck the Agreement, there remains a sense of historic futility and seediness about it all which could paralyse even this relatively smallscale revolt (in global terms of British economic imperialism's very survival which is at stake elsewhere).

Although there is no real point or future in it however, the very disarray of old colonial Torydom might yet play just one last 'Orange card' to try to turn back the clock.

Yet even then, the odds must remain against any really destabilising UDI emerging at this late stage. At root, the 'Loyalist' tradition has not just been inseparable from British imperialism's triumphal world history, which is no more, – but also very importantly oriented on a successful capitalist class culture within the Occupied Zone community itself.

If and when the business interests (which used to be able to stay comfortable while remaining generally Orange) can no longer do so (because the investment climate has increasingly been taking a 'New Ireland' dimension from the American and European-Union involvement over the last 15-20 years of Anglo-Irish Treaty and Good Friday Agreement thinking), – then the whole major driving forces of what was 'Northern Ireland' will have gone out of it completely, leaving only embittered cultural habit behind.

While not underestimating the potential for such 'traditions' to produce largescale, organised, purposeful, extreme nastiness, there really would be no real incentive or point any longer, and possibly far less than was speculated about for intransigent White South Africa at the time of its retreat from direct colonial rule over the territory and its inhabitants, which came to nothing in the end in UDI terms.

Fascist motivation for such a "unilateral declaration of independence", if it came off, would indicate a decadent leap in the rate of decline & fall of the British imperialist state which has not been obviously on the cards immediately, (even allowing for the greater degree of bitterness and resentment in colonised Ireland at the collapse of economic and political empire), – and which is hard to see getting off the ground even in the longterm even in an all-Britain context (because of a mass of difficult

historical circumstances facing fascist revivals generally).

So while any amount of vicious 'Loyalist' backlash is not ruled out, it is the opportunist manoeuvres in Unionist political circles which will be more decisive in how precisely the Agreement works out in the coming months, from the point of view of the traditional orange intransigence and the Tory attempted playing of the Orange card yet again.

But what Trimble & Co are up against is the certainty at the moment that the Agreement is going to go ahead whatever the histrionic posturing of the Trimbles, Paisleys, Donaldsons, Robinsons, etc. The understanding at the moment is that the Agreement has been consciously constructed so that London and Dublin can administratively continue with the implementation of all the governmental effects that were intended, – with or without any of the particular politicians bodies that were to be involved, if any of the politicians are deliberately refusing to cooperate or play their part.

In other words, it is possible for the Agreement to go ahead even without the Assembly or the Assembly Executive functioning quite as planned, (which was the one thing which Unionism so insisted must be a crucial part of the New Agreement, even though the national liberation movement was obviously unenthusiastic about the "another Stormont" aspects of this part of the deal.

In other words, Trimble & Co are threatening to shoot themselves in both feet, and both knees as well with their current antics, which would indicate short odds on some more Unionist backtracking in the not-too-distant future.

Speculation about whether or not the national liberation movement might encourage some 'gesture' or other towards decommissioning, or some rethinking about how communities should regard the question of their internal discipline, – is far less interesting or important than the demand for 'gestures' itself. What does it mean? It can hardly be regarded as a serious contribution to anything in the context of a long-and-hard-fought-for Agreement ending 800 years of Ireland's struggle for self-determination against English oppression.

Given the remarkable depth and clarity with which the national liberation movement understands all the political processes which have brought things to their present position, it could be speculated that there

might not even be any 'gestures' of this kind or any kind, however unimportant they might be considered to be either way.

The reality of the situation can speak for itself. British economic and political imperialism has reached the end of the road historically and has been fought to a standstill politically and militarily by Irish national-liberation. Its Agreement is to give, at last after 800 years, full self-determination back to the people of Ireland. It means dismantling 'Northern Ireland'.

It is not a gesture.

In which case all the talk now of 'gestures' of different kinds is all to do with just saving someone's face somewhere.

In general, this may or may not be without merits sometimes in life, including in serious political questions. And it is certainly the case that British and world imperialism has maintained as a prime aim, throughout the 15-20 years of general latest-phase negotiating, the need to hide at all costs the clear historical implication that armed revolutionary struggle has once again forced imperialists to retreat against all the odds.

But having got all the cover-up gestures it could out of the national liberation struggle at the time of the Agreement's signing, the British imperialist Establishment itself would be into reneging and renegotiating if it was to put its full, weight behind 'new gestures' at this stage.

This remains an unlikely outcome. The declining British imperialist state has been offered peace or war by the national-liberation struggle, and in these circumstances where it cannot win the war and there would be little to be gained even if it could, it has sensibly chosen peace.

It is unlikely to choose to go back to war just for some further facesaving gesture or two for someone or other: The talk of 'gestures' may end up doing nothing more than record the degenerate shallowness and stupidity of doomed colonial bullying in its final ugly twitching.

As the above Establishment comments have restated, the Agreement to dismantle the old 'Northern Ireland' goes on regardless. Although nothing is being taken for granted given the past deceitfulness and treacherousness of the British police-military dictatorship over the occupied Zone of Ireland, and while there are still many conflicting signs, there is obvious evidence nevertheless

that certain significant security relaxations have taken place already and are continuing regularly.

One possible explanation to bear in mind in face of the repeated build-up of renewed tensions over unfulfilled Agreement obligations and provocative threats and speculation such as Trimble frequently plays brinkmanship with, – is a certain style of British imperialist negotiation which makes use of last-minute rushed deals on a mass of details which permit any amount of concessions or compromise to be got away with in all the 11th-hour panicking and all the relief that total breakdown has been avoided.

The final cover-up of British imperialism's retreat in the face of unbeatable national liberation revolutionary war, registered in the Agreement itself, was hustled through on this basis as months of heavy questioning by the reactionary capitalist press over the prisoners issue, decommissioning, the RUC, the all-Ireland dimensions, etc, etc, were suddenly swept aside in the feverish, detail-rich, last-minute rush of the Agreement's release itself.

It could be a pattern to be repeated in imperialism's continued wish to conceal from the world the full significance of Ireland's national-liberation victory through armed and political revolutionary struggle led

by Sinn Féin and the IRA.

The answer to nearly all vexed questions remains the same, – get the full Agreement for a new Ireland up and running, and all the outstanding matters can start to resolve themselves into whatever new class and national political priorities, perspectives, and structures emerge from this remarkable turning-point in Ireland's (and Britain's – see last weeks *Review*) history, – the questions of ALL the guns (mostly British imperialist, Orange colonist, or Irish capitalist controlled and used); the questions of social discipline (how will reunifying Ireland fare in the inter-imperialist trade-war and economic collapse holocaust that is coming?); and the questions of religion, culture, language, and education, etc, all to be reassessed by the people of Ireland in the light of the completely new conditions that will begin to prevail and to the background of a rapidly changing world facing insoluble capitalist crisis.

In the long run, of course, there is only a Marxist-Leninist scientific answer to all these problems worldwide. Meanwhile, the anti-imperialist triumph of Sinn Féin and IRA-led national liberation struggle in Ireland continues to provide priceless lessons and give inspiring leadership to the peoples struggles everywhere.

Build Leninism. Royston Bull

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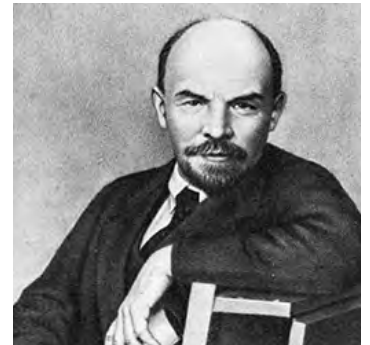
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