

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 3 (Feb 1994–Feb 1996)



Imperialist splits are the real issue, – over Ireland, the BMW takeover, the stock market tremors, and everything else. The British propaganda cover-up about the Adams visa blow is just pathetic self-delusion, as bad as the lying concern by imperialism generally over Bosnian muslim pain when the civil-war dead in Kabul, a direct Western responsibility, are ignored. US snub

for weak Britain reflects trade-war conflicts as much as Irish policy differences. Fake-‘lefts’ see a Sinn Féin ‘defeat’ eagerly because any victories over imperialism put a stop to their armchair socialist pontificating. The longterm decline of British imperialism is the Marxist key to an analysis of the Irish troubles. Orange colonist barbarism only confirms that decline.

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The massive counter-revolutionary propaganda campaign to try to diminish the impact of Gerry Adams’ visit to New York is missing the point entirely.

The Sinn Féin leader’s publicity is now being downplayed by the bourgeois press as an influence on the outcome of the national-liberation war in Ireland; on public opinion in Britain, Ireland and the Occupied Zone;

and even on what Americans think of the struggle.

But the initial hysterical reaction of the British establishment and media was the right response, even if they now lie about it and try to hide their

fear and shattered confidence, or failed to understand why the visit was so damaging in the first place.

Giving a US visa and full freedom to be internationally reported and quoted to the figure most publicly associated with the armed revolutionary challenge to British imperialism’s continued domination over a colonised part of Ireland, is sensationally damaging in more ways than one.

Obviously, all the cadres of the national-liberation struggle and all of its supporters worldwide will receive an enormous boost from seeing Adams dance rings round the plodding British attempts to hide the truth about its vicious repression and to tell lies about the resistance to it by the IRA and Sinn Féin.

Obviously, the representatives of British imperialism on the ground, – the soldiers, the administration of the police-military dictatorship, and the Orange colonist settler community posing as ‘British Irishmen’, – will feel more disheartened than ever and are already showing the signs of making more and more of the mistakes that will come from demoralisation.

And all of the plainly contrived attempts by the counter-revolutionary propaganda to stand reality on its head and say that it is the Republican movement which is split and in trouble, and that it is the British devious ‘peace’ manoeuvres which have gained from these developments, – are just so much wishful thinking, or whistling in the dark.

But crucially being ignored almost completely is one of the most significant factors in this whole drama which is the undoubted deep fissures in the imperialist camp which have been revealed, and in particular the weak and increasingly scorned position of the British imperialists within that cut-throat racket.

The Adams saga points up one of the most fundamental issues of Marxist theory on which the *Bulletin* has always tried to insist in its longstanding analysis of how the British ruling class is gradually being defeated by history in its efforts to hang onto its colonised gains in Occupied 1 Ireland, or at least not to have to admit defeat by an armed revolutionary struggle (see ILWP

Books vol 8 & 15 – *Ireland*).

Assessing how the battle was going between British colonialism and international bourgeois 'anti-terrorist' propaganda on the one hand, and the forces of national-liberation on the other, was always as much a question of interpreting inter-imperialist relationships on the world economic trade-war and military alliance stage as trying to evaluate how the rival camps were doing in Ireland, and how the conflict was being perceived by the British public.

Hitherto, and still the case in general, the entire bourgeois-imperialist racket would stand united in its condemnation of revolutionary armed struggle against an existing monopoly-capitalist establishment.

But gradually, historically, the relentless development of renewed long-term inter-imperialist economic crisis has meant that other potentially decisive considerations have come into play.

The devastated British demeanour and the enormous smokescreen of confusion brought out by the Adams publicity triumph in New York demonstrates this reality of how international imperialist-domination and trade-war perspectives are the only serious basis for analysing all political developments everywhere on earth.

After all, Adams was still not being reported in Ireland or Britain, so nothing was lost there where these questions of self-determination over a disputed patch of territory are ostensibly going to be decided.

And US imperialism and the American public in general has not obviously decided to take up the cause of the Irish national liberation struggle in a big way as a result of Adams's words, so not much was lost there either.

The British bourgeois-imperialist hysteria over the Adams visit comes about largely because of the painful truth the debacle has told about the standing of degenerating Britain in the pecking order of inter-imperialist conflict.

The steadily declining British interests just do not rate very highly in Washington any longer.

The Clinton regime's agreement to a visa for Adams in the face of almost demented incessant British protests was a colossal world-public humiliation for London.

Not only was it a shatteringly painful blow for the Tory government itself, but it also damagingly pricked the bubble of British arrogance and conceit

in front of an international audience.

This was one small event causing specific measurable irritation between London and Washington, much of it already discounted by bourgeois media propaganda.

But the implications behind this devastating rebuff could be incalculable for the longterm fate of British imperialism, implying just exactly that decline in world standing which has been nagging away at the back of Britain's great difficulties with the Irish problem in the first place.

And on top of a general statement about the diminishing importance of London in international imperialist big-power considerations, the Washington humiliation also raises more immediate concerns about what specific manipulations and calculations have gone into the Clinton regime's decision to deliver this particular snub at this particular time.

Is it a comment about internal European considerations with a wish on Washington's part to take London down a peg or two at the expense of strengthening American relations with Germany, for example, or to reduce London's influence on European Community-wide affairs in general in order to encourage other different influences?

Or maybe it reflects a much wider-scale tendency by the USA to possibly deflate European importance in general in order to concentrate America's interests much more on the Pacific area as the most crucial region governing the USA's longer-term political and economic future?

One thing for certain is that the decision to scorn London and give a propaganda visa to Gerry Adams is not limited to just a US intervention into Irish affairs. There is a lot more to it than that, – as interested as the Americans are in scoring electoral points off each other in domestic USA politics by buttering up one ethnic lobby or another from time to time, or even in boosting one US government department against another where slanted regional political bias may be thought to prevail and to need rectifying, (–although this reported aspect (State Department and CIA interests versus those of the Democratic Party and sympathetic government departments in general) is already bordering on those bigger inter-imperialist world issues already identified as one of the main factors in this explosive affair.)

How much more to it remains to be seen, but that big issues

are at stake is clear from the capitalist media's own admissions, – as tight-lipped and stultified as were the British bourgeois press comments:

IN ONE of the sharpest transatlantic rows in years, Britain yesterday angrily criticised the granting of a United States visa – and the consequent widespread publicity – to the Sinn Féin president, Gerry Adams, and blamed President Clinton for a decision opposed by many of his own advisers.

Ministers reserved their sharpest barbs for Mr Adams but officials threw caution to the winds and said that chances for the Downing Street Declaration could have been impaired by a "lousy idea".

As a triumphant Mr Adams left the US last night after his 48-hour media blitz, again saying that Britain alone was obstructing the search for a settlement, John Major accused him of hiding behind a "smokescreen of evasions and falsehoods".

Before boarding his flight to Dublin, Mr Adams promised to make "concrete" decisions soon on his party's role in the Northern Ireland peace process. He added that the many prominent Americans, including Mr Clinton and Senator Edward Kennedy, who supported his visit to the US, "will not be let down".

"I want to see an end to all violence. The raising of this issue [by the British Government] is a diversion. I don't see the British Government being asked to renounce violence," he said.

Foreign Office officials blamed Mr Clinton squarely for allowing Mr Adams in, saying he knew it would "go down like a lead balloon" in London.

Mr Hurd told Mr Gore frankly of British dismay. The Foreign Secretary had also had a "lively" meeting with Tony Lake, Mr Clinton's national security adviser. Warren Christopher, the secretary of state, backed the British position, as did the CIA.

Ray Seitz, the US ambassador to Britain, obliquely confirmed yesterday that he and colleagues at the state department had been overruled by the White House in the decision to grant Mr Adams a visa. There had been "a big tussle" he said.

In London the Foreign Secretary scorned Mr Adams as "a failed politician". But he told American officials privately of his deep dismay at an ill-timed visa that could do serious damage to the chances of moving forward with the Downing Street Declaration.

As the Foreign Secretary and his officials picked gloomily over one of the stormiest weeks in the history of the special relationship between Washington and London, it was clear that whatever the expectations of his American hosts, Mr Adams had failed to meet them.

Precisely what the expectations were remains a mystery. Details of the conversations between Mr Adams and US consular staff in Belfast have not been made available to the British government. Nor are they expected to be. "Once they'd

given him the visa, they had to justify it," said one Foreign Office official. "You could read the whole episode as the Americans having been taken for a bit of a ride."

Yet Britain's complaint against the US is of naivety rather than bad faith: "Clinton was persuaded by people who overwhelmingly believed he would use his New York speech to make a step towards peace," one senior source said.

"There are two categories of people in the States who argued for the visa: those who will support anything Irish and the second category who judge things on their merits and this time genuinely thought it was worth offering a carrot."

White House officials have admitted that the president ended the ban on Mr Adams mainly because of pressure from two prominent Democratic senators, Edward Kennedy and Patrick Moynihan, who face re-election battles this year for Irish-American votes.

"The President obviously gets a political dividend by accommodating Pat and Teddy on this," a White House insider told the *New York Times*. "But he also thought it was a risk worth taking on its own merits.

"The only downside is that it obviously ticks off the Brits but, equally obviously, that is acceptable to a lot of us."

Ray Seitz, the US ambassador to London, who opposed the visa and is deeply embarrassed by the episode, gave one clue when he addressed lobby correspondents at Westminster as the storm burst on Wednesday. He conceded that there was a dispute about the degree to which Mr Adams had fulfilled his visa conditions.

Damage limitation was the next stage: Sir Robin Renwick, the British ambassador to the US, said on Thursday that Mr Adams reminded him of Goebbels, the Nazi propaganda chief.

This waspish mood over Britain's discomfiture carried over into the attempted 'reporting' itself of what Adams actually said. The hurt national British bile in this piece from the most 'liberal' and 'freedom of the press' posturing stables of all, – is almost tangible:

THE roar rattled the ballroom chandeliers. For 2,000 cheering, stamping Irish-American republicans gathered at the Manhattan Sheraton, it was a moment for which they had worked for 20 years. Looking on, misty-eyed, from afar they had "kept the faith", they said. Now, finally, their hero, Sinn Féin president Gerry Adams, was standing before them.

As they chanted his name and the pipes wailed, Mr Adams told them the tide had turned. The hated British were on the run both politically and morally, for "a nation that enslaves another can never, ever be free".

He had been vilified by the censored and censorious British media but that did not matter. George Washington, Yasser Arafat, and Nelson Mandela had received simi-

lar treatment, he said.

Pressure from Washington on John Major and from people like themselves on Bill Clinton would ultimately force the British army out. "Let us resolve to face the new millennium having moved the republican agenda to the top of the national agenda of this country," Mr Adams said.

"We've shown we can move presidents, move the most powerful country in the Western world. We are in the final phase... Get behind the banner, spread the gospel, keep the faith!"

After the sanitised media performances of the past two days, the mask dropped on Tuesday night from what the *New York Daily News* yesterday called the "human face of the IRA".

Gone were the bland, beguiling prevarications about peace processes, dialogue, and going the extra mile. In their place was the face of militant nationalism, primarily focused on victory not solutions.

In an interview published in yesterday's *New York Post*, Mr Adams appeared to let his 'man of peace' guard down momentarily.

"I think in circumstances where there is military occupation, that it is legitimate for people to exercise resistance," he said. "If you have British troops on the street, you will always have people to counter that with resistance. I would like to see a situation where people don't have to do that."

For the edification of people far removed from the bloody realities of Armagh, Fermanagh, and Belfast, Mr Adams served his Sheraton supporters up a heady brew of safely vicarious patriotism, liberation romance, and emotive anti-British bile. Nor was he slow to dramatise his own role. He'd been shot, beaten, imprisoned, gagged, and ostracised by eight previous denials of a US visa. His personal story, he suggested, was a metaphor for the republican cause.

"It's a great night for Ireland," said Tom Lydon, aged 86, who was born in County Mayo and now lives in Philadelphia. "England has tried everything to crush us. I can remember the Black and Tans — can you? I came here to show support. I try to keep in touch."

Mr Lydon belongs to an older, better-informed generation of Irish-Americans. But the reaction to Mr Adams of younger people in the overflow crowd was more strident by far. With clenched fists raised in the air they vowed to continue the struggle.

Like Sinn Féin itself with its meagre electoral base, Tuesday's "Friends of Gerry Adams" rally represented but a tiny fraction of America's 44 million people of Irish descent. But Mr Clinton's decision to give Mr Adams a platform for his views has fundamentally distorted that reality.

As he prepared to fly back to Dublin last night, Mr Adams knows he has scored a spectacular political victory.

This pain carried on into the seething irrational claptrap with which bourgeois propa-

ganda tried subsequently to assure itself in Britain that nothing was really wrong with its world view, and that no great lasting damage had really been done to its positions and its prejudices.

The sophisticated *Guardian* editorial was reduced to resurrecting some of the most dishonoured clichés in the whole repertoire of the spurned Ulster Unionists, ridiculed at other times in other columns:

"Ken Maginnis got it right when he wrote yesterday that the cause of terrorism has been elevated and that of democracy diminished."

And further down on the same point:

"None of Mr Adams's followers is denied the vote. He does not speak for a disenfranchised majority or even a disenfranchised minority."

What a stinking old rat of an argument this is.

The 'British Irish' Orange colonists were a less than 20% minority in the general election results in British-occupied Ireland at the end of World War I which voted overwhelmingly (nearly 80%) for immediate Irish independence.

Instead of letting that Dail parliament meet to proclaim its democratic freedom, British bayonets closed it down and waged war on the Irish national-liberation movement instead ending up ripping out fifth of Ireland's territory at gunpoint and handing it to the Orange colonists for all time as a new, – and believed-to-be unchallengeable, – 'country' of "Northern Ireland". The British police-state protection of that colonial grab from the effectively disenfranchised minority of Irish people there, has been a large cause of all the 'troubles' ever since, – a gerrymandered hellhole of a reactionary political backwater with no possible viable longterm historical future all the time that Irish national sentiment lasts with breath in it to fight and protest with.

Maginnis can be one of the less objectionable Orange bigots for all he likes but he still represents the foul heritage of one of the most evil acts of colonial savagery – the brutal partition of Ireland – in all history, and speaks with all of the arrogant hypocrisy and conceited selfishness that goes with that disgraceful record of fascist oppression and illegal land seizure, – not to mention the endless nazi discrimination and police brutality that was regularly inflicted on the Irish in the Occupied Zone by the RUC and 'B' Specials and is still inflicted to this day by their replacement British mainland forces.



Gerry Adams New York visit in 1994 meeting Bill Clinton

The IRA's armed resistance to that police-military dictatorship with its built-in 'democratic unionist' majority, is further subjected in the *Guardian* and elsewhere to accusations of causing a major split in the Republican camp, and that really the New York 'peace' propaganda by Adams has damaged the national-liberation struggle much more than it has damaged the British cause.

A further *Guardian* refinement of this wishful thinking claims that a voluntarily offered and desired British compromise on its sovereignty over the Occupied Zone of Ireland is unable to proceed unless the IRA/Sinn Féin can accommodate to a 'defeat' (of its wish to get instant complete reunification) by a brief moment of triumph (the New York publicity for Adams) prior to burying the national-liberation struggle in some new 'pluralist' lash-up, partially obscuring the old headline reality of British Northern Ireland behind some new all-Ireland façades.

And the fake-'left' swamp petty-bourgeoisie in Britain back up this capitalist press rationalisation of British imperialism's real new setbacks by claiming that Sinn Féin and Adams have now 'sold out completely' on their national-liberation struggle by going to New York to agitate for a 'peaceful solution', etc.

Now it is of course possible that the Republican movement does have many splits or is even badly split on current strategy and tactics to do with the negotiations with British imperialism.

But the point that all this defeatist gibberish has in common is that it simply cannot see, or does not want to see, the far bigger picture of the imperialist system itself badly split and in crisis and in more desperate need of bogus 'triumphs', – both as a whole and in its several imperialist parts, – than the Irish

national liberation struggle by a long way.

These middle-class zombies simply cannot see the forest for all of the trees that are around.

Petty-bourgeois 'left' journalism, of course, has an especially large need for defeatist rationalisations about there being no anti-imperialist victories in sight on the Irish national-liberation struggle front because of never having had the intelligence, the courage, or the class sense to back a defeat for British imperialism, or because of having 'supported' the Irish national-liberation struggle on a completely sectarian basis denouncing every move as a 'sellout' which did not conform to some Mickey Mouse 'plan for revolutionary socialist victory' or other ivory-tower programme-mongering. It is always safest for armchair socialists to declare that 'there is only one way to do it' on any issue whatever so that any real defeats or setbacks can quickly be disowned completely as a 'counter-revolutionary sell-out'.

The entire history of Trotskyite bile, stabbing the Soviet workers state in the back from 1923 onwards, is the classical form of this demented subjectivism.

All these wild predictions and fantasies over a national-liberation defeat in Ireland may yet, of course, prove true on the immediate political detail of any settlement. When dealing with the philosophy of nationalism, nothing can ever be guaranteed about the conduct of this fundamentally bourgeois-idealist mentality.

But the middle-class defeatism which slewed around last week following the Adams' triumph in New York had a far more certain bourgeois-idealist vulnerability about it. Such defeatism simply does not start out from any objective analysis of the imperialist crisis at all but begins solely with the subjective requirements of the

given 'left' sect or middle class commentator. The psychology of it is pathological. If imperialism is never defeated, then fake-'left' anti-imperialist commentators will never in their life have to face a situation where their own ivory-tower views are proved wrong. Their anti-imperialism worn lightly on the sleeve is valid for ever provided that imperialism never really goes down to defeat. Hence the profound hatred of all these types for any real proletarian-dictatorship success against imperialism, and their lifelong anti-Sovietism. They are real instinctive anti-communists, and they will readily denounce all armed revolutionary struggle if they ever feel it putting the imperialist 'democracy' system in danger.

A much better guide to whether the Irish nationalists have sold out or not, or just adopted the trappings of 'victory' in order to mask the pain of defeat, as the fake-'left' swamp are claiming, – comes from the scalded reactions to the *Downing Street Declaration* and all its ramifications by the Ulster Unionist colonial diehards and Protestant bigots, and by the more venomous Green-Tory counter-revolutionaries in Dublin like Conor Cruise O'Brien:

WE ARE being told that the IRA is under heavy pressure to deliver peace. Some even hold that it is about to split under this terrible strain. Don't believe a word of it! The morale of Sinn Féin-IRA – one organisation, not two – is far higher now than it was at the beginning of last year. And the main reason for this is the Downing Street declaration of 15 December 1993.

The *Irish Times* has a Northern reporter who has the entrée to the appropriate circles. Her name is Suzanne Breen, and she was among the guests at Sinn Féin's Christmas party, right after the publication of the Declaration, and after the IRA's immediate and derisory response, which took the form of announcing its customary three-day Christmas truce. Gerry Adams in person presided over the festivities of his followers and friends.

Were the assembled Sinn Féiners cast down at the IRA's rebuff to the declaration which their President had done so much to shape? They were not. The general mood was one of unalloyed euphoria. They were delighted with the declaration – which they felt was a coup on their own part – but they were also entirely supportive of the IRA's "no hurry, let's see" response. Implicitly, but unmistakably, they support the continuation of the violence.

But why should Sinn Féin-IRA be so pleased with the Downing Street declaration? The reason is that it contains one sentence included at its behest, in an attempt to appease them, as they well know. And this

sentence, with other matter related to it, constitutes the only really new element in the declaration. The sentence runs:

"The British government agrees that it is for the people of the island of Ireland alone, by agreement between the two parts respectively, to exercise their right of self-determination on the basis of consent, freely and concurrently given, North and South, to bring about a united Ireland, if that is their wish."

No previous British government has ever agreed to any proposition of that order.

Middle-class Unionists tend to be legalistic in their approach to documents. But Sinn Féin-IRA looks at documents in terms of symbols and signals: especially those which suggest who is winning the battle of wills. That sentence, issued officially on behalf of the British government, conveys to them the message that the IRA is winning. Hence the euphoria.

The general pattern of Sinn Féin-IRA's responses over this year is predictable. There will not be the "permanent end to the use of, or support for, paramilitary violence" which the two governments have been looking for and still pretend may be round the corner. Sinn Féin-IRA will seek further concessions, in the form of "clarifications". Indeed, the clarification game is already in full swing. John Hume has called for clarifications to be provided by the British and Irish governments for both Sinn Féin and the Rev Ian Paisley's party (a recipe for diplomatic bedlam). Gerry Adams has backed Mr Hume's demands, adding for good measure that Mr Major's failure to date to provide the necessary clarifications is "childish" and "grossly irresponsible". The IRA will measure its continuing dosage of violence in proportion to the responses to the demands for clarification.

There are likely to be tactical cease-fires, and when these break down the blame will be cast on the intransigence of the Unionists, the perfidy of the British government, and the treachery of the Irish one. Even at this stage, the most congenial of these themes is being addressed. Mr Hume this week charged that Mr Molyneux "does not want the IRA campaign to stop and is provoking them into continuing". So if the IRA campaign does continue, it will be the Unionists, and not the IRA, who are responsible, in Mr Hume's eyes. In short, Sinn Féin-IRA and its friends have already begun an enjoyable game of cat-and-mouse with the two governments, and with the longing for peace of a gullible public in both islands.

It is not Sinn Féin-IRA that is under pressure. It is Sinn Féin-IRA that is applying – and occasionally relaxing – the pressure, in a highly sophisticated manner. Those who believe the group to be under pressure, because of the general longing for peace, are utterly mistaken. For terrorists, a general longing for peace does not constitute a threat. On the contrary, it is an asset a major resource, that they exploit at will: "You want peace, do you? Well, we control the supply of that commodity. How much will you pay us, po-

litically, to let you have a bit of peace, for a while?"

The brutal fact is that the two governments, and Mr Hume, were conned by Sinn Féin into issuing a declaration that benefits nobody except Sinn Féin's masters, the IRA. The governments and Mr Hume were led to believe that the IRA was so war-weary that all it wanted was some formula with the magic word "self-determination" in it, to save its face, and then it would give up the fight, for good. Mr Reynolds, it seems, was assured of this by some monks he met in the border area, and the diagnosis was subsequently confirmed by Mr Hume. Mr Major appears to have experienced similar revelations. It was all a put-up job. The alleged war-weariness was never more than a ploy. Those who fell for it cannot admit the fact, even to themselves, so the ploy is still working.

Almost as inept a response to the way things are having to go on the national-liberation struggle front worldwide as a result of the profound crisis the entire imperialist system in now plunging into (and has been heading for over a long time in particular parts like around British imperialist degeneracy – is the behaviour of the British government itself when trying to face up to the inevitable humiliation of being seen to have been got the better of by Sinn Féin and the IRA.

The latest counter-blast by Downing Street to the Adams propaganda triumph in New York consisted of more ridiculous subjective-idealism than had even spewed out the days before (see last week's *Bulletin*) in claiming the loss of the last major British-owned car manufacturer to a German take-over as a 'vote of confidence in British engineering know-how', etc.

First came the inspired press 'stories' that Sinn Féin's publicity victory was really a defeat in disguise because of Adams being forced to say he wanted a peaceful solution. The shallow 'logic' of this argument is both astonishingly ignorant of all basic negotiating tactics since negotiations began in human civilisation, – namely now all participants are for a 'peaceful agreed solution' and how it is the other side insisting on warring disagreement instead, – and also ludicrously at odds with the British government's own actions, in denying Adams the chance to repeat on British television what he said in New York. If Adams being forced to say he is a man of peace in New York is good for the British cause, then why not encourage him to say it ten times a day on London television?

Second came the rushed announcement of new British gov-

ernment moves for a devolved and negotiated solution to the crisis over Ireland's self-determination and future, the offer of new talks to which, however, Sinn Féin would not be invited.

This very old procrastinating gibberish should not fool a single soul. It is the Sinn Féin/IRA national-liberation struggle which has put an end to the old gerrymandered 'devolved' and 'negotiated' so-called 'solution' to the Irish troubles, and will obviously do so again if London is stupid enough to try yet more humbugging tricks on the played-out 'democratic majority' theme. Every objective-minded person on earth will realise that if the basic issue of Ireland's genuine independence and reunification is not now at last addressed, then there is not the slightest chance of any really reliable peace in Ireland, or any real progress.

This head-in-the-sand make-believe world of the British capitalist system over Ireland is currently being very powerfully reinforced by the total idealism of all bourgeois imperialist behaviour on the international economic crisis.

The British ruling class for example, never stop telling themselves and others that things are getting steadily better when they clearly are not. And internationally, the stock exchanges are pushing hundreds of millions of gullible savers further and further out on a limb by insisting that if the market-makers think that a new boom is about to take off, then that is all that is required to make it happen. The stock markets have managed to peak in one and the same week both because the general economic news was good, making things reliable, – and because the general economic news was bad, which would make a cut in interest rates via a central bank-rate cut essential, – thus making things even more reliable.

But in spite of bourgeois idealism's ridiculous subjective delusions and wishful thinking, the British imperialist crisis over its failed colonial policy in Ireland nevertheless continues edging bit by bit towards the only eventual real solution, the completion of Britain's long-lasting snail's-pace withdrawal from the Occupied Zone, and the completion at some stage of Ireland's reunification.

Bit by bit, little snippets of information about British imperialism's actual capitulation to the demands of the national-liberation struggle have become well established in spite of all the amazing depth, persistence and

variety of smokescreens which British ruling-class sensitivity has thrown up to try to hide its defeated climb-down.

The Anglo-Irish Treaty was the first big milestone, conceded by the fire-breathing imperialist Thatcher regime of all people, – accepting in print, in public, the right of Dublin to have a say in what goes on in ‘Northern Ireland’.

The even barmier right-wing Major gang have let the slide-out go further in the Downing Street declaration which now states that Britain has ‘no more interest’ in ‘Northern Ireland’, a complete abandonment of the ‘British Ireland’ sovereignty jingoism of the prime British imperialist epochs.

Now further concessions are being discussed in Sinn Féin’s direction, – possibly irresistible after Adams’s propaganda coup in New York:

There was a mood of cautious-optimism in Dublin yesterday after Sir Patrick held six hours of talks with Dick Spring, the Irish foreign minister. Sir Patrick indicated that the Government may be prepared, after all, to offer Sinn Féin some form of clarification to the declaration – an option stoutly rejected earlier by the Prime Minister.

Sir Patrick and Mr Spring agreed to continue to provide explanations of the declaration through public speeches.

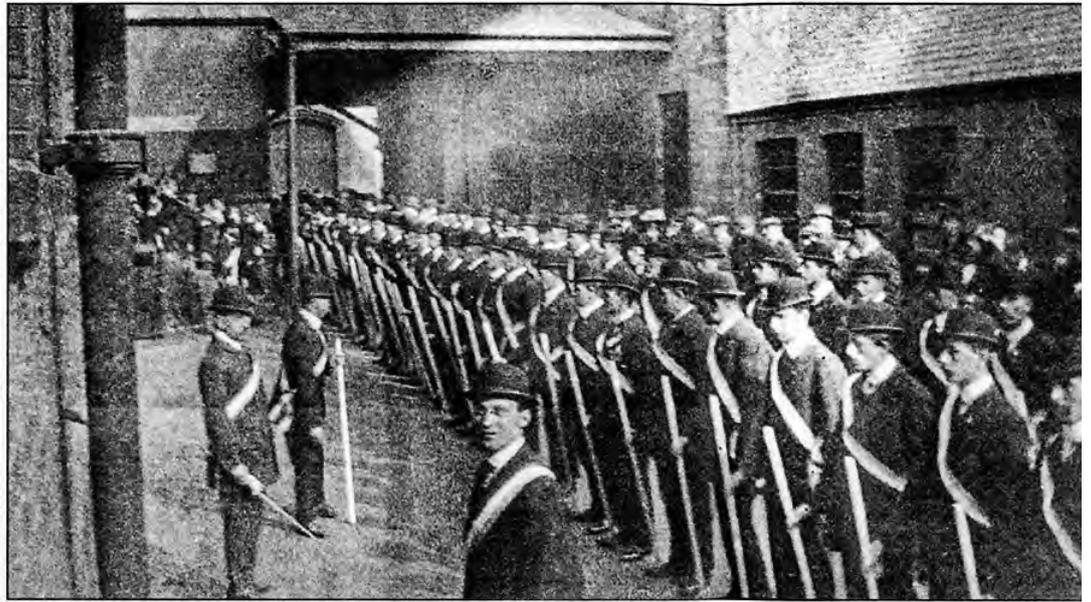
Sir Patrick said he didn’t wish to see anybody under any genuine misapprehension about what the declaration said. But he was not inviting requests for clarification and was not prepared to negotiate or put glosses on the document.

“I think we ought to get away from dancing on the head of a pin about whether it’s clarifying or what word you wish to use and concentrate on what the document does.”

He also used one of the potent words in the current republican debate by adding that the document made the two governments “persuaders” towards an agreement between the people of Northern Ireland.

It is still possible that the Irish national-liberation struggle will yet be frustrated by British imperialist intransigence or paralysis, or sidlined because even worst crises have overtaken London in the course of the terrifying inter-imperialist trade-war crisis now threatening the British ruling-class’s very survival.

But events so far over British imperialism’s longstanding difficulties over the slow death of its Orange colonist community’s domineering spirit (in step with the degeneration of the British ruling class in general) have all underlined the value of the Marxist method which provided the ILWP [now EPSR - ed] with its theory of the longterm imperi-



▲ Violence in support of the unionist cause was strongly hinted at with the formation of the Ulster Volunteers in 1912

alist-crisis perspectives which alone can provide a reliable guide to what is really happening in the class/national warring in Ireland. On a lesser note, the *Bulletin’s* insistence on ‘the British colonists in the Occupied Zone of Ireland’ as the only correct historical description of the deliberately tendentious ‘British-Irish, Ulster Unionist, Loyalist Northern Ireland’ labels shows how it would have paid off last week if consistent Sinn Féin propaganda had rendered Hurd’s counter-blasts about ‘the people of Northern Ireland’ impossible by always refusing to accept the very legitimacy of such a bastard statelet, or even its name.

And backing up the evidence of the British ruling class losing its way internationally in the inter-imperialist conflict as the key to the colonial decline in Occupied Ireland, the Orange colonist community has shown increasing signs of demoralised or deranged behaviour, confirming that it is an artificial lying existence which is on the way out.

The ‘loyalist’ nightmare plans for yet another repartitioning of Ireland, creating yet another anti-nationalist ghetto on Occupied Territory and resuming the whole troubles for another 70 years, underline this hopelessly outdated reactionariness like nothing else, repeating the monstrous ethnic-cleansing which has so shamefully scarred the whole history of British imperialist interference in Ireland: PLANS for an ethnically cleansed Protestant homeland, with the “surrender” of at least two border counties, were revealed yesterday in loyalist paramilitary documents portraying a “doomsday scenario” in Northern Ireland.

Describing repartition as the preferred option, one document says: “British military intelligence sug-

gests that at least two and probably three counties in Ulster are already lost...Armagh for instance has an overwhelming Irish nationalist population owing no allegiance to the State or the British crown.” To all intents and purposes, it says, the RUC and army have already withdrawn from “these nationalist border counties”, so “surrendering two or three provinces (counties) to the Irish Republic would alleviate much of the security problem.”

Under the heading “What to do with these people” are discussed three options for the many Catholics living behind the redrawn border. “Expulsion” would reduce demands upon food supplies but give enemy forces extra men. “Internment” would be a drain on resources but provide a “useful bargaining chip in any negotiations”. “Nullification” is chillingly described as “difficult again but reduces demands on food supplies and if all could be rounded up the process could be finished within 1-2 weeks”.

The doomsday plan was “a very valuable return to reality”, a prominent member of Ian Paisley’s Democratic Unionist Party said last night Party spokesman Sammy Wilson, a former Belfast lord mayor, said it showed some people were prepared to take radical action to protect an independent Ulster identity.

This proposed new onslaught of barbaric British terrorist violence against the Irish in their own land, the cause of all the troubles from their very start 800 years ago, continues the usual historical sleight-of-hand and deception so that ‘Ulster’ can be made to appear as basically ‘British’ territory, conveniently burying the gerrymandered ripped-out reality of this ‘British Ulster’ to start with which already had to forget about three of Ulster’s nine counties in the 1921 carve-up because of their heavily Irish majority population.

Having grotesquely gerrymandered the border of the

remaining six-county Occupied Zone to include as many colonist areas and exclude as many Irish areas as possible, these fascist representatives of British colonial violence now propose to rip out a couple more heavily Irish county areas and still claim that the rest is ‘Ulster’, or ‘British Ireland’.

Even their stinking name of Ulster Unionist is a rotten fraud. But still the cringing petty-bourgeois ‘liberal’ and ‘left’ scribblers in Britain refuse to acknowledge the justice of the armed revolutionary struggle to complete Ireland’s national liberation; and still wave after nauseating wave of ‘Ulster Unionist’ frauds and fascist hypocrites are invited to spew out their bile to dominate the British broadcasting channels.

Ireland is Ireland and all who want to live there honestly should accept the majority wish clearly stated and fought for, for over 800 years, that the Irish want their independence free of any British sovereignty claims whatsoever. The fake ‘Ulster Unionist’ veto, imposed by British bayonets, is one of the great obscenities of history.

And the national-liberation struggle could not be more restrained or rational in its propaganda on this point, even down to allowing the Occupied Zone to be called ‘Northern Ireland’ and the British Colonists to be called ‘Unionist’ Irish:

GERRY Adams, president of Sinn Féin, told *The Observer* yesterday that the Government should tell the Unionist majority of Ulster that their future lay within a united Ireland.

‘First of all, in reality they have no right to a veto in the Irish context. I mean that no national minority has any right to a veto. In the Irish context, we have to accept that the Unionists are a sizeable grouping of our people, a very significant large

minority, and also that they live mostly in the north-east of the country.

'So we have to get their participation, we have to have their involvement, we have to seek the maximum consent. But that cannot be a precondition. We cannot decide as has happened for almost all of this century, there can be no movement — while the Unionists are a sizeable minority in the Irish context they are a very small, insignificant minority in the British context, in the context of the six counties and Britain.

'Now who will decide the fate of the six-county state? The British Parliament. That is where the sovereignty lies. That is where the jurisdiction lies. That is where the Government of Ireland Act — an Act of the British Parliament — will be changed, not by the Unionists but by the British Parliament and that is the reality of the situation. 'The Unionists will not move and we cannot expect them to move until the British persuade them to. They have no right of a veto over any policy. They certainly have no veto over British policy.'

But Mr Adams said: 'The British use that as a pretext. In the Irish context, of course, we cannot make progress and we cannot have the society we want to have unless we have the full participation of the Unionists. We can't move without them.'

What he wanted from the British Government was an agreement with Dublin that it would, within an accepted timescale, 'restore to the Irish people not just the principle of self-determination but the exercise of the right to self-determination'. 'How we exercise it is a matter for us to work out among ourselves, but the British, in other words, must point the Unionists in that direction.

'If they don't do it now, they are going to do it in the future and the Unionists know that the British are going to move to a point where they are actually to agree with what I am outlining, and I am saying that this should be done sooner rather than later.'

As for the joint Downing Street declaration, he said: 'This declaration comes a long way along the peace process and even further along the peace strategy which Sinn Féin initiated five or six years ago, so we have to look at it in the context of our strategy.

'Does it advance the peace strategy and does it move forward the whole peace process? The two governments and other supporters of the declaration say that it provides the basis for a settlement. But the document is full of ambiguity. There are so many contradictions, not just between Unionists and others, but between the two governments. Mr Reynolds and Mr Major have on every issue that has raised itself a totally different attitude.'

Commenting on the letter he sent last week to John Major, seeking clarification of the declaration, Mr Adams said: 'A cause for concern which should be taken aboard by English readers is that this declaration was made and trumpeted as a declaration for peace. The language used since by Mr Major, Mr

Mayhew, Mr Hurd and other British cabinet members is hardly the language of peace.

'We are told to take it or leave it, we are told there is going to be a crackdown, we are accused of teasing or stringing the whole issue out. We are told they are running out of patience with us, we are threatened with internment and so on. I have to say the British Government have made no attempt to bring us on board.'

Setting out his own view of what Britain now needed to do, he said: 'It is time for you to bring about some accommodation with the rest of the Irish people. Whatever is going to be done will end up being a matter for legislation because the cornerstone you see of British involvement in our country is the Government of Ireland Act. At the end of the day that must be done away with.' Specifically, Mr Adams said there were too many ambiguities, the declaration did not explain the mechanics of the peace process and above all, he wanted clarification on the key point of self-determination.

'The British Government refrained from saying that they had no political interest in Ireland, if you noted what they said, they said they had no strategic or economic interest in Ireland. They didn't say they had no political interest in Northern Ireland. Mr Major in his commentary on the document when he presented it to the House of Commons said that it didn't mean a united Ireland, that it didn't mean Dublin involvement in the affairs of Northern Ireland, that it didn't mean joint sovereignty. He gave a long list of Nos.'

Mr Adams denied that Sinn Féin was deliberately stringing along the two governments, saying: 'There is nothing in it for us to string along the two governments. The two governments told us that they took some lengthy time to put this declaration together. John Hume and I took months to get where we were. The problem is centuries old. It has only been published for a month, that is not stringing along.'

Asked how Protestants could join a healing process when the IRA was still killing members of that community, he said: 'I don't accept the Protestants are being targeted, although I do accept the perception from their point of view.'

Asked what the Republican contribution to that process would be, he said: 'I think first of all we have to be very open — treating people who are Unionists, who have a sense of allegiance with Britain, who want some recognition of that — we have to be very open. Second, we are accepting that we are not going to jump today from a partitioned Ireland, a divided Ireland, a part of the country under British jurisdiction, from that situation into an independent socialist republic tomorrow.'

Mr Adams continued: 'There is no possibility of the IRA unilaterally deciding to end this campaign and anyway the IRA isn't the only force involved. There are a number of forces involved. So the situation has been militarised and we need to go about a process of demilitarising that, of bringing into play political factors, political processes which allow the

militarisation to be ended.

'I can't stop the IRA. And anyone who thinks that any one individual can stop the IRA misunderstands the dynamic of the situation. But what I can do and what I am prepared to do, I am prepared to take risks, to play a part in developing a peace process and embrace a process of peace which the IRA can embrace.'

The 'loyalist' (British colonist) response is just to go on butchering innocent Catholic Irish individuals to try to terrorise the nationalists into submission, — just like it has always been for 800 years of British imperialist intervention.

The only thing more degenerately criminally cowardly than the British colonial violence in Ireland is the supine treachery to the cause of Ireland's independence by the Green Tory establishment in the Republic. The RTE censorship on Sinn Féin has been partially lifted at last, but the big question is what on earth was it doing there for 20 years in the first place. But the Dublin bourgeoisie will always be too busy getting up and down off their knees to get opportunistic economic crumbs off the Western imperialist table to find time to answer.

But even that middle-class wretchedness will be swallowed up by the immense turmoil to come from general inter-imperialist trade-war upheavals. The Adams visa snub will seem trivial compared to the trade-war shocks to come, and Dublin will not be spared, share crashes and all.

Domineering imperialist aggression can only go in one direction — towards war, — and far more than toes will be trodden on, of presumed 'friend' and 'foe' alike:

A ROW is brewing in the Clinton administration over federal subsidies for United States arms exports, to maintain US dominance of almost 60 per cent of world arms sales, with contracts worth \$31 billion last year.

The proposal for a new \$1 billion export credit programme, to guarantee US arms manufacturers against defaults by buyers, is being strongly pressed by the commerce secretary, Ron Brown, who is emerging as the most energetic salesman for the US arms and aerospace industries.

US armed forces equipment and personnel are being sent to push the sales effort at the Singapore defence exhibition later this month.

In the 1980s, the US sold \$134 billion worth of weapons and military services to 160 countries and political movements, according to a new book, *And Weapons For All*, by William Hartung, senior research fellow at the World Policy Institute.

In the 1990s, arms sales intensified, with \$34 billion in new orders from Middle East and Gulf countries after the war with Iraq, Mr Hartung says. The biggest wave of arms sales in history took place in the nine weeks before the 1992 election, when President Bush announced over \$20 billion in new weapons exports.

"In just two months, George Bush rushed through the equivalent of a year's worth of weapons exports," Mr Hartung writes. Mr Bush did so even while his government's policy was to limit arms sales to the Middle East through joint talks between the Big Five arms exporters — the US, Russia, Britain, France and China.

THE Clinton administration has decided to re-equip the Argentine Air Force, despite British objections, in a \$250 million (£172.5 million) deal for 36 American-built Skyhawk fighter-bombers with advanced radar technology.

The move will add to fears of eroding British influence in Washington after last week's row over the welcome accorded Gerry Adams, the Sinn Féin leader.

The US reluctantly met one British plea that if US aircraft were sold to restore the balance of air power between Argentina and its neighbours, Chile and Brazil, they should be incapable of matching the handful of potent British Tornado fighters stationed in the Falkland Islands.

"We are content with the offer the US has made," British diplomats said yesterday. [...]

Meanwhile bourgeois Britain continue to stab itself in the



foot, as hard and frequently as possible it seems. Portillo's rabid xenophobia is now standard Tory meeting talk, apparently. It is an outdated class system which is losing in Ireland, in the

trade war, in everything, and is on the way to revolutionary overthrow at the climax of the inter-imperialist crisis.

Build Leninism. JB

Defeat of reaction in South Africa has a message for Orange colonists in Ireland, The collapse in imperialist positions means national-liberation will be preferable to Bolshevik revolution. Only the middle-class 'left' swamp has backed Tory disorientation propaganda that the London Declaration is all about an 'IRA surrender'. Weak nationalist policies are best challenged by Leninist perspectives, not sectarian sniping. Wrong strategy and tactics are the right of any genuine anti-imperialist struggle. The blame for their danger rests entirely with the hypocritical system of imperialist 'democracy' and 'market freedom' concealing the monopoly-bourgeois dictatorship. Racist bile cannot hide establishment humiliation over Heathrow. [EPSR No 742 15-03-94]

The routing of the diehard white colonists in South Africa by the national-liberation movement contains a timely and most appropriate lesson for illuminating the troubles in Ireland.

Bourgeois political opinion has always pretended that large-ish and well-established settler communities (Rhodesia, South Africa, Occupied Ireland, Zionists, etc) could never be tackled head-on by the 'free' West, even when they were clearly seen to be in the wrong, and voted on as such by the United Nations (as happened with the UDI whites in Rhodesia who were allowed to survive for another 14 years of colonial/feudal dictatorship until the ill-armed and desperately impoverished local black-nationalist forces routed this dictatorship themselves in national-liberation war).

The British police-military regime of bogusly 'protestant' or 'loyalist' bigots colonising the north east corner of Ireland is still always presented as having an unchallengeable right of veto over the reunification of Ireland (monstrously partitioned by arbitrary imperialist violence in 1921).

It is asserted that the Orange mafia would unleash a blood-bath which would never end, if the British tried telling the colonists that the Occupation was over and that British forces would henceforth stay on for just a brief while to ensure a secure and disciplined transfer of authority to the armed power of a united Irish state.

The ILWP alone has always explained what anti-historical nonsense this argument is (regardless of whether or not decadent British imperialism could ever face such a dramatic humiliating climb-down, 'instantly' solving what bourgeois ideology has always pretended were 'insoluble difficulties', etc.)

The *Bulletin* has published article after article for more than 10 years (See ILWP Books vol 8 & 15 – *Ireland* and dozens of subsequent additions) detailing how the 'community' of British-occupied Ireland has been steadily disintegrating directly in line with the decay in the position of British imperialism itself (internationally, economically, militarily, domestically, etc, etc).

The Popper-minded bourgeois 'historians' like Kee & Go never

cease wanking on about the 'poverty of historicism' (which simply means how they hate the Marxist class analysis of civilisation's development) but then offer 'historical' judgments themselves to justify their own extremely class-conscious 'analyses' of the events in Ireland, – such as Kee's latest effort this week, asking in the capitalist press for the Government to concede negotiations to the national-liberation movement because the IRA has been 'defeated':

Given the ideological insistence with which for those 25 years the IRA have proclaimed their goal as a united Ireland and the end of British sovereignty, they should have had only one response to the Declaration: to throw it out at once. They did not do such thing. And still do not. For three months now Gerry Adams and Sinn Féin have asked for "clarification". There is no clarification needed. The Declaration is crystal clear: there can be no change of sovereignty in Northern Ireland unless a majority of the people there agree to it. Future democratic political organisation in Northern Ireland will be sought within that unalterable structure. Adams's blurring call for clarification is a disguised admission of defeat.

The second alternative when negotiating with people who come to the table in a relatively weak position is to help them do so without losing too much face. Given the relatively diminished IRA activity since the Declaration, until Heathrow, and the possible significance of the fact that the bombs there did not explode, public opinion might now accept the arrival of Sinn Féin at the table without pre-conditions. The Declaration itself makes clear that the negotiation would in no way be about altering the present structure of sovereignty in Northern Ireland. What would be discussed would be the details of the new democratic Northern Ireland state and the return to it of representative Government after 20 years. Today's statement by the IRA seems to add to the argument for such an invitation.

In 1922, when a far more powerful IRA representing the majority in Ireland in a way the present IRA has never done, was at deadlock with the British Government, that Government, having first demanded surrender, finally agreed simply to talks about a truce. These took place over two days, during which some very unpleasant violence still took place, but a truce was eventually arrived at. The truce held until a political settlement was achieved. History, though not always a useful model for the future, has particular relevance to an Ireland in which it is consistently part of the present.

Don't these bourgeois just love the thought that revolutionary 'terrorism' can be defeated, and that the establishment power (of British imperialism) can prevail.

But while the appearance

of weaker IRA strength now compared to 1921 may not be totally misleading (and there are scores of other complex relative judgments to take into account), what the grotesque philistine 'historian' Kee simply ludicrously ignores is that the health of British imperialism in 1994 is just a farcical shell of its world position in 1921.

And the Orange community, strongly colonising an occupied Ireland "in the name of the British sovereign and British sovereignty", etc, – is even sicker. That 'League of Empire Loyalists' diehard mentality, rampant around the 'Ulster' Unionists at that time of the great bogus 'victory' for British imperialism in the Great War (World War I) was already something of a dubious-sounding desperation measure when the first UDI threats were notoriously made by Carson & Co against Home Rule legislation at the time of the Curragh Mutiny by rebellious army officers. Even in the contemporary accounts of the Unionist bluster, it is hard not to see in it some early traces of Ian Smith's tragi-comic theatrical self-righteousness of 50 years later, a performance reduced to farcical parody by Ian Paisley's over-rehearsed ranting.

It was the full strength and implacable interest of British imperialism which imposed partition on Ireland at that 1921 period of the centuries-long national-liberation struggle, – not the wagging of the British imperialist dog by its 'Ulster' Unionist tail. The diehard Unionists were opposed to any retreat by British imperialist sovereignty from any part of Ireland. The London ruling class compromised that 'loyalty' by calculating that imperialist interests could get a quicker, cheaper, and more secure deal to prevent full Irish independence (to avoid possible future alliances with foreign powers against Britain on Britain's own back doorstep and guarantee only British military bases and 'home ground' around the island of Ireland) – by giving Irish nationalism some limited half-hearted 'independence' to shut it up, – the 26-county 'Free State' initially compulsorily remaining within the British Empire (later Commonwealth).

It is the collapse of that static old world-imperialist geographical manoeuvring and military pecking-order prestige, especially as far as bankrupt British imperialism is concerned, which would make any similar strategic manipulation by Britain now against Irish nationalism such a

nonsense.

Temporarily, a mild verbal commitment to 'majority agreement in Northern Ireland' (the Unionist veto on reunification) persists.

But Kee and Co are being more idealistically foolish than ever in believing that such momentary theoretical propaganda about 'guaranteed commitments' and 'democratic rights', etc, would not be abandoned in a flash, – and replaced by even more grandly-resonant 'principles' (i.e. totally hypocritical bullshit), – at the first moment it suited British imperialism's remaining curtailed aims in life (such as sucking up to Washington even more to do what it is told).

This ridiculously undemocratic and historically outdated 'veto' racket in the hands of these psychotic 'Loyalist' diehards is trivial rubbish compared to the major British imperialist statement of retreat over Ireland, – enforced by the invincibility of the national-liberation struggle and the ridicule of world opinion condemning Britain for its brutal dithering and paralysed intransigence, – that Britain has no further economic or strategic interest in keeping the Occupied Zone of Ireland within British sovereignty.

This enforced London declaration both marks a further stage in the triumph of the national-liberation struggle, and further encourages the Republicans towards even greater endeavours.

The whole situation of the outdatedness of the entire imperialist system of market (and military) domination by the Great Powers, and of the outdatedness in particular of the traditional politically dominant roles of British imperialism now that it is bankrupt in the midst of the most terrible slump-warmongering turmoil that the (dying) capitalist epoch has ever approached, – is relentlessly pushing Unionism (arrogantly and incorrectly called Ulster Unionism) towards the farcical debacle the AWB diehards slumped to in South Africa.

Their humiliation on the streets of Mmabatho and Mafikeng by the local black population in revolt (and dragging Pretoria's stooge 'homeland' police and army trusties with them in a joint overthrow of dictator Mangope) may not be the end of White Colonial resistance to black national liberation, or the last word in how the anti-communist diversions sown by Pretoria stooge divisions in the black population, such as the Inkatha Zulus, will ultimately



be resolved.

But the triumph for the strength of the national-liberation movement has been enormously stimulating worldwide, and is of monumental significance.

Sadly, such a victory will only tend temporarily to confirm the present flawed ANC/SACP class-compromise programme in position, naively supporting 'market democracy' as the way towards full 'black emancipation' when it is in fact only emancipation for the middle-class blacks and at a time when the revolutionary overthrow of capitalist ownership is the best agenda, not its class-compromise sustenance on into a period of all-out inter-imperialist world trade war followed by shooting war which will be a total catastrophe for the proletarian masses everywhere.

But the only plausible tactic for the moment in South Africa is to continue supporting the ANC/SACP into office so that its market-compromise catastrophe can be demonstrated in practice to the awakening masses, but simultaneously building an anti-nationalist movement of revolutionary theory to prepare for planned-socialist proletarian dictatorship which alone will be able to rescue South Africa (and every other country on earth) from the inter-imperialist holocaust to come.

The British petty-bour-

geoisie's fake-'left' fake-'revolutionary' sniping at the ANC to prevent it taking power by destroying all proletarian confidence that there could be something on the far side of an ANC electoral victory other than the 'total defeat' – is a sterile tactic.

It continues the ivory-tower 'revolutionary' opportunism of middle-class intellectuals who simply subjectively get off on proving to their devoted sects that they would be better leaders than the existing ones of the ANC, IRA, FMLN, USSR, MPLA, etc, etc, ad infinitum, from 1917 onwards.

The role of Leninist science is not to substitute itself for the leadership of bourgeois nationalist revolt, whether that of Sinn Féin, the PLO, or the ANC, once those historical movements are in progress.

Democratic-liberation revolutions have been led often by communists (as in Vietnam, China, Cuba, Angola, etc) but once bourgeois nationalism has taken a genuine lead in the anti-imperialist struggle (South Africa, Ireland, etc), it can then merely become nothing but a totally destructive provocation to just shout 'sell out' endlessly from the sidelines.

At two separate phases of the revolutionary year 1917, the Leninists twice called for power to be taken by the petty-bourgeois nationalist-opportunists (the Trudoviks and others in

the leadership of the Soviets) as the best tactic for exposing the disasters of class-compromise and centrism, and for allowing the proletariat to make its own crucial mass-revolutionary experiences itself.

The mistakes that could be criticised in Sinn Féin's leadership of the anti-imperialist struggle in Ireland would be never ending but for Leninist science to approach the situation that way would to sow illusions in workers that all that was wrong with bourgeois nationalism was a tactic or policy or two, etc.

This would be grossly misleading. The anti-Marxist philistinism of Republicanism disarms workers about the real nature of the world imperialist crisis and prolongs anti-communist anti-proletarian-dictatorship prejudices (such as faith in religion, in parliamentary 'democracy', the 'free market', etc, etc) just as destructively as any petty-bourgeois idealism.

But while middle-class nationalism is a catastrophic leadership for the proletariat in the long term, there are well-established historical precedents for accepting that in the short term, a serious lead in the anti-imperialist struggle might be given by petty-bourgeois liberation movements which slowly developing communist groups might well have to play second fiddle to (it) for a time.

This in no way means giving

unconditional support to Sinn Féin. That would create the most grotesque illusions, and lead to the most ghastly misunderstandings. The need is to give unconditional support to every anti-imperialist group's right to strike against imperialism in whatever way they think fit, – even when the tactics are those which revolutionary Leninism would never dream of employing in anti-imperialist struggles if it itself was leading.

Bolshevism would not necessarily disagree with the tactic of armed terrorism as such (see lengthy quotations from Lenin on this subject in ILWP Books vol 8 & 15 – *Ireland pt1&2*) at any particular time, and certainly not permanently for all occasions, as revisionism of various kinds has pretended. The disagreement would almost certainly always be with the political perspectives which the different types of idealist groupings inevitably disoriented themselves and others with, – wildly assuming that terror tactics, for example, could immediately give such startling lessons to millions of workers that entire historical processes could be in an instant due to the dramatic propaganda effects of sensational actions.

Such voluntarism is the deadly enemy of Marxist objective science which allows for enormous feats to be achieved by deliberately organised subjective factors of persuasion and education, – provided, of course, that such developments are in line with historical necessity (strictly governed by what is possible at any given time in the class relations of production at different specific levels of technology, productivity, and social cohesion.)

The *Bulletin* has always totally distrusted Sinn Féin's wooliness on correctly analysing the epoch the world is living through, which has resulted in the national liberation forces being frequently disarmed by anti-communist international propaganda and pro-Western 'democracy' illusions which have only strengthened imperialism and weakened the fight against British domination.

But at the same time, the *Bulletin* has always led the way in principled denunciation of the 'left' swamp for its fairweather treachery to the anti-imperialist struggle every time that the Irish national-liberation movement (Sinn Féin or the IRA or others) pursued dubious tactics which played into British imperialism's propaganda hands. Joining in the usual middle-class chorus of 'down with

sectarian violence', etc, – these petty-bourgeois 'revolutionaries' have only ever helped British imperialist propaganda keep workers everywhere confused about 'democratic majority rights' and suchlike by retreating from unconditional support for national liberation's right to pursue whatever anti-imperialist tactics and strategy it thinks fit.

Once again now, the despicable fairweather 'anti-imperialist' frauds everywhere are anew tut-tutting against the 'callous disregard for ordinary human life if hundreds of innocent people had been killed at Heathrow, as might have happened', etc.

And as usual well out in front in slimy nauseating hypocrisy within this disgusting chorus of 'reforming', 'compromising', and 'negotiating' dimwittedness are the fake-Republican petty-bourgeois stooges for Western imperialist values ensconced in Dublin around the permanently Green-Tory Dail parliament.

That crippling little jerk Reynolds would not even be successfully selling pegs door-to-door in Epsom, let alone be posing as an internationally recognised and respected statesman, were it not for the devastating blows struck by revolutionary nationalism over the last 200 years which have step by step forced back British imperialism from its total domination over Ireland (not one single victory of which advance was not subsequently claimed as its own with maximum humbug by some 'reformist' lash-up or other, sniffing around picking up the pieces of partial retreat by imperialism, but still not total defeat, and still dominant).

Reynolds and his grisly corpse-picking crew are ferretting around now like rats round the coffin of further British imperialist retreats which they sense have been forced out of London by the astonishing achievements of the national-liberation forces.

His vomit-inducing sanctimonious whine against 'the inhuman evil of cowardly violence arbitrarily terrorising innocent passengers, British and Irish alike, at Heathrow Airport', etc, is right in line with the self-righteous oafish chief police boss in Britain (whose law enforcement officers gave the world the Guildford Four stitch-up, the Birmingham Six brutal frame-up, and the terror blackmailing of the Maguires, forcing bogus 'confessions' out of them all by sheer fascist violence) who said of Heathrow:

"We are not facing audacious terrorists who are coming back

night after night to thwart the security services.

We are facing cowards who have secreted one or more devices near the airport and who have slunk away."

Well, there may be much criticism to make of Sinn Féin/IRA tactics from a position of correct revolutionary struggle against imperialism; but accusing the national-liberation struggle volunteers of cowardice when they face an enormously high death-attrition rate and persecution by what is virtually a British police-military dictatorship on 'prevention of terrorism' questions, especially in the drumhead 'courts' in the Occupied Zone of Ireland and especially as condemned by international opinion over the torture barracks there, the previous concentration-camp internment without-trial, and the now notorious 'legal' frame-ups in British courts of Irish people just for being Irish, – is just loathsome racist bile.

It remains desperately tragically true, of course, that the extreme 'solutions' which British imperialist intransigence has imposed on successive generations of Irish patriots for 800 years to have their own island back again, free from British domination, – are potentially catastrophically dangerous for totally innocent members of the British and international public.

But the answer to that is to do the obvious historically-necessary and logical thing and complete the British colonial withdrawal from Ireland by restoring Irish unity immediately and warning the Orange colonial diehards who wish to remain 'Irish' to obey Ireland's laws or face police-military repression by a combination of nationalist Irish forces, transitional-period British forces, or temporary United Nations forces, if any of that would be necessary, (which is unlikely, judging by the performance of the AWB colonist diehards facing historical necessity in South Africa).

Any such 'reformist' collapsing stages of imperialist crisis (as the British ruling class might try to cut its heavy load of losses and disasters in all directions), – is not a matter for Leninist revolutionary agitation. Let dying bourgeois chaos collapse how it will. But it is a needed argument to expose the petty-bourgeois fake 'revolutionaries' who denounce national-liberation 'terror' tactics really only from the point of view of middle-class armchair socialists who hate the threats to their own comforts from having to declare unconditional

solidarity with the national-liberation movement's right to fight imperialist tyranny however it thinks fit. The blame for the arbitrary dangers this might cause to everyone is to be laid solely at the door of imperialist reaction, wholly responsible for the troubles in the first place.

Remarkably, sections of bourgeois opinion in Britain seem poised to reach exactly such a defeated conclusion, including in Fleet Street editorials and news coverage:

Say what you like about the IRA, but they are certainly a professional terrorist organisation. If they took so much trouble to contrive the sequence of attacks and to conceal the mortars, why did they not take more trouble to ensure that they actually exploded? Why did they not use state of the art mortar ordnance? The answers to these questions are essential parts of a coherent interpretation of Heathrow. But at this stage the repetition of the botched deed sounds like an insistent message: Look what I could do if this was for real. As the song says, there's no success like failure.

This morning's statement by the IRA leadership absolutely confirms that this is an organisation which wants to find a way of striking a deal with the British and Irish governments. If that statement is a rejection of the Downing Street declaration then the word No has lost its meaning. Rarely can an organisation with such a revolutionary tradition have sounded so unwilling to spurn the hand proffered by its enemies. In the course of a short statement the words "positive" and "flexible" appear four times each. The overwhelming impression is of an organisation anxious for the chance of peace.

Is the tone of the statement contradicted by the Heathrow mortars? Or are the two not consistent and compatible? Only a fool can answer this for certain. An overnight outrage can easily make a mockery of yesterday's apparently well-judged conclusions. But for the moment the two sound remarkably in harmony. The IRA are asking, not to say pleading, for talks; at the same time they are giving a chilling warning of the perils which await refusal. It is neither unprincipled nor unreasonable to expect the British government to give a more serious answer to them than it has done so far.

Mr Adams's confidence that direct talks will resume was shared by Peter Robinson, deputy leader of the hardline Democratic Unionist Party. "Of course the Government are going to talk to the IRA again," he said, claiming that it would be a "reward" for stopping the violence.

Mr Hume's claim in media interviews from the US yesterday that the IRA did not intend any of the mortars it fired at Heathrow to explode was endorsed by a senior RUC officer last night He said: "In military terms this is powder puff stuff and it is quite obvious what they are up to. What they are doing at Heathrow is hinting at the potential."

Mr Hume, who wants the

Government to reopen direct talks with Sinn Féin, said: "It was their intention to demonstrate to the British government what they are capable of, so that if there is a total cessation of violence they are not backing down or standing down from a position of weakness, but from a position of strength."

THE IRA last night capitalised on the confusion its mortars have caused when its coded telephone warnings closed both Heathrow once more and Gatwick airport in Sussex.

The two airports reopened late last night after police had searched the perimeters for more than two hours, but the IRA appeared to have scored a significant propaganda coup.

About 20 troops were drafted into the search around Heathrow after a request from the Metropolitan Police, the Ministry of Defence said. Detectives were satisfied there were no further mortar launchers hidden in the areas, although during an earlier sweep along Heathrow's nine miles of fencing they missed those which sent yesterday morning's missiles into the airport.

As police again refused to evacuate the airports, thousands of passengers were refused permission to leave the terminals, even though IRA warning calls had suggested terminals would be targets.

One mortar had hit Terminal Four at Heathrow in yesterday morning's attack, but like the other 11 in the three attacks over five days, it did not explode.

Police said the no entry, no exit policy was adopted for people's safety and accused the IRA of a cynical attempt to cause fear and panic.

The IRA said in a statement from Dublin its warnings should be heeded. "The luck of the British authorities who are deliberately taking these calculated and cynical gambles with people's lives will inevitably run out," it said.

"It's now six months since the leadership of O'Leigh na h-Eireann indicated its positive and flexible attitude to the developing Irish peace initiative.

"Our public statement came in the wake of the announcement by John Hume and Gerry Adams that they had temporarily suspended their talks and had forwarded a report on the position reached to date to Dublin for consideration.

"The awaited response of the two governments came on December 15 with the Downing Street declaration. Despite the negative attitude of the British government since then and their refusal to build on the opportunity for peace, the IRA wish to publicly note that our positive and flexible attitude to the peace process is an abiding and enduring one. This is evident from our responses to developments to date and in our continued willingness to be flexible and positive in explaining the potential for moving the situation forward.

10 "There is a responsibility on the British government to move from its current negative stance. The people of Britain and of Ireland deserve better. The continued opportunity for peace should not be squandered.

There is an urgent need to refocus attention and to move the peace process forward.

TWELVE IRA mortar bombs fired at Heathrow in three separate attacks over the last five days were not primed to explode, according to republican sources.

Commander David Tucker, head of Scotland Yard's anti-terrorist squad, said the devices all had a "consistent mechanical defect". He refused to speculate on claims that the attacks were part of an IRA propaganda campaign.

According to sources quoted by the *Dublin Sunday Tribune*, although the mortar bombs fired last week contained quantities of the high explosive Semtex they were never meant to explode.

The fact that four more mortar bombs used in yesterday's attack also failed to explode could add credence to the claims and illustrate the IRA's ability to score considerable publicity coups while maintaining a recent change of tactics with an apparent commitment to not taking civilian lives.

The latest attack, which caused little damage, proved to be a big embarrassment for the security forces. Commander Tucker admitted yesterday that the area from which the latest batch of bombs had been launched had been searched by hundreds of officers less than 24 hours earlier.

The Sinn Féin leader's remarks concerning the Heathrow attacks and the value of attracting international exposure amount to an exposition of current republican thinking on the role of the armed struggle.

Speculation of a split in the movement seems misplaced. Violence will accelerate the peace process and is therefore complementary to it, Mr Adams appeared to explain.

Talking peace while continuing the war perhaps best sums up the approach. Seamus Mallon, the Social Democratic and Labour Party's deputy leader, described Mr Adams's comments last night as appalling and added: "I believe there is a growing hypocrisy about an organisation which talks peace in the morning and carries out, acts like these and supports acts like these in the afternoon."

Mr Adams said the eight mortars fired on successive nights at the airport were a reminder designed to accelerate Britain's thinking and bring fresh clarification of its policy.

The continuing conflict was a product of Mr Major's refusal to talk to Sinn Féin. "The British government are presenting the major obstruction," Mr Adams said.

"The British government have stalled this process by refusing to engage with Sinn Féin. Engagement by the British government with Sinn Féin moves the process on."

The historic record is worth collating. The ILWP's longstanding attempt to establish the need for objective Marxist science to be reintroduced to the international labour movement for the first time in decades to

replace Stalinist revisionism and Trotskyite sectarianism has rested entirely on seeking to explain and analyse the real movement of international class and national forces governing world developments, without which understanding no true communist programme, strategy and tactics for class struggle can remotely begin to be successfully elaborated.

Much has been got wrong, and will inevitably be got wrong in the future too.

But every incorrect assessment and understanding has also been painstakingly reanalysed and the lessons learned, hopefully.

Such an approach has no connection whatever with anything else on the supposed 'left' which is in fact but a swamp of opportunist confusion run by middle-class sectarian mentalities of various kinds.

The *Bulletin* has had to campaign against an avalanche of petty-bourgeois defeatism and idealist muddle-headedness from all directions, including the anti-communist and anti-Marxist Sinn Féin itself, to explain that British imperialism has long since been forced onto a path of snail's-pace withdrawal (from its last colonisation of Ireland territory) by the historical period of universal imperialist-system crisis, of specific dire British imperialist economic and political crisis, and irresistible advance of mass revolutionary politics worldwide. It seems to be monopoly-bourgeois, international policy to accommodate this advance in its less dangerous national-liberation phase (IRA/Sinn Féin) where possible rather than to hold off and provoke closer and closer towards renewed Bolshevism (which is coming anyway).

Despite its limited resources, the *Bulletin* has tried to plot every move in the signs of imperialist pressure on London to effect a capitulation to irresistible Irish nationalist aspirations but without, of course, being seen to be giving in to the 'men of violence', etc.

The latest twist has been the London Declaration which bourgeois propaganda has tried to pass off as a 'generous response to the IRA/Sinn Féin wish to surrender and abandon its futile campaign of violence' etc, - imperialist claptrap vilely supported by petty-bourgeois 'left' subjectivism sneering at the 'IRA sell-out' just to give its own idealist 'revolutionary' philosophical chaos an egocentric boost.

National-liberation muddle-headedness might yet will trip

up and sell itself short into a messy compromise while yet far from achieving full independence now, or its own vaguer more limited goals, or even just what could be achieved at the present from the confused and demoralised British imperialists.

But the sectarian 'IRA sell-out' material has nothing whatever to do with any such objective scientific judgment of the class and national forces involved in the Irish question internationally, but everything to do with the subjective needs of wretched petty-bourgeois fake-'revolutionary' sects, who conduct one-sided polemics on all matters solely to prove that they are always right.

And for the moment, matters still look poised for a historic British imperialist sell-out, and not the other way round. For the moment, on the capitalist press's own coverage, it hardly looks like it is Sinn Féin and the IRA who have been beaten and wish to surrender, as Major & Co (and the Trots) have been pretending.

Possible next developments will be serious splits in the Unionist ranks akin to the divisions among the South African colonists, with half doing a bourgeois accommodation deal with the ANC, and half vowing to resist black rule to the death. A proposed all-Irish government of some kind would be likely to lead to the same defeated fissure in Unionism.

Internationally the pressure will soon be on the Zionist colonists of Occupied Palestine too, and the obvious split there will be for the Tel Aviv establishment to agree to international imperialist prodding to abandon the aggressive settler mentality rampaging around the West Bank and the Gaza Strip, for some further accommodation with Arafat's bourgeois-nationalist compromise before the intolerable crisis drives Palestinians (and all Arabs) further towards Bolshevism.

But none of these 'reformist' compromises will last out the inter-imperialist trade-war crisis which will rage on all the way to general imperialist war-mongering and renewed largescale communist revolution. Build Leninism. Douglas Bell



Split British bourgeoisie more isolated than ever by failure. New yielding to Irish national-liberation not hidden by media lies. Confusion-mongering on Ireland by petty-bourgeois fake-'lefts' is too stupid to help either. Imperialism's elitist domination system in retreat everywhere.

[EPSR No 752 24-05-94]

Continuing unresolved 'free world' economic crisis and deepening inter-imperialist conflicts over Bosnia & elsewhere are the explosive background to the latest humiliations for Britain's ruling class, so hopelessly divided and now whipping up anti-Europeanism as a chauvinistic cover for failures.

British imperialism's snail's-pace withdrawal from the colonised zone of Ireland slithered forward a bit more with the recent question-and-answer farce over the *Downing Street Declaration*.

The ruling-class pretence once again is that they are still not negotiating with Sinn Féin and the IRA, and the bourgeois press dutifully assured everyone that the published exchanges would amount to a 'brush off' for the national-liberation struggle.

Above all, the fiction was further maintained that there had been no retreat by London from its earlier headline postures that no clarification of the *Declaration* was needed or would be given, and certainly that not the slightest suggestion of negotiations was involved in answering Sinn Féin's questions.

But as the capitalist media themselves were finally forced to admit (albeit quietly and in parentheses), the Government's 21-page published reply amounted to exactly that, – clarification and therefore the public renewal of the secret negotiations that had already taken place.

Another huge smokescreen was put up by Whitehall claiming that its previous insistence on the IRA accepting a one-sided cease-fire before Sinn Féin could be considered "worthy to be let into" the peace talks and the new settlement discussions for Ireland 'after a decent interval', – was still valid.

But even Fleet Street's own middle-class commentaries almost conceded the point that the Republican movement had effectively battled its way into the conference chamber with its latest 25-year fight for Ireland's total independence and reuni-

fication.

Little is convincingly put forward in reply when the Orange-colonist thugs are quoted as sneering defiance at the fact that "the IRA has bombed its way to the negotiating table", and vowing to frustrate such a way forward by unleashing mindless sectarian terror against Irish Catholics, whether Sinn Féin supporters or not.

And a delicate silence is maintained over the humiliating defeat for British imperialism for having repeatedly promised that the Republican movement was just a bunch of hated and isolated terrorist-criminals who were rapidly being wiped out or demoralised and who would soon no longer be a problem.

But still the bourgeois ideological machine cannot openly cope with the revolutionary notion that Sinn Féin represents a genuine national-liberation struggle which has, arms in hand, defeated the entire armoury of British military-imperialist repression trying to crush that determined spirit for Ireland to be reunited once again, ending the hated partition, and to be wholly independent, ending the hated British colonisation.

The middle-class just cannot accept that such romantic revolutionary perspectives could ever be viable for fear that the next step people may get used to would be the notion of all-out communist revolution. Nor can British petty-bourgeois public opinion easily live with the idea that it is the British 'democratic' state which has been Ireland's fascist-imperialist gaoler, only able to impose the hated partition by means of just as ruthless a police-military dictatorship as any of the big colonial-aggression powers have been guilty of this century, including the open periods of fascist warmongering.

The M16/RUC shoot-to-kill death squads; the Gough torture barracks denounced in the International Court; the astonishing suppression of the

Stalker inquiry by the state's judicial frame-up of one of its own senior police officers; the 18-year-jail terms imposed arbitrarily for vengeance on six totally innocent Irishmen, the Birmingham Six; the similar monstrous fitting up of the Guildford Four and the Maguire family, deliberately killing some of them in their long insanity-provoking prison sentences just for the sake of the morale and pride of the British 'legal' system; the night terror raids on Catholic housing estates in the Occupied Zone of Ireland; the concentration-camp imprisonment-without-trial of Internment; etc, etc, etc, – the petty-bourgeois public opinion in Britain would feel it had all this to impossibly face up to if once it even allowed official mention of the idea that the Republican movement has been conducting a legitimate revolutionary national-liberation war and has actually been triumphant, – and with every right on its side.

So despite all the admissions between the lines that in effect, the British imperialist government has had all its bluffs called by the Republican movement and is now negotiating with those same "criminal bloody terrorists who deserve only to be hunted down and locked away from decent human society for a very very long time indeed", etc, there is still the same constipated inability as ever among bourgeois ideology to even mention the very notion of a legitimate armed national-liberation struggle in connection with the IRA and Sinn Féin.

Most pathetically of all, the middle-class fake-'left' of anti-communist thinking equally echoes the bourgeois-imperialist propaganda, writing off the Republican struggles, but from its own idiot-sectarian posture of being 'ultra-revolutionary'.

The ludicrously misnamed 'Leninist' faction of the former Communist Party (CPGB, a title these poseurs have now claimed as their own) for example, has joined the Fleet Street lie machine (in putting the boot into Sinn Féin) by implying that the Republicans are sell-out stooges:

For those of us who wanted to see the British army forced out of the Six Counties clinging to the skids of its helicopters, this turn of events is undoubtedly a setback.

The worldwide sweep of reaction in the wake of the failure of bureaucratic socialism does not bypass the Six Counties. For 25 years there has been an extraordinarily prolonged revolutionary situation there, posing a threat to the existence of the United Kingdom itself. This is now moving towards an end which looks likely to leave the British state intact in charge and in the Six Counties.

THE IRA does not have to surrender, according to Northern Ireland secretary

Patrick Mayhew. What he means is that he will not rub its nose in the dirt as long as it leaves the battlefield; as long as it behaves like respectable bourgeois politicians.

It is highly unlikely that the current unfavourable conditions will produce what a more favourable situation could not.

Now, however, it seems that the revolutionary situation will be resolved negatively, in favour of imperialism, and the exceptional circumstances will no longer apply. Revolutionaries in the Six Counties will be left without an organisational focus.

We pose the same question to all revolutionaries in the Six Counties. Although many communists and socialist republicans have worked within Sinn Féin and the IRA, they never had a voice in that organisation. These comrades will be among many to realise what the true content of Sinn Féin's policy is.

If, as we fear, imperialism succeeds in imposing a settlement more or less on its own terms, will the heroic sacrifices of our Irish comrades have been in vain? Will the suffering endured – the assassinations, state torture, imprisonment and sacrifice – have been for nothing? This will certainly be the case if, once the cries of 'sell-out' have died down, they make their final retreat into a left republican cul-de-sac.

The CPGB pretence that it is working to disillusion workers in Britain and Ireland from falsely believing in IRA/Sinn Féin as anti-imperialist revolutionaries so that a real communist revolutionary movement can be built in Britain and Ireland, should fool no one.

Only completely confused and posturing middle-class idiots, pretending to be 'revolutionaries', ever could have muddled the Sinn Féin/IRA bourgeois-nationalist liberation struggle with communist revolution in the first place.

The Republicans are not supposed to be, and have never remotely pretended to be, Marxist-Leninists out to win state power by proletarian dictatorship in order to build a planned socialist workers state.

For the record, in case any workers anywhere have been fooled, the CPGB have not the faintest grasp of, or the slightest interest in, a real proletarian-dictatorship workers revolution anyway. Their record is an abysmal one of loud posturing that the Moscow-led 'international communist' fraternity was the only organisation that could be taken seriously as able to and wanting to defend the world socialist revolution and that any group outside the family was wasting its time, – followed by an equally deafening silence when this 'only real communist movement' liquidated itself in all directions, leaving themselves outside the door as a compulsorily evicted and powerless minority.

That grotesque humiliation, unanalysed and unexplained to this day, was preceded by the equal farce of the 'Leninist' CPGB 'world socialist family' faction refusing to openly support



Lech Wałęsa the Pilsudski loving leader of the bogus *Solidarnosc* meets the CIA installed Pope

the proletarian-dictatorship Polish workers state when under counter-revolutionary attack from the CIA-Vatican stooge *Solidarnosc* gangsters, led by Wałęsa, who are now in charge of Poland, handing it over to Mafia capitalism and imperialist exploitation.

These 'revolutionary' heroes of the 'Leninist' faction muttered fearfully that backing the Polish workers state in the midst of its great difficulties and after such a patchy record might only lay the 'cause' open to even more international embarrassment.

These are not revolutionaries in the reconstituted CPGB but just 'left'-posturing echoes of exactly the same disgracefully cowardly and philistine opportunism which had the old revisionist Stalin-loyal CPGB creeping up the backside of the reactionary British labour and trade-union movement in the post-1945 Stalin-ordered insanity of a class-collaborating non-existent 'peaceful road to socialism' to accommodate Moscow's paranoid anti-Leninist superstition of the possibility of permanent peaceful coexistence between imperialism and the dictatorship of the proletariat.

These CPGBers had a philistine hostility to theory then with their bovine sivist simple-mindedness that the Third International was the only communist movement the world had and would be the only one it would ever need, – and they have a philistine hostility to theory now, as seen in every issue they turn their attention to, as in the above 'revolutionary' posturing imbecilities about the situation in Ireland.

Dissecting this academic diletantism bit by bit, what has forcing the British army out clinging to the skids of its helicopters got to do with it? **12** *Apocalypse Now*-type movies, with their huge box-office needs to pay for huge budgets, require Hollywood to always mimic or

better the real-life drama of Vietnam in their denouements. Such details are childishly irrelevant to seriously assessing imperialist victory or defeat in the endless variety of real-world complications of dismantling all the vestiges of the monopoly-capitalist colonial epoch in nearly 200 different types of countries and different types of social, economic, and political conditions all round the globe.

As explained, what is happening in Ireland at the moment is the completion of the national-liberation struggle, led by the traditional bourgeois-nationalist movement for Irish independence (and reunification, now).

But the Sinn Féin/IRA Republicans are revolutionaries nevertheless, who have taken on Britain's imperialist-state dictatorship (dominating the colonised zone of Ireland by the usual fraud of capitalist 'democracy') arms in hand.

The anti-imperialist national-liberation struggle did not have to be led by the bourgeois-nationalist IRA/Sinn Féin. It could have been led by communists, as was the national-liberation struggle in Vietnam and in Indo-China generally. Indeed the 'Official' IRA and 'Official' Sinn Féin (as opposed to the Provisional Sinn Féin/IRA after a split) were very close to the 'official' communist movement.

But it was that 'official communist' tendency to which the CPGBers all their life long have always kow-towed in such a philistine and cowardly way, which led the path into 'respectable bourgeois politics', and, worse still, led the way in denouncing the Provos for "pointless isolated individualist terror" in trying to continue the armed struggle, which was supposedly "substituting itself for the real mass revolutionary movement of the working class of Ireland, north and south", etc, etc.

That might have been a good

line had the 'official communist' movement the remotest intention or the slightest conception of developing the revolutionary anti-imperialist struggle, both nationally and internationally. In practice, world revisionism was already well on the 'peaceful road' to total class collaboration (which only ended with Gorbachev's total liquidation). Where were these CPGBers then? The 'Officials' all ended up in a total reformist swamp.

And when it was the bourgeois-nationalist Provos who proved to be the only movement willing and capable of continuing to lead a revolutionary anti-imperialist struggle, it was the clear duty of all revolutionaries everywhere to critically give unconditional support to the Republicans' right to fight for the national-liberation of their country in any way they chose. But where did these CPGBers stand at that point?

They were undoubtedly still hiding behind the door along the corridors of 'peaceful coexistence' class-collaboration.

While showing unconditional solidarity with the revolutionary fight, real communists, in Ireland and elsewhere, would have taken a critical road towards building up a Leninist party within that revolutionary struggle.

It is certainly the case now that a proletarian-dictatorship critique of the sort of class-collaborating reformist compromise that the revolutionary national-liberation struggle will probably end up in after a 'negotiated settlement' with London, – will be more relevant than ever.

But the worst position from which to start trying to build a new Bolshevik Party in Ireland would be the one taken up by these defeatist academic-cynic CPGBers.

Their view that there has not only been no revolutionary triumph in Ireland (for the national-liberation struggle), but that imperialism has even emerged from the struggles more entrenched than ever, – is just an insanity which will be jeered out of hearing in Ireland by all but the most academic 'revolutionary' sectarian-individualists suffering from the most neurotic subjective-idealism imaginable, – i.e. people just like these armchair-socialist CPGBers.

Their view of a 25-year-long "extraordinarily prolonged revolutionary situation" in Ireland, one moreover which was "posing a threat to the existence of the United Kingdom itself" is an amalgam of extraordinary hum-

bug and sheer barminess.

There has been a revolutionary struggle for 25 years, thanks to the heroic achievements of the IRA/Sinn Féin who not only totally eclipsed the 'official communists' on whether or not it was correct to continue the revolutionary fight against imperialism, but who also built the only real mass movement as well, – the remarkable proletarian political rising associated with the incredible hunger-strike movement, 'dirty' protests, and Westminster electoral triumphs to rout the British imperialist attempts to write off the Republicans as nothing but isolated 'common criminals' and 'terrorists'. The colossal political success of that revolutionary movement is entirely down to the IRA/Sinn Féin national-liberation struggle, but whenever has the CPGB's fake 'Marxist-Leninist materialist analysis' of the world accepted such a conclusion?

But to state that there has been a "prolonged 25-year revolutionary situation" in Ireland in a supposedly Marxist-Leninist CPGB newspaper is to invite complete disbelief or total confusion. For Marxism, the 'revolutionary situation' has always classically been that condition of virtual collapse of all bourgeois state and social authority plus that surge of class-conscious fighting mass mobilisation by the proletariat which would make the seizure of state power by a conscious Bolshevik party leadership possible, and desirable.

There has not remotely been any such 'revolutionary situation' anywhere in Ireland not once in the whole 25 years, nor was there ever likely to be any such situation, nor is there likely to be any such situation arising there now in the short term.

The Occupied Zone of Ireland has an overwhelming majority population of British colonists, masquerading as 'Northern Irish' or even more bogusly as 'Ulstermen'.

They are all welcome to become genuine Irishmen the moment they accept a united Irish government and reunification, but for the moment they remain British imperialist colonists in terms of the international class and national struggles of the monopoly-capitalist system's worldwide warmongering crisis, – the solution to which, for the sake of the flowering of the national aspirations of every country on earth, alone lies in the international revolutionary triumph of the dictatorship of the proletariat.

But vaguely pretending now to be playing at being 'international revolutionaries' as these CPGBers do in their childish academic shallowness, – whilst totally ignoring the very powerful and important reality of the enormously significant revolutionary triumph of the Irish national-liberation struggle on the way towards that even greater defeat for imperialism that lies in store for it at the hands of international proletarian-dictatorship socialism, – is just the depths of irresponsibility.

Their philistine muddle-headedness (that the failure of a fully-fledged Bolshevik Revolution to emerge (impossibly) out of an unmistakably bourgeois national-liberation struggle must therefore mean that imperialism has triumphed once again) – is such a moronic perception that even the impressionistic petty-bourgeois scribblers, making admissions between the lines in their vain efforts to maintain some rationality as they try to keep their counter-revolutionary spirits up, – can put it to shame:

THERE is no peace process in the north of Ireland without the active involvement of the Republican Movement. This political truth has been unambiguous from the start but for 25 years, politicians have denied it. Sir Patrick Mayhew's about-turn on Sinn Féin's calls for clarification of the Downing Street Declaration put beyond doubt the crucial importance of Republican participation.

Even though it was long ago accepted that the IRA could not be defeated militarily, British governments have consistently sought a political solution without reference to Sinn Féin or the IRA. This failed at Sunningdale in 1973; at Hillsborough in 1985; at the Brooke/Mayhew talks of 1990-92; and it was about to fail again when last December's much-hyped *Declaration* began its inevitable run into the ground.

In January, Mayhew seemed to set his face against this lesson when he told the Commons: "We shall not add to, or take away from, gloss, or interpret the text... we shall not clarify it because it speaks for itself..." Now Mayhew seems to have learned that if anything is to come of the *Declaration*, the Government will have to talk to Sinn Féin. It has taken five months and many lives for that to sink in.

Mayhew will persist in the line that the Government is not "negotiating". He will go through the familiar semantic hoops to prove that he and his Prime Minister have not been contaminated by improper relations with "men of violence".

The British maintain that clarification does not equal negotiation. In the word games of the Troubles, we now learn that the announcement on Friday that the Government was willing to answer queries from Gerry Adams was not "clarification",

but an effort agreed by John Major and Albert Reynolds, the Taoiseach, to help "the joint declaration explain itself."

Why should the Government be so coy? Perhaps it is the fear of a backlash at Westminster. However, ministers will have taken note of what happened after last November's revelation that the Government had been conducting extended secret talks with Sinn Féin. Although there were dire predictions about Mayhew's future, when the Northern Ireland Secretary justified his actions he received a sympathetic hearing in the House. Labour did not seek to capitalise on his embarrassment, and Tory MPs cheered when he declared that the Government would maintain its contacts with the Republicans. "We shall keep exploring the opportunities for peace. Peace properly attained is a prize worth risks."

Only the Unionists, specialists in isolation, were angry. Mayhew also got a relatively easy ride from the right-wing press. And when Mayhew announced that, contrary to his previously-stated position, he would respond to the Republican calls for clarification, there was little criticism.

The message is clear: die-hard Unionists aside, there is a negligible political price to be paid for negotiations with Sinn Féin. People may not like it, but if it brings violence nearer an end, they will swallow it. Indeed, there are potential political rewards: Major's statesman pose was never more credible than when he stood on the steps of Downing Street with Reynolds to announce that *Declaration*.

They counted on the Republicans being stampeded, partly by public opinion and especially by their own supporters, into compliance with the Government agenda. In fact, support for Sinn Féin's position remained solid, enabling it to resist being bounced into something the party felt worthless. Like the adept tacticians they are, the leadership played for time.

The *Declaration* would never have come into existence had not the London and Dublin governments been forced together to try to wrest the initiative back from the nationalists. That the peace process, agonisingly tortuous though it is, has come this far is the achievement of Hume and Adams, not of Major and Mayhew. Adams is serious about peace.

Sinn Féin is serious, too, and it can deliver. Although some politicians have tried to raise the spectre of a split in the Republican movement, no serious commentator suggests that there is any evidence for such a scenario.

The Provisionals have avoided any serious divisions within their ranks since their inception in 1970. As one activist put it to me, "I don't like it [the *Declaration*], but if Gerry says it's good enough for him, it's good enough for me."

Adams says that the *Declaration* does not in itself provide a basis for a lasting peace. "There can be no quick fixes," Adams has said. But he has also, more positively, described the *Declaration* as "a possible step-

ping stone" to complete "demilitarisation", and to a peaceful settlement.

These 'negotiations' are no triumph for imperialist status quo, as even this wary middle-class comment, trying to put the best gloss on things, has to admit.

There is no 'defeat' necessarily in having to negotiate a conclusion to a national-liberation struggle. In fact, it has been routine for 90% of the great postwar national-liberation movements to end this way. The Vietnam war was one of the few spectacular exceptions to this rule, and that only because it was indeed led by real communist spirit. But what were the CPGBers doing at that time too? Declaring total support, no doubt, for Moscow's efforts to coerce Hanoi into further negotiated truces, such as had marked the Third International's attitude to the whole history of the struggle in Indo-china, and beyond.

These CPGBers line up currently with the rest of the fake middle-class 'left' of the Trotskyite tradition in joining their sneers at Sinn Féin for 'capitulating' to British imperialism with sneers at the ANC for 'doing a sellout deal' with South African imperialism.

Once again, these armchair-socialist ultra-'revolutionary' attitudes are just a mockery of serious Marxist-Leninist science, deliberately confusing national liberation with socialist revolution so as to score some academic 'super-revolutionary' points against bourgeois nationalist movements like the ANC and Sinn Féin which never should have been regarded as revolutionary socialists to start with.

And in terms of national-liberation struggle, the accusations of 'treacherous sell-out' and 'capitulation to triumphant imperialism', etc, are just plain utterly wrong interpretations of what is going on in history, – just defeatist ultra-'left' posturing from middle-class sectarians whose only acceptable revolution ever will be one that takes place at the top of an ivory tower.

It is obvious that at the national-liberation stage of anti-imperialist struggle, the vast proletarian masses will not necessarily have been forced into total revolutionary struggle by the climax of an imperialist economic crisis. It is also obvious that the consciously mounted national-liberation resistance to continued colonial domination might never rise to equal military or political strength to that of the imperialist power and its colonial set-up.

And it is equally obvious that in all such circumstances, and with the imperialist power not being threatened with total elimination by a proletarian-dictatorship revolution, – it will often suit the colonial-bourgeois regime to do a compromise deal with the national-liberation struggle to at least preserve something for the old ruling class, and to head off any further class-war and national-war deterioration in the general imperialist crisis which would mean a communist revolution arising for certain if the national-liberation struggle continued to get absolutely nowhere.

On top of all that in the case of the Sinn Féin nationalist movement, the Republicans could never appeal to more than a minority of the entire population for support anyway (where the limited revolutionary struggle is for Irish independence and reunification). A negotiated and totally obscured 'retreat' by British imperialism was always the likely outcome of this national-liberation movement, – as the *Bulletin* explained from the very beginning (see ILWP Books vol 8 – *Ireland* written in the early 1980s about the snail's pace withdrawal from Ireland by British imperialism) which at that time was derided by everybody as a correct analysis, – which is no longer the position now. Bits of the swamp are beginning to echo the *Bulletin's* line in a struggle not to get left too far behind events, and even the capitalist press is quietly repeating a bourgeois version of this understanding:

Earlier, the former Irish foreign minister, Peter Barry, claimed that Britain had decided to withdraw from Northern Ireland and had already begun the process. "I'm not saying they're going overnight. It could take at least 25 years, but I believe the decision has been taken and the process begun," he told the *Cork Examiner*. "Britain now regards Northern Ireland as financially draining, strategically redundant and an international embarrassment."

Mr Barry, who is regarded as an influential figure in Anglo-Irish relations, received support from the hardline Democratic Unionist leader, Ian Paisley, who said that successive governments had sought to push the province into a united Ireland.

The carefully controlled London release of Britain's replies to Sinn Féin's questions on the *Downing Street Declaration* have obviously not yet confirmed the growing understanding that a snail's-pace British withdrawal from Ireland is the likeliest outcome, but they once again did not dispute this perspective, and they totally gave the lie to

all the bourgeois press and fake-
'left' speculation that what is
really going on in these negotia-
tions is a straightforward com-
plete surrender by the IRA and
Sinn Féin, a complete abandon-
ment of Irish reunification, and
a total capitulation to continued
imperialist domination. These
replies are worth adding to the
record the *Bulletin* has kept of
the slow-but-sure unfolding of
the final national-liberation
triumph of the revolutionary
Republican struggle, and the
further humiliating setback to
the defeated and decrepit Brit-
ish imperialist bourgeoisie and
its degenerated Orange-colonist
community in the Occupied
Zone of Ireland:

In its most positive passages, the
document stresses that the repub-
lican movement need not accept
the declaration in full. All it has to
do to enter talks is to renounce vio-
lence permanently.

The questions, forwarded to
London by the Irish government,
have been divided into six catego-
ries and then dealt with individu-
ally by means of brief commentar-
ies. While avoiding the politically
charged term of "clarification", it
describes its comments as being "elu-
cidation". (Sinn Féin's original ques-
tions are in italics).

Q.4 *The British government says, in
the Downing Street Declaration,
'that they will uphold the democratic*

*wishes of a greater number of the peo-
ple of Northern Ireland. What is the
British government's precise definition
of 'a greater number of the people of
Northern Ireland' and how would this
be measured in practical terms?*

Comment: The wish of a greater
number of the people of Northern
Ireland would be determined by
a numerical majority of those val-
idly voting in a poll fairly and ex-
plicitly organised for this purpose.
Provision for such a poll is made in
section 1 of the Northern Ireland
Constitution Act 1973.

Q.2 *Given that the document put to
you in June 1993 was welcomed by
the IRA leadership which commented,
on October 3 1993, that it "could form
the basis for peace", could you clarify
the differences, if any, between this
document and the Downing Street
Declaration?*

Comment: This question, referring
to a document put to us by the Irish
government, does not arise from
any uncertainty about the text of
the *Joint Declaration*, which was the
product of detailed and extensive
discussions between the two gov-
ernments. Therefore the only text
that bears our name and on which
we can comment is that which was
issued on 15 December 1993 by the
Prime Minister and the Taoiseach.

*The Taoiseach has clearly stated the
long-term objectives of the Irish gov-
ernment in the search for a lasting set-
tlement. It is essential that the British
government displays the same honesty
and frankness in outlining its long-*

*term attitude towards the Irish people.
What are the British government's
long-term interests and objectives in
relation to Ireland?*

Comment: Paragraph 4 of the *Joint
Declaration* already fully spells out
the British government's objectives
and interests in relation to Ireland
— in terms which speak for them-
selves. In particular it states that
the British government's "primary
interest is to see peace, stability and
reconciliation established by agree-
ment among all the people who in-
habit the island, and they will work
together with the Irish government
to achieve such an agreement,
which will embrace the totality of
relationships".

Q.13 *Does the British government ac-
cept that while the consent of a major-
ity of the people of the six county state
to constitutional change, as referred to
in the Downing Street Declaration,
may be desirable it is not a legal re-
quirement in international law?*

Comment: Both governments make
clear in the *Joint Declaration* that any
change in the constitutional status
of Northern Ireland would be sub-
ject to the consent of a majority of
its people, as set out in the Anglo-
Irish Agreement, itself, an interna-
tional instrument registered at the
United Nations.

Q.18. *The British government has
called upon Sinn Féin to renounce vio-
lence. What does this involve?*

Comment: There has to be a per-
manent end to the use of, or sup-
port for, paramilitary, violence. For
Sinn Féin and the IRA this would
involve a public and permanent re-
nunciation of violence as a means
of achieving political ends, and
commitment to peaceful and dem-
ocratic means alone. Within three
months, as has already been pub-
licly made clear, the British govern-
ment would in these circumstances
begin exploratory dialogue with
Sinn Féin.

The purposes of such dialogue
would be:

i) to explore the basis upon which
Sinn Féin would come to be admit-
ted to an inclusive political talks
process to which the British govern-
ment is committed but without an-
ticipating the negotiations within
that process;

ii) to exchange views on how Sinn
Féin would be able over a period to
play the same part as the current
constitutional parties in the public
life of Northern Ireland;

iii) to examine the practical con-
sequences of the ending of violence.

The reason for the time lapse be-
tween a permanent cessation of
violence and exploratory dialogue
is to enable the commitment to ex-
clusively, peaceful and democratic
methods to be fully demonstrated.

The British government accept the
validity of all electoral mandates,
including that of Sinn Féin; and, being
committed to the democratic pro-
cess, endorses the freedom of voters
to choose their elected representa-
tives.

Q.5 *The British government has said
that it has "no selfish, strategic or eco-
nomic interest in Northern Ireland"
Would it not be more in accord with*

*democratic principles for the British
government to base its Irish policy on
the objective of ending the union?*

Comment: The *Joint Declaration*
makes it clear the British govern-
ment is committed to upholding
the principle of consent.

Q.19 (a) *Given the declared opposition
of both governments to coercion, how
will the coercion of Northern nation-
alists into the six county state be ad-
dressed in real terms?*

(b) *How will the denial of nationalist
rights be redressed in real terms?*

(c) *When will repressive legislation be
ended?*

Comment: This question is based
on assumptions which have no
foundation in reality. It is the
clearly declared aim of both gov-
ernments that all new arrange-
ments agreed in the course of po-
litical dialogue should be based on
consent. An end to violence would
open the way for a comprehensive
reassessment of existing provisions
against terrorism, many of which
would become irrelevant and obso-
lete in a climate of peace.

From the last reply, it is clear
that all of the attempted 'crimi-
nalisation' legislation against
the Republican movement
would be dropped immediately.
The chances for early reunifica-
tion of Ireland are less clear, —
particularly on the humiliating-
for-Britain question that the
Irish minority were coerced
into the hated Orange partition
state of non-existent 'North-
ern Ireland' in 1921 in the first
place totally against the wishes
of the overwhelming majority
of the people of Ireland who
had fought and voted 80% for
the independence from Britain
of the whole of Ireland, which
the Downing Street 'reply'
just chooses to pretend never
happened and is not now an
issue (when it quite clearly is
the historical issue which must
eventually find a just answer in
the reunification of Ireland).

But while the Fleet Street edi-
torials stuffily try to gloss over
London's capitulation on the 'no
negotiations until a cease-fire'
(or a 'surrender' as the middle-
class fake 'revolutionaries'
would describe it) as a 'wise
and generous concession' to
'help Sinn Féin climb down' and
to avert 'terrible new trouble'
from Orange-colonist sectarian
violence, — other parts of the
capitalist press have been just a
bit more honest about the real
arm-twisting that has been go-
ing on in the circles of inter-im-
perialist conflict to force Britain
to give ground, and about the
real anachronism now of British
colonialism in Ireland:

Since the signing of the declara-
tion last December, Ministers have
been adamant that there was no
need for further explanation. But
after a five-month impasse there
was growing pressure — not least



from Washington — that the demands from Gerry Adams and his colleagues were not unreasonable, particularly in view of the task of persuading their grass roots that the time has come to call off violence.

Even so, there were fears that the British response would be dismissive, offensive even to Nationalist opinion. At one point last week the signals coming from London were so alarming that Albert Reynolds said he would disassociate himself from the British response if it was unduly dismissive.

When the answers to Sinn Féin's questions were published on Thursday, they were both longer and more considerate than anyone had expected.

The difficulties remain formidable. After 25 years of death and imprisonment there are many people living in the Republican ghettos who see any talk of compromise as a sell-out. Sinn Féin leaders are determined not to risk a split, arguing that any move which left the young, more militant activists on the outside and determined to continue would lead to an even worse situation.

In this context the one reply in last week's document which the Northern Ireland office may come to regret is the rejection of the question about 'repressive legislation' and 'the denial of Nationalist rights' as 'having no foundation in reality'. For many people living in places like West Belfast the experience of repressive legislation is all too real and their mood will be an important factor in determining if and when the IRA calls off the violence.

That decision is likely to be some way off.

[The] *Downing Street declaration* with Albert Reynolds was aimed at bringing the IRA to the peace table. Ulster's constitutional nationalists said it would. The British would have only to lift a finger to bring the gunmen in from the cold and they would come, they said. But they have not. Three-day ceasefires expired promptly after Christmas and Easter. Heathrow has been targeted. Last week, an RUC patrol was shelled by a mortar which was fired from the grounds of a Catholic church in John Hume's Derry constituency.

Yet we still await the "iron fist" response promised by British and Irish ministers if the violence did not end. If my visit to Dublin and Irish security chiefs on the border is anything to go by, we will have to wait for ever.

The only anti-terrorist measure left open to them is internment they say, and you can forget that because the IRA has a fresh tier of unknown people ready to take over. They also argue that since three in four terrorist incidents have nothing to do with the border, the core of the IRA menace is northern-based and British security policy, to put it bluntly, does not stand a chance. The Irish, I found, have a high professional regard for the Royal Ulster Constabulary and the British Army but consider they have an impossible task. So long as the RUC is an

armed, mainly Protestant body, they say, it will never be able to operate with the consent of the nationalist. Catholic minority. As for the British Army, flying its Union Jack in besieged Crossmaglen, its image as an occupying force is beyond dispute.

How, then, to break the deadlock? "Play it smart," they say. Only by being "smart" can the British negotiate a lasting peace which has eluded 25 years of struggle and cost the stationing of one third of the British Army and billions of pounds a year.

By "smart", I responded, you mean doing what Dublin says? Laughing, they did not dissent.

With the Downing Street declaration in the bag, they are poised for further advances. In security terms, they say, the IRA has enough volunteers, weapons, explosives and funds to maintain its current high level of activity for the foreseeable future. On the political front, they say, with a double dose of Hibernian smartness, that Northern Ireland can never enjoy peace unless its nationalist minority is granted equality and a "parity of esteem" with the Unionist majority. So far as Dublin is concerned, this means institutional links between the province and the republic, to match the Unionists continuing their constitutional links with Britain.

Not only do their eyes remain fixed on eventual Irish unity; they believe they got the British to agree in Downing Street to act as "persuaders" in bringing the North and South together, "whatever that involves". No talk now of taking an iron fist to the IRA. "The peace process requires immense patience." Reynolds told his staunchly republican party last weekend. As W B Yeats wrote, he added. "*Peace comes dropping slow.*" It does indeed, and while it does, it is British policy that is being stretched to incredulity while the Irish government watches and waits. To the Unionists, Major says he believes passionately in the union; to the nationalists, that they can have a united Ireland when they have a majority for it, and we will not stand in their way.

While we dig in behind our Maginot defences on the border, the Irish leader offers new inducements to Ulster's Unionists to throw their lot in with a united Ireland. The American-Irish lobby will prime the pump for a united Ireland as the Jewish lobby did for Israel, he says. Meanwhile, Dublin insists on a northern power-sharing deal between nationalists and Unionists that will take the sting out of the British connection.

All clever stuff. While the British cabinet hums and haws, the only real danger of Dublin's strategy coming unstuck is the rise of sectarian violence by Protestant paramilitaries. Reynolds was so concerned about it last week that he called on the British to protect nationalist areas. During such operations, he added, security forces acting "in that situation" should be free from attack. For this, much thanks.

With nothing to show for the Downing Street declaration on the ground so far. British policy is in danger of becoming increasingly desperate. Sir Patrick Mayhew says

the IRA need not surrender and that all we seek is "a just peace". The more the IRA murders and maims, the more forlorn British policy looks. Dublin officials even ponder aloud about the likely British reaction to the setting free of IRA prisoners. It's a long way down the trail, they confide, but so is a lot more in the Major-Reynolds peace package.

As of now, Northern Ireland remains a twilight democracy, sub-

jected to continuing terror. The British mood is to do anything to end the nightmare short of a total loss of honour. Dublin has a different agenda. After centuries of struggle, playing the waiting game is the smart thing to do.

Defeated by Irish nationalism, defeat by proletarian dictatorship can't be long delayed. Build Leninism. Joe Harper.

Damaging losses to Britain's colonial intelligence service and to its prestige will bring the reunification of Ireland closer, marking the further dying off of the imperialist system in general where the British ruling class is particularly badly deteriorating.

[EPSR No 754 07-06-94]

By wiping out more than one third of the top brass of the British imperialist establishment in the Occupied Zone of Ireland, the crashed helicopter has caused both crippling material damage and also a staggering humiliation to the ruling class in London.

The Irish national-liberation struggle will inevitably benefit enormously from this military and political catastrophe for Britain.

Sinn Féin was already running rings around the Whitehall negotiators, forcing the acknowledgment that the Downing Street Declaration really was the opening of bargaining talks with the IRA in spite of all the denials to the contrary.

Now these disastrous setbacks (to Britain's ability to successfully combat guerrilla war, already gravely in doubt as a result of London agreeing to peace negotiations with 'terrorists' in the first place) will place even more emphasis on the really triumphant position that the Republicans' political and military efforts have carved out for the cause of Ireland's complete independence at last, and reunification.

The snail's pace withdrawal by British imperialism from one of its last colonial outposts, slithers forward once more (see *ILWP Books vol 8 & 15 Ireland*).

This latest farce has more hallmarks of a ruling-class system which has come to the end of its days.

First, the Tory establishment still dare not say for sure, for fear of subsequent embarrassment if it proves wrong, that it was not a brilliant IRA mission which struck down the cream of British military intelligence, of the police Special Branch

anti-terrorist experts, and of the secret service's specialist counter-revolutionary department, all in one blow. There had been no claim by the Republican press office in the first three days after the crash, but London will be worrying that this might just be a trick by the national-liberation struggle to get the Establishment to make a relieved 'no evidence of sabotage' statement, and then to come up with detailed knowledge of exactly how the mission was accomplished.

Second, either way, there can only ever be egg permanently on the 'counter-terrorist' department's face for having themselves made half their leadership vulnerable in one go by putting all their young intelligence stars into one fallible helicopter flight. It would seem to be the most elementary rule of security when fighting such a determined foe as the Irish national-liberation struggle to never have more than a tiny percentage of crucial leadership personnel at risk of guerrilla attack at one single time and location, (except where any risk at all could be totally ruled out), - or at risk of a chance accident. A Chinook helicopter flight over foggy seas and windswept mountains might seem hazardous enough to begin with. To make such a flight over the Occupied Zone of Ireland and then Celtic Scotland at low level and with such a valuable cargo would seem more like an advanced state of decay in mind and spirit by the ruling class.

Thirdly, on top of all this, it looks as if the travelling intelligence supremos were stupid enough not only to travel all together on a potentially dangerous journey, but even



barmier to take with them in readable files a vast quantity of the most top secret information about the 'counter-terrorist' war, in particular such crucially sensitive details as the lists of agents provocateurs and informers within the ranks of the national-liberation struggle, and their methods of operation, and possible forthcoming targets and missions, as well as their key runners and contacts outside.

And, fourthly, as if this was not bad enough, it then turns out later that the whole 'brainstorming' intelligence trip was not really necessary anyway, and that the packed golf clubs and fishing rods for a few pleasant days of 'rest and recuperation' (R & R) in the Scottish countryside were as much a concern of the 'anti-terrorist' hierarchy as the irreplaceable personnel and documents which went on the flight, — as has been hinted even in some bourgeois press reports:

THE CREAM of Ulster's anti-terrorist intelligence officers wiped out in the Chinook helicopter crash in Scotland had no operational need to leave Northern Ireland.

The *Observer* has learned that the Inverness conference to which the 25 officers from MIS, the RUC Special Branch and Army Intelligence were travelling was confined entirely to Ulster-based personnel, raising serious questions as to whether the risk of flying them out of Ulster was worth the benefit.

A series of top security sources stated yesterday it was never intended they should be joined by mainland police officers from Special Branch or the Anti-Terrorist Squad, nor by mainland-based MIS staff.

The damage caused by the crash is immense. It is understood the 10 officers from the RUC Special Branch, the lead agency in Ulster terrorist intelligence, amounted to 40 per cent of its command level.

The six dead MIS officers represent an even higher proportion of local

expertise, including the Director and Co-ordinator of Intelligence, John Deverell. The nine soldiers who died made up about a third of the Northern Ireland specialist military intelligence hierarchy.

Reports over the past 48 hours have suggested the dead officers were to have met their mainland counterparts to discuss the terrorist threat to the whole of the United Kingdom — a claim still being made by the Northern Ireland Office last night.

But authoritative security sources in Britain and Northern Ireland have told *The Observer* that the reason for the trip was to hold 'brainstorming' discussions about the terrorist threat in Ulster, away from the officers' normal environment.

They admitted that the trip also had both a social and a 'rest and recreation' side. Eyewitnesses to the crash on the Mull of Kintyre last Thursday night described seeing golf clubs and fishing rods among the bodies and wreckage.

One mainland security source who maintained extremely close professional links with those who died in the crash said yesterday: 'There may have been an element of R & R. The reason for these conferences in the past has been to take some of the leading players away for a complete break, to talk over the options.'

'Over the years, it has produced some first-class results, but occasionally it has been disappointing — there isn't always something new to discuss.'

'But it does help for people from different organisations to get to know each other. It starts with a formal dinner, a few drinks; then down to business. There is another formal dinner to round things off.'

However, security sources in Northern Ireland told *The Observer* that there were several possible secure locations within the province where a meeting of this kind could take place. These included Stormont Castle, the Castlereagh detention centre, and top hotels where large RUC meetings have been held in the past.

Even though British imperialism is losing its economic position in the world, is losing the inter-imperialist trade war

overall, and is losing its last colonial fight in Occupied Ireland in particular, — there is still time for one more ruling-class dinner, — and then another, and then.....

This pantomime would seem to sum up brilliantly the whole history of British monopoly-capitalism's eventual tragic decadence.

The entire conduct of the snail's-pace withdrawal from the Occupied Zone of Ireland

has been carried out with just one consideration above all others, — namely that the British ruling-class should not be seen to lose face. In particular, it has been considered vital that whatever the reality, on no account could even the suggestion emerge that the revolutionary national-liberation struggle might have actually won itself a settlement arms-in-hand and against the very worst counter-revolutionary might and wit that one of NATO's biggest 'anti-terrorist' stalwart powers could throw at the Republicans.

This non-stop propaganda that 'the terrorists are losing' and 'Britain will never make a negotiating response to terror-blackmail', etc, etc, could have only ever had the disastrous effect of lulling the complacent conservative British bourgeoisie with another bout of groundless false security and ridiculous 'superiority' to the natives, etc.

The golf clubs, fishing rods, and formal public-school dinner japes, all point to a decadent ruling class which simply cannot get its mind on the real job in hand, — namely that British imperialism is losing all its positions in the increasingly competitive inter-imperialist world trade conflict, and is commensurately declining in social cohesion on every front at the same time.

This arrogant ruling class still kids itself in part, deep down, that it really ought to continue to rule the world, and that it still could rule the world if it really wanted to, or if it ever got pushed into having to seriously defend itself again as in the inter-imperialist World War parts I and II. A whole generation of anti-Irish jokes have helped delude the British bourgeoisie that the Micks really are thick, and that British know-how could give them a good thrashing any

time it wanted to if it really put its mind to it, etc.

And that arrogant complacency looks suspiciously like continuing even right through the actual process of the British imperialist regime coming a humiliating cropper over its attempts to 'defeat terrorism and establish peace with honour' in pretending to not be being driven out of its last colony. All of the sly London manoeuvring about the Downing Street Declaration, planting disinformation here, there and everywhere implying that really the IRA had 'had enough' and really 'wants to surrender', and that the Tory Government is just doing Sinn Féin a 'humanitarian favour' by letting them give up their struggle for reunification but under cover of being 'allowed' to participate in constitutional talks which will 'offer' to everyone 'peace with honour', etc, — is all part of these insane delusions of the British ruling class that they can still be in control of things, or make everyone effortlessly believe that they are still in control of things, which to this decadent way of thinking is just as good.

But the reality on the ground is an unanswerable material situation which tells a totally different story and which will give a totally different outcome.

British imperialism really is in full-spate decline historically speaking, and all of its institutions and confidence and know-how are really being undermined by this unending decadent deterioration.

The British-colonist community in the Occupied Zone of Ireland is as doomed as the colonial British settler remnants were in Rhodesia which briefly declared UDI (with the London Labour Government's help) in 1965 to boast that they would "never give in to the ignorant black masses who had not the faintest idea of how to run an advanced country and economy that the whites had built up"; etc, etc, and who were still pretending the same nonsense to anyone who would listen 15 years later when the national-liberation struggle finally forced that colonial police-military dictatorship to capitulate.

The British-colonist Orangemen have been losing their spirit as a community for a long time, just as the Rhodesians eventually lost theirs, and just as the die-hard apartheid whites in South Africa now seem to have lost theirs, promising to declare UDI and cut part of South Africa adrift for a whites-only homeland, but only succeeding (so far) in

shooting themselves in the foot and making humiliated fools of themselves.

All these communities are doomed by the march of history, and sooner or later events will show it, whatever the propaganda disinformation that is spread about.

Parent British imperialism is in a terminal crisis as far as its world-dominant standing of old is concerned, – as even the capitalist press itself will admit in its more self-searching moments in the smaller print:

LOATH though governments are to admit it there is a dread inevitability about the value of the British pound. It goes down. Sometimes the fall is smooth and restrained, a graceful handmaiden of export growth and import saving. At other times, the fall is sharp and brutish, an ugly mother of financial crisis. But whether fast or slow, fair or foul, the dominant trend is down. The devaluing pound is a necessary if disagreeable consequence of Britain's economic infirmity, moderating but not reversing the inexorable forces of relative decline which seemingly emasculate all once-great economic empires.

Let us then entertain conjecture of the next lurch – a drop that may prove vertiginous, white-knuckle and decidedly unwelcome to a government bent on economic recovery through cheap money.

For, without precedent in 140 years, the British economy today has probably become an international debtor, amassing liabilities with the rest of the world in excess of overseas assets.

By the end of last year, net overseas debt by our calculations was well over £20 billion, a modest proportion (4 per cent) of the gross domestic product but a far cry from the heady levels seen at the height of Britain's rentier economy.

On the eve of the first world war, according to Professor Feinstein's estimates, Britain's net overseas assets totalled 180 per cent of GDP, generating net overseas income equivalent to 8.5 per cent of GDP.

The gigantic slide in Britain's external worth was arrested temporarily in the 1980s, thanks to the bonus of North Sea oil. But after seven years of abnormal trade deficit, the external asset position has reverted to trend and threatens to become rapidly unsustainable. At today's level of sterling, the economy would eventually slide into deep debt, an unsightly beggar in an unforgiving global capital market.

Although there is inevitably considerable uncertainty about the large sums involved in all directions, it is a reasonable assumption that the UK has today descended to the status of a small-scale international debtor.

The next question concerns sustainability. Imagine that sterling stays at its current level and consider the transformation in trade performance necessary to prevent an ever-spiralling level of international indebtedness. As every schoolboy knows, the textbook answer is that

the economy would probably need to run a primary trade surplus on the current account of the balance of payments – that is, the current account excluding overseas investment income and payments – to finance the outflow of debt interest.

But there are offsetting considerations. Thanks again to contrasting composition, the rate of return in the form of dividends, profits and interest on assets tends to fall short of that on Britain's liabilities. A further depressant arises now from the excess of liabilities over assets.

Taking everything into account, the golden rule for debt sustainability turns out to be quite simple and quite lethal. To keep net debt stable in relation to GDP, the UK would need broadly to secure primary trade balance, if not modest surplus.

Alas, the required transformation looks impossibly onerous, for two reasons.

First, the economy starts from a position of substantial deficit. Even on official figures, flattered by under-recording of black-economy imports, Britain's primary deficit last year ran to more than 2 per cent of GDP. Second, the economy suffers from a high trend rate of import penetration, a longstanding feature which abated surprisingly little in the 1980s despite undoubted gains in industrial efficiency. As a result, without persistent improvement in competitiveness, the UK must necessarily grow more slowly than overseas economies simply to keep the trade deficit in check.

This condition would put the UK's warranted growth rate at about two-thirds of the average in the industrial world. Unfortunately, a steady sequence of trade deficits would lead to an explosive rise in Britain's stock of overseas debt.

TO ACHIEVE debt stock and exchange rate stability at the same time would require the elimination of the trade deficit and a sacrifice of growth. Assuming overseas growth averages a little over 3 per cent a year in the next five years, our economic model suggests a warranted growth of UK GDP of 1.5 per cent a year with virtual stagnation of private-sector spending.

The associated low inflation rate – averaging 2 per cent – might offer some comfort to the Government. Far less agreeable would be the necessity to raise taxes again to prevent an otherwise explosive rise in government debt, the result of secular economic stagnation.

Although all such estimates need to be taken with a large pinch of salt, the scale of the problem dwarfs any conceivable qualification. With sterling unchanged, Britain's non-accelerating-overseas-debt rate of growth is unacceptably puny.

The Chancellor clearly thinks so. On his preferred policy settings, private-sector spending growth, far from stagnating, is already running towards 5 per cent a year.

Unhappily, on this basis, Britain's external net debt would explode, rising to more than £200 billion by 1998, over 20 per cent of GDP.

Except that it won't. Long before the debt blows up, sterling will have sunk and taken with it into the wedy depths for ever the dream of

the Chancellor about low base rates.

This unanswerable picture of relative decline also inevitably must imply aspects of absolute decline as well as far as the self-confidence and leadership style of the British ruling-class is concerned. It leads in general towards self-deceiving complacency and paralysed arrogance such as the British bourgeoisie have been showing, for example, over Ireland.

The British-colonist Orange establishment in the Occupied Zone of Ireland is part of that British ruling-class decadence, whether it likes it or not. Signs of exactly the same self-delusions and ailing, contentless grandeur can be seen in the 'Ulster' hierarchy as in its British parent, and for exactly the same reasons, – because the real international basis for Britain's past imperialist roles and for the Orangemen's undemocratic and pirated domination over the Occupied Zone of Ireland has now totally disappeared both in practice and in spirit. On a world scale, the British imperialist tradition is bankrupt in all departments.

Much has been made of the supposed sting-in-the-tail of the Orange fascist gangs who have been threatening a last-ditch stand to wreak havoc in the Occupied Zone and over all Ireland if their British-imperialist domination 'permanent veto' status is taken away from them.

The UVF and UFF and Red Hand Gang and other nazi groupings are variously said to be able and ready and willing to drown Ireland in a total bloodbath, north and south, if their 'right to be British' is taken away from them, etc, etc. They are alleged to be capable of taking a bombing campaign to Dublin just as the national-liberation struggle has taken it to the Occupied Zone and to the British mainland. Much play was made recently of one apparent Orange-colonist foray into the South when a bomb blast shook a Sinn Féin fund-raising event at a suburban Dublin pub, killing two people, the bombers getting clean away.

The capitalist press attempt to play up this aspect of the Troubles:

The mood in the Loyalist camp is very dangerous just now. There is a sense that the focus is on Sinn Féin and that both governments have been dancing to its tune. 'There are TV crews camped permanently outside the Provos headquarters in the Falls Road. Why? Because they kill people,' I was told recently.

As a first step, the UFF is attempting to build up recruits in border

areas. 'We see ourselves as less British as time passes,' said the leader. 'It is evident from what has been happening since the Anglo-Irish agreement and the Downing Street Declaration that the British Government's long-term objective is a united Ireland and we feel they are preparing the groundwork.'

'They are putting structures in place so that when that eventually comes about it will not be such a long step.'

He showed no trust in the present Secretary of State for Northern Ireland, Sir Patrick Mayhew. 'He's certainly one of the greener Secretaries of State. I wouldn't trust him. He has lied and lied again.'

'We feel we're being taken into a united Ireland against our will and we will do everything to resist that.'

'The Dublin government is the bigger threat. We don't see our own government as a threat, but its long-term objective seems to be that it wants to leave. We believe if they could leave tomorrow they would.'

Lord Carson, the father-figure of Loyalism, once predicted that 'the final battle will be between Loyalists and the British Army'. But the UVF leader said: 'It is too early for that to happen. It would be a sorry state of affairs if our own Government turned our own army against us, considering that a lot of us in the Loyalist community served in the armed forces and I have served.'

BECAUSE of the job I am in, people will say I am a bastard, but if I wasn't doing it, someone else would be.' So says the former British Army soldier who is now commander of the Ulster Freedom Fighters, an illegal Protestant terrorist force.

On Wednesday, UFF gunmen tried to murder a wheelchair-bound multiple sclerosis victim just days after he had returned from Lourdes seeking a miracle cure for his illness. Paul O'Neill, a 33-year-old Catholic, was hit in the face and arms as eight shots were fired through the windows of his Belfast home. His father, Aidan, 61, was wounded in the chest. Police dismissed claims that the family had any link with IRA terrorists.

Twenty-four hours later, Loyalist paramilitaries shot dead a Sinn Féin councillor's wife at her home in the city. Mother-of-two Theresa Clinton, 33, was hit when a UFF gunman sprayed the house with bullets.

The attacks are part of a long line of brutal sectarian murders mounted by Protestant paramilitaries. Loyalists have been responsible for eight of the 11 terrorist murders in the province this year. According to its leader, the UFF intends to continue its attacks in the North and has targeted for assassination John Hume, the Social Democratic and Labour Party MP who has been holding talks with Sinn Féin leader Gerry Adams. The UFF is also threatening to take its campaign into the Irish Republic.

Of the Irish Prime Minister, Albert Reynolds, and his involvement in the Downing Street Declaration, the UFF leader said: 'The more interference, the more intransigence on his side, the more inevitable a Loyalist

assault on the South.'

But reading between the lines a little, a slightly different picture emerges to the one which counter-revolutionary propaganda would like to put across.

Whatever else the diehard British colonists are saying, their bleating reveals an astonishing level of defeatism and sense of betrayal. There is a defiant attitude but it is much more one of a dog in the manger rather than that of people with an aggressive triumphant perspective. Despite all their positive bombastic propaganda efforts, these colonist sectarian voices sound as if they are beaten before they start. They sound like what they are, - a discredited and futile historical blind-alley which is doomed to failure and extinction.

This raises the question of what might have been behind the recent strangely successful bombing raid on Dublin. It might be that the UFF UVF carried out a risky and difficult operation successfully, first time, without any previous experience or failures at such missions.

But it could equally be that these fascist die-hards were assisted to their target by a much more competent authority such as the British MI5 which is used to such dirty tricks and which has its own fascist axe to grind against other section of the British bourgeois establishment over the vexed question of whether to relinquish the final colonial hold on Ireland or not.

The whole record of the recent British turmoil over its Irish entanglement has shown endless signs of an internal sectarian war being fought out between the various British imperialist agencies in the Occupied Zone such as MI5, Army intelligence, the RUC Special branch, the mainland police counter-terrorist units, etc, etc, not to mention the rival factions within the British bourgeois ruling-class party, the Tories, and the civil service establishment inside the Occupied Zone and in Whitehall as well.

There were conflicting policies over the shoot-to-kill episodes which gunned down Sinn Fein

or IRA suspects in cold blood without an atom of serious evidence against them or so much as the pretence of a trial (such as the drumhead jury-less 'courts' {have} set up under the police-military dictatorship in the Occupied Zone). There were conflicting policies over the mainland police 'investigation' over some of these shoot-to-kill crimes and disasters, conducted by John Stalker, the Manchester Deputy Chief Constable who was then sensationally framed by his own British establishment and hounded off the enquiry - and out of the police for good, because of having found out too much about the illegal fascist goings-on by the authorities in the Occupied Zone and their secret service controllers from Britain.

It could easily be that such raids on Dublin and elsewhere by fascist UFF/UVF die-hards could be kept going for a demonstrative while by British reaction at the heart of the imperialist establishment.

But as these pathetic UFF comments above testify, it is not impossible that the British army itself would be obliged to take on seriously the last-ditch propaganda spectacular of British dying reaction, and deal with it. There are plenty of other ways it could be dealt with too, if it develops.

But the quality of this diehard stand would seem immediately to be very low-spirited and meanly-gangsterish right from the start, - mere vengeance killings to try to wreck the house before leaving for good. Such a moronic fascist outlook is out of its time for the 1990s in the Occupied Zone of Ireland. It has no future or worthwhile perspective at all. It would seem to be very unlikely to have any success at all for very long.

All the talk here is of bitterness against the British establishment. There is no future in that. The British imperialist establishment is the very essence of the Orange-colonist community. The one will quickly decay and collapse without the other.[]

Build Leninism Joe Harper

Neither the MI5 show, nor 'left' muddleheadedness, can confuse the picture of British imperialist defeat in Ireland, despite all its murderous tyranny.

18[EPSR No 755 14-06-94]

Because of this hopelessness, as perceived, of British imperialism's plight, some watchdogs of

the capitalist state such as MI5 secret policemen, are becoming very agitated.

Hence the extraordinary phenomenon of the director-general of the Security Service (Gestapo) not only permitting name and personal details to be revealed for the first time in history of an incumbent, but even now going full frontal onto national television to give a friendly reassuring chat about how supposedly law-abiding, democratic, and accident-free all this secret-police work now is.

Possibly these ultra-right fanatics want to cash in on the temporary reprieve from international class pressure on imperialism from the self-liquidation by the revisionist degeneracy in Moscow, to take the opportunity to pretend that capitalist-state 'security' is a non-class operation in the interests of everybody; and possibly they want also to get in quick, before the international slump-mayhem really starts, to pretend that world order and justice is relatively simply available and well-secured provided that just tiny handfuls of 'terrorist' and 'subversive' individuals are closely kept under control.

Presumably Rimington was put up on national television because this opportunity for the imperialist-state secret police to put across this sly and deceitful stunt just happily coincided with the MI5 agency having an unusually deceptively-mild-looking boss at the moment, - a woman.

But bourgeois women cannot hide their class fanaticism no matter how hard they try or how good an act they are. This middle-class governess figure would have 'subversives' strung up with piano wire as soon as look at them.

Rimington just told non-stop lies, and not with a look as if butter would not melt in her mouth, but with a look that you would be ruthlessly punished if you dared to disagree with her.

Only a totally dehumanised fanatic could stand there lying that MI5 did not commit murder, did not have a political view on anything, and was full of totally law-abiding self-sacrificing servants of democracy and parliamentary control (representing public support and control over what MI5 does "in your name", etc.)

Having boasted that MI5 consisted entirely of just simple little civil servants doing their simple little surveillance work without any hidden agendas, or conspiratorial cliques, or secret political axes to grind, - she then just dismissed Peter Wright's astonishingly detailed revelations of MI5 being a highly political factionalising law

unto itself, - revelations which the British Government had gone berserk trying to suppress worldwide, - for example, - as simply "wrong".

And even if Rimington can only wanted this dismissive verdict to be seen as applying only to the controversy about how seriously MI5 agents tried to undermine the Harold Wilson Labour Governments, - and conveniently ignoring the endless rampage of illegal activities and dubious political stunts Wright confessed to on other pages, - this insolent and contemptuous response still leaves unmentioned the startling business of the enormous implications of just saying that Wright was "wrong".

This was one of the most senior, respected, and experienced figures ever in MI5's whole spy-catching history. And if he was "wrong" about all that he revealed of the Gestapo's work yet was prepared to defy the British Government across the courts of the world to prevent his book of memoirs from being censored or suppressed, then what did this say about such an archetypal Security Service representative, approved in office for more than 30 years?

That he was a totally compulsive liar? Or all the time completely mad? Or an incorrigible betrayer of his country's interests, and utterly contemptuous of democratic parliamentary control?

What it says is that Rimington was lying through her teeth when gushing her bilge about how law-abiding, responsible, principled, and reluctant to intrude on any citizen's privacy, etc, the agency was, - peopled by totally reasonable, politically-neutral, and kindly angels, it seems, who wish no harm to anyone.

Top spycatcher Peter Wright's revelations of ruthless, class-biased fanaticism are either totally correct, - or else totally mad, - revealing thereby a completely different kind of ruthless fanaticism at the head of MI5. Either way, the present head of MI5 is revealed as an utterly fanatical, class-hatred-demented arsehole.

Murder and lying treachery are all that the British imperialist secret police live by and live for. Rimington can try all she likes to distance her agency's work from other crimes of the capitalist state, but only imbeciles will fall for this. The Birmingham Six were tortured, framed, and then banged up for 18 years of their lives for something which the law knew all along they did not do. The



Guildford Four and the Maguire family likewise. The Gibraltar Three were murdered in cold blood by the British secret service. Murder squads were operating (and still are) in the Occupied Zone of Ireland, and they were found out by the Stalker inquiry, which then had to be suppressed by hook or by crook, and its author, - a senior British police officer, one of Rimington's own "honourable and trustworthy honest civil servants defending the security of the state with great self-sacrifice", John Stalker, had to have his career butchered and his name slandered to get the British capitalist state off the clearly-proven charge of premeditated 'judicial' murder and cover-up.

But the last laugh is with the anti-imperialist struggle. Rimington had to reveal that more than half of the whole of MI5's resources now have to go on combatting the IRA and Sinn Féin. So much for the 'success' of 25 years of murderous repression against the Irish national-liberation movement. Such a catastrophic failure has been the whole 'counter-insurgency' operation that, - even as the Gestapo bloodhounds are still

bursting every gut to nail "terrorism and everyone connected with" by fair means or foul, persecuting Irish accents and political sympathisers at random and with extreme brutality and menace, - the political bosses of MI5 are seeking a political deal with those very same "terrorists". No wonder it is widely rumoured that there are MI5 influences behind attempts to sabotage any new constitutional agreement for British imperialism to finally pull out of its interference in Ireland's affairs, allowing reunification at last under an independent Irish government.

Rimington's other chilling threat to be gathering the entire membership lists of every single organisation which challenges the validity of the present 'parliamentary democracy' racket (dominated by monopoly-capitalist ruling-class interests in a thousand-and-one uncontrollable ways), - is likely to be equally as inept as imperialism's 'counter-terrorist' attempts to hold back the Irish national-liberation struggle.

Revolutionary theory will decide the outcome of the class struggle in Britain, not sordid little informant's lists of who says what to whom in which

pub, etc.

Plants and agents provocateurs will have to listen to the same political analysis of the international imperialist economic crisis as everyone else, and eventually, nothing on earth will hold back the working class from agreeing to a Marxist-Leninist analysis of the only possible solution, a revolutionary solution, to the now incurable decadence of a dying capitalist system.

Letter-opening, phone-tapping, and arrests have never stopped the spread of revolutionary Marxist understanding in the past. They will never stop the invincible role of revolutionary theory in the future either. It will soon be gushing out of every crack in the soon-to-explode class struggle, and all the arrests on earth will not stop it. So old iron knickers can do her worst. Like Thatcher, all she will succeed in doing is turning on the decadent geriatrics in the establishment with the hint of perfumed tough leather, and gentle horsewhipping. It will be utterly irrelevant to the break-up of the imperialist system and the advance of the class struggle, just like Thatcherism was.[]

Build Leninism. JH

BBC lies about 'tit for tat' violence in the Occupied Zone of Ireland are deliberately-concealing the fascist despair of wrecked imperialist power. Crashing markets will further undermine the bourgeoisie. But a return to Leninist party-building science an urgent need.

[EPSR No 756 21-06-94]

The fascist thugs of the British colonist community in the

Occupied Zone of Ireland are in no way comparable to the

Irish volunteers of the national liberation struggle, as is being claimed by the bourgeois establishment.

Nor do these degenerates in any way reflect "the ordinary people of the protestant tradition in Ulster who are worried about being forgotten", as the top colonist clergyman Eames has tried to pretend.

These cynical killers who massacred the Saturday-night pub crowd in Loughinisland village watching Ireland's World Cup football progress, represent contemporary imperialist political attitudes only, and all that

is worst about monopoly-bourgeois class society deserving to be totally destroyed.

The tactics of the IRA or the INLA or anyone else in applying individual-terror guerrilla war to anything and everything regarded as standing for the British imperialist state and occupying forces, - however dubious the political logic from any point of view, and however tinged with unappetising nationalist venom, - are one thing. The intention is obvious: - to wipe out, damage, or intimidate every aspect of the British colonial connection with Ireland, including, clearly, the resident pro-British population in any of its activities which have as their aim the protection, sustenance and supply of the colonist state in Ireland.

This is the continuation of an 800-year war of national-liberation fought by the Irish to end all British control over their island. As in all such struggles throughout history, the tactics are NEVER set by the guerrilla fighters but only ever by the aggressive colonial authority. The only way that tiny bands of intervening colonists have ever been able to overcome the far greater masses of the indigenous population has been through the most ruthless brutal terror and wholesale extermination. That was how the Americas were won by the white man (English, Spanish, French, etc) from the Indian civilisations (Mayan, Aztec, Iroquois, etc); New Zealand from the Maoris; Australia from the Aborigines; etc, etc; and how the control of the whole of Ireland was won from the Irish for nearly 700 years until the revolutionary war of independence of 1918-1920 forced the occupying British imperialist state to concede an Irish Republic on 26 of Ireland's 32 counties.

British imperialist brutality continued right throughout the negotiations (which finally saw the Irish Free State established in 1921), threatening to torch the whole of Ireland if the IRA/Sinn Féin negotiators did not make do with 26 counties (despite the last all-Ireland elections of 1918 having produced a near 80% vote for total independence of the whole of the island from British rule or connection. So much for the British bourgeoisie's real concern for the "wishes of the majority" which only began to be touted by London once the artificial border had been gerrymandered in a crazy meandering line across Ulster to leave three of its counties in the Republic, and six under continuing British

military domination with crazily zig-zagging boundaries to embrace the maximum possible of traditionally colonist settlements to produce artificially a new “majority” inside the bogus land called “Northern Ireland” where ‘democracy’ could claim to be in favour of remaining in the United Kingdom.)

That imperialist terror domination over the one third of the population of genuine Irish people trapped behind the new British imperialist frontier then became institutionalised as the sectarian RUC and ‘B’ Specials and the sectarian local British army regiments, - all of which only came into existence to ensure that any remaining Republican sentiments in the colony were systematically persecuted for the rest of time; urged prejudice.

The terror-murder of individuals for their attitude to the imperialist state was established hundreds of years ago by the British colonialists, as were systematic starvation in the famines, kidnapping and holding to ransom, collective punishments, detention without trial, torture for information, plus every other manner of bribery and corruption to shatter or disgrace Irish nationalism and promote the pro-British connection. No new ‘terrorist’ tactics have ever had to be invented by the national-liberation struggle ‘terrorists’. And every new development in the guerrilla war was only in response to some new intransigence or colonial-“majority” imposition on the Irish by the British imperialist state in its bogus new guise of the non-existent country of “Northern Ireland”, - just a repository for lingering British-colonial sectarianism.

But as the Irish national-liberation struggle has fought on against this tyranny, so has the British imperialist domination been finally forced to begin to recognise once again the renewed pressing claims of Irish independence.

There is no such pattern of historically-evolving developments and inevitability about events concerning the fascist-colonist backlash against London’s enforced reconsideration of its imperialist position in Ireland.

There is not one scrap of perspective, one ounce of historical justification, or one iota of heroic self-sacrificing volunteer-struggle in these sordid acts of mindless butchery and violence

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by the Orange-colonist mafia. These grubby little thugs are just the typical fascist scum left behind by the receding tide of

British imperialist fortunes.

This same murderous destructive ignorance and prejudice has emerged just as fanatically in other dying colonial situations such as the Smith regime which tried for 14 bloody years to hang onto colonial domination over Zimbabwe as Rhodesia, or the South African apartheid sectarians who equally vowed “no surrender”, just like Paisley & Co, in order to gerrymander ‘democracy’ and boundaries for a few decades longer to try to preserve their ‘white, protestant paradise’ from ‘heathen incursions’, etc, - by state terror, covert murder squads, torture barracks, concentration-camp internment without trial, midnight snatch-squads busting into homes, supergrass plants, black propaganda subversion, etc, etc, - all the same barbaric tactics used by British colonist domination to try to hang onto its fraudulent ‘Ulster’ Occupied Zone.

Similar patterns of dying imperialist behaviour were observed in the decadent decline of other empires such as the French in Algeria, the Belgians in the Congo, the Portuguese in Angola, Mozambique, etc, the Americans in Panama, Nicaragua, Vietnam, etc, and so on.

All such terminal colonial barbarism was marked by its rotten lack of perspective, - hired gangs of thugs killing for the sake of sheer terror in order vainly to try to hang on to what historically was no longer tenable. Continuing white political domination of the southern states of the USA against advancing black mass democracy was another example of this failed barbarism, so similar to the criminal fascist rottenness currently trying vengefully to destroy all civilised life in the British imperialist Occupied Zone of Ireland.

It is an outrageous nonsense for Bishop Eames and the rest of the British imperialist bourgeois-propaganda establishment led by the BBC to present these isolated nazi-gangster stunts by the UVF, the UFF, the Red Hand mafia, and other paid stooges as just “tit-for-tat actions by the protestant community”. These acts of indiscriminate random butchery against Irish people trapped behind the artificial ‘Northern Ireland’ barriers by the infamous 1921 Partition of Ireland, one of the sickest crimes in all imperialist history, - are simply the scum-filth of fascism, left behind by the death of the colonial era.

What is more, this pretence of “inevitable uncontrollable counter-terror to answer the

terror-tyranny of the IRA, etc”, and so on, is the most evil and cynical deception of all.

If the MI5 and the rest of the British imperialist gestapo agencies devoted just a tiny fraction of the huge resources they spend in trying vainly to control the Irish national-liberation struggle - on these groups of mercenary nazi thugs instead, - there would be an overnight transformation at least in this aspect of the ‘troubles’. The UVF and UFF fascist reprisals could be tamed immediately with just the slightest sustained serious counter-terrorist campaign by the British police-military dictatorship.

But of course there is not the slightest wish or intention to hold back these nazi thugs just yet, - or possibly not at all.

By half turning a blind eye to these ridiculous Hitler-strutting stunts of these out-of-date Ian Smiths, the British bourgeois establishment hopes that Ulster fascist colonism can confuse people into thinking that the imperialist system faces an impossible dilemma in the Occupied Zone, - hounded by society-wrecking violence whichever way it turns.

This is the biggest nonsense of all, of course. It is precisely the continued existence of the British monopoly capitalist ruling class’s interests in the Occupied Zone of Ireland that is the sole basic cause of all of the violence there.

Although no longer engaged in financially or geopolitically exploiting its colonial territory, the British imperialist presence still 100% prevents all further natural progress there and in the whole island of Ireland. Historic Irish national aspirations reborn of 19th and 20th century world nation-state developments, must finally be given full birth to before anything else can happen there of a decisive major kind on the economic, political, social or cultural stage. Reunification and total formal state independence are an itch that simply will never go away until it is satisfied.

By guaranteeing in the fraudulent way that it does the ‘rights of the majority’ in the artificial bastard entity called ‘Northern Ireland’, British imperialism makes it inevitable that its stamp of authority unavoidably becomes the stamp of repression.

The very proclamation of the non-existent state of ‘Northern Ireland’ - part of the United Kingdom’ spelt out violent insoluble confrontation from Day One onwards, unendingly. The British jurisdiction has never

remotely provided ‘even-handed justice’ to the Irish minority dominated by the gerrymandered permanent colonist majority. Obviously it has only ever confirmed the sectarian status quo, just as it is still going through the motions of doing in the Downing Street Declaration, promising that the ‘Northern Ireland majority’s rights’ will be preserved, etc. By cementing the Partition injustice, British ‘democracy’ ensures that nothing but hatred can ever be bred thereafter until that criminal division of the country of Ireland is corrected and made well again.

The sordid little killing acts of the murderously aggressive scum in the fascist extremist bands are very much the appropriate and anticipated outcome of British imperialism’s basically paralysed negative position. There is zero future perspective for the ‘British Ireland’ fiction about the torn-out bits of Occupied Ulster, and no compensation in view for all of the past ‘loyalist’ posturing by the misguided settlers, fatuously beating their breasts about ‘No surrender’ when the epoch of Empire has long since passed.

And yet at the same time, British imperialism cannot bear to openly admit that its foul little game of partitioning Ireland artificially has come to a sordid little end, and all attempts to defeat the national-liberation struggle have been a disastrous failure.

This leaves the fascist political-aggression content of the colonialist mentality with nowhere to go but down even deeper into spiteful arrogant prejudice. All Paisley’s attempts at a serious Carson-type fascist-colonist UDI (mimicking the Curragh mutiny days and Smith’s Rhodesian racket) have come to humiliating disaster. The civil disobedience campaigns have collapsed; the provocative forays into the Republic immediately broke down in embarrassment; the stormtrooper uniformed midnight mobilisations turned out to be a derisible farce in reality; and Paisley’s bombastic rhetoric is beginning to sound ever lamer, convincing no one.

This effective collapse of the whole morale of the out-of-date British imperialist settler community, occupying and governing Ireland in the name of the British Crown, has therefore left nothing but the nastiest gutter fascist echo of imperialist supremacy rumbling bitterly in the guts of politically backward individuals of a thug-like disposition, allied to straightforward

crooked mafia circles who are into guns, violence, racketeering, and anarchy of every kind, automatically.

The result is all these blood-curdling fascist-gang threats to make not just the Occupied Zone ungovernable but the whole of Ireland too by 'taking the war of resistance into the South', – but only the brutal cold-blooded massacre of an old chap having a Saturday-night drink in his local in reality, – so far.

So far, – for it is not inconceivable that hopeless fascist despair by the colonist mentality in the Occupied Zone could coincide with a far vaster quantity of similar political depravity arising out of imperialist decay on the British mainland itself as the monopoly-capitalist ruling class continues to prove how out-of-date it is on all fronts of the international trade-war crisis.

But so far, the nazi gangs have not met with unashamed bourgeois support in the Occupied Zone as Hitler's fascist scum did in Germany in the 1920s and 1930s of similar imperialist decline. Which is why this vengeful dog-in-the-manger reaction in the Occupied Zone to the collapse of British imperialist supremacy has risen to no greater 'No-surrender' heights than shooting innocent Catholics or Irish citizens (or even innocent bystanders of no persuasion or of the protestant faith) in the back in late-night pub massacres.

At the same time as the bourgeois propaganda machinery in Britain presents an outrageously biased account of these demented fascist provocations as being merely 'inter-community tit for tat' and supposedly on a par with the heroic 800-year national-liberation struggle by the Irish, – the philistine media are also continuing vainly to conceal British imperialism's retreat around the Downing Street Declaration question by still pretending that it is the Republican movement which is split and incapable of making up its mind and moving things forward, – thus standing on its head the obvious reality that it is the British establishment which is hopelessly paralysed about its degeneration in general, and about its humiliating defeat by the IRA/Sinn Féin national-liberation struggle in particular.

These divisions and lack of resolve (and total lack of any confident or serious policy perspectives, – almost on any subject) are becoming more and more blatant as the back-stabbing

recriminations start hotting up over what and who is to blame for the continuing ruling class decline. Major only hangs on because no one else and no other factions are bold enough to offer any dramatically different alternative policies as far as the general style of this beleaguered Tory Government is concerned. And this Tory sclerosis hangs on greatly courtesy of the farcical spinelessness of Labour's three supposedly 'leadership' candidates, all terrified of saying anything about anything.

Faced with the greatest capitalist crisis in British imperialism's history and confronting one of the weakest and most despised ruling-class regimes ever, the Labourite opportunist movement cannot even manage a good belch in the Tories direction, let alone give a scrap of serious anti-crisis leadership. This continuing ludicrous charade must mean several more nails in the rapidly-nearing-completion coffin of the parliamentary-'democracy' pantomime (where *Prime Minister's Question Time* is now an international joke TV slot on a par with Clive James's bizarre Japanese television commercials and game-show pranks).

These media fantasies of triumphant British imperialism and routed Irish nationalism are, of course, never challenged by Labour's treacherous 'bi-partisanship' on all questions where the Gestapo-minded establishment shouts 'national security interests', etc, and in turn do their bit to prolong the venomous delusions of the Ulster fascist gangs.

But the really sick worries at the heart of all this nonsense grow steadily worse under the pressure of such never-ending hammer blows as the latest statistical doubts about any so-called 'economic recovery' in sight, and this week's renewed 'Black Monday' panics in the money markets and on the stock exchanges.

The racist murder gangs of the dying imperialist community in Occupied Ireland will all be rendered even slightly more inhuman than ever by such destabilising anarchy as the latest 'inexplicable' share-price collapses, or generally disturbing feverish turmoil and uncertainty. The imperialist system of crisis staggers on to create even more widespread mayhem and confusion than ever before. In the process, all imperialist-system relations that have ever existed continue to be steadily undone, including such 'special' relationships as the one between Britain and its oldest and

closest colonist community, the settlers in the Occupied Zone of Ireland, the only ones ever to be included as part of the United Kingdom itself.

The *Bulletin* has consistently traced the worsening relations between the colonist establishment in Ireland and the London establishment. The tendency in this contradictory pattern has always unavoidably inclined towards the Carson rebellion and Curragh Mutiny standard mould. The ever-increasing venom of colony comment about 'London treachery' only emphasises this trend.

But as examined in previous *Bulletins*, there can be no great future for such a sterile perspective as an essential offshoot of British imperialism taking on British imperialism in order to guarantee its own British imperialist continuity. As noted, such degenerate reaction in the Occupied Zone might just coincide with a like-minded fascist outburst of vengeful despair on the mainland itself, briefly boosting its credibility.

But even a Hitlerite turn in Britain looks for the moment as being beyond the clapped-out British ruling class, so decadent, paralysed, and deluded has it become. In which case by one means or another, these miserable gestures of nazi-colonist

defiance in the Occupied Zone look like being a sick dying swansong of a once mighty imperialist supremacists.

Out of counter-revolutionary prejudice and arrogant ignorant racism which is hard to unlearn, all bourgeois propaganda in Britain continues to sow nothing but confusion about Ireland's 'troubles' with the grotesque distortion that "tit for tat sectarian violence" is all that is going on in the Occupied Zone.

These criminal lies from Bishop Eames to the Labour Party which only encourage fascist reaction, might not necessarily be intended to continue all the way to real nazi coup provocations in the colony. But the debilitating influence of this bourgeois propaganda on all potential anti-imperialist clarity in Britain (and elsewhere) is not helped by the appallingly degenerate condition of all so-called 'left' or 'liberal' opinion, currently, in the wake of the desperate confusion bequeathed by the monstrous revisionist let-down of Moscow's final self-liquidation, and of the chaos left behind by attempted 'anti-Stalinist' analyses of these monumental postwar developments.[...]

Build Leninism
Joe Harper

Royal soap opera 'success' hardly the answer to Britain's trade-war problems or collapse of bourgeois confidence. The monarchy is out of date, just like imperialism. Dollar crash will scupper all. 'Loyalism' dying on every count.

[EPSR No 758 05-07-94]

[...]already in view are renewed direct inter-imperialist confrontations over the increasingly antagonistic trade war.

Extending the feud by Britain inside the EU against German-French domination over the next commission president, it is significant that France has now joined in with German trade-sanctions threats against the import of British beef products.

Meanwhile, British bourgeois-imperialist confidence continues to dwindle on all fronts.

And nothing could be more symbolic of the unease at the heart of the ruling-class system than the outdated way in which the colonist remnants in the Occupied Zone of Ireland should be culturally so oriented towards their supposed loyalty to the Crown, now so tarnished as the emblem of British power and au-

thority. The Nazi-level depravities of terror-torture inflicted on the Irish national-liberation struggle (as remarkably confirmed by the Channel 4 coverage this week) by the 'forces of the Crown' render this bogusly 'neutral' and non-comprehending monarchy even more odious and futile as an institution, making the colonists' 'loyalty' look more and more like a kiss of death for both partners.

And a preview of further Channel 4 coverage later in the week notes how the demoralisation of the colonist community begins with bourgeois paralysis:

This month, 25 years after British troops arrived in Belfast, the mood in the Protestant heartland is troubled and uncertain.

Now, it is working-class Protestants who feel they are on the losing side, caricatured across the world as bigoted rednecks. Looking

fearfully across the peace wall which divides the Shankill Road from the Falls, they see an increasingly confident Catholic community which has made enormous gains, political and economic. Most bewildering of all, it seems to many Protestants that this has happened as a result of the IRA's terrorist campaign. 'Violence works' is a phrase one hears grimly repeated again and again to explain the rise in support for loyalist paramilitary groups.

Jackie Redpath, who runs the Greater Shankill Development Agency, analyses the experience of loss and defeat. 'You have to understand that the Protestant community is a community in retreat — physically, politically, economically, culturally.' He points to the decline in population in the Greater Shankill area over the past 15 years from 120,000 to 56,000 as younger families have moved out. To many of those who remain this planned redevelopment, which has inevitably left an imbalance of elderly people, is evidence of a deliberate strategy to drive Protestants from this part of Belfast. Some of the most bitter arguments about the re-routing of Orange parades have been when the police have diverted them from streets which were once Protestant but are now occupied by Catholics.

This physical retreat has been accompanied by a sense of political defeat and betrayal. Most loyalists, even those who are prepared to admit that discrimination against Catholics was a major cause of the Troubles, will also reel off a list of political losses over two decades.

The signing of the Anglo-Irish Agreement in 1985 and, more recently, the Downing Street Declaration have aggravated the suspicion that Britain has no long-term interest in maintaining the Union. In this context, Prince Charles's apparent indifference to the Williamite settlement, which Orange marches commemorate, is simply another example of how far even the Royal Family has drifted from loyal Protestant Ulster.

The economic decline of industrial Belfast has fallen particularly hard on the Shankill Road. Workers employed in places such as the Harland and Wolff shipyard were overwhelmingly — and unapologetically — Protestant. If you were a teenager in the Shankill 25 years ago you had automatic access to a job. Now Harland and Wolff, which employed 20,000 in its heyday, has fewer than 2,000 workers. Mackie's, the engineering works, had 7,500 on the payroll at the start of the Troubles. It now employs fewer than 200. Unemployment is 25 per cent in the Shankill area, comparable to Catholic West Belfast.

To Protestants, who believed they were entitled to jobs and who defined themselves by the work ethic, the effect has been devastating. May Blood, a veteran trade unionist,

spoke of her shock. 'A young man said to me: "Why would I work? My father never worked." Twenty-five years ago you would never have heard a Protestant say that.'

Recent research has revealed another shocking statistic — dramatically low levels of educational achievement. Only a handful of children in the Shankill Road pass the 11-plus each year and very few go on to higher education. It was partly to deal with this that Sally Paul and other women at the Hummingbird Centre started a programme of courses to encourage parents, particularly single mothers — of whom there are many — to help their children.

One of their most striking discoveries was the lack of knowledge among many working-class Protestants of their own history and culture. 'How could we know? We were only taught English history, the Battle of Hastings and so on,' Sally Paul said. One woman in her own adult education class refused to believe that the Protestant community had only arrived in Northern Ireland in the seventeenth century. Now the centre runs Irish language classes as well as history.

This remarkable initiative focuses a spotlight on another part of the loyalist community's sense of loss and confusion about its own identity. There are 23 different Protestant churches in the Shankill Road, each offering a different view of Divine Truth. Even allowing for the fact that the defining characteristic of Protestantism is the individual's relationship with God, this makes for intense fragmentation.

It has also made it much more difficult to develop community projects: one of the strengths of the Catholic community has been the leadership provided by a monolithic church.

In this, as in many other fields, one has a sense that people in the Shankill are looking half enviously, half angrily at how the Catholic community has emerged, apparently stronger from the experience of the past 25 years. There is the suspicion, for example, that 'the Catholics have all the best poets, the best musicians, the best writers'.

The problem extends beyond cultural identity. The flight of the Protestant middle classes from politics, the perception that many appear to be ashamed of their roots, adds to the sense of many in the Shankill that they have been abandoned by those who should be providing leadership and solidarity. These include a perfidious British Government intent on pushing them into a united Ireland, the territorial threat from Dublin and the violence of the IRA.

[...]Philistine stupidity not only rules but gets worse. The bourgeoisie is losing its grip entirely. Build Leninism.

Joe Harper

ruling class.

The UFF Orange logic is that the Irish national liberation struggle would only halt operations if London had promised a deal ultimately resulting in British withdrawal from the OZ and reunification of Ireland.

Such a deal has long been on the cards ever since the early 1980s had proved that

Sinn Féin and the IRA had won total support of the Irish in the OZ and the total sympathy of world opinion everywhere, but crucially in the huge Irish-extraction population in the USA. The fascist-colonial remnants may now have to be fought, easier but nasty all the same for clapped-out British imperialism.

Final demise of Britain's rotten 'Northern Ireland' colony now in sight, reversing the hated Partition for ever. Further British concessions over Ireland mark an important milestone in the anti-imperialist struggle, making possible an end to anti-Irish chauvinism among workers and underlining the value of Marxist-Leninist scientific analysis of the situation

[EPSR No 767 06-09-94]

The latest developments in the Irish question point unmistakably towards one of the greatest national-liberation victories ever gained by armed revolutionary struggle.

Britain's long slow withdrawal from colonial domination of the last bits of Ireland it had held onto, has suddenly spurred into virtual declaration of a full retreat.

Reunification under Irish majority rule and ending the despised Partition will not be completely conceded yet, but London's ungracious and begrudging acceptance of the IRA's ceasefire terms plainly confirms how it is the Irish guerrilla war which has proved unbeatable, and how international public opinion has forced the world monopoly bourgeoisie to tell London to bourge.

The longterm crisis of the British imperialist system (and of imperialism in general) meant that the colonial occupation of parts of Ulster had ceased to have any confident ring of truth about it whatsoever.

The Occupied Zone (OZ) on bits of six counties of Ireland was a strategic anachronism, an impossible-to-justify colonial legacy, and an increasing economic liability as Britain's formerly triumphant imperialist trade-war positions went into steep and irreversible decline following the traumatic experience for Britain of its lost prestige and colonies during and after World War II.

The paralysed decadence of the Orange-colonial commu-

nity in the Occupied Zone only emphasised how out-of-date and impossible-to-sustain the situation had become.

The writing on the wall became obvious for this colonial remnant in the wake of the sensational political coups scored by national-liberation heroism in the hunger-strikes-unto-death in 1980-81, the parallel electoral breakthrough with the Irish voters in the OZ, and the simultaneous beginnings of IRA guerrilla-war supremacy over its RUC, British Army, M15 and Special Branch opponents, eventually able to bomb Britain itself almost at will, and on two occasions, at Brighton and Downing Street, nearly wiping out the entire British Cabinet.

At the same time, Sinn Féin's political spokesmen and strategies became increasingly adept at outmanoeuvring British imperialist decadence and the time-warped Orange colonists.

The international imperialist-system allies of Britain's ruling class in Washington and the Common Market capitals have steadily grown more impatient for London to finally do something to resolve the endless sore of having to brutally repress an unbeatable national-liberation struggle.

In the trade-war crisis now preoccupying the Western powers, the former allies and now rivals of Britain will not be averse to taking advantage of London's paralysed plight.

The Major government is clearly unhappy at the pressures from Washington and Dublin to now speed up the peace-negoti-

Ireland colonialist 'civil war' threat

22 [EPSR No 766 30-08-94]

The fascist threat by British colonialist die-hards in the Occupied Zone of Ireland to inflict

'civil war' if the IRA announces a ceasefire will be the worst nightmare come true for the British

ation process, scarcely hiding its dismay at the speed with which invitations are now going out to Sinn Féin and IRA leaders to parade as triumphant international statesmen.

But the London attempts to cover up its humiliation by insisting that more of a surrender tone should be read into the IRA's ceasefire announcement are going to be swept aside and ignored.

The British establishment are just making fools of themselves even more by trying to delay things until the word 'permanent' is added to the ceasefire proposals.

It is clearly just the flimsiest of pointless gimmicks to try to prevent the more hardline Orange-colonist reactionaries from denouncing Major & Co totally as selling out 'Northern Ireland'.

But the colonial game is up and it seems that the bigger bourgeoisie around Molyneux might have finally reluctantly accepted this, – in return for some further economic and social guarantees for their personal futures from the recent flurry of international talks involving Dublin, Washington, and the Common market.

American and EEC investment aid, plus new joint enterprise prospects with all-Ireland institutions, look like being the hoped-for way of giving the whole war-torn north east of Ireland a new deal so that the still-unresolved details of what precise new constitutional arrangements will prove acceptable to all parties, can have time to become less of an explosive issue.

But despite all of the continuing confusion and the sick posturing from every aspect of the now terminally wounded colonial inheritance, – from London, from sectarian Unionism, from the lumpen fascist 'No surrender' gangs, etc, – what appears obvious is that the old order has been fatally undermined.

Britain's imperialist dictatorship in Ireland is finally over after 800 years of savage repression and heroic resistance.

Agreement has obviously been reached that no new attempts will ever be made again to establish exclusive British sovereignty over any part of Ireland.

Never again will any Irish anywhere in all 32 counties have to live under anything but Irish citizenship.

Exactly what authority over the six-county Occupied Zone of Ulster will be established to replace British sovereignty has not been worked out yet, but

there will be no return to the bastard Orange-fascist statelet set up by the 1921 Partition tyranny.

The sick fiction of 'Northern Ireland' will not disappear overnight but neither will it ever be revived as an artificial colonial enclave dominated by a built-in gerrymandered British-bigot 'majority'.

No announcement can yet be made that the infamous Orange-colonists 'veto' over any dismantling of Britain's imperialist gains in Ireland has been at last torn up and all the 'No Surrender' posturing abandoned as a silly historical relic. Truculent feelings among the more fascist-chauvinist minded of the colonist community are still too sore to make it sensible to risk too openly provocative a challenge to the Orangemen's past glories.

But the signs are unmistakable that the main British ruling-class establishment in the economic, political, military, and civil service fields now all accept the worldwide pressures for finally winding up a hopeless cause.

And although nothing drastic will be done to reduce the Orange bourgeois-colonial status immediately, all the evidence continues to point to a new retreat by the ruling class in Britain from its age-old imperialist stance towards Ireland.

The national-liberation struggle's 'ceasefire' offer came after a fortnight's intensive lobbying by a delegation from the Clinton presidency and the powerful Irish-extraction economic and political lobby in the USA, led by Bruce Morrison.

As a result of further pressures and bargaining with London, Dublin, and all the political tendencies in the Occupied Zone (OZ), the IRA finally felt confident enough to announce a halt to military operations forthwith to make way for a new period and stage of campaigning.

What final concessions were made to the national-liberation struggle is not clear but it seems obvious from all the subsequent posturing that it was the British imperialist side which most felt in need of more bluffing to cover a further embarrassing retreat.

The empty huffing and puffing about the IRA's failure to declare their ceasefire to be 'permanent' looked like a telltale sign that London was desperately playing with its fingers to hide some guilt or shame.

The bankrupt furore and tortuous cover up later on about the first new repatriations of hardline IRA prisoners-of-war seemed even more unmistak-

ably to spell out a profound and despairing confusion on the British side, knowing that things were going wrong but unable quite to admit to itself exactly what it was.

At a more primitive level, the sad acts of sectarian terror perpetrated on Catholics since the ceasefire by Orange-fascist gangsters incapable of reorienting to the loss of colonial domination, tell even more plainly of a community in turmoil and scared to even contemplate what is happening to it.

At the same time, the immediately more animated response from Sinn Féin and its supporters to the ceasefire agreement indicated in whose favour the new understandings were being reached.

For appearance's sake London will continue to drag its feet on giving any recognition at all to the triumphant positions won for furthering the national-liberation of the whole of Ireland by the achievements of Sinn Féin and the IRA.

But the rest of the imperialist camp which has so influenced London's final climb-down has no such inhibitions. An immediate flood of Sinn Féin initiatives and influential international summitry has been announced, only confirming who has really won the peace in Ireland.

Adams & Co will be justly celebrated, having achieved such a miraculous national-liberation triumph with such tiny resources and against all the odds in terms of the far more powerful civil-war foe it took on in the Orange community, the infinitely more powerful imperialist opponent it got the better of in guerrilla war, and the seemingly hopelessly impossible urban terrain on which to try to fight this guerrilla war.

But the real explanation of all the recent immediate goings-on in the Ireland question are still only a fraction of the truly historic story which is gradually unfolding.

Whatever secret deals are eventually revealed, and whatever the final details of the changes in Ireland, the whole process can only be understood in terms of historic shifts in the international balance of class forces.

The world role of the British imperialist bourgeoisie (and of the imperialist system in general) has long been a slowly dying one.

Britain's continued colonial control of the north-east corner of Ireland was always doomed to ultimate humiliating defeat by the strength of national-liberation struggle, a great

transitional phenomenon of the 20th century.

The final result of the relentless economic decline of British imperialism (and the entire imperialist system) must be proletarian socialist revolution. Whatever economic, social and political arrangements are tacked together for the Six Counties (the occupied zone of Ireland's nine-county province of Ulster), either temporarily or in the slightly longer term, the bourgeois-nationalist compromise deal can provide no lasting solution.

The incurable collapse of British imperialist know-how and the paralysed degeneration of its local Orange-colonist ruling class is a feature of a much broader crisis of capitalism itself, and deep structural changes in bourgeois society will continue to operate, whatever new class-collaborationist regime is installed.

But the sneering 'left' criticism of whatever arrangements Sinn Féin has entered into (with Washington, Dublin, London, and other sections of the Occupied-Zone middle class) as a 'sell-out', – is hopelessly wide of the mark.

The national-liberation struggle by Sinn Féin and the IRA has always been a bourgeois-nationalist movement.

But as the *Bulletin* has consistently explained from the start, this became the main anti-imperialist fight, – and a serious one with enormous international implications.

It is farcical wishful thinking by fake-'lefts' such as Bernadette Devlin-McAliskey to mutter that 'the war is now over and the good guys lost' just because the useless petty-bourgeois sectarianism of her Trotskyite circles failed to capture a leading role for their wholly academic bogus 'Marxism'.

The political and guerrilla-war successes of IRA/Sinn Féin cannot be ignored in any serious Marxist-Leninist scientific appraisal of the movement of all class-war forces in their totality, – the only possible starting out point for the very ABC of Marxism.

Imperialism has once again taken on the anti-colonial movement and once again imperialism has been beaten, – in spite of the more difficult conditions imposed on the anti-imperialist struggle (as seen in Cuba's renewed sabotage problems, eg.) by the appalling self-liquidation by the Moscow revisionist bureaucracy.

This further setback to the British ruling class could be incalculable; and for the world

imperialist bourgeoisie as a whole, another terrifying example has been set of how armed revolutionary struggle (albeit bourgeois-nationalist struggle) has triumphed over every savage repression and vilification that the 'all-powerful' imperialist military and propaganda monopolies could throw at it.

These are lessons of infinite importance for the world's masses in a historical period of unprecedented ideological confusion.

The fake-'lefts' snigger because their incorrigible anti-communism and anti-Sovietism (hatred of the dictatorship of the proletariat) has marooned them as the most confused and defeatist elements of all. Their analysis of the world has got everything wrong, from the class character of the East European workers states and the precise obstacles to world socialism created by bureaucratic revisionism, to the significance for the anti-imperialist epoch of such national-liberation struggles as those in Ireland, South Africa, Nicaragua, etc.

The sectarian subjective-idealism of these 'left' groups is, comically, the very essence of bourgeois-imperialist philosophy, of course.

The simplistic pattern is to remain in wishful thinking ivory towers on the fringes of every real anti-imperialist struggle on earth and to just carp at the way it is being 'mishandled', deliberately refusing to mobilise workers in unconditional solidarity with those under imperialist attack.

Thus Devlin spits contemptuously at the Irish national-liberation struggle's advance: "I'm not against the ceasefire, I'm just against dirty dealing. But this isn't my game. It's a dirty dishonest game."

At the same time, her Trotskyite co-thinkers at the anti-communist *Socialist Worker* have just snarled out at the height of the US imperialist onslaught on the Cuban workers state:

Cuba is not a democracy. Its rulers' claims to be socialist are a cynical lie.

The US has stepped up its economic war, and the result is savage economic crisis.

The government has responded by introducing rationing while allowing those with US dollars—the rich and the state bureaucrats—to buy in special shops.

This has widened the gulf between rich and poor and stoked growing bitterness among the mass of people.

This is what lies behind recent riots in the Cuban capital. Havana, and it is fuelling the exodus of refugees.

24 All these fence-sitting, cynically defeatist outlooks rest on just one breathtakingly childish notion, – that somewhere some day, there will be the perfect

anti-imperialist revolution. And then all 'really good people of conscience' such as the Devlins and Foots of this world consider themselves to be, could then indulge themselves in truly uninhibited and unworried triumph-mongering around such a 'guaranteed success'.

But only in never-never land. In the real world, anti-imperialist struggles of true significance can take place in an endless variety of circumstances. Marxism-Leninism has never hidden its awareness of the chronic limitations of bourgeois-nationalist fights for independence such as that of Irish Republicans going way back into the 19th century. But it has also never failed to give the correct enthusiastic welcome to such blows as have been struck against imperialism by such 'freedom fighters' (see ILWP Books vol 8 & 15 *Ireland*). Lenin, for example, revelled in the clattering setback to British imperialism that was created by the 1916 Easter Rising (hopelessly flawed from a Marxist tactical point of view, and in terms of its class content and perspectives) by the very middle-class Fenians led by Pearse.

The assessment of British imperialism's 1994 setback at the hands of the Irish national-liberation struggle needs to be made free from the farcically distorting lens of chronically-sick individualist Trotskyite thinking (permanent anti-Leninism masquerading as Marxism – see ILWP Books vols 3, 4, & 5).

One immediate practical advantage of enormous importance will be the winding up of such a longstanding source of such foul chauvinistic bitterness infecting the British working class.

There will still remain plenty of other racist issues on which fascism can feed to pollute workers minds, but it will help greatly in the fight against reactionary British nationalism if an actual war is not taking place in which British troops are getting killed by 'foreigners'.

Racist hatred of the Irish has bedevilled the understanding of British workers for more than a century, – as Marx and Engels famously noted in declaring "No nation which enslaves another can itself be free".

All the time that the Irish sore festered, every new generation of British proletarians was bound to be poisoned with anti-Irish hatred to some extent, sowing divisions in the working class in Britain and making the justice of the Irish situation impossible to see because of "our boys being killed there", etc, etc.



The guerrilla-war conflict was the worst of all possible scenarios from that point of view. The pain, anger, and humiliated suffering of an army, which could not win, and that of its family and friends back home, was as intense as in any war. Yet the war itself was not one which could ever result in the total shameful defeat of that army so that feelings of revolt against the ruling class (which sent it there on an impossible mission and without the proper equipment or support to do the job, – the universal revolutionary outcome of World War I,) – could develop.

The non-stop repressive war against the undefeatable national-liberation struggle could only mean that anti-Irish hatred, – and the potential for permanent fascist divisions weakening the working class in Britain from finally seeing imperialism as its enemy too, and fighting it, – would continue indefinitely.

Now that the "defensive war against evil Irish terrorism" is over and done with, it could be possible to very quickly eliminate the race-hate consequences of that conflict, – and even be possible to let British workers see finally what a criminally unfair and unjustified nonsense that whole 25-year struggle to hang on by British imperialism was in the end, – a completely pointless waste of life and needless destruction of a whole region of Ireland, not to mention the futile fear, death, damage and disruption sustained by Britain itself.

What was the terrible conflict all for in the end? Nothing except to save the blushes of the degenerate British imperialist ruling class which felt too humiliated and proud to get its

brain around the simple fact that its continued colonisation of part of Ireland was now hopelessly out of date and no longer economically or politically (or even militarily) sustainable in the last decades of the 20th century following several generations of relentless British imperialist decline.

It will not be long before London's Ireland policy for the last quarter of a century will be seen to have been one of the last great monumental follies of a self-deluding dying colonial era which finally totally corrupted and degenerated the brains of the ruling class which was supposed to be wisely ruling over it.

The lesson of history is that this ruling class will have to be overthrown. It will not get better by itself, and it will never give up or admit that it is now completely useless and an embarrassment to mankind.

Even now as the full shameful stupidity of past British stubbornness over the issue of Ireland's final complete independence is becoming clear, the sclerotic London political establishment (all parties) cannot avoid making further humiliating idiots of themselves by continuing vainly to try to bolt the stable door long after the horse has run off, – still trying at this late stage to claim that they were right to treat Adams & Co as "petty murderous criminals" in the past, and that they should still be treated as such in the future, – at a time when the rest of the world is beginning properly to regard the Sinn Féin and IRA leaders as triumphant national-liberation statesmen.

For what else is this nonsense all about of vainly trying to persuade Washington to not give travel visas to Adams,

McGuinness, Cahill, etc (when clearly it is going to happen, as it has already happened despite London's objections), – and ridiculously continuing to try banning Adams from being heard and admired in Britain by such farcical tricks as keeping on with the 'actors voices' having to mouth all Sinn Féin and IRA statements to emphasise the 'evil' of the original sources, and by preventing Adams from addressing the coming Labour Party conference.

Very handily, the juvenile idiot Blair now in charge of the Labour Party has instantly confirmed the total bankruptcy of all British middle-class parliamentary politics (all incurably corrupted by past imperialism) by backing the Tory ban on Adams and by continuing to put up with the futile censorship of Sinn Féin and the IRA.

There is no cure for this cretinous arse-end of the decrepit parliamentary pantomime horse either. The whole rotten capitalist-imperialist game is out of date. Only Marxist-Leninist scientific understanding can now provide leadership to take civilisation forward. Adams & Co are not quite it, as will quickly be demonstrated as the class-compromise national-liberation deals go ahead but fail to grasp (as has happened in South Africa, for example) that the only real way ahead is through planned socialism under working class rule.

But it is obviously of enormous significance that Adams, Morrison, McGuinness & Co all trained in Marxism-Leninism during the 1970s period when many of them were held without trial in the internment concentration camps, thus producing the brightest new generation of leaders that the national-liberation struggle had had in a long time. The same could be said about the triumphant ANC-SACP national-liberation leaders in South Africa, e.g., – and in just about every other anti-colonial struggle too, – all trained in sympathy (sadly all too vague and shallow) with Leninism to the extent that the remnants of Lenin's Third International still understood what the scientific essence of Leninism was.

The *Bulletin* has always accepted that any claims to Marxist-Leninist understanding by anyone could only finally be proved by seeing how any attempted analysis of the international balance of class forces matched up to the actual developments in the world's struggles.

The ILWP has pursued its own distinctive analysis of Ireland

from the start, disagreeing profoundly with everyone else.

The essence of the disagreements has been the differing estimates and characterisation of the strength and role of British imperialism, the nature of its Irish colony, the potential of the class forces involved in the struggles there, and the influence on all of this of the international crisis of the capitalist system.

Only the ILWP has insisted that the epoch of incurable imperialist crisis was continuing, and only the ILWP pointed out that British imperialism was steadily losing the struggle in Ireland, even when Sinn Féin itself was full of defeatist pessimism declaring that the hunger strikes were less than the resounding victory over British imperialism that they eventually proved to be, and later declaring that the Anglo-Irish Treaty of 1985, the first obvious admission by British imperialism that it was on the way towards total withdrawal from Ireland (see ILWP Books vol 8 & 15 *Ireland*), was in fact a ruthless strengthening of British imperialist control and intransigence, and a further setback to the national-liberation cause (when it was in fact an important milestone towards Britain's eventual total retreat).

The *Bulletin* has always tried to provide a full record of the evidence demonstrating this continued crisis for the imperialist system (on this and on every other subject) and will continue to do so now, in this and subsequent articles.

As well as showing the evidence for the *Bulletin's* Marxist-Leninist conclusions, it is also appropriate to recall how this understanding developed historically. Not every aspect of the *Bulletin's* struggle to analyse events has been correct of course. But the main thrust of the ILWP's understanding has been proved uniquely on target, as will be demonstrated in subsequent weeks.

For the moment, some very early comments from 1980 in the first 15 months of the *Bulletin's* existence, can serve to show the purpose of an attempted Leninist analysis, characterising all the class forces involved and examining in which direction the entire scene was developing, – knowledge of which in any situation is the only secure basis for a sound revolutionary understanding and movement to develop:

"The Irish republican hunger strikers' 'fast unto death', – the seven men in Long Kesh concentration camp now being joined by three women held in

Armagh gaol, – has helped spark off the biggest demonstrations ever seen against continued British rule of the occupied north of Ireland.

Despite the constant threat of rightwing terror reprisals from the sick fascist minds of the 'loyalist' fanatics or the professional killers of the British army's secret counter-revolutionary arm, the SAS, – nearly 50,000 republicans marched through Belfast at the weekend, out of a population in the city of little more than four times that. (It is the equivalent, in terms of the population of London, for example, of a street demonstration by no less than 2 million workers down Oxford Street).

Despite all the frenetic propaganda lies of the British military dictatorship and the collaborationist bourgeoisie in the north of Ireland (and many in the South, too), the republican movement is just the opposite of 'dying', and 'losing support fast'.

On the contrary, the IRA, – in the absence of a revolutionary socialist alternative, – is currently carrying more of the nationalist and socialist aspirations of the Irish masses than ever before.

In spite of its incorrect terrorist methods against non-military targets, the IRA's legitimate fight against British army occupation and the local Orange order capitalist dictatorship is winning enough support among the republican masses to make its long-promised 'wiping out' by the military, the RUC, and the loyalist gangsters an impossible task. So just as in Egypt, Cyprus, Aden, and other colonies before it, the Irish struggle for independence, however brutally repressed, is proving impossible to defeat.

The military occupation can kick down as many doors in the early hours of the morning as it likes, murder as many innocent people as it likes, falsely convict them at drumhead courts and detain them by the thousand in concentration camps, but the Irish national liberation struggle will go on. The endless propaganda lies about the British occupation, the torture and the other barbaric illegalities of the decaying imperialist regime, the lopsided attempts to prop up the bankrupt capitalist economy, – all of this is marking the terminal crisis of the British ruling class rather than the 'eliminating' of the IRA.

The new surge in the mass movement of resistance, signalled by the hunger strikers and their huge support marches in every part of Ireland, brings the fresh intrigues and 'initiatives' of the new Tory Government to a complete halt.

It could mark the beginning of the end of British domination of Ireland for all time."

December 4, 1980 (*Bulletin* 66)

"The British ruling class is coming under overwhelming international fire to do something to end the festering sore of its military occupation of the north of Ireland.

In the recent debate in the American Congress, little publicised in Britain for obvious reasons, speaker after speaker – solid bourgeois from left, right and centre of the US ruling class – rose to denounce Britain's involvement and the catastrophic muddle over relinquishing its last colony.

This was only the culmination of

years of growing disquiet among the imperialist NATO allies, – as their international position worsened because of growing economic crisis, – that the heroic Irish national liberation struggle against the brutal savagery and torture of the ultra-right police-military regime in the occupied north of Ireland was an embarrassment they could no longer afford.

Assassination of leading Republican activists by the secret SAS army murder squads, the extraction of false 'confessions' under torture at the hands of the fascist-minded RUC and army 'interrogators', the 'conviction' of Republicans at the fraudulent no-jury drumhead 'courts', and their incarceration in Long Kesh concentration camp – and all in the name of British capitalist ruling class domination over a slump-ridden colony with more than 16% unemployment, – all of this was a million times worse than even the wildest anti-Soviet propaganda lies the CIA could spread about what was supposed to be happening in the Afghan revolution to wipe out backward tribalism, feudalism, banditry, drug addiction, and religious stupor.

The approaching martyrdom about Christmas time through death by starvation of the hunger strikers in Long Kesh concentration camp was a prospect which the hard-pressed manipulators of imperialism's worldwide anti-communist crusade could not cope with.

The British ruling class has been told to do something about the disastrous advertisement for the 'democratic' capitalist system that the continuing tragedy of the occupied north of Ireland represents.

Hence the hush-hush Thatcher, Carrington, Howe and Atkins talks with Haughey and the Green Tories in Dublin.

It was an unprecedentedly powerful delegation to send on a 'routine' meeting on Anglo-Irish affairs. The presence of the Foreign Secretary, the Chancellor, the north of Ireland political supremo Atkins, and the Prime Minister all at once shows how difficult and crucial were the matters in hand.

The total refusal by Thatcher in Parliament subsequently to say a single word about what went on in Dublin proves how serious the situation is.

All talk of the new 'initiatives' that the Tories routinely tried like all new governments before them, – in fact just a surface tinkering with the issues without any real intention to change anything, – all such bromide waffle has been dropped.

The rumours now are of genuine measures to try to get the British ruling class off the hook.

That is the reason for the real alarm among the 'loyalist' bigots who run the north.

There is even talk of a rival hunger-strike by UDA fascist thugs, also gaoled in Long Kesh, to whip up again the reactionary 'colonial settler' spirit of the original Scottish and English colonisation of Ulster to declare 'No Surrender' again, this time to their Westminster protectors, probably going all the way to UDI, a unilateral declaration of independence on the Ian Smith lines in Rhodesia, – and doomed to just as certain a failure. How quickly would depend on how greatly the imperialist NATO powers wanted to present 'clean hands', – free of the stain (of

sanctions-busting) which tainted them throughout the inevitable slow death of the Smith regime."

December 11, 1980 (Bulletin 67)

The latest evidence from the best source possible, the capitalist press's own admissions, continue to back up the perspectives begun in those early *Bulletins* and developed successfully in more than 700 subsequent weekly publications.

Ultimately, it was the damage to British imperialist prestige and economic interests which brought a whole raft of influences together to force London to accept defeat in its pointless damaging war against the Irish national liberation struggle:

YESTERDAY'S historic IRA ceasefire will be as welcome in the City as in the Falls Road. After all, it was at the Guildhall last November that John Major launched his peace initiative. Two successful IRA bombing attacks in the City had shaken London's financial community and they needed reassurance.

Apart from worries over security within the Square Mile, there was the sharp rise in insurance premiums — and more tellingly the threat that some key international financial institutions, especially the Japanese, were considering using Dublin, Luxembourg or Frankfurt as the base of the operations. London's future as an international financial centre, an annual subvention to Northern Ireland climbing to £4 billion and a troops commitment that weakened Britain's capacity to undertake Great Power obligations were beginning to concentrate London's minds wonderfully.

The ceasefire opens the way to a reduction in London's security commitment, but the real public expenditure savings will only come if Northern Ireland's economy can be weaned from its dependence on public spending and generate some sustainable economic activity.

More trade with the Republic will be an important stimulus, and the much touted Dublin/Belfast growth corridor could really take wing. On the other hand, Northern Ireland's economy has disintegrated so far, and so many have a vested interest in the racketeering on both sides of the sectarian divide that returning the province to economic normality will be a long drawn-out affair. After all Glasgow, Liverpool and Newcastle — British cities comparable with Belfast — have troubles enough without Belfast's history. The mainland's subvention looks like continuing.

And it is the weakened position of British imperialism relative to its competitor-'allies' which has made world opinion about Irish independence irresistible:

26 "There will be an international outcry if loyalist paramilitaries continue killing," one well-placed American source said yesterday. "And the world is now watching to see that the British Government

lives up to its responsibilities in cracking down on the collusion that exists between the ruc and loyalist extremists."

The Irish lobby in the United States has already shown its influence in the negotiations that led to the ceasefire. Irish-American opinion now considers that visits to Ireland by ex-congressman Bruce Morrison, the political ally and friend from Yale University law school days of President Clinton, were effectively that of a special presidential envoy. He has made three visits in the past 12 months, meeting Sinn Féin and Unionist leaders, the Irish government and Sir Patrick Mayhew, the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland.

In an RTE Radio discussion yesterday the Taoiseach, Albert Reynolds was at pains to emphasise the influence of Irish-Americans over the IRA. He said the last-minute decision to grant visas to the former IRA leader Joe Cahill and a Sinn Féin councillor were so important that there would have been no ceasefire announcement had it not occurred. Britain advised against the visa being granted.

Mr Morrison last night confirmed the importance of the Cahill visa. But the US Government had resisted British pressure for the second time this year and shown Sinn Féin that it was committed to helping them find a way out of the conflict. Britain's resistance to the Cahill visa showed the loathing with which it viewed the respectability which the United States was preparing to grant prominent IRA figures whom London has worked so hard to demonise, informed sources said.

The leading Irish-Americans involved in the peace talks along with Mr Morrison also include a Tipperary-born journalist, Niall O'Dowd, two officials from the AFL-CIO umbrella trade union movement (the equivalent of the British TUC) and two prominent businessmen.

The group represents the sophisticated new face of Irish-America, a far cry from the stereotypical image of media accounts.

The businessmen of the group included William Flynn, 67, chairman of Mutual of America, an assurance group with \$6bn in assets, and Charles "Chuck" Feeney, chairman of General Atlantic Corporation and a frequent visitor to London. They have been persuasive in getting the Clinton administration to prepare an ambitious reconstruction programme for Northern Ireland pending a peaceful settlement. The programme could reach between \$150m and \$200m and is modelled on the assistance programme for South Africa's transition to democratic rule.

At present the United States spends \$19m a year through the Ireland fund and this is expected to be trebled to \$60m.

In addition, New York City's comptroller Alan Hevesi is drawing up plans for so-called "Ireland peace bonds" to be underwritten by the London and Dublin governments. Cities and municipalities with large Irish ethnic communities are expected to invest pension funds

in these.

It is understood Mr Adams has been assured that a visa of greater flexibility and duration than the 48-hour one granted him in February will allow him to travel widely in the USA. This is almost certainly due to President Clinton's intervention.

In February, the Government strongly opposed the granting of the visa for Mr Adams to visit New York, but this was overruled by the Clinton administration. Last night Downing Street said it had no knowledge of the visa being granted.

Meanwhile, Albert Reynolds, the Irish Taoiseach, said this weekend that he persuaded President Clinton to waive US immigration rules and allow Mr Adams's last visit. He said that when "the chips were down" earlier this year he told President Clinton that a visa would strengthen Mr Adams's hand within the republican movement. "It enhanced his stature and gave him the strength to go back and make the argument stronger."

Although British officials last night insisted that Mr Clinton had made no direct appeals to Mr Major for any humanitarian gesture as a signal of goodwill to the IRA, White House sources told the Guardian: "There were recommendations made by the President." The President had "gently prodded" Mr Major to transfer some IRA prisoners back to Northern Ireland from British jails, NSC sources said.

Other White House officials have made it clear that the US also wants an end to the broadcasting ban on Sinn Féin.

For the record, the Gerry Adams and IRA statements were as follows:

TWO phrases describe the situation here as I write this. One is the old cliché, "a week is a long time in politics." The other is an opening line from Bobby Sands's diary of his hunger strike, when he wrote: "I am standing on the threshold of another trembling world." I presume there is some sense of this throughout Britain. I am referring to the current frenzy of speculation about what is to happen now after the IRA cessation of violence. There is an urgent need to ensure that this new situation is not squandered.

Last week, Sinn Féin invited a US delegation to meet with us, to discuss the role of Irish America and the US in the evolving peace process. The delegation led by Bruce Morrison represented an important and typical section of US opinion. The meeting, one of a series of protracted discussions, was an important and positive one.

On Sunday I met again with SDLP Leader, John Hume. This also was a good meeting, during which we recommitted ourselves to the peace process. Afterwards, he and I issued a joint statement. As representatives of nationalist opinion in the north of Ireland,

this statement represents a crucial consensus. In conclusion, we said: "In any new situation there is a heavy onus on the British Government to respond positively, both in terms of the demilitarisation of the situation, and in assisting the search for an agreed Ireland by encouraging: the process of national reconciliation. It is our informed opinion that the peace process remains firmly on course. We are, indeed, optimistic that the situation can be moved tangibly forward."

That evening, the Taoiseach, Albert Reynolds, issued a comprehensive statement.

On Monday, I disclosed that I had provided another assessment of the developing situation to the IRA leadership, at its request. This assessment updated the one I had provided a month ago in the run-up to the Sinn Féin conference in Letterkenny. All of this preceded yesterday's IRA announcement, and comes after years of very careful management by Sinn Féin of our peace strategy.

There is an onerous responsibility — some may say there always has been — on everyone with influence to seize new opportunities to move the situation on. Irish republicans have shown a willingness and a flexibility to look forward. This must be matched by a willingness by others to move forward. Within Britain, champions of freedom and justice have played a commendable role over the decades in promoting the cause of peace in Ireland. Others must now join them. The onus is on London.

So what must be done if a peace settlement is to be built? I am an Irish republican, I believe that the Irish people have the will, the intelligence and the right to govern ourselves. I believe that the British Government is the root cause of the conflict in this country. I believe that this Government has no right to interfere in Irish affairs. I understand the fears and anxieties of Unionists. I have a view of the British Government's responsibility for this situation, and of the need for London to play a constructive role in resolving these difficulties.

If the peace process is to succeed, then the British Government must be moved to set aside the failures of the past. There must be a new beginning. Tory party political considerations, leadership problems at Westminster or pacts with the Unionists should not be allowed to prevent the creation of an inclusive and peaceful society in Ireland. Mr Major must take immediate measures to end the deadlock by creating a proper climate for inclusive and meaningful negotiation.

The whole approach of the Brit-

ish Government to the question of negotiations with Sinn Féin is totally unacceptable, and requires to be changed drastically. And rhetoric will not be enough. There must be fundamental political and constitutional change. But this is not an occasion for me to denigrate the London Government for its policy towards Ireland, or towards Sinn Féin, or those we represent.

And despite the threatening knee-jerk reaction of the Unionists to the current developments, this is not the time to be derogatory about them. It is a time to extend the hand of friendship, and to urge dialogue, and calm reflection.

Anglo-Irish relationships have reached a decisive moment. I call upon all to ensure that the process towards democracy is rapid and uninterrupted. We have waited too long for our freedom. We can no longer wait. To relax our efforts now would be a mistake which generations to come will not be able to forgive. Seize the moment, Mr Major!

"Recognising the potential of the current situation and in order to enhance the democratic process and underlying our definitive commitment to its success, the leadership of the IRA have decided that as of midnight, August 31, there will be a complete cessation of military operations. All our units have been instructed accordingly.

"At this historic crossroads the leadership of the IRA salutes and commends our volunteers, other activists, our supporters and the political prisoners who have sustained the struggle against all odds for the past 25 years.

"Your courage, determination and sacrifice have demonstrated that the freedom and the desire for peace based on a just and lasting settlement cannot be crushed. We remember all those who have died for Irish freedom and we reiterate our commitment to our republican objectives.

"Our struggle has seen many gains and advances made by nationalists and for the democratic position. We believe that an opportunity to secure a just and lasting settlement has been created.

"We are therefore entering into a new situation in a spirit of determination and confidence, determined that the injustices which created this conflict will be removed and confident in the strength and justice of our struggle to achieve this. We note that the Downing Street Declaration is not a solution."

The middle-class media of British imperialism responded with typical petty-bourgeois venom,

knowing only its own class pain and confusion and seeing little more:

DID the IRA declare peace or war? It was difficult to tell from the media's response which was at best, grudging and, at worst, contemptuous. Even the allegedly objective broadcasters were guilty from the moment the story broke of pursuing an angle which set the day's political agenda for Unionists and rightwing Conservatives.

In both news and current affairs programmes, on television and radio, there was a single-minded concentration on the IRA statement's use of the phrase "complete" cessation rather than permanent. Interviewers hammered away at this one aspect of the story to the virtual exclusion of any other.

Given that the Irish government had accepted the statement's underlying message, and that John Major said he was "not hung up on a particular word", the broadcasting coverage went beyond scepticism, which is an honourable journalistic enterprise, and tipped over into bias.

No wonder that by the time of BBC's *Newsnight*, after suffering semantic arguments in a dozen earlier interviews, John Hume's exasperation showed through. The man who had put his reputation on the line to broker an historic peace quoted dictionary definitions of "complete". He asked wearily: "Is that good enough for you?"

In fairness, it was *Newsnight*'s Jeremy Paxman, turning to the enraged Unionists in the studio, who asked the day's most pertinent question: don't you understand how odd it looks in Britain where people think a ceasefire is something to celebrate that all you do is moan about it? This contrasted oddly with the moment on Radio 4's *Today* programme when one presenter, in defiance of historical fact, stated that loyalist violence "is a function of IRA violence".

In general, the BBC, which is apparently indulging in an orgy of self-congratulation about its "brilliant" coverage, has little to celebrate. It might reflect instead on whether it really did fulfil its mission to explain. Relentless goading of interviewees does not help viewers or listeners to understand. There was a lack of historical and contextual analysis, and a failure to offer the kind of insights to be found in next morning's newspapers.

On Friday there was virtual unanimity among press, radio and TV that the transfer of IRA prisoners from Britain to Northern Ireland was a blunder of the first magnitude. Part of the reason was the understanding that Major was "livid" and had ordered an inquiry. His leaked "outburst" gave the media justification to manufacture a story about a potentially uncontroversial move.

The fact that it was largely synthetic was proved by the discussion on Radio 4's *The World Tonight*. Robin Lustig, the presenter, endlessly prompted two Protestant spokesmen, the Rev Roy Magee and David Trimble, into criticising the transfer. But they refused to be drawn, both

calmly stating that they understood that the prison policy was laid down some time ago. It was unfortunate timing, but it did not suggest the government had done a deal with the IRA.

Next morning the press launched into an orgy of condemnation. "Madness" (the *Sun*); "a disaster" (*Today*); "crass decision" (*Mail*) and so on. The row bubbled on over the

weekend, with the *Mail on Sunday* splashing on Baroness Thatcher's outrage (since denied) and the *News of the World*'s Woodrow Wyatt spluttering at the "idiots" responsible. Brian Hitchen's first column since becoming editor of the *Sunday Express* argued that the prisoners should have been sent home in coffins.

Build Leninism. DB



'Free' world sinks deeper into bottomless slump bog

[EPSR No 768 13-09-94]

But the sick Goebbels propaganda by the Guardian and others about the 13th of March tugboat provocation has not denied Cuba's revolutionary resolve.

The ex-Yugoslav workers-state Serbs likewise show little inclination to give in to Western 'free market' bullying without a fight, so much so that NATO is now publicly splitting over what anti-socialist stunt to try next.

But despite London's surprisingly firm stand against Washington on the Balkan question, on Ireland it continues to back-pedal and give in to international pressure.

Evidence continues to pile up that secret agreements have indeed been reached to wind up the British colonial nonsense called 'Northern Ireland'.

The futile violence of the die-hard Orange colonist response was predictable but it is also already showing signs of being ludicrously ineffective as well as hopelessly out of place.

The anti-Irish 'loyalists' who have effortlessly turned to fascist gangsterdom in the UVF and UFF from having their imperialist dominance frustrated, instinctively realise that destructive despair is all that is left to their rotten supremacist ideology.

But it is so far not looking at all convincing, damaging, or threatening.

Paisley's rumbustious walk-out from 10 Downing Street was a good laugh but not really very frightening. There seems to be some spontaneous grasp that these bigoted 'unionists' are more a theatrical museum-piece

than a serious part of the political future.

The Dublin train bombs, the ostentatious camera poses of 'defiant armed strength', and the continuing isolated slaughter of innocent Catholics or Irish because of their religion or race are nastier and potentially very serious, – but still do not ring true.

Almost certainly, they lack credibility as a "counter-terror campaign to keep British sovereignty over the disputed territory" because such savagery would lack much believable motivation or perspective.

Erstwhile unbeatable British imperialist strength and arrogance has been in irreversible decline throughout the century. World domination by a handful of imperialist powers is itself now rapidly collapsing as a workable and acceptable international system of relations between states and between classes.

A rival 'nationalist' claim for these colonising 'loyalists' to set against the legitimate nationalist aspirations of the Irish Republicans makes no sense. The loyalty of these 'unionists' is only to old-fashioned Union Jack arrogance which is now completely out of date on colonial territory.

These 'loyalist' gangs are still there, – but with historical goals now more than 50 years out of date, they can not be expected to do much more than simply slowly fade away in sour insoluble bitterness.

Gerry Adams has given just a hint of how the snail's pace withdrawal by British imperial-

ism from the Occupied Zone of Ireland is envisaged, – first burying for ever the idea of a British ‘Northern Ireland’ and then gradually reintegrating those British who want to continue living in Ireland back into a unitary Irish state as it used to be, but a fully sovereign and independent Ireland:

SINN Féin president Gerry Adams is confident he will see a British withdrawal from Northern Ireland within his lifetime, and envisages a series of interim arrangements to assuage Unionist fears, leading inexorably to a united Ireland.

In his first interview with a British newspaper since the IRA called an end to its campaign, Mr Adams said the Government must accept its responsibility to become a persuader of the Unionist community that its future does not lie within the United Kingdom.

Mr Adams said the issue of whether or not last week’s IRA statement meant a permanent end to its campaign of violence should now be set aside in order to move towards an inclusive negotiated settlement. Once all the parties were around the table, however, he conceded that the fundamental question of reconciling the two competing claims of sovereignty was impossible.

“I think they are irreconcilable. British policy has failed. You have a British Government which has been moved to say it has no real interest in being here. One has to then set in place negotiations which take up these matters. I’m an Irish republican and I want to see British jurisdiction ended and an Irish jurisdiction begin.”

Do you think that will happen?

I’m certain of it, perhaps not in these negotiations, but I think at the end of this struggle I will certainly see a united Ireland, if I am spared, in my lifetime. I think that by the millennium we should be well on the road to a situation where British jurisdiction has ended.

Everything that is known so far about the British and Irish governments’ joint framework document points to another internal settlement in Northern Ireland. Would you accept this?

Mr Hume and myself have already said that an internal settlement is not a solution. So are we expected to believe that the nationalists in the six counties are going to acquiesce in something we don’t want being imposed on us? And is the Dublin government going to acquiesce to that and is Irish America or the US administration going to acquiesce to that when we have had 70 years of an internal settlement? An internal settlement is not a solution. I’m not expecting the partition of Ireland to end overnight. Sinn Féin will be seeking through negotiations to bring that about and that will take time.

28 So you might see a series of interim measures?

The policy objective will govern what interim measures are accept-

able. They would be acceptable within a framework, within a process which had a very clear policy objective. If a London government and a Dublin government agreed to end British jurisdiction with whatever timescale was involved, and then in order to get over these difficulties which you’ve identified in relation to the Unionists there had to be a number of interim measures in between time, of course that’s totally different.

But from the outset what you require is a statement of intent to withdraw?

No, that would have to be an end result rather than a beginning.

And there is further circumstantial evidence that the stage reached in British imperialism’s snail’s pace withdrawal from Ireland is confronting the Orangemen with the truth that the colonial days are over, – from this clearly officially inspired disclosure leaked to the public via capitalism’s ‘free press’ racket:

REPORTS of Dublin’s impatience with London’s ‘foot-dragging’, and John Major’s irritation with the ‘euphoria’ of Albert Reynolds in the wake of the IRA ceasefire, are well founded.

But such reports have become part of a diplomatic process designed to reassure the two communities of Northern Ireland that their interests are being well protected.

The two Prime Ministers are acting as a pair of sheepdogs; working instinctively and skilfully as a co-ordinated team to cajole and induce a peaceful coexistence. Well-informed sources argue that the two and their officials are playing a clever game of deception; reports of tension between London and Dublin are part of the phoney war that precedes peace, it is also said. Mr Major and Mr Reynolds have carved up their respective roles, enabling the British Prime Minister to keep the mainstream Unionists sweet, while Mr Reynolds keeps Sinn Féin’s Gerry Adams and the IRA on board. Thus, Mr Major was able last week to keep his hands ‘clean’, while the Irish Prime Minister held talks with Mr Adams and John Hume of Ulster’s nationalist Social Democratic and Labour Party.

That left British officials free to describe the Dublin meeting as ‘premature’, while Irish officials were equally free to pour scorn on Mr Major’s adamant refusal to accept that the IRA offer amounted to a permanent end to violence.

The Irish counter-attack did not mean Dublin did not understand British reticence. Irish officials know only too well that Britain’s attitude helps James Molyneux maintain the united front of his Ulster Unionist party.

Similarly, when last year’s paving agreement was reached between Mr Adams and Mr Hume, British officials were able to say it had nothing to do with them; they had not even seen the document. That ‘dirty work’ was left to Dublin, and the

British were able to ease Unionist outrage with their outright denial of involvement.

But London has had its own share of unpleasant chores. The covert links between British officials and the IRA – an operation Dublin angrily denied all knowledge of – were an essential and dangerous part of the process.

So, too, were the repeated confrontations with Ian Paisley, in which Mr Major was given the task of humiliating, if not isolating, the rampaging bull elephant of Ulster politics.

The teamwork has not been without genuine strains and anger. During the Anglo-Irish talks that led to last December’s Downing Street Declaration, a senior British source privately lambasted Mr Reynolds for making ‘a bog’ of every stage in the process.

But another British source said last week that both sides kept well within the limits of the ‘tolerances’ on either side.

It was understood, he added, that Mr Major and Mr Reynolds had different constituencies and concerns, although that did not stop the Irish Prime Minister opening up contacts with the loyalist paramilitaries, just as Mr Major had sanctioned indirect contact with the IRA.

Last week Mr Reynolds dismissed a suggestion that his meeting with Mr Adams might rupture the joint approach, saying; ‘There is absolutely no risk of a breakdown between the two Prime Ministers in this.’

When a similar question was put to Mr Major last Wednesday, he said: ‘Everyone must make their own judgments about what pace to take things. The Taoiseach and I have worked very closely indeed over the past couple of years, and I do not doubt for a single second his commitment to have a permanent end to violence and to be able to move forward satisfactorily.’

British Government sources said last week that the bond of trust between the two men was strong enough not to be broken by ‘the burden of history’.

And a good part of all this bluffing, – unnoticed by these spoon-fed Fleet Street stooges, – is to fool British middle-class opinion that although the ‘loyalists’ are having the wool pulled over their eyes, so too are Sinn Féin.

This deception makes it possible to continue the petty bourgeois ideological illusion that there has been no victory for revolutionary national-liberation struggle, and no defeat for British imperialism.

But even in its own words, this Fleet Street leak gives no parity at all of both Sinn Féin and the ‘unionists’ being taken for a ride. The IRA are to be secretly negotiated with; Paisley is to be openly humiliated. Molyneux is fed meaningless drivel by Downing Street only to help him pretend to his community that its interests are being protected; but Reynolds openly

embraces Adams for business-like discussions on the changed future political shape of Ireland.

The *Bulletin* has analysed this extreme bourgeois sensitivity to any suggestion of a revolutionary guerrilla victory before, of course, as well as the middle-class media’s self-deception in always claiming ‘imminent defeat for the IRA’:

After thousands more lives have been lost; after further enormous destruction and disruption of livelihoods; after being properly put in the dock internationally for its inhuman torture of suspects, its barbaric SAS assassination squads, and its NAZI-style internment-without-trial in concentration camps, and its midnight terror raids on Irish homes throughout the occupied zone; – after all this senseless mayhem, the ruling class is getting ready to pull out anyway, ignominiously defeated in its final rotten attempt to hang onto a corner of Ireland at least, – by hook or by crook.

The ruling class is most sensitive of all to it being thought that its mighty police-military dictatorship has been forced out by a handful of IRA guerrillas, especially considering that the IRA is so politically handicapped by its insane policy of anti-civilian terror bombing.

But the facts are that the Republican movement’s heroic struggle against the police-military dictatorship, – the enormous suffering and sacrifice that the IRA and the nationalist working class have withstood, and the fanatically courageous fight by the Republican military wing against overwhelmingly superior odds of the British occupation, – all this has won the sympathy of the international working class.

It has forced even the bourgeoisie in countries like the USA, the British ruling class’s closest ally and support, to condemn the continued military occupation.

So the *Guardian*’s very long sour grapes editorial this week beginning “The Provisional IRA now has very little going for it” was written because the remarkable turnaround now in sight in British policy on Ireland has touched on the rawest of raw nerves of the ruling class, particularly the IRA’s part in forcing that turn-round.

The one thing the bourgeoisie cannot stand, having staked its survival on the illusions and tricks of “parliamentary democracy” and the “rule of law” which it has hypocritically built up over the centuries of unchallenged imperialist domination, is the example of a relatively small group of dedicated revolutionary nationalists openly “defying” the Crown’s “law and order” and winning mass support for that independent stand, undermining British capitalist rule.

The British bourgeoisie fear that as things start to get rougher in Great Britain due to the slump, and workers begin to realise that the “parliamentary democracy” fraud is doing nothing (about their suffering, permanent mass unemployment, and falling living standards) but act as a bromide to divert anger from revolutionary channels, – similar moves for political mobilisation independent of the ruling class will begin in Britain.

But the degeneration of British capi-

talism proceeds rapidly and becomes more and more obvious whatever rotten propaganda smokescreens it puts up to hide its political catastrophes in Ireland, Rhodesia, and elsewhere, and whatever lying humbug it spreads through the press, parliament, and its millions of reformist agents throughout the Labour and trade union movement about "preserving democracy".

The capitalist system is not about democracy but about power, the power of the ruling class to dominate the economic life of the country and as much of the outside world as it could through imperialism and colonialism, and to extract super-profits to enable it to live the life of a ruling class - dominating landowning, industry, the professions, politics, the civil service, the police-military hierarchy, the judiciary, press, television and publishing, and the academic world.

That domination is now crumbling because the capitalist system is bankrupt. It can no longer develop the economic resources sufficiently successfully, (-due to its repeated slumps and wars,-) to satisfy mankind's legitimately expanding aspirations.

The failure and historical out-datedness of the system cannot be hidden by any amount of television propaganda - or any amount of brutal military suppression, as the 20th century history of Ireland has shown, the century of British imperialist decline.

January 15, 1981 (Bulletin 71)

The actual denouement of this longwinded colonial degeneration has taken longer than anticipated, partly because these revolutionary developments always do take far longer than it is hoped, and partly because of the enormous set-

Crisis undermining of the imperialist powers, leading inexorably towards this World War III holocaust, proceeds relentlessly. Ireland a brilliant example [EPSR No 769 20-09-94]

[...]healthy 'competition', far from keeping the free-enterprise system honest, only leads it into ever deeper corruption and cynicism as those who had the power, who think they ought to have it and are being denied it unfairly, use every dirty trick in the book to either keep on top or else to get on top and stay there.

In the corporate and individual entrepreneurial world, this means domination by ruthless cartels and skulduggery by ruthless crime syndicates and mafias. In the sphere of nation states, this means an endless round of arms-race diplomacy treachery, spying and industrial sabotage, and in the end open trade war, followed by ruthless alliance-forming and shooting wars.

Yet the undermining of the imperialist powers, leading inexorably towards this World

back to historical progress that the revisionist self-liquidation in Moscow temporarily represented.

It might have been expected that imperialism would at least get a brief second wind at such a dramatic moment of 'end of history' and 'new world order' hysteria. But remarkably, the astonishing collapse of the East European bureaucracy has hardly helped imperialism's survival at all.

The British ruling class has continued to degenerate and make a hopeless mess of its contradiction-solving. And specifically, the Irish national-liberation struggle has moved on from being privately accepted as unbeatable by London as long ago as the 1985 Anglo-Irish Treaty first giving Dublin an official say in the affairs of the Occupied Zone, - to being publicly acknowledged in 1994 as undeniably a key part to the future of the Six Counties ('Northern Ireland'), thus effectively reuniting it with the rest of Ireland in all but name, - regardless of bitter Orange-colonist reaction.

The dramatic triumph of the IRA's revolutionary guerrilla war in the heart of West Europe will have played a significant part in mapping out the path of the inevitable future proletarian revolt against capitalist crisis in general.

Build Leninism. JH

War III holocaust, proceeds relentlessly.

Ireland has just provided a brilliant example of how old imperialist patterns are being irresistibly eroded by the influences of capitalist evolution itself over a period of time eventually making old relationships impossible to sustain any more.

It was British imperialism's world position which always inspired the Orange-colonist minority to insist successfully and arrogantly on its separate superiority to the colonised bog-Irish Catholic past.

But British imperialism has long since ceased to have any progressive anti-feudal-catholic 'protestant' role. Its own monopoly-imperialism has been the greatest reactionary influence on earth for a very long time.

The endless expansion and evolutionary reorganisation and

technological modernisation of capitalism, on the other hand, has been steadily transforming tens of millions of former dumb peasants or proletarian factory wage slaves the whole world over into street-wise communications-wise modern people.

And in Ireland, for example, they will no longer put up with the disgracefully blatant racist discrimination which ran the old Northern Ireland colony, - a corrupt and savage piece of imperialist tyranny from the start, - ripping out bits of six of Ulster's nine counties at the point of ferocious Black-and-Tan fascist bayonets to create a stupid haven for a dying colonial 'loyalist' breed and impose a dictatorial nightmare on the unfortunate Irish nationalists left behind within the ludicrously gerrymandered Partition frontiers, - the last word in modern imperialist-racist evil.

But despite the collapse of the Moscow revisionist bureaucracy and the apparent triumph of the imperialist 'New World Order' (the same old racket as before), British imperialism has still been totally undermined by the Irish national-liberation struggle.

So profound are the implications for the British bourgeoisie of acknowledging a total transformation in relations between now-backward colonial 'masters' and now far-more-progressive colonised 'subjects', that middle-class ideology still cannot come to grips with the evidence staring them in the face, - namely that the Sinn Féin/IRA national-liberation struggle has completely outclassed the entire British establishment in propaganda, political manoeuvres, military matters, international diplomacy, financial organisation, internal security, self-discipline, etc, etc, etc.

While Adams & Co are already running away with the peace negotiations, the *Guardian* editorials are still kidding themselves that public opinion in Britain is still as supportive of the Government and as hostile to the national liberation struggle as ever it was on the Irish question.

They took an opinion poll finding recently, showing that 41% thought the ceasefire in Ireland would only last a few weeks, and declared:

"This poll shows with unambiguous clarity that public opinion is sceptical about the IRA's longterm intentions".

It showed nothing of the sort. No reason at all was given as to why 41% thought that the ceasefire might only last a few weeks. Because of Unionist

intransigence? Because of London Tory stupidity, or shire Tory recalcitrance? Nothing at all was specified (in the question as printed in the *Guardian*, which commissioned the poll) about people's doubts in the IRA's longterm intentions.

And in any case, this 41% was not at all the most significant figure, for editorialising purposes, or headlines. Vastly more important was the fact that only 16% of Britain now favours the Government trying actively to keep Northern Ireland as part of the United Kingdom, 84% preferring either to be neutral on the question or wanting to see Ireland reunited once again.

And even on the ceasefire question, the fact that 55% either did not know how long the ceasefire would last, or thought it would be permanent or last a year or two - was much more interesting than the 41% of dullards who spontaneously parroted that "it would not last".

It suits petty-bourgeois philistinism of all kinds to pretend that "terrorism" (revolutionary guerrilla war and national-liberation struggle) is futile, refusing to see that the 25-year fight by IRA/Sinn Féin has totally demoralised and outmanoeuvred British colonialism and won such worldwide support that London has finally been forced to negotiate a completely new future for the island in which 'Northern Ireland' as such (the ripped-out, gerrymandered, aggressively-armed, anti-Irish British colony of the hated partition infamy) will no longer exist.

The same bewildered middle-class press under British imperialism has also grasped at every straw in trying to convince itself that the despised IRA/Sinn Féin has achieved nothing:

JOHN Major effectively handed Northern Ireland's protestant majority a veto on political change last night when he promised a referendum on the outcome of peace negotiations.

But there is far more spontaneous capitalist media information to the contrary. The only veto agreed is on any resurrection of the old 'Northern Ireland' British colony in any shape or form. As the *Bulletin* has explained for 15 years, British imperialism has long been engaged on a snail's-pace withdrawal from Ireland; and a long non-sovereignty interregnum is the likeliest way round London's fears of an Orange-'loyalist' die-hard reaction:

IT WILL take at least 20 years of peace before the people of Ulster are expected to face the question of a united Ireland, Albert Reynolds

says in an interview today that could help calm Unionists' fear that they face a republican stampede.

The Irish Prime Minister tells *The Observer* that there will be no united Ireland 'in this generation — it's a question of what happens over the years'.

If Belfast, London and Dublin manage to achieve an interim agreement that is endorsed by referendums on both sides of the border, Mr Reynolds says it will take a generation for people to understand the evolving benefits of that 'New Ireland'. 'All I'm saying is, "Build an intermediate future, and let a future generation decide what's the best future for the island of Ireland".'

In an apparent reference to Mr Major, he adds: 'Others take a different view. I'd never forgive myself if I felt I'd let it slip away for want of action.'

'The nationalist community needs to be assured that there will be no return to the discrimination of the past, that they can look forward to a genuine involvement in government, that there will be parity of esteem and equality of treatment. And to be fair, I do think there is acceptance of the need for change.'

Mr Reynolds believes that the 'New Ireland' is possible: with Unionists and nationalists working together in a new Stormont assembly; with North and South working together on joint economic interests like trade and tourism; and with London and Dublin standing back to let the communities find their own equilibrium and balance.

That raises the question of how, and when, he sees a united Ireland coming about. 'You wouldn't get it in this generation,' he says without hesitation. 'It's a question of what happens over the years.'

'If we can get a new accommodation as to how the whole island is to go forward, if we can get economic co-operation and demonstrate the benefits of it, let the whole situation evolve, because it will take a generation anyway to get people to understand.'

However, Sinn Fein's Martin McGuinness warned: 'Irish nationalists are agreed that there can be no internal solutions, no partitionist arrangements and no vetoes. Partition has clearly failed. There has to be fundamental constitutional and political change.'

THE assertion by the Irish prime minister, Albert Reynolds, that this generation will not see a "united Ireland" was greeted with disappointment by Sinn Féin yesterday.

But the party forecast that it will be included in direct all-party negotiations with the Government before Christmas. Mr McGuinness said: "I was surprised and disappointed to hear what Mr Reynolds had said, and I think many other people, particularly nationalists, will have been, too. We should not take pessimistic views at this stage. We have to be realistic, but we should not be pessimistic."

Mr McGuinness said it was now a question of when rather than if Sinn Féin meets government representatives to hold talks about talks. "I ex-

pect the international community, people in Ireland, the British people, believe that Sinn Féin and the British government will meet this year, possibly before Christmas.

"There is absolutely no reason whatsoever why the British government and Sinn Féin, within a matter of weeks, could not be involved in discussions."

He insisted in an interview with BBC Radio 4's *The World This Weekend* that any settlement reached through talks would have to be put to all the people of Ireland. "It is quite clear that Irish nationalist opinion is agreed that there can be no internal settlement, that there can be no partitionist arrangement and there can be no veto for anyone."

Downing Street yesterday hinted that it was still pressing President Clinton not to authorise a visa for Gerry Adams, Sinn Féin president, to visit the United States until the IRA had clarified that its ceasefire was permanent.

Mr Reynolds's warnings chimed with John Major's increasing concern to dampen public expectations of an early breakthrough. He has told colleagues that negotiations on the new Anglo-Irish blueprint for constitutional reform in the province may not be completed until December — five months behind the original deadline.

THE Sinn Féin president Gerry Adams yesterday denounced John Major's announcement of a Northern Ireland referendum as "premature and presumptuous".

Mr Adams said that other steps now needed to be taken by Mr Major, including an acceleration in "de-militarisation" leading to "inclusive dialogue and negotiations".

The Government's position was at odds with popular, political and international opinion. "Mr Major's reference to a referendum in the six counties is both premature and presumptuous. The six county statelet is an artificial and gerrymandered political entity with an in-built and permanent Unionist majority," said Mr Adams.

"The British government-imposed veto based on this artificial majority is both undemocratic and unacceptable. Discussion on how agreement would be measured, when the search for agreement has not yet begun, is therefore premature.

"All these matters should properly be the subject of discussion in a process of inclusive negotiations which should begin as soon as possible."

Mr Adams said he had been asked to comment on the Irish prime minister Albert Reynolds's recent remarks. "Let me say that I agree with the thrust of his remarks in respect of British troop levels. His other comments about Irish unity are a matter of opinion about the time this will take. There is no doubt about the need for a united Ireland."

Mr Adams said that from Sinn Féin's point of view the objective of negotiations was to replace British jurisdiction with Irish jurisdiction based on agreement "among the Irish people." Sinn Féin wanted to see a 32 county republic which was also the policy of Mr Reynolds's Fianna Fail party.

"It will take time to bring this about, and while there may be varied views on the length of time involved I am sure that Mr Reynolds would not wish to delay such a development."

Sinn Féin, of course, remain petty-bourgeois nationalists and ultimately an obstacle to Leninism. But Marxist science has always grasped that defeats for imperialism can come in many forms, and has denounced the 'left' sectarians (who in words dismiss all anti-imperi-

alist progress as worthless if it does not amount to a 'perfect' socialist revolution with themselves leading it, while in practice chiming in with reaction's cynical onslaughts on such anti-imperialist struggles.)

A more detailed analysis will be made next week of how the philistine petty-bourgeois 'left' in Britain has again joined reaction to deny that British imperialism has been forced into any new retreats over the ceasefire. Build Leninism.

Adam Carr

Approaching storms will blast away middle-class head-in-the-sand attitudes towards the actual real crisis of the imperialist system. Continuing British ruling-class humiliations over Ireland further disrupt bourgeois-idealist illusions.

[EPSR No 770 27-09-94]

[...] As the faltering trade-war-divided leadership of the imperialist world begins to stumble more and more away from confident and successful counter-revolutionary anti-communist aggressiveness worldwide and into inter-imperialist conflict and warmongering self-preservation, the class collaborationist dreams will fade, and the Marxist-Leninist understanding of the real revolutionary movement of history will come more and more into focus.

NATO counter-revolutionary and anti-communist aggressiveness is bogged down in Bosnia and the Balkans, in Somalia, in Hong Kong, in Haiti, in Ireland, and everywhere else. German, Japanese, Italian, and French imperialism show no signs of being able to pick up the faltering Anglo-Saxon baton.

The nuclear arms race will continue and become increasingly unpleasant. Racial, religious, and national conflict will continue to mount inexorably worldwide, leaving Popper and all middle-class philosophical complacency gently spinning in the grave.

On top of all that, the worldwide capitalist system's financial markets are poised for their greatest crash in history, dwarfing the impact of the 1929 Great Collapse on Wall Street.

And some of the more futile stock market gambling is exactly duplicating the notorious Florida land speculation of 1928 in demented profiteering pointlessness:[...]

Meanwhile, the decline of monopoly-imperialist know-

how proceeds apace, as even the bourgeois ideologists themselves cannot avoid reporting:

THE forces of Irish republicanism gave the British a good beating yesterday, as the war over Northern Ireland raged on the airwaves of America.

Gerry Adams, on the third day of his American tour, was the star of network TV interviews and newspaper front pages, while John Major's envoy, former northern Ireland minister Michael Mates MP, stayed firmly off the American media menu.

The Sinn Féin president was the featured guest on ABC TV's *Good Morning America* programme — for the second day running. ABC ran its nine-minute interview with him in two parts, an honour only usually granted to the biggest names.

British officials had made Mr Mates available to counter Mr Adams, but the offer was declined. Asked about the decision, an ABC spokesman said: "Michael who?"

A computer search revealed that not a single American newspaper had mentioned Mr Mates's visit, designed as a public relations effort to prevent Mr Adams having an unfettered run at the US media.

Dozens of US newspapers have covered the Adams mission with everything from warm editorials to front-page photographs.

The degree of coverage lavished on Mr Adams is all the more remarkable considering the scant attention the American media normally pays foreign leaders. Jacques Chirac, the mayor of Paris and a possible future president of France, visited Washington last week and was barely noticed.

Rachelle Cohen, a senior editor at the *Boston Herald*, said the newspaper's board gathered on a Sunday to hear Mr Adams because he was now a figure of international clout. "He's

playing in the big leagues," she said.

David Greenway, a senior editor at the *Boston Globe*, said Mr Adams was now as big a draw as Yasser Arafat or Nelson Mandela. "The perception that this is a serious breakthrough has put him on a different level," he said.

Nor is it just the media which is giving Mr Adams the red carpet treatment. At each stop, he has been greeted by senators and congressman, many of them treating him as an Irish leader-in-waiting. Tomorrow, mayor Rudolph Giuliani of New York will give him the freedom of the city — a move San Francisco is expected to copy later in his nine-city tour.

And to add to London's woes, Gerry Adams has made the obvious response to the British ruling class's pathetic attempts to wring some propaganda point-scoring out of the disastrous humiliation of finally having to negotiate peace — (with the Irish national liberation struggle who were supposed to be nothing but terrorist criminals' who would only ever be given the chance to surrender unconditionally, etc) — by making a silly issue out of the word 'permanent' which the IRA obviously refuses to tack on to its generous ceasefire proposals.

The British colonial occupation of part of Ireland can have peace for as long as it is prepared to continue sensibly negotiating a longterm settlement and solution to the hated disaster of the Partition of Ireland (to provide a sunset haven for a dying breed of empire-minded 'loyalist' colonists.)

If the disgraceful historical fiction of 'Northern Ireland' and its stinking gerrymandered racist dictatorship is not finally dead and buried at the end of this long peace-initiative

interregnum, then clearly the national-liberation struggle will start again on every front, as Adams has warned.

It would be astonishing if the British establishment attempts to make an issue of Adams's blunt speaking brought anything more than renewed contempt down on London's head. Without saying so, the ruling class is still desperately clinging to the hope that it can somehow grab some tiny propaganda consolation (out of its retreat-humiliation in finally negotiating concessions to the 'terrorists') by making it possible to pretend in muffled tones that the IRA has in fact surrendered in all but name by accepting in advance that they have given up military operations 'permanently, for all time', etc.

If London is not careful, all that such pathetic clumsy manoeuvring will earn it is more blunt international comments that it is in fact the British colonial police-military dictatorship which has given up, not the IRA, — as Paisley and other embittered colonials keep on howling.

As always, the fake-'left' petty-bourgeois swamp is ever ready to come to the aid of beleaguered bourgeois-idealist thinking, throwing in its pennyworth of added confusion from its phony middle-class ultra-'revolutionary' position to try to cast doubt on the value of Sinn Féin's rout of British imperialist intransigence and incompetence.

By lame historical analogy — which sounds intellectual but which fails completely to judge 1994 events in the context of the international imperialist crisis in 1994 and its totally new international balance of class

forces, — the *Socialist Worker* leads the way in writing off the latest national-liberation struggles triumphs as a sell-out and a defeat:

It was a genuine mass struggle for independence. But many Sinn Féin leaders, headed by Michael Collins, grew scared that the rising would pass beyond their control.

Collins accepted a deal with Britain — it left Ireland divided. Unionists and the British government held the north east of the country with almost all the major industry and thousands of Catholics were trapped under Unionist rule. Many saw Collins as a traitor. The IRA split and there was civil war. A section led by Eamon De Valera fought to overthrow the deal.

But by 1923 De Valera was beaten. He soon performed a similar U-turn to Collins.

De Valera split away to found a political party called Fianna Fail. This is the Tory Nationalist party that has dominated Irish politics since.

Now Adams appears to be embarking on a road similar to other Sinn Féin/IRA leaders before him.

At each split in the Republican movement former leaders of the armed struggle have gone over to contesting elections and competing on the ground of established politicians. In every case it has been a dead end. The failure of established parties on all sides to offer anything but communal based politics leaves the way open to hardened bigots among the Loyalists.

In the absence of resistance to wage cuts and job losses some working class Protestants can turn in desperation to Loyalist violence.

The tragedy is that Sinn Féin and the IRA are throwing themselves into alliance with the enemies of working class Catholics and Protestants.

Gerry Adams has thanked Bill Clinton — the man who turns away drowning Cuban refugees and prepares to invade Haiti — for his help.

He has applauded Irish prime minister Albert Reynolds, a Tory whose government is cutting jobs and benefits, holding down wages and raising taxes every bit as much as Major.

In fact, the very timing of the ceasefire announcement was geared to help Reynolds.

It came on the very day he stood to face the climax of a scandal that has dogged his administration.

It came on the day he announced a £15,000 a year pay rise for himself and every

MP and chief executive in the Irish Republic, when those same executives are trying to cut the pay of workers at Dublin airport by 20 percent.

Sinn Féin and the IRA have never been engaged in a socialist revolution, so the SWP's defeatist scorn poured upon them for their 'failure' is a piece of ludicrous irrelevance.

And what this snivelling sectarian approach by the classic academic armchair socialists fails itself to do is to remotely appreciate what a further tremendous blow against imperialism this openly national-liberation struggle has achieved.

Of course the conflict is ending in a form of class-collaborating compromise, and with pure nationalism incapable of solving anyone's problems longterm.

But could a tiny nationally-based urban guerrilla war inside the very territory of the most famous imperialist power in history, — based on just a few hundred thousand isolated Irish-nationalist population, — be expected to drive the full might of the entire British imperialist army, representing a nation of 55 million people, to actual total military defeat?

And arguing that a proletarian revolution could do it (or really arguing that if we, the *Socialist Worker*, had been in charge of things, we would have done it, etc) is utterly irrelevant and the most disgusting imaginable.

And if it is all so easy to take on the British police-military dictatorship militarily and politically and thrash it totally, then why does not the *Socialist Worker* 'revolutionary' middle-class get on and do it inside Britain itself?

These fake-'left' petty-bourgeois degenerates play only one objective role in life and that is to queer the pitch for Marxism-Leninism, and they must be fought to a standstill before the revolutionary movement can flourish, — as the subsequent article clearly explains.

These 'general strike now' activists are just an obstacle to the development of revolutionary theory, nothing more. 'Big organisation' posturing is their sole political approach to the working class, really nothing more than a rival commercial brand-image attitude that Labour electoralism has now at last finally decided the time is ripe to embrace openly (with the final historical triumph' of capitalism, as they see it). SWP sectarianism is to be the organiser of the working class, not Marxist-Leninist understanding of how the international balance of class forces is really working



out. As in every case with revisionism through the ages, this

will be another dead end. Build Leninism. Douglas Bell

Parliamentary capitalism in its entirety is one giant swamp of graft and corruption protected only by the class-collaborating stupidity of the 'reformist' and revisionist 'opposition' and by the anti-communist propaganda of the very 'free press' making the sordid revelations. But Ireland proves how imperialism, and all subjective-idealist revisionist confusion, is still losing badly.

[EPSR No 775 01-11-94]

[...]But even as the British capitalist state appears to be getting away with murder as far as its privatisation, sleaze, and other rackets are concerned, – in the longer historical view of broader real-world developments, the imperialist system is running into more and more difficulties in every corner of the globe, and the British imperialist bourgeoisie in particular continues to degenerate.

Yet even on Ireland, where the game is so plainly up as far as hanging on to the disgraceful colonial outrage called Northern Ireland is concerned, it is still the fake 'socialists' who do most to conceal the real picture of London's humiliation at the progressive hands of Irish national-liberation forces.

Despite having fought their way to a revolutionary triumph, arms in hand, against the monstrous imposed evil of Partition and the gerrymandered bastard sterile statelet of non-existent 'Northern Ireland', – an amazing success which should have all revolutionaries cheering everywhere just as previous bourgeois-nationalist triumphs over British colonialism in Ireland had Marx and Lenin cheering in earlier periods, – many ultra-'left' petty-bourgeois posturers have been incapable of any response but a sick sectarian bleat of misery and condemnation.

Listen to the Trotskyite Spartacists' analysis of the latest clever Sinn Féin/IRA peace strategy to wrongfoot the donkey-like British imperialists:

The current IRA cease-fire settles nothing in Northern Ireland. The "troubles" will not end short of a workers revolution which 32 wrests power from the blood-drenched British bourgeoisie and its lackeys in Dublin and Belfast.

Britain is not about to put an end to Protestant ascendancy, nor is withdrawal of

the British army—which continues to ride roughshod through the Catholic ghettos—an imminent possibility.

The British imperialists do not always see eye to eye with the fractious Loyalists, but for now they have no intention of abandoning their old allies.

Many working-class Catholic youth join the IRA because they mistakenly see it as the only force opposing the British army. Yet the IRA's "armed struggle" was never really aimed at—or capable of—driving the massive British imperialist military presence out of Northern Ireland, but rather at pressuring Britain to the conference table.

It would be fatal for working people to have illusions in such "settlements." In South Africa the newly installed Mandela/De Klerk regime has already moved to break strikes of black workers and squelch the expectations of the impoverished black masses. The Palestinian PLO now has its own cops to keep down the Palestinian masses in Gaza and Jericho. And while conditions in Northern Ireland are not identical, Ruari O Bradaigh, the leader of the dissident nationalist group Republican Sinn Féin, has warned that behind Gerry Adams' call for "new policing arrangements" is a veiled appeal for recruiting Republican militants to serve in a "police service to be run in parallel with the RUC" to do "England's dirty work in Ireland" (*Irish News*, 6 September).

The declaration marks the latest stage in the quest by the IRA and its political wing, Sinn Féin, for a 'negotiated settlement' with British imperialism, pursued through the "good offices" of the southern Irish clericalist state and underwritten by U.S. imperialist chief Bill Clinton.

Hoping to secure a place in the "New World Order" ordained by Washington following the destruction of the Soviet Union, the IRA/ Sinn Féin are predictably claiming a victory. Yet the oppressed Catholic minority in Northern Ireland have been offered nothing in exchange for the cease-fire. Sinn Féin does not even demand the withdrawal of British troops from the North.

The recent move was foreshadowed by the Anglo-Irish declaration between London and Dublin last December. As we warned then: "Any imperialist 'deal' will be bloody and brutal and will necessarily be at the expense of the oppressed Catholic minority. And it would not do any good for working-class Protestants either."

The Loyalist stranglehold over the Protestant workers will only be reinforced

by liberal bourgeois "solutions" that promise to spread the endemic poverty more evenly. In a situation of increasing economic desperation, fighting over a shrinking slice of pie only stokes up the fires of sectarianism.

This grotesque ultra-leftism postures its 'revolutionariness' in the most irresponsible and childish way imaginable.

Past *Bulletins* and ILWP Books vol 8 (& 15 - *Ireland*) have quoted endlessly from the works of Marx, Engels, and Lenin on the important strategic understanding to communists that bourgeois-nationalist and other defeats for the imperialist ruling class can frequently be of enormous help and significance for the subsequent success of proletarian-dictatorship revolution to get rid of capitalism altogether.

It is just numbskulled posturing to keep on pointing out that bourgeois-nationalist liberation is not necessarily a short step from communist revolution (although they proved inseparable in Vietnam and Cuba, for example). It is well-known that Sinn Féin are philistinely ignorant of Marxism-Leninism.

The crucial question, however, is whether or not this bourgeois-nationalist struggle can cause British imperialism an enormous setback.

To ask the question is to answer it. Why else has British imperialism been fighting all these years with more than half their mainland infantry forces to 'defeat terrorism' in the Occupied Zone of Ireland (and beyond) if not to avoid a humiliating reversal with dire consequences for all the ruling class's interests? The Spart slogan for proletarian-dictatorship revolution (although these opportunist sectarian cowards never spell this out scientifically) is not incorrect as an abstract theoretical statement but in practice is worse than useless, – a complete academic diversion.

To proclaim communist aims does not necessarily make it obligatory to rubbish national liberation aims. Just read Marx and Lenin on the subject.

And it is particularly stupid and reactionary sectarianism to denigrate a national-liberation struggle carried out in such a revolutionary manner, both politically and militarily, by Sinn Féin and the IRA, arms in hand. And especially so when that national-liberation movement turned out to be the only serious and effective anti-imperialist movement going, – and one with undoubted sensational success which has dramatically captured the world's imagination, commanded wide international sympathy, and confound-

ed the entire British ruling class leaving it utterly tongue-tied and undermined.

Obviously, the Sinn Féin/IRA triumph is not yet a 'workers revolution', or even remotely any 'solution' to the immediate capitalist crisis afflicting Ireland (and everywhere else, of course), or even any guaranteed immediate satisfaction of Irish national aspirations and an end to the 'troubles'.

But it does represent a colossal retreat by British imperialism and reflects an enormous movement in international class forces which have felt obliged to force London to accept that it is potentially seriously damaging to the Western imperialist cause for naked British colonialism to keep on hopelessly brutally repressing a national-liberation fight which not only obviously will not be beaten but which could start to become an increasingly dangerous revolutionary beacon for the oppressed worldwide, as the international imperialist slump continues to deepen.

After their first academic and pointless paragraph above, the Sparts diatribe then quickly has to descend into just plain untruths or distortions, or commit yet more historically strategic errors by way of false analogies, or just simply get things wrong.

The fight for Leninist parties of proletarian-dictatorship revolution must never cease to grow, as is obvious to all real Marxists (although of doubtful appeal in fact to these Trots who, as always, are terrified of having to call communist revolution by its crucial proletarian dictatorship name), and the pan-bourgeois-nationalist coalition taking shape for the reunification of Ireland will naturally become the then open enemy of further social progress.

But it is sectarian insanity to just sneer at the final completion of Ireland's war of independence against bitter British imperialist resistance as an event of not only no historical importance but as actually a reactionary development, (as these ridiculous Spart academics try to do), – no matter how unpleasant the sight of "imperialist lackeys" in Dublin jumping once again onto the nationalist bandwagon.

And as proof of the ridiculousness of the point they are trying to make, these boring and dimwitted Trot ultra-'lefts' then have to be very economical with the truth to try to back up their daft stance.

The 'Protestant ascendancy' is not ended yet, nor is the British army withdrawn, clearly. But it

is equally plain to all who would see it that the old outrageous colonial notion of a supposed country called 'Northern Ireland', – a tame stooge of blatant British imperialism on occupied Irish soil, – is nevertheless utterly doomed now, never to be resurrected.

Only complete sectarian fake-'left' fools can fail to see this, or fail to see what a huge revolutionary shift of historical forces this represents.

The Sparts are just wrong. Disregarding Trot silly canny wordplay, the 'Loyalists' certainly are being abandoned in the sense that the essence of the former British colonialist tradition, – i.e. 'Ulster is forever British' (meaning the gerrymandered ripped-out parts of six of the Irish province's nine counties), – is no more, – destroyed by a heroic revolutionary-guerrilla war from a wholly legitimate national-liberation movement.

It is just the depths of triviality for these Spart cretins to try to present the successful negotiations forced on infinitely stronger British imperialism by the tiny but unbeatable revolutionary war as proof that "the IRA's 'armed struggle' (put in offensive [inverted] commas in the original) was never really aimed at...driving the massive British imperialist military presence out of Northern Ireland (noticeably not put in quotes by these Sparts who presumably accept the British bastard colony's legitimacy).

What insane crap is this. One of the most dramatic and triumphant guerrilla wars of all time fought by tiny forces against a huge enemy which succeeded virtually in laying siege to that enemy's own capital city (the barriers are still up around London's Square Mile, so terrified is British monopoly capitalism of further crippling blows to its property and its prestige), – and these armchair socialists pretend that it was nothing, and no real intended challenge to British imperialism. What total mental bollocks.

Of course the guerrilla war's aims were limited, – to force British imperialist rule out of Ireland. No sane person doubts that it is now on its way out. And only the most pedantic dilettantes could be so childish as to try to make more sectarian points out of the obvious reality that the British Occupation would eventually be forced to effectively surrender via a covered-up negotiated 'peace settlement', – just as has always happened with 99% of West European colonial retreats from

former empires.

The wild analogies with South Africa and the PLO are just silly and misleading, but are wrong anyway. Of course it was a necessary historical stage to go through for the ANC national-liberation struggle to form a bourgeois nationalist independence government before the correct unending struggle for a proletarian-dictatorship socialist revolution could hope to make further significant progress in southern Africa. It would have been sectarian gibberish, incomprehensible to the African masses, to have agitated for a Leninist revolutionary movement in South Africa in direct antagonistic opposition to success for the ANC's national-liberation war. The cause of proletarian dictatorship was obviously served, not hindered, by the prior defeat of apartheid-imperialist dictatorship by the national-liberation forces. And that is even true to some extent in Occupied Palestine in spite of the trivial extent to which the Zionist Occupation has been forced to retreat, and in spite of the suicidal ludicrousness of the pocket-handkerchief sized 'independent' areas which Arafat has accepted as Palestinian 'self-determination'. That truly bogus 'settlement' will be the death of Arafatism, which is to the good, but it will also be a further spur to a clearer understanding that it is imperialist economic domination of the region as a whole, spearheaded by the Zionist colonial presence, which must be defeated before genuine Arab national aspirations and self-determination can be achieved, – obviously only under proletarian-dictatorship revolution eventually.

Quoting O'Bradigh's views as 'proof' that Sinn Féin and the IRA are only negotiating with London in order to "do England's dirty work in Ireland" for it, is just more sectarian unseriousness.

And it is just plain wrong, and shows disgraceful lightmindedness, to claim that neither nationalist or 'loyalist' workers have gained a thing from the brutal war being brought to an end by British military occupation's acceptance of the IRA's truce-for-talks initiative. These armchair socialists obviously have never even considered what an enormous national sacrifice has been put up by the Irish population of the Occupied Zone to sustain 25 years of unprecedented repression-terror by the British army, special assassination forces, secret police, and RUC shoot-to-kill squads, etc, plus concentration-

camp internment without trial, the torture-barracks routine brutalisation of all nationalist suspects, and the nightly house-wrecking onslaughts on strongly republican areas, – not to mention the sinister murderous activities of the 'loyalist' fascist terror gangs.

The infamous irresponsibility for this casual Trot observation that the war might just as well go on for all the good that any 'peace settlement' might do, becomes more graspable when the Sparts' motives are further probed. They actually hate the Irish national-liberation movement, and want it slaughtered, virtually accusing it of genocidal fascist intent against British imperialism's 'loyalist' stooges, and joining in with British imperialist propaganda to denounce Sinn Féin as nothing but a movement of sectarian terror:

Any attempt to forcibly incorporate the large and relatively well-armed Protestants into the Irish clerical state could only precipitate a wholesale communal conflict. While Irish Republicans usually present their struggle as fundamentally directed against British imperialism, the more hardheaded IRA nationalists acknowledge that the Protestant Loyalists are the ultimate obstacle to their programme of reunification with the South. As one Belfast IRA commander told an American journalist:

"This is not about peace. This is about getting the referees off the playing field, about finding a way for the British to leave with some semblance of dignity. The real war has always been between us and the Loyalists. That has not changed, and that's what we're getting ready for."
—*New York Times*, 2 September

The bloody logic of this nationalist line is currently being played out in the former Yugoslavia.

However, a central component of the IRA's nationalist strategy involved reprehensible indiscriminate terror against Northern Protestants, as well as against civilian targets in Britain, aimed at exacerbating the communal divide between Catholics and Protestants and at galvanising the oppressed Catholic minority behind the banner of Green nationalism.

[.]We call for the formation of integrated workers militias to combat both imperialist/Loyalist rampage and sectarian terror from any quarter.

[.]The Protestant majority are deeply hostile to—and a significant number of Northern Catholics are wary of—the nationalist project of reunifying the North with the even more poverty-stricken and virulently anti-woman southern clerical state, where divorce as well as abortion is illegal.

And this Trot-totalitarian intolerance of genuine Irish national aspirations, barmily regarding the 'loyalists' as equally-good Irish patriots (!), – has had the lifelong nerve to denounce the Soviet workers state for its 'undemocratic arbitrariness'. What a sick joke.

Time will tell what a monstrous misrepresentation the above comments are of the national-liberation movement's

intentions towards the whole population of Ireland, – nothing remotely in common with the genocidal, repressive, sectarian reaction which these Sparty ivory-tower loons ascribe to Sinn Féin and the IRA.

Already the Sparts' instant September predictions are looking not just silly, but looking like a clear provocation from these strange fake-"lefts":

Meanwhile, the viciously sectarian RUC and Royal Irish Regiment (RIR) are still in place, and the heavily armed fascistic Protestant Loyalist/Unionist paramilitaries, who have killed far more people than the IRA this year—mostly in random, indiscriminate attacks on the Catholic populace—have refused thus far to reciprocate the IRA's cease-fire.

As a woman from Ardoyne—a Catholic area of north Belfast where unemployment runs 47 percent—put it:

"I want peace but nothing has changed around here. The Brits and the peelers (cops) are still on the streets, young lads are still being harassed. We're terrified of a loyalist attack"
(*Irish Times*, 8 September).

Only hours before the cease-fire went into effect, a Loyalist gang dragged Belfast Catholic Sean McDermott from his bed and executed him. Shortly after the IRA declaration, John O'Hanlon was shot in cold blood outside a friend's house in Belfast. On 5 September the Protestant paramilitary Ulster Volunteer Force (UVF) set off a large car bomb outside Sinn Féin's headquarters in Belfast, following up five days later with an assassination attempt against a Sinn Féin activist.

The actual historical developments are clearly different from these hopelessly wrong predictions revealing complete muddleheaded incomprehension of the first thing about the real class and national war situation in Ireland.

But exactly what the balance of forces between British imperialism and the national-liberation movement will exactly throw up at this stage is obviously not yet fully clear.

Yet the signs still accumulate, – from the capitalist press's own coverage of events, – that things are still well on course for completing the rout of the British imperialist colony on occupied Irish soil, and for the eventual reunification of Ireland under a bourgeois democratic republic, – the best conditions of capitalist dictatorship for proceeding with the struggle for a revolutionary workers state:

The symbolism carried more weight than what he said. Mr McGuinness, an executive member of Sinn Féin, told BBC TV's *On the Record* he had received a private assurance from the Government that it was working towards a united Ireland, a claim first made in January by Sinn Féin when it published secret correspondence between the party and the Government.

"In March of last year I did have

a meeting with a representative of the British government who said the eventual outcome of all Britain was trying to do would be that the island would be as one," he said, but refused to identify whom he spoke to. "He was there on the authority of the British Prime Minister John Major and the Secretary of State for Northern, Ireland Patrick Mayhew. There is no doubt about that."

Referring to Mr Major's speech in Belfast on Friday, Mr McGuinness said the Government had already publicly accepted there could be no internal political settlement for Northern Ireland. Mr Major, he said, significantly adopted republican terminology, saying they were moving towards a "just and lasting peace."

"The British government are slowly but surely disengaging from Ireland," he said, but admitted he was sceptical of private assurances given by the Government. He derided suggestions by the Ulster Unionist leader James Molyneux that there could be a new Northern Ireland assembly. "If he thinks the SDLP and the Dublin government and ourselves will support assembly elections at the beginning of next year, I think James Molyneux is living in cloud-cuckoo-land."

Instead, the Government had accepted there could not be a settlement based on a new Northern Ireland assembly and it was moving closer to a position where it could act as a "persuader" for a united Ireland. "They have said there can be no internal settlement. The British government in recent times have used interesting terminology to talk about being "facilitators," about bringing people together. It is a short step, in my opinion, from the language which they are using to use the language of being a persuader."

He stressed Sinn Féin was committed to the peace process and he believed there was the best opportunity for 70 years to achieve a lasting solution. "Irish republicans have set the agenda. Everybody else is jumping to the Irish republicans' tune."

His remarks, immediately condemned as mischief-making by Downing Street, came as the Irish prime minister, Albert Reynolds, speaking on the eve of his meeting

with John Major at Chequers today, made his clearest call yet for the establishment of cross-border institutions in the framework document being negotiated by the two governments.

The differences threaten to delay further the so-called *Joint Framework Document* on new relationships between Britain and the two parts of Ireland. The document — which is seen as the essential next step in the political process — was originally scheduled to appear in July, but the two governments are deadlocked over issues of sovereignty and cross-border powers. The chances of publication in time for Thursday's Commons debate on the peace initiative seem slim. Mr McGuinness's claim is based on the private contacts between the IRA and government officials last year, of which accounts sharply differ.

Mr Reynolds said yesterday that cross-border bodies with executive powers were essential for establishing peace. Their remarks will require Mr Major to do even more to reassure Unionist opinion that he has not embarked on a step by step path to unification.

Mr McGuinness also clashed with Unionists by insisting that no devolved assembly in Northern Ireland could be established, until agreements had been reached on the whole future of North-South relations.

In his most remarkable claim Mr McGuinness said: "In March of last year, I did have a meeting with a representative of the British Government who said to us that the eventual outcome of all that Britain was trying to do would be that the island would be as one."

Mr Reynolds told a Fianna Fail rally in Co Kildare: "If nationalists [Northern Ireland's Catholics] are being asked at present to accept the reality and the consequences of the present majority wish of a continuation of the union between Northern Ireland and Britain, their desire for meaningful institutional links with executive functions must also be accommodated."

But he added: "It is wrong to see co-operative institutions, democratically mandated north and south, as in any way prejudicial to the consti-

tutional status of Northern Ireland — either at present or in the future."

These institutions, which would deal with matters such as tourism and investment, were not to be confused with joint authority over Northern Ireland by the two governments. "The constitutional future will be decided democratically — as set out in the two governments' joint declaration last December," he said.

Since the IRA called its ceasefire there has been a feeling that every move — by all sides — has been quietly but carefully choreographed. The wrangling over the permanence issue was a tactic for Mr Major to buy time and see if the IRA was serious, and to make room for loyalist paramilitaries to decide about the merit of pursuing a campaign of violence.

Mr Major knew why Sinn Féin could not call the IRA ceasefire permanent. Under the IRA's rules, its seven-member army council can call a cessation, but it needs to be endorsed by an army convention — of up to 500 delegates — to make it permanent.

A convention must be called within 12 months of the council decision, leaving a lot of breathing space to carefully assess the developing situation. But yesterday's announcement will do much to ease the pressure on Gerry Adams to show to his republican hardliners that the IRA initiative is paying tangible dividends.

The rescinding of all the remaining closure orders on border roads was a masterstroke by Mr Major, coming only a day after Sinn Féin produced a glossy map detailing the 100 roads closed by the British army in the last 25 years.

The physical impact of the measure will add to the feelgood factor of the peacetime situation. Scenes of unhindered passage between communities cut off for so long will make it all the more difficult for those who may yet harbour thoughts of a resumption of the armed struggle.

This element is likely to make its voice heard once it becomes clear the opening of the border does not mean the end of partition. Only then, when republican fundamentalism is tested against Sinn Féin's pragma-

tists — who are talking about British withdrawal in a timespan of 20 to 30 years — will we know if Northern Ireland is rid of political violence.

JOHN Major's announcement that direct talks with Sinn Féin will begin soon marks the lifting of an official veil of secrecy over contacts which go back more than 20 years.

In the past 12 months, that veil has been torn away by press revelations which appear to give Sinn Féin's version of events more credibility than the damage-limitation exercise launched by the Northern Ireland Secretary, Sir Patrick Mayhew, last November.

In a document dated March 23 last year, the Government representative is quoted as saying that Sir Patrick wanted to include Sinn Féin in a political settlement "not because he likes Sinn Féin but because it cannot work without them."

The representative goes on: "The final solution is union (of the North and South of Ireland). It is going to happen anyway. Unionists will have to change."

Sinn Féin alleged that the breakdown was caused by government forgeries and deception. But Ian Paisley's Democratic Unionist Party claims contacts have continued throughout this year as the IRA ceasefire was awaited.

A basis for broad agreement was the aim. "Neither a purely internal solution nor a return to domination of one side by the other would achieve this," Mr Major said yesterday.

In 1985 Paisley was right — or, at least, more right than his rival James Molyneux — when the Anglo-Irish Agreement gave Dublin for the first time a say in the affairs of Northern Ireland. Last December he denounced the Downing Street Declaration even before he had read it. But this time its Molyneux who is claiming Paisley's misread it; Gerry Adams has been conned and the Union is safe.

Paisley is far from convinced. "It is more likely that James Molyneux has been conned," he says. His problem is that the unionist people don't appear to believe him. Or if they do, they show scant evidence of want-



Operation Motorman: British armoured vehicles invade the nationalist town of Coalisland, County Tyrone

ing to do anything about it. Maybe a weariness has set in from being harangued by the same voice so many times about betrayal.

Most damaging of all to hardline unionism is the acceptance by loyalist paramilitaries that Molyneux is right. A unique coalition of minds has formed between the broad, conservative church of the Ulster Unionist Party and the radical-sounding grassroots loyalist parties who keep closely in touch with the gunmen.

It is difficult to sell "sell-out" when even the gunmen who profess to spill blood for the Union have called it a day. Paisley's esteem is low on the Shankill—the symbolic heart of loyalism to the Crown. At a recent conference on protestant culture and identity his party was attacked for piously refusing to negotiate with people who once supported or were involved in violence while hinting at the use of the same dark forces when it suited them.

This charge is strongly denied by Paisley and his party, but the memories of his deputy, Peter Robinson, in a red beret and the late-night rallies of men brandishing firearms certificates haunt them all still. "He's led us all up to the top of the hill only to march us back down again too often," is a common observation.

Paisley can be accused of playing the same old games. Only last week, after liberally peppering the "enemies of Ulster" — everybody but the DUP — with buckshot he warned: "The Union is not safe, the Union can be betrayed. We would repeat to John Major and the Dublin government the challenge of Lord Carson — interfere with us if you dare, because you cannot rule us without the consent of the majority."

Carson founded the original Ulster Volunteer Force, which was prepared to coerce the Government into giving Northern Ireland its own gerrymandered parliament and a place in the Union at the point of a gun. It was Carson's UVF 80 years ago which introduced the gun to Northern Ireland's politics. Carson is a heroic figure for Paisley. He doesn't discourage comparison. This spring he ran a series of Carson Trail-style rallies across the province.

But it was a founder of the modern UVF, a group responsible for some of the worst atrocities of the last 25 years, who galvanised the public when he spoke of the loyalist paramilitaries "abject and true remorse" upon the announcement of their ceasefire.

Gusty Spence is this week in the United States as part of a loyalist delegation presenting their message to the same politicians that Gerry Adams has recently met. The "No" word has gone out of fashion. "Unionists have a legitimate political philosophy which they must go out and sell," says David Ervine, another spokesman for the Progressive Unionist Party and a broker of the loyalist paramilitary ceasefire.

It is a journey which Paisley has persistently refused to make. Further sidelined by John Major who, with the skills of the chief whip's office, threw the turbulent pastor out of Number 10 and pulled the rug from under his feet with the

promise of a Northern Ireland referendum, it is tempting to ask who Paisley thinks he now. It is scarcely comprehensible that Northern Ireland's most popular politician has been so marginalised in the peace process.

Paisley has a fundamentalist approach to the problems. Nationalism and Unionism are irreconcilable philosophies and one must defeat the other. There can be no compromise on that. It's a message which sounds more appealing to the background sound of bombs and bullets, hence the claims — rubbished by British, Irish and American security sources — that the IRA is continuing to buy arms.

But he is right about one thing. The nationalists and the unionists are both claiming they have "won" in Northern Ireland. "They can't both be right," he says. Paisley will continue to call "betrayal" from the margins, even if nobody appears to be listening.

Mr Powell said there was a "game plan" to detach Northern Ireland from the United Kingdom. "Give them self-government upon a scale that they cannot refuse and attach to it conditions which will bring them into a united Ireland."

The only protection lay in his slogan, "the union, the whole union, and nothing but the union".

Away from the conference floor, one delegate from the party's progressive wing was heard to whisper in the bar: "Personally, I'm all for an all-Ireland tourist board, for instance." But his face clouded with worry when asked if this might be extended to agriculture — Ireland's other big earner — and if so, then was not this simply the rocky road to Dublin? "That's the problem, we just don't know," he admitted. "The cross-border bodies are the crux now."

Mr Hume's refusal to countenance another internal settlement for Northern Ireland is the block in the road for the Ulster Unionist game plan, and though his name was barely mentioned he was Banquo's ghost at the weekend's feast.

THE IRA will not be prepared to relinquish its armoury as the first stage in the process of reaching a political settlement.

Sinn Féin sources have already ruled out movement on the arms question without significant progress in other areas, including release of prisoners, withdrawal of troops, and replacement of the RUC, as well as new political structures.

Yesterday Mr Adams said there could be no preconditions to talks. "All the guns and explosives of all the armies need to be decommissioned. The issue is to get all the weapons taken out of Irish politics," he told Brian Walden on ITV.

"Any attempt to get a section of nationalists to disarm unilaterally, I would think, would be doomed to failure."

Pressed repeatedly on the matter, Mr Adams said it was Sinn Féin's intention to remove the gun "permanently and irreversibly" from Irish politics.

THE Northern Ireland Secretary,

Sir Patrick Mayhew, came under hardline Unionist pressure in the Commons yesterday not to open exploratory talks with Sinn Féin after Mitchel McLoughlin, the party's Northern Ireland chairman, said the IRA was unlikely to surrender its weapons before negotiations on a new constitutional settlement were near completion.

In the first Commons debate on Northern Ireland since the IRA and loyalist paramilitaries declared a ceasefire, Sir Patrick implied that he would not allow Sinn Féin to enter substantive talks on the future of Ireland until the IRA's arms had been surrendered. But he appeared to accept that the IRA would retain them during exploratory talks.

Mr McLoughlin, speaking on BBC Radio yesterday morning, said: "There is a considerable amount of distrust both in the British government's track record on Ireland, and the failure of constitutional politics over the last 70 years, for it to be realistic to expect either the IRA or loyalists would hand over weapons before there is clear evidence that... there is consolidated prospect for agreement on political structures.

"To insist as a precondition to any

side that they must surrender their weapons before people will talk to them is to invite this very fragile consensus to collapse."

In remarks bound to fuel Unionist suspicions, he added: "People will recognise the difference between a ceasefire and a permanent peace. Let's hope we have a permanent peace. What we haven't got as yet, because we aren't even in the necessary negotiations, is agreement on the political structures for the island of Ireland."

Peter Robinson, deputy leader of the Democratic Unionists, claimed Mr Major had reneged on a promise not to allow the IRA to enter talks until all the arms had been handed in.

Revisionism is the dying clammy hand of subjective bourgeois-idealist philosophy holding back workers from Marxist-Leninist science, — fake 'socialists' from right-wing Labourite 'reformist' class-collaborators to the sectarian Trot middle-class ultra-lefts at the other extreme. Build Leninism. Spread the ILWP Bulletin. Joe Harper

Dublin farce a headache for bourgeois reaction, not for real anti-imperialist advance. Imperialist crisis everywhere exposing the rotten warmongering essence of imperialist 'democracy', completing the conditions for its revolutionary overthrow by the working class armed with Leninism.

[South West Bulletin No 96 17-11-94 in EPSR No 778]

The resignation of the Irish prime minister, Albert Reynolds, brought down by a storm of accusations and exposures of lying, sleaze, corruption and cover-up, is far more damaging to the hold that the lying fraud of capitalist 'democracy' has on the Irish working class, than it is likely to be to the "peace process", though it does highlight the limitations of the nationalist perspectives put forward by Sinn Féin/IRA.

While it is possible that the change of leadership in Dublin will throw up some problems for the continuation of negotiations over British withdrawal from the Occupied Zone, and the personal relationships established between the parties involved are obviously of significance, by far the biggest problem presented by the collapse in Dublin is the one now facing Westminster and the green Tories in Dublin.

The "peace process", as it stands today, has been won, arms in hand, by the heroic and determined revolutionary nationalist struggle led by Sinn Féin/IRA against British

colonialism, without the help of the treacherous leadership in Dublin.

The "peace process" is not the gift of Reynolds, or Major, or Clinton, or anyone else, to be taken away because of a domestic political crisis in Ireland, Britain or the US.

The overwhelming international recognition of the legitimacy of the nationalist struggle, spectacularly built on in recent months with Adams' visits to the US, and the propaganda victories scored by the sophisticated nationalist tactics compared to the clumsy woodenness of London, is not going to disappear simply because Reynolds has been exposed as a lying hypocrite.

Neither is the 1985 Anglo-Irish Treaty (forced out of the cowardly green Tories in Dublin and the British colonial state by the huge international support for the hunger strikers, the election of Bobby Sands to Westminster whilst dying as a political prisoner of the British state, and the continuing unbeatable military struggle of the IRA)

about to be rescinded because of Reynolds' resignation.

Britain's public admission, conceded in the Downing Street Declaration, that it no longer has any economic or strategic interest in 'Northern Ireland', cannot be unsaid.

The international standing of Irish political leaders like McGuinness and Adams, whom the British have for years tried to dismiss as nothing more than criminal racketeers, will not be undermined because of the exposure of the real criminal racketeers, the ones running government in Dublin.

The problem that British imperialism now has, in company with the Dublin administration, is how to carry on with the steady withdrawal of British occupation, and with negotiations over new constitutional arrangements, without letting out into the open the extent of secret deals, promises etc., threatening thereby further to undermine London and Dublin's face-saving operations, – at a time when both administrations are permanently on the brink of collapse.

At a moment when the Irish working class may well be wondering how much longer they want to be putting up with a

semi-feudal Catholic establishment, paedophile priests, bent judges and lying politicians, a Marxist class analysis (exposing the whole rotten stinking racket of the 'democratic' capitalist system, and advancing the need for proletarian revolution and the building of an Irish workers state) makes much more sense than the more limited nationalistic perspectives put forward by Sinn Féin, which currently appear to be viewing the difficulties into which the cowardly Dublin leadership has run solely as an occasion for alarm and gloom.

Seen in its wider context, the crisis in Dublin is yet another reflection on the difficulties afflicting the bourgeoisie everywhere as the relentless crisis of capitalist 'overproduction' causes ever greater international tension, resulting in increasingly paralysed governments as 'solutions' to the anarchy of capitalism get ever further away. The divisions opening up in the former 'free world' anti-communist 'alliance' are now becoming so wide that even the complacent petty bourgeois commentators for the capitalist press can no longer ignore them. [...]

D Watts

in order to deliberately lay on a last-minute 'demonstration of complete impartiality and objectivity', for the first time ever, just so as to provoke this very backlash.

By using the 'strict letter of the law' to set up a situation which manufactured petty-bourgeois mob hysteria can pretend to find 'completely intolerable', the Establishment can creep closer to declaring the whole 25-year 'emergency' to have been 'correct' in the way it was conducted, but to all be now 'out of touch with changing realities', etc.

At which point it might become easier for the entire British bourgeoisie to pronounce all the 'law and order' provisions of a conflict which is now 'in the past' to be 'out of date'.

That way, the 25-year attempt to defeat the national-liberation struggle does not have to be considered as a 'big mistake' or worst of all as a 'total failure'. It can begin to be written off as 'no longer relevant to the changed conditions and changed attitudes in which all those involved find themselves'.

Crucial to this stratagem working will be the role of the British colonist 'loyalists', and they have partly started responding just as Downing Street would have wished, – denouncing the campaign to release Clegg as "typical English partiality", and demanding equal reconsideration for the plight of 'every prisoner jailed just for doing their job' in the civil-war conflict now ended, – meaning the jailed UVF and UFF Unionist thugs, the RUC and UDR 'cowboy' killers, and, presumably, the national liberation struggle's Republican prisoners-of-war as well.

Some of the language has been remarkable. "Why are not the Irish prisoners being treated the same as the English prisoners", etc, – dropping all reference, for once, to the 'Britishness' which these Ulster colonists are usually so proud to flaunt.

More remarkable still, both of the main Unionist political parties sent representatives at the weekend to a conference in Derry, organised by the nationalists to honour the 14 Irish civilians massacred by the British paratroopers on Bloody Sunday 23 years ago this week.

And perhaps even more astonishingly, the Ulster Volunteer Force sent a delegate to commemorate the murdered Irish civilians for whom no British military or police representatives were ever found guilty or even charged, – and a former

UVF activist who has served a life sentence for sectarian killing at that.

He was quoted in the bourgeois press:

Asked about his decision to take part in this weekend's events Mr Hutchinson, a member of the Progressive Unionist Party's delegation holding talks with civil servants, said: "It's well known what happened on Bloody Sunday. It shouldn't have happened, irrespective of what people might say. It is an event in our history which we could have done without."

However, he told the *Derry Journal*: "When we witness loyalists and Unionists taking part in a debate in the Bogside, something positive must have come out of the events of Bloody Sunday."

The Democratic Unionist Party will be represented by Gregory Campbell, the party's leader in the city. Three years ago Mr Campbell criticised Derry city council for funding the weekend's events, which culminate in a mass march.

At the same time, the Dublin government has stepped up the pace of releasing its Republican prisoners, clearly with the connivance of the British government, whatever is pretended to the opposite.

And with respectable part of the British Establishment currently going out of their way to praise Gerry Adams for so helping to bring peace to Occupied Ireland, the capitalist state is slowly gearing up for a total transformation in British imperialism's relations with the Occupied Zone and the Republic:

The Sinn Féin leader, Gerry Adams, receives a remarkable tribute from the former Northern Ireland Secretary, Peter Brooke, in a television profile to be shown by the BBC tonight. Mr Brooke tells Panorama: "In my view he was a brave man and I hope he will be justified.

"That step [the ceasefire] was a crucial step. I describe it myself as a Rubicon. He led them across that Rubicon. And I think the whole of Ireland, and the whole of these islands, and I think arguably the whole of the world is grateful to him for having done it."

Earlier this month the Northern Ireland Secretary, Sir Patrick Mayhew, said Mr Adams needed some government support to prevent him being replaced by a more hardline republican leadership.

That current government comment is, of course, of the usual mealy-mouthed kind. The British imperialists want a deal because they have been hopelessly trounced, politically and militarily, by the outstanding Irish national-liberation struggle, – and they want a deal with Adams now they have been forced to negotiate.

But the Tory Cabinet tactic has been obvious throughout

Discussion

Deepening twilight of British imperialism over Ireland is a sound measure of how the whole monopoly-capitalist system internationally will soon be forced to submit to revolutionary challenge, the Mexican economic crisis being typical.

[EPSR No 787 31-01-95]

The campaign to free Private Clegg shows the humbug and hypocrisy of the British ruling class as its most degenerate, but there could be some crippled method in this Establishment madness.

Alone, the ILWP has consistently explained (see ILWP Books vol 8 & 15 – *Ireland*) that British imperialism has for more than a decade basically been seeking ways to get out of Ireland completely but without appearing to concede any victory to the IRA's and Sinn Féin's armed revolutionary struggle.

Washington and the Common Market have long insisted that the highly damaging image for the West of bloody colonial war inflicted on a great European nation by one of the pillars of NATO and the 'free' world, and shown nightly on television

screens around the world, must stop come what may.

The prisoners issue might be one way of sowing so much confusion over British imperialism's involvement in Ireland that, to Washington and the EEC's satisfaction, – the entire 25-year 'emergency' can be declared to have been full of mistakes on all sides, and therefore better wound up, but with no 'losers' or 'winners'.

The astonishingly high-powered Clegg campaign has suddenly been whipped up out of nothing by the sorts of establishment figures who know exactly why the normal 'rule of law' and the status quo should prevail, for deep reasons of abiding class-rule domination.

It is looking suspiciously as if Clegg was kept in jail by a series of High Court judgments

of only wanting to be seen to be dragging their feet, conceding no 'victories' for Sinn Féin or the IRA, and no 'defeats' for the colonist population or their British military protectors.

Major & Co are nervously waiting for the impossible situation, which is now facing the dying British colony, to begin to completely undermine the colonist community and their die-hard 'Unionist' intransigence, at which point it is hoped that these 'Loyalists' themselves will start to come up with new proposals for how this colonial remnant can survive peacefully, happily coexisting with completed Irish Republican independence at long last after 800 years of struggle, in a reunited Ireland.

The British Establishment then hopes that the whole Anglo-Irish political scene will have become so muddled, so confused, and so transformed that London will continue to be able to pretend that 'no concessions' at all have, been made to 'armed terrorism', and that the ancient British pledge of 'No surrender' to the 'Loyalists' will not have been reneged on by the Tory Government.

Sinn Féin alone has appeared to strike the right note over the British bourgeois campaign to release Private Clegg. Clegg should be let out only when all the prisoners of the 'emergency' have been let out, Adams explained.

This would seem to meet with the British Government's secret agenda, if there is one. If the artificial clamour to release Clegg becomes too great, despite his 'lawful' conviction for the unprovoked murder of Karen Reilly, then the way for London to deal with the problem would be to advance talks about releasing all those who ended up in jail as a result of 'doing their duty' in the national-liberation war.

Some of the bourgeois campaigning has played right into the hands of such an agenda. The *Daily Mail*, for example, has been screaming with contempt against the grotesque 'injustice' of Cleggs' legal processes, sneering that 'he was found guilty by a court which did not even have a jury'. Just so, and for nearly 25 years, the Republican nationalist population has been jailed and persecuted by similar 'courts' just for being Irish, frequently convicted to prison sentences for membership of some suspect Irish organisation or other all on the say-so of an "informer's" muffled voice from behind a screen in these Diplock drumhead courts-martial. If

they are 'unjust' now, they were 'unjust' then, Messrs capitalist press. And every IRA volunteer soldier was only 'doing their duty' as well, just like Clegg is dubiously claimed to have been doing.

The campaign to clear Clegg as such is, of course, the most outrageous nonsense. It was Clegg and his troop who carried out the unprovoked butchery on the teenage joyriders, gleefully doing so as no less an authority than the BBC has admitted through its *Panorama* reporter John Ware who has described in gruesome detail the scenes of triumphalism in the para-troop barracks after the killing where a cardboard mock-up of a Vauxhall Astra bore the legend 'Built by robots; driven by Irish; stopped by A Company', to the background of chortled smirks demanding 'take my picture with the trophy', etc.

If there is a case for releasing Clegg on the grounds that 'he was only doing his duty', it could only make sense if the responsibility for the unprovoked deliberate butchery of teenage joyriders was placed higher up, — either with the officers who sent A Company out on patrol and briefed and trained them, or the British imperialist political establishment in the colony who created the culture of colonial domination in the first place, persecuting and victimising the native Irish for centuries.

But simply switching responsibility for the teenage joyriders deaths to the higher-ups in this way can hardly be what the toffs at the *Daily Telegraph* and the *Daily Mail* and their legions of retired-general supporters had in mind.

Their monstrous, racist, and fascist claim is for complete exoneration for "a proper job, well done", etc. But such nauseating degeneracy, however, need not undermine any influence this campaign might have for viewing all those jailed as a result of this national-liberation struggle with compassionate clemency. Such decadence might even add to a new mood for seeing everything from the past in a different light. If the only 'lawfully' convicted British soldier for murder can suddenly be declared to be a 'hero', it might do nothing for fascism but merely make it possible for British public opinion to accept that everyone 'lawfully convicted' in the course of the 'emergency' should now be looked at in a fresh way.

Beyond the prisoner issue, the peace process is proceeding anyway, — and once again in ways which completely con-

tradict the ludicrous Downing Street posture that it has never and will never concede anything to the IRA, exposing Major's supposed 'negotiating stance' as pure hogwash which is merely covering things up while waiting for the Unionists to accept that the colonial game is up once and for all.

The capitalist press itself has reported some interesting aspects of the real British imperialist position which is all for facilitating the reunification of Ireland:

SECURITY services throughout Ireland believe it could prove counter-productive for the Government to insist that the IRA and Loyalists surrender their arms before being allowed to participate in full peace talks, *The Observer* has learnt.

John Major said in a BBC radio interview on Friday that he judged other political parties would not wish to sit down with Sinn Féin 'without significant progress having been made on arms', adding: 'It is equally my judgment that the British Government — any British government — could not, unless there had been progress on arms.'

But Garda and RUC sources at the highest levels told *The Observer* that it was more important to bring all

the paramilitaries to the negotiating table, even armed, than to risk the creation of splinter groups by insisting on disarmament.

One top RUC man said: 'It's all to play for. The people at the top are committed to the process — keep them locked into the process, and keep the other people happy... Splits could lead to all sorts of problems. It is better if agreement is reached in any talks, that everyone is involved.'

The flexible and pragmatic approach being taken by the police is fuelled by the knowledge that the terrorists could secretly keep guns in reserve and, even if they handed them all in, could quickly get hold of more — there are 120,000 legally-held guns in Northern Ireland, and guns for sale all over the world.

A senior Garda said: 'The Provos could make a gesture and tell us where certain weapons are, and say "That's it". We don't have an inventory of what they have.'

He added: 'It is the intent not to use guns and bombs again that matters. If they handed in everything now, they could restart making bombs in a year's time.'

Peter Robinson, deputy leader of the Democratic Unionist Party, commented on Mr Major's stand yesterday: 'They [the British Government] told us they were not talking to the IRA—but they were. Then they gave an unequivocal assurance that they would never clarify the Downing



• British forces engaged in summary executions

Street Declaration — but they did. They promised that the IRA would not be invited to exploratory talks until it renounced violence and permanently ended its murder campaign — but they did.

'Now, having pledged never to allow the IRA to enter full negotiations until it hands over its arms and explosives, they tell us that "progress" on this subject is all that is required — and they will define what constitutes progress.'

And some of the bourgeois media have started to describe the 'new Ireland' as a *fait accompli*, being lived daily, and are even proposing their own political superstructures which might constitutionalise this dramatic transformation:

Across the road Robinson's bar, gutted and almost demolished in a bomb attack, has been refurbished at a cost of £2.4m and now is packed to the doors every night of the week.

Robinson's is a tangible metaphor for the changed identity of Belfast: a Janus-like symbol of the city's two sides, republican and loyalist, back to back. The front bar is solidly Anglo-Irish, all mock-Victoriana complete with life-size figures of Sherlock Holmes and Watson. The back bar, also accessible through a separate door, is known as Fibber McGee's, equally pastiche but from a different kit: a Donegal grocer's kitchen pub, with hanging hams, wellies and fiddle music.

Partly because of the official London-sponsored campaigns against old bigotries, but more on account of the growth in the nationalist population of Belfast, the Celtic-Irish element in the city's culture has grown enormously. Three decades ago my grandfather, a Stormont civil servant, Shankill Road shopkeeper and past master of his Orange Order lodge, would have been horrified at the idea of street signs in the Irish language in Belfast. Today, even Protestants accept their presence in nationalist areas.

An even more crucial difference is that the new breed of politicians on the fringe of the Protestant paramilitaries have learned a new language themselves, compared with the familiar rantings of the Rev Ian Paisley and his Protestant fundamentalism. "It's time to ditch the dinosaurs," says Ervine. "We need to take the ayatollahs out of politics over here. John Paul II is a nice old Polish bloke. It doesn't do anybody any good going around shouting he's the anti-Christ. And calling the Catholic Church the harlot of Rome is just downright offensive."

Whereas the old breed of Unionist politician affected not to know how to pronounce the names of the Irish republic's two main parties, Fianna Fail and Fine Gael, the new breed, from Ervine to Ken Maginnis, the sharply intelligent Ulster Unionist MP, know how to say them, who they are and what they mean. "We have to. Whether, we like it or not, they have a say in what happens here," says Ervine.

There is no reason to end the current situation by which those born

in Northern Ireland are entitled to either a British or an Irish passport, or both. Northern Ireland's inhabitants' greatest need for defence this century has been against each other. The territorial issue can be fudged: at present both the UK and the Irish republic lay claim to Northern Ireland; amend the Government of Ireland Act to allow explicitly unification by consent and alter the Irish constitution to remove the imperative to achieve it, and the situation can remain substantially as is, pending developments which only a fool would try to predetermine.

What matters is immediate events on the ground. A key issue is policing. The Unionist-dominated RUC is already preparing for change. Senior RUC sources admit that not only new recruits but candidates for promotion from the rank of chief inspector to superintendent are being asked how they would react to a radical change in the culture of the force.

There is acceptance that only a much greater nationalist involvement will make the force universally acceptable, and if that means a new style and structure, it is worth it to return to normal policing rather than full-time anti-terrorism. Early retirements, widened recruitment, accelerated promotions and local community policing administered by up to 36 sub-divisions could be the beginning of a new order.

In short, cantonisation is on the agenda. The concept failed in Bosnia, but that is a war on a greater scale and not yet fought to a standstill.

Ulster's thankfully less brutal form of ethnic cleansing is relatively complete: the ghettos have rearranged themselves. Communities are more or less homogenous. Where they are not, it is because the inhabitants are prosperous enough not to care.

A British government could do to Northern Ireland what Mrs Thatcher did to the Greater London council: dissolve it into its constituent parts. Not, in this case, the six counties, but smaller units, on borough council level in parallel to policing districts.

Whether existing boundaries are acceptable or have to be redrawn is a topic for the talks. Already the border has little meaning; if there were no police checkpoints, there would be nothing to indicate crossing from one state to another in the west of the province.

Currency is a problem, though as the two are currently so near parity, only a small one. A single European currency would solve it. A "Europe of the regions" may be unpopular in Chelmsford, but it seems a good idea in Crossmaglen.

Different levels of taxation and social services North and South are frequently cited as a last-ditch defence against Irish unity. But there is no absolute reason why the people of Northern Ireland should follow either pattern precisely.

The province ran itself under devolution for half a century, immorally but not inefficiently. A greater degree of devolution could operate on similar lines. There is no reason why income tax should not be collected along with council tax,

administered and spent by the locally elected authorities. Differences in levels between different areas would soon be smoothed out.

Even if they were not, and this led to population movements for reasons of taxation rather than religion, it would not be the worst way of furthering integration. No British government, faced with the possibility of drastically cutting its annual £3 billion contribution to Northern Ireland, would object to loss of tax income from its 1.5m people.

Let the people of Ulster agree together — or separately if they must — on common Vat rates, health service funding and benefit levels. This is no sell-out but a bold experiment in restoring democracy to grassroots level.

As for central government representation, let Northern Irish MPs take seats in Westminster or the Dail as they choose (perhaps with non-voting rights in the other as well). Open all doors except violence.

There is no easy blueprint for peace in Northern Ireland; the above ideas are simply irons in the fire. They could, however, produce a degree of autonomy in which nationalists would consider themselves reunited with the rest of Ireland while Unionists would remain British as long as they wanted.

John Hume's successful catchphrase is not a "united Ireland" but an "agreed Ireland", in the short term it might have to be an agreement to differ, but surely that is better than no agreement at all? We have already experienced the alternative.

All of this is consistent with the actual developments in the British imperialist snail's-pace withdrawal from the Occupied Zone of Ireland established more than a decade ago. The first official talks for 70 years between the British Government and representatives of the Irish national liberation struggle have at last been held. And out of those talks have slipped leak after leak about the new cross-border bodies that are to be set up with executive powers to regulate certain matters on an all-Ireland basis, plus leak after leak about how the dominant Western allies (the United States of America and the Common Market) have been pushing the Downing Street paralytically all the way towards a new sustainable peaceful settlement of the Irish national question at long last.

Ireland itself is not a world-shattering matter, and the defusing of the national issue there will not of itself have a great impact on the international balance of class forces.

But the mess British imperialism has got itself into, and how London has been forced to set about trying to extricate itself from its mire, — is full of significance for the wider class-war struggles against imperialist decadence.

The British monopoly-imperialist establishment has humiliatingly failed to do anything but continually lose to the IRA and Sinn Féin because it is a historically decadent ruling class which has outlived its epoch of supremacy by some time and a long distance now, and because the very process of capitalist-system development has irresistibly created ever new and more capable centres of anti-imperialist resistance and struggle as the working masses have been transformed by the social and cultural processes of advanced production-organisation and technology into a class no longer appropriate for exploitation and domination but ready to become the ruling class itself.

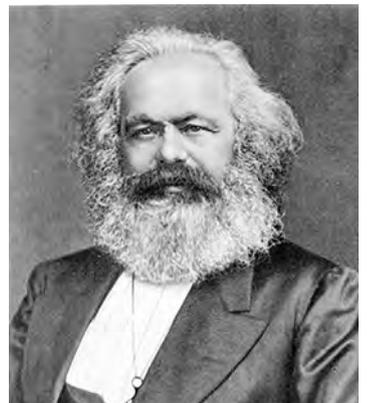
And Ireland only reflects much more vital challenges to the imperialist order taking place on the international stage.

As the *Bulletin* has steadily anticipated, the economic crisis in Mexico is turning out to be a monster headache for the whole free-market system, if not a lethal one yet.

It does not just involve the 'usual problems' of corruptly-governed 'banana republic' coming to grief for trying to live beyond their means with borrowed money. At stake is not only the entire market in international capital movements, but the very capitalist theories which have promoted the complete de-regulation of 'modern' rightwing economics.

And just how vital and deep the terrified divisions are in bourgeois circles which for different reasons are regarding the Mexican crisis as the final straw or a bridge too far, — can be seen from the paralysing split the turmoil has led to between Clinton's White House and the new-right Republican Congress. [...]

All of which highlights the utter irrelevance to the international imperialist crisis of Blair's sappy sentiments replacing Clause 4, and the Tory splits for or against a Eurocurrency. Marxist revolution is the only sane perspective. Adam Carr



Discussion:**Bourgeois propaganda stunts cannot halt historic trends in the international balance of class forces.**

[EPSR No 788 07-02-95]

The confusing propaganda blitzkriegs during the past week over Ireland and the Mexican economic crisis show the worth of the Marxist-Leninist scientific outlook as the only sound materialist analysis of bourgeois society.

The *Times* 'leak'-attempt to galvanise the dying Orange colonist community into revolt against the snail's-pace British imperialist withdrawal from Ireland, was followed by further Whitehall reactionary lobby efforts to pretend that rebelling Ulster Unionists could combine with the Labour Party to bring down the Tory Government at Westminster.

But this desperate and pathetic deception looked doomed from the start. Although the obscene opportunists Blair & Co are capable of any dirty tricks going to try to get into office, – imagining that Labour could be bamboozled into helping Orange colonist fascists to sabotage the peace process in Ireland, – and still maintain popular electoral support, sounded like one barroom fantasy too many.

Without ruling out the most amazing unexpected leaps, turn-rounds, and transformations in the politics of deep and incurable crisis of the capitalist system to come, the chaos is not that great yet to suppose that even the unprincipled imbecile Blair could think he could get away with such a stunt as voting with nazi 'loyalists' to prolong colonial dictatorship in the Occupied Zone of Ireland, especially after so many years of Labour (albeit futilely and incoherently) supporting eventual reunification of Ireland as its basic policy, and as many years of opposing the annual renewal of the Prevention of Terrorism Act in opposition to the detailed mishandling of the 'Emergency' and the Irish question by the Tories.

But before it could be fully seen how the *Times* leak and its handling were a plain propaganda stunt by a Rule-Britannia lobby within the British Establishment to pretend that they could command a new Carson rebellion against any imposed reunification deal from London, – and how the hints that an electoral deal with Labour could bring down the Major

Government if it did not tear up the framework document (for bringing forward a reunified Ireland at some time in the future) – were so much wishful thinking, – some fundamental class-historical truths would have been a useful guide.

Downing Street has not just suddenly gone weak-minded and soft with the result that 'the real interests of Britain and the British people were being sacrificed', etc, – and the Orange colonist community in the Occupied Zone of Ulster had not just suddenly gone to sleep or started to smell particularly offensively whereby the main British Tory Establishment would, out of the blue, suddenly start wanting to 'betray' or 'sell out' this part of the United Kingdom and the British people, – as was all being implied by this reactionary Union-Jack-waving Whitehall lobby and its backward press contacts.

British imperialism's real intentions towards its colonial occupation of part of Ireland, – and what was the real truth which lay behind all the wild media speculation and confusion-mongering of the last week about an 'unstoppable revolt' against Downing Street policies, and an 'unbeatable electoral alliance with Labour to halt the Tory Government in its tracks', etc, etc, – could only be successfully approached from a correct understanding of the post-1945 international balance of class forces.

The basis for British imperialism's historic retreat from its colonisation of Ireland began to be laid down a long time ago.

Far from it being a last-minute decision arbitrarily on Major's part to 'betray' Molyneux & Co, and a decision which, moreover, a lot of Unionist jumping up and down would be able to reverse, – the British Establishment acceptance that the colonial game is up in the Occupied Zone of Ireland became clear a long time ago.

Even in January 1981 with still four years to go before the 1985 Anglo-Irish Treaty first tentatively accepted that the affairs of the occupied Zone were properly the concern of the whole of Ireland, and the door was just slightly opened to the idea of Dublin governments developing some official say in

what went on there, – the *Bulletin* was able to write:

"After thousands more lives have been lost; after further enormous destruction and disruption of livelihoods; after being properly put in the dock internationally for its inhuman torture of suspects, its barbaric SAS assassination squads, and its NAZI-style internment-without-trial in concentration camps, and its midnight terror raids on Irish homes throughout the occupied zone; – after all this senseless mayhem, the ruling class is getting ready to pull out anyway, ignominiously defeated in its final rotten attempt to hang onto a corner of Ireland, at least, – by hook or by crook.

The ruling class is most sensitive of all to it being thought that its mighty police-military dictatorship has been forced out by a handful of IRA guerrillas, especially considering that the IRA is so politically handicapped by its insane policy of anti-civilian terror bombing.

But the facts are that the Republican movement's heroic struggle against the police-military-dictatorship, – the enormous suffering and sacrifice that the IRA and the nationalist working class have withstood, and the fanatically courageous fight by the Republican military wing against overwhelmingly superior odds of the British occupation, – all this has won the sympathy of the international working class.

It has forced even the bourgeoisie in countries like the USA, the British ruling class's closest ally and support, to condemn the continued military occupation.

So the *Guardian's* very long sour grapes editorial this week beginning

"The Provisional IRA now has very little going for it"

was written because the remarkable turnaround now in sight in British policy on Ireland has touched on the rawest of raw nerves of the ruling class, particularly the IRA's part in forcing that turn-round.

The one thing the bourgeoisie cannot stand, having staked its survival on the illusions and tricks of "parliamentary democracy" and the "rule of law" which it has hypocritically built up over the centuries of unchallenged imperialist domination, is the example of a relatively small group of dedicated revolutionary nationalists openly "defying" the Crown's "law and order" and winning mass support for that independent stand, undermining British capitalist rule.

The British bourgeoisie fear that as things start to get rougher in Great Britain due to the slump, and workers begin to realise that the "parliamentary democracy" fraud is doing nothing (about their suffering, permanent mass unemployment, and falling living standards) but act as a bromide to divert anger from revolutionary channels, – similar moves for political mobilisation, independent of the ruling class will begin in Britain.

But the degeneration of British capitalism proceeds rapidly and becomes more and more obvious whatever rotten propaganda smokescreens it puts up to hide its political catastrophes in Ireland, 'Rhodesia' and elsewhere, and whatever lying humbug it spreads through the press, parliament, and its millions of reformist agents throughout the Labour and trade union move-

ment about "preserving democracy".

The capitalist system is not about democracy but about power, the power of the ruling class to dominate the economic life of the country and as much of the outside world as it could through imperialism and colonialism, and to extract 'super'-profits to enable it to live the life of a ruling class – dominating landowning, industry, the professions, politics, the civil service, the police-military hierarchy, the judiciary, press, television and publishing, and the academic world.

That domination is now crumbling because the capitalist system is bankrupt. It can no longer develop the economic resources sufficiently successfully, – (due to its repeated slumps and wars), – to satisfy mankind's legitimately expanding aspirations.

The failure and historical out-datedness of the system cannot be hidden by any amount of television propaganda – or any amount of brutal military suppression, as the 20th century history of Ireland has shown, the century of British imperialist decline.

Now the British ruling class is falling apart as its system crumbles beneath it.

The gestures and hints (the Dublin summit, the concessions to the hunger strikers, etc) of acceptance at last by the British ruling class that its remaining toe-hold on Ireland, – its military occupation of the north, – can no longer be maintained (a development already reported by the *Bulletin*), still fall far short of an agreement to actually get out, as we explained.

The Tories want to end the infamous history of London's 800-year attempt to dominate Ireland by quietly slipping away so that no one will notice, – and certainly without giving the impression of a complete humiliation and reversal of policy due to having its Orange police-military dictatorship undermined by a handful of IRA guerrillas, backed by the entire Republican working class.

The bigoted Protestant bourgeoisie look like making any such quiet withdrawal impossible for the Tories.

The Stronge family's refusal to let the Westminster government be represented at the ritual tribal funeral of the former Stormont speaker, gunned down by the IRA together with his equally-prominent son in a major assault by the IRA in retaliation for the uncontrolled murders of leading Republicans (Bernadette Devlin the latest attempted victim) by the capitalist state and its tolerated Protestant assassination squads, – was obviously the consensus of the whole northern Ireland ruling class.

It marks an unheard-of low in relations between the Tory ruling class in Britain and their "Ulster Unionist" imitators in the north of Ireland.

The Curragh Mutiny and Carson's 1911-1914 rebellion is generally thought of as the gravest-ever crisis in relations between Westminster and the "loyalist" capitalist class in Ireland.

But that was against the Liberal Party. The dominating sector of the British ruling class around the Tory Party openly sided with the Orange rebellion against London in that period. The infamous partition of Ireland in 1921 was the result.

But now it is the Tory Party, the voice of the ruling class establishment itself which is preparing to abandon the

province finally to Irish national liberation.

For this rift to have already degenerated to the point where the Tories are being virtually boycotted for their 'failure to protect Loyalist Ulster' implies that strong feelings of UDI – unilateral declaration of independence – are ripe again.

It implies that the Tories' reluctant acceptance, under US imperialist pressure, that the spectacle of permanent armed rebellion against British military occupation in the north of Ireland was fatally tarnishing the West's "freedom and democracy" image, could finally force Britain to get out, as the *Bulletin* has explained.

The rift gives more credibility, therefore, to the understanding that deals were discussed at the recent Dublin summit for an elaborate cover-up of a British withdrawal from northern Ireland.

Paisley's continual prodding at the settlement with the Maze hunger-strikers and blanket-protest men gives the same impression.

He knows that a sell-out is being cooked up. [ILWP *Bulletin* 73 – ed]

A few weeks later, the *Bulletin* explained again:

"If there was no intention of getting Ulster off its hands by a deal with Dublin, then what would be the point of the continuous pained reassurances to Paisley and the rest. Just let the master-race loonies see after a time that nothing is happening (if there really are no such pull-out plans), and the trouble will die down of its own accord.

What makes the Tories' intentions hard to comprehend, – and what could force their abandonment (apart from Paisley), – is the ruling class's obsessive fear that they must not be seen to be 'giving in to violence', i.e. withdrawing under IRA pressure.

This was also the curious final message of the long television series on Irish history which ended this week with a studio discussion.

The series on BBC and ITV were clearly inspired by the British capitalist establishment after years of a total ban on televising such sensitive material, which clearly brought out the great injustice and brutality of Britain's long domination of Ireland.

They could only have been given the go-ahead for the deliberate purpose

of conditioning British public opinion for the ignominious British military pull-out after recent years and previous centuries of vicious and ultimately futile repression and destruction.

But the safe petty bourgeois gang of journalists, politicians and academic historians gathered in the studio were by no means let completely off the capitalist establishment leash.

They had one last essential service to perform, – and that was to drum it into viewers heads that 'violence' is the real cause of all the intractable problems and the one impossible obstacle to a final solution of the Irish troubles.

The violence of the IRA, naturally. Not the violence of British rule which first CONQUERED Ireland and has hung on since by sword, bullet, and gallows. Not the violence of the gerrymandering Orange bourgeois clique which tyrannously ruled the remaining occupied north of Ireland after British imperialism was forced to relinquish control of three-quarters of Ireland after the Rising and the bloody War of Independence against the Black and Tans, 1916-1921.

Even the anti-partition Catholic nationalist John Hume, the sop to 'Irish opinion' on the programme, could not please his parliamentary circus-mates quick enough by declaring "violence is no solution" and condemning the IRA as much as anybody.

This fraudulent petty bourgeois conspiracy of journalists, politicians, and academics is not just aimed against IRA tactics and the class-purpose of IRA violence (both of which Marxist revolutionaries also depart from).

It was aimed against the very notion of class violence as a solution to class oppression.

It was a message to the working class of Britain: "Violence is bad. It will never solve anything. Don't think that any British pull-out from the remaining military occupation of Ireland has got anything to do with the violent resistance of the IRA."

To the extent that IRA violence reflects a class war determination by Irish workers and intelligentsia to fight against British ruling class domination, (or that of its Protestant Orange petty bourgeois proxies), – then it is precisely the IRA's violence which has finally forced Britain's hand.

The background to this is, of course, the steadily weakening world position

of British imperialism and its growing economic and political crisis, – just as that was the background to the partial retreat from Irish domination in 1921.

But no dying ruling class has ever voluntarily let go its hold on power. The history of the world is the history of new emerging forces pushing the dying ruling class out of the way; it is the history of class struggle.

And that struggle has NEVER been peaceful. It has always been climaxed by a violent overthrow of the old order.

Unlike anarchists and nationalist-terrorists however, revolutionary Marxists do not make violence the starting point of the struggle.

Exactly the opposite. Only the revolutionary working class has the power to finally and completely end imperialist oppression and bring about real independence and national self-determination. And that is through the socialist revolution which alone, when completed at the higher stage of communism, can eradicate any basis for class or national oppression arising out of the unequal economic development of the world.

But the working class becomes revolutionary not through military or insurrectionary organisation, as necessary as that may ultimately be, (due to ruling class police-military dictatorship and civil war), but through POLITICAL organisation. And in many cases, even under autocratic tyranny let alone bourgeois democracy, terrorism can be an obstacle to revolutionary political organisation.

Many of the IRA's terrorist tactics have been just such an obstacle, – confirming and cementing the IRA's bourgeois nationalist limitations.

But the IRA's purely military national-liberation struggle against the British police-military dictatorship has been all too painfully successful from a Tory ruling class point of view, from the beginning of this century to the present day, and it has now forced yet another retreat.

The petty tyranny of the gerrymandered Orange rule of Ulster would have gone on for ever if the Republicans had not grown rebellious by the end of the 1960s. And if the British army had met no resistance from the IRA and the entire Republican working class in the occupied north, that same petty tyranny would have eventually been installed back in power there.

The totally justified violent class revolt by the Irish Republicans in the north over the last 15 years now ensures that it won't be.

Despite some IRA political willingness to compromise, and despite all the sabotage by the local Orange Order of solutions to the prisoners status dispute, etc, the decaying British ruling class will be forced out. [ILWP No 79 12-03-81 –ed]

Later on, this analysis was regularly added to, detailing the symbolic role played by the Occupied Zone of Ireland itself in the decline of British imperialist fortunes, – a military base guarding Britain's back door which was no longer needed (or too expensive to maintain) given British imperialism's now vastly reduced importance in world economic and military domination after 1945 (and increasingly declining because of further economic decadence (vis-a-vis Germany, the USA, Japan, the Common Market, etc) by the time of the 1960s and 1970s); and a shipbuilding and engineering heavy-industry base which was no longer profitable because of that very decline in British imperialism's worldwide performance in economic competitiveness.

That expensive outpost in Occupied Ireland was becoming a pointlessly expensive burden for all kinds of reasons.

At the same time, the *Bulletin* began to note the corresponding decline in the internal confidence and reason-for-existing of the British colonist community itself. The one million bogusly 'British-Irish' could quietly survive unremarkably if they meekly and sensibly merged properly into their Irish background. But as the arrogant colonist advanced guard for continued British imperialist rule, they were bound to be a dying and spent force. British imperialist rule was dying



worldwide, – losing position after position in economic, political and military matters to rival imperialist powers and to the national-liberation struggle, – and the British imperialist colonial community in the Occupied Zone of Ireland would be bound to see its whole way of life, and its whole lifestyle, die too. It was self-consciously becoming a community which knew the game was up and had started to no longer believe its own bombastic propaganda, – just as progressively befell the British colonial communities in Rhodesia, in South Africa, and elsewhere around the old Empire as the national-liberation struggle irresistibly swept forward under the unstoppable influence of the world socialist revolution (albeit by then becoming bogged down in its own internal development by the lethal sickness of revisionist ideology).

Marxist-Leninist science of history as the history of class struggle and nothing else, fundamentally, in modern times, provided the only basis for trying to decide if in 1995 the British imperialist colony could rally its forces to prevent the creeping reunification of Ireland as a press/Whitehall lobby was implying, and if the Labour Party's opportunism could be bent far enough to help Orange reaction to turn back the clock.

As soon as all this present confusing dust has settled, it will be informative to analyse how the fake petty-bourgeois 'revolutionaries' of the bogus 'left' in Britain have continued their cretinous misleadership of workers on the Irish question, disarming the proletariat from effective class struggle totally by keeping up the ignorance of the real world and real class struggle analyses that workers have always suffered from under a variety of subjective-idealist illusions from anarchism to ultra-leftism.

This SWP, WRP, RCP, etc, swamp play the crucial role in helping the straight bourgeois press, from the *Guardian* to the *Times*, to try to stampede the political situation in Britain into a reactionary catastrophe, as happened last week with all the lying gibberish about how the IRA/Sinn Féin Irish national-liberation struggle was 'properly' going to be defeated after all, supposedly. The whole bourgeoisie, from large to small, collectively hate the idea of armed revolutionary struggle, especially one of such 'uncouth' spontaneity as that of the IRA/Sinn Féin, triumphing where a more bogusly 'learned' tradition

of 'struggle' (i.e. posturing) was supposed to prevail.

The Mexican crisis is almost as rich in class-war lessons. Clinton's presidential coup to twist the arms of the reluctant Congress, the IMF, the BIS, and some Western 'partners' to bail out the collapsed Mexican "investment" bubble, reveals how unprecedentedly close to a worldwide markets meltdown in modern times things were last week, – and still are, in effect, because the debt crisis, and the 'hot money' fears that the circus juggling can no longer continue, has only been 'solved' once again...by stoking up an even bigger debt crisis to 'overcome' the difficulty, and by juggling even more balls in the air than ever before.

Inter-imperialist bitterness nearly brought things crashing down this time, – as Germany & Co poured scorn on bigger IMF bailouts while the fundamental US indebtedness underlying the Mexican near-catastrophe, still remains unresolved (and unresolvable, other than by a new Depression, trade war, and world war). Washington hopes the China trade war can be a successful practice for universal fisticuffs to come. It might turn out to be the first of many bloody noses to come for the decadent imperialist 'leadership', now undermined by 'surplus'-capital sclerosis which must befall the whole monopoly-imperialist system eventually, under iron laws of capitalist accumulation discovered by Marx and still unrefuted. China's centrally-directed economy should cope much better with trade war than the more vicious but anarchic Western market free-for-all.

Meanwhile, more propaganda smokescreens have been poured out by bourgeois ideology to hide the hysteria over Mexico's near-crash, among them the crudely obvious substitution at once of Brazil for Mexico as the new 'engine' of Latin American 'economic miracles' on the simplistic grounds that since Brazil did not immediately follow Mexico down the chute, then that must make it a real winner.

This bilge was followed by the extraordinary spectacle of the Brazilian Cabinet taking a 25% pay cut (from their huge salaries) to con the masses into accepting a 42% loss in the purchasing power of their minimum wage. Such stunts hint that desperation is close in Brazil too.

Despite the propaganda blitzkrieg around Mexico's near-collapse, stark facts emerged such as the effective loss of Mexican

sovereignty to its imperialist creditors, including control of its own oil reserves; suspicion that all the players are devaluing currencies or raising interest rates not for the "world's common good" but for partisan national or private interests; public certainty that taxes and cuts are once more being used to bail out failed multinational monopoly-imperialist gambling.

War requiems cannot drown the drumbeat of capitalism's endlessly renewed aggressive conflicts. Marxist-Leninist scientific understanding of modern history is now crucial and sabotaged principally by the 57 varieties of fake-'lefts'.

[EPSR No 789 14-02-95]

The Russian Revolution failed to complete what was so famously begun in 1917 largely because the grasp of Marxist-Leninist philosophy proved subsequently to be much feeble than the 57 varieties of petty-bourgeois anti-communist 'leftism' worldwide.

The next great leap forward in history will take place when the post-1945 capitalist crisis of a massively long inflationary boom finally matures in unstoppable international currency collapses, and civil-war aggression by the ruling class finally obliges the working class to take to the proletarian-dictatorship road once again, roughly along similar lines to what is potentially posed in Mexico now, but on a far more brutal and ruthless worldwide scale, possibly after the reimposition of inter-imperialist warmongering of some description.

The last thing that is needed meanwhile is just more 'left' party posturing of the old Trotskyite activist kind which is utterly bankrupt on the vital question of first mastering completely the scientific revolutionary theory of Marxism-Leninism, – proudly and philistinely so in the case of such outfits as *Class War* and the SWP, the most prominent of the anti-Soviet, anti-proletarian-dictatorship, anti-communist groupings.

A steady increase in the 'left' pressure that these anti-Leninist organisations can apply might be good for a laugh or even no great harm in itself, – but crucially it will not achieve what most needs to be achieved, – a complete relearning and re-working of Marxist-Leninist theory from top to bottom, re-digesting the whole of revolu-

More revolutionary repercussions in Mexico from all this are inevitable, swelling the already powerful spontaneous communist rebellion in the southern provinces.

And if the 'surplus'-capital trade-war bubble is prevented from swamping Mexico, it will burst out somewhere else sometime soon.[.]

Build Leninism JB

tionary socialist history from the 19th century onwards, but particularly from 1917 onwards.

Only the steady building of a party totally dedicated to that scientific task will be of real use to the working class in the very complex international and class-war battles to come.

And that building will not be done by a single gimmick but only by the struggle for revolutionary theory itself, blow-by-blow, understanding-by-understanding, as history unfolds. The greater the volume and spread of revolutionary understanding, the more and the faster will the party grow.

The complexities of the national-liberation struggle in Ireland have repeatedly exposed the pathetic theoretical backwardness of the fake-'left', including the weakness of Sinn Féin itself which for ages limped along burdened by a petty-bourgeois defeatist attitude towards victory over imperialism (see *ILWP Books* vol 8, 15 & 22 *Ireland*) when it failed to grasp how the Hunger Strikes and the related political successes had dealt the colonial statelet a mortal blow, and how the Anglo-Irish Treaty of 1985 confirmed that setback to British imperialism, accepting Dublin's authority over affairs in the occupied north, albeit only in embryo form.

Recent twists and turns and frenzied propaganda smoke-screens from a humiliated British imperialist establishment over its ill-concealed snail's pace withdrawal from Ireland (making ghoulish nonsense of the last 25 years' colonial butchery in an 800-year-long record of failed conquest) – have exposed more of the fake-'left' confu-

sion.

The previous issue of *Class War*, for example, included the following statements:

Gerry Adams assured everyone that the IRA initiative had given the republican movement "an opportunity to secure our political objectives."

In the weeks which followed the ceasefire announcement, Sinn Féin were to show just how they hoped to achieve those objectives. Having realised that the IRA campaign could not succeed, they were now hoping to enter into an alliance with the SDLP and the Southern government.

As socialists we have said all along that the IRA campaign could not deliver even the limited aims of republicanism, but we are equally opposed to the new 'unarmed strategy', which has nothing to offer the Irish working class.

You could be forgiven for thinking that Sinn Féin has taken a massive political step to the right. Why then does Sinn Féin seek agreement with parasites like the SDLP and Fianna Fail? The answer to this lies in the politics of republicanism, because, no matter how radical they claim to be, republicans view their role as that of advancing conditions for the Catholic/nationalist section of the population. What better way to do this than to get the most powerful nationalist party, Fianna Fail, on your side.

Far from 'broadening the battlefield' in the new unarmed strategy, Sinn Féin are going down an increasingly narrowing road which can lead only to an alliance with the very people who are the enemies of every working class person in this country.

"Does he believe that our long-suffering people would be any better off in a united Ireland brought about in conjunction with these people? Has he learned nothing from Irish history which repeatedly teaches us that common fronts with middle class parties with different economic aims inevitably lead to sell-outs for the working class?"

The letter was signed "Worried Republican."

In the four and a half years since this letter was penned it is becoming clear that Sinn Féin have learned nothing from Irish history and also that more recent developments would seem to give "Worried Republican" much more to be worried about.

However this does not mean that we agreed with the republican 'armed struggle.' We argued that the IRA campaign could not win and that the politics of republicanism were incapable of bringing about change.

There are others on the left, in both Britain and Ireland, who believed the armed struggle to be the only tactic which could get the Brits out, therefore they gave total support to the republican campaign and called for a vote for Sinn Féin. In doing this they were forced to dismiss the entire Protestant working class.

Since the IRA ceasefire the response from those groups has ranged from supporting the new 'unarmed strategy' and insisting that Britain has been bombed to the negotiating table," to accusing Sinn Féin of selling out.

Class War believes that it is time for socialists to take stock of the changing political landscape and begin discussing how the small left wing forces in Ireland can begin to build their influence, in order to provide an alternative to what we believe is the failure of republicanism.

The type of peace process which we really need - one which will build more houses, improve the health service, provide meaningful employment and a decent education system - is not even up for discussion.

are best served by unity with their fellow workers, 'Catholic, Protestant or dissenter.' It must be a party which can show Protestant workers that they have nothing to gain from supporting the northern state and that they have nothing to fear from the type of Ireland which would come from the destruction of both partitionist states.

At the moment this may not seem possible but the alternative is for us to continue to live in a society which breeds hatred and violence. We cannot afford to leave it to right wing politicians to sort out a future which will condemn another generation to sectarian division and poverty.

The essence of this naive and self-contradictory drive is to pointlessly damn the Irish national-liberation struggle for not being a workers revolutionary socialist struggle, (which gets described, however, in more wimpishly reformist terms than ever Sinn Féin's Popular-Front coalition nationalism could even be accused of).

This infantile 'left' posturing can only have the effect of weakening and confusing potential British workers' sympathies for what is an entirely legitimate nationalist fight (for all its limitations from a revolutionary socialist perspective).

And out of this imbecile determination to beat their middle-class 'revolutionary' chests, the anarchist philistines almost inevitably just casually completely falsify what Sinn Féin's aim has been and what the national-liberation war has tremendously achieved against all the odds, - and against all the perpetual sneering from the fake-'left' pigmies in the British petty-bourgeoisie.

As has been exhaustively demonstrated in ILWP Books vol 8 & 15 and in countless *Bulletins* since then, it is just a monstrous historical falsification to pretend that the IRA campaign "could not succeed" and has not succeeded. British imperialism is pulling out of its occupation of part of Ireland, - and the bastard colonial statelet of 'Northern Ireland' will never be re-established again in anything remotely comparable to its old sectarian annexationist form, if restored at all. The eventual re-unification of Ireland is now firmly and irrevocably on the agenda.

This represents an enormous historical milestone, and a colossal achievement for a small but determined armed revolutionary struggle against the full might of the oldest-established metropolitan imperialist power of all.

The British ruling class was not at all convinced at the start of the emergency 25 years ago that it should abandon this last colonial outpost. It only became persuaded to pull out by the phenomenal stubborn

unbeatability of the IRA and the real damage to City of London fortunes that the mainland bombing campaign had begun to inflict towards the end of the struggle.

These remarkable achievements in turn influenced powerful imperialist 'allies' of Britain in Washington and the Common Market to twist London's arm into accepting that it would have to dismantle this last armed colony, - being careful only to do so without making it obvious that it was mostly a capitulation to revolutionary armed struggle.

Wrapped up in their ridiculous subjective preening, these dismal anarchists really have not the faintest idea what is really going on in the international balance of class forces.

And having failed to grasp how Sinn Féin had finally realised, through its ceasefire initiative, that British imperialism had had enough and wanted to get out, the *Class War* infants then announce that they do not support the continuation of the IRA's military strategy either, but then confess that they do not know quite what to think or recommend anyway.

They then wind up with the most crass opportunist garbage of all, uttering a ludicrously naive reformist plea for a 'nicer' system, etc, coupled with the most criminally dangerous light-minded delusion that 'protestant workers' (whatever they are) merely have to be appealed to for bringing about a socialist paradise in Ireland almost overnight.

The anarchists' grotesque imperialist and racist slander of the Irish Republic as a "partitionist state" just as responsible for reactionary sectarianism as the British colonialists, repeats almost exactly the sort of fake-'revolutionary' posturing that the *Bulletin* was challenging against the peculiar Spartacist American ultra-lefts as long ago as January 1982, and later that year against the grotesque opportunist lunacies of Healy's Redgraveite circus:

British imperialism, for its part, is losing more money than ever propping up the artificial Orange bourgeois statelet and is also losing the propaganda struggle to the IRA (the hunger strikes, Bobby Sands' election victory, etc), and also, slowly, the national liberation war too.

The Tories' latest £90 million dole to the province is clearly just a token and deliberately framed to underline London's view that a long-term solution to the north of Ireland's appalling economic problems (nearly 20% unemployment) lies within the context of an

all-Ireland approach.

As the *Bulletin* has repeatedly explained, the extreme Orange and imperialist bourgeoisie may not like this proposed virtual abandonment of the old Union Jack-waving 'guarantee' that Ulster would for ever remain 'British', but their ability to fight against it as Carson, the Tory Party, and the British Army officer caste did in the pre-World War I period is only a farcical shadow of its former self.

That extremist colonialist wing of the British ruling class has lost its Empire and all its confidence in the subsequent half-century. The days of brazen imperialist domination, - of Ireland or anywhere else, - are fast dying and becoming impossible for the 'free world' to get away with any longer.

Thus Paisley's threatened revolt is already proving to be far less substantial than shallow press predictions have indicated over the last few years. And Hermon's stand implies that the British capitalist state machine in the occupied zone may itself be in a position to successfully take on the job of routing the threatened 'protestant' backlash, i.e. the fascist reaction.

The New York-run Spartacists' hysterical defeatism about Paisley's threatened bloodbath (*Spartacist Britain* No 38 December/January) is in the first place, therefore, grotesquely out of touch with the real events in the class war.

But much worse is their utterly RE-FACTORY reasoning behind their refusal to recognise the legitimacy of the Republicans' national liberation war.

The contemptuous fake-'left' remarks that "green nationalism is no less bigoted and reactionary than Orange" betray a lunatic confusion of nationalism and imperialism, a profound ignorance of Marx and Lenin, and a criminal siding with savage imperialist repression of that national liberation struggle.

Irish nationalism is as limited as any nationalism. But where nationalism becomes a genuinely mass movement with revolutionary implications in the fight against imperialism, Marxists have always acknowledged its justification and never crassly opposed it on sectarian abstract ideological grounds (which in practice would only amount to the most hypocritical material support for imperialism).

Orange 'loyalism' is nothing whatever to do with nationalist liberation struggle against imperialism. It is pure colonialism of the worst Rhodesia-white-settler kind. White workers in South Africa are among the most rabid wavers of the national flag. But that does not make their nationalism the equal of the black national liberation struggle.

Neither is the flag-waving of 'protestant' workers in the occupied north of Ireland anything to do with a national liberation struggle. It has everything to do with the politics of fascist colonialism. Lenin's line, following Marx, was to support the petty bourgeois IRA all the way to full Irish independence.

Writing in *The right of nations to self-determination* against Rosa Luxemburg (the Spartacists' spiritual inspiration although they take the name of her German revolutionary party in vain), Lenin explained how

"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...

"And in proposing in the International a resolution of sympathy with 'the Irish nation', 'the Irish people' (the clever LV would probably have berated poor Marx for forgetting about the class struggle!), Marx advocated the SEPARATION of Ireland from England...."

"If capitalism had been overthrown in England as quickly as Marx had at first expected, there would have been no room for a bourgeois-democratic and general national movement in Ireland.

But since it had arisen, Marx advised the English workers to support it, give it a revolutionary impetus and see it through in the interests of THEIR OWN liberty....

"The 'unpracticality' and 'impracticability' of the separation of Ireland (if only owing to geographical conditions and England's immense colonial power) were quite obvious...."

"Both the Irish people and the English proletariat proved weak. Only now, through the sordid deals between the English Liberals and the Irish bourgeoisie, is the Irish problem BEING SOLVED (the example of Ulster shows with what difficulty) through the land reform (with compensation) and Home Rule (not yet introduced). Well then? Does it follow that Marx and Engels were 'Utopians', that they put forward 'impracticable' national demands, or that they allowed themselves to be influenced by the Irish petty-bourgeois nationalists (for there is no doubt about the petty-bourgeois nature of the Fenian movement), etc?"

"No. In the Irish question, too, Marx and Engels pursued a consistently proletarian policy, which really educated the masses in a spirit of democracy and socialism. Only such a policy have saved both Ireland and England half a century of delay in introducing the necessary reforms, and prevented these reforms from being mutilated by the liberals to please the reactionaries.

"The policy of Marx and Engels on the Irish question serves as a splendid example of the attitude the proletariat of the oppressor nations should adopt towards national movements, an example which has lost none of its immense PRACTICAL importance. It serves as a warning against that 'servile haste' with which the philistines of all countries, colours and languages hurry to label as 'utopian' the idea of altering the frontiers of states that were established by the violence and privileges of the landlords and bourgeoisie of one nation.

"If the Irish and English proletariat had not accepted Marx's policy and had not made the secession of Ireland their slogan, this would have been the worst sort of opportunism, a neglect of their duties as democrats and socialists, and a concession to ENGLISH reaction and the ENGLISH bourgeoisie." (May 1914).

The English proletariat still remains weakened by its toleration of the reactionary repression of the national liberation movement in the occupied north of Ireland. The practical way forward for the final defeat of imperialism throughout the entire British Isles remains the defeat of imperialism through the final complete victory of Irish nationalism.

The hopelessly academic New York Spartacists exhibit all the crass insensitivity of 'oppressor nation philistines'.

Crudely, they try to equate the inclusion of religion on the official curriculum of Irish schools with the age-old imperialist-colonialist tyranny of British domination of Ireland!

When Paisley demagogically declares 'We prefer to die than give in to the bondage and tyranny of Dublin', he is appealing to an instinctive recognition among Protestant workers that what is posed in a forcible re-unionification is a reversal of the terms of oppression.'

the Sparts declare, virtually arguing Paisley's racist-fascist case for him. 'White' South African workers could argue just as persuasively against being forced to accept the domination of black society.

The comparison of religious education and 700 years of colonial domination is ludicrous enough. But the Spart armchair socialists are so mesmerised by 'Trotskyist programme' fetishism that they are obviously under the illusion that in 'enlightened' 'protestant' Britain, there is no compulsory religious education in schools! In reality, the entire working class throughout the British Isles is forced to suffer stifling compulsory Christian religious education in all state schools. Workers in the occupied north of Ireland will be no worse off on that score under Dublin rule. The concealed racism, in-

correctness, and triviality of this major argument of the 'Spartacist International' is almost unbelievable.

Their very labelling of workers in the colonial occupation of the north of Ireland as 'protestant' workers is a farce and a fraud.

Any 'loyalist' workers in the north who go along with the infamous Union Jack-waving frustration of legitimate demands for the restoration of full Irish independence have only one label - 'reactionary'. And their rotten line in support of nearly 70 years of something approaching military-fascist dictatorship must be fought and defeated in whatever way it takes, - not pandered to as the reactionary Sparts would like.

Vanessa Redgrave's kept band of middle class anti-communists, the WRP, persist in lying to the working class about the Marxist-Leninist attitude to nationalist struggles against imperialism.

An outrageous distortion of a quote from Lenin is their latest pathetic contribution to the bourgeoisie's campaign to put down the Irish national liberation movement (*Labour Review* No 5, 1982).

The silly Redgraveites then repeat their slanderous provocation made in July after the IRA bomb attacks on military ceremonials in London's Royal parks:

"Who authorised this latest bombing episode and why?" implying that the IRA was in league with the British capitalist state.

"The Provisional IRA has come to Thatcher's aid. We denounce these bombings in the strongest possible terms. They serve Thatcher and the capitalist state...."

the well-funded Redgraveite petty bourgeoisie declared, making their provocation explicit.

Fatuously, they try to recruit Lenin



for this nauseating AGENT PROVOCATEUR work in the Labour movement, trying to finger the nationalists.

Their aim is to prove their contentions that -

1. "thirteen years of armed struggle have exposed the infantile belief of IRA leaders that bombs in the UK could wring reforms from Whitehall and lead to a negotiated settlement in the north of Ireland."
2. That "the hunger strikes were a gruesome failure".
3. That "the armalite in one hand, the ballot in the other" is a "politically unviable policy".
4. And that terrorism has "strengthened the Tories' resolve to continue the brutal repression of the north".
5. And that "defending the right of the IRA" to fight imperialism "is a long call from actually defending the expediency of such actions". (A remarkably frank if accidental admission by the WRP of their TOTAL humbug in pretending to defend national liberation rights IN WORDS while opposing those rights to fight imperialism IN PRACTICE, - (especially when the going gets hot and the respectable Redgraveite petty bourgeoisie feel like running away from any possible Fleet Street taint of 'responsibility for violence'))).

But the quote they use from Lenin, to try to back up this confession of opportunist cowardice and COMPLETE anti-Marxist political bankruptcy, means exactly the OPPOSITE of what the WRP intend it to convey.

They quote from chapter 10 of Lenin's 1916 work "*The socialist revolution and the right of nations to self-determination*".

"To imagine that social revolution is conceivable without revolts by small nations in the colonies and in Europe, without revolutionary outbursts by a section of the petty bourgeoisie with all its prejudices, without a movement of the politically non-conscious proletariat and

"centuries-old Irish national movement, having passed through various stages and combinations of class interest, manifested itself in particular in a mass Irish National Congress in America which called for Irish independence; it also manifested itself in street fighting conducted by a section of the urban petty bourgeoisie and a section of the workers after a long period of mass agitation, demonstrations, suppression of newspapers, etc. Whoever calls such a rebellion a 'putsch' is either a hardened reactionary, or a doctrinaire hopelessly incapable of envisaging a social revolution as a living phenomenon...."

"Whoever expects a 'pure' social revolution will never live to see it. Such a person pays lip-service to revolution without understanding what revolution is...."

"The socialist revolution in Europe cannot be anything other than an outburst of mass struggle on the part of all and sundry oppressed and discontented elements. Inevitably, sections of the petty bourgeoisie and of the backward workers will participate in it. Without such participation, mass struggle is impossible, without it no revolution is possible. And just as inevitably will they bring into the movement their prejudices,

semi-proletarian masse against oppression by the landowners, the church, and the monarchy, against national oppression, etc., - to imagine all this is to repudiate social revolution."

This is immediately followed by an attempt (long-winded, feeble, and muddled) to elaborate Marxism-Leninism's CLEAR and well-known rejection of purely nationalist political struggle against imperialism, and rejection of the anarchist weapon of individual terror.

But this has nothing whatever to do with the quote from Lenin they give.

And the quote they give has nothing whatever to do with their attempted DENUNCIATION of nationalist armed struggle. Just the opposite.

Lenin was attacking some German 'Marxists' who were trying to dismiss the 1916 Easter Rebellion in Dublin as nothing more than a 'putsch' with little social backing. (The WRP dishonestly omit any explanation of the purpose of Lenin's polemic).

The meaning of his remarks is self-evident: that ON THE WAY to a completed socialist revolution which will alone finally rout imperialism and allow the fulfilment of any people's legitimate national aspirations, the bourgeois political status-quo will be broken up by all manner of revolts and mass struggles led by all manner of political movements. And that for revolutionary socialists to STAND ASIDE from (let alone denounce) such popular struggles would be the height of REACTIONARY SECTARIAN STUPIDITY and tantamount to a stab-in-the-back to the eventual socialist revolution.

In other words, Lenin's quote is actually proving that IT IS THE WRP who are "serving Thatcher" by their middle class anti-Leninist HOSTILITY to nationalist revolt.

Lenin had no such hostility, as the above quote graphically demonstrates. Just the opposite. He welcomed any revolutionary movement against imperialism as helping to break up the old political structures and open the way to Marxist-Leninist revolutionary socialist consciousness.

Lenin was for a Marxist proletarian dictatorship, a strong workers state, and the international socialist revolution as the final solution to the problems of imperialism, and not for merely national self-determination, or anarcho-syndicalist terror.

Of course Sinn Féin Irish nationalists are not Marxist-Leninists. Whoever said they were? Lenin's point is PRECISELY that the German 'Marxists' he was attacking were being "ridiculously pedantic" for "vilifying the Irish rebellion by calling it a 'putsch'".

Either side of the WRP's hilariously mis-chosen quote, Lenin explained that the

their reactionary fantasies, their weaknesses and errors. But objectively they will attack capital.....

"A blow delivered against the power of the English imperialist bourgeoisie by a rebellion in Ireland is a hundred times more significant politically than a blow of equal force delivered in Asia or in Africa....

"...an oppressed civilised nation has reacted to a military oppression unparalleled in ferocity by establishing an organ of revolutionary protest. The dialectics of history are such that small nations, powerless as an independent factor in the struggle against imperialism, play a part as one of the ferments, one of the bacilli, which help the real anti-imperialist force, the socialist proletariat, to make its appearance on the scene....

"We would be very poor revolutionaries if, in the proletariat's great war of liberation for socialism, we did not know how to utilise every popular movement against every single disaster imperialism brings in order to intensify and extend the crisis. If we were, on the one hand, to repeat in a thousand keys the declaration that we are 'opposed' to all national oppression and, on the other, to describe the heroic revolt of the most mobile and enlightened section of certain classes in an oppressed nation against its oppressors as a 'putsch', we should be sinking to the same level of stupidity as the Katutskyites.

"It is the misfortune of the Irish that they rose prematurely, before the European revolt of the proletariat had had time to mature. Capitalism is not so harmoniously built that the various sources of rebellion can immediately merge of their own accord, without reverses and defeats. On the other hand, the very fact that revolts do break out at different times, in different places, and are of different kinds, guarantees wide scope and depth to the general movement.

"But it is only in premature, individual, sporadic, and therefore unsuccessful, revolutionary movements that the masses gain experience, acquire knowledge, gather strength, and get to know their real leaders, the socialist proletarians, and in this way prepare for the general onslaught...."

Every single word of Lenin's here is alive with a real revolutionary's exhilaration at the "heroic revolt" albeit of petty bourgeois Fenian nationalists, just as every genuine revolutionary today will feel enormous sympathy for the masses of Republican workers and youth in the occupied north of Ireland who have been brought out to the streets to fight the police-military dictatorship by the savage imperialist repression of the Fenian nationalists.

What an enormous distance between Lenin's enthusiastic sympathy for nationalist revolt as part of the chaotic unplannable break-up of imperialism, and the middle class Redgraveites' HATRED of the nationalist revolt. As Lenin explained, in reality it merely proves that these petty bourgeois poseurs are OPPOSED to the social revolution.

In just the same way, these lunatic sectarians were OPPOSED and HOSTILE to the spontaneous anarchic revolts in Brixton, Toxteth and Moss Side last year. Who is really "serving Thatcher"? The WRP opportunist sectarian reformists.

Compare all this pathetic petty-bourgeois fake-'left' ignorance with the following pained but honest acknowledgment of objective historical reality from the very bourgeois *Manchester Evening News*:

I HAVE spent half this week in Ireland, commuting between Derry and Belfast. I have been in a friendly, but distinctively foreign country. Since the silencing of the guns at the end of last August and the disappearance of British troop patrols from the streets, it seems absurdly anachronistic to call the country of my hosts Northern Ireland. It also seems gratuitously insulting to give Derry its colonial London prefix, so loathsome to 80 odd per cent of the city's population.

The truth needs to be faced. The Nationalists and the Republicans have won. That is to say, they have, in the almost unanimous opinion of our European partners, of the United States and of the majority of civilised nations, won the argument. Years, possibly another decade, of

twisting the sword, sometimes unwittingly, but more often with calculated cruelty, ever since.

According to Shakespeare, Richard II talked of subduing "these rough-headed Irish kerns." He needed money for wars against his own English barons. That was in the 14th century.

Not much more than 100 years ago, the Victorian historian Thomas Babington Macauley, writing about the Battle of the Boyne, sneeringly described Irish patriots of that time as "aboriginals." And Macauley was a Tory-hating liberal!

This column is no place for a history lesson and I am not qualified to give one. But you cannot, if you have any sense of justice, arrive at Derry by British Rail without being confronted with a terrible wrong that we have done.

The destination sign on the station platform says "Londonderry." Why is the city, still officially thus named? In 1613, James I, the Scots king of England, was minded to give the citizens of London a present.

He gave them Derry, and he insulted the natives by prefixing their Irish city with the name of his English capital. To ensure that the Londoners could enjoy their gift, James planted a few thousand English and Scottish settlers there, with a mandate to rule the roost.

That is ancient history. Yet only 26 years ago the descendants of those

British imperialism being driven out of Ireland is about to enter its final phase. Armed revolt vindicated, despite all what British propaganda has claimed.

[EPSR No 791 28-02-95]

British imperialism's intention to abandon its colony in Ireland has at last been spelled out, more or less, in the *Framework Document* for further talks in the peace process.

While the language is still deliberately vague and obscure, and commitments to Ireland's reunification remain at a snail's pace, the central point that 'Northern Ireland' will be no more is unmistakable.

The disgraceful history of 75 years of armed occupation and tyranny over the north-east corner of the independent country of Ireland is at last to be wound up.

The blatant British colonialism which ruled under the deceitful banner of 'Ulster loyalism' has finally been accepted as no longer valid by public opinion in Britain, after having long been condemned by world opinion.

The national-liberation struggle against the Orange Order gerrymandering of the ripped-out bits of six of Ulster's nine counties has convinced everyone that the colonists' claim to sovereignty over the area was both a grotesque historical in-

transplanted campers, though still in a substantial minority on their Protestant side of the river Foyle, were, by a combination of gerrymandering and knuckle-dusting violence, still governing a nationalist population of over 80,000.

It was in Londonderry that the rioting began, and it was in Londonderry that British troops in 1972 fired on a procession agitating for the vote and killed 14 unarmed citizens. The mayhem of the past quarter of a century really started there. And it will break out again unless, this time, at long last, the British government stops listening to the Unionist extremists in Ulster and acknowledges that, like all its modern predecessors, it has been perpetuating a grievous wrong.

Once anti-communist revisionism has abandoned the inbuilt disciplines of Marxist-Leninist science of constantly testing all theoretical understanding against all the practical outcomes of historical development, and has substituted subjective idealism instead, justifying 'leadership' positions already adopted just for the sake of personal comfort and prestige, - then fake-'leftism' can rapidly go very far wrong indeed. Build Leninism.

Douglas Bell

justice and also an increasingly untenable political reality.

British imperialism's police-military dictatorship, which ripped the colony at bayonet point out of Ireland's newly-won independence in 1921, and has preserved the British colonist order since, may not have been 'defeated' in a strictly military sense, as bourgeois ideologists are all comforting themselves by saying.

But much more importantly, neither could the IRA/Sinn Féin guerrilla war and political revolt be defeated either, - despite some of the most monstrously criminal dirty tricks by Britain in the whole history of rotten colonial repression, - including torture barracks condemned at the European Court; a murder campaign by Gestapo secret-police and nazi military units against mere Republican 'suspects'; the most blatant cover-up of that murder campaign when the Stalker inquiry was most foully undermined by MI5 and Home Office stunts; other barbaric shoot-to-kill provocations like the cold-blooded massacre of the Gibraltar Three and the Bloody Sunday slaughter in

Derry; years of concentration-camp detention-without-trial of hundreds and hundreds of a Republican political persuasion behind the barbed wire of Long Kesh; the attempted demoralising 'criminalisation' of Republican prisoners, denying them prisoner-of-war rights which only ended with the heroic hunger strikes, dirty protests, and political electoral triumphs; the brutal routine midnight destruction raids with sledge-hammers and terror tactics on Republican homes; the infamous Prevention-of-Terrorism Act harassment of all Irish people around the British Isles for more than 20 years including 7-day brutalisings in police and prison cells without any charge being needed, 95% of which detentions led to no charges but were pure racist victimisation and intimidation; a tyrannical Hitlerian censorship of even Sinn Féin voices being heard on radio and television discussing the justness of the national-liberation struggle, or anything at all; etc, etc, etc, etc.

And when this guerrilla war started bombing the City of London to pieces, requiring the heart of British capitalism to be ringed with a steel fence and impossible-to-live-with security restrictions, – it may still have been technically the case that Britain's police-military dictatorship over the Occupied Zone of Ireland was still 'undefeated', – but the will of the British ruling class, the most crucial factor, to fight on had at last evaporated completely.

Parts of this historic *Framework Document* deserve to be reproduced for the record, in line with the *Bulletin's* admirable and detailed documentary record over the past 14 years of explaining the underlying tendency of British imperialism to want to get out of Ireland, despite all the 'No Surrender' bluster, because the British ruling class had had its day, because the British imperialist economy was on its last legs, because the colony itself was no longer any kind of strategic or economic prize but was just an expensive handicap, and because the postwar era had become the age of the break-up and defeat of all direct colonialism through national-liberation struggles and because British imperialism was too weak to be much use at indirect colonial domination any longer (see ILWP Books vol 8, 15 & 22 *Ireland*).

That documentation must wait until the next *Bulletin* for lack of space this time, but meanwhile, the British capitalist press's own comments on



▲ Rioting on the streets of Belfast in the 1920s

the new developments are worth studying in some detail since part of British imperialist bourgeois ideology is still trying to insist that the Framework Document concedes nothing to the national-liberation struggle and to Ireland's reunification.

While not civilised enough to eat 75-years or more of past weasel words on the subject of Ireland's legitimate fight for full self-determination, robbed of it by the treacherous Partition outrage imposed at gunpoint, – parts of Fleet Street are at least coming out with slightly new-sounding weasel words:

When he and the SDLP's John Hume launched what became known as the Hume-Adams initiative, there were two key arguments with which they hoped to persuade the IRA the time had come to put away the guns. The first was that while the IRA could not be defeated by the British Army it could not attain its objectives of forcing the British to withdraw from Northern Ireland by a campaign of terrorism. On the contrary, as long as the Unionist community was under threat there was no question of a British Government abandoning its citizens to terrorists.

The second argument followed from this; once the threat was seen to be removed, the British would begin to withdraw political and emotional support from the Unionists.

The publication last week of the framework document, and popular reaction in Britain, indicates this may have already begun to happen. The document envisages strong cross-border institutions. Ideally these will involve politicians from a new assembly in Belfast working with members of the Dáil in Dublin. But Paragraph 47 spells out the fall-back position, already endorsed by both governments. If direct rule

continues, or has to be reintroduced, the British Government agrees other arrangements will be made 'to implement the commitment to promote co-operation between North and South'.

For all the soothing words by Government ministers about consent and discussion, the need to consider and not wanting to impose anything on anybody, the thrust of the document is towards an eventual all-Ireland settlement. 'Achieving agreement among all the people who inhabit the island of Ireland', 'establishing agreement among the people of the island of Ireland', these phrases crop up again and again.

Gerry Adams and the Rev Ian Paisley both understand that the document spells out more explicitly than ever before what has been implicit in previous Anglo-Irish proposals, from the Sunningdale Agreement in the early Seventies, through the Anglo-Irish Agreement in 1985 and the Downing Street Declaration of last year.

Despite a moral commitment to the Unionists and a determination to do the right thing by them, Britain will not stay in Northern Ireland a moment longer than is necessary. There is no suggestion that Irish policy is neutral. On the contrary, it is accepted that Dublin has an on-going and partisan interest. Public reaction in Britain to publication of the document seems to confirm the Hume-Adams analysis that now the killing has stopped the IRA is no longer blamed for the intransigence of the Unionists. The opinion poll published in last Friday's *Daily Telegraph* showed 92 per cent of the British public approved of the document and 68 per cent thought Unionists would not be justified in refusing to take part in talks.

In the Irish Republic, 63 per cent favour changing the terms of their country's constitutional claim on the North, an opinion poll in Dublin's *Sunday Press* newspaper indicates today. The Irish government

agreed in principle to the move in the framework document.

Opinion in Northern Ireland may also have been softened by six months of peace. A poll carried out on behalf of *Channel Four News* suggested that just over half its people believe the framework document's proposals form the basis for a lasting peace, and that 87 per cent want their own party to participate in inter-party talks – including 63 per cent of those supporting Ian Paisley's Democratic Unionist Party.

There are a number of reasons for this. The business community has already seen the benefits which peace has brought. Those associated with loyalist paramilitary groups have begun to feel their way into the political process and are no longer prepared to allow the more extreme Unionist politicians to threaten to fight to the last drop of their blood.

Already the benefits of peace are taken for granted. When people are forced to think of what it would be like to go back, the prospect is unbearable.

The *Framework Document* is in fact more plainly for the reunification of Ireland than even these belated admissions, if it is read intelligently without the blinkers of past British imperialist prejudices which not only force the Government to still speak in double-talk, but make it impossible for the British capitalist press, either, to own up to their own past blind stupidity on this question, denying for 25 years that the national-liberation struggle was winning, or would ever have the slightest chance of winning.

Still the headline on this piece tries to justify the past bourgeois ideological stance by proclaiming "A victory without the guns", wanting to say (but not having the ounce of

humanity required to spell it out openly) that “all right, the national-liberation struggle may have won, – but we were still always right to denounce terrorist violence as not only despicably intolerable but also as a hopelessly losing tactic,” etc.

Not so. The national-liberation struggle has won by armed revolution, nothing else.

And having battled for so long and so unbeatably, that revolt is now in a position to offer besieged British imperialism a truce so that sensible self-determination talks can at last begin, – and to have it gladly accepted, in spite of the continuing silly pretence by London that it is still not going to respond to armed blackmail.

The Sinn Féin-delivered peace process is even now acceptable to a growing body of hardline Orange colonist opinion, once again as revealed by the anti-IRA capitalist press itself, (which may now be slightly more eager to detect some wavering in the previous ‘No Surrender’ intransigence because it helps to get humiliated London intransigence off the hook):

In the Berlin Arms and other drinking dens on the Shankill Road – the last arm of Protestant Ulster in Catholic west Belfast – the leaked details of the framework document caused few surprises. Nor in the smarter suburban saloons off the Newtownards Road in east Belfast was there anything to match the blustering shock of Ian Paisley and John Taylor. The hard men of Ulster know that their longstanding – some would say time-serving – mainstream politicians failed them long ago.

The illegal Ulster Volunteer Force (UVF) and Ulster Defence Association (UDA) and their political counterparts, the Progressive Unionist party (PUP) and the Ulster Democratic party (UDP), have long faced up to the military and strategic facts of the conflict. In a “safe” house in Portadown, I once listened to a UVF hitman, a rationally intelligent killer, tell me there would one day be a united Ireland. His job, he explained, was to delay as long as possible this logical consequence of Britain’s betrayal.

For “betrayal” is exactly how they see it. On the wall of the PUP’s Shankill Road office, along with portraits of volunteers killed in paramilitary violence, are grainy black-and-white pictures of men in khaki marching off to the Somme, most of them never to return. The UVF today considers itself directly descended from the force raised by Lord Carson in 1912 to oppose Home Rule. It is proud of the fact that in August 1914 its members signed up to fight and die for king and country. Postcards from the 1930s proclaim the Shankill Road “the heart of the Empire”. When they talked of the empire, it was “ours”, not something belonging to the English.

David Ervine, a former UVF man

jailed for explosives offences who is now the genial voice of loyalism’s militant tendency, typifies the spiritual schizophrenia. “I am British,” declares Ervine. Asked if he was also Irish he would want a closer definition of the question.

“Ulsterish” is not an adjective and even if it were it would be inaccurate: three counties of Ulster are in the Irish republic. “Northern Irish” is accurate, but by drawing attention to partition suggests the possibility of unification. The Unionist Ulsterman therefore prefers to say “British”, even though it is inexact: he belongs to the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland. His bit is not part of Britain.

Better-off Ulster folk have opposed Irish unity on economic rather than religious grounds. The high taxation in the republic is frequently cited – so a Labour government in Westminster might be expected to shift the balance towards Irish unity in unexpected ways.

But economic excuses are just a figleaf to cover up instinctive feelings inbred over centuries. Achievement of the IRA’s aims would be – as some of them have always known – the end not just of Northern Ireland but also of the Irish republic as we know it. The injection of 1m Protestant Ulstermen would transform that society.

LEADING businessmen in Northern Ireland yesterday accused Unionist politicians who condemned the Anglo-Irish framework document of losing touch with opinion in the Province.

The businessmen warmly welcomed the document which, they said, would bring economic benefits. There has been a big upsurge in economic activity since the IRA and loyalist ceasefires.

Howard Hastings, operations director of Hastings Hotels, criticised the Ulster Unionists and the Democratic Unionists who dismissed the document within minutes of its publication on Wednesday. He said: “I don’t hear a grassroots echo in what they are saying. I think on this occasion the Unionist politicians have lost touch with their constituencies – that is the first in a generation.”

Mr Hastings, who said he was a Unionist and is chairman of the Institute of Directors in Northern Ireland, said the all-Ireland dimension of the document would help business. “There are areas of mutual economic benefit. For my business it would be better if a single tourist board marketed Ireland at the international level.”

However, Mr Hastings added that his members would take their time to consider the document. Eric Cairns, who runs an estate agency in south Belfast and North Down, said John Major had emphasised that it was a discussion document. “It is akin to a draft contract. It is up to us to sort out the real contract.” Mr Cairns called on Unionist leaders to consider the document with “cool heads and business acumen”.

Mr Cairns added that politicians were out of touch with the business community. He said: “A Unionist MP asked me why people such as

myself were not interested in politics. I said there had to be something more to politics than the traditional Orange and Green colour scheme. They should concentrate on the real issues such as creating jobs.”

It remains to be seen where public opinion ends up on the Irish question, especially in the Occupied Zone itself and in particular among the British colonist community.

But the general trend of British imperialist decline, as evidenced in the latest Barings Bank fiasco, for example, can only help add relentlessly to the demoralisation surrounding the ‘British’ Ireland claim, including among the Orange Order itself which drew all of its historic arrogance and aggressiveness from out of the undoubted international superiority at one time of British imperialist culture.

How quickly that could all fall apart is shown first and foremost on the economic front. British imperialism is being trounced in every department of the trade war, just seeing collapse its most traditionalist, longstanding and prestigious merchant bank of all time.

However indirectly, that humiliating catastrophe will unavoidably add to the general British sense of failure, disaster, and retreat, on all fronts.

But the willingness to cut out some of the imperialist bullshit at last, and to start facing up honestly to the real clapped-out situation confronting the British imperialist bourgeoisie, can already branch off into some surprising new directions, – as in this remarkably frank piece from the capitalist press as background to the astonishing propaganda stunt by sections of the reactionary establishment in support of the army’s murder of joyriders in the Occupied Zone:

In August 1990 a patrol from the regiment went into the republican Lenadon estate, armed with clubs, and beat five civilians senseless. Four soldiers were fined £450 each.

This incident set the stage for the Clegg affair a month later.

To commemorate the “kill” other paras erected a cardboard model of the bullet-riddled car in their mess.

Mutual antipathy reached a climax nearly two years later in another incident that had important repercussions. On May 11, 1992 a member of 3 Para stepped on an IRA mine and had both his legs blown off.

Soon after, a patrol in Coalisland came under a hail of bottles and stones.

The following day, according to local councillors, paratroopers armed with truncheons went on a violent rampage in Coalisland. A senior army officer was relieved of his command.

A week later, local feeling was

again inflamed when a paratrooper opened fire on a crowd in Coalisland, leaving three people with gunshot wounds. Locals claimed paratroopers used foul language and taunted people to take a weapon from them.

In an unprecedented move, Brigadier Tom Longland, in charge of army operations in the Armagh and Tyrone border area, was relieved of his command. Six of his men were charged with assault, disorderly behaviour and damage to property. The total withdrawal of 3 Para from Northern Ireland was considered seriously in London.

This cloud overshadowed the trial of Clegg and five colleagues in 1993. Claims that the case had originally been marked “no prosecution” by the DPP but was revived 11 months later as a result of a *Panorama* documentary have always been denied by the RUC.

The bitterness of the Clegg affair lingers on. As a result of army resentment, the anonymous RUC officer who testified against Clegg’s colleagues has had to be moved to another station in Co Down. There he has been abused by soldiers of another regiment, who have refused to go on patrol with him.

Nor is that resentment confined to the regiment. It is an elite unit, some argue, trained for a narrow military purpose and unsuited to the sensitivities of policing Northern Ireland.

But the whole British imperialist existence is now “unsuited to the sensitivities of policing” the Occupied Zone of Ireland (or any other colonial territory anywhere), – not just its fascist-aggression paratroop elite.

Imperialism is a historic system of world development which has now well passed its ‘consume-by’ date. From the very beginning, capitalism could never ‘advance’ without preparing, deep within its own social relations of property and production, an ultimately uncontrollable contradiction with the exploited-labour source of all profits. Its global ‘over-production’ crisis now, as brilliantly analysed in last week’s *Bulletin*, can no longer ‘advance’ other than by even greater monopolisation concentration, wiping out of weaker rivals, ‘winning’ the cut-throat trade-war competition partly by destroying alternative capacity as well as taking-over and ‘rationalising’ duplicate production, – and all the time prepared to escalate the disruptive social cost of such anarchic conflict towards inter-imperialist shooting war or smaller-scale colonial wars in one direction, and towards permanent mass unemployment and an endless succession of frustrated social aspirations for millions in another, – if they ‘cannot be avoided’, etc.

When British imperialism’s decline in the international pecking order began to feel economically and socially intoler-

able to a particularly sensitive section of population in the Occupied Zone of Ireland in the 1960s, a class, social, cultural, and nationalist revolt began to occur.

And despite all the tremendous odds against it, that launching of a tiny spontaneous revolt has resulted, 25 years

Tory ruling class made angry fools of by US backing for Ireland's independence war, now a peace initiative. Shamed London establishment cannot hide its disgrace. Reunification is the agenda. Only bourgeois Britain and fake-'lefts' squirm with embarrassment.

[EPSR No 793 14-03-95]

British imperialism's long-drawn-out snail's-pace capitulation to the heroic resilience of the Irish national-liberation struggle has received a dramatic kick up the backside from the resumed triumph of Gerry Adams's campaigning in the USA and before world public opinion.

The Clinton presidency has humiliated Major's government by inviting Adams to the White House and encouraging Sinn Féin to recommence open fundraising in the United States, while London limps along, still refusing to open full round-table peace negotiations.

Tory backbenchers have made a feeble attempt, alongside the colonist MPs from the Occupied Zone of Ireland who deceitfully mislabel themselves 'Ulster Unionists', to take a stand against American and worldwide pressure for a settlement, by refusing talks until IRA arms are decommissioned.

But the mainland ruling class had already given in on this position last week, announcing that after all, talks could begin "on an exploratory basis" before a single IRA gun was handed in.

In other words, the entire British propaganda stance that no concessions to the Irish national-liberation struggle would be discussed "while the threat of armed revolt remained" now publicly has not a shred of credibility left to it, just as it has been plainly obvious to any class-conscious workers with half a brain for many years now (see ILWP Books vol 8, 15 & 22 – *Ireland* and subsequent *Bulletins*).

In other words, as the *Bulletin* has been explaining for the past 14 years since the triumph of the Hunger Strikes and Sinn Féin's associated political

later, in an unstoppable, small-scale, partial revolution.

Even more than in the miniature and particularized anti-imperialist struggle in Ireland, class war alone remains the key to the understanding of all future historic development worldwide. Build Leninism. Douglas Bell

breakthroughs coupled with the invincibility of the IRA's armed struggle, it is revolutionary force which has finally broken the British imperialist bourgeoisie's colonial intransigence in its Occupied Zone of Ireland.

For the Marxist-Leninist understanding of the international balance of class forces and the relentless historic overthrow of imperialism since the start of this century, the inevitability and importance of this national liberation triumph, and the degenerate humiliation of the British ruling class, has not been difficult to analyse.

British imperialism's positions and strength in the world have suffered terribly under siege ever since the close of the 19th century, and have declined particularly rapidly since 1945. With the collapse of British political empire as well as of much of Britain's imperialist industrial and military strength, the colony ripped out of the northeast corner of Ireland by the evil of Partition in 1921, denying Ireland its full independence and self-determination, no longer played any worthwhile strategic or economic role.

On the contrary, the renewed outbreak of national-liberation struggle there at the end of the 1960s rapidly turned the Occupied Zone into a burden and a nightmare, economically and politically.

But for the scores of petty-bourgeois fake-'left' movements in Britain splitting, confusing, and holding back the working class with their sectarian subjective-individualism, their shallow anti-Marxist idealism, and their instinctive middle-class-philistine anti-communism, – the Irish situation has always confounded them with

nothing but headaches.

It is no different now, in spite of all the abundant evidence currently presenting itself of a humiliating defeat for British imperialism; of an end to the hated nonexistent 'province of Northern Ireland' now being assured, never to be returned to; of the colossal advantage in all directions of being able to complete Ireland's independence; of the undoubted tremendous significance of the national-liberation struggle historically in the steady dismantling and overthrow of the colonial-imperialist system; etc, etc.

Despite all these magnificent gains from the Irish struggle which will help put imperialism into its coffin more firmly than ever, – the posturing middle-class 'lefts' in Britain still refuse to see anything but defeats and setbacks in Ireland, expressing only their own posturing 'ultra-revolutionary' stupidity and lack of theory.

In for example the SWP's childish exhibitionism, demanding to see 'Catholic and Protestant workers' (whatever they are) 'uniting immediately for revolutionary socialism now', etc, – the present revealing international balance of class forces scarcely get examined at all, and the crucial post-war phenomenon of national-liberation struggle might just as well not exist in anti-colonial and anti-imperialist history either, for all the grasp that these sad Trotskyite ultra-lefts show of reality:

Will the Framework Document end sectarianism?

THIS IS unlikely. It is really about restructuring division on religious lines, not abolishing it.

The proposals do nothing to end the false idea that Protestants and Catholics have separate identities and cannot live together.

The two governments want to undercut the Republican desire for Irish unity by drawing the Catholic middle class of Northern Ireland into a "power sharing" arrangement with the Unionists.

In fact, ordinary Protestants have nothing to lose from the proposals—though they would not gain anything either.

JOHN MAJOR has made it clear that he does not want real change.

The move towards talks and diplomacy has meant a turn away from any sort of focus on struggle by the mass of people from below.

WE HOPE the peace continues.

But there can be no stable peace on the basis of two groups of capitalists coming together. It requires the unity of Protestant and Catholic workers.

The problem at the moment is that the only alternative to the Unionists on offer appears to be a nationalist alliance between Gerry Adams and the Irish government.

In that situation it is easy for Unionists to claim that any gain for nationalists will mean a loss for them.

That is why there is a desperate need for socialist politics and an organisation that emphasise the united interests of Protestant and, Catholic workers in fighting Tory gov-

ernments and bosses throughout Ireland.

There is nothing in either document about new jobs, homes, better wages, benefits or healthcare.

A fightback against the government and bosses in Britain and Ireland could see Protestant workers shift. Instead of feeling "betrayed" they could begin fighting for their class, with Catholic workers as their allies.

This naïve rubbish asks nearly all the wrong questions, and gets nearly all the wrong answers.

It is unbelievable unclass-conscious ignorance to present the struggle in Ireland, as nothing but middle-class religious sectarianism failing to get along, – to a background of economic deprivation.

British colonist ideology is not just engaged in routine beating of the Orange drum, as explained by the SWP, nor are 'Catholics' (whoever they are) just seeking rights, nor are 'Protestant workers' the main victims of sectarianism, nor is the London government seeking no change.

The entire historic British imperialist system is in crisis, and its colonial ruling-class mentality in the vulnerable Occupied Zone of Ireland is facing a complete cultural breakdown and annihilation from standing right in the path of worldwide historic forces of national-liberation which inevitably will grow stronger and refuse to be denied as the general crisis of the monopoly-capitalist system universally plunges ever faster towards economic collapses and international proletarian revolution.

To delay proletarian revolution, imperialism has conducted a major historic retreat from direct political colonisation since 1945.

Whatever the Popular Front faults of Stalinism throughout its Third International career and after, national-liberation has obviously played an epoch-making part in the general dismantling of the monopoly-imperialist world.

Only in superficial appearance does the planet seem under the influence of one monopoly-capitalist superpower more than ever, or under collective imperialist domination more than ever.

The West has been obliged to recruit half the world into its ruling-class profiteering glitz, – and the workers of the whole world into potential revolutionary confrontations with capital.

And this has all had to be accomplished via keeping going the most sustained inflationary boom in all history, which can only eventually lead to the most devastating economic slump

and fascist civil-war chaos in all history, dominated by another inter-imperialist war, potentially the most destructive ever, and probably the last one that civilisation will ever put up with, a catastrophic threat only to be ended finally by universal proletarian revolution.

Marxist-Leninist science has never failed to grasp that nationalist guerrilla wars of independence are an inevitable phenomenon on route towards a final planned socialist world of workers states, – as quoted at great length direct from Lenin a few *Bulletins* ago.

How could such a stubborn, bitter, heroic revolt as that by the Irish national-liberation movement against British imperialist domination, – defeating barbed-wire concentration camps of detention-without-trial; endless midnight terror army raids on republican homes; torture barracks; shoot-to-kill death squads; enforced hunger strikes; total censorship silencing; non-stop PTA harassment and exclusion orders and the like; frame-up show trials; etc; etc; etc; – withstand every vile repression that the British police-military dictatorship could inflict upon it, and somehow not be a defeat for British imperialism when it finally prevailed and forced London to negotiate???

How can such a humiliating climb-down by British imperialism, which had never ceased vowing to not consider ever negotiating anything with 'the common criminals of terrorism until they had all surrendered and handed over their guns', etc, – now be described as 'no change' by the British government???

How could the ceasefire and end to civil war forced on the British police-military dictatorship by the IRA's invincibility, not be regarded as a 'gain' for "ordinary Protestants" (whatever they are)?

And only total 'left' sectarian nincompoops could regard British imperialism's colossal capitulations towards Ireland's reunification over the last 10 years in the Anglo-Irish Treaty, the Downing Street declaration, and the *Framework Document*, as wanting "to undercut the Republican desire for Irish unity".

All that these tedious 'rank-and-file' sectarians can grasp is some childish dogma about "struggle by the mass of people from below" to unite "Protestant and Catholic workers in fighting Tory governments and bosses throughout Ireland", thereby not only putting the Dublin government on a par with British imperialism, to be

equally damned, but lumping Sinn Féin in with this reactionary paralysis via its 'nationalist alliance with the Irish government' for a hopeless peace between 'two groups of capitalists coming together'. What a cesspit of stupid ignorance is such 'left' analysis.

Of course Sinn Féin are not revolutionary socialists, and of course the Dublin government must essentially be seen as Green Tories. But the Irish national-liberation struggle against British imperialism is a very real and monumental historical phenomenon, still tremendously influencing the international anti-imperialist fight, still capable of being a key vehicle in inter-imperialist conflict, still needed as an antidote to the chauvinistic poisoning of the British working class, and still capable of producing revolutionary heroism and the priceless lesson of what armed revolt can achieve which will stand the forces of progress in good stead for all time to come.

These 'left' worms wallow in this philistine mire out of the most small-minded conceit of being for 'real' and 'pure' socialism, while in practice, of course, never doing anything but sit on the fence and carp when any actual anti-imperialist advances are being made anywhere, such as in the Irish national-liberation struggle, or in Cuba, or in the national-liberation struggle in general, or in 70 years of Soviet-led socialist camp, etc, etc. These middle-class opportunist opponents of the dictatorship of the proletariat posture sanctimoniously about "better wages, healthcare," etc, but always end up creeping behind the Labour Party organisers of the principal permanent reformist class treachery to workers.

The 'Militant' crowd of embar-

assed forcibly-exposed entrust parasites take an even more reactionary line than the SWP dilettantes. They astonishingly try to comfort Ian Paisley, telling the Unionists not to despair because it is the Irish national-liberation struggle which has accepted that its armed struggle has been defeated; – and explaining the failure of Paisley's attempted renewed 'Carson trail' fascist UDI (backed by UVF/UFP fascist sectarian killings) as merely being because the 'Protestant workers' (like the 'Militant') realise that there has been no 'sell out' by London, but only by Sinn Féin:

Real fears do exist amongst Protestants that attempts are being made to coerce them into a united Ireland, but this isn't the aim of the *Framework Document*.

The leaders of the Ulster Unionist Party have incorrectly analysed the political situation. They believe that the IRA called an end to its military campaign from a position of strength and that the price of the IRA ceasefire is concessions to nationalists, moving towards joint authority and eventually to a united Ireland.

They believe that the IRA cessation is only temporary and that if the Provos don't get their way, the military campaign will resume.

But the Provos haven't forced the British government into a corner. The leaders of the republican movement realised the limits and the weakness of their 'armed struggle'.

They moved into an alliance with the SDLP, right-wing establishment parties in the South and Irish-American capitalists to pressurise the British government. Today there are no plans for mass demonstrations to show Protestant resistance. There have been no calls to do so from the factories or the shop floor. This does not signify illusions in the *Framework Document* but it shows that Protestants don't feel they are about to be sold out.

Throughout 1992 and 1993, thousands of Protestant and Catholic working-class people demonstrated against sectarianism and sectarian killings, it was this brilliant display of working-class unity that brought the 'peace process' where it is today.

Protestants will oppose attempts to coerce them into a capitalist united Ireland.

The IRA's undefeated bombing campaign against the City of

London which caused hundreds of millions of pounds of damage to British monopoly—capitalism and threatened to choke financial life there to a standstill, with even more catastrophic consequences for the British imperialist economy, – by forcing the police to impose a steel-walled checkpointed barrier around the central Square Mile, – had nothing to do with bringing London to the conference table, forcing the British police-military dictatorship to suspend its murderous civil war, – according to these bogus 'Marxists'. In a deceitful display of 'left' romantic posturing, these IMG pseudos claim that 'brilliant united displays of anti-sectarian working-class solidarity by Protestants and Catholics' made the IRA 'give up', – and will carry on resisting the evil of a 'capitalist united Ireland' in prospect.

At the moment, of course, a reunited Ireland would indeed be capitalist. But not nearly as reactionary-imperialist, it could be pointed out, as these former (and still continuing, in many ways) loyal Labourites who worked diligently to secure office for the British imperialist Labour governments which reinstated the police-military dictatorship over the Occupied colonial zone of Ireland in 1968 in the first place, which rushed through the fascist PTA (Prevention of Terrorism Act) in one evening without a single Commons vote against in 1974, and which imposed the barbaric reactionary 'criminalisation' stain on the Republican prisoners-of-war later on, forcing the Dirty protests and eventually the Hunger Strikes which saw ten young Irishmen sacrifice their lives in hideous suffering and cruelty to this monstrous imperialist Labour Government



● British soldiers on the rampage during the Falls Rd. curfew terrorising a woman at her front door

policy.

These reactionary little Labour-Party 'left' *'Militant'* jerks still do not really disagree with these racist-chauvinist Labourite provocations, – so full of contempt for the Irish national-liberation struggle.

A major obstacle, of course, to the obscene Little Englander jingoism of these *Militantites*, crowing that the Irish national-liberation struggle has been beaten, – is the *Framework Document* itself, – not the desperate propaganda padding of British imperialist intransigence in words, none of which is new, – but the newly-stated concessions to Ireland's reunification and full national self-determination, plus no mention of the hoax 'Northern Ireland' bastard statelet ever being resurrected again on its old basis.

For the record:

The primary objective of both Governments in their approach to Northern Ireland is to promote and establish agreement among the people of the island of Ireland, building on the Joint Declaration.

They take as guiding principles for their co-operation in search of this agreement:

(i) the principle of self-determination, as set out in the Joint Declaration;

(iv) that any new political arrangements must be based on full respect for, and protection and expression of, the rights and identities of both traditions in Ireland and even-handedly afford both communities in Northern Ireland parity of esteem and treatment, including equality of opportunity and advantage.

The two Governments will work together with the parties to achieve a comprehensive accommodation, the implementation of which would include interlocking and mutually supportive institutions across the three strands, including:

(b) North-South institutions – with clear identity and purpose to enable representatives of democratic institutions, North and South, to enter into new, co-operative and constructive relationships; to promote agreement among the people of the island of Ireland; to carry out on a democratically accountable basis delegated executive, harmonising and consultative functions over a range of designated matters to be agreed; and to serve to acknowledge and reconcile the rights, identities and aspirations of the two major traditions;

(c) East-West structures - to enhance the existing basis for co-operation between the two Governments, and to promote support and underwrite the fair and effective operation of the new arrangements.

Given the absence of consensus and depth of divisions between the two main traditions in Northern Ireland, the two Governments agree that such an accommodation will involve an agreed new approach to the traditional constitutional doctrines on both sides.

In their approach to Northern

Ireland they will apply the principle of self-determination by the people of Ireland on the basis set out in the Joint Declaration: the British Government recognise that it is for the people of Ireland alone, by agreement between the two parts respectively and without external impediment, to exercise their right of self-determination on the basis of consent, freely and concurrently given, North and South, to bring about a united Ireland, if that is their wish; the Irish Government accept that the democratic right of self-determination by the people of Ireland as a whole must be achieved and exercised with and subject to the agreement and consent of a majority of the people of Northern Ireland.

Both Governments recognise that Northern Ireland's current constitutional status reflects and relies upon the present wish of a majority of its people. They also acknowledge that at present a substantial minority of its people wish for a united Ireland. Reaffirming the commitment to encourage, facilitate and enable the achievement of agreement over a period among all the people who inhabit the island, they acknowledge that the option of a sovereign united Ireland does not command the consent of the unionist tradition, nor does the existing status of Northern Ireland command the consent of the nationalist tradition. Against this background, they acknowledge the need for new arrangements and structures to reflect the reality of diverse aspirations, to reconcile as fully as possible the rights of both traditions, and to promote co-operation between them, so as to foster the process of developing agreement and consensus between all the people of Ireland.

They agree that future arrangements to Northern Ireland, and Northern Ireland's wider relationships, should respect the full and equal legitimacy and worth of the identity, sense of allegiance, aspiration and ethos of both the unionist and nationalist communities there. Consequently, both Governments commit themselves to the principle that institutions and arrangements in Northern Ireland and North-South institutions should afford both communities secure and satisfactory political, administrative and symbolic expression and protection. In particular, they commit themselves to entrenched provisions guaranteeing equitable and effective political participation for whichever community finds itself in a minority position by reference to the Northern Ireland framework, or the wider Irish framework, as the case may be, consequent upon the operation of the principle of consent.

While the principle and overall context for such new structures are a recognised concern of both Governments in the exercise of their respective responsibilities, they consider that the structures themselves would be most effectively negotiated, as part of a comprehensive three-stranded process, in direct dialogue involving the relevant political parties in Northern Ireland who would be called upon to operate them. Both Governments consider that new institutions should be

created to cater adequately for present anti future political, social and economic interconnections on the island of Ireland, enabling representatives of the main traditions, North and South, to enter agreed dynamic, new, co-operative and constructive relationships.

Both Governments agree that these institutions should include a North-South body involving Heads of Department on both sides and duly established and maintained by legislation in both sovereign Parliaments. This body would bring together these Heads of Department representing the Irish Government and new democratic institutions in Northern Ireland, to discharge or oversee delegated executive, harmonising or consultative functions, as appropriate, over a range of matters which the two Governments designate in the first instance in agreement with the parties or which the two administrations, North and South, subsequently agree to designate. It is envisaged that, in determining functions to be discharged or overseen by the North-South body, whether by executive action, harmonisation or consultation, account will be taken of:

(i) the common interest in a given matter on the part of both parts of the island; or

(ii) the mutual advantage of addressing a matter together; or

(iii) the mutual benefit which may derive from it being administered by the North-South body; or

(iv) the achievement of economies of scale and the avoidance of unnecessary duplication of effort.

In relevant posts in each of the two administrations participation in the North-South body would be a duty of service. Both Governments believe that the legislation should provide for a clear institutional identity and purpose for the North-South body. It would also establish the body's terms of reference, legal status and arrangements for political, legal, administrative and financial accountability. The North-South body could operate through, or oversee, a range of functionally-related subsidiary bodies or other entities established to administer designated functions on an all-island or cross-border basis.

Specific arrangements would need to be developed to apply to EU matters. Any EU matter relevant to the competence of either administration could be raised for consideration in the North-South body. Across all designated matters and in accordance with the delegated functions, both Governments agree that the body will have an important role, with their support and cooperation and in consultation with them, in developing on a continuing basis an agreed approach for the whole island in respect of the challenges and opportunities of the European Union. In respect of matters designated at the executive level, which would include all EC programmes and initiatives to be implemented on a cross-border or island-wide basis in Ireland, the body itself would be responsible, subject to the Treaty obligations of each Government, for the implementation and management of EC policies and programmes on a

joint basis. This would include the preparation, in consultation with the two Governments, of joint submissions under EC programmes and initiatives and their joint monitoring and implementation, although individual projects could be implemented either jointly or separately.

Both Governments envisage regular and frequent meetings of the North-South body:

□ to discharge the functions agreed for it in relation to a range of matters designated for treatment on an all-Ireland or cross-border basis;

□ to oversee the work of subsidiary bodies.

The two Governments envisage that legislation in the sovereign Parliaments should designate those functions which should, from the outset, be discharged or overseen by the North-South body; and they will seek agreement on these, as on other features of North-South arrangements, in discussion with the relevant political parties in Northern Ireland. It would also be open to the North-South body to recommend to the respective administrations and legislatures for their consideration that new functions should be designated to be discharged or overseen by that body; and to recommend that matters already designated should be moved on the scale between consultation, harmonisation and executive action. Within those responsibilities transferred to new institutions in Northern Ireland, the British Government have no limits of their own to impose on the nature and extent of functions which could be agreed for designation at the outset or, subsequently, between the Irish Government and the Northern Ireland administration. Both Governments expect that significant responsibilities, including meaningful functions at executive level, will be a feature of such agreement. The British Government believe that, in principle, any function devolved to the institutions in Northern Ireland could be so designated, subject to any necessary savings in respect of the British Government's powers and duties, for example to ensure compliance with EU and international obligations. The Irish Government also expect to designate a comparable range of functions.

Although both Governments envisage that representatives of North and South in the body could raise for discussion any matter of interest to either side which falls within the competence of either administration, it is envisaged that its designated functions would fall into three broad categories:

Consultative: The North-South body would be a forum where the two sides would consult on any aspect of designated matters on which either side wished to hold consultations. Both sides would share a duty to exchange information and to consult about existing and future policy, though there would be no formal requirement that agreement would be reached or that policy would be harmonised or implemented jointly.

Harmonising: In respect of these designated responsibilities there would be, in addition to the duty to exchange information and to consult on the formulation of policy, an obligation on both sides to use their best endeavours to reach agreement on a common policy and to make determined efforts to overcome any obstacles in the way of that objective, even though its implementation might be undertaken by the two administrations separately.

Executive: In the case of these designated responsibilities the North-South body would itself be directly responsible for the establishment of an agreed policy and for its implementation on a joint basis. It would however be open to the body, where appropriate, to agree that the implementation of the agreed policy would be undertaken either by existing bodies, acting in an agency capacity, whether jointly or separately, North and South, or by new bodies specifically created and mandated for this purpose.

In this light, both Governments are continuing to give consideration to the range of functions that might, with the agreement of the parties, be designated at the outset and accordingly they will be ready to make proposals in that regard in future discussions with the relevant Northern Ireland parties.

By way of illustration, it is intended that these proposals would include at the executive level a range of functions, clearly defined in scope, from within the following broad categories: sectors involving a natural or physical all-Ireland framework; EC programmes and initiatives; marketing and promotion activities abroad; and culture and heritage.

Again, by way of illustration, the Governments would make proposals at the harmonising level for a broader range of functions, clearly defined in scope (including, as appropriate, relevant EU aspects), from within the following categories: aspects of agriculture and fisheries; industrial development; consumer affairs; transport; energy; trade; health; social welfare; education; and economic policy.

Both Governments envisage that all decisions within the body would be by agreement between the two sides. The Heads of Department on each side would operate within the overall terms of reference mandated by legislation in the two sovereign Parliaments. They would exercise their powers in accordance with the rules for democratic authority and accountability for this function in force in the Oireachtas [the Irish Parliament] and in new institutions in Northern Ireland. The operation of the North-South body's functions would be subject to regular scrutiny in agreed political institutions in Northern Ireland and the Oireachtas respectively.

Both Governments expect that there would be a Parliamentary Forum, with representatives from agreed political institutions in Northern Ireland and members of the Oireachtas, to consider a wide range of matters of mutual interest.

Both Governments envisage that the framework would include administrative support staffed jointly by members of the Northern Ireland Civil Service and the Irish Civil Service. They also envisage that both administration will need to arrange finance for the North-South body and its agencies on the basis that these constitute a necessary public function.

The remit of the body should be dynamic, enabling progressive extension by agreement of its functions to new areas. Its role should develop to keep pace with the growth of harmonisation and with greater integration between the two economies.

Both Governments envisage a new and more broadly-based Agreement, developing and extending their co-operation, reflecting the totality of relationships between the two islands, and dedicated to fostering co-operation, reconciliation and agreement in Ireland at all levels. They intend that under such a new Agreement a standing Intergovernmental Conference will be maintained, chaired by the designated Irish Minister and by the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland. It would be supported by a Permanent Secretariat of civil servants from both Governments.

The Conference will be a forum through which the two Governments will work together in pursuance of their joint objectives of securing agreement and reconciliation amongst the people of the island of Ireland and of laying the foundations for a peaceful and harmonious future based on mutual trust and understanding between them.

The Conference will provide a continuing institutional expression for the Irish Government's recognised concern and role in relation to Northern Ireland. The Irish Government will put forward views and proposals on issues falling within the ambit of the new Conference or involving both Governments, and determined efforts will be made to resolve any differences between the two Governments. The Conference will be the principal instrument for an intensification of the co-operation and partnership between both Governments, with particular reference to the principles contained in the Joint Declaration, in this *Framework Document* and in the new Agreement, on a wide range of issues concerned with Northern Ireland and with the relations between the two parts of the island of Ireland.

Both Governments believe that there should also be provision in the Agreement for developing co-operation between the two Governments and both islands on a range of "East-West" issues and bilateral matters of mutual interest not covered by other specific arrangements, either through the Anglo-Irish Inter-governmental Council, the Conference or otherwise.

In the event that devolved institutions in Northern Ireland ceased

to operate, and direct rule from Westminster was reintroduced, the British Government agree that other arrangements would be made to implement the commitment to promote co-operation at all levels between the people, North and South, representing both traditions in Ireland, as agreed by the two Governments in the Joint Declaration, and to ensure that the cooperation that had been developed through the North-South body be maintained.

The document is overwhelm-

ingly about what is envisaged as effectively a new North-South government for the whole of Ireland. Paisley is not mistaken in his bitter rejection. 'Militant' are just irresponsibly trying to avoid saying that their Little Englander opportunism has always been hopelessly and reactionarily in the wrong towards the Irish national-liberation struggle.

DB

Great-power differences in a world of sharpening trade-war conflicts are the key expression of the class-war contradictions which are the source of all future development. Cultural and social despair reflect the same seismic explosions to come.

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That imperialist crisis and inter-imperialist conflict are the decisive framework for all immediate future developments in world history can no longer be doubted after the sensational deterioration in relations between Washington and London, the oldest and firmest 'alliance' in the 'free world' of anti-communist counter-revolution.

Disagreements about the Irish national-liberation struggle are the obvious instant friction-point at the moment, marked, by intense British humiliation at the way in which Gerry Adams, president of the separatist movement in the Occupied Zone of Ireland, has been given a hero's welcome in the USA, crowned with a glittering reception at the White House itself, against desperate Tory pleas that any such triumphal recognition would be gravely damaging to Downing Street interests.

As bourgeois commentaries themselves are noting, Clinton's slap in the face for Major & Co is based on more than just 'disagreements about tactics' over how to respond to Sinn Féin's peace initiative.

The American ruling class is clearly contemptuous of the whole position of the British bourgeoisie on just about everything to do with the whole crisis now facing the imperialist system worldwide, on almost all questions of international economics and politics.

The unprecedented snubs of the US and British governments openly refusing to communicate with each other at the highest level out of hostility to each other's position is certainly a re-

flexion of London's touchiness over its catastrophic enforced climb-down to Sinn Féin and the IRA's national liberation struggle.

But plainly a lot more is involved than just disagreements about the Irish question, where to some extent the US imperialists actually share the British establishment's deep concern (supported by all ruling classes everywhere) that the Tory government should not only not be seen to be capitulating to armed revolution, but that the appearance should be given, if at all possible or if enough confusion can be sown, that it is the armed 'terrorists' who have abandoned their struggle as hopeless.

The British ruling class resentment of 'American interference' over such a sensitive issue as British imperialism's failure to defeat the IRA; plus evidence that in the end it was the government in London which could not cope with any more civil-war bombing disasters on the City, or security setbacks to its police-military dictatorship over the Occupied Zone of Ireland, - could only have been given such desperately challenging expression last week if it coincided with other much deeper grudges and fears about Britain's position in the world.

The British capitalist press itself is inhibited from giving any more than the barest outline of how basic these contradictions now are:

JOHN MAJOR'S angry rebuff to President Clinton over the Gerry Adams visit highlights a deepening concern in Whitehall that the row is much more than another example of a spat between friends. Many now believe that tectonic

plates in the relationship have moved.

British and American interests are diverging so fast, officials believe, that it is becoming difficult to recognise the common ground that for more than 40 years made the Anglo-American relationship uniquely close. The changes have been exacerbated by the Clinton Administration, especially in the quarrels over Bosnia and Ireland. But officials believe that unless a supreme effort is made to get relations on a better footing, the goodwill that bound the two countries together may be eroded for ever.

Officials have been holding intensive talks, throughout Whitehall, to analyse what has gone wrong. The main concern is that without a solid political relationship, not only will transatlantic co-operation become more fraught, but that burgeoning trade relations between Britain and America may suffer. There are worries also that Britain is increasingly seen in America only of value as a member of the European Union. America has come to accept that the EU will speak with one voice on trade negotiations or foreign policy, and pays less attention to British views in isolation. Both Mr Clinton and former President Bush have paid as much or more attention to France and Germany than to Britain, officials here believe.

THE deepening rift between Britain and America was exposed last night with the disclosure that John Major has kept President Clinton waiting for four days to talk about the Gerry Adams' visit to Washington.

Administration officials said yesterday that Mr Clinton had first tried to telephone Mr Major last Saturday, the day after Mr Major sent him an angry letter about his decision to allow Mr Adams to raise funds in the United States, but the day before the Prime Minister flew to the Middle East.

Sources in Washington believe that a furious Mr Major has been trying to punish Mr Clinton for ignoring the advice of No 10 and Sir Patrick Mayhew, the Northern Ireland Secretary, not to give the Sinn Féin president the red carpet treatment.

Downing Street officials confirmed in Amman that the White House had made contact on Saturday but that there had been no conversation. They said that the White House had been told that Mr Major was busy preparing for his trip. They suggested it had been arranged that the two leaders would get in touch after his return. Government sources also confirmed that the White House had again been in touch with Mr Major's travelling party on Monday while he was in Jerusalem.

Throughout yesterday the explanation given by Mr Major and his officials was that a conversation had been difficult to arrange because of the differing schedules of the two leaders and the need to have secure telephone lines.

The President's inability to make contact with Mr Major was considered extraordinary in diplomatic

circles given the sophistication of modern communications. Last night it emerged that unable to talk directly to Mr Major, Mr Clinton had faxed the Prime Minister what American officials described as a "conciliatory" letter designed to repair the extraordinary open rift.

However Mr Clinton's letter failed explicitly to respond to a key demand that Mr Major had made in his letter — that the President should press Mr Adams during their two meetings this week to start decommissioning the IRA's arsenal.

Administration sources said the thrust of Mr Clinton's message was that he and Mr Major shared the same goal of peace in Northern Ireland though they disagreed on tactics.

Conservative anger over Mr Clinton's decision to see Mr Adams surfaced in the Commons. James Couchman, MP for Gillingham, said the move had struck a "grave blow" to the special relationship. Tony Newton, the Commons Leader, who was standing in at Question Time for Mr Major, underlined the depth of irritation within the Government.

He said the American Administration had been left in "no doubt" about the Government's view.

Monopoly-capitalist slump rivalry is the basic cause of the inevitable and incurable divergence between Britain and the USA, and between any of the other 'great powers'.

The cut-throat competitiveness of the imperialist system is only seen in the full picture once the trade war has broken out in earnest at the peak of market expansionism, whereafter the only 'gains' that can be made by any grouping are at each other's expense, 'winning' by driving a rival multinational into bankruptcy.

This is the stage now being reached in capitalism's long post-1945 trade cycle. All the counter-revolutionary freemasonry's clubby and philistine anti-communist complacency of the inflationary boom years is now giving way to the bitter recriminations and terror of isolation of the downward-spiralling bust years.

As the worldwide slump and bankruptcy devastation sets in, all of the imperialist 'allies' can no longer afford to do anything with each other except squabble about every issue under the sun, and watch each other like hawks to find out who is ganging up on who, and which state is going to stab its 'oldest friend' in the back next.

The feuding is rampant in between the imperialist powers, and even more sour and aggressive (at this stage) within each ruling class as the policy costs of getting the general line or perspective wrong mount higher and higher.

Washington paying more attention to France and Germany within the Common Market is only one aspect of the problem, downgrading Britain's importance. At the same time, the USA is at least getting ready to fall out with France or Germany or both even more violently, if it has to, than has just happened with Britain.

And equally, as is now common knowledge, all the countries of the European Community (EC) are constantly at loggerheads with each other over internal Common Market wrangles, sabotaging each other's exports at every opportunity over such potential bureaucratic minefields as the 'beef scare' controversy, the 'lamb dumping' scandal, the 'veal crates' campaigning, etc; or undermining each other's high-office candidates; or ganging up for trade advantage in other ways; or using even more ruthless financial sanctions to do an EC 'partner' in the eye such as raising or not raising, lowering or not lowering interest rates as the case may be, or defending or not defending particular currency parities regardless of prior agreements, etc, etc.

Even more telltale are the obvious splits now within each ruling class, such as the British, which indicate how seriously the main inter-imperialist divisions have already gone, frightening different sections of the bourgeoisie into denouncing each other for the 'disastrous consequences' that will follow, it is argued, if Britain gets too close to or too far from its 'allies in Europe', or its old relationship with America, or its Commonwealth friends, or too close or too far from 'standing independently', etc, etc. The Tory ruling class are always quietly sniping at each other anyway. But the periods when it has come to open splits within the bourgeoisie have always been periods of international imperialist crisis in general, when major upheavals and realignments, not stopping at inter-imperialist war itself, have been in the offing.

Bosnia and Ireland are, to a certain extent, just the superficial details of scaring inter-imperialist rivalry, the places where underlying contradictory agendas break to the surface.

Deeper down, serious economic problems and conflicting trade-war policies are what is giving rise to the real anxiety.

In general, the British monopoly-capitalist ruling class are now lagging disastrously behind the rest of the imperialist world leaders. One of the oldest bourgeoisies, one which grew

flabby and complacent from too long success at colonising empire-building, and one which has catastrophically fooled itself as to its real standing in the pecking order in the 20th century by fortuitously ending up on the 'winning' side in two world wars which, on its own, it would have lost, abysmally, - this bourgeoisie is decadent and facing demise.

And some recent grievous hammer-blows to British finance-capital have directly raised inter-imperialist sore- points.

The Barings merchant bank collapse raised envy against no specific rival but underlined London's weakness against international investment banking in general, Barings being broadly thought to be 'too puny' for the dangerous and volatile world of the lucrative derivatives markets.

But the Barings crash had followed earlier scandals at Warburgs, the City of London's most powerful merchant bank, which too had proved to be no real competition for the vastly mightier American investment banks which have now started to dominate (along with some other foreign financial conglomerates) some of the more profitable business in the City.

Some sections of the British bourgeoisie took a very strong stand against those ruling-class circles which had decided to let Barings go to the wall, raising precisely the issues of Britain's position in the international imperialist pecking order as their real grievance against the 'men of failure':

The Barings bankruptcy is a historic defeat for the Bank of England, which raises harsh issues of national interest. The Bank cannot afford to be seen to fail in such an attempt. It failed because it was not prepared to take an unquantifiable risk as the lender of last resort.

The argument that the failure is "non-systemic" is entirely bogus. Whether the Bank of England likes it or not, Barings, the oldest merchant bank in London, was an integral part of the credit of the City. That credit has already been undermined



by the mismanagement and vast debts of the Lloyd's insurance market. When Barings is not supported in meeting its obligations, the credit of all British banks, without exception, is damaged. Foreigners do not make fine distinctions in creditworthiness; they transact their business with banks they trust implicitly and totally. They will think that if Barings can go, no British bank would certainly be saved — not even the largest. The system of confidence has been very seriously damaged.

The “unquantified liability” argument is almost equally unconvincing. The Bank of England has long functioned as the “lender of last resort”. That almost always involves a risk which cannot be quantified: if the risk were quantifiable, and could be matched against assets, there would be no need for a lender of last resort. Since the nationalisation of the Bank of England in 1946, the role of lender of last resort has always involved the use of public funds, since the Bank itself has no private capital. In this case, Barings owed something between £500 million and £1 billion, and was worth somewhere between £750 million and £1 billion as a going concern. A rescue did involve risks, but the Bank of England might well have made a profit if it had taken them.

Nor does the argument that bankrupting Barings will inspire greater prudence in other banks carry weight. It is the argument for the execution of Admiral Byng — shot, as Voltaire said, “*pour encourager les autres*”. No bank wants to lose all its equity because of the follies of one dealer. Losing £600 million is not a deliberate policy from which Warburgs or Lazards needs to be deterred.

What the Governor seems not to understand is how credit actually develops. It takes a generation, a century or several centuries to build world confidence in a financial centre. International clients must believe in the City's integrity, in its professionalism and in its reliability in all circumstances, particularly in times of difficulty. This confidence can be damaged by a single failure: in that sense all major failures are systemic. When foreign customers have their doubts — as they now do — they transact their business somewhere else. The City has no shortage of competitors in countries which would not turn their backs on a great bank in a day of trouble.

It is not, therefore, sentimentality or a desire to protect the particular interest of particular people which makes one regret the failure of Barings and the grotesque timidity of the Bank of England. It is concern for the credit of London, one of the world's greatest financial centres, and one of the most important of Britain's dwindling stock of world assets. The policy which allows such a valuable asset to be endangered seems absolutely idiotic. The failure of the Bank of England has avoided risking at most a few hundred million pounds; the credit of London, which has been put in jeopardy, may be an unquantifiable asset, but it must be measured in hundreds of billions of pounds of Britain's

future earning power. The Bank of England exists to protect British credit. In this instance, it has failed in its prime duty.

Such forceful arguing about what is needed for a ‘strong’ Britain is very close in spirit to those circles which at some stage will be recriminating that Major took too strong a stand against the USA over Ireland, or not strong a stand enough, or too strong a stand against Common Market federalism, or not strong a stand enough, etc.

From a similar bourgeois stable, somewhat surprising personalised onslaughts have already begun against the particular class characteristics of the Establishment bluebloods who are now seen as ‘letting the side down’, etc:

The truth is plain to see, however it is fudged. Whoever made the mistake, the head of the business is a Baring, and it is he who must take the blame, just as he would have stuffed his face with more millions if the wind hadn't turned.

What else? Well, apart from the greed, come to think of it there is also stupidity. Who says that the halls of Baring ring with financial genius? Certainly, they were once upon a time very clever — in the 18th century — but I have just seen a headline that encompasses practically all I have been saying. It runs: “*Three audits failed to detect £17 billion scam in Singapore.*” Let's inquire further about these three audits, shall we?

During the two-year period when the fraud is suspected to have been carried out, there were no fewer than three audits of the Singapore office. Two were internal inquiries and one an external review. But the fraud was not detected. “He covered his tracks very well,” the source said.

To which Mr Eddie George, the Governor of the Bank of England, said: “There must have been some kind of collusion or relationship between the trader and back-office staff.” My word! Well never! Cool! The Bank of England is in good hands when the Governor can deduce from a huge scam that there must have been some kind of collusion. He really does earn his wages.

But we must not lose sight of those three audits and other financial controls. Whose job was it to exercise control, and why did nobody see that anything was wrong? Possibly he was just about to nail the lie when the dinner bell rang.

I like money, or more precisely, what money can do for me. I am not so stupid as to have put my money into Barings — not, of course, that a crook might be able to steal it, nor because I would have to put up not less than £10,000 for the honour of having my moneys treated by Baring — but because I have always treated fancy banks like Barings as perfectly honest in every way, but likely to make fools of themselves sooner or later. And wasn't I right?

Yes, I was: but to make a fool of oneself is common to all mankind.

When the fool turns disingenuous we must look sharp, and more than sharp. Again, I make plain that everyone at Barings was scrupulously honest as far as I know. But I do not like people who, when they have made colossal and indeed terrible mistakes, assert that the disaster was nothing to do with them, and that still less did they cause it. That is what the company said and I say — come all the lawyers in the land — that they did it for greed.

The culture of running away from trouble has taken root, deep root in this country. Every one dealing with this midden, from the head of the family firm to the youngest recruit, knows perfectly well that their cataclysm was caused from the top, not the bottom.

The Barings disaster is fascinating to me, because it shows not only that the clever are very often stupid, but also that it is not very difficult to avoid being stupid, and that most people manage it with ease. I wouldn't go so far as to say that the simple are cleverer than the great brains, but sometimes it is plain to see.

Which is, of course, exactly the same exasperated contempt on the domestic front as is being expressed internationally, marking the depths of bourgeois despair and fears as the crisis relentlessly deepens.

Even the British capitalist press coverage of Adams's triumphant American tour, while still kidding itself to some extent that London's negotiating position is not a completely bankrupt farce trying to close the stable door after the horse of Ireland's reunification (following the IRA's national-liberation struggle) has already bolted home, — can scarcely conceal the derision steadily piling up against Britain's representatives over their long-hopeless position on the Irish question:

Last week was one long, sumptuous, rolling lunch-cum-dinner for Gerry Adams, through marble hallways, at the finest hotels, at the epicentres of power, and surrounded by throngs of celebrities, tycoons and political heavyweights who would have shuddered at the very thought of his handshake only months ago.

Next evening the final conquest of the American establishment was sealed by a two-minute chat with Bill Clinton under the White House chandeliers.

The evening climaxed with a grand finale in which Adams and John Hume, leader of the mainly Catholic Social Democratic and Labour Party, led the distinguished company in singing ‘*The Town I Loved So Well*’, a lament for the ravaged city of Derry. Guests said the song provoked ‘tears, clapping, the lot’.

Also at the reception (menu: smoked Irish salmon and trout, Dublin Bay prawns, West Cork crab, Limerick ham with asparagus roulade and Bailey's Irish cream mousse) were the Ulster Defence Association

leader, John English, and hardline loyalist Garry McMichael — neither of whom greeted Adams.

But queues of other guests had formed to greet him. ‘There were more flash cameras pointing at him than at Paul Newman,’ said one.

Adams emerged late to say that he had had ‘a very nice evening’, and to insist in the face of denials from Westminster that ‘our people are talking to the British Government about an agenda for direct discussions at a ministerial level — that cannot be denied’.

Every warm embrace makes it that much harder for Adams to return to the streets from whence he rose to wage the war of telescopic sights. Conversely, the Clinton administration, the pillars of Irish-American society and the capital that has taken on the task of brokering peace in the Middle East have taken Adams — and all he stands for — to their bosom, and crowned him as an essential and equal partner in the Irish peace process.

As Clinton himself said — punching his fist in the air — after the first conversation at Thursday's luncheon: ‘This is going to work.’

At every port of call, Adams said with his new turn of political phrase: ‘John Major talks a lot about Sinn Féin. Why can't he talk to Sinn Féin?’ This weekend there is hardly anyone left in Washington who has not, at least implicitly, endorsed his view.

Each time Adams is introduced on the podium with another accolade, you get the strong feeling he will have the last laugh — his admirers at his feet, the British Government floundering, now laps behind. He is the one who knows where he has come from, and who knows exactly where he is going, in deadly earnest.

A decade ago, in Belfast, Irish Republicans of various hues talked publicly for the first time about the schooling that Adams has always denied and which the American establishment has chosen either to ignore or forgive.

Working then for *World in Action*, I sat for evening after evening listening to people talk about Adams, the backstreet commander of the Provos' second battalion, Belfast Brigade; about the ‘economic’ bombing campaign; about his secret talks in London as the youngest of an IRA team flown over in 1972, deadliest of all years for Northern Ireland.

We browsed the newspaper columns Adams wrote from inside Long Kesh, under the codename ‘Brownie’, in which he first expounded what became the ‘Armalite and ballot box’ project to blend armed struggle and political agitation. That strategy, which has culminated in a handshake and sing-song at the White House, originally set out to build ‘an alternative to the Brit system... spearheaded by the IRA’.

‘Sinn Féin,’ decreed Adams's prison blueprint, ‘must come under army leadership at all levels.’ We heard how, once out of prison in 1977, Adams brilliantly remoulded the clumsy IRA into a streamlined guerrilla organisation that the British military admitted it could never defeat. We heard about Adam's calm, guiding hand in turn-

ing the 1981 hunger strike into a propaganda landslide and turning point for Sinn Féin.

Adams is, dare one say it, sparsely protestant in the way his ascetic severity of purpose underpins even the most pompous of occasions. The coda was a tribute to 'My friend Bobby Sands'. Describing his prison cell, he said, to the clink of espresso coffee cups across the debris of luncheon: 'Imagine your bathroom, smaller than your bathroom. No window, artificial light, day and night. The walls smeared with human waste. And this is what Bobby Sands wrote on a piece of cigarette paper, with the refill of a ballpoint pen: "Our revenge will be the laughter of our children." Let us be part, as the end of the millennium approaches, of contributing to our children's laughter.'

They had strewn the trees with a thousand lights on the patio of the glitzy Tavern on the Green for the Top 100 Irish Americans dinner that evening, hosted by the magazine *Irish America*. The editor of *Irish America*, Niall O'Dowd, who was at the hub of Clinton's discreet diplomacy before Adams's series of visits to the US, scurried between the various factions of *Irish America*, between businessmen and activists, between the White House, the government in Dublin and Sinn Féin in Belfast.

'Unthinkable two years ago,' he said. 'We've got businessmen involved who would not have gone near Sinn Féin, and the other way round. The Irish-American community has never been so homogeneous.'

Thursday was the day that brought the fruit of O'Dowd's efforts: the handshake between Adams and Clinton. Adams remained behind in the banqueting room and went into conclave at a secluded table with Nancy Soderberg, Chief of Staff to Clinton's National Security Council, and a big influence in securing the visas. Adams took notes of the conversation.

Among the guests was Peter Westmacott, political counsellor at the British embassy in Washington. Spotting Soderberg, he made towards the table, but retreated, with a start and a smile, on recognising her company. Instead, he was promptly introduced to Kieran Staunton of American Sinn Féin, whose hand he clasped warmly.

Sums of money even heftier than those commanded by the American Ireland Fund are the undercurrent of this peace process. And among the guests was Lisa Mitchell, organiser with her husband George Mitchell — former Democrat leader of the Senate — of what she called the 'peace dividend' of investment and business incentive funds for Ireland.

One of those attending the \$200 Sinn Féin lunch, and later the *Irish America* beanfeast in New York on Wednesday, was a debonair Wall Street sage called Jay Connolly. A successful banker and broker, he has bought one of Ireland's most pleasant golf courses, in Kerry, where he hopes to host the next Ireland Open. 'I went to the Sinn Féin lunch mostly out of curiosity,' he said.

'I'm not that kind of guy. But there's business to be done in all this. It's all about money now.'

It's about liberating Ireland's nationalist aspirations to be more precise, — capitalist for now, obviously, but never with the chance of becoming anything else until an end had finally been put to the colonisation Partition of Ireland by British imperialist armed aggression, which had to be defeated by the Sinn Féin/IRA armed national-liberation struggle.

Inter-imperialist conflict is reaching the stage where rival monopoly-capitalist powers are not averse to taking advantage of each other by surreptitiously 'interfering' in a rival's problems to achieve 'democratic' and 'just' and 'peaceful' solutions but not minding if that rival power gets more egg on its face as a result.

There is nothing particularly new in American sympathy in general with Irish nationalist aspirations in general, nor even with a solution, long mooted, which basically gets rid of the bastard artificial statelet of 'Northern Ireland' whatever else happens.

The real sting for Britain's decrepit establishment is that it was bound to be in the USA that the triumph of the Irish national-liberation struggle would be most painfully and suddenly established as the international reality, — whether the Washington regime really minded its imperialist partner's embarrassment or not.

It is not anti-British machinations as such that can be read into Adams's triumphant reception in the USA, so much as the inevitable damage from inter-imperialist rivalry in general now that the monopoly-capitalist crisis has reached the proportions of serious economic and political damage for the weaker powers.

American imperialist interference is obviously unavoidably universal, trying to gain some superpower advantage for itself out of every conflict on earth, already pulling all of the strings in many capitalist-world contradictions, so much so that the point easily can be made that the fate of American imperialism is itself inseparable from the disputes it tries to arbitrate upon.

The classic case is Mexico where many of the popular demonstrations against government belt-tightening plans have in fact railed against decisions taken in Washington as much as those taken in Mexico City.

And the dismal continuing collapse of the US dollar regard-

less of the so-called 'stabilisation' measures imposed on Mexico by Washington and the IMF confirms how inextricably linked together now, to some extent, are the fate of American imperialism and the fate of US imperialism's stooges.

Over Ireland too, it may turn out that eventually the US ruling class did not at all have the last laugh over its British counterparts but that all the imperialist camp turned out to be the losers, challenged by growing national-liberation struggle everywhere.[...]

The long-predicted humiliating defeat for imperialism in Ireland proves that the fundamental pattern of the 20th century, — the triumph of mass struggle against imperialist crisis, — is as unassailable as ever. Imperialist crisis will be overthrown.

And while the 20th century also demonstrates that there will be some regressions in this general advance of civilisation towards a world of planned socialist enlightenment and rationalism, such as is temporarily clouding the picture for the countries of the former Soviet Union, the world's first workers state which developed successfully for 70 years without capitalists and without the crime and social disintegration and degeneracy that goes with capitalism, — the overall view remains that it is the 'free world' which is sick, not communism, as Cuba still cheerfully proves (see rest of *Bulletin*).

The imperialist propaganda agencies compiling shows like the BBC's *Messengers from Moscow*, reburying communism, are becoming increasingly desperately dependant on the peculiar breed of revisionist bureaucrats who lost their way and took the decisions to 'improve' the workings of the planned social-

ist state with the injection of some free-market anarchy and a complete abandonment of the dictatorship of the proletariat.

Some of these sad failures are still trying to justify their colossal stupidity and bumbling incompetence out of the most pathetic personal vanity. But the real people of the Soviet Union who actually made that society work, and work well, will reach very different conclusions once the shattering calamity of such grotesque misleadership in human affairs has been recovered from.

Clear evidence of the superiority of what the USSR was achieving under socialism compared to what is being achieved there under capitalism is eventually going to sweep aside the influence of the quite trivial phenomenon of a bunch of socialist-state bureaucrats being ideologically dominated and subverted over a long period of time by the continuing power of bourgeois thinking from a continuing powerful imperialist-dominated world.

In the end, the confused brain of a small-minded twerp like Gorbachev is going to be of no interest to anyone. What matters is how the best that Russia can do for itself under capitalism compares to the best it could do for itself under planned socialism.

Even under the bilious distortions of the Western media, the even worse problems of the crappy capitalism Russia has now got compared to the crappy socialism which was all its small-minded revisionist bureaucrats could manage, — are coming across:

Soviet socialism was deliberately sabotaged.

It was a catastrophic mistake which can easily be put right.

Build Leninism.

JH

Despair and confusion grow as 'New World Order' plunges deeper into predictable warmongering chaos. Labour & 'lefts' sicker than ever.

[EPSR No 800 02-05-95]

[...]The brilliant Southwest Bulletin article this week further demonstrates how pathetically remote from the real world are these fake-'left' anti-communist circles. The way in which their philistine ignorance of basic Marxist-Leninist philosophy pollutes their opportunist mentality is well brought out, for example, by such epics as the 1995 perspectives of the CPGB (the *'Leninist'* rump which captured the corpse of their old

much-vaunted 'official' affiliate to the 'only world communist movement', etc (i.e. the one stifling under Stalinist revisionist ideology).)

Their crass misunderstanding of what is happening in the world springs from an inability to even remotely understand that it is imperialist crisis which is the chief motor of world history still.

Instead, the 'victory of capitalism' is taken at face value,



Lech Walesa, the Pilsudski-fascist loving leader of the reactionary bogus "union" Solidarnosc meets the CIA installed Polish Pope.

springing from the 'defeat of bureaucratic socialism'.

And sticking on all this a headline label of "the world period of profound political reaction" fails even more thoroughly to even faintly grasp that it is a towering world imperialist crisis which is dominating all developments and directing them slowly but surely in the direction of an unavoidable explosion of new revolutionary understanding everywhere.

Every sign of this the CPGB read wrongly. They declare:

"Nevertheless, the counter-revolutions (in East Europe) were a world historic defeat for the international proletariat.

The period remains one where progressive politics in general are at a low ebb.

"The recent events in Ireland confirm this overall picture. While Sinn Féin has not been defeated militarily, the fact is that it has been forced to sue for peace on imperialism's terms."

That is what bourgeois propaganda would have the gullible believe, and it seems that a tiny proportion of the more reactionary gullibles do believe it. More healthy-minded workers worldwide, however, have grasped that it is British imperialism which has been humiliated by having to accept that its outrageous colonial outpost of non-existent 'Northern Ireland' cannot be propped up any longer, in spite of 25 years of the most savage counter-revolutionary dictatorship over the Occupied Zone and over Irishmen in Britain, including Army and RUC death squads; concentration camps (detention without trial); torture barracks; judicial frame-ups; endless midnight terror raids on Irish communities in the Zone; ceaseless vicious racist propaganda; several near-massacres like Bloody Sunday; the starvation to death of the Ten Hunger Strikers; the brutalising of the elderly, women, and children with rubber bullets;

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the Prevention of Terrorism Act tyranny; etc, etc.

For Sinn Féin and the IRA to have struggled and won against

all that, forcing the ending for ever of the 'Northern Ireland' hated Partition nonsense, - is some 'defeat'!

In the same vein of hopeless defeatism, the petty-bourgeois CPGB liken Sinn Féin's 'capitulation' to another "negative resolution" in South Africa, i.e. another 'defeat'. Which planet are these people living on?

Just as British imperialism was inevitably on the slide for 25 years, losing its last colony because of losing its place in the world imperialist pecking order under steady economic and political decline, - so the South African white colonial dictatorship was always facing defeat from the armed revolutionary national liberation struggle, just like fading British imperialism in Ireland, - in spite of much comparable defeatism by petty-bourgeois fake-'lefts' and pseudo 'revolutionary' middle-class sects everywhere.

Of course these are not yet socialist revolutions in the OZ or South Africa, - they were never declared to be such; but such revolutionary defeats, arms in hand, for imperialism can nevertheless, properly understood, be just as powerful a stimulus to the general anti-imperialist movement worldwide.

But all that this middle-class CPGB posturing can see is 'negative resolution' everywhere, - because their subjective-idealist philosophy cannot even comprehend the notion of what epoch the world is now living in, - let alone get it right, - the epoch of terminal imperialist crisis.

These petty-bourgeois even ladle their doomed class misery all over the heroic Cuban Revolution, phenomenally holding out for the planned socialist civilisation of the future against demented US imperialist subversion and sabotage.

"Similarly the intense problems faced by bureaucratic socialism in Cuba indicate that the general tenor of the period remains one of defeat, disintegration, and decline of working-class politics."

they moan on.

The essence of the fake-'left' is simply to get sucked into the prevalent bourgeois-ideological bog. Throughout the Cold War (and beyond), for example, the 'left' swamp (at first the Trots, anarchists and centrists, and then the Stalinist revisionists themselves as 'Eurocommunists') echoed the relentless anti-communist crusade of monstrous imperialist reaction but with some phony 'progressive' pretence added on of the 'neither Moscow nor Washington' variety, or "for the Soviet workers state but with a 'political revolution", etc, - the agenda only set by international counter-revolution which meanwhile got on with butchering real anti-imperialist movements wholesale, from Indonesia to Guatemala, with impunity because of the paralysis spread by the 'left' swamp's own anti-communist poison.

These CPGBers, for example, then posturing as the 'Leninists' no less, did not fully join the rest of the 'left' swamp in falling for the CIA/Vatican depraved reactionary stunt called 'Solidarnosc', posing as 'rank-and-file socialism' but eventually revealing its true capitalist-restorationist/fascist colours under the reactionary little dictator Walesa, - but equally refused to back the Polish workers state and the Red Army as the only ultimate rebuff to Washington-financed-and-run counter-revolution. These bogus 'Leninists' have always squirmed over the fundamental Leninist understanding that proletarian dictatorship is the only true test of a serious Marxist approach to anti-imperialist struggle.

The latest trailing behind bourgeois ideology by these poseurs concerns Blair's 'New Labour' charlatanism, which one might have thought could hardly bamboozle a newborn infant.

They describe Blairism as "the

Jingoist propaganda blows up in the establishment's face (Ireland, Churchill, etc).

[EPSR No 803 23-05-95 (SouthWest Bulletin No 120)]

[...]All the wartime Churchillian 'bulldog' spirit and two finger salute ever really amounted to was a lot of overblown rhetoric about the defence of 'freedom', 'democracy' and 'British decency', covering over the real greedy battle for colonies and market share in desperate pursuit of the bourgeois imperialist class interest at whatever cost.

None of the parliamentary reptiles will admit to the sordid,

revival of the Labour Party" and as producing "a viable alternative bourgeois party of government". Blair will probably send them a donation for such favourable publicity. More thoughtful workers will be more sceptical. Labourism was part of the successful imperialist epoch, its permanent shadow. With British imperialism at death's door, certain to have the international position of its class standing utterly destroyed in the coming maelstrom of warmongering trade-war crisis, - the position of its bogus 'parliamentary-democracy Opposition' is bound to be undermined too.

Far from "the revival of the Labour Party", Blairism surely represents a desperate petty-bourgeois dash towards the trivial froth of 'new politics' as the old imperialist two-party racket becomes thoroughly discredited. It is a contemporary twitch echoing Labour leader Mosley's turn to the 'New Movement' in the equally-troubled 1930s crisis for imperialism, but abandoning Old Labour far more comprehensively than did Mosleyism or Ramsay MacDonald's desertion to the National Government, - because now the game really is up totally for British imperialism, and not a trace of petty-bourgeois 'socialist' posturing (like Clause 4) is safe to be left in place any more.

Blairism might win an election or two, but the last thing it could become is a "viable alternative bourgeois party of government". British imperialism has no such future stable life remaining to it, - under any government. The next government, whatever it is, is going to be a government of even greater chaos and crisis than Major's present bedraggled crew, overwhelmed by the enormity of the catastrophe overtaking British imperialism at long last.[...]

Build real Leninism JH

grabbing imperialist reality of capitalist Britain's war aims, preferring to share the comfortable myth of Churchill having led a 'war for democracy', a 'war against fascism', even a 'war to save the Jews', rather than a war to defend the status quo of anglo-saxon imperialist domination of world markets against imperialist rivals.

Admitting to the predatory and anti-communist character

of Britain's war aims (wanting to shore up its monopoly capitalist positions against imperialist rivals by hanging on to the colonial and annexationist fruits of earlier bloodletting, and like a dog with two tails at the idea that with a bit of luck the proletarian dictatorship authority of the Soviet Union might also be fatally wounded by the ordeal) would also mean owning up to the failure of those aims post-war, without any compensating sense of 'at least standing on the side of democratic civilization in our period of gentle decline'.

There is nothing gentle about the disasters threatening British monopoly capitalist existence (Lloyds, Warburgs); and as for the delights of democratic civilization, let Churchill speak for himself:

The P.M. said the Hindus were a foul race "protected by their mere pullulation from the doom that is their due" and he wished Bert Harris could send some of his surplus bombers to destroy them. After dinner we saw an amusing film: Bob Hope in *The Princess and the Pirate*. Then we sat in the Great Hall and listened to *The Mikado* played, much too slowly, on the gramophone. The PM said it brought back "the Victorian era, eighty years which will rank in our island history with the Antonine age". Now, however, "the shadows of victory" were upon us. In 1940 the issue was clear and he could see distinctly what was to be done. But when Harris had finished his destruction of Germany, "What will lie between the white snows of Russia and the white cliffs of Dover?"

After this war, continued the PM, we should be weak, we should have no money and no strength and we should be between the two great powers of the USA and the USSR.

Renewed imperialist crisis has wound up the phony Cold War equilibrium and exposed as fiction all the barmy 'Soviet expansionism' paranoia. But the underlying fear of revolution was not barmy at all, and this gloomy tabletalk from February 1945 speaks volumes about how the British ruling class really felt about the imminent loss of empire and the dawning of 'Pax Americana'.

Despite the imperialist character of the war so far as Britain's involvement was concerned, many workers who saw the counter-revolutionary imperialist ideology of fascism getting routed by the Red Army, and felt that they themselves had a class-stake in this defeat of fascism, started to draw lessons from the experience which temporary cynical bourgeois war propaganda about 'gallant Russian allies' had not at all intended.

It took the whole expensive edifice of welfare capitalism to drown out workers' suspicions about the real imperialist aims of the bourgeois running the war and their memories of the kind of roused class-consciousness which for example prompted the Communist-tending discussions around the soldiers' 'Cairo parliament'.

Not for nothing did the establishment consent to bundle Churchill into a corner and let the Labour party get on with the job of rehabilitating capitalist class rule with a welfarist face. The bullying elitist class arrogance which Churchill represented had to be shelved for a time as too provocative. Only later did the bourgeoisie feel they could resume the construction of the sick personality cult around Churchill, as part of the whole effort to take the class sting out of memories about the war.

The Churchill cult commands all-party devotion because an attack upon it is simultaneously an attack on the bourgeois falsification of the Second World War in which all bourgeois parties have a stake.

Again, the suicide-bug which inspired Major to win electoral prestige by going to Derry to commemorate the Irish dimension of WWII equally infects the rest of imperialist Westminster.

It was Callaghan's Labour party that sent in the troops 25 years ago which are getting ready to throw in the towel against Irish national liberation now, and the imperialist humiliation of this retreat undermines Blair and Ashdown quite as much as it does Major.

British imperialism is now universally despised the length and breadth of Ireland. Everyone knows that it is British imperialist decline and Irish national revolutionary success which are forcing the 'peacemaking' hat onto Major. The timewasting obstacles to reunification which Britain half-heartedly continues to erect can only increase the contempt with which the humiliated and retreating bourgeois state is regarded.

Reminding the Irish of the two imperialist wars this century in which their fathers and grandfathers died (to be rewarded by Partition after the first, and counter-revolutionary war for the last 25 years) can only increase their contempt for imperialism.

And reminding the Orange fascist ascendancy that their privileged existence as colonial gauleiters in the occupied zone of Ireland, now going down

the pan, was supposed to be a permanent reward for loyal services rendered to an Empire on which the sun would never set, can only increase the impotent despair of imperialism's redundant stooges.

Small wonder that the Derry visit was the occasion for the frustrated RUC rabble to fly off the handle and wade into a peaceable and well conducted Sinn Féin demonstration, thereby earning further street-fighting humiliations for themselves at the hands of the contemptuous Derry citizenry.

And more revealing still was the much less well publicized East Belfast Orange lodge VE parade a few days later which spontaneously degenerated into a lumpen orgy of looting and destruction, hospitalizing some of their own RUC gang sent to the scene, and completely trashing an off-licence.

British imperialism's temporary lucky break in staying on the winning side in the last two imperialist wars was never a victory for the working class or 'democracy'. Nor is the long-overdue end of this streak of luck, as renewed imperialist crisis exposes geriatric British imperialist positions to more and more ruthless competitive rivalry, a defeat for workers.

The rise of fascism in Germany and elsewhere in the '20s and '30s, which set in train a counter-revolutionary CLASS war waged by the bourgeois ruling class against its own proletariat, was BACKED by imperialism internationally as a "bulwark against Bolshevism". The Western 'democracies'

Tories hack each other apart as capitalist trade-war looms worldwide, and the Clegg stunt backfires on Major's sordid game with the peace process in Ireland, in British Imperialism's last dying colony.

[EPSR No 809 04-07 -95]

Whatever interpretation is put on the results of the voting in the Tory leadership contest, the fact remains that the head of the government party did declare, halfway between general elections, that he could no longer cope.

There were, Major announced, a few 'bastards' who were making it impossible for him to run things properly.

The entire world correctly interpreted this as simply meaning that Tory policies were proving increasingly useless for dealing with ever more complex

ONLY turned against the axis powers at the point where their usefulness (as counter-revolutionary suppressors of revolution in the West and of unimpeded socialist development in the Soviet Union) started to be seriously overtaken by the imperialist threat they posed as rivals to their own monopoly domination of the planet.

The current misfiring of all these attempts to take people's minds off the news in 1995 by retelling a sanitized version of the news from 1945 is very bad for the whole establishment, and not just for the electorally stricken Tories. ANY capitalist party that wants to be part of the next phase of bourgeois political life is going to be relying more and more heavily on promoting the crassest middle-class chauvinist prejudices, all the way ultimately to khaki elections. But on present performance, they look to have their work cut out for them.

As soon as the media were obliged to stop pretending it was 1945 (and a 1945 that never existed at that), all the major news stories breaking at once pointed straight back to the divisions and paralysis afflicting all attempts at imposing imperialist order on the growing crisis. In addition to the City's nightmares about a run on sterling, the declining dollar is faced with new shocks as Washington knocks the Vancouver trade talks on the head and reverts to open trade-war bullying threats against Japan's superior monopoly performance.

Build the ILWP.

DH [Dominic Hull]

and difficult international and domestic economic and political conditions, that Major himself felt inadequate to do anything about it, and that he was looking round for someone else to blame.

The result of his piece of ludicrous foot-stamping pique, demanding at first an unopposed vote of confidence, and then a near-unanimous vote of confidence after his challenge was taken up, – is that the 'bastards' who do not have obviously unstinting affection for Major's leadership, now number

in the dozens.

What is more, the whole world now knows this is the reality [...]

As the previous *Bulletin* analysed, the Tory leadership crisis sums up the whole historic crisis of the British monopoly imperialist bourgeoisie which flourished worldwide for a long while in the past, but degenerated badly, became sclerotic and overtaken by newer more powerful thrusting imperialist rivals (the USA, Germany, Japan, etc), and is now completely outclassed and hopelessly out of its depth in terms of the heavy-weight monopoly-capitalist competitiveness now required for world leadership.

As a result, the British bourgeoisie has become increasingly crotchety, hidebound, and ill-at-ease with itself. It seems to be fast approaching the position of being totally lacking in confidence internationally, and therefore eventually internally as well.

It is a malignant condition affecting the entire British bourgeoisie. Against all the evidence, ever-more-desperate cries are still occasionally heard sadly insisting that 'Britain is still the best' at this or that, – only usually to be quickly humiliatingly shown up by new international evidence to the contrary, – not only on the sporting field but in research, science, technology, industry, the arts, social organisation, etc, etc.

The problem, of course, is not with 'Britain' but with the British ruling class, which must now be not far away from total historical political extinction at the hands of a frustrated and contemptuous British people.

Similarly totally riddled with this bourgeois disease of inadequacy, Major likewise could only pathetically keep on insisting 'I am still the best', etc, when his own weak actions have themselves in fact made it obvious that he is either nowhere near 'the best', or else that 'the best' that the Tories can do is hopelessly inadequate.

But, the ruling class obviously simply cannot just stop being the ruling class. This has never happened to a ruling class in history, and it will not happen this time either. The 'leadership' posturing will continue, even as what is being 'led' looks increasingly unappetising, sickly, and unsuccessful, – like, for example, the British capitalist economy's ability to compete well or at all in the colossal trade-war conflicts soon to break over the planet, driving to the wall vast international companies which could not sur-

vive the increasingly cut-throat competition.

The British monopoly imperialist bourgeoisie was long ago already squeezed out of it in such key matters as domestically-owned volume car production, or shipping production, or production of scores of other items crucial to being a serious world power, – especially in times of approaching all-out trade war which will see some ferocious dirty tricks played soon against those rivals vulnerable to selected goods embargoes, etc.

Now this ruling class cannot even manage the affairs of its own leading political party adequately. They will now look a more ludicrous sight than ever in the eyes of world imperialist rivalry. [...]

It is what free-market politics cannot cope with that is alone worth deeply examining, not the inadequacy of the various posturing leadership contenders none of whom could have the slightest significant influence now on the fate of decadent British imperialism as the greatest slump in history approaches.

It is the problems which 16 years of Tory government have not remotely come close to solving which matter, especially as they will also be the same problems which would devastate any incoming Labour administration just as they have devastated the Tory government. [...]

To add to the woes of the British middle class and its seething back-stabbing confused Tory Establishment, the problem is not just one for weaker economies which have fallen on hard times, or made a wrong decision or two, or just suffered some temporary leadership problems. The problem is endemic for the whole free-market system. It is just that the weaker powers might suffer the worst.

But there again, they might just not. Maybe a few stronger but more heavily export-oriented powers might suffer even greater relative catastrophes, – Japan for example. The capitalist press is finally catching up with the realisation that the bust which follows the credit boom could hurt the most successful economies the most: [...]

No wonder the dithering British ruling class feel so confused and ill-at-ease, squabbling over a worthless pecking order, and making a paralysed banjax of their own lone achievement in realistic rational politics, – the snail's-pace withdrawal from the Occupied Zone of Ireland, (burying for ever, at long last, the nonexistent bastard colonial statelet of Northern Ireland).

Britain's reluctant climb-down has visibly slowed in the past few months because Tory leadership has been so challenged. The deliberate undermining of the peace process is not yet a new policy from London, merely a piece of incompetent stagnation, wiping the illegal murder of Karen Reilly off the slate but keeping thousands of national-liberation prisoners-of-war behind bars still, even though victory for Ireland's reunification struggle has all but been conceded to the heroic Republican movement. But a paralysed ruling class like the British bourgeoisie could yet stumble into a renewed bloody mess at the end of its disgraceful 800-year history of colonial repression in Ireland.

It is an obvious Major re-election stunt to have let Pte Clegg out this week to appease the far right of the Tory Establishment, hoping thereby to have got some

of the more reactionary capitalist press off his back who dislike him for his lack of aggressive imperialist confidence. This stunt was trailed by Mayhew's bizarre outburst to the *Times*, before Major's resignation was announced, that the PM was crucial to a 'just settlement', – all things to all Tory factions. It has gone wrong. Is Clegg's army murder gun to be decommissioned? Own goal!

Now let London's devious Clegg campaign meet its real aim of an excuse to free all the war's gaoled.

It still remains the epoch of destructive imperialist crisis and defeat; and Ireland's reunification is guaranteed sooner or later. But present Tory paralysis is a reminder of how important it is to press on for Leninist revolutionary consciousness everywhere as soon as possible. JH

Major's 'win' leaves bourgeois class leadership in a worse hole than ever - the Ireland Clegg issue included

[EPSR No 810 11-07-95 (*SouthWest Bulletin* No 128)]

[...]The humiliating snail's pace retreat from Ireland continues to be a crucial index of the British bourgeoisie's wider failures, with the farce over the Clegg release putting fresh nails in colonial rule.

The carefully orchestrated campaign (to add another convicted army murderer to the long list of those exempt from the usual processes of criminal 'justice') began long before the latest leadership crisis, and needs to be understood in the context of London's need for face-saving devices to minimize the humiliation of its snail's pace withdrawal from the Occupied Zone of Ireland. Specifically, it is likely that this latest grossly partial example of colonial 'justice' was intended as a tactical sop to enflamed colonial bigotry, in anxious preparation for the eventual liberation of Irish POWs held in gaols across the OZ and in England itself.

Trying to milk a little extra specific electoral advantage out of the plan (by having Mayhew time the release for the eve of the leadership election) may have soothed a few gullible reactionary votes back behind Major, – but only at the expense of further compromising the whole strategy of damage limitation, needlessly turning up the heat in Derry and Belfast, and stupidly alienating sections of bourgeois opinion which, if better handled, might still have

been able in some measure to help ease the shock to bourgeois imperialist prestige of Britain's forced decolonization:

Within hours of the decision by the Northern Ireland Secretary, Sir Patrick Mayhew, to free Clegg on licence after four years in jail for shooting dead Karen Reilly, a passenger in a stolen vehicle in west Belfast, more than 100 cars had been hijacked and set alight. There was unrest in Londonderry and Lurgan, Co Armagh.

Police put on flak jackets and riot helmets which had been stowed over the last four months when they confronted a 1,000-strong march and prevented it leaving west Belfast for the City Hall.

All afternoon, long plumes of oily smoke billowed up from the Lower Falls and Ballymurphy. The main roads into west Belfast were blocked by lines of slate-grey ruc Land-Rovers. It was the most extensive rioting in republican areas since August 9, 1994, when disturbances marked the anniversary of internment.

At least 100 cars and lorries were set alight in Belfast and in the Creggan, Bogside and Shantallow estates in Londonderry.

"People have to remember that this is how it started out more than 25 years ago," a young man said, picking his way between charred cars. "Do you want to go back to it again? Let the prisoners out then."

Clearly angered, the Irish prime minister, John Bruton, said he expected the British Government to apply the approach used in the Clegg case to all similar prisoner cases, republican and loyalist.

Labour and supporters of John

Redwood complained that the timing of the announcement had been arranged to help the Prime Minister's leadership campaign. Evidently irritated by London's tactics, the Irish foreign minister, Dick Spring, fuelled the flames by calling the speculation reasonable. Downing St denounced the charge as "utter rubbish".

Mr Redwood said Clegg's release "didn't come a moment too soon for me." But he avoided comment on the charge of media manipulation — implicitly that John Major's ally, Sir Patrick Mayhew, had decided the soldier's fate on Friday (as Downing Street confirmed) but delayed revealing it until eve of poll.

Downing Street said Sir Patrick acted alone in a "quasijudicial capacity" on the advice of the board, the trial judge and the province's Lord Chief Justice. He had told Mr Major, not consulted him.

Northern Ireland's chief probation officer, Bridge Gadd, yesterday revealed that she has resigned her position on the province's life sentence review board over the case. Mrs Gadd said: "The reviewing of a case at the June meeting was a major deviation from the principles of practice and procedure used previously."

Like Major's daft VE day 'man of peace' posturing in Derry, and subsequent half-hearted stunts to put off the inevitable negotiations towards Ireland's reunification with a lot of flannel about 'decommissioning' preconditions, this panicky attempt to turn public relief at the Irish 'peace process' into short-term brownie points for Major has ended up with the worst of both worlds for the bourgeoisie.

It shows up the cynical opportunism underlying all Major's 'man of peace' posturing from the start. And, much more seriously for imperialism, it compromises the crucial strategic efforts the imperialist bourgeoisie is painfully making to extricate itself, at this dangerously late stage and under these ever less propitious crisis conditions, from its stupidly hung-on-to Orange fag-end of empire. Any temporary advantage that might have secured for Major in his pathetic leadership charade hardly makes up for the new high water mark in the contempt which British imperialism now attracts in Ireland (and most other places too), let alone the impetus which such clumsiness might offer the national struggle, already fought through to its current advance in revolutionary fashion, to move beyond the narrow nationalist constraints of its politics.

As Irish developments help clarify, what underlies the Tories' leadership weakness is the long-term historical decline

of British capitalist fortunes, now shunted on to the edge of a REAL "abyss" (a lot bigger than the "abyss" of a few hundred MPs losing their precious seats at Westminster with which Major sought to scare his backbenchers) by the world crisis of imperialism.

The Labour party has on current showing even less real sense of purpose and direction than the Tories. At least behind the Tories lie centuries of genuine rancid exploiting class instinct. With the last lights going out for welfare capitalist class-collaboration, what has the second-hand Toryism of Blair to recommend it over the original article, beyond the novelty of the first few weeks in office?

Sooner or later, the kind of 'foreigner'-baiting right-wing hate-politics gestured towards by the Redwoods, Lilleys and Portillos will have to be attempted by the ruling class, behind whatever political grouping (or 'National Party' chauvinist coalition of groupings, as is already being predicted/prompted by right-wingers like Norman Stone) is around when trade war push comes to shove. Thatcherism was not a 'digression from sensible politics', but a faltering early attempt at the only kind of politics which can possibly accompany any serious crusade to keep Britain's rotten monopoly capitalist rule afloat in the trade-war, shooting-war storms ahead.

Bourgeois ideology can't ever let go of chauvinism's tail, however transnational become capitalism's aspirations, and however crass Wisden-style racial bigotry sounds to modern ears, — or however hollow ring the 'more sophisticated', 'liberal' alternatives:

Fire can only be fought with fire: emotion with emotion: mean and miserable xenophobic nationalism with a generous, pluralist and outward-looking alternative. Such nationalisms have existed, and still exist. Verdi was the hymnodist of the Italian Risorgimento, and also of European liberalism. Vaclav Havel is a Czech patriot, and a citizen of the world. George Orwell was both an English nationalist and a socialist internationalist. Winston Churchill — significantly, a bogey to Europhobic revisionist historians — combined in his own person a generous British nationalism with Whig cosmopolitanism. I doubt if any Conservative can now find the right idiom for the combination of Orwell and Churchill that the times demand. The crucial question for the next decade is whether Tony Blair can do so. For all our sakes, he had better start soon.

Citing Verdi and Havel in the same breath only succeeds in emphasizing what a long downhill road capitalism has travelled from its bourgeois nationalist heyday to the squalid warmongering nihilism of its imperialist twilight — aptly represented culturally by the light-minded playwright-cum-president who helped end socialism in Czechoslovakia.

And this yearning for a 'patriotic' agenda underwritten by the pretend 'anti-fascist' WW2 bourgeoisie and its equally pretend 'socialist' hangers-on from the anti-Soviet middle class intelligentsia is even more revealing of the difficulties capitalism faces in pushing such chauvinist dope down people's throats at this late stage of the 20th century, with or without Blair's syrup to help it along.

The 'anti-fascist' alibis which obscured the imperialist war

British capitalist rule is weaker after Major's leadership gamble, not stronger. (Ireland - Clegg not helping)

[EPSPR No 811 18-07-95 (SouthWest Bulletin No 129)]

[...]It is against the background of that same crisis that the colonial oppression of Ireland is finally being retreated from at a snail's pace, so eventually clearing away a major obstacle to conscious revolutionary communist development in both the British and the Irish working class.

Contrary to the nonsense spouted by the SWP and *Militant* (and now the RCP too, insanely claiming that the Irish national struggle has been 'defeated', with Ireland 'a nation never again'), the fact is that it was the revolutionary fight against British imperialism, waged behind the non-communist leadership of Sinn Féin/IRA, which has opened up new possibilities of class-struggle advance, not all that pretend-socialist advice from the wings.

All the time that Trot idealism was excusing itself from defending the national liberation struggle unfolding on its own doorstep by whining that the IRA were not communists (unlike the SWP fakers, they never claimed to be), that struggle continued to sacrifice and struggle heroically against everything the state could throw at it — PTA, internment, no-jury courts, torture barracks, shoot-to-kill policy — until the long retreat was forced on London.

All those simple-minded calls for 'protestants and Catholics to unite and fight for a living wage' etc. (blindly accepting the bourgeois story about 'sectarianism

aims motivating all bourgeois participation in WW2, Britain's included, have in the propaganda of recent years been compromised beyond repair, — over Libya, over Argentina, over Panama etc., and now in the Balkans (with the truly Goebbelsian attempts to slander those upholding the partisan tradition of resistance to imperialist intervention as themselves 'fascist').

And as the real consequences of walking AWAY from proletarian dictatorship in the Soviet Union are rubbed home worse every day, the anti-Soviet claims of 'democratic socialism' Orwell-style look less and less like 'socialism' of any description, and more and more like nauseating toadying to imperialism.

Fight for Leninist proletarian, dictatorship science. Build the ILWP.

DH (D Hull)

on both sides' and doing its best to bury the historic significance of the latter stages of the fight against national oppression under mechanical repetition of reformist formulae) only ever had one effect: to get under the feet of the anti-imperialist fight, and sow confusion amongst workers.

But the last laugh is on the Trots. Now that this great obstacle to Bolshevik progress is at last being shoved aside, it is becoming clear that it is the SUCCESS of anti-imperialism and the demoralized FAILURE of Orange politics which is opening up the opportunities for conscious class struggle.

Before the Portadown events started up, the capitalist press was already reflecting some interesting pre-marching season tensions:

In Dublin there is an expectation that the government will shortly move to soothe the crisis by transferring the remaining republican prisoners held in English jails back to Northern Ireland and by increasing remission rates to 50 per cent, which could result in the immediate release of some prisoners. The Ormeau's Ballynafeigh is the smallest of Belfast's Orange Lodges, with just 259 members out of a total membership in Northern Ireland of 100,000. Every Twelfth for the last 96 years it has paraded down the Ormeau Road into the city centre and joined the annual march to the Field. For the Catholic population it means being penned inside your home all day, listening to the rising beat of the drums, fearful of roused sectarian passions, enduring the

annual coat-trailing spectacle of the Protestant ascendancy.

Those who can afford it go away on holiday to Spain or Donegal.

But this Twelfth the Orangemen of Ballynafeigh will find their route down the Ormeau Road blocked by RUC officers in riot gear, as it has been five times already this year during the marching season's warm-up parades.

THE ROAD glistened after the hour-long battle, broken bottles ground to powder by the wheels of police Land-Rovers, the familiar detritus of rioting. Back in Ballynafeigh Orange Hall some of the older men sat drinking whiskey in the upstairs bar where a large photograph of a young Queen Elizabeth hung, shaking their heads resignedly. "Hooligans, they messed it up for us. It wasn't Orangemen doing that," said one. "The police over-reacted, it was no worse than your average soccer match," opined another. "What were they doing releasing Clegg this week of all weeks?" demanded one of his drinking companions. "Couldn't they have at least waited until the Twelfth was out of the way? What would another few days have mattered?" The conversation dried up after someone concluded: "Well that's that, there's no way we'll get down that road on the Twelfth now, not after that."

The showdown between unrec- onciled sections of Orange fas- cism and their fellow Orange- men in RUC uniforms is rubbing home the real extent both of that resentful whipped demor- alization and of just how badly the stricken British establish- ment need to be done with the Irish war for good.

With the material basis of

'British-Irish' privilege eroded by slump (no more guaranteed Unionist ticket to a ship-build- ing job for life) and fought to a standstill by armed national- ist resistance (all the way back to its roots in Downing Street and the City of London), the demoralization of all the cocky second-hand imperialist arro- gance is nearing completion.

The whisky-tipler's response to Clegg's release is instructive. So far from giving 'British Irish- ness' the fillip that might have been anticipated, what at once surfaces instead is the fear that London's latest blundering will only make things even worse.

And the self-destructive fury which drives some 'British Irish' blowhards into a hail of plastic bullets from the guns of their fellow bigots in the RUC can only, as the tipler's gloomy prophecy made clear, bring closer the day when such counter-revolutionary displays of colonial arrogance are banned from going down any road in Ireland at all. The hundreds of Irish in Portadown who gath- ered in the road at 4 o'clock this morning to block any idea of scuttling through under cover of darkness made this point very clearly. (Latest reports suggest- ing that the marchers will pass through today under conditions imposed by the nationalist community would make the triumphalism of this year's 'Glorious Twelfth' even more hollow.)

Orange triumphalism, long

Bloody Sunday slaughter of unarmed demonstrators by British paratroopers

a hollow echo of a wider empire lost, can never be stood back upon its feet now that Paisley's endless 'sell-out' warnings now self-evidently correspond with simple fact.

With the unfinished national business on the way to being sorted, the deck is being cleared for Irish workers to extend their recent revolutionary anti-impe- rialist tradition into a profound- er challenge to the class basis of all imperialist rule.

Nor can it even be guar- anteed, in the absence of a confi- dent and clear lead from the rotten bourgeois of the Orange ascendancy, that even the poor bloody Orange infantry will for- ever let their love of 'King Billy' block out everything that the reality of their class existence within imperialist crisis keeps trying to tell them. But such developments, if and when they

come, will owe everything to the ferocity with which 'British Irish' colonial pretensions have been fought to the wall, and 'nothing at all to the 'protes- tants and Catholics, unite and fight' disruptive cretinism of the SWP and the rest.

As for workers in Britain, it is hard to say where the richest po- litical lesson lies: in the demise of the colonial oppression of Ireland which played such a key role in the imposition of reform- ist class-collaboration on British workers' political consciousness (especially after losing India, Suez etc.); or in the spectacular self-exposures of its brutality, cynicism and incompetence which the capitalist state is lay- ing on for workers in the course of its slow-motion scramble for the colonial exit.

Fight for Leninism. Build the ILWP. Dominic Hull

Divided trade-war imperialists have no wish to bury the hatchet, – except in each other. Blitzing the Serbs' small-scale independence fight would just be the criminal violence of the despic- able inter-imperialist supremacy con- flict. But the Balkans and Ireland show that defeat for imperialism is the real perspective.

[EPSR No 812 25-07-95]

Continued imperialist big- power attempts to bully tiny

little Serbia's national self- determination struggle might



give the appearance that the monopoly capitalist system is further from serious overthrow challenge than ever before in modern history, – but such conclusions would be completely misleading.

Events in the Balkans and Ireland demonstrate some crucial philosophical truths of historical-materialist science which, fully understood, will give unbeatable strength to the international anti-imperialist movement among workers.

In former Yugoslavia, the 10 million Serbs' refusal to accept the Balkanisation of their country into artificial mini-statelets dominated by reactionary middle-class religious mafias who would be nothing but stooges for Western imperialist influence, and which would destroy the one genuine regional nationalism by forcing nearly half of all Serbs to become discriminated-against minorities inside fanatical confessional hell-holes (like Muslim Bosnia or Catholic Croatia), – has laid bare a vital perception for the fight against the degeneracy of monopoly-capitalist crisis.

In the long run, the imperialist powers cannot avoid being split irreconcilably, – on everything, – and this simple understanding, fully and well grasped by workers, will be of colossal significance for the eventual socialist revolution.

The fake-'left', – (bogus petty-bourgeois 'revolutionaries' like the SWP, RCP, WRP and Eurocommunists), – have always kept workers divided for the most part throughout history by their theoretical confusion. Only briefly have genuine Leninist parties like the Bolsheviks managed to build enough support for relentlessly-disciplined parties of revolutionary-theory leadership to set up proletarian dictatorships, the only way state power will ever be conquered by the working class.

Not only does the 'left' fail to see the splits in the warmonger Western powers as a great anti-imperialist victory in Bosnia; most of these anti-Leninist dilettantes are busy cheering on the incipient monopoly-capitalist blitzkrieg on the Serbs[...]

[...]Various imperialist government speculations and propaganda ambushes are detectable in the off-the-record briefings which inspired the above report, supposed to be about the Lancaster House discussions on what military action to take next over Bosnia. The imperialist powers' real worries are about what trade-war action, and worse, they may soon have to take against each other.

Germany is paying the piper and so Germany is calling the tune on what should happen around Europe. But French imperialism is speculatively wondering, with a sneer, whether the Germans could go it alone if they have to, bearing in mind hostile European memories of past German militarism, and asking itself how much more European Union cover it dare lend the Germans.

At the same time, the French imperialist bourgeoisie are prepared to stir everybody up in order to remind the world once again of France's nuclear muscles, while simultaneously playing the European card once more against British imperialism, hoping to keep London distrusted as just a US imperialist stooge, and at the same time to exacerbate the known divisions within the British bourgeoisie over whether to try for a European alliance or an American alliance in the coming inter-bloc trade-war holocaust, (it is interesting to note in passing how it is another old Trotskyite 'left' fraud, Cohn-Bendit, who is leading the clamour in Germany for the imperialist Wehrmacht to renew throwing its weight about)[...]

Anyone with half a brain would bet that German and Japanese imperialism has been secretly working for decades on perfecting all the nuclear know-how that their international trade-war rivals possess, including, of course, nuclear weapons know-how.

But the time was always likely to arrive when it would have to become a matter of public knowledge (and concern) that German and Japanese imperialism are fully back in the picture again for world domination once more. That moment looks like it might have come already.

In a routine cover-up to continue avoiding alerting the world's masses to the really serious threat to "human rights" of forthcoming inter-imperialist conflict (aided by Trot muddle-headed reactionaries who want to convince people that the national-liberation struggle of 10 million Serbs is the real threat to mankind), – this report uses polite euphemisms about 'non-proliferation' of 'highly enriched uranium' with the 'high neutron-flux' when the real issue is weapons-grade uranium which should be banned, say the West, to on no account give their German imperialist rivals any access to the atomic bomb.

The NATO imperialist 'allies' are almost certainly wasting their time in trying to restrict

the development of German and Japanese imperialist might in this way.[...]

[...]Once again, the deep splits which have paralysed the British ruling class party (which came so close to toppling John Major and forced power-sharing on him with Michael Heseltine) over whether to get deeper into European Union or encourage the American alliance more, are making themselves felt throughout the industrial bourgeoisie as well. No wonder British imperialist policy on the Balkans quagmire has been even more constipated than the paralysed-enough manoeuvres of the rest of the imperialist gangsters.

That paralysis in London has extended to what was already an arthritic-enough programme for the snail's-pace withdrawal from the Occupied Zone of Ireland, – the elimination of one of British imperialism's final colonies, the non-existent bastard colonial statelet of 'Northern Ireland', a survival of an earlier divide-and-rule creation of an imperialist-stooge confessional hellhole (under the Orange-logic fanatics).

But despite the enormous confusion generated by the extreme sclerotic condition of the collapsing British imperialist ruling class in recent weeks, latest developments have indicated that the snail's-pace withdrawal, the ILWP's unique analysis of the conflict in Ireland (see ILWP Books vol 8, 15 & 22 (in progress) on *Ireland*), remains on course.

The desperate British cover-up of its retreat plus the chaos of last month's leadership resignation and electoral challenge, have conspired to continue fooling everyone (i.e. those who want to be fooled like some middle-class diehard reactionaries and their close cousins in the fake-'left' Trotskyite groups) that it is Irish Republican Army/Sinn Féin struggle which has capitulated, and British imperialism which has 'won'.

That very queer outfit *Living Marxism* has been one of the latest to sneer at the guns-in-hand Irish national-liberation struggle for 'bottling out':

Every assumption of the *Framework Document* is anti-nationalist. There is no concession to Ireland's right to form one independent nation state.

Under the terms of the *Framework Document* British dominion will remain over Irish affairs.

The acceptance by the Irish government and even more importantly by Sinn Féin of the legitimacy of diverse 'identities' and 'traditions' in Ireland marks the end of Irish nationalism. Ireland will never be a nation.

Previous outbreaks of republican resistance ended in heroic defeat, but always with the pledge to try again in more auspicious circumstances.

The final phase of the last 25 years is descending into low farce. It is a truly pitiful end to a once powerful movement, and a poor tribute to those who fought and gave their lives for Irish freedom.

This is the most obscene nonsense from emotionally-retarded Trotskyite dilettantes of the most diseased kind.

Deviously, these demented buggers also admit that the great aim of the Sinn Féin national-liberation struggle, – the downfall of the hated fiction 'Northern Ireland', – has also been achieved.

But their dishonest tortured way of accepting this in order to conceal their own past incorrectness about the conflict in Ireland is to provocatively declare:

"Now that Irish nationalism is dead, the nuisance of partition can finally be removed".

The pretence is that the British imperialists have long wanted to get rid of their bankrupt Orange-Unionist colony as too unwieldy, preferring more subtle methods of control.

Certainly, world and British imperialist influences will still pollute the politics of Ireland for some time to come, no one is denying it.

But all of this misses the point entirely that British imperialism, – aided for a long while by the condoning complacency of world imperialism, fought ferociously with every dirty means in the book in order to try to avoid being defeated (by armed revolutionary struggle, with all the terrifying significance that would have for the international bourgeois system), – in order to 'defeat terrorism'. And British imperialism failed catastrophically.

The triumph of the Irish national-liberation struggle is to be seen precisely in the winding up of the despised colonial statelet and Partition. Only the most deranged subjective-idealist political posturing could pretend to conclude that Partition is dead, but that Irish nationhood is also now dead. It is a nonsense not worth arguing against.

The diverse identities and traditions in Ireland do not and could not remotely stop Ireland from being Ireland, however dubious they were and however much begrudged 'recognition' they receive. One trip to Ireland would suffice to prove this, if it was not spent hanging around men's public lavatories the whole time. It has always been obvious that the 350-year British colonial plantation should be given the choice to become really Irish, under Irish sovereignty, or to remain as foreign visitors, or to emigrate to South

Africa as the Orangemen used to do (a less viable option for racial bigotry now). Most, of course, will stay. But Ireland will still be Ireland.

These fake-'lefts' wrote off Sinn Féin because they could not grasp that imperialism could be defeated, and defeated at the hands of revolutionary struggle, without it necessarily being at the hands of these self-aggrandising Trotskyites, full of the most insane subjective conceit.

They also could not remotely grasp the crucial lesson of Marxist historical-materialist science that a defeat for imperialism, at whoever's hands, would be the only key to unlocking the door to future socialist progress in Ireland (and in Britain too).

These lunatic Trotskyite sectarians have been vilifying and undermining anti-imperialist struggle after anti-imperialist struggle for decades on the idiot grounds that the anti-imperialist fighters were not 'perfect revolutionaries' like these armchair-socialist dilettante Trots puff themselves up to be.

The real condemnation of Sinn Féin and the IRA of course, was in practice nothing but a gift to imperialism's counter-revolutionary efforts. It is only the Trots, of course, who have never done anything but 'betray the revolution', - 100% in every situation in history.

But despite all this fake-'left' subjective denigration from the petty-bourgeoisie, despite all the British big bourgeoisie's delaying tactics and cover-up confusion-mongering, - the defeat for imperialism is clear.

The latest alarms about the peace process have been settled by capitalist press admissions that the imperialist bourgeoisie has now begun full talks with the 'unspeakable terrorists' who at one time were to be 'only totally destroyed'. The

remnants of the British colonial community can only foam at the mouth in wounded disgust at their total betrayal. Paisley may be only a joke now, but he is not joking in his bilious hatred for the ending of Partition and his apoplectic outrage at being sold out, and he has only been made a joke by the triumphant struggle of the Irish national-liberation movement.

The British media also reveal that as well as the start to fullscale negotiations between the Government and Sinn Féin, there are other snail's-pace concessions in the pipeline, exactly as the ILWP has long been explaining would happen:

There is an expectation in security circles that the Government will announce the reintroduction of 50 per cent remission for paramilitary prisoners. Legislation brought forward in November would mean the release of about 100 prisoners by Christmas.

More transfers of republican prisoners from English jails are in the pipeline, as are proposals to further disarm the RUC. At a Sinn Féin demonstration in Belfast on Friday, many police officers were not carrying even standard issue revolvers.

There is speculation that Sir Patrick is considering a compromise on political talks, which would fudge the issue of "substantive" and "exploratory" negotiations with Sinn Féin. An informed source speculated this might take the form of an open table at which the Northern Ireland Secretary would be prepared to meet any of the parties. It would be up to them to choose when and with whom they would convene.

At the same time, British and Irish civil servants are said to be casting around for a suitable candidate to head an independent commission which would oversee the practicalities of disarming the paramilitaries.

Sinn Féin's view is that the release of prisoners is a distraction and that only the setting of a date for all-party talks - sometime within the next six months - will avert the impending crisis.

In a radio interview before the talks between Sir Patrick and Mr Spring at Hillsborough, Co Down,

Mr Adams said he had informed Sir Patrick "that the IRA... were not going to decommission unilaterally at this time or as part of a precondition." Usually reliable Unionist sources yesterday said they believed Northern Ireland Office officials were working on a form of words which would fudge Sir Patrick's insistence on substantial arms progress and which would pave the way for all-party talks as soon as September. But Ian Paisley's Democratic Unionists have made it clear that they would not attend such talks, while the Ulster Unionists are facing a leadership change and would be incapable of approaching the table.

Earlier Sir Patrick, defending his secret meeting last week with Mr Adams and Martin McGuinness in Londonderry, said the Government was asking only for a start to be made on the decommissioning of weapons and there was a "fair hope" this could happen soon.

But Mr Adams rejected this in a separate radio interview later. "I told Sir Patrick Mayhew very frankly that as the leader of Sinn Féin, I accepted no preconditions being placed upon our party," he said.

However, there are some signs that London is warming to the idea of an independent commission to oversee the disposal of paramilitary weapons. The Northern Ireland Secretary, Sir Patrick Mayhew, said the idea had been discussed and not ruled out during the three-hour meeting with the Irish Foreign Minister, Dick Spring.

In a further move, up to 20 high-profile Irish terrorist prisoners are to be repatriated to the Republic in an attempt to ease severe tensions in the Anglo-Irish peace process.

In a separate move, a further three IRA prisoners who are on a 'dirty protest' at Whitemoor jail in Cambridgeshire - Feilim O'Adhmaill, Liam Heffeman and Martin McMonagle - are to be sent back to Northern Ireland.

Being repatriated to Ireland was a main aim of the 'dirty protest'.

The British imperialist retreat is the key to another vital revolutionary understanding. For decades, the Trot sectarians have been screaming abuse at the national-liberation struggle for 'dividing the proletariat' in the Occupied Zone, (which the Trots have always been willing treacherously to call 'Northern Ireland' as if it were a real country, and regarding the working-class colonists there as the normal proletariat of a regular capitalist country). The Irish national-liberation struggle was denounced for encouraging 'Catholic sectarianism' and for driving 'Protestant workers' into the arms of British imperialism.

The ILWP has alone long explained that the only front line in the anti-imperialist struggle was the national-liberation struggle led by Sinn Féin and the IRA and that such a

revolutionary fight should have the unconditional, if critical, support of all revolutionaries everywhere as being the likeliest route to the defeat of British imperialism in Ireland.

Only such a defeat, it was repeatedly explained, could at last release the so-called 'Protestant working-class' (really only proletarian colonists until the defeat of Britain) from being stooges for their own British ruling class. And only then could the fight for the socialist revolution in Ireland, based on the entire working class, really begin.

And so it has proved.

It is the defeat and humiliation for British imperialism in the guerrilla war which has finally given colonist workers the chance to see their own exploitation at the hands of the Orange bourgeoisie, and the utterly futile perspective of tying their fate to that of the British colonial ruling class any longer.

This process is still in its very early stages, but the evidence for it is provided by the capitalist press itself:

In the ten months since the Nationalist and Loyalist ceasefire, old enmities have begun to fade and in spite of the painfully slow progress of peace negotiations at Westminster level, new allegiances are being forged on the streets of Belfast. There will be some elements of the ancien regime out there today attempting to stir up traditional hatreds, but they are outnumbered by those who see that a chapter of Northern Ireland's bloody history has closed.

The ceasefire and the publication of the *Framework Document* left the old Unionist parties of Molyneux and Paisley either raging in impatient silence or standing on the sidelines unsure of what to do next. Molyneux's Ulster Unionists took a battering in last week's by-election in well-to-do North Down.

Meanwhile, a further two new Loyalist parties have emerged on an increasingly fragmented political scene. In the same way that much of Sinn Féin's clout stems from it being the political wing of the IRA, Garry McMichael's Ulster Democratic Party and Billy Hutchinson's Progressive Ulster Party have won respect because they represent the former gunmen of the UDA and the UVF respectively.

In the PR war that has replaced the shooting war, Gerry Adams and Sinn Féin have so far won hands down. Once demonised, he is now lionised. So where are the province's Protestant standardbearers in the new struggle for hearts and minds? Where the once ubiquitous Dr Paisley, last seen being unceremoniously ejected from Downing Street?

Where the prim and grim James Molyneux, leader of Ulster's largest Unionist party? It's as if 25 years of bluster and defiance of the South and of British perfidy have simply evaporated.

David Adams of the new Ulster



Democratic Party, the political voice of the proscribed Ulster Defence Association. Adams has, as he puts it "been active in the Loyalist cause" since his teens. He seemed not entirely at home in the neat suit, shirt and tie. Unlike some of the slick performers brought to the fore by the peace process, he seems sincere. "The crucial mistake made by the Protestant working class was 25 years ago when the civil rights campaign started and we didn't get up and nail our banners on to sticks and walk with those people. For we were at a disadvantage and didn't realise it."

David Adams comes from a family of ten where only his father was entitled to a local council vote. Like many of his contemporaries, he dropped out of grammar school because he felt out of place among the middle-class and well-off children. "Northern Ireland is a very snobby society, I found school a complete nightmare." He sees the stance of the new parties, his own and Billy Hutchinson's Progressive Ulster Party, as "far more realistic and moderate than those politicians not personally involved in the armed struggle. We know the outcome of setting people on a certain course of action. We know the communities that are going to suffer for it"

He thinks the new wave of politicians has much to learn from Sinn Féin and that the mistake they made was in leaving politics in the hands of the mainstream Unionists. "The Loyalist paras left politics to the politicians and then realised the politicians were not doing much of a job. Paisley's Democratic Unionist Party is just a bit right of Ghengis Khan. They are a protest party and if we can get some settlement here there will be nothing for them to protest about I think they'll vanish like snow off a ditch.

"The UUP [Molyneux's party] is a catch-all party which doesn't represent the interests of its voters. They've had 25 years in which to come to some arrangement with the Nationalists and have failed completely. If the constitutional question is taken out of politics it will lead to a complete realignment. People will be elected on bread-and-butter issues." He believes the way forward is in a new devolved form of provincial government far removed from the old Stormont "I'd like to see an assembly, fair, power-sharing from top to bottom, that has friendly links with the Republic."

A major stumbling block to peace is the British Government's intransigence in refusing to consider an amnesty for prisoners. This point was reiterated by almost everyone I spoke to.

"There is not a hope in hell of a peaceful settlement without a settlement for all the prisoners" said Adams. "Only for the troubles, most would never have seen the inside of a police station let alone prison.

"All political representatives must get together with the serious intent of working something out. John Hume mustn't think he can have everything he wants, and if there's any Unionist leader who still thinks he can get everything he wants, what planet has he been living on

for the last 25 years?"

FAR more remarkable than David Adams's change of heart is the shift in attitudes of the hard men who cannot hope to have any public or legitimate role in the changing landscape of Ulster politics. Sam is in his thirties and immediately recognisable as a type I would not like to have met along the border on a dark night in the not too distant past. He has served two prison sentences for his paramilitary activities. For almost all his life, the troubles and the part he played in them have been the main focus of his life. "My father can go in anywhere and mix with Catholics. He worked with them and he went to their dances. I can't I haven't it in me. I never knew them. My only contact was in street warfare. I don't know, even if peace holds, if I ever will be able to, after all that has happened here.

"But I'd like to see my son know them. Who knows he might even play Gaelic games like hurling?"

"We have lot in common with Sinn Féin. The working class problem is with feeding and looking after your family.

"We're learning from Sinn Féin. They've had the greatest publicity machine since Goebbels and the work they've done for their communities gets the vote. It's hard to go into a Catholic area and not see community centres, shopping complexes. Here it's the opposite. The area where I grew up is a pitiful sight, run-down, boarded up. We had shops, bars, a club. Now there's nowhere for people to go."

He sees the exploitation of the Protestant working classes as different only in degree from that of their Catholic neighbours and thinks for too long they were misled by the Unionists into acting against their own best interests by giving automatic uncritical support to the ruling class.

"The history of this province is, Mr So-and-so comes along, sets up a factory, builds a row of wee houses says, 'Here's a job. Here's a house. You vote for me.'" In the outcry that followed the signing of the Anglo-Irish Agreement, Sam supported the Unionist call for strikes and protest. "Everyone was behind them. But as time went on they said. 'Hold on, what are we doing this for them ones (Unionists) for?' They owned the factories. They owned the laws. The working class have started to catch themselves on and it's great to see it. I (now) hate Ian Paisley. He's a cancer in Northern Ireland.

"We must talk. In 1985, John McMichael (killed by the IRA in 1987 — his son Gary McMichael now leads the UUP) published his *Common Sense* document which said Loyalists would have to sit down with Sinn Féin and talk. It's taken the Unionists ten more years to realise that they will."

In a province which has the best education in the UK, the Protestant working class gets the worst. In 1993, three children passed the 11-plus from the ten primary schools in the whole of the Shankill. Last year, the number rose to 11 but most opted not to go to grammar school two bus rides away. There is no school in

the Shankill able to deliver A-levels. Only 20 per cent of Protestant children from these areas stay on at school after 16 as compared with 77 per cent of Catholics from similar backgrounds.

Robert is a nervous shy youth. In different circumstances, you might have encountered him with a jittery finger on the trigger. He is 25 but seems about 18 and still lives at home with his parents. Like his peers he has no basic qualifications and joined the paramilitaries straight from school. He talked for hours and told me afterwards he had never examined his motives or aspirations or spoken about them before. "I changed when I realised no matter how much I want to be British the British Government doesn't think I'm British. I don't see the sense in being loyal to a government that has no loyalty to us. They are looking for a way out. In the long term I see a united Ireland and that doesn't bother me so long as it comes about democratically.

"We have a lot in common with people in the [Catholic] Falls Road and we should get together. None of the two sets of people is gaining anything and people who deep down are not bigots are making bigoted statements."

His only means of learning about them is by reading Irish history. His conversation is peppered with references to 18th and 19th century Irish leaders, particularly the United Irishmen who in the spirit of the French Revolution united Catholics and Presbyterians in a doomed revolution to throw off the English Establishment in 1798.

"They wanted to replace the terms Catholic and Protestant with Irishman."

For most of her adult life Doreen's energies went into day to day survival and she didn't give much thought to the causes of the troubles. "The ceasefire has made me more politically aware. All the old politicians are living in the past. Paisley wants the troubles back. We need new people. We must look forward from now." Despite a quarter of a century of segregation she has managed to maintain contact with the friends of her youth. "I still see some of my Catholic friends but we had to meet in town. I'd really love to go to their homes and for them to come to me, the friends I grew up with. We should all work together. If you want something done, you'd be better off going on to the Falls Road. Their councillors work for them. Our councillors do nothing for us. All they want is money and to go on fancy trips. We need jobs and houses and then people can mix again. I'd love to see this area mixed if peace were permanent." Doreen's husband, Aubrey, is now out of prison, and it's one of the many surprises in Ulster to find activists, who have killed and spent long periods in prison, changed men because of the experience.

Aubrey served 20 years for murder and is, according to his wife, a much kinder and better person now. He agrees.

"Prison changed 90 per cent of people. I can walk into town and meet Republicans I was inside



Paratroopers on the streets of Derry during Bloody Sunday, 1972

with. On social issues I'd say we'll be working together in three years time. In prison, you learned to listen to the other side. I didn't have to agree but you began to understand what they thought. I have faith in the future. You can speak to someone when you know their point of view." But like his wife he's a little alarmed at the speed of change Sinn Féin's political agenda seems to embody. "They should leave a united Ireland out of it for the moment. The weapons should be given in on both sides. They should be discussing jobs and the release of prisoners and getting people to trust each other."

PRISON also provided Aubrey Tarr with a different perspective on another of the bogeymen that has so stultified political progress between the two communities — the Catholic priest. Protestants are taught from childhood to see priests as dangerous agents of Rome, seeking to destroy the Protestant church and state, and what he learned inside proved something of an eye-opener.

"Their priests didn't make any difference what side you were. The Protestant clergy, with the exception of Dr Eames, [Church of Ireland Primate of Ireland] did nothing for the prisoners. They'd say 'Yes' to everything and then do nothing. Whatever you asked the Catholic priests, contact your family or whatever, they said they would do it and they always did.

"I have hope now for the future, if only we had work. I have faith in the new politicians — Progressive Unionist Party, Ulster Democratic Party. They can speak for us. Until now we had nobody to articulate our case. All the Unionist platform ever said was, 'Keep Taigue out. Get me in.' Once elected, they did nothing for us." Anne (she did not wish to be identified) is the voice of a new woman not heard in Loyalist circles before. She spoke with great vehemence in a small but spotlessly neat house. "As prisoners' families, we had just the same treatment as the Catholic women and I can tell you, if the women in Paisley and

Molyneaux's families had to come through what we came through they wouldn't have such big mouths on them about defending the Protestant cause. You had to get the money and time for the prison visits and then they kept changing times and days after you'd arranged it all. And the strip searches. It's not just your clothes they go through. Imagine what you feel like. You want to see him but you dread what you might have to go through."

"I was good at school and I could have gone to university but girls like me weren't encouraged. I can tell you, the minute I get this crowd off my hands I'll be down to Queens University. You ask me why the Protestant women were invisible for so long. Well, we won't be invisible for much longer. If we get an education we'll be able to hold our own with them. Women on both sides can all work together. They can keep their slogans and their war cries. The people want a life. Up to now we had no life. Peace has given us great heart for the future."

WHEN the IRA and Loyalist cease-fires were declared at the end of August it was largely seen as a Nationalist initiative. The IRA had given up the armed struggle only to let Sinn Féin politicians strive for the same goals in the constitutional arena. It seemed Unionists like Paisley and Molyneaux had been wrong-footed. Their only cry is the old one of "betrayal" by Westminster. After days spent talking to the Loyalist underclass I think there may be another "betrayal" the Unionist hierarchy will now have to address.

There are the younger politicians, far closer to the gut instinct of the paramilitaries than the old guard ever were, who aren't afraid to talk to Sinn Féin. There are once disaffected diehards who feel the mainstream parties have neglected them and want nothing more than jobs. There are the ex-paramilitaries who are turning to Irish history to make sense of their present predicament. And there are the women who want a say in the running of their own communities.

While the media focus on Stormont and Westminster, the biggest shift in attitudes and expectations may well be taking place off-stage in the Protestant heartland, well beyond

the control of the politicians who regard the votes of their working classes as their lawful due.

A community looking to a new future without them could prove, for the old-style Unionist politicians, the greatest betrayal of all. G

Far from hating Sinn Féin for their supposedly 'despised Catholic sectarianism', these 'Protestant' workers are clearly full of admiration for the tenacious anti-imperialist struggle put up by the Irish masses.

At the same time, it is their sense of the British-Orange colonist community decaying and disintegrating from its ruling-class head downwards which is beginning to convince them that their future does not lie with imperialism.

Once again, it is the defeat of imperialism which has been the decisive historical lesson.

For the moment, attempts to revive Orange colonist reaction via the summer marching season have failed. A majority of voices have been raised for compromise with Irish nationalist sentiments. Anti-Major moves inside the Tory Cabinet with the same reactionary aim have similarly failed, it seems, with Mayhew playing an important extraordinary role in rescuing current policy from a rightwing backlash by his open letter to the *Times* even before Major had resigned the party leadership. And if Molyneaux is ousted from the UUP leadership, die-hardism may even start dying at slightly faster than snail's-pace; and the provocative Clegg release may yet be seen with hindsight as just a ruse to quieten British die-hard reaction against IRA prisoner releases, a key part of accepting the abandonment at last of that outrageous colonial folly, the non-existent bastard statelet of 'Northern Ireland', an endless recipe for troubles. Build Leninism.

DB

NATO warplanes bombing Serb villagers can only deepen the 'free world' fascist-slump crisis. Elsewhere, the imperialist system continues falling apart.

[EPSR No 818 05-09-95]

Once again, the essentially warmongering bullying attitude of the leading Western powers towards 'upstart' communities such as China, Cuba, Serbian nationalism, and the IRA/Sinn Féin which have challenged 'free world' domination, - has had to cautiously vary its response.[...]

[...]But still the 'reformist' petty bourgeoisie choose to ignore the capitalist system's responsibility for an unbreakable worldwide regime of anarchic exploitation and warmongering arms race, which the socialist camp wiped out internally from Cuba to China, and vent their pathetic anti-communist

prejudices on China's workers state instead:

Those who argue — as do Glenys Kinnock, and the World Council of Churches — that the conference* should be boycotted because China is just such an authoritarian state can cite abundant evidence for their case. Yet the Chinese may have opened the door to a tigress they cannot easily ride. What better place than Beijing in which to denounce man's inhumanity to man — and woman? [*UN Women's Conference in Beijing - ed]

But these snivelling degenerates are living in the wrong age. On the broadest worldwide scale, it is Western imperialism which needs to be wiped out before progress can be made, — as has been proved by the heroic Cuban workers state (see subsequent article).

And once again, the blitzkrieg bombing of the Serb nationalists is obviously the dying gesture of a decaying order. Imperialism can get nowhere with such a bullying colonial approach to Cuba, and never will, all the time the Cubans keep their proletarian dictatorship regime in firm health and good order.

Over Ireland too, imperialist bluster still looks as if it will come to grief at the hands of not even proletarian revolution but simply a good old-fashioned national-liberation struggle.

The bourgeois propaganda machinery is itself now predicting a complete British imperialist capitulation towards the completion of Irish national-liberation, holding talks with the 'terrorist enemy' about a new structure for Ireland which will finally bury the despicable colonial statelet of bogus 'northern Ireland' and the barbaric partition of the country:

John Major will this week sanction substantive political talks with Sinn Féin, despite the IRA's refusal to make any move on giving up weapons or explosives.

A formula to break the deadlock in the peace process is expected to be agreed at a Chequers summit with the Irish Prime Minister, John Bruton, on Wednesday.

It marks yet another retreat in the face of Sinn Féin-IRA intransigence and will anger Ulster Unionists, who elect a new leader on Friday.

But British sources now accept that there has to be movement if the peace process is to stay alive.

Wednesday's summit will also set up an international commission, including military experts, to consider how to de-commission terrorist weapons. The British will use that as a pretext to start political talks while sidestepping their previous precondition on weapons.

Only last March the Northern Ireland Secretary, Sir Patrick Mayhew, told MPs there could be no Sinn Féin participation in substan-

tive talks on February's framework documents — plans for an Ulster assembly and cross-border bodies — 'until there has been substantial progress on the decommissioning of arms'.

He also cited the increase in 'the loathsome practice of punishment beatings' as evidence that Sinn Féin had not turned its back on violence. But figures to be released by the ruc later this week will show a dramatic increase in paramilitary 'punishment beatings', with 114 republican and 67 loyalist attacks.

Sir Patrick will hold a further meeting with the Sinn Féin president, Gerry Adams, tomorrow, even though the IRA reiterated yesterday that it was not prepared to hand in any of its weapons by the front door or 'by the back door', a reference to the arms commission, which is to be chaired by a former US senator, George Mitchell.

Yesterday Sinn Féin said: 'No such formula has been agreed and the two governments would be extremely foolish if they thought they could bounce the IRA into handing over weapons.'

But Ken Maginnis, an Ulster Unionist leadership contender said that if the commission defined a properly structured strategy, the Government might get increased cooperation from his party.

In recent days Ministers have adopted a more conciliatory line on decommissioning. In an interview coinciding with the anniversary of the ceasefire, Michael Ancram, the Northern Ireland Political Minister, said: 'Nobody is talking about the surrender of weapons... We're talking about creating the environment and the atmosphere within which constructive democratic dialogue can take place.'

The formula for moving towards all-party talks will be that the two governments jointly call a series of 'triangular' meetings with the parties in Northern Ireland, with the expressed intention that these will, develop into all-party discussions by Christmas.

A powerful pressure on all sides is the visit at the end of November by President Bill Clinton, who has already said that he hopes the talks will be under way when he arrives.

And even next day's immediate Downing Street denial could only produce the following capitalist press conclusion:

Instead, it appears London will invite Sinn Féin to enter a new phase of talks on an agenda for future substantive negotiations between both governments and all parties, if it agrees to work with a commission on the dismantling of paramilitary arsenals.

The commission — expected to be led by George Mitchell, President Clinton's special envoy — will begin work at the same time as the new talks, which would involve representatives of the British and Irish governments, Sinn Féin and Northern Ireland's other parties.

Sinn Féin would progress to the next stage without the IRA beginning to disarm, allowing the Government to claim no principle was at stake as those new talks were

not “substantive”.

And quietly in the background, bourgeois ideology is meanwhile slowly changing its tune about what the IRA ceasefire really meant, – not any surrender at all, but a further clever outmanoeuvring of imperialism by the forces of national-liberation, as the *Bulletin* has always explained:

THE IRA ceasefire, which astonished the Government when it was declared on August 31 last year, has ushered in the most hopeful period in the history of Northern Ireland.

Remarkable transformations include regular meetings between government ministers and Sinn Féin, while loyalists have ventured for the first time into Roman Catholic areas of the Province to meet nationalists. The Army has all but disappeared from sight in the Province's main towns and RUC officers patrol republican areas without flak jackets.

The slow pace of the peace process has led to warnings almost daily from Sinn Féin of the dangers of slipping back into violence. There is little doubt that senior republicans remain deeply committed to the ceasefire, at least for the moment. Sinn Féin knows it has won substantial concessions from the Government.

The republicans' commitment to peace was underlined in an IRA briefing paper of April 1994 that argued in favour of a ceasefire. It attempted to convince hardliners of the merits of the unarmed struggle by pointing out that the strategy represented a new front in the fight for Irish unity.

However, the same document contained the threat of a return to vio-

lence. It described the new strategy as risky and said the IRA had the ability to “carry on indefinitely”.

The ceasefire's success will hinge on whether the republican movement is willing to accept political changes that fall short of its core demands. There is conflicting evidence as to whether the IRA has softened its political demands or whether the ceasefire represents a lethal new pragmatism that includes a mixture of violence and peace.

Some observers believe the ceasefire was designed to test how much Britain would concede in a peaceful environment. Many republicans now believe Britain will concede nothing of substance and that the “just and lasting settlement”, which was outlined in the IRA's ceasefire statement, is as remote as ever.

Nobody, except a small group of senior republicans, knows what decisions the IRA will make in coming months. However, one senior Sinn Féin source indicated the growing sense of unease within republican ranks by describing the ceasefire as tactical. The source added it would be broken if the IRA decides, after lengthy deliberations, that the Government has failed to respond positively to the new climate, most notably by convening all-party talks.

The security forces, who publicly sound optimistic about the ceasefire, believe the IRA will review it in the autumn. There are now growing fears that the slow pace of the peace process will strengthen the hand of hardliners who are deeply sceptical of the strategy.

Only dialectical materialism provides the possibility of a correct understanding of the world. Build Marxism-Leninism.

JH

Outright lies excuse ‘free world’ barbarism [but] the sick and paralysed crisis of the monopoly-capitalist ruling class and its ‘reformist’ shadows is the only real story, – in Ireland, around ‘New Labour’, etc. [EPSR No 819 12-09-95]

In a campaign of total brainwashing of which Goebbels would have been proud (how long before his rehabilitation?), the anaesthetised Western television audience must be made to feel that nothing good whatsoever was lost from the collapse of the Yugoslav socialist federation, and that nothing but good can come from the destruction of the Serb nationalist demons who wanted to keep Yugoslavia together in the name of that federation.

The philistinism, of such obscene fake ‘history’ is appalling. At the same time as the leading imperialist powers seek ever-greater consolidation for self-defence purposes in the

coming great trade war, weaker powers which refuse to become stooges of monopoly imperialist domination are hypocritically broken up into ever weaker units, – the notorious policy of Balkanisation which took its name from this very region of past Western-colonial atomisation for the purposes of general ‘pacification’ (meaning subjugation and better preparation conditions for expanded Western warmongering in that area should it be necessary later on).

In abstract theory, the ‘free market’ can give emerging small nation-states remarkable opportunities for outstanding economic and political development. Singapore and others are

obvious examples.

But the practice which will matter is what precise historical period the world is now moving into. Singapore, Taiwan, Hong Kong, & Co flourished as the postwar international trade boom, financed by deliberate imperialist credit creation, surged on for an unbelievably long time. If that epoch is now finally at an end, however, – as all the signs increasingly indicate, such as the Japanese stagnation, the dollar's collapse, the ferociously sharpening trade war, etc, etc, – then casting new little nation states adrift into such a potential worldwide warmongering slump of unprecedented proportions is the most cynical abandonment and callous exploitation.

It is these national and class anti-imperialist considerations which are prompting the feeble Russian bourgeois regime to utter weak threats of increased aid to the Serbs if the NATO blitzkrieg aggression goes any further.

The propaganda hype and the initial impression is that imperialist aggression has at last got at least a bit of an act together in the savaging of the former Yugoslav socialist federation. But on reflection and closer examination, it is still imperialism's own crisis which is the only real story. Serb nationalist resistance to foreign imperialist diktat still shows no signs of crumbling completely. The Western trade-war rivals have not been, and will never be, able to stop stabbing each other in the back on every occasion. And now the traditional weak link in the imperialist chain, – the vast re-established semi-asiatic Russian empire, is buckling again.

Meanwhile, the other very sick imperialist decadence in Europe, – British imperialism, – is continuing to provide nothing but inspiration to the anti-imperialist movement over Ireland.

The ludicrous long-running bluff by London to pretend that nothing was being conceded at all to the heroic 25-years national-liberation struggle by Sinn Féin and the IRA, – was beginning to look as if it might at last be called.

Earlier bourgeois press speculation that full-scale international political negotiations were at last to begin for finally ending formally the existence of the old discredited colony of the ‘Northern Ireland’ fiction, artificially created solely by the vicious reactionary stunt of the 1921 Partition, proved premature.

But as a result of this further

decrepit procrastination by the decadent British ruling class, the tame Green-Tory stooges of the ‘free world’ in Dublin themselves felt bold enough to publicly cancel a summit meeting with London, – on the grounds, it can be guessed, that the willingness to keep on backing London's pretence of ‘no retreat in the face of terrorism’ (i.e. the national-liberation struggle) is at last wearing thin.

The speculation must be that there was agreement last week to announce the timetable for fullscale international negotiations over the future for Ireland with a simultaneous fudging of the bogus ‘issue’ of decommissioning the IRA's weapons (which the national-liberation movement has made clear will not be unilaterally surrendered), – but that London again stalled at the last minute, – possibly trying to avoid helping to get a total reactionary elected as the new leader of the Ulster Unionist Party like Trimble, who eventually did actually get the vote anyway.

Surrounding London's further delaying tactics, coming on the anniversary of the IRA's ceasefire initiative, were several admissions by police, military, and security chiefs that all talk of the national-liberation struggle being incapable of returning to the armed conflict after such a lengthy ceasefire, was foolishly misleading.

And yet more pressure for the London political establishment to get on with the fullscale international negotiations on a new future for Ireland and a definitive end to the discredited and defeated old nonsense of the bastard bogus ‘Northern Ireland’ colonial statelet and the despicable partition of Ireland, is coming from the projected end-of-year electoral propaganda visit to the island by US President Clinton.

All of which resulted, in yet further bourgeois press speculation about renewed British imperialist retreats in the form of hints that Mayhew might resign as the British supremo, presumably as some kind of obscure gesture for any London miscalculation over the aborted summit with Dublin, and over Trimble getting elected anyway.

Such a gesture might give London, it would be hoped, the possibility of pretending that its latest diplomatic disasters were all the fault of one discredited politician rather than more evidence that British imperialism itself was no longer up to keeping control of and dismantling this last discredited piece of empire.

Over-concern about Trimble's election could only confirm how hopelessly paralysed and out-of-touch British imperialist ideol-

ogy has become. The essential point about Ulster Unionism is that the British colonist community has split apart over the

end of empire, and has continued steadily disintegrating ever since.

Trimble has only united a

dwindling band of diehard obscurantists, and even if he reunited the Ulster Unionist Party (currently split at least five or six ways, forming separate parties in most cases), it would still remain a moribund political phenomenon not remotely to be compared to the imperialist power, influence, and significance of the single united Ulster Unionist Party leadership of 30 years ago.

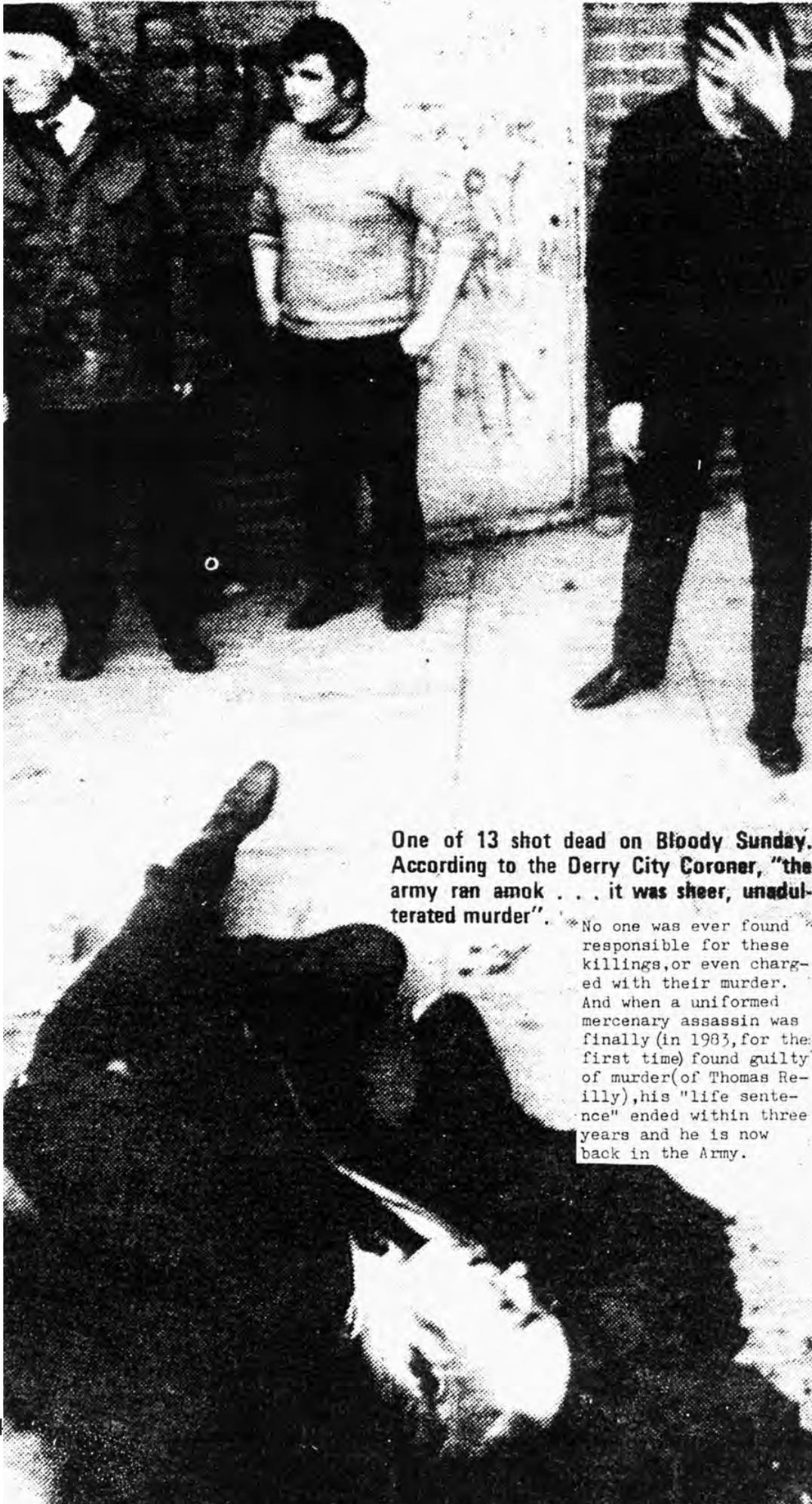
Either out of stupidity, incompetence, or paralysed perversity, - dying British imperialism is once again grotesquely missing the point that the system of monopoly capitalist colonialism is dead as far as the British ruling class is concerned, and will no longer be tolerated as far as national-independence sentiment in Ireland is concerned, or in the world at large. Those ludicrously out-of-date die-hard 'no surrender' colonial mentalities must simply be forcefully told at last that their days of artificially-partitioned domineering over parts of a foreign country are over for good, and that however lengthy the perspective, Ireland must slowly, steadily, and surely be reunited as a single country once again. Any further armed resistance to such a rational and inevitable perspective should be ruthlessly dealt with, and would certainly be a very short-lived phenomenon, as it proved to be in Rhodesia once Zimbabwe was declared, and as it is proving to be even in South Africa where a very genuinely successful colonialist imperialism was still in full flower only a decade ago, or less, - (unlike the longtime tacky and discredited doomed colonial racket in the Occupied Zone of Ireland).

Trust the cretinous Labour Party stooges of British imperialism to be among the very last to see the point and abandon their colonial blinkers:

- Tony Blair has refused to meet representatives of Sinn Féin during his three-day visit to Ireland, which started last night. Mitchel McLaughlin, Sinn Féin chairman, said the decision was disappointing and unhelpful and showed "little imagination or leadership or understanding".

The Labour leader said he would keep open the question of a meeting with the republicans and would meet "when I consider it helpful to do so".

What a crass arrogant imperialist insensitivity to the nationalism of the Irish by these sad petty-bourgeois Little Englanders. Not one whit abashed at the torment inflicted for 800 years by English colonialism on Ireland, - and still astonishingly continuing to this day, to the horrified amazement of even



One of 13 shot dead on Bloody Sunday. According to the Derry City Coroner, "the army ran amok . . . it was sheer, unadulterated murder".

*No one was ever found responsible for these killings, or even charged with their murder. And when a uniformed mercenary assassin was finally (in 1983, for the first time) found guilty of murder (of Thomas Reilly), his "life sentence" ended within three years and he is now back in the Army.

British imperialism's 'friends and allies' at the clumsy outdatedness of it all, – these wretched Labourite parliamentary opportunists not only cannot see even as far as the benighted Tories about the need to talk to Sinn Féin, but feel obliged to dismissively insult the heroic Irish nationalists as well.

It is all of a piece with much else of Labour's recent ignorant outpourings, such as on education, and what to do about society's casualties and their 'aggressive begging', etc.

There would appear to be no limits to the class-collaborating grovelling Labourism will do in order to ingratiate itself, as it thinks, with the petty-bourgeois majority of the British electorate. JH

Blair's embarrassing 'national partnership' waffle for a 'new, young, dynamic Great Britain' avoids every question of the real imperialist economic and political crisis of sharpening class war and trade war. What an appalling demagogue. But the real message of this class-collaborating religious nut will be 'discipline', especially for the working class.

[EPSR No 822 03-10-95]

[...]The only thing more creepily opportunistic than Blair's martinet posturing to appeal to the prejudices of the capitalist press, is the fact that this supposedly 'intelligent' and 'progressive' candidate MP and all her supporters are in the Labour Party to start with.

It has been securely dominated by rightwing middle class authoritarianism since its very foundation at the start of the century. Only the most dreadful careerists and hypocrites themselves would last more than five minutes inside such a vicious racket of class-collaborating treachery and corruption as the Labour Party, among whom the fake-'lefts' like the ditched Leeds North East candidate are the very worst. The Labour Party exists for one purpose only, – to never-endingly act as a safe diversion for all would-be socialist minded workers, to draw them off for ever into permanent opportunism of every kind and away from a principled scientific commitment to a class socialist challenge to ruling-class capitalist power.

But Blairism, while seeming to skate away with all the prizes, is in fact travelling on very thin ice. This stooge for ruling-class ideology thinks he is being so smart with his servile backing for most chauvinist stances of the British imperialist state, to guarantee him against losing votes for being 'unpatriotic', etc.

Yet a look at some of the issues shows how disastrously out-of-date and a liability these nationalist attitudes will eventually be.

On Ireland, for example, Blair even outdoes the reactionary British establishment in their paralysed refusal/inability to get on with the peace process for fear of losing face, parroting Major's idiot repetition of a quite pointless demand for some token decommissioning gesture by the IRA, and declining to open talks between Sinn Féin and the Labour Party in the meantime.

This cowardly echo of the appalling old colonial mentality which cannot grasp how hopelessly humiliated it has been by the unbeatable national-liberation struggle to end Britain's Occupied Zone of Ireland ('Northern Ireland' of modern imperialist fiction), and how close is the formal international recognition of the end of that colony and agreed progress towards Ireland's reunification (and the end of the hated Partition), – could be put to shame much sooner than the idiot Blair thinks.

The national-liberation struggle could not have warned the incipient anti-Irish jingoism of Labour (both fake-'left' Trotskyites and reactionary right Blairites) more clearly about how wrong is their arrogant assumption of an IRA/Sinn Féin 'defeat':

THE IRA last night gave its bluntest warning yet that the Government must drop its pre-condition of a token surrender of arms before admitting its political wing to all-party talks on the future of Northern Ireland.

The IRA said, in a statement that drained away yesterday's growing optimism in Dublin, that the

Government's demand for a handover of weapons was ludicrous.

"The entire decommissioning issue is a deliberate distraction and stalling tactic by a British government acting in bad faith," said the statement. "John Major's government knows enough of Anglo-Irish history to understand that there is no possibility of disarmament except as part of a negotiated settlement.

"Given that history and the reality that they and their loyalist death squad allies hold the largest stock of licensed and unlicensed weapons, the demands for an IRA handover of weapons is ludicrous. There is no possibility of the IRA meeting these demands."

Emerging from the Sinn Féin conference, which was being held at the splendid headquarters of the Royal Dublin Society at Ballsbridge, Mr Adams acknowledged: 'At the moment anger at the lack of progress is directed mainly at the British Government. But obviously if we don't get movement soon, people will begin to ask questions about the [Sinn Féin] leadership and why our strategy hasn't worked.'

The meeting was in private, but delegates said three themes were repeatedly expressed from the floor. These were frustration at the lack of progress on the release of IRA prisoners, the failure to move towards political talks and the questioning of the British Government's failure to respond more positively to the ceasefire.

Feelings were summed up by one veteran of IRA encounters with the security forces, who said: 'I now believe we must take the political route. But the Brits are playing with fire if they let this opportunity go. There's a younger generation out there and if they decide to take up arms they will be more determined and ruthless than we ever were.'

The Irish police believe, from intelligence reports, that support for the ceasefire remains relatively solid within the IRA. But they have also struck a warning note about a growing feeling among activists in the border areas of South Armagh and Fermanagh that the peace process has failed to yield tangible results.

Ironically, the task facing Mr Adams in maintaining unity has been made easier by last week's European Court of Human Rights judgment on the killing of three IRA activists in Gibraltar.

But last week's decision of the High Court in London on the treatment of long-term prisoners in Britain may turn out to be a more important ruling.

The belief that the conditions of long-term prisoners has deteriorated since the ceasefire is a source of grievance at grass-roots level. If the Home Office were to bring some judicious mercy into its treatment of IRA prisoners, it would do much to restore confidence in the peace process.

But reading between the lines of other capitalist press reports, it seems that even a far weightier and more decisive push towards a negotiated settlement for ending the British colony, as the

national-liberation struggle has insisted, will be coming soon from the USA:

Gerry Adams told the *Observer*: 'Sinn Féin – and I personally – remain wholly committed to our strategy for peace ... however long it takes, there will have to be a negotiated settlement arrived at with the consent of all our people.'

He then added: But the hard reality is that the present peace process, which brought about the IRA ceasefire, has to move forward. Otherwise it is inevitable that it will go into reverse and break down.'

Mr Adams's plea was already being heeded in Washington last week, with a flurry of telephone calls out of Washington to Dublin, Belfast and London as the US tried to kick-start proceedings.

Because of the current sensitivity among all the parties, the negotiations are being kept at a level which one insider called 'subterranean'. The White House has suspended all press briefings on the subject.

On Friday President Bill Clinton 'dropped by' a meeting in Washington between Dick Spring, the Irish Deputy Prime Minister, and Al Gore, the US Vice-President. US presidents do not normally 'drop by'; Bill Clinton was displaying his increasing concern at the stalemate in the peace process. He made it clear that he wanted to see a breakthrough in negotiations before he travels to Ireland in November.

The US is attempting to bring Sinn Féin back to the idea of an International Disarmament Commission which the IRA dismissed last month.

Critically, to give Sinn Féin the opening it requires, the Americans have asked Britain to broaden the remit of the commission beyond that of just decommissioning. Mr Adams has indicated that he might agree, but it is not yet known how the US is proposing to get both sides off the hook.

Because of its sensitivity, it seems certain that no agreement will be declared before next week's Conservative Party conference in Blackpool.

American imperialism is helping British imperialism to save face, obviously. But it is also continuing the longstanding pressure, dating from the Cold War era, for the troublesome British colony to be dismantled because of the monstrous stain it has been on the supposedly 'free Western world', and the open invitation it has always been for renewed revolutionary struggle to move ever closer towards communist revolutionary struggle again.

The American ruling class has never minded stripping its old 'ally' and rival of power while 'helping' the British Empire through various difficult periods, and the monopoly-imperialist forces behind the Clinton regime, keen to recapture the power of the presidency, have identified startling foreign policy successes as one way of

getting their appalling crook of a candidate re-elected next November, especially somewhere so crucial as Ireland to which tens of millions of Americans sentimentally look for their descendancy.

Clinton's planned visit to Ireland before the end of this year may finally force a halt to London's embarrassed delaying tactics holding up its long-agreed acceptance that a snail's-pace withdrawal from Ireland is the only sensible future:

THE warmth of the handshake between David Trimble and the Irish prime minister, John Bruton, in Dublin yesterday indicated that something calm and deliberate may be going on behind all the talk of crisis in the Irish peace process.

Forget sightings of ufos over Ian Paisley's Ballymena — stranger visions are becoming a commonplace in the capital of the Irish republic. Not since 1965 has an Ulster Unionist leader met an Irish Taoiseach in Dublin.

Throughout yesterday's meetings with a host of Irish politicians of all shades of green, Mr Trimble was accompanied by his new deputy, John Taylor, the man whom Dublin and London wanted to see slipping into Mr Molyneaux's shoes. Mr Taylor cheerfully admitted last week that not only did he enjoy his regular visits to the republic, he was actually a friend of the Taoiseach.

Mr Taylor went on to say that Unionists had to accept that the IRA was not beaten, which must have turned Mr Paisley's face several shades of green. The Democratic Unionist leader yesterday warned Mr Trimble that he could not speak to Dublin "with impunity" and described the Irish government as surrogates for Sinn Fein and the IRA.

Mr Trimble decided to treat Mr Paisley in the same way as Downing Street — he ignored him, pointedly refusing to comment on the attack. After lunch with Mr Bruton, he held a brief press conference. The talks had been a lot more constructive than in 1992, he said.

Their purpose was "to make sure there's no opportunity for misunderstanding with regard to what we see as possible."

Pressed on the issue of IRA weapons, Mr Trimble studiously avoided signing up to Sir Patrick Mayhew's so-called Washington Three test — the handing over of some weapons before talks begin. Instead, he said: "They've got to prove they are committed. If they are so committed, then it will be easy for them to produce the necessary evidence."

That still left plenty of room for manoeuvre in Mr Bruton's direction, namely his preferred option of getting a commitment from the republicans that they will never return to violence.

Mr Trimble said that a channel of communication had been opened. Mr Bruton said it had been a very constructive meeting. "Obviously there were areas where we agreed and there were also areas where there was less agreement.

"But what's important is the fact

that we are engaged now in a process of discussion," the Taoiseach said. Movement towards all-party talks was now inexorable.

"What I think we are seeing is steady progression in the scale of dialogue. There's a calmer atmosphere now, a much more constructive approach by everybody."

Nobody from the Ulster Unionist camp looked unhappy about that.

The IRA offered the ceasefire on the obvious understanding that talks towards a negotiated end to Ireland's partition problems had finally been accepted in principle by London. So the ceasefire was in order to allow the peace process talks to get under way, not to make time for pointless and totally inappropriate decommissioning gestures by the national-liberation struggle. Blair is following Major down a blind alley too stupid for words as well as reeking of the most horribly unreconstructed colonialist conceit.

The same blindness cowed Labour's response to the humiliating European Court verdict which declared the Tory Government's use of force illegal in the gunning down in cold blood of three IRA suspects in Gibraltar. Last week's capitalist press rehash of events could not conceal that this was deliberate criminal slaughter:

Farrell and McCann were seen entering on foot at 2.30pm. The three met by the car 20 minutes later.

When they moved away a soldier gave the car a cursory external examination and concluded that it was a "suspect car bomb". Soldier A, who shot Farrell and McCann, said he was 100 per cent sure it was a bomb and that the terrorists had remote control devices and weapons.

He was sure because that was what he was told over his radio. (In fact the car did not contain a bomb).

At 3.40, as the three began to move back towards the border, Commissioner Canepa signed a form requesting the military to arrest the suspects. Curiously no attempt was made to evacuate the area around the car.

As Heseltine and the State blustered, not one Labourite had the guts to use the European Court's authority to bring out the obvious deception:— If there was a bomb in the town centre car park where the military band assembled (the intended target) necessitating the three to be shot miles away, cold, without even a warning at 4.00 pm 'in case their fingers strayed to a detonation button' etc, — then why was not the slightest effort made to clear the area around the car park from 2.50 onwards, an hour and ten minutes of further preparations by the entire police and military headquarters in Gibraltar on full alert for this event? A score of streets

and buildings could have been cleared in that time.

[See page 19 also - ed]

But not one Labourite had the guts or gumption to ask.

And yet Blair & Co are apparently very popular.

The verdict of the public opinion polls, apparently overwhelmingly in favour of the changes Blair has imposed on the Labour Party, can only reflect the philistine shallowness

of much vox-pop tasting. There may well be many more middle-class individual members of the Labour Party than before. But that only confirms the terrible opportunism of the petty bourgeoisie as a class, and the lemming-like conformism and superficiality of the consumerist mentality. Blair is welcome to his supporters, and they to him[...]

Build Leninism. JH

Pathetic Portillo wardrums only remind Tory imperialism how far it has fallen and how bleak is the prospect in all directions. All imperialism faces civil war eventually and the Farrakhan nationalist diversion will not spare the USA.

[EPSR No 824 17-10-95]

[...]But the greatest difficulty of all for the many varieties of chauvinist opportunism currently vying to "lead Britain back to glory", etc, is the fact that the British imperialist economy truly is now just an also-ran, a position it has been heading towards for a very long time.

Portillo's aggressive nationalism is, of course, the only anticipatable effective reply to the ever-more-threatening inter-imperialist trade war via which British monopoly-capitalism might hope to come through the

era of slump and fascist-war-mongering now unfolding.

But first of all this means war, obviously, (as Portillo's blood-curdling histrionics indicated). It may have been one thing to warn of the threat of war (and of the need to be fully prepared for national defence and self-assertion in the event of war) in previous eras before the long slow decline of British imperialism had become so plain. But the talk of war in today's world, after the West's non-stop Cold War propaganda about "freedom and democracy" versus "the evil



Paras smashing down doors in the Markets area of Belfast

empire”, presenting capitalism as solely a “peace-loving” system, etc. – and after the virtual total demise of all British imperialism’s historic might, – is another thing entirely.

Secondly, even if it is very vaguely (and painfully) accepted that in general there may yet be more wars, and that it is only sensible to maintain adequate ‘defence’ forces, – there is then the question of specifically which enemies Britain’s imperialist state might be fighting against, where, and how.

Portillo only brought embarrassed barely-stifled groans when as Defence Minister he made the obligatory reference to where British forces are currently in action, – “doing a heroic and effective life-saving and peace-keeping job in Bosnia”. Even the crazed jingoist Portillo did not seem to believe it.

His next effort to provoke blood-tingling belligerence to get the nation rallying enthusiastically around the flag was even more ludicrous, – British imperialism’s “great military achievements against the IRA”.

Now the “professional performance” of any individual units of the British forces in the Occupied Zone of Ireland or elsewhere in the war against the Irish national-liberation struggle is not the issue. Many behaved with “very effective aggression” indeed, – for all that it was in such a depraved and reactionary cause as the maintenance of British colonial dictatorship over part of Ireland, which makes the boast seem in very dubious taste, to say the least.

The trouble with this glowing reference for British military prowess is that overall, it is entirely a false claim as far as the 25 years of British war effort against the tiny forces of the IRA is concerned.

It was, after all, the heroic national-liberation struggle of a thousand or so irregular volunteers frequently using largely home-made weapons who won the 25-year war against the full might of the British imperialist forces by refusing to be beaten by that military dictatorship.

This was in spite of the Long Kesh concentration camp for detention without trial for all republican militants; the notorious torture regimes for information at Gough Barracks and elsewhere; the shoot-to-kill murder squads sent to stalk republicans by the Special Branch, the SAS and MI5; the endless midnight terror raids by armed police and troops to bust up republican homes; the very expensive and sinister infiltration

of paid informers throughout the nationalist population to spy on republicans; etc. etc.

Portillo even had the sick gall to brag about the SAS’s cold-blooded murder of three unarmed republicans in Gibraltar, newly condemned by the European Court of Human Rights. “Don’t give succour to terrorists” snarled a senior Cabinet minister for the great British democracy. No wonder even so many Tories nearly choked on this disturbed and disturbing rant.

And yet still the really big questions remained totally unanswered by this unseemly performance. Portillo jeered disgracefully and racistly at the supposed bureaucratic effeminate inefficiency of the fighting forces from the European Community, – British imperialism’s so-called closest ‘allies’. And at the same time, he drew cheers for some quite empty boasts about how closely he pretended that US imperialism would always stay close to Britain’s side. Not if Washington can help it, it won’t. The United States might well choose to back countries other than the UK if Europe should ever split apart again in war, – as seems more than likely even if the main inter-imperialist warmongering on the horizon seems at the moment to be a three way struggle between the USA, Japan, and the whole of West Europe together.

American imperialist interests have only ever coincided with British interests at the expense of Britain’s imperialist positions which have had to be yielded up to the USA, as well as much imperialist wealth in return for the ‘aid’. And since the fortuitous US entry into World War II as a result of the Japanese attack on Pearl Harbour late in 1941, the Americans have not only disagreed with British ambitions on many occasions but have occasionally confronted them directly, – most famously in British imperialism’s greatest humiliation over Egypt’s nationalisation of the Suez Canal, when the subsequent sneak British-French-Zionist imperialist onslaught on defenceless Egypt was ignominiously called to a halt following Washington’s threats to intervene against the ‘allies’ because of the Soviet Union’s threat to do likewise.

More recently, the British refused direct support to the USA over its infamous colonial war against Vietnam and Indo-China generally, and history’s supposedly greatest ‘allies’ have also partly pursued different agendas in the Balkans current



upheavals.

On top of all this, it is American sympathetic intervention on the Republican side in the Irish national liberation struggle which has been, and is going to be even more so in the near future, such a punishing blow to British imperialist prestige as it squirms on the hook of its own colonial intransigence over Ireland.[...]

[...]The other daft ingredient in Portillo’s diatribe was the cocky assumption that the USA, – along with Britain, of course, – would largely remain free of any internal civil-war turmoil of its own, thus leaving the “great alliance” entirely at liberty to profitably militarily intervene to their own advantage and at the expense of others weighed down by strife.

This is insane complacency, even more dangerously juvenile than the silly playground “Want a fight” parading that Portillo has been widely disowned for, even by Tories. Such die-hard imperialists around the Defence Ministry are living in a fool’s paradise.

The Irish national-liberation struggle has precisely been in a civil-war setting, and for 25 years it has slowly but surely proved a deadly cancer to any remaining British empire illusions within the UK’s ruling-class establishment.

The new round of banging heads together in Britain and Ireland by Washington’s special envoys Lake and Soderberg this week will almost certainly see British imperialism’s enforced snail’s-pace withdrawal from its remaining piece of colonial mismanagement of Ireland, lurch forward another step or two, obliging the sclerotic and paralysed British ruling class to ditch some more of its stupid “we never surrender to terrorism” conceit, – mere word posturing, – and get on faster with the dismantlement in practice of the monstrous

colonial outrage (bogusly called ‘Northern Ireland’) which for 10 years has always remained the basic significance of the Anglo-Irish Treaty and the subsequent Downing Street Declaration, and even more clearly of the current ‘Framework Document’.

And the reason that British imperialism has been laid lower than ever by such civil-war strife is precisely identical to what is economically undermining imperialism in general as the 20th century draws towards its close of an unprecedented eruption of communist revolution worldwide. The huge monopoly-capitalist financial bastions of empire (with or without formal colonies) are the dinosaurs of contemporary society, doomed to die out because they no longer suit or can cope with the changing conditions in the world of international proletarian emancipation.

The Irish national-liberation struggle took the form of a nationalist independence movement because of the strong influence of cultural traditions and the appalling weakness of Marxist-Leninist science after decades of revisionist idiocy from the leadership of the workers states and the socialist camp. But the evidence of a powerful class content against ruling-class economic and social domination is overwhelming in the detailed development in this latest explosion of Ireland’s colonial troubles.

The class content of this anti-imperialist revolt will remain to torment the decadent British ruling class even after the embarrassment over Ireland is shuffled off with the help of some US imperialist cajoling, arm-twisting and handouts, plus some middle-class nationalist delusions.

And while this class content may yet take other ethnic forms inside the UK before full-scale communist revolution finally challenges dying British imperi-

alism, the proletarian emancipation element, - incompatible with the survival of capitalism as the ruling system, - will increasingly predominate.

The US bourgeois-imperialist state is possibly in even worse a plight than British monopoly capitalism, - and certainly ultimately, its supreme challenge will be civil-war strife (although possibly as a result of previous

inter-imperialist war suffering or colonial devastation, much as happened to the USA after the Vietnam war fiasco, only a thousand times worse. Portillo, incidentally, also completely forgot, of course, that the imperialist system has been suffering increasingly spectacular defeats in the modern era, not gaining effortless automatic victories at all). [...] Build Leninism. JH

British Establishment goes catatonic. (On Ireland and everything else)

[EPSR No 826 31-10-95]

[...]Even on Ireland, on its own doorstep, British imperialism's word is no longer the one which counts as far as the final colonial surrender to the Irish national-liberation struggle is concerned. Washington is doing the real negotiating with Dublin and Sinn Féin.

London's latest capitulation to the inevitable ultimate withdrawal from colonial control and the dismantling formally at last of the non-existent monstrous bastard statelet of 'Northern Ireland' and the hated Partition, has been Mayhew's rushed legislation virtually giving a timetable for all further prisoner-of-war releases ("convicted terrorists") over the coming few years.

Once again, this is the long-standing snail's-pace withdrawal at work, concealing at all costs any victory for IRA/Sinn Féin in the national-liberation struggle in order to try to appease any remaining fascist-colonial resistance among the diehard British colonist community ("Ulster Unionists") to the reunification of Ireland. (See ILWP Books vol 8 & 15 - Ireland).

The timetable for prisoner release is not quite the triumphant immediate release of all political prisoners that the nationalists would have wanted, but it does look like yet

another important piece in the jigsaw puzzle being assembled by British imperialist weakness and defeat, Irish nationalist intransigence, and concerned holding of the ring by the USA in order to save imperialism from more damaging publicity about rotten colonialism, and to suit huge financial lobbying interests around the Clinton presidency to try to ensure re-election next year by assuring Irish-extraction voters of a Washington-brokered peace treaty for Ireland.

At the same time, and in the same direction, the requirement for would-be barristers in 'Northern Ireland' to swear an oath of allegiance to the Queen is being quietly discontinued in line with Ireland's eventual reunification.

The disintegration of the old 'Ulster Unionist' camp continues apace, meanwhile, the latest break-up being the disenfranchisement of the Orange Order colonial-religious freemasonry from automatic participation in UUP decision-making, against the bitter resistance of the notorious Orange sash-wearers.

Thirty years ago, before the latest upsurge of the Irish national-liberation struggle began to put renewed pressure on the doomed British colony, there was just one 'Ulster

Unionist' community, with one united UUP party in which the Orange Order fanatics were securely bedded. Now there are at least six 'Unionist' parties or factions, endlessly squabbling with each other over the decline of their colonial fate and their 'No surrender forever' British community; relegation of the Orange Order fanatics to the background; and endless accusations against each other of even further retreats in the pipeline.

At any time now, fresh negotiating concessions will quietly be slipped out by British imperialism, - under continuing US and Irish nationalist pressure, and with just a few timid squeaks from remaining 'Ulster Unionist' intransigence, - towards dropping London's empty propaganda posturing about "the need for IRA weapons decommissioning before Sinn Féin can be granted fullscale

negotiating rights" at the definitive Ireland reunification and peace settlement.

Not that US imperialism, pulling the rug from under its oldest rival ("ally"), is smoothly in control of the 'free world' system as might appear. No one is. The system is soon to be totally out of any control as the relentless money-market chaos and currency crises eventually culminate in the complete collapse of the dollar or some other vital currency.

Capitalism's fundamental contradiction keeps on inevitably worsening, - bank-debt based monopoly-imperialist expansion building up huge, relatively-'surplus' trade-war rivalry positions, which must put the leading powers at each others throats and drive the super-exploited and slump-hit masses towards revolution all over the world[...] JH

British imperialism continues to go bankrupt.

[EPSR No 830 128-11-95]

[...]British imperialism will remain as sick as ever, - and it will continue just as moribund if and when the cretinous Labour opportunists get back into office, - which is when the crashing collapse of monopoly-capitalism's whole rickety house of cards might set in. Blair & Co are toying with exactly the same seedy gimmicks, covering up a terrifying imperialist-crisis reality, as the Tories are. British imperialism can only afford more and more cuts in public spending, no expansion. And no 'clever' mix whatever of tax changes or monetary measures (bank-rate cuts, etc) is going to help the British colonialist mentality start to win the international trade war again, - ever. The historical momentum of the capitalist system's last

great boom-expansion has long been with other parts of the planet, but the triumphant powers there, - the USA, Germany, Japan, etc, - are eventually just as doomed as dying British imperialism when the boom shortly turns into the most appalling trade-war warmongering slump in all human history.

Meanwhile the limping British economy has so totally undermined the last vestiges of the British colonial spirit in Ireland that the final stages of retreat are now imminent, - and the reunification of Ireland, - and the burial of the abominable Partition, - are now about to enter their last snail's-pace phase (see ILWP Books vol 8,15 and 22 - Ireland).

The shoddy amateur theatricals of the past 15 months by London, - threatening to let the peace process be aborted, - have all been about trying to save face for the British ruling-class, hide the IRA victory, and made sure the Orange-colonist diehards do not cause too much trouble as the bastard colonial statelet of non-existent 'Northern Ireland' is put to rest.

A massive amount of tediously detailed processes yet remain to be drawn up, agreed, and then lived through, but the essential business of completing Ireland's national-liberation struggle, - by re-establishing Dublin's key role in the affairs of all Ireland over the past year, - has already been achieved. Ten years ago, before the Anglo-Irish Treaty, such a position for Dub-



lin in the affairs of all-Ireland was unthinkable.

The victory for the IRA/Sinn Féin national liberation struggle, backed by anti-British rival international imperialist influence (mainly the USA &

West Europe), marks a colossal vindication for all anti-imperialist struggle, and a triumph for the dialectical-materialist understanding of history. Build Leninism.

DB

The mixture of real festivities and self-congratulatory posturing reflect a genuine turning point in the history of Ireland and Britain. The ending of colonial occupation is a triumph for revolutionary struggle, and useful deck-clearing for the class-war battles to come in imperialism's general economic crisis.

[EPSR No 831 05-12-95]

The enormous celebratory mood in Ireland over Clinton's visit was a sign of the triumph Irish nationalism feels at the imminent prospects of reunification, an end to the troubles, and full final independence after 800 years of British domination.

Commentaries in the British capitalist press have once again hopelessly missed the significance of the latest London capitulation to the national-liberation struggle, foolishly inventing all sorts of wrong alternative explanations, and even more stupidly ascribing the euphoria to Clinton's cloyingly naff speeches.

The Arkansas arsehole was, of course, completely irrelevant to the jubilation. The USA could have sent President Donald Duck, literally talking gibberish, and he would still have been ecstatically received.

The American presence represented the verdict of world opinion on the grotesque injustice of British colonialism's police-military dictatorship repressing any longer the Irish nationalist freedom fighters.

The IRA's armed guerrilla warfare proved unbeatable, and British imperialism was finally forced to accept the need to end the colonisation of Ireland's northeast corner, and introduce measures towards expanded Irish unity and independence, beginning with the 1985 Anglo-Irish Treaty which first acknowledged Dublin's rights in the affairs of the north, simultaneously marking the beginning of the end for Orange-fascist "Ulster Unionist" diehard colonialism.

The long snail's-pace British-imperialist withdrawal from Ireland is at last coming towards a climax of a new constitutional arrangement for the ripped-

out bits of six of Ulster's nine counties which the defeated British Empire manipulated in 1921 out of the bitterly divided, exhausted, and confused Irish national-liberation struggle of that time which foolishly settled for independence for just 26 of Ireland's 32 counties.

Clinton's arrival coincided with the withering away of closing gestures of British ruling-class intransigence as it has sought to spin things out to save face for the London Establishment, to muddle the clarity of the IRA/Sinn Féin triumph, and to leave the "no surrender" pockets of colonial resistance in the Occupied Zone even more paralysed than ever, to avoid any attempted reactionary backlash.

The latest Downing Street communiqué, in the names of the London and Dublin governments, was issued just hours before the American presidential visit got under way.

This does not quite express a full open retreat by the Tories from their previous face-saving stance of demanding some token surrender of weapons by the IRA before Sinn Féin could be included as a partner in the multi-party negotiations for a new deal for the Occupied Zone, but it avoids the issue, – leaving it to the new International Commission on disarmament, thereby getting Major & Co off a hook of their own making.

Last week's events represented the collapse of British imperialism's final obstacles to an openly-acknowledged full constitutional conference for a completely new status for the Occupied Zone, internationally recognised and approved, and partly administered also, via the commission for recommending how to disarm and physically

complete the peace process once negotiating agreement has been reached, with the Sinn Féin/IRA, – the other nationalists, and the Dublin government as full participants in the constitution-making procedures and debates. It was a fitting cause for great celebration, not only for the Irish, and not only for all the international supporters of their heroic national-liberation struggle, but also for the people of Britain whose politics have long been poisoned by the vile colonial role in Ireland, not to mention the actual pain and damage suffered from the guerrilla war.

The widespread jubilant feelings were probably little conscious of all these political implications, but they did clearly sense that the sheer unusual novelty of the whole occasion, must have reflected something significant, even if it was not entirely obvious what.

This was plainly a very meaningful American intervention, clearly not tied in detail to Clinton and his visit because the crucial communiqué was finally agreed, signed, and issued before he arrived, – but obviously linked to some much longer-term influence (on such international struggles as the one over Ireland), most closely identified with the all-powerful American imperialist dominance, but also representing the far wider world sympathy that the Irish struggle has won.

The symbolism was unmistakable, – the world was now openly on the side of the Irish national-liberation struggle. And it coincided with London at last being forced to move the peace process on, – the most open capitulation yet to the forces of history which have long had the writing on the wall for the doomed bastard colonial statelet mischievously entitled 'Northern Ireland', a country which obviously does not exist, invented by the colonists.

For the one thing which is certain out of all this enormously complicated turmoil over the Irish question, – is that there will be no continuation of 'Northern Ireland' as it used to exist. Plainly, however long it takes and by whatever convoluted and devious mechanisms are imposed by continuing British imperialist intransigence, – those ripped-out parts of six of Ulster's counties will be more clearly a part of Ireland again than they have remotely been constitutionally since the foul evil of Partition was imposed by vengeful British imperialism on the much abused people of Ireland by the vicious 1921 set-

tlement.

It is this demise of the old 'Northern Ireland' which will be the greatest signal of the triumph of the Sinn Féin/IRA struggle, whatever remnants of bogus 'Northern Irish' tokens might remain in the complex constitutional frameworks afterwards. But dead and buried for ever will be the monstrous creation of 1921 which declared to the world on the savage authority of British imperialist military might and ferocious re-colonisation threats to the rest of Ireland, – that the ripped-out bits of six of Ulster's counties would henceforth and for ever be part of Britain, – permanent and unchallengeable, lost to Ireland for eternity.

Little or none of this has yet been officially expressed, of course. The bourgeois world is, after all, in the process of accepting and rewarding a triumph of revolutionary guerrilla war, not something that capitalism does every day of the week, – or ever at all willingly.

But the tremendous significance of this latest climb-down by British imperialism is nevertheless not hard to unravel, even within the pages and between the lines of the capitalist press itself. Even bourgeois ideology has to make some attempts occasionally to come to terms with inevitable historical reality:

SLEIGHT of hand and a deft use of ambiguous words are the mainstays of progress in the Anglo-Irish peace process. Private stealth is buried under public protestations of innocence; bombast masks retreat.

Last week's Downing Street communiqué was no different. The means were yet again eclipsed by the end. Once more, precious time was bought; the process was inched forward.

Sinn Fein has said demands for the delivery of a token gun is tantamount to a call for surrender; there will be no surrender. Mr Major and the Unionists say there can be no negotiation while Sinn Fein-IRA retain a gun under the round table.

Last week's communiqué negotiated that gridlock by creating a siding into which the difficulty could be shunted; the international body that will now give advice on decommissioning.

London then insisted that it was no part of the remit of the body, to be chaired by former US senator George Mitchell, one of the President's men, to question the British precondition for talks.

Dublin insisted, in turn, that that was nonsense; the Mitchell body was free to question and consider anything it wished in the context of decommissioning.

London said that each and every one of its objectives, including the exclusion of the precondition from the remit of the Mitchell body, had

been achieved. Dublin urged people to examine the text of the communiqué; to ignore the British spin and read the words.

On that basis, the Irish appear to have made some headway, and as Mr Major said in his Downing Street press conference with President Clinton on Wednesday: 'I think the fact that the President was coming concentrated the mind.'

Take, as an example of British vulnerability, Mr Major's careful use of words on the precondition. 'We won't be asking the international body to question our position,' he said on Tuesday night.

When it was put to British sources that there was a difference between not asking the Mitchell body to examine the issue, and asking them not to examine the issue, one source complained about semantics and the absurdity of attempting to count the number of angels who could be found on a pin-head. 'We cannot see a way of securing the necessary confidence to bring all parties to the negotiating table without a start being made to the decommissioning of illegal arms.'

He then added: 'If there is an alternative, it has not yet been produced. If it is produced, of course any sensible person would look at it. But it has not yet been produced and we have not been able to conceive what it might be.'

It is possible that the Mitchell body will report by the middle of January bearing exactly such an inconceivable alternative — putting London and the Unionists on the spot.

London could then say that it was never hung up on the precondition of disarmament, any more than Mr Major had once said it would turn his stomach to consider any kind of talks with Sinn Féin. Just three weeks ago, Mr Bruton went to London to deliver a speech designed to kick some life back into the dormant peace process, saying that the 'obstacles in the way of all-party talks were comparatively minor in historical terms... insignificant ... small contentions'.

British spokesman said: 'This is an extraordinary speech, at an extraordinary time, the eve of Remembrance Sunday and delivered in Britain through a megaphone.'

Last weekend, a British source said that following progress in Anglo-Irish talks on Friday, there had been Irish backsliding in further talks on Saturday. An Irish source said: 'Bollocks. That is untrue and without foundation.'

THE Clinton Administration's active involvement in the peace process has, on occasion, been deeply offensive to the British Government, which has been accustomed to relying on the co-operation of the State Department. The Government was infuriated by the granting of an American visa to Gerry Adams while the IRA was still involved in violence.

But there is no doubt that allowing Mr Adams to visit the United States, and the enormous media boost given to the Sinn Féin leader, was crucial in convincing the IRA that there was a viable alternative strategy, and that it would be able to

call on powerful allies if it called off the violence.

Inevitably, this has increased the deep suspicion in the Unionist community that President Clinton is sympathetic to the IRA/Sinn Féin.

Sinn Féin has been given its own little gold mine by Washington. It has been fundraising (and legally now) with a vengeance in America, and donations are expected to top \$1 million in its first year. But the money is dwarfed by the amounts being poured into Ireland by the US government, which is backing up its political pressure with economic aid. Not only has the Clinton administration committed \$20m to the International Fund for Ireland in 1995, but has promised a further \$60m over the next two years.

The first signal will come in the response of the party leaders in Northern Ireland to the invitations issued on Friday by the Northern Ireland Secretary, and by Dick Spring, the Irish foreign minister, to take part in groundwork talks to discuss the possibility of wider negotiations early next year.

Already the Reverend Ian Paisley has denounced these invitations as an outrage and has accused the Government of abandoning its role as the sovereign power in Northern Ireland.

This gives a begrudging bourgeois ideological view on some of the harsh facts; but all of the capitalist press reports muddle any number of questions at any time, never take up the bourgeois media's general embarrassing failure to get anything right on occasions, and least of all will they ever offer the slightest explanation in broad historical terms of why this is all happening the way it is.

The 60% of the contents edited out of the above report, for example, only serve to totally confuse everyone about the issues.

The supposed deliberate even-handedness of the American intervention, for instance, cannot possibly be even-handed. The British bourgeois press cannot say it, (and the foreign bourgeois press are a bit reluctant too, because they do not like revolutionary struggle), but one side is winning in the Irish question, and one side is losing. In this advanced epoch of anti-imperialist struggle, it is impossible for international public opinion not to support the Irish national-liberation struggle. At the right moment, that means that populist US political leaderships do not wish to be seen not supporting the Irish national-liberation struggle either.

And, for instance, there simply is no impasse on the arms decommissioning question. There is no problem of decommissioning as many arms as all sides want once political constitutional agreement is

reached. The impasse is solely the political one of the diehard Orange colonists, and their political proxies the British government, feeling incapable of publicly accepting in formal political and constitutional arrangements what they have long been forced to accept on the ground, — namely that British imperialism cannot beat the Irish national-liberation struggle, and that it would eventually totally wreck the north-east and its whole community (and had begun to wreck the City of London as well) if the police-military dictatorship repression was continued with.

Because of their own congenital lack of any sense of historical continuity or purposefulness which rises above the latest immediate squabbling opportunist concerns and grand delusions of the bourgeoisie itself, the bourgeois ideological scribblers rarely take up (*Private Eye's* well-developed cynical philosophy excepted) the issues of last week's failed predictions.

For weeks, the Clinton visit was never going to take place because it would be pointless; the IRA was about to break off all talks, defeated; Sinn Féin was about to capitulate; or Dublin was; etc, etc.

The posturing 'liberal' *Guardian* has particular difficulty in coming to terms with the triumph of the revolutionary armed struggle. Take the following, which could qualify for quote of the year in *Pseudo Corner*, bum-lickers corner, racist-prejudice corner, and pure idiots corner:

YOU ARE the past, Bill Clinton told the IRA in Belfast on Thursday. And in those four simple words one heard at once the authentic voice of the moderniser, the politician who is simply not interested in the agenda of the past, the leader who believes that the old maps offer no meaningful guidance to the new political world, the kind of public figure that in this country Tony Blair aspires to be.

Le tout Londres flocked to the presidential presence this week. A Clinton invite was the hottest ticket in town. But it was Labour politicians rather than Conservatives who were the more entranced by the visitor from the White House. For Clinton is what they themselves would like to be, progressive, effective and powerful.

That catalogue of affectation, crass misunderstanding, and hopelessly naïve wishful thinking, was from one of the senior columnists and editorial writers. Could anything be more fatuous? Yes. The chief columnist and leader writer, obviously, saying of Clinton's intervention:

It changes the angle of pressure he

will exert: crudely put, from pressure on the British Government to pressure on Sinn Féin/IRA. It begins to turn a dismal segment of history round. The shift of perspective began in late September, when Nancy Soderberg, the lead White House official on Ireland, paid an unpublicised visit to London, followed shortly by her boss, Tony Lake, head of the National Security Council. Between them, Lake and Ms Soderberg were exposed to more British and Unionist opinion than Washington had ever listened to before. An official close to their talks said they had their eyes opened to the political reality of Ulster Unionism under its new and more formidable leader, David Trimble. It was a triumph, in particular, for the American embassy in London, whose analyses were customarily regarded as a case of ambassadors going native, mere mouthpieces for British prejudice.

The deal prompted by Clinton's visit involves a concession by John Major but puts pressure on Gerry Adams. Major has agreed to a form of all-party talking, without a smell of the prior de-commissioning of weapons. But by doing it now, he invites Clinton to put the squeeze on the man who's the nearest thing to Washington's client rather than listen to his bleatings about London's destructive inertia. Let's hope he does so. The next move is certainly up to Sinn Féin, in this long process for which the Major-Bruton pact has bought the priceless commodity of time. Internationalising the arms issue is the best way of releasing it from sterilities in which it has been locked for more than a year. But in the end, it cannot replace the choices that have to be made by the parties to the argument.

I prefer to think that Major has got his timing right. The unscrambling of 25 years' bloody disaster is bound to take a very long time. The weight of culture and history that has to be overcome, if a lasting peace is to be made, ordains an attention-span of matching solemnity, which survives all manner of delays and cogitations and threats and even outright violations. Any leader who gets involved in re-ordering this history, and comes face-to-face with Ireland's endless fascination with obstructive minutiae, has to be ready for the long haul. Mr Blair needs to be schooling himself for it as well, for what Major has started Major will not live to finish. Meanwhile, to institute a new twin-track process, with another deadline, is the right way to make use of time's ally: the steady experience of peace which makes it ever less acceptable to be the party responsible for destroying it.

In the next batch of time, between now and the end of February, the biggest service the international commission can perform is to find a way of indicating to Sinn Féin/IRA that its stance on arms is unacceptable.

Now that Major has made his move, and been denounced by most Unionists for nothing worse than a fudge, it's plain enough where the next obligation lies.

The bourgeois ideological guard-

ians on Radio 4's *Moral Maze* tried even harder to confuse all the issues, bringing on some victim-support type moaning from families of those who had got in the bad books of local DIY punishment squads, wallowing in shock-horror at such 'violence', and then failing to nail down the simple political conundrum of "what right do the British imperialists have to call their use of guns 'legal', and at what point in history did they become so, 1169 the first invasion? 1541 the total annexation? 1653, the 'final solution', taking the land off the Irish in their most rebellious province Ulster, and implanting Scottish Protestant colonists in their place, an act of diabolical genocide, never forgiven to this day? 1690, the renewed pacification? 1798, the slaughter of the United Irishmen bour-

geois revolution, leading to the imposed Act of Union? 1845, the imposition of the Great Famine? 1916, the butchery of the Easter Rising? 1920, the blitzkrieg by the Black & Tans, the burning of Cork, and the partitioning of Ireland?"



English soldiers in the sixteenth century return triumphant from a skirmish with the Irish, whose cattle and horses they have captured. They bring a prisoner and several heads.

The concern for the 'innocent dead' by the masturbatory *Moral Maze*-rs meant no chance, therefore, of a dialectical view of unfortunate civil-war casualties, realising that they are the consequence of the 'cowardice' of the official establishment, not of the terrorists.

If the British ruling-class would itself go on the front line in its repression of Irish nationalism, then there need never have been any innocent casualties of civil war, ever. If the Queen, John Major, the great British landowners, the bankers, the British generals, the heads of MI5, MI6, the Special Branch, etc, all went personally onto the front line to kick the Fenian heads in, instead of leaving it to rank-and-file soldiers, policemen, their back-up civilian support in the public services, petty loyalist gangsters, etc, etc, - then the IRA could attack their real targets

directly, with no 'collateral damage' to intermediaries at all. It is ruling-class cowardice, not doing their own dirty work in the administration of imperialist super-profiteering, which has created history's 'innocent victims of 'terrorism', nothing else. If the bourgeois leadership would stop hiding behind secret servicemen, the 'innocent dead' could never become casualties, in the first place.

But the 'new' bourgeois ideological opportunism is very selective. Before the whole nation on Radio 4's *Today* last week, Trimble, the 'formidable' one, lost his temper and hissed that John Major was Bill Clinton's "poodle". Did he mean that? "Yes, he follows him like a dog". Quite a story to follow up, probing the depths of hatred and misery between the former great imperialist partners, the

'Conservative and Ulster Unionist Party'. And quite a good tabloidy issue to exploit too, trying to provoke Trimble or some other hopelessly reactionary die-hard to throw up something even more bilious than 'dog' or 'poodle'.

But little or no follow up at all. Just imagine if Adams, or Mc-Guinness, or Morrison, or McCloughlin had spewed up some similar 'violent' language? The capitalist press would still be making a meal of it even now.

The *Guardian* even went to the extent of cleaning up Trimble's language for him. How 'free' can the 'free press' get?

He accused Mr Major of behaving in a distasteful and shameful manner. "We have had all this rushing about and a press conference at 11pm last night, all so that John Major could meet Bill Clinton this morning and say 'What a good boy I am, I've done what you told me'."

"Isn't that a rather shameful position for a British Prime Minister to be reduced to, rushing around late at night, scurrying desperately to meet deadlines that other people have set?"

Other blind spots for the 'free' press are such issues as a new 'Northern Ireland Assembly' election, and comparable mat-

ters which the nationalists properly consistently frown upon as verging too closely back towards an "internal solution" which is plainly not on the cards. The British colony has failed utterly. It is politically and ideologically bankrupt, and militarily fought to a stalemate. In international propaganda terms, it is a complete loser. End it, and don't try partially reviving it with new try-on 'elected Assemblies' and the like which only seek to exploit the inbuilt gerrymandered advantage to the colonists of the rotten Partition in the first place.

But some of the truth has to come out as well. The bourgeois ideology of critical realism, albeit a subjective-idealist reason, would seize up completely on an undiluted diet of delusion, falsehood, and evasion. So the communiqué had to be published, some of its more undigestible parts had to be noted, and the soundest bourgeois advice of all (admittedly from Dublin) had to be repeated, - namely, study the text:

The final breakthrough was made when Mr Major agreed at least "to reserve your position until after the International Body has done its work. "Perhaps it will come up with another means of establishing the confidence required by Unionists that Sinn Fein is for real. If it doesn't, what have you lost?" Privately, Dublin believes he will find it "morally difficult" to reject the findings of an international panel of experts.

Given that the ruc was by now privately concerned that the IRA ceasefire was looking dangerously rocky, Mr Major bit the bullet. He softened too on the setting of a date for all-party talks. Previously no more than an aspiration, the two Governments upgraded the target date of late February to a "firm aim". And the remit of the International Body was widened, allowing it to determine its own procedures and to consult

widely. A fine tooth comb would be needed to tease out all the nuances of the communiqué, but buried in it is an acceptance by the Government of a symbolically important issue to Sinn Fein - the removal of all weapons from Northern Ireland politics, not just the IRA's.

This is the communiqué issued by 10 Downing Street last night:

The Prime Minister and the Taoiseach met tonight. After intensive efforts by both governments, and with the benefit of consultations with parties in Northern Ireland, the two governments have agreed to launch a "twin track" process to make progress in parallel on the decommissioning issue and on all-party negotiations.

Both governments reaffirmed their commitment to securing the early launch of all-party negotiations. By way of the twin tracks, the two governments have the firm aim of achieving this by the end of February 1996. It is the two governments' considered view that, with co-operation from all the relevant parties in both tracks, that objective should prove achievable. Both governments commit themselves to working, with others, to achieve it.

To this end, the two governments have agreed to invite the parties to intensive preparatory talks with a remit to reach widespread agreement on the basis, participation, structure, format and agenda to bring all parties together for substantive negotiations aimed at a political settlement based on consent. These talks will have an open agenda, allowing any party to raise any relevant matters.

These matters would include how best the structure and format of all-party negotiations, involving in appropriate strands both governments and all the relevant Northern Ireland parties, directed to addressing in a comprehensive manner all the relevant relationships in an interlocking three-stranded process, can properly take account of democratic mandates and principles, including whether and how an elected body could play a part.

These preparatory talks may also extend to all steps required to es-



British troops use a travelling gallows against rebels in 1798



person shouting 'never' in Northern Ireland is a miracle," he said.

Then the president left for a matching walkabout in the Catholic Falls Road. The welcome was larger, more excited, more enthusiastic. Here he met Gerry Adams, and the White House choreography was almost but not quite perfect — the first public handshake between the two men had been shielded from the TV cameras by the motorcade. But an amateur video showed the handclasp was warm and even prolonged.

There were many theatrical aspects to the Clinton visit, and not all of them were to do with the boring business of his presidential backers trying to drum up good re-election material when his 4-year stint ends next November. Some of the drama seemed engineered by London to provide some diversionary cover for their latest retreats, and to help bemuse the Orange colonist diehards a bit further, — in keeping with the whole nature of the snail's-pace British imperialist withdrawal which began as long ago as 1985, or even earlier, (see ILWP Books vol 8,15 & 22 - *Ireland*)).

This odd history has been partly set up by the reality of the Orange colonist community, slowly dying as British imperialism has faded as a world force. These frontline fascist imperialists have been losing their aggressive invincibility for a long time, slowly. There is nowhere for this Orange colonist community to go with the death of imperialism. It can only now merge in with local nationalism (as the white colonists have ultimately had to do first in Rhodesia, and now in South Africa), or it can leave, returning to Britain to join the National Front, or try to find, an outpost of diehard reaction abroad, as has equally been happening with many of the white colonists from southern Africa.

It is only the sclerotic imperialist intransigence of the British ruling class itself, telling lies about its own decay and that of its empire spirit, which has prevented this colonist community in Occupied Ireland from falling apart even more rapidly than it has done, refusing to tell the Orangemen as long ago as it became obvious to the rest of the world (with the exception of the Tories and the Trotskyites) that their number was up, — and refusing to threaten the sternest policing to prevent any last-minute UDI recalcitrance such as Paisley has always been emptily boasting about, and such as the degenerate British ruling class let Ian Smith's disgusting empire relics get away with in Rhodesia.

The absurd theatre of this

establish the necessary circumstances to bring the parties together at the negotiating table in accordance with paragraph 10 of the *Downing Street Declaration*. In managing the process of preparatory talks, each government will build on existing exchanges and bilateral contacts, treating each party on an equal basis; they will encourage other formats for meetings with the parties and among the parties, including meetings between the two governments together and one or more parties, with their agreement, where these might further the objective of the preparatory talks.

In parallel, the two governments have agreed to establish an international body to provide an independent assessment of the decommissioning issue.

Recognising the widely expressed desire to see all arms removed from Irish politics, the two governments will ask the international body to report on the arrangements necessary for the removal from the political equation of arms silenced by the virtue of the welcome decisions taken last summer and autumn by those organisations that previously supported the use of arms for political purposes.

In particular, the two governments will ask the body to: identify and advise on a suitable and acceptable method for full and verifiable decommissioning; and report whether there is a clear commitment

on the part of those in possession of such arms to work constructively to achieve that.

It will be for the international body to determine its own procedures. The two governments expect it to consult widely, to invite relevant parties to submit their analysis of matters relevant to the decommissioning issue and, in reaching its conclusions within its remit, to consider such evidence on its merits.

In establishing the body, the British and Irish governments reaffirm their willingness to continue to take responsive measures, advised by their respective security authorities, as the threat reduces.

The two governments have invited Senator George Mitchell to chair the body, and will invite two other eminent persons to serve as the other members of the body.

The two governments have asked the body to submit its report to the two governments by mid-January 1996. Neither government, nor any other party co-operating with the work of the Body, is bound in advance to accept its recommendations, which will be advisory. The two governments will consider carefully any recommendations it makes and give them due weight on their merits.

To that end, and to review progress in preparatory talks for all-party negotiations, the two governments plan to meet again by mid-February 1996.

Quite obviously, "arms silenced by the welcome decisions" etc, (i.e. the ceasefires), can only mean all the arms in the Occupied Zone, which is precisely what Sinn Féin has been insisting on from the start.

Not surprisingly, there was widespread enthusiasm last week for a spot of dancing on the grave of "Never" and "No Surrender". Throughout the entire presidential visit, no more than one shout of "Never" was widely reported. Appropriately, if unwittingly, the comedy sketch writers did this best:

He said that violence had no place at the table of democracy — but significantly said nothing about the threat of violence. He endorsed the IRA's role in future talks: "Those who renounce violence and take their own risks for peace are entitled to be full participants in the democratic process."

"Never!" shouted a voice belonging to a former DUP councillor, Cedric Wilson, the poor man's Ian Paisley.

Anthony Lake, Clinton's national security adviser, looked anxious. "Oh no," he said. People are not supposed to shout "never" at the president, except perhaps in the US Congress.

Michael Ancram, the British No. 2, reassured him. "To get only one

show of British 'fairness and statesmanship', – getting out of Ireland at last before being literally finally forced to get out, – is now nearly over. Helping push it to the final curtain has been some interesting inter-imperialist rivalry from the USA which was not just limited to playing a last-minute ostentatious role for the benefit of a London cover-up and next year's American presidential election.

The capitalist press has been half revealing how some of the old anti-empire strains in American monopoly-bourgeois politics have helped US imperialism to undermine its oldest rival while equally pretending to just be helping reason, statesmanship and justice to flourish, – with just the possibilities of a bit of business interest on the side:

Steering the group were the "Four New Horsemen" of Irish America; Niall O'Dowd, publisher of *Irish Voice* magazine; Bruce Morrison, a former congressman; and two eminent Irish-American businessmen, William Flynn and Charles Feeney. After the election, the group changed its name to Americans for a New Irish Agenda – directly antagonistic to the "special relationship" with Britain and the pro-British state department. "We were taking on 45 years of Anglo-American relations," says Mr O'Dowd.

The four started taking "holidays" in Ireland, and although the president was informed of their activities their itineraries were clandestine. In fact what they did, on behalf of the White House, was to prepare the ground for all-party peace talks in meetings with John Bruton, the Taoiseach, SDLP leader John Hume, and Mr Adams – with the IRA enforcing an undeclared, week-long ceasefire to honour the occasion.

The "horsemen" also met loyalist paramilitaries – including the UVF's Gusty Spence and Gary McMichael, son of a UDA commander killed by the Provos – and one element in their package had particular appeal: money.

The team had been licensed by Mr Clinton to offer American funds designated for investment in jobs, North and South, conditional on peace. The loyalist ceasefire followed soon after these consultations; before long, Messrs Spence and McMichael were guests of the new Irish American leadership in New York.

But the fund was also pivotal in the USA, to enlist the business community in the process with the lure of tax breaks and profits through peace by putting their money where their hearts were.

Already promoting this notion (on Mr Clinton's orders) was Beryl Mitchell, wife of George Mitchell, the senator now chairing the arms decommissioning panel.

To convince the president, the "horsemen" needed to bring in two match-winning players.

"Our greatest achievement of all was to bring Senator Kennedy back

into the axis" says Mr O'Dowd.

The Massachusetts senator, then in need of an Irish cause to champion as increasing prosperity had turned his traditional constituency towards the Republican Party, first secured the Dublin ambassadorship for his sister, Jean Kennedy Smith, who conducted her own crucial negotiations. The dealing was still so secret that the pair had code names in republican and loyalist paramilitary circles; The Big Brother and Strong-Lady.

The former took Washington, along with the golfing Senator Dodd, and the latter took Dublin and Belfast. Together they brokered the dialogue. America had thus become the prime mover.

"The British could not accept they were not controlling the pace of events. The peace process had become like riding a bicycle, you had to keep going, or else you'd fall over," says Mr O'Dowd.

Then, 17 months after the "horsemen's" first trip to Ireland, Senator Dodd played golf with the president. Eighteen months after that trip, on March 17 this year, Mr Adams and loyalist leaders toasted St Patrick's Day at the White House.

And two years later, President Clinton walked down the Lower Falls Road.

The whole story of the modern Irish question needs a vastly different emphasis, of course, – in particular the fundamental triumph of the unbeatable Irish national-liberation struggle, revolutionary arms in hand. Without that, all the rest of the manoeuvring would have been utterly meaningless. Paralysed sclerosis rules British imperialism. Nothing will change until new class forces on the scene (or national forces) make it change.

With the end of the phony-war period of threats, posturing, and gestures, pressure now obviously moves on to the diehard 'unionist' politicians. In 12 weeks time, they finally have to creep into negotiations with Sinn Féin/IRA, Dublin, the other nationalists, and other parties, about a new constitutional arrangement for the Occupied Zone which cannot be a continuation of the corrupt racket of 'Northern Ireland' in any way, shape, or form.

Right on cue, the immediate focus is on Trimble for his apparently clumsy attempts to hastily and nervously start manipulating his fellow 'unionists' (to cope with the appalling trauma of publicly abandoning "No Surrender" in 12 weeks time) via some unilateral decommissioning-of-arms gesture as a stunt to try wrongfooting Sinn Féin/IRA, a hopeless ambition and a fatuous ploy.

It will be no surprise if the possibly truly 'formidable' Trimble, with his untarnished hard-line reputation, begins appearing as a much less formidable

opponent of progress in reality just as has gradually been happening to Paisley, Robinson, Molyneaux, the paramilitary loyalists, et al. They have not changed. But the historical circumstances have simply passed them by. They are just out of date and pointless now as diehard colonists. National-liberation struggle rules. A triumph for the IRA and Sinn Féin. British imperialism is a dying nonsense facing a terminal trade-war slump crisis of world imperialism.

Build Leninism.

Douglas Bell

One mighty guerrilla-war push, and all kinds of negotiating channels suddenly get put on offer. The Irish national-liberation struggle wins again. Will the academic 'lefts' who pronounced it 'defeated' or 'irrelevant' now admit that their Trot 'Marxism' is a hoax?

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No one can argue that the IRA's 'shot across the bows' of British imperialist foot-dragging has not had a startling wake-up effect on the whole world of decadent bourgeois-'democratic' political posturing.

With a single blow, it has demolished the idiots who claimed Sinn Féin's ceasefire negotiations had been proposed out of defeated weakness, and has got the entire capitalist establishment in Britain and Ireland scurrying around like headless chickens.

Pathetic attempts (examined subsequently) have been made by the servile bourgeois media to pretend that it is still the Irish national-liberation movement which is in the dock for its 'violent breach of trust', etc.

But no sane person believes a word of this. Even the capitalist press and television have admitted (quotes follow) that the Major Government's self-delusion and feebleness had created a hopeless impasse for serious peace talks for a new set-up in Ireland.

London's silly play-acting has not stopped, – hinting that Sinn Féin's participation in future negotiations might not be credible in the light of last Friday's destruction of the ceasefire by the IRA.

But the idea is fatuous that the peace process could resume without Sinn Féin, and no British minister, when pressed, would put his name to such a daft perspective. It is the 25 years of national-liberation war which has to be negotiated away, and everyone knows it. Implying that might happen without the full involvement of Sinn Féin and the IRA is pure imbecility. In any case, there has been no breach of the negotiating mode by the national-liberation struggle because there have

been no negotiations yet. That is the whole problem. The IRA's creative offer of a ceasefire had hitherto been treated contemptuously. The South Quay Plaza events have already changed all that. Everyone is now pleading for a new ceasefire and to get talks going again.

It is insanity trying to present the post-bomb situation as Sinn Féin and the IRA needing 'another chance' to 'go straight'. It is the shaky imperialist status quo which needs to be given another chance of a ceasefire to see if it can make more sensible use of a new negotiating truce period than it made of the first one.

Another piece of hopeless bourgeois media hysteria has been the attempt to refuse discussion of why the ceasefire broke down on the grounds that British Government weakness and folly could in no way be considered on the same plane as 'deliberate IRA murder'. But there was no aim to murder last Friday, or in any IRA urban-terror bombing. A whole 1½ hour warning was given of the bomb at South Quay, plenty of time to clear the whole area and let British imperialist property take the damage, as was the IRA's intention. Let the British authorities explain why they failed to clear the area, as they have refused to do on many previous occasions also.

Another unreal pose is in pretending that any negotiated longterm settlement for Ireland might get blasted away by the IRA just as the present ceasefire was at Canary Wharf. But that could only be true if it was 1921 all over again, the original British colonial tyranny imposed by superior military might (see below) which made it inevitable that the Irish troubles could only go on resuming perpetu-



BRITISH TANKS confront Republican demonstrators in Dublin, April 1920. A year later Britain withdrew from the South.

ally.

Finally agree to a perspective for full Irish independence and reunification, – the right of any nation but the right of the Irish more than any other nation after 800 years of fighting against British imperialist domination, – and there will never be any question of renewed Irish troubles of this nature ever again.

When it called its ceasefire 18 months ago, the Irish national-liberation struggle offered British colonialism a clear choice: "Instead of our armed resistance to your unjust and illegal rule over part of our country, we offer you serious negotiations about a completely new settlement for Ireland, replacing the despised and utterly failed Partition, imposed by imperialist diktat in 1921."

British colonialism has only made an endless ridiculous nonsense of this 'peace process', – as bourgeois ideology itself (see below) is admitting (even though it also hates the revolutionary challenge from the IRA and Sinn Féin).

The ending of the ceasefire by the liberation struggle will cause even more embarrassment to decadent British imperialist interests than did its calling in the first place, which was humiliating enough for the dull-witted and incompetent London establishment.

When not trying to justify Westminster's endless obstacles to starting proper peace negotiations, middle-class thinking from both the extreme right and the fake-'left' (Trotsky-

ites) cockily revelled in their prejudiced speculation that the nationalists had been 'forced' into the ceasefire because of the 'futility' of their aims, and their 'defeat' by British imperialist military might, etc. Such closed minds!

The 'left' petty-bourgeois sectarians enjoyed sneering at the Irish national struggle for Sinn Féin and the IRA's allegedly 'hopeless mistake' of not leading a fullscale 'socialist revolution' by workers in both north and south to overthrow both their respective governments, as the Trots pretended 'they would do'.

This infantile sectarian posturing was just the most grotesque middle-class philistinism. As has been consistently analysed in *EPSR*, the anti-imperialist struggle in the Occupied Zone of Ireland has been led, whether one likes it or not, by nationalist forces, – (bourgeois-nationalist forces, to give them their full scientific description), – not just a legitimate historical process from Marxism-Leninism's point of view, but one to be wholeheartedly approved of, and even supported, in the appropriate circumstances of the international balance of class forces.

Dying British imperialism, in the epoch of worldwide imperialist terminal crisis, has been exposed for all its colonial decadence in the moribund bogus statelet insultingly called 'Northern Ireland', – a gerrymandered cesspit of outdated and perspectiveless British imperialist strategic and economic

self-serving. The Orange-fascist remnants must either get out when British imperialism goes, or else must finally accept themselves as being properly Irish and subject to the sovereignty of Ireland, a 32-county republic governed from Dublin.

Socialist revolution is obviously eventually inevitable, but the completion of Ireland's independence from great-imperialist colonisation is the first obvious historical process to be completed in the conditions as they are in reality.

What is more, that legitimate national-liberation struggle has been completed in a fully revolutionary manner, arms in hand, – a colossal blow against imperialism not just in Ireland but on behalf of the interests of the proletarian masses all over the world. If this was not obvious from a study of the actual conflict in the Occupied Zone and further afield against imperialism, or from the complex history of the present tortured situation domestically and internationally, – it should have been obvious from the start judging just by the scalded reactions of the British imperialist establishment to the means by which the national-liberation struggle was achieving its aim (of making the bastard colonial statelet ungovernable and forcing a completely new settlement of the whole Irish question, ending the hated and disastrous Partition).

From the beginning, London and its imperialist allies have indicated their increasing

acceptance that the fiction of 'Northern Ireland' could no longer be maintained, and was no longer worth maintaining, – but have recoiled in horror from any recognition that a revolutionary national-liberation struggle, with tiny forces, has won a sensational victory, arms in hand, against the second most important NATO imperialist power on its 'own' territory, using urban guerrilla warfare.

Hence all the farce of trying to force Sinn Féin/IRA to say that their ceasefire was 'permanent', i.e. that this 'dreadful' revolutionary fighting would never even be contemplated again under any circumstances. Hence all the farce of then trying to bamboozle Sinn Féin/IRA into 'surrendering' or 'decommissioning' some weapons in advance of any new deal for Ireland offered through peace negotiations, – just so that a doubt could be thrown over whether or not it had been the armed struggle which had finally forced London into negotiating an end to the old 'Northern Ireland'.

Now all of this decrepit face-saving manoeuvring by humiliated British imperialism, and all of this sectarian 'Little Englander' petty-bourgeois ignorance by fake-'left' detractors of the national-liberation struggle, – has literally been blasted to pieces.

The fight to complete Ireland's independence and correct at last the infamous injustice of 1921, has been re-spelled out to the whole world: either it is

serious talks, or serious bombs, – one or the other.

This recommencement of guerrilla war operations has already had the most astonishing nonsense written or spoken about it (analysed below) by the still-deluded British bourgeois media in their desperate attempts to still cover up the reality of British colonialism's humiliation and the triumph of revolutionary struggle.

But it will be plain to any serious-minded workers that only one thing is proved, – namely that the IRA is more capable than ever of carrying out the most audacious and damaging attacks on British establishment bastions at any time; that the time really has come for serious talks with an unbeatable enemy; and that all the poisonous Trot garbage about the IRA and Sinn Féin having “given in” to the Tory Government 18 months ago was utter horse manure.

It has also been proved beyond doubt that it is only dying British imperialist truculence, weakness, and muddle-headedness which has wilfully been obstructing all progress towards a permanent new settlement. For having delayed things for 18 months by a stream of provocative rhetoric, asking ‘How can we talk if you won't guarantee that your ceasefire is permanent? How can we start negotiations if you won't help build confidence by surrendering your weapons? How can we let you participate fully if your dubious democratic mandate can be overridden by renewed bombs if you don't like the negotiated outcome?’ etc, – London, and even some Unionists, are now accepting that despite the renewed bombing, progress towards talks is more urgent than ever.

However Major wriggles on the question of not daring to be seen to be revitalising the peace-process as a result of IRA bombing pressure, – that is exactly what will happen, and that is exactly what everyone will eventually grasp has happened.

Even Tory MPs are now telling their government to wake up to its responsibilities or face further shame:

Peter Temple-Morris is Conservative MP for Leominster

THE IRA ceasefire of August 1994 represented a historic opportunity to deliver peace to the island of Ireland and the British Isles as a whole. The opportunity has not yet been taken, but it still exists – just.

It was only a ceasefire. The British reaction was to go on for months questioning whether it was permanent or not. It was never intended or meant to be permanent. It was the IRA, or terrorists if you like, com-

ing in from the cold, putting down their weapons and saying: “Talk to us about peace.”

There also could be no question of surrender, which is where decommissioning comes in. In the context of the ceasefire, there was no scope for decommissioning before talks and no way that Sinn Féin could get the IRA to deliver it. We were only dealing with a ceasefire. We then knowingly and quite rightly took up the process.

The point is that if you knowingly accept to be part of a process of talks following a ceasefire, then you should talk. For 18 months not a word has been spoken in the context of the IRA's expectations of and reasons for the ceasefire. The intense and historical distrust of the British by the republicans has steadily mounted until violence has resumed.

The two governments' agendas have not been close enough, particularly since July 1995, to make the process work. The Irish see it as involving constitutional change in the North and in the island-of-Ireland context, with equality of esteem for the nationalists, and with any development towards a united Ireland being evolutionary and subject to the principle of consent. The British tend to view matters much more from the status quo point of view, with the prolongation of the peace and its effect on the people of Northern Ireland providing its own strategy. We are not “persuaders”; we have chosen not to pressure the unionists – and therefore, by definition, change as part of the process will be slow. Sadly, recent events have indicated that it could be too slow.

Since July 1995, when much concern was expressed behind the scenes, the two governments have drifted apart, mainly over the decommissioning issue. The Irish formed the firm view, later endorsed by Senator George Mitchell, that the IRA would not deliver on preliminary conditional decommissioning. The British held rock-solid to this condition.

The twin-track approach was on the table from early September until finally agreed only on the eve of President Clinton's visit. The *Mitchell Report* came out of that, and effectively kept the show just on the road. Once we decided not to operate within the *Mitchell Report* but outside it, and without the prior agreement of the Irish government, the scene was set for a possible resumption of violence. There was no time to get agreement for an elective process towards negotiations.

The future is difficult, if not bleak, because it involves going round the same route again. More give has to come from those moving away from the status quo, which means the British and the unionists.

The IRA delivered an 18-month-long ceasefire and could deliver another one if they thought it would work. We have to react by showing sufficient willingness, having entered a process, to be prepared to move away from the status quo and to contemplate real change in Northern Ireland.

If we do not accept the realities of

what we are involved in, we will all fail. We must talk to the Irish government; establish an agreed and hopefully common agenda; we must then sell that agenda to the parties and where necessary try to persuade them.

It seems inevitable that eventually, pressure must build on all sides against the total intransigence of the ‘Unionist’ colonist diehards, who are obviously the sole obstacle now to a completely new settlement of the Irish question, (in spite of all-party British imperialist hypocrisy in the Commons yesterday putting the boot into Sinn Féin to deny it ‘any rewards from violence which it has failed to obtain by democratic means’, – with Sinn Féin's total election victory all over Ireland in 1918 for independence conveniently forgotten, a ‘democratic’ development British imperialism chose to ignore).

All of the nauseating vox-pop humbug being laid on by television reports from the Occupied Zone, saying how everyone still yearned for peace, unwittingly increasingly clashes with the balefulness of the colonist diehards, no longer able to enjoy the British imperialist plunder from oppressing Ireland for 300 years but unwilling to accept their defeat and get off Ireland's back either.

This real dog-in-the-manger nastiness of ‘Unionism’, endlessly spitting out its hatred of the national liberation struggle, jars hopelessly with the ordinary opinion of the Occupied Zone which wants immediate endless negotiations with all parties until all-sided concessions make a new settlement possible.

The ‘Unionist’ venom against Sinn Féin as merely the ‘unacceptable front for violence’, – a disgustingly hypocritical and reactionary piece of nonsense which the sad British parliament (especially the Labour and Liberal parties) does nothing to disrupt, – ends up inevitably demonstrating that it is ‘Unionism’ itself which is inseparably wedded to violence.

Disregarding all the deliberately misleading bureaucratic smokescreens about ‘mandates’, etc, – every sane person knows that Sinn Féin speaks for the Irish national-liberation struggle, all 300 years of it, and can never do anything else, and it is doubtful it will ever want to.

So all the silly obstacles raised by ‘unionism’ and its entire cretinous fellow-membership of the Westminster parliament, saying ‘no talks with Sinn Féin until it utterly denounces violence, and renounces it,’ etc,

etc, – are in reality saying ‘no serious further talks ever with the legitimate Irish national reunification aspirations’.

And the only way that such an ostrich-like stance can be adopted, in the face of all the historical evidence that Ireland's total independence will one day become irresistible, – is through being incurably addicted to the violence which gave Britain any sovereignty over any part of Ireland in the first place.

The entire ‘British-Irish’ mentality has been based on an assumption of British imperialist military domination from the very start. Such a mentality could not survive without a deeply embedded and incorrigible ‘no surrender’ arrogance which believes British rule should continue by divine right no matter how rebellious the natives become, or by what majority numbers they denounce remaining under British sovereignty. The essence of this arrogance is that no matter how outnumbered, British bayonets will keep the British flag flying at the end of the day.

This was exactly the attitude of the defeated British colony in 1921 in imposing, at gunpoint, the hated Partition in order to disrupt the results of the 1918 all-Ireland elections (British-run) which gave a huge majority for Sinn Féin's immediate-independence platform, and to disrupt the results of the equally triumphant national-liberation war fought by Sinn Féin from 1919-1921 to unilaterally give empowerment to the 1918 election result.

The slimy ‘Unionist academics’ from Queens, Belfast, and other Occupied Zone universities, invariably squat grotesquely on this reality, smothering it, when making their sly verbal denunciations of Sinn Féin.

Here is how one such clever-clever slimeball tried to put down the Irish national-liberation struggle yesterday, incorporating at the heart of this conceited contempt, the huge lying hypocrisy about the 1918 election results, conveniently forgetting all about them:

Republicans operated on the principle that the end (Irish unity) justified the means – murder intimidation, extortion. They were being asked to accept the principle that the means (democratic procedures) defined the end – a political settlement based on consent.

So where were the means defining the end when the British-run 1918 election gave Sinn Féin an overwhelming victory over all Ireland for immediate independence? The means, – full democracy, – were totally

ignored. The end, – for British imperialism to hang onto its colonial territory in Ireland at whatever cost, – was preset and paramount.

And it is the most criminal kind of dishonest idiocy to say, at such a point, that ‘all that stuff from the past had better be forgotten or we’ll never get anywhere’, etc, as philistines of every description do when something does not suit their prejudices.

When the question is the complete self-determination of a nation, especially one with as proud and glorious a history as Ireland, then it is precisely the un-righted wrongs of the past which will never cease to disrupt the future until justice is finally achieved. The long-run historical record is that by hook or by crook, British imperialism has tried to hold onto a bit of Ireland. This disgraceful crime must be brought to an end.

It is offensive imbecility for anyone now to insist that righting this wrong should only go ahead ‘with the consent of the majority of the people in Northern Ireland’, as most of the belated ‘nationalist’ Green Tories in Dublin say, all without exception the cowardly ideological stooges of lying Western ‘free world’ imperialist orthodoxy. It is a weakness that Sinn Féin latterly has not been more insistent about the long-term unacceptability of the non-existent ‘Northern Ireland’ and the conveniently partial British farce about ‘majority wishes’ when the 1918 election results are still being ignored.

The answer to London’s sly ‘elections’ proposal now, to further obstruct any meaningful negotiations, is to say “Yes, all-Ireland elections, taken up from where the ‘democratic’ process which British hypocrisy so pretends to be in love with, was last broken off”.

Thanks to the cowardliness of the British parliament, the British bourgeois media, and the Green Tory cretins in Dublin, — London has been getting away with just as much humbug on the question of ceasefires as well.

Every worm imaginable has been trying to claim credit for “what has been achieved since the ceasefire”, with all the emphasis ludicrously on the supposed magical divinity and creativity of the ‘democratic process’, etc.

But who gave the world the creativity of this ceasefire? It was the IRA, and no one else. And not in some silly-sense of some nuisance-causers no longer causing a nuisance. The Irish

national liberation struggle has greater historical legitimacy than most other phenomena in modern world politics.

No, the benefits of the ceasefire were deliberately and consciously created by the IRA to further everyone’s understanding and sense of well-being concerning a completely different and better future for the whole of Ireland.

It was a unilateral contribution to which British imperialism should have been required to add just as much in terms of diminished colonial injustice before having the gall to denounce the national-liberation struggle for ending its ceasefire.

Fighting for justice is the greatest reality of all history, the permanent condition of civilisation’s advance. The human and political considerations of the specific military tactics and the broader campaign strategy of the nationalists are there to be disagreed with or regretted by anyone. But the IRA’s right to fight for its country’s independence against outrageous past and present British imperialist injustice is unassailable.

The most foul disservice of the utterly supine bourgeois media in Britain has been in failing to ask those responsible for driving the national-liberation struggle back to its war strategy (because of the refusal to seriously negotiate), whether they are now happy with the ‘told you so’ outcome of their intransigence?

Only Paisley could be happy, because only Paisley is deranged enough to have a contented answer to the obvious follow-up question: What will happen next, then?

The reply, ‘We will now pursue these dastardly criminals to the ends of the earth’, etc, could even make a block of wood frown. It was in failing to achieve any success against the national-liberation struggle in 25 years that the IRA’s ceasefire became such a welcome relief for imperialism in general.

It is the prospect of another 25 years of the same humiliation and devastation that is forcing London, between the lines, to be so cautious in how it tries to score propaganda points against Sinn Féin over the bombing. Despite his obnoxiously arrogant tone, the crafty Major carefully insisted several times that negotiations with the national-liberation struggle must on no account be written off entirely. Another ceasefire would do nicely to get talks going again, he made clear.

This is quite a different tune from the days when London

did not like to be seen talking at all to Sinn Féin, even after the initial ceasefire. And so it is obvious, to answer some of the ridiculous press speculation of recent days, that the national-liberation struggle has gained enormously from its ceasefire initiative of 18 months ago, and enhanced rather than diminished by now ending it temporarily.

And this is richly confirmed by much of the comment in the capitalist press itself, which it is well worth putting on lengthy record at this historical turning moment which will further damn British imperialism and favour the Irish national-liberation struggle:

The New York Times

Mr Major “should reconsider his approach to arranging all-party peace talks. He has been playing a dangerous game of brinkmanship with the paramilitaries, gambling that they would not return to violence and insisting unrealistically that the IRA hand over some of its weapons before such talks could begin. He seemed not to understand that Mr Adams offered a hope for peace and needed to be able to show his followers some concrete advantage in putting down their guns.”

The post-mortem on whether Mr Major made serious misjudgments is likely to determine his long-term political reputation.

Inevitably, the strongest criticism of Mr Major’s cautious negotiating tactics came yesterday from Sinn Féin, but even some Conservative backbenchers were expressing fury at what they privately described as Mr Major’s decision to opt out of the peace process.

John Hume, leader of the SDLP, claimed that if the British government had been stronger at Westminster, with a clear majority, all-party talks would have been under way a year ago.

Albert Reynolds, the former Irish prime minister and an architect of the ceasefire, attacked Mr Major for imposing a precondition of a start to IRA decommissioning before allowing Sinn Féin into all-party talks. He said the precondition had never been included in the initial *Downing Street Declaration*.

John Bruton, the Irish Prime Minister, focussed his regrets on the British government’s response to the Mitchell Commission.

He also blamed the Unionists. “We regret deeply the lack of generosity of the Unionist community over the past 16 months that they would not even talk to the Irish government in a twin track process agreed by their government.”

His foreign secretary, Dick Spring, also complained. “We could have used the *Mitchell Report* to far better purpose.”

The Labour Party, wedded to a bipartisan approach, will not reproach Mr Major for failing to bring about all-party talks more speedily.

Martin McGuinness, the leading Sinn Féin member, was one of Mr Major’s most bitter critics yesterday,

complaining Sinn Féin had been promised all-party talks within three months of the ceasefire and “in reality there has not been one word of negotiation” between the parties.

“We took the greatest risks of all. We put our lives on the line to bring peace to this country and that was not reciprocated by John Major. We did not have one major statement from any senior figure in the British government urging the Unionists to come to the negotiating table. The British prime minister wants no change at Westminster and the Unionists want no change in Northern Ireland.”

Mitchell McClaughlin, chairman of Sinn Féin in Northern Ireland, was equally angry. “The Irish side had already delivered all sides to the negotiating table. The British had promised they could deliver the pro-British elements to the negotiating table and they had failed, and we were looking at a further 15 months of paralysis because of the arithmetic at Westminster”.

Albert Reynolds TD was Taoiseach 1992-94

WHEN John Major and I started on the peace process over three years ago, most people thought a ceasefire could not be achieved and would not last more than a month or two if it were. The peace process was always fragile, and needed injections of life-blood to keep it moving. It was never going to be easy but everybody had to get involved. If we had done nothing, hundreds more would have died.

In all the dealings I had with the republican leadership and the loyalist paramilitaries, they were honourable and kept their word. Now they have a very strong sense of betrayal. Commitments were made in the *Downing Street Declaration* which were not kept. New preconditions were introduced as delaying tactics. Republican leaders such as Gerry Adams and Martin McGuinness, who courageously led their community into political involvement, should have received more support by true political activity, but did not.

Decommissioning was never a precondition of the *Downing Street Declaration* and the insistence on it created serious problems. It was made clear from early on that it was unacceptable and unachievable. The response on prison policy was, if anything, more hardline than before the ceasefire. That began to raise questions about the commitment of the British to the process.

Initially the delays were seen by Sinn Féin and others in the Republic as a way for John Major to get over his domestic problems and to allow unionists time to elect a new leader. But after that, people expected movement. When it didn’t come, the whole process began to run out of steam.

But the perception now is that John Major has given in totally to unionist demands. The British government appears to have made a foolish miscalculation that the ceasefire had lasted so long there was no question of a return to violence, so it therefore did not have to do anything.

The principles of the Mitchell

Commission got to the core of the issue. The recommendations would not have been easy for the republican leadership to accept, but if all else was going well and they had cleared the way to all-party talks they would probably have accepted them. Those principles would also have given the unionists assurances they were justifiably seeking.

In Northern Ireland it is dangerous to come down on one side or the other. You have to be seen to be even-handed. John Major was seen to have sidelined the *Mitchell Report* in favour of a unionist proposal. From the Irish perspective, it seemed that there was an attempt being made to humiliate people. Strong political leadership is about doing things you don't like doing. And the British government had already spoken to Sinn Féin over a long period in secret without preconditions while bombing continued.

No democrat has a problem with elections, but I do not see them in the short term as solving the problem. Everyone knows what the results will be. They are not really intended as a way of getting into all-party talks immediately. By the time we got into elections, we would be approaching a general election in Britain anyway.

Irish Times, Dublin

..The best assessment of [Friday] night's events must be that they represent a single crude and imperative demand for negotiations. The effectiveness of that demand requires that the possibility of repetition is left...open. It invites John Major to take, in the IRA's terms, affirmative and positive political action — or to call their bluff.

BBC in Northern Ireland sent one of its reporters to talk to men and women on the streets of West Belfast about their reaction to the IRA's announcement that the ceasefire was over.

Most people seemed, quite simply, shellshocked, and fearful about what may now lie ahead. But one young man, freshfaced and articulate, said: 'It's brilliant. We never got a thing from the Brits.' He gestured towards a green ribbon pinned to his lapel: 'What has the peace process done for them?' The strip of green silk, modelled on the red Aids ribbon, is the symbol of a group which campaigns for IRA prisoners in British and Irish jails.

This young man was almost certainly not a member of the IRA. If he had been, he would have known better than to draw attention to himself in this way so soon after the Docklands bomb. But his reaction reflects what very many nationalists in Northern Ireland feel about the peace process, and explains some of the pressures that have been growing on Gerry Adams in recent months.

These people are dismissive of the Byzantine manoeuvres of politicians on both sides of the Irish Sea. Many of them believe that the changes which have occurred in Northern Ireland during the past 25 years have been achieved by the bomb and the bullet. Adams persuaded

them, largely on the strength of his own track record, that violence could not take them any further and that it was time to give politics — the alternative, unarmed strategy — a chance.

But, from their perspective, the political process has failed to deliver progress on a whole range of issues, from the release of prisoners to all-party talks.

Over and over again, when you talk to Sinn Féin supporters, the same points are made. The IRA delivered, they say, on what it was asked to do, which was to bring the violence to an end. It was promised that Sinn Féin would be brought fully into the political process.

The peace held, more or less, until Friday. But the British Government has found excuse after excuse to delay progress, placing one obstacle after another on the path to full negotiations.

The Government has made tough political concessions, but all too often these have appeared to be granted grudgingly and under duress, rather than as part of an imaginative and generous response to the ceasefire.

The improvement in the quality of life for ordinary people in Northern Ireland has been so powerful that it had become almost unthinkable that there could be a return to violence.

But in recent months it was becoming clear that there was growing pressure on Adams from many of his own supporters in IRA/Sinn Féin. Other Sinn Féin leaders expressed growing concern that their own supporters, particularly IRA men who had been prepared to back the Adams strategy, were losing faith in the ability of the peace process to deliver tangible results.

Adams himself issued warnings, over and over again, that the peace would unravel unless progress was made towards all-party talks. Sinn Féin was becoming increasingly desperate for full political recognition.

Dublin officials complain: "How can the two governments run a peace process on the basis that Trimble has to give it the okay? It's not on." The reality is that Trimble has the ball at his feet and if he doesn't like the rules of the game then he will most likely stalk off the pitch. Unionists have not been in such a powerful position in more than a decade, years which have seen retreat and defeat for their cause. From the 1985 Anglo-Irish Agreement, which for the first time gave Dublin a say in the running of Northern Ireland and which one senior official described as "not joint authority but more than consultation", through to the joint British and Irish governments' *Framework Document* last year — which to the horror of Unionists only served to increase the South's role in their affairs — the pattern of Northern Ireland policy runs in a direction counter to Trimble's ambitions.

WHEN he pledged last year before the people who elected him leader that the Union with Britain would be stronger by the millennium, the wishful thinkers in Dublin hoped he still meant to make a historic compromise with Irish nationalism. But a recent contribution which he made to a collection of pro-Union essays reveal him to be another integrationist. This week he made his terms of engagement with Dublin clear: he will not discuss anything which touches on the internal affairs of his corner of the United Kingdom.

This position is irreconcilable with the British and Irish governments' "three-stranded approach" in which relations within Northern Ireland, between the two parts of Ireland and between Britain and the Republic are all seen as inextricably linked elements of an abiding solution. Trimble wants to get the internal settlement before addressing the subject of "friendly relations" with the southern neighbour.

There is a private view expressed by some Unionists that there is nothing to be gained from reaching the comprehensive settlement for which

the IRA called its ceasefire, since the outcome of talks will inevitably involve constitutional concessions for them. It is far better, this line of thinking runs, to play the long game, giving as little as possible and only when forced. With any luck the IRA ceasefire will be called off, which will only go to show that Unionists were right all along not to sit down with its political wing Sinn Féin.

Currently Trimble appears to hold all the cards. John Major is certainly not going to do anything which might influence the Ulster Unionists' Commons votes. What troubles Dublin most is that his refusal to negotiate decodes as a refusal to accept there is a problem in the first place. As an official said: "If it's down to the old psychology of contempt for the other side then the peace process is not going to survive."

PRESIDENT Clinton refused to turn his back on Gerry Adams and Sinn Féin yesterday, insisting that the peace process was not dead and rejecting the Ulster Unionists' plea that "a political price" be exacted from Sinn Féin for the IRA's return to bombing.

"Adams has been an important contributor to the discussions that have occurred to date and we hope he will remain so," said the White House spokesman, Mike McCurry. "Mr Adams is an important leader in this process because he speaks for Sinn Féin. It is hard to imagine a process making progress towards peace without the active involvement of Sinn Féin."

The White House is in the extraordinary position of being more conciliatory to Sinn Féin than the Dublin government, which has blocked further meetings with Mr Adams until the announcement of a permanent ceasefire. "We are not willing at this point to say that there is any kind of collapse of a peace process," Mr McCurry added yesterday. "Our most urgent task is to get all parties to again honour the ceasefire. We believe that is not without some possibility."



A British Army commander and an RUC officer chat with a masked UDA leader in Belfast



The Ulster Unionist leader, David Trimble MP, yesterday challenged President Clinton in a brief White House meeting to back up his condemnation of the IRA bombing by putting the controls back on US visas and fund raising for Sinn Féin. Evidently not expecting this to be taken very seriously, Mr Trimble then urged the US to back John Major's proposal for early elections to a body which could begin all-party talks.

Mr Trimble did not rule out all-party talks, including Sinn Féin and the IRA "as and when they bring about a credible cessation of violence".

But President Clinton had told leading Irish-Americans that he plans to stay "actively engaged with Adams".

There was no sign yesterday that the White House would reverse its previous concessions for Sinn Féin leaders to visit the US freely and to raise funds.

For John Major, the bomb was always a calamity waiting to happen. The Westminster consensus never guaranteed his position for the duration, and his weak majority thrust him ever deeper into the arms of Ulster Unionists. His gamble after the *Mitchell Report* now looks as though it failed. Going for elections drowned out the rest of what Mitchell had to say and, as London perfectly well knew, recalled bitter images of Protestant Stormont in all but the sophisticated nationalist breast. The hard men gave their answer last night.

With a larger majority, the Tories could probably have lived with a formula that allowed de-commissioning to accompany rather than precede all-party talks. There was always something totemic about this condition, once the promise of all-party talks, itself a big departure was countenanced. A stronger prime minister would have been able to ride over the Unionists, always aware that if the talks failed,

nothing significant would have been surrendered to Adams. We may soon see the tragedy of that not happening. As it is, the idea of negotiators working to an elective mandate looked (to people well beyond the IRA) like just another British obstruction.

Adams is a republican with blood on his hands, who has devoted his life to a united, republican Ireland. But he's also an operator. He showed signs of knowing the limits of the possible, However much he shouted, he came back to talk, and would want to go on doing so. He was and is an exponent of peace as much as war, however impossible it was for him to surrender to a forced de-commissioning of weapons he didn't control.

Sillier bourgeois commentaries have tried posing the daft question of whether Adams is not finished on the grounds that if he did know the bomb was coming, that makes him an untrustworthy hypocrite as a negotiator, and if he did not know, then he is not worth talking to anyway because he is not the real person in charge of the national-liberation movement.

But even other sectors of the capitalist press grasp full well that Adams clearly speaks for the whole Irish nationalist community in the Occupied Zone, and for the political movement in all Ireland which parallels the secret Irish Republican Army:

Adams and McGuinness came to power through re-priming in the IRA over the previous leaders' handling of the 1975 ceasefire. In 1975 Ruairi O Bradaigh and Daniel O'Connell believed they had struck a deal with the Labour government and called a ceasefire. It lasted a year but broke down amid internal IRA rows over British intentions. O Bradaigh thought his negotiation with British officials was the precursor to a statement of intent

to withdraw; but as civil servants talked peace the army dug in for a long war. The ceasefire was overthrown by rising Republican leaders like McGuinness and O Bradaigh lost his power base. The 1975 ceasefire has been a formative lesson in McGuinness's political life. "This generation of Republicans is not going to be fooled by the Brits' fancy language," McGuinness was fond of telling his interviewers.

FOR many months the 1995 ceasefire has in Republican eyes taken on the ominous shape of the 1975 debacle. The endless prevarication by the British Government over decommissioning, the insistence on what the IRA viewed as impossible demands to surrender weapons, confirmed their scepticism about British good faith and they viewed these manoeuvres as deliberate attempts to delay the peace process.

The final straw was the British seizure in the Mitchell commission on the throw-away remark about elections in the 56th paragraph. Once the decommissioning hurdle was over the British erected an election hurdle in its stead. To Republicans it was the final signal that the British were not serious about a deal and there would be no historic handshake.

At this stage it is impossible to say what has precipitated the end of the ceasefire.

But in one sense it does not matter if it is a dissident faction or not. Whoever bombed Canary Wharf was resourceful enough to slip men and explosives into London, blow up office blocks and prepare a press release in Dublin. The guns are back in Irish politics.

The IRA's statement predictably blamed British intransigence. In truth, many in Nationalist Ireland will secretly agree with them. But it is the only Ulster game of getting your retaliation in first. John Major's government is responsible in a wholly different way. The aim of the British Government should have been to win and secure the peace in Ireland but instead we are

faced with another catastrophic political and intelligence blunder. Where were the SIS and the RUC's Special Branch, whose lavish salaries are paid by the British taxpayer, last night? It was SIS's task to assess the internal machinations of the IRA. Did they not see that the political prevarications and the endless talk of elections and new Stormont-style assemblies was tearing the carefully balanced unity within the IRA's leadership apart?

Last night's bombing signals the loss of one of the greatest historic opportunities to bring peace to Ireland. John Major's government has blown it.

The expectation is that if any campaign does continue, it will be against spectacularly high-profile mainland targets. The element of difficulty, it's understood, will attract rather than repel the IRA, as they want, here to make a simple point: we're still good, and we haven't gone away. Their last mainland attack, the mortaring of Heathrow late in 1994, was purely to demonstrate their capability.

So did John Major make a misjudgment? Blame was certainly being piled upon him, by the usual suspects, one of the most important of which is Niall O'Dowd, editor and publisher of the *Irish Voice*, New York's leading Irish-American newspaper, and a member of the group that played a role in ensuring that the Clinton administration granted Adams a visa to the US in 1993.

Whoever made this decision was focusing on the wide discontent in Northern Ireland over the pace of the peace process, he told the *Observer* yesterday. He laid the blame for the breakdown firmly on the British Government, saying: 'The man who should be embarrassed is John Major, who by his lack of action after 17 months of ceasefire has the most to answer for. The *Mitchell Report*, with its six points that Sinn Féin would have had to agree to before they got to all-party talks, was fair and excellent, but John Major went outside the confines of that report and sided with the Unionists—he has been playing to the peanut gallery for too long.'

'If Clinton took risks for peace and failed, that's unfortunate but I can guarantee you that Irish Americans appreciate his efforts. The only problem has been that Major didn't match Bill Clinton's courage,' he added.

On Capitol Hill, James Walsh, a Republican who chairs the Friends of Ireland Group, said: 'We all condemn the violence, but there was a real sense of frustration that left only two inevitables — violence or peace talks. Unfortunately we got the wrong one first.'

Away from the land of black and white, however, Mr Major will perhaps be seen as having erred not in courage but in subtlety of judgement. Ireland is a notoriously complicated game to play, and he had been doing so much better than most, but you can only wind up your boys up for so long before something snaps. The wilful disregard of the *Mitchell Report* was the last straw; the grasping of Mr Trimble's election plan salt

in the wound. And his flaunting of the idea 'democracy' through elections was a fairly cheap political point, and flawed for two reasons. Firstly, the *Green Book*, the written code of Republican membership, expressly forbids standing for election for any body which openly recognises the sovereignty of the British state; Whitehall certainly knows this, and so must Mr Major. And, more importantly, any pre-talk elections, as envisaged, would almost by definition have been ludicrously partisan, negating any chance of realistic dialogue.

Each side would elect the inevitably biased candidate, and the chance of honest debate and movement would be lost. Major may have appeared to gain the moral high ground by suggesting such elections, clinging to the sacred cow of democracy, but the intentions were not seen as honourable.

Seamus Mallon, deputy leader of the SDLP, alluded to just this situation yesterday when he said: 'Making peace is not just a platitude. You don't make peace with your friends, you make peace with whom you disagree and with those who are your enemies.'

"There can be no other route. If peace is lost, everybody loses. If peace can be won, then we can only win peace by dealing with our enemies.'

Mr Major's brokering, then, may have worked had the faint, early stirrings of good intentions continued. But efforts to bamboozle the Irish through civil service casuistry and Westminster manoeuvrings must be seen to have blown up in his face.

Peace or War? Britain must decide' reads a slogan inscribed in huge letters on the historic Derry Walls standing over the city's nationalist Bogside district.

Yet the Derry graffiti had still acquired a sharp new relevance in the hours since Friday's bomb. In local streets yesterday, people in dismayed huddles tried to assure one another that the London bomb was a shot across the bows of the British Government, not the opening blast of an all-out campaign.

'Nobody wants this,' said one Bogsider. 'But the only time the Brits have ever listened to us is when we've been giving them grief. If the IRA can keep up the war across the water there'll be plenty like me who mightn't say it in public but who'll be thinking, "Good on you, slap it up them!"'

There is still hope. Forget the knee-jerk reactions of the Republicans' secret PR weapon, the Rev Ian Paisley, and listen instead to David Ervine, spokesman for the Progressive Unionist Party, who yesterday tried to echo the words of peace and reconciliation that Mr Adams had uttered on Friday.

This might sound strange coming from me,' said Mr Ervine, 'because there is little love lost between me and Gerry Adams — but I think we have to give him the benefit of the doubt. We have got to hope that he and elements within the IRA leadership can retrieve the situation. We are looking into the abyss again after 18 months. Rather than knee-jerk

reaction and simply straightforward vilification of those who will smile like Cheshire cats and say "I told you so" I say, pull back, take stock and give people who want to end this pain an opportunity to do so.

Adams himself declared: (the IRA was undefeated when 18 months ago it took a very courageous decision to create what was universally recognised to be the greatest opportunity since partition to resolve the conflict and secure a lasting peace settlement. But the British government and the unionists erected one obstacle after another to frustrate every attempt to sit down around the negotiating table.

Inclusive negotiations, without preconditions or vetoes, is the key to advancing the peace process to a peace settlement. This was the commitment given by the two governments, publicly and repeatedly in the run-up to the IRA cessation. This was the context in which the IRA in August 1994 made their historic announcement. Since that time there has not been one word of real negotiations. Nor is there even the prospect of negotiations beginning.

For 18 months Sinn Féin and others have been standing at the negotiating table waiting for the British government and the unionists to sit down with the rest of us to agree a new and peaceful future. The cumulative evidence points damningly to a British-government strategy locked into a psychology of war; a mindset which demands victory over republicans rather than agreement and compromise. We have witnessed bad faith and dishonesty, new preconditions, stalling, negativity and provocation. British bad faith and dishonesty which confounded those who believed that the British would approach the peace process positively; bad faith and dishonesty which was so barefaced that it surprised even those of us with a healthy cynicism about British intentions.

We watched as Private Lee Clegg was released and then promoted, as David Trimble marched through the nationalist community in Garvaghy Road, as Irish prisoners were mistreated in English jails, as plastic bullets were fired at peaceful demonstrators, as RUC raids wrecked nationalist homes. We pointed out, with growing desperation, that there could be no negotiated peace without peace negotiations. That without peace talks there was no peace process.

Yet Sinn Féin maintained its positive approach to the peace process. Last November, the two governments established the twin-track approach. The Irish Taoiseach, John Bruton, described it as the means to remove preconditions to all-party talks. But when Senator George Mitchell's international body issued its report, the British government dumped it, reneging again on its commitment to begin all-party talks. While the IRA must bear the responsibility for its actions in London, the British government must bear its total responsibility for the collapse of the peace process. It has been guilty of criminal neglect.

What is clearly needed is a negotiated peace settlement. We needed

that before Friday night's events; we need it more than ever now. People in Ireland and Britain want above all to see their governments and political representatives move positively and decisively to engage in dialogue to resolve our difficulties.

And the IRA added:

"It is with great reluctance that the leadership announces that the complete cessation of military operations will end at 6pm on February 9.

"As we stated on August 31, 1994; the basis for cessation was to enhance the democratic peace process and to underline our definitive commitment to its success. We also made it clear that we believed an opportunity to create a just and lasting settlement had been created.

"The cessation presented an historic challenge for everyone, and the IRA commended the leaderships of nationalist Ireland at home and abroad. They rose to the challenge. The British prime minister did not.

"Instead of embracing the peace process, the British government acted in bad faith, with Mr Major and the Unionist leaders squandering this opportunity to resolve the conflict.

"Time and again over the last 18 months, selfish party political and sectional interests in the London parliament have been placed before the rights of the people of Ireland.

"We take the opportunity to reiterate our total commitment to our republican objectives. The resolution of the conflict in our country demands justice.

"It demands an inclusive negotiated settlement. That is not possible unless and until the British government faces up to its responsibilities. The blame for the failure thus far of the Irish peace process lies squarely with John Major and his government."

All the signs are that the shot across the bows has worked, even in the dim understanding of some of the British bourgeois press:

If anything summed up the British position, it was an interview with Sir Patrick Mayhew, Secretary of State for Northern Ireland, on Radio 4's *Today* programme yesterday, in which he said he would first be asking Sinn Féin leader, Gerry Adams, if he condoned the bombing, and then, whether he condemned it. Pursuing the logic of the argument, it was put to Sir Patrick: Unless he condemns it, you will not deal with him?'. Without hesitation, he replied: 'I'm not going to be put into a corner in that way.'

Put most crudely, terrorist violence can be a force for political progress, just as the most hopeless stalemate between the Unionists and the republicans can generate the most remarkable agility in British policy positions.

There have been many hopeless deadlocks since 1992, and there have been as many deep and significant shifts in the British position in the run-up to the ceasefire and beyond.

By initially opening up covert lines of communication with the IRA, by accepting that the terrorist cessation of violence was permanent, by agreeing to drop his previous rigid insistence on a start to IRA disarmament as a precondition for all-party talks, Major has shown adaptability.

But if elections are held, and all-party talks are subsequently offered, it is equally possible that the Unionists would still refuse to talk to Sinn Féin because the IRA had not started to decommission its weapons. Unionist leader David Trimble told David Frost in November that, even if decommissioning was put to one side, elections could lead to negotiation only 'at a later stage when we solve the weapons issue'. Dublin puts mild pressure on London; Washington exerts powerful political and economic clout on both Dublin and London, and even Sinn Féin/IRA; but the Unionists are far and away the most intractable force because they appear impervious to pressure.

They also know full well that as Major's Commons majority slips to four and then to three over the coming months, Unionist MPs' votes could be required to save the Tories from an early election and near-certain defeat. They also have the potential backing of some Conservative backbench Eurosceptics, which makes them doubly dangerous.

THE Irish government launched a furious attack yesterday on Britain's strategy for peace in Northern Ireland in the wake of Friday night's London bombing, describing it as like "throwing petrol on to a fire". Irish prime minister said Britain's insistence on elections to a Northern Ireland assembly as the best way forward was a 'serious mistake'.

In the home of the dead man's sister, Eilish McCabe, they don't have much time for the institutions of the British crown. So, yesterday their front room was dark and tense as they sat in silence for almost half-an-hour listening to John Major's speech.

Paul McCabe sat glumly on the sofa under the framed photograph of his sociology degree from the Open University as John Major proclaimed his way forward from the familiar lectern. "If he calls for a clampdown on security and insists on elections that will be it for another 30 years," he said. After 22 years living with the green corrugated army garrison they have few expectations. As Eilish and Paul watched Mr Major's performance, their mood lifted rapidly. "He keeps talking about options and all options being on the table. There a new tone in his voice, something I don't think I've ever heard before," said Paul McCabe.

Every nuance in Mr Major's voice was commented on — every semantic twist noted. "War, now he's calling it a war in Northern Ireland — that's a first."

As Tony Blair and Paddy Ashdown

rose to speak, then conviction that there were new noises coming from the House of Commons gained strength.

"They're all talking the same way. Major's not even throwing out the Mitchell report. Last month he rubished it – now his attitude is as different as night and day."

As Mr Major's statement drew to a close, Eilish McCabe turned to her husband and said: "There's hope."

She says she is against violence: "If you've lost someone you love then you know what that kind of pain is like. I am opposed to violence but it sounds like they've been doing a lot of talking in London this weekend."

"If that bomb was in Aghnacloy

or Derry there wouldn't be this kind of panic, but you can see that it's really shook them in London."

It is British imperialism which is in crisis, not Sinn Féin and the peace process, – as the capitalist press itself is obliged to admit in another context, just about to humiliate London even further:

Whatever else Scott achieves, he will supply a unique public guide to the private, secretive, double-dealing world of unaccountable power which Whitehall created for the purpose of selling weaponry to Iraq. He will show just what ministers and officials are prepared to get up to and then either conceal or

justify. He will lead many people to doubt not only whether present ministers were honest but whether the system, behind the screen of executive power, is any longer capable of integrity.

Whether Labour ministers, once grizzled by power, would be any more open and honest than Tories in supervising an arms industry that makes £5,000 million a year from exports is a question to which affirmative answers can't be guaranteed.

But Scott will reveal a rotten bureaucracy, a corrupt political culture, a system so lacking in curbs on the arrogance of executive power that just about the entire Labour Party will line up behind the consti-

tutional reforms to which the leader reaffirmed his commitment yesterday.

London's 'democratic' condemnation of Sinn Féin and the IRA are not worth the 1,800 paper pages the Scott Report is written on, denouncing Whitehall lies and corruption. Can't trust Sinn Féin to keep its word even if a new deal is negotiated?

London should consider itself honoured if the IRA does give clapped-out British imperialism a second negotiating chance. Read Lenin.

Douglas Bell.

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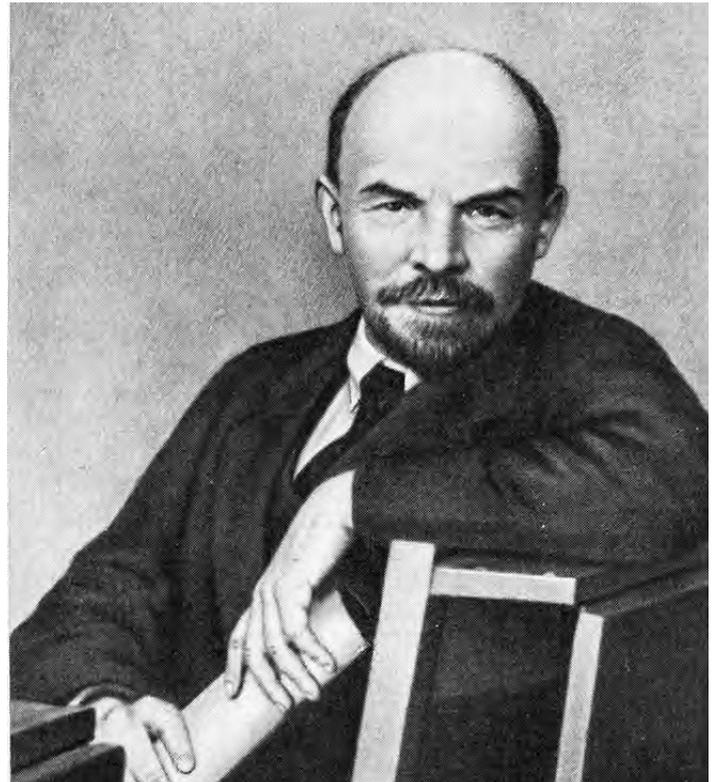
Volume Two covers June 1988 – January 1994;

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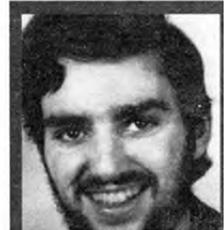
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