

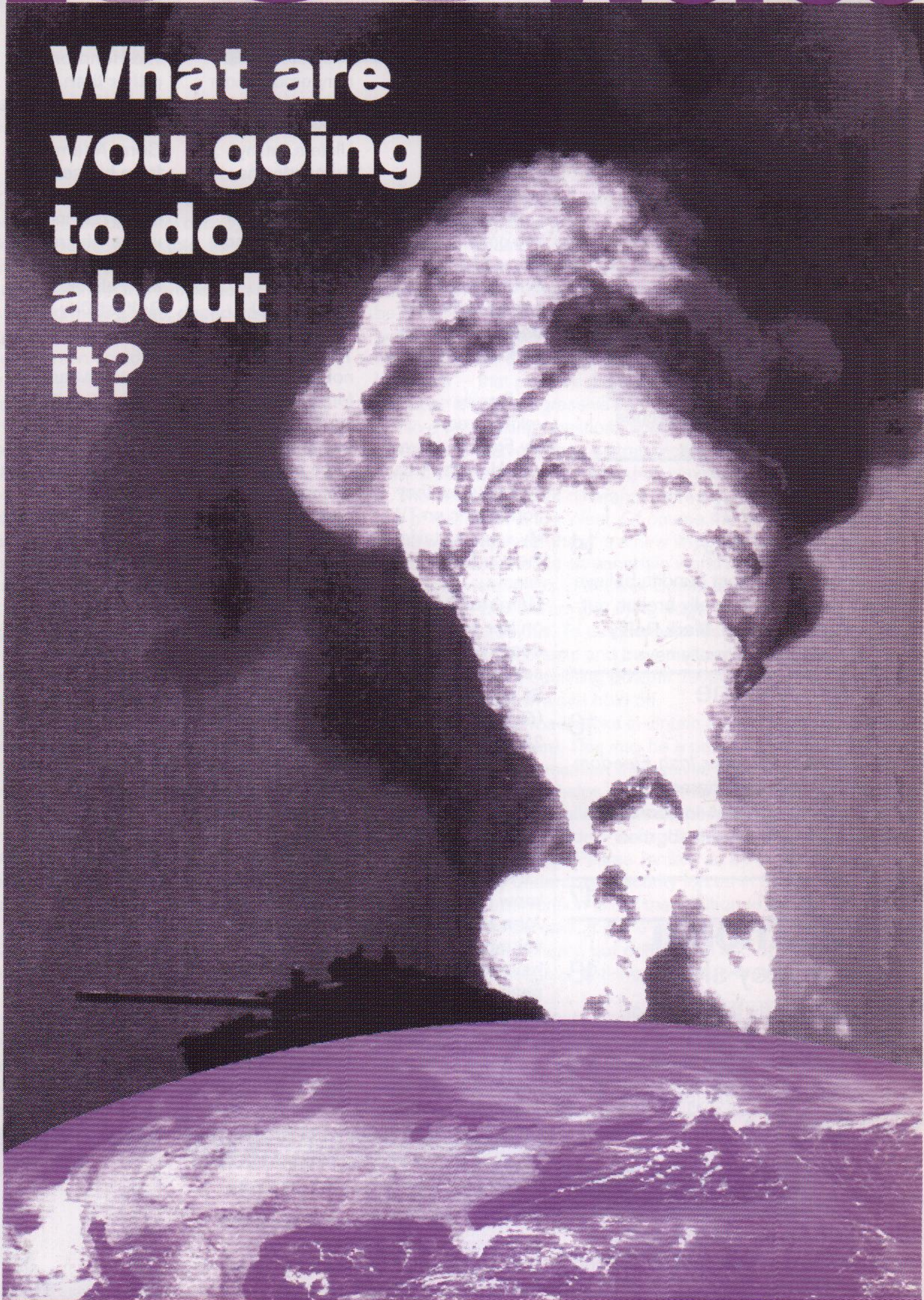
IRISH FREEDOM

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Ireland Iraq Somalia Balkans

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In the autumn the Irish Freedom Movement ran a course of lectures – Fighting for Freedom in a Changing World – focusing on the effect on the Irish war of the massive changes in international relations in recent years. Here we reprint the three speeches delivered at the course

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WHAT THEY SAID IN 1992

I wouldn't tar the IRA with the criminal brush ...these are dedicated, resourceful, professional freedom fighters as they see it. We prefer to call them terrorists. **British army officer in Belfast** (*Independent on Sunday*, 5 January)

My Frankie volunteered. My Frankie was at war. He wasn't a monster as they portrayed it on TV. My son was taking the war to the enemy. **Margaret Ryan on her son's death while on active service in St Albans** (*Guardian*, 28 January)

Those responsible for this outrage will be hunted and hunted and hunted ...they will never know peace again... **John Major on IRA volunteers, who have never known peace at all under British rule** (*passim*, January)

Meanwhile, Britain is becoming more

intimately involved in that tortuous, dangerous, wider Europe where there are many Ulsters...many Europeans have this disease in one form or another. **Neal Ascherson** (*Independent on Sunday*, 12 January)

They brought the riot squad in and forcibly stripped us. They are filthy bastards and ought to be ashamed of themselves. I have never felt so close to rape as I have today....We'll never be stripped into submission. **Maghaberry POW writes to a relative in Long Kesh**

Pleasure in fighting is at the root of the trouble and all that historical background only the excuse for the fighting. **Worsthorne sums up the Balkans war** (*Sunday Telegraph*, 8 March)

A vote for Cobain is a vote for Sinn Fein. **UDA graffiti in West Belfast urges Loyalists to vote**

for the SDLP's Joe Hendron rather than for DUP candidate Cobain, to oust Gerry Adams from his seat

It was the unionist voters who rejected Sinn Fein. **Ian Paisley, Belfast City Hall** (10 April)

The traditional policy of waiting for each outrage, and then arresting several Irish people at random (in abeyance following recent court decisions) will no doubt be resumed before too long. **Simon Hoggart on the future for MI5** (*Observer*, 10 May)

Sue for fucking thousands, mate – the bastards. **London cabbie gives Judith Ward some legal advice** (*RTE*, 4 June)

I'm not into this business of winning hearts and minds. I prefer what an American general said in Vietnam. 'If you grab them by the balls then their hearts and minds

will follow.' **DUP press officer Sammy Wilson discussing the RIR's tactical options (er...the US lost, Sammy)**

This is like Ulster with tanks... **British soldier in Bosnia** (*Sunday Telegraph*, 8 November)

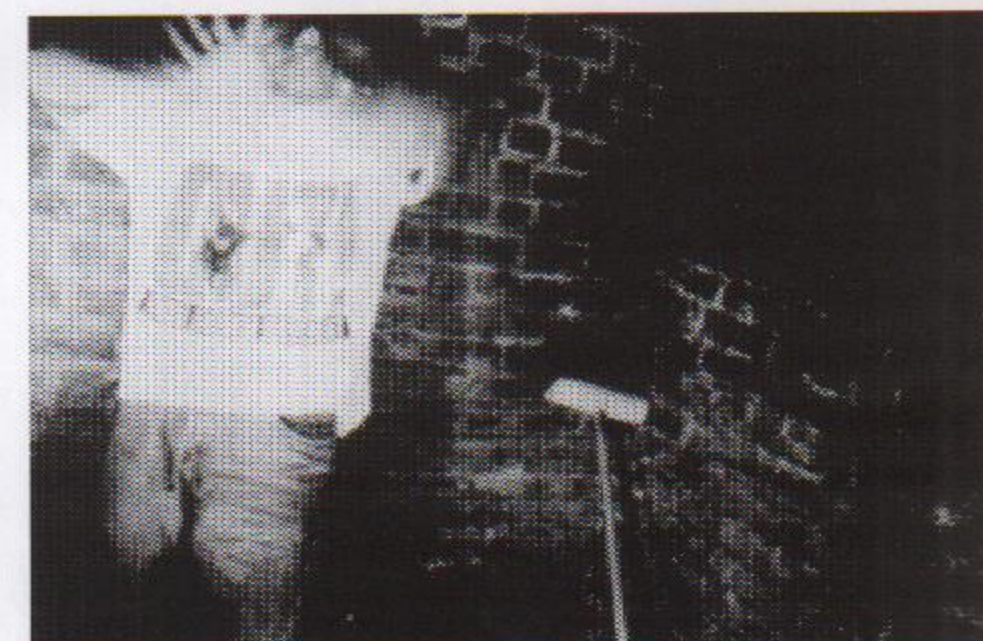
I don't see the talks as having broken down. **26 Counties foreign minister David Andrews, after the close of the Brooke/Mayhew talks** (November)

Then he smiled and said, 'when you give my description, knock ten years off me'. That's when I realised I might just stay alive...I jokingly asked about the fare for the trip, and he just told me to think of it as being in a good cause. **Malcolm Egerton, the minicab driver who drove a bomb to Downing Street, on instruction from two IRA volunteers** (*Enfield Independent*, 4 November 1992)

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WESTERN 'CHARITY' JUST SAY NO



20 000 American marines – and sundry Foreign Legionnaires – are currently occupying Somalia. They have gone in, we are told, for humanitarian reasons – to bring order to a land afflicted by anarchy, violence and famine, to disarm the marauding tribal gangs, doped up to the eyeballs from chewing qat, the local narcotic. This, surely, is a mission that no decent person could object to.

The marines had only been there a week when they shot two Somalis dead. The rest are treated alternately as cattle or criminals. Five unarmed Somalis were found in a warehouse near an airfield. They were made to lie face down on the ground, interrogated and harassed. Their crime? The marines did not know who they were.

There are some strong parallels between this invasion and the British invasion of the Six Counties of Northern Ireland in 1969. The two events may be separated by 23 years and thousands of miles, but the comparison reveals uncanny similarities.

When the troops first appeared on the streets of Belfast and Derry, they too were clapped and cheered by some of the local Catholic population – just as Somalis were seen applauding the arrival of the marines. Nationalist women made British squaddies cups of tea, believing the troops were there to protect them from the Loyalist gangs and sectarian local security forces.

In Britain people were told that the troops had gone to keep the peace between two warring religious tribes. Just as we are now being told that the marines have gone to help stop the tribal warlords from tearing Somalia apart.

Back in 1969, though, northern nationalists quickly understood why the British troops were there – to hinder, not to help. Within six months British soldiers were shooting, arresting and harassing the local Catholic population. People began to understand that this was an occupation, not liberation nor even democratisation. They realised that the troops were there to maintain British domination, not just through Loyalist privilege, but now through direct military force.

Twenty-three years on and the world has changed. There are also important differences between the two situations that need to be recognised. When the troops invaded Northern Ireland, most people in Britain initially supported the intervention. But eventually many British people became suspicious of Britain's

motives, inclining to view the military presence as a problem rather than as a solution.

Today the same mistrust of military intervention abroad has been dampened. The *Evening Standard* can write an editorial entitled 'The new imperialism', arguing that while it may not be politically correct, imperialism is the only solution to the problems of Africa (4 December 1992). Even a liberal newspaper like the *Independent* prints an editorial – 'Benign Imperium' – that puts the case for Western intervention as an impartial and progressive act.

No-one is asking questions about the real reason for US military intervention in a strategically insignificant region. Armed interference is accepted as sensible and straightforward.

The other important difference between now and 1969 is the rise of militarism in the West. Of course the West was militaristic in the past. However there is a new impetus driving militarism forward. The turmoil of an uncertain world is felt all too deeply by those imperial powers in decline, Britain and the United States.

The older powers are like dying dogs. As they go down they become more vicious. To compensate for their lack of prestige, they puff out their chests and bare their teeth. The new culture of militarism is the declining powers' response to their difficulties, a warning to their rivals to hold off.

The new police roadblocks in Britain are just one face of the new militaristic culture. This may be a particularly pathetic attempt by the authorities to reassert themselves after one hell of an annus horribilis, but it helps create a more repressive atmosphere.

There is another parallel between the Irish war and the invasion of Somalia. Inside a fortnight, the two Somalis were shot at a US checkpoint and Pearse Jordan, an IRA volunteer, was assassinated by undercover security forces in Belfast (see page 5). Imperialist intervention is not the solution to the problems of Ireland nor of Somalia. It is the cause of the problem. The aim of the West is not charity, but domination and oppression. This must be the message of anti-imperialists in the months ahead.

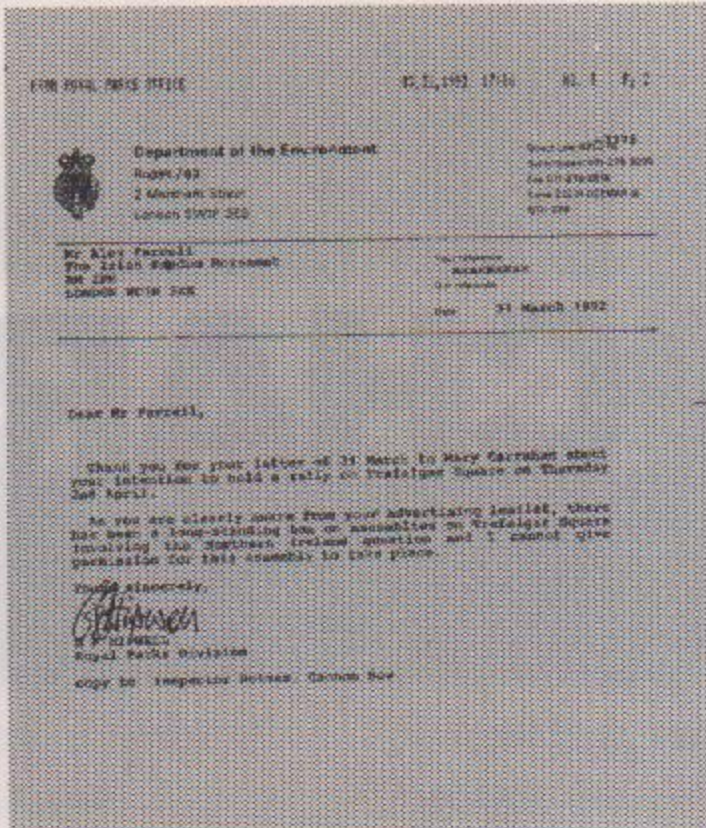
Irish Freedom is edited by Fiona Foster, Kevin Kelly and Eve Anderson. It is written by supporters of the Irish Freedom Movement and is open to anyone interested in advancing solidarity work in Britain. If you would like to help, write to Irish Freedom, BM IFM, London WC1N 3XX.

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Despite police warnings



and the 20-year ban



the IFM takes over Trafalgar Square

1992 has been marked by intense debate within the IFM about how to make the cause of Irish freedom relevant at a time when the Irish war is less of an issue in British politics than at any time in the past 23 years. One clear conclusion is that the IFM's work has assumed a new significance and urgency in a country where economic and political decline is being offset by a more aggressive, militaristic foreign policy.

Far from scaling down our activities as Ireland slips off the British political agenda, the IFM has been busier than ever selling *Irish Freedom* and pointing to the Irish war as evidence of the tragic consequences of British interference abroad.

23-26 January

A bus load of IFM activists travels to Derry to attend the international conference organised by the Bloody Sunday Initiative and to take part in the 20th anniversary Bloody Sunday demonstration

March

The launch of the IFM's general election campaign. The IFM stands Alex Farrell as candidate in the City of London and Westminster South constituency to take on Peter Brooke, the then secretary of state for Northern Ireland. We achieve national media coverage for our campaign to break the all-party silence on the Irish war and force the issue onto the agenda of many election rallies around London

21 March

One day conference – *The war that won't go away* – to rally

our supporters for the election campaign

April

The IFM breaks the 20-year ban on Irish demonstrations in Trafalgar Square with a noisy 150-strong protest at which a life-size effigy of Peter Brook wrapped in a union jack is burned. A large photograph of the protest appears in *The Times* the next day

4 April

IFM election motorcade through the busy shopping areas of London

9 April

Election day. Canvassing and selling *Irish Freedom* throughout the constituency during the day and then livening up the count. A bomb scare excites the Special Branch when an unknown Tory leaves his briefcase unattended. The candidates line up to make speeches thanking the police. Farrell thanks the people of the Six

Counties for their inspiring fight against British rule. 107 people vote in support of Irish freedom

21 May

The IFM takes on the anti-republican group New Consensus in a debate sponsored by North London Polytechnic's Irish Studies Centre. The IFM's Eve Anderson debates revisionist historian and New Consensus member Austen Morgan. The debate is chaired by Donal Mooney, the editor of the *Irish Post*, and 145 people pack into the lecture theatre

2 June

Feargal O'Donnell, hospitalised when the Paras went on the rampage in Coalisland, is flown to London by the IFM to tell a packed rally in Camden what really happened

16 July

Far from avoiding the issue of IRA violence, the IFM responds to the upsurge in the bombing campaign in Britain

with a public meeting called *Bombs in Britain – Why?*

1 August

Motorcade through the streets of London as the culmination of months of work to publicise the annual Troops Out march

8 August

More than 3000 people join the IFM demonstration in North London. Rally addressed by Sinn Féin's Barry McElduff, Equality's Oliver Kearney and the IFM's Alex Farrell

16 October

Forty IFM supporters, and members of the IBRG, converged on the *Evening Standard* offices in protest at a smear article the day before attacking organisations said to be actively supporting 'terrorism' in this country

15 & 22 October and 5 November

The IFM's Short Course in *Fighting for Freedom in a Changing World* – three well-attended public meetings pursue the debate about how best to build solidarity in Britain, in conditions very different from those in 1981 when the IFM was founded

2 December

War against War slide show and preview of *Don't Believe a Word* – the IFM's new exhibition on Ireland and the media, to be ready early 1993

10 December

Public meeting at the University of North London on the changing face of Southern Irish politics in the wake of the general election and the abortion referenda

BREAKING THE SILENCE ON THE IRISH WAR THE IFM IN 1992

Janet Sugden looks back at 1992
and offers her list of the highlights of
IFM activities that year

THE RETURN OF 'SHOOT-TO-KILL'

Despite Britain's image as 'peacekeeper' in Northern Ireland, officially-sanctioned death squads are still gunning down Irish republicans. Kevin Kelly reports from the streets of West Belfast

"Reports of a shooting incident are coming in. The shooting took place outside St John's church on the Falls Road." Sitting in my house less than a mile away from the shooting, the report on the 6.00pm news barely caused a ripple of curiosity among my family and me, so common are such incidents in West Belfast. But that was to change when less than an hour later, the phone rang. It was my brother-in-law Paddy, who told us that young Pearse Jordan had been shot dead.

Murder

Pearse's family and mine had known each other well for 20 years. Pearse, an IRA volunteer, had been shot at point-blank range by undercover RUC men. His killing happened on the Falls Road during rush-hour and dozens of local people reported seeing Pearse's car rammed front and back by two unmarked RUC cars. As Pearse staggered from his car, four RUC men armed with Heckler and Koch submachine guns shot him dead.

Many local people witnessed his murder, but to the compliant British media their eye-witness accounts were of little importance. Instead, news reports quoted as fact

the leaked and untruthful RUC accounts of the incident. During the evening various incorrect versions of the shooting were presented in news reports throughout Britain and Ireland: "...the RUC vehicle was rammed by Mr Jordan's car..." and "Gloves and a mask were found in his car...". *Sky News* even reported that an IRA man was "shot dead by the RUC in a car full of explosives". None of these accounts were true and by the following day even the RUC accepted that there were no explosives, no mask and no gloves.

Unlike previous shoot-to-kill incidents, such as when three men were shot dead by undercover SAS men at a bookies less than 100 yards from where Pearse was murdered, there was no massive outcry in the British media. The betting shop killings provoked a storm of controversy only when it emerged that these men were not republicans but merely petty criminals.

Clearly the British media have successfully managed to isolate republicans as fair game and legitimate targets. The fact that Pearse was unarmed is irrelevant to many; he was an IRA man and this is seen as justification enough for the facts of his murder to be distorted and his death to be diminished.

Defiance

Supporters of British rule may feel growing confidence about the prospect of defeating republican resistance in Ireland, but the reaction of local people in West Belfast shows that this is premature. They reacted with grief and sympathy, but also with defiance. Shortly after the shooting almost a hundred local women held a torchlit

protest. The next day IRA volunteers fired a volley of shots in salute to their comrade, close to his home in Newbarnsley.

When Pearse's body was taken to his home, nationalists poured into the Jordan's house to pay their respects. About the closest the media came to reporting reality was when a camera crew filming the scene of Pearse's shooting the next day, zoomed in on a sympathy card among the dozens of bunches of flowers placed by local people, which read: "to a brave Irish Soldier".

Provocation

Not content with murdering Pearse, the RUC videoed and stopped mourners entering the Jordan household. Many mourners were heckled and spat on. The RUC tactics were in stark contrast to the quiet dignity with which Pearse's parents, Theresa and Hugh, bore their grief. Two IRA volunteers in uniform stood guard of honour over the coffin as hundreds of people filed in and out of the house undaunted by the provocative and sectarian behaviour of the RUC.

On the morning of Pearse's funeral, hundreds of RUC men surrounded the Jordan family home, armed with submachine guns, rifles, revolvers and plastic bullet guns. As Pearse's coffin was carried out of the house, the mourners were in determined mood. On the way to the chapel the RUC tried to impose their control on the funeral procession, making two attempts to disrupt it. But the mourners, who had by now swelled to over 2000, refused to be intimidated. As hundreds of local youth stared at the lines of the RUC men, I couldn't help thinking that these young people will be the IRA volunteers of tomorrow.

No doubt our British rulers are hoping that the murder of young IRA volunteer Pearse Jordan will pass into the obscurity of another British cover-up. But as hard as they try, they will not prevent the flow of young volunteers prepared and eager to take Pearse's place.

Pearse Jordan's father Hugh appeals for the security forces to back off from his son's funeral



PHOTO: PACEMAKER PRESS INT'L

It is over three years since former secretary of state for Northern Ireland Peter Brooke first started talking about bringing 'all sides' together, to facilitate some form of power-sharing agreement which could help defuse the conflict in the occupied Six Counties.

The British and Irish media have been openly sceptical from day one about the prospects of any real progress being made as a result of the talks. The apparent intransigence of some of the parties involved seems to confirm the widely held prejudice that nationalists and unionists have an irrational hatred for each other which offers no space for compromise.

Squabbling children

Dr Ian Paisley, leader of the Democratic Unionist Party (DUP), declared "these talks are dead" and blamed the Social Democratic and Labour Party (SDLP) for intransigence on the issue of Dublin involvement in the internal government of the Six Counties.

The SDLP leader John Hume, on the other hand, said "the problem hasn't changed in 6 months of talking so our analysis hasn't changed" (*Irish Times*, 11 November 1992). The problem being that a devolved Northern Ireland would be governed by the unionists.

The woolly optimism expressed in the closing statement, suggesting that all sides

had "developed a clear understanding of each other's positions", could not mask the admission that there was "no basis to agree a settlement". And the *Independent* newspaper made the point that "if anything, the talks have resulted in greater polarisation" (11 November 1992).

It must be incomprehensible to many people that the parties involved could indulge themselves in such mud-slinging when it seems the chance for peace is being offered by the British. In fact, British rule in Ireland is the central barrier to reconciliation.

Oppression UK plc

Britain can only maintain its hold over the Six Counties through institutionalised discrimination against the nationalist population which keeps the Loyalists in a relatively privileged position. The Loyalists, in turn, support the British presence.

Stuart Sharp asks why Britain could dispense with the Mayhew Talks so easily

BRITAIN ENDS THE DIALOGUE

Until Britain is removed from the equation, there can be no common ground between the two sides.

Ironically, all sides invited to the talks accept the right of the British to rule the Six Counties. The petty squabbling was over technical details, over what is the best mechanism for maintaining that rule. Despite some of the rhetoric, the Dublin government relies on Britain for its own position as the constitutional government of a partitioned country. The SDLP's strategy in the talks was to deflect nationalists' anger through the suggestion of Southern 'participation' in Northern Irish affairs.

The one party which does not accept Britain's right to run the show is Sinn Féin. The representatives of that organisation were excluded from the talks on the grounds that they will not renounce the armed struggle. But it does not take a genius to note that the unionist parties were not required to renounce the violence

of Loyalist paramilitaries, nor the British government the violence of British troops.

Not with a bang but a whimper

The talks were never primarily to do with reconciling the differences of the participants. They were staged in order to isolate the republican movement and exclude it from the 'normal' political process. The talks were meant as a public demonstration of this marginalisation. The fact that Britain allowed the talks to end in such an inconclusive and understated manner suggests how successful their strategy has been.

This stability is the most significant aspect of the end of the talks. No-one has lost their job. Nobody important has resigned from their post. No soul-searching articles have been written. No-one has taken issue with the inconclusive end of the talks. Five years ago there would have been an outcry. Today it is no big deal. Britain no

longer needs the talks like it used to. They have, for the time being, served their purpose: presenting Britain as an impartial arbitrator, and sidelining Sinn Féin.

The demoralising combination of being excluded from the talks and the targeted repression of their activists in recent years, has left Sinn Féin in a more defensive position, unable to find wider support outside of its core constituency.

Despite the instability and incoherence of the British establishment at the moment, the success of its strategy against the republican movement means it is able to act with a certain amount of confidence in relation to the Irish war. It has virtually shrugged off the IRA's bombing campaign because of the insignificance of the war to British politics. Similarly, the Irish government in the South is moving closer to dropping its constitutional claim to the North.

No solution

The British are in a good position to contain the conflict for the time being, but they are unable to provide a solution. The nationalists will always be forced to resist British rule, and if the present leadership of the republican movement fails to remove the British from Ireland, the struggle will undoubtedly re-emerge in a new form. Standing up to the British establishment and demonstrating that there are people in Britain who support Irish freedom, whichever form it may take, is more important than ever before.

Paisley and Hume will keep the dialogue going - informally



In the last few months the IRA have stepped up their bombing campaign throughout Britain. Explosions have wrecked commercial premises in the City of London, blasted department stores in Manchester and forced Downing Street security chiefs to re-fortify Number 10. There have been few casualties. The Irish Freedom Movement has continued to argue that the blame for every death and injury lies with the British state. Quite simply, the IRA bombs Britain in response to the occupation of its country by the 32,000-strong British armed forces.

Despite the sustained nature of the IRA's latest bombing campaign, the notable feature has been the muted response from politicians and public alike. Far from whipping up popular fears and generating a wave of anti-Irish hysteria, politicians and the press have reacted with a routine show of banal and low-key condemnations. The British public seem to view recent bombs as a nuisance on a par with leaves on the line or another set of road works.

Less impact

So why are IRA bombs eliciting less response in the 1990s than in the 1980s?

During the 1980s British governments were forced to respond to a strong increase in support for the republican movement in Ireland. Widespread backing for the hunger strikers in 1981, the election of Gerry Adams in 1983 as MP for West Belfast and of 59 Sinn Féin councillors in the 1985 local elections, all heightened British fears that support for the anti-imperialist struggle would spread unstoppably in the North and possibly throughout Ireland. Sinn Féin's electoral success also threatened the 'criminal psychopath' image of republicans created by Britain during the 1970s.

The 1985 Anglo-Irish agreement and the subsequent Brooke/Mayhew talks of the last few years were all British initiatives designed to stem the electoral growth of Sinn Féin and to ensure that support for the republican movement remained marginalised to the nationalist ghettos of the six counties.

During this period maintaining the propaganda battle against the IRA within Britain was a crucial part of the war effort. This required a constant campaign of demonising and criminalising the IRA and a concerted effort to whip up outrage against IRA actions in Britain.

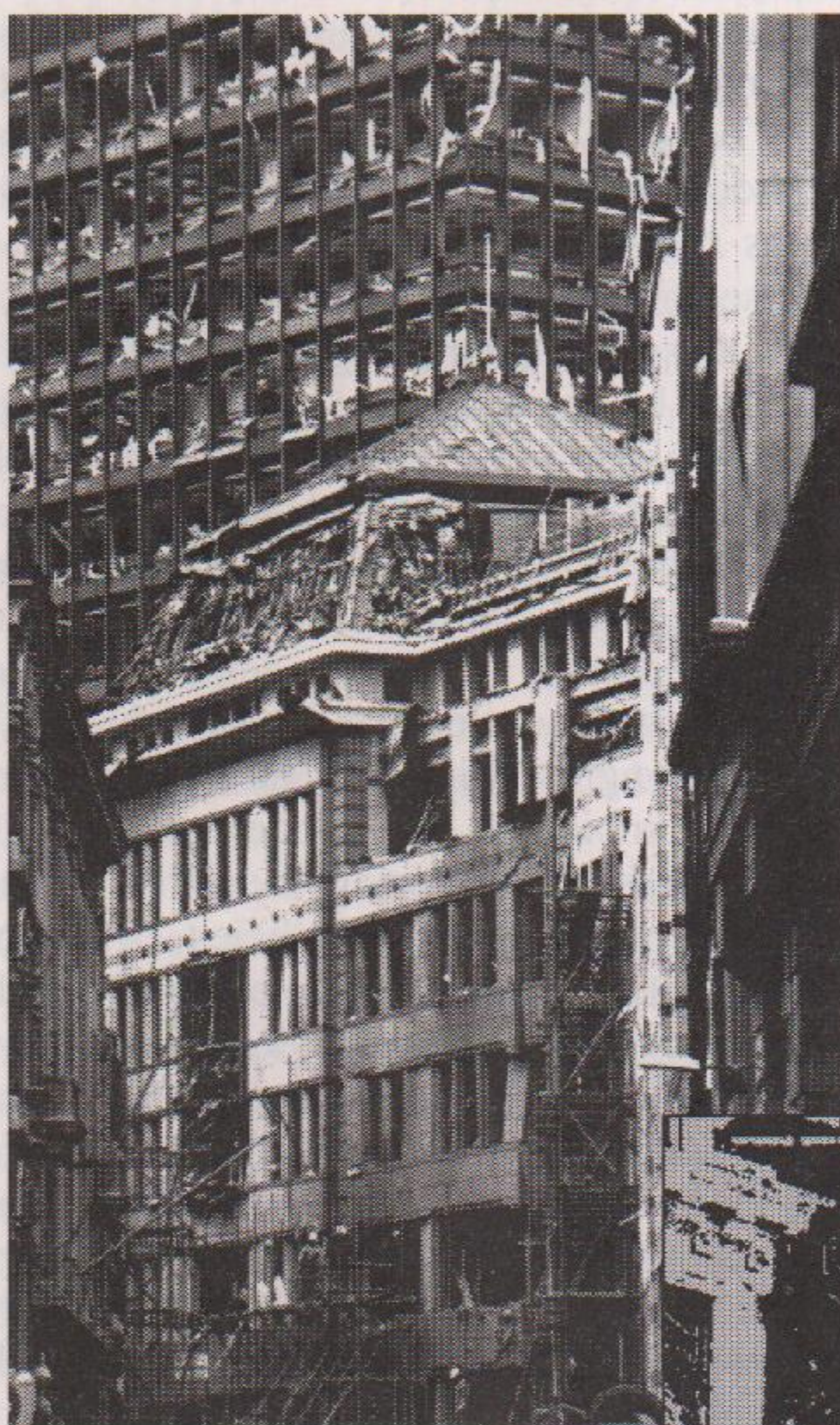
No longer a threat

Today the British establishment no longer fears a growth of popular support for the anti-imperialist struggle in Ireland. The strategy of marginalising republicanism, begun with the Anglo-Irish deal, has been given a dramatic boost by world events.

The collapse of Stalinism and the end of the Cold War has tilted the balance in favour of imperialism and against those

Richard Evans assesses the reaction to the IRA's bombing campaign in Britain and argues that the low-key reaction reflects Britain's success at keeping its longest war off the political agenda

BRITAIN TURNS DOWN THE TEMPERATURE



The IRA bombing of the City of London, above, produced little of the establishment hysteria provoked by the bombing of the Grand Hotel, Brighton, right, in 1985

fighting it. Irish republicans have been left more isolated than ever by the collapse of anti-imperialist struggles world-wide which had always inspired them. The republican movement has not been immune from the same debilitating pressures which have affected the ANC and the PLO.

Feeling less threatened by the struggle in Ireland than before, the British authorities no longer need to put much effort into sustaining the anti-Irish consensus in

Britain. In fact raising the temperature on the Irish war always contained the risk of encouraging people to question Britain's role in Ireland.

Now, even with bombs going off all around them, the British establishment has less need to turn up the temperature and can keep the issue of Britain's occupation of Ireland completely out of domestic politics. When the Irish issue is discussed, as when the war claimed its 3000th victim, British politicians and commentators can get away with presenting the 23 year-old war as a tribal feud between two sets of religious extremists. Britain's occupation of Ireland is thus presented as a neutral, humanitarian, peace-keeping operation needed to prevent the worst excesses of both sides.

The British establishment is now so confident of the stability of its rule in Ireland that it can call off the Brooke/Mayhew talks on the future of Northern Ireland and smugly declare that they ended by mutual consent "in good humour".

People asking why

The recent bombing campaign has left many people here wondering why bombs are being planted in Britain as an extension of a 'tribal feud' in Belfast. The large number of non-military targets has done little to clarify the fundamental conflict at the heart of the Irish war – the conflict between the Irish people's right to run their own country and the British

state's enforced denial of that right.

The task of the IFM must be to demystify the presentation of the Irish war and use the tragic example of British involvement in Ireland to build a movement capable of challenging Britain's right to send its war machine anywhere in the world.

IN A CHANGING

BRITISH WARS AND
BRITISH PROPAGANDA

MIKE FREEMAN

Though Britain's war in Northern Ireland is often dubbed its 'longest war', it is a war that has never been declared. In British propaganda at home and abroad, the Irish war is an exercise in 'policing' or 'peace-keeping'. The legitimisation of British imperialist policy in this way has deep historical roots.

Britain emerged as the dominant world power in the nineteenth century, coinciding with a period of prolonged stability among the major nations. After decades of war, the century between Waterloo (1815) and the First World War (1914) was relatively peaceful in most of Europe. Of course, things were different in Africa and Asia, but these backward regions were scarcely considered by contemporary observers. Thus, whereas rising nations (Germany, Italy, USA, Japan) were forced to assert their national challenge to British supremacy in militaristic terms, Britain's national identity was linked to peace, the 'Pax Britannica'.

A key influence on the outlook of the British establishment in foreign affairs was the 'free trade pacifism' championed by Cobden and Bright, representatives of the rising industrial bourgeoisie. They repudiated the policies of militarism, diplomatic intrigue and colonial conquest associated with Britain's declining landed property elites, represented at home by the Tory Party. For Britain's manufacturers, the most productive in the world, the interests of free trade, international harmony and Britain's profits converged. The equation between Britain's economic interests and the universal good of mankind was established.

While British capitalists opposed militarism and colonialism, they upheld the global supremacy of the Royal Navy, on which Britain's trading hegemony depended. Indeed the role of the Navy in ending the slave trade was the perfect example of the convergence of Britain's role in showing moral leadership to the world and its commercial interests.

The anti-imperialist spirit of the British bourgeoisie was also expressed in its championing of the cause of oppressed nationalities. In the latter half of the nineteenth century, campaigns in support of national self-determination or other extensions of democratic rights – for Italian nationalists, for Hungary against Russia, for the North against the South in the American Civil War, for Bulgarian Christians against the Turks – won widespread middle-class support in Britain.

For as long as Britain's global hegemony remained unchallenged, free trade pacifism

flourished and became institutionalised in the programme of the Liberal Party. However, by the close of the nineteenth century, British supremacy came increasingly into question, first in the backward capitalist world, and soon in Europe itself. The result was the scramble for Africa, colonial revolts, protectionist rivalries, rearmament, and finally, the First World War. Under these pressures, there was a gradual shift in the outlook of British industrialists and their Liberal representatives, from the 'anti-imperialism' of the Manchester school to the characteristic pro-imperialism of the British establishment in the twentieth century.

Two examples illustrate the trend for anti-imperialism to turn into its opposite. In 1882 Liberal leader Gladstone made an about-turn from being a fervent campaigner for national self-determination to endorsement of British intervention in Egypt. His successor Lloyd George made a similar shift from support for the Boers in 1900 to leadership of the First World War coalition. The commitment of representatives of the British establishment to the needs of British capitalism has always taken priority over their commitment to peace and their aversion to war.

In the twentieth century British capitalists have been forced to fight, more or less continuously and at an unprecedented level of ferocity, to defend their interests, both against advanced capitalist rivals in two world wars and against numerous colonial revolts. At the same time, they have had to contend with the threat of a large and well-organised working class movement at home. Given its grisly experience of the barbarism of war, the working class is always liable to question the legitimacy of militarism and imperialism in ways which may jeopardise the position of the capitalist class. Thus winning legitimacy for its interference in the affairs of other countries has been a major propaganda problem for the British establishment, in a century in which the exposure of the atrocities committed in the name of imperial glory has seriously discredited imperialism.

In winning the propaganda war for imperialism, the British establishment has greatly benefited from the enduring influence of the nineteenth century liberal notion that it was Britain's destiny to serve the universal interests of mankind by interfering in other countries. Long after the comforting illusions of free trade pacifism had been abandoned by the Liberal Party, as its leaders made common cause with the traditionally pro-imperialist Tories, they were

In the autumn the Irish Freedom Movement ran a course of lectures – **Fighting for Freedom in a Changing World** – focusing on the effect on the Irish war of the massive changes in international relations in recent years. Here we reprint the three speeches delivered at the course

The characteristic theme of British war propaganda is to justify militarism by some higher moral purpose

taken up by radical anti-war campaigners on the left of the Labour Party. The influence of such views among the more radical sections of the working class has provided British capitalists with a vital link through which to mobilise popular consent for war.

The characteristic theme of official twentieth century war propaganda is not an explicit appeal to imperialist prejudice or crude jingoism. It is an attempt to justify militarism by some higher moral purpose in line with nineteenth century traditions. Thus Britain went to war in 1914, so they said, not to destroy rising German capitalism, but to defend little Belgium; in 1939, it was to combat fascism (and to save little Czechoslovakia and Poland). In post-war colonial conflicts British forces have become involved, always reluctantly of course, to protect peoples from communist subversion, terrorism, tribal barbarism, communal strife. Such campaigns have generally been highly successful in rallying domestic support for, or at least neutralising opposition to military activities, despite the level of carnage involved.

As a product of Britain's nineteenth century pre-eminence, liberal pacifism is based on an assumption of British superiority. Thus, when Britain's imperial position is threatened, liberal pacifism turns inexorably into its opposite, a justification or an apology for militarism. The path trodden by Gladstone and Lloyd George has more recently been followed by the erstwhile leaders of CND in Britain.

Supporters of Irish freedom have long noted the paradox that British campaigners against the threat of nuclear war in the future remained

strangely unmoved by the deployment of conventional weapons in the present in Ireland and elsewhere. This paradox has slowly unravelled over the past decade, destroying CND in the process. During the Falklands war in 1982 – justified, we should recall, by Britain's claimed commitment to the rights to national self-determination of the Falkland Islanders – CND leaders took an equivocal stand, appealing for sanctions and negotiations, but refusing to oppose the British task force. Again during the Gulf war, CND leaders tried to stand in the middle, but took a more explicitly pro-British line. The final capitulation has come over former Yugoslavia, as prominent CND leaders and other formerly anti-war left-wingers have taken the lead in appealing for Western military intervention. The campaign itself is now moribund.

Two striking features of the post-Cold War New World Order are the more explicit promotion of imperialism by establishment politicians and propagandists, and the decline of anti-imperialist movements and sentiments around the world. Both trends are evident in relation to the Irish war. The British authorities are now less inclined to emphasise their commitment to 'democratise' Northern Ireland and more likely to point to the necessity for more coercion of communities dominated by atavistic tribal loyalties of the sort now on display throughout Europe and elsewhere. At the same time the collapse of liberal pacifism opens the way for a coherently anti-imperialist anti-war movement that can challenge all forms of imperialist propaganda in the process of mobilising active resistance to British imperialism in Ireland and beyond.



British squaddies in the Gulf – barbarism dressed up as a fight for democracy

NATIONAL RIGHTS OR ETHNIC STRIFE?

ALEX FARRELL

The world can be a confusing place at the best of times. Just now, confusion is achieving world-record levels. In imperialist circles 'national self-determination' is a hip slogan – so long as it doesn't apply to Ireland. Britain's propagandists manage to exploit the ethnic character of the very conflicts which they support to tar the Irish struggle with a sectarian brush. Heads they win, tails we lose.

The debate over modern nationalism is significant for us for two reasons. First, the discrediting of anti-imperialism affects the Irish struggle directly and our work in Britain to build support for Irish self-determination. Second, to carry the case for Irish freedom convincingly, we need to understand the drastic changes of the last three years and to distinguish anti-imperialist from pro-imperialist movements.

There has been an explosion of national and ethnic movements, from the collapsed Soviet Union to central and eastern Europe. Nation-states are fragmenting and breaking up. Even within the West itself, regionalist movements are threatening the integrity of Canada, Belgium, Spain and Italy. One small Italian island recently threatened to secede and become part of Libya.

It seems that every week we learn of ethnic groups and movements that we were previously unaware of. Yet far from resolving conflict and bringing democratic rights in their train, these movements are leading to the extension of conflict as even the fragments themselves fragment. Take ex-Soviet Georgia. First the conflict seemed to be between Georgia and Russia. Then it developed into strife between ethnic Georgians and ethnic Ossetians. Then the West Georgians renamed themselves Mingrelians and took on all the other Georgians. Finally the Abkhazians joined the South Ossetians in a secessionist war with the rump of Georgia.

At this point it seems fair to ask: what the hell is going on? Why is it happening now, and why didn't it happen before?

The last three years have seen the rapid reversal of the dominant trend since the Second World War, when many peoples achieved formal national independence and identified themselves with broader movements beyond the nation-state, like pan-Africanism, pan-Arabism, socialism, Stalinism, anti-imperialism, or more recently – and very fleetingly – the idea of a united Europe. All these are seen to have failed, and as a result notions of ethnicity or of religious identity have begun to dominate.

Since 1989 ethnic national movements have

erupted all over the world. This shows in itself that there is nothing national about this phenomenon. These movements are not returns to the past, as is often claimed, but responses to the problems of the present. Their emergence has been sparked by the coincidence of two powerful factors – the collapse of the Cold War system and the arrival of the biggest world slump since the 1930s.

The Cold War system reflected the outcome of the Second World War. After over fifty years of competing with Britain and Germany for number one status, America displaced Britain as the pre-eminent world power – economically, militarily and politically. If, as the USA argued, the Soviet threat was a real one, then clearly only America was strong enough to lead the fight against it. So the West had to accept American world leadership, cemented through US-run institutions like the UN, Nato, the World Bank, the IMF, the General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade and so on.

While America imposed order around the world, the Soviet Union maintained stability on its own side of the Iron Curtain. The only drawback from the Western point of view was that the Soviet Union acted as a counterweight to Western foreign intervention and an alternative model to capitalism, which inspired Western-dominated peoples with the possibility of change.

Anti-communism also played a crucial domestic role in the West. Any challenge to the establishment, be it strike action or political opposition, was attacked as communist-inspired and so cut off from broad popular support. The market system didn't have to be justified in its own terms, but just compared with the undemocratic and economically backward Soviet Union.

The whole Cold War package depended on American economic supremacy and the existence of the Soviet bloc. Built in the late 1940s, by the end of the 1980s it no longer reflected the real state of affairs in the world. Soviet bankruptcy, American economic decline and the emergence of Germany and Japan as upfront competitors with their own regional blocs meant that the Cold War system was past its sell-by date. Once the first crack opened, in the shape of the fall of the Berlin wall in November 1989, it was bye-bye Cold War and hello fragmentation.

Competition between the US bloc, a Japanese-dominated South East Asia and a German-dominated Europe – previously suppressed by US dominance – is being intensified by the world slump. Their mutual jockeying for advantage is now destabilising the whole world order. This

The politics of ethnic identity are alien to Irish anti-imperialism

can be clearly seen in the Yugoslavian conflict.

Germany recognised Croatian nationhood as a signal to the US that it regarded eastern Europe as its own backyard and would intervene independently of US approval. America responded by recognising Slovenia. Once the remaining Yugoslavian republics saw that declaring independence could attract Western political and economic support, the collapse of the country – and the ensuing war – was assured. The same process once started in the Baltic republics of Lithuania, Latvia and Estonia spread at speed throughout the former Soviet Union, now riven with armed conflict.

In this context, what look like demands for national independence turn out to be demands to be taken over by the West. Anti-imperialism has been undermined by the downfall of the Soviet Union, not only because there is no longer any counterweight to imperialism's free rein, but also because the idea that there is any alternative to capitalism has been discredited. The catastrophic impact of the slump on people's lives, set against the relative prosperity of the West, is creating desperation and fragmenting society into rival groups competing to be exploited by imperialism. As a result, what we have is not anti-imperialist nationalism but pro-imperialist nationalism.

So the widespread retreat into ethnic and regional identities is not a return to the past but a desperate reaction to the crisis of the present. The question is not whether ethnic and regional identities exist – they clearly do. The problem is what happens when these identities become politicised. For instance, Geordies and Scousers have distinct identities, but this has no political expression. The politicisation of ethnic identities can only involve the denigration of the outsider groups and, when institutionalised in state power, attacks on their democratic rights. Movements based on ethnicity or cultural particularity inevitably become movements not for equal rights but for privilege.

As for the Irish war, two groups centre their existence or their arguments on ethnic exclusiveness – first, the Loyalists, and second, the historical revisionists. The revisionists argue that the distinct cultures of Irish Catholicism and Ulster Protestantism are irreconcilable in a single state, and that co-existence is only possible in a two-state system, preferably as regional states in a 'Europe of the regions' – a notion, by the way, whose day has already come and gone.

Loyalists themselves justify their privileged position in apartheid Northern Ireland on the

basis of their cultural peculiarities and their claimed superiority to Catholics. In fact, the strong defensive identity of Loyalism has nothing to do with Protestantism as such, nor any exclusive set of genes. It was created by and depends on British imperialism manipulating Loyalist identity to secure its shaky grip on Ireland.

The difference between the Loyalist and republican traditions could not be more striking. Loyalist propaganda justifies privilege by representing Catholics as sub-human, backward and ignorant scum. The Loyalist 'armed struggle' turns out to be sectarian murder pure and simple, where any Catholic will do. In contrast, the republican tradition is not to fight for Catholic privilege, but for equal rights for all in a secular state. The politics of ethnic identity are alien to Irish anti-imperialism.

Internationally, the retreat into ethnic identity is a profoundly pessimistic reaction to the crisis of the New World Order. Ethnic identity defines people around the elements of their existence about which they can do precisely nothing – their parentage, their bloodlines, the past. It is profoundly conservative. In response to today's political confusions, we have to ask not 'where do we come from?', but 'where are we going?'. What working class people all over the world have in common outweighs our differences many times over. This is not an argument for ignoring or suppressing difference – a futile goal, even were it desirable – but against the ethnic exclusivity which characterises the recently-emerged national movements.

If we are to build the support in Britain which Irish freedom deserves, we have to disengage in people's minds the association of the Irish struggle with today's ethnic conflicts.

The Irish national struggle has never fought for ethnic exclusivity. Nor is it an end in itself. When James Connolly fought for working class leadership of the liberation struggle during the First World War, it was not to establish an ethnically cleansed Irish republic. When on the eve of the Easter Rising he urged the men and women of the Irish Citizens' Army to hold onto their guns in the event of victory, it was because he recognised that oppression, war, exploitation and poverty were not features simply of British rule but of capitalism itself.

In these crisis-ridden times we are not short of proof that Connolly was right and that working class people in Britain should support the Irish, not as an ethnic movement which it is not, but as a potentially mortal threat to the British state.

BRITISH IMPERIALISM AND HOW TO FIGHT IT

FIONA FOSTER

There are lots of people who have a healthy scepticism about Britain's recent foreign adventures. I meet plenty who look back on the Falklands war as Thatcher's way of boosting a flagging government or think the Gulf war was 'all about oil'.

As nice as it is to see people questioning British propaganda about peace-keeping and defending democracy, I think many are still seriously underestimating the real dynamic behind British imperialism.

British imperialism is so dangerous today because it has no option but to intervene militarily around the world, as the only way to reduce the impact of Britain's dramatic economic decline. One important consequence of this dynamic is that, despite appearances to the contrary, Britain is less likely than ever to disengage from Ireland.

Second fiddle

The Gulf war is a good illustration of the real dynamic behind British militarism today. It's probably true that if there was no oil in the Middle East, the USA would not have chosen this region to stir up a conflict which would affirm its role as the world's policeman. But it was not the West's oil interests that were under threat from Iraq in the Gulf.

As long as the so-called 'Communist bloc' existed, the USA was unchallenged in its role as the primary defender of western democracy from eastern communism. When Stalinism collapsed, the USA stood naked, like the Emperor with no clothes, as a nation in a state of economic and social decline with no guaranteed basis for continuing as world leader.

The USA seized on a local Middle East dispute and blew it into an international conflict to reassert America's role as global policeman.

Britain was the USA's closest ally in the Cold War and suffered the same kind of exposure when it ended. Britain emerged from the Cold War desperately trying to cover the shame of having become a third-rate European power. But it was now too obvious to hide. The pro-Tory *Sunday Times* produced an editorial in 1990 despairing at Britain's decline:

'Britain faces a world in which it can hope at best to play second fiddle to a regional superpower, which is a distinct demotion from running an Empire or playing second fiddle to a global superpower, America. Even second fiddle to Germany is not guaranteed since Britain is the poorest of the four big economies behind France

and even Italy, as well as Germany.'

The Gulf war offered Britain the chance to show the world that economic decline did not necessarily signify a lesser role in world affairs. Britain became America's most enthusiastic backer in the Western alliance, spending millions of pounds and launching a massive propaganda campaign which also pointed to Germany and Japan's lesser role as proof of their peripheral role in world affairs.

Britain went to war in the Gulf because not going would have symbolised British decline.

Withdrawal from Ireland

Many people involved in campaigning for troops out of Ireland believe that the dramatic changes in the world have improved the prospects of a British withdrawal from Ireland.

The republican movement, weary of 23 years of war which it cannot seem to win, has seen developments in South Africa, El Salvador and Palestine as evidence of a desire on the part of the imperialists to resolve age-old conflicts. The fast-fading terminology of the New World Order – the peace dividend, European union, the submerging of national borders – has further convinced the republican movement and its supporters in Britain that there is now an historic opportunity for Britain to wash its hands of its Irish problem.

Sadly the opposite is true. Britain's declining role in the emerging New World Order makes it impossible for Britain to opt for withdrawal from Ireland.

The collapse of Stalinism and a number of national liberation struggles which it sustained has temporarily boosted the confidence of Western imperialism. With the national liberation struggle in Ireland marginalised and demoralised, the British have some room to manoeuvre. Britain could well change the form of its rule in Ireland, and it could even work out some scenario in which British troops are taken off the streets. The possibilities are endless, but the option of giving Northern Ireland back to the Irish is not on the agenda.

Belfast-style roadblocks

The argument that Britain will withdraw suggests that not only would withdrawal fit in with world trends, but it would also bring benefits for the British government. On the one hand they could well use the billions of pounds saved to reduce the impact of unpopular public spending cuts. On the other hand the beleaguered Tories could well do without the embarrassment of bombs going

For a declining Britain to announce that it can now no longer run a region of what it claims to be its own country would be political suicide

off by Downing Street and having to admit that armed policeman are now staging Belfast-style roadblocks on the streets of London.

You may think these arguments sound pretty convincing. But I can assure you that they don't sound so convincing to the people who are running this country.

There is absolutely no debate within the British establishment about withdrawing from Ireland. Far from ending the Irish war as a means of generating extra money, the government has upped its spending on security in the past year, sending in more troops and installing new high tech surveillance equipment in nationalist areas.

Far from reeling from the embarrassment of the IRA's bombing campaign, the government, with the full support of opposition politicians and the media, has succeeded in minimising the impact of the Irish war in British politics more than ever before – so much so, that the arrival of paramilitary police roadblocks on the streets of London hardly raised an eyebrow.

Those who ask Britain to leave Northern Ireland are asking the British ruling class to concede defeat on the central question of Britain's right to rule its own territory. What's more, they are asking them to concede defeat at the very time when they are nearer to claiming victory than at any time in the past 23 years.

Britain ignored requests not to go to war in the Falklands and in the Gulf precisely because those wars were necessary to disguise the extent of British decline. For Britain to announce that it can now no longer run a region of what it claims to be its own country would be political suicide.

The constant references to Britain's glorious past and the present-day debates about Europe

and national sovereignty are indicative of the identity crisis of the British establishment. The idea that in the midst of this they would decide to call it a day in Ireland, unless they absolutely had to, is absurd.

Know your enemy

The reason we need to understand the nature of British imperialism today is to inform our discussion of how to challenge it.

If we had concluded that it is in Britain's interests to get shot of Ireland, then we would orientate our work towards persuading them of this. That would entail lobbying politicians and other forces that can influence politicians.

Our conclusion that it is not in the interests of the British state to withdraw means that we must look to the ordinary people of this country who have every interest in speeding up the defeat of our rulers.

When I sold *Irish Freedom* on the recent march against pit closures, I had sold out of my 40 copies within a couple of hours. My slogan that British workers should support the Irish, if they really wanted to screw the Tories, seemed to connect with a rather despairing recognition that siding with the leadership of the labour movement against the Irish hadn't got them very far. The discrediting of the old organisations of the working class provides the Irish Freedom Movement with new opportunities to argue for support for the struggle of the Irish.

British imperialism is very dangerous just now. But its viciousness comes from its inherent weakness and its desperation to survive. It's these two factors that should inform our discussion of British imperialism and how to fight it.

Demonstrators for Irish freedom ask: who will the West XXXX next?



NOTHING LEFT

After the elections, most commentators believe that Irish politics have finally broken out of the nationalist mould. Mark Reilly asks just how much is really new

The general elections in November bring to light new developments in Irish politics. The results were universally greeted as a sign that the 'civil war politics' which have dominated Ireland for seventy years are at an end. The dramatic decline in the fortunes of Fianna Fail and Fine Gael, the two parties most closely associated with the civil war split, suggests that the old politics have had their day. The rise of the Labour Party has been taken to indicate the arrival of the class politics of left and right.

While it is true that the old forms are disintegrating, the larger claims of a new, more mature political mould emerging are the product of wishful thinking. The Irish Labour Party is hardly new, nor is it untainted by civil war politics – it supported the partition treaty and has attacked those who challenged partition ever since that time. It is ironic that those commentators who welcome the death of class politics elsewhere applaud its miraculous appearance in Ireland.



Breaking the mould

There is no doubt that the old civil war parties are experiencing a traumatic decline. Since 1982, Fianna Fail, the largest party in Ireland and the one most closely identified with green nationalism, has failed to win an outright majority. It has been forced to rule by stitching up deals with the independent TDs (Irish MPs) and latterly with the Progressive Democrats, who split from Fianna Fail in 1986.

Fianna Fail's slow decline through the eighties has accelerated with the defeat in November, when its percentage of the vote dropped from 44 to just under 40 per cent. Pundits have marvelled at the scale of the slide. But Fianna Fail remains the largest

party, and, because of the collapse of its main rival, Fine Gael, it is now ahead by an even greater margin.

More striking about Fianna Fail is how slowly its vote is collapsing, compared to the collapse of its credibility as a political force. There was a time when Fianna Fail was deeply embedded in the political and social life of the country. Fianna Fail produced the classical machine politicians whose word meant everything when it came to getting planning permission or job promotion. This machine politics was based on a form of anti-British nationalist politics, stronger in rhetoric than substance, which wove together the most important institutions and classes in Irish life, giving the country its cohesion and identity.



Where's the beef?

The days of Fianna Fail supremacy are gone forever. The party still produces the same breed of cut-throat politicians as before, but it has lost its old political identity. The current leader Albert Reynolds typifies the new Fianna Fail image. He used to run show bands and a dog food factory, earning the unaffectionate nickname 'Pedigree Chum'. Reynolds has dumped Fianna Fail's token republicanism and tried to project a new image of pragmatism. But, unfortunately for Reynolds, every other party and politician in Ireland has exactly the same idea.

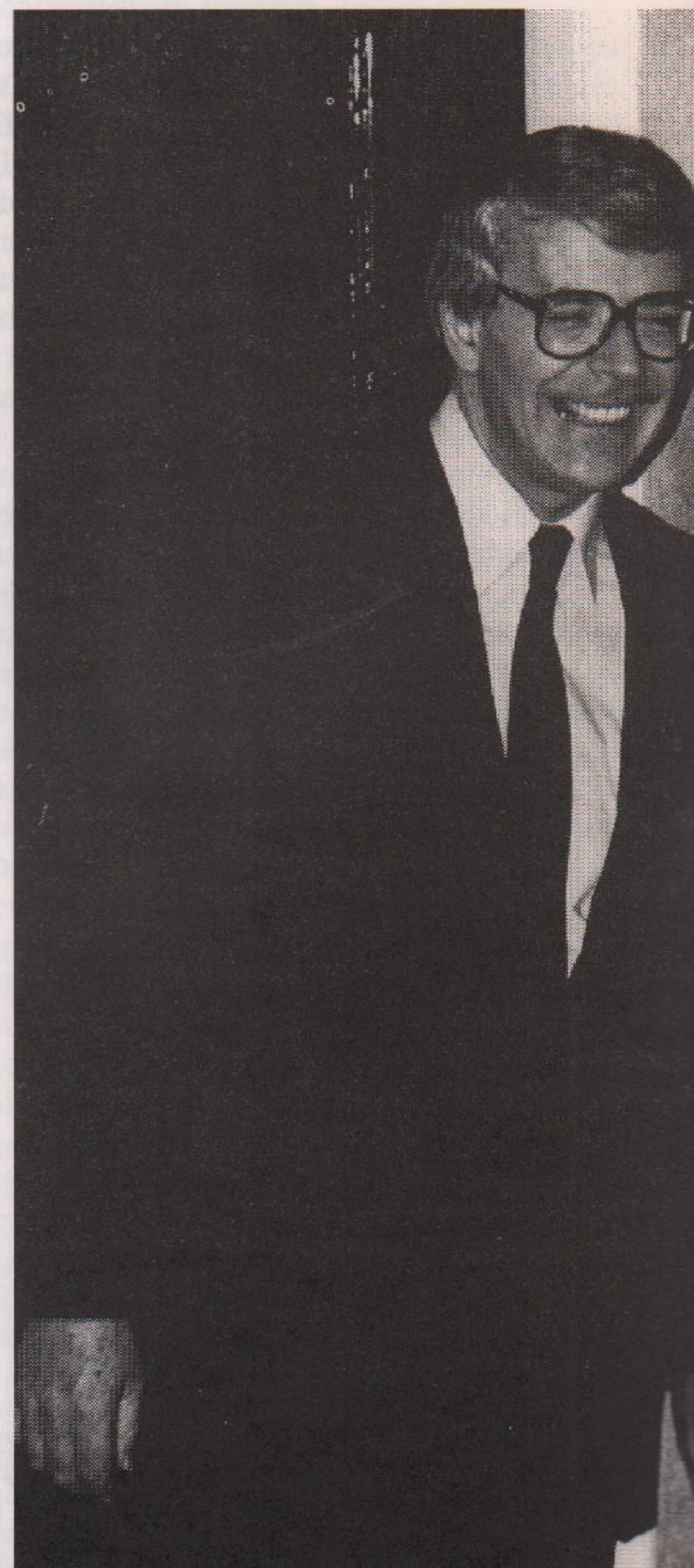
If the election was bad for Fianna Fail, it was disastrous for the main opposition party, Fine Gael. Their share of the vote dropped to just under 25 per cent. Always anti-republican in both word and deed, Fine Gael is suffering a decline parallel with its arch-rival Fianna Fail. As everybody airs the anti-republican politics traditionally

associated with Fine Gael, the party is now just one player on a crowded pitch.

Mould breakers

So what of Labour's breakthrough? Just as the electoral decline of the two main parties is exaggerated, so is the advance of Labour. Its share of the vote rose to 19.3 per cent – hardly a landslide for a party which has been around longer than any of the others and which has always managed to corner about ten per cent of the vote. Its rise looks more impressive when set against its mid-eighties depression, following one of its many punishing coalitions with Fine Gael.

Many observers make the erroneous



Albert Reynolds laughing with Major – but th

BUT THE PARISH PUMP

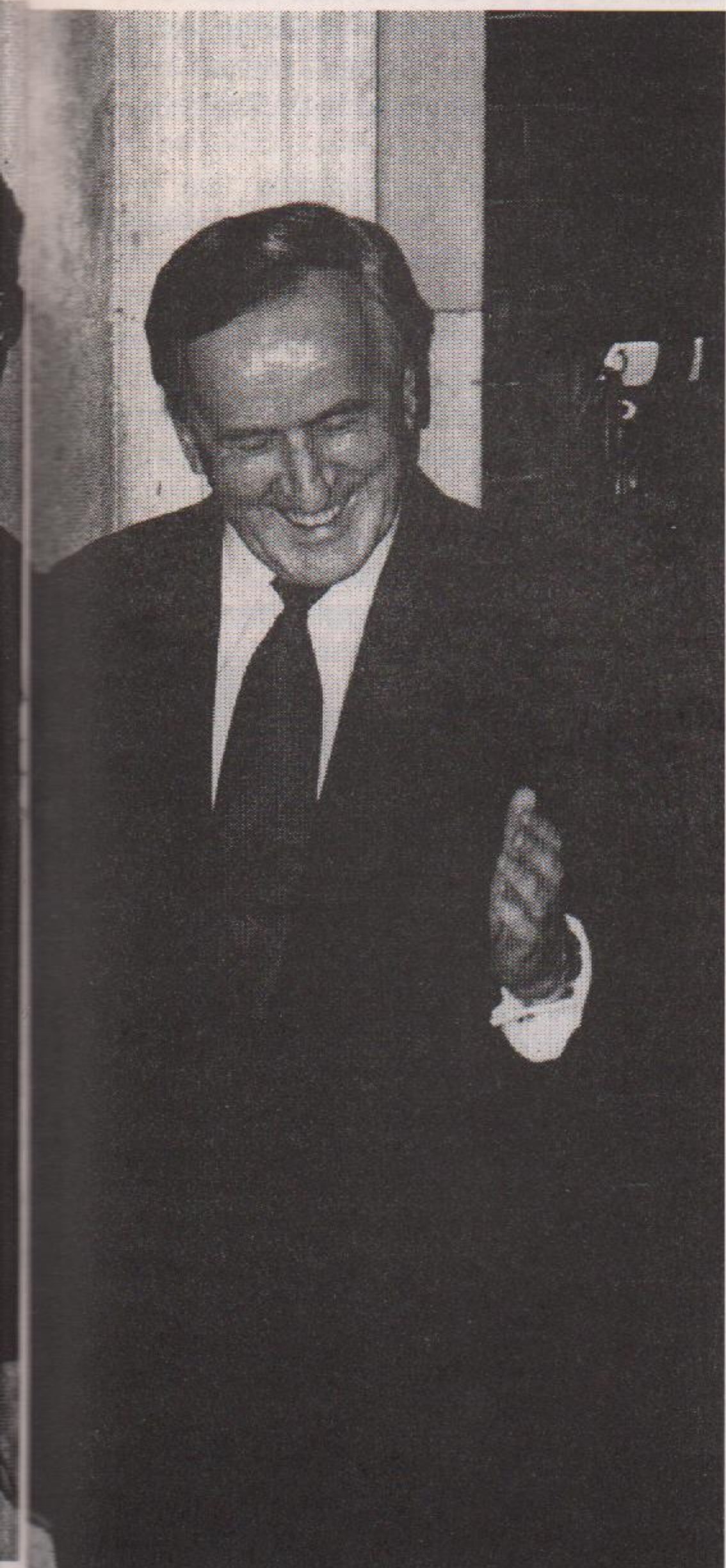
assumption that the Irish Labour Party is in some way akin to the British version. It is not. If there is a similarity, it is that the Irish Labour Party has always been what the British Labour Party is becoming – a party of disparate individuals without any distinct political creed.

As a political machine representing any distinct section of society or set of ideas, the Labour Party could hardly be said to exist. Unlike its British sister, it never had any institutional relations with the working class. Labour TDs got elected because of their local reputation, not their politics.

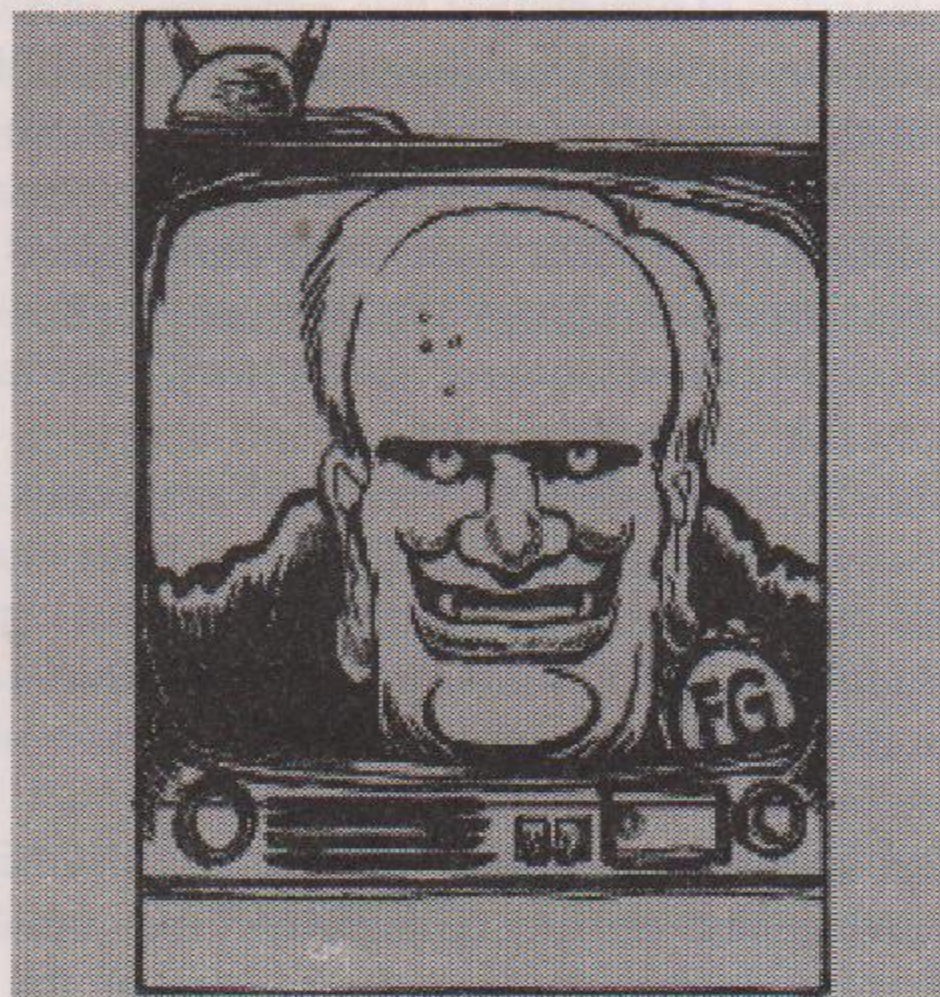
This was candidly acknowledged by Dick Spring, a former rugby player and the

Irish Labour Party leader. Whether he became Taoiseach or not, he observed, he knew that he would always be remembered as the man who dropped the ball at the Cardiff Arms Park and allowed Wales to score the winning try.

The Labour Party was the beneficiary of the decline of the old parties. It was fortuitous as to who would collect the debris from Fianna Fail and Fine Gael. The Progressive Democrats would have been first in line were it not for the fact that they had spent the last three years in coalition with Fianna Fail. For their punishment they received a paltry 4.7 per cent of the vote. Labour could, for the first time in its history, make its irrelevance look like virtue, high above the slurry pit of Irish politics.



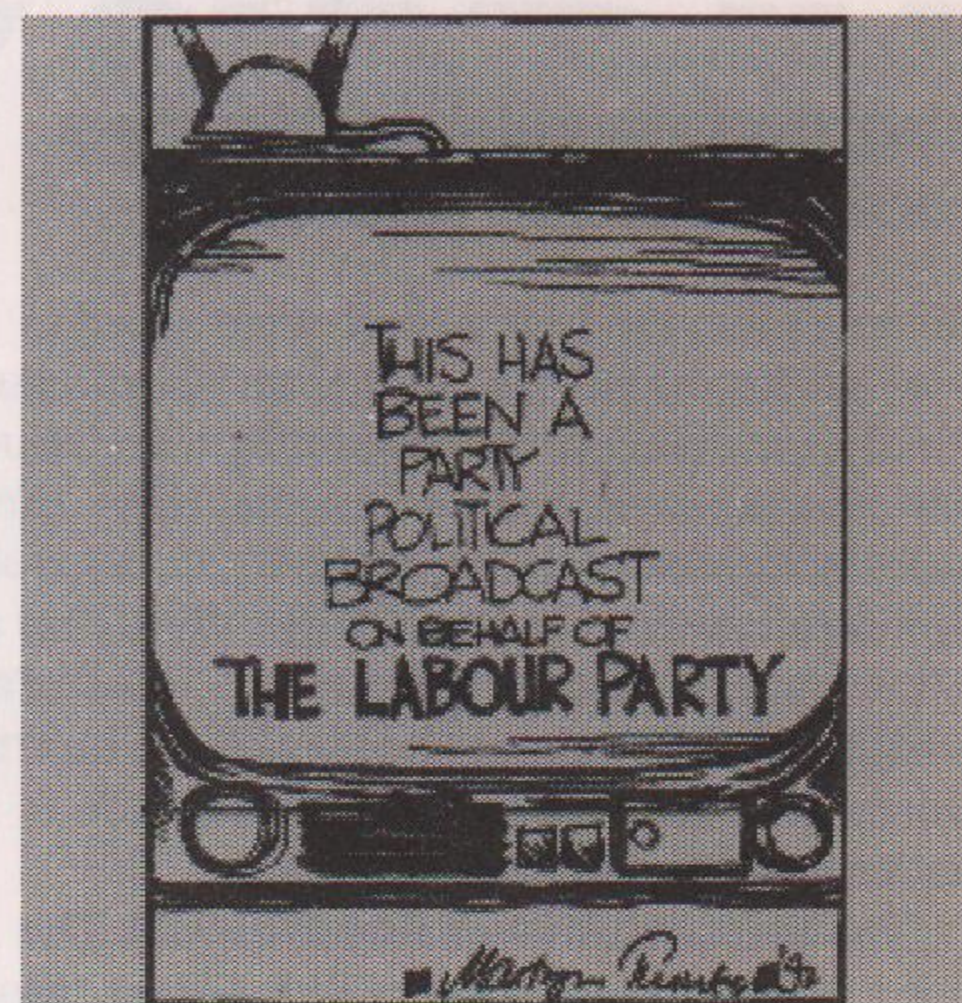
se who laugh last, laugh longest



Post-Cold War bonus

An added bonus for Labour came with the end of the Cold War. The collapse of the Soviet Union and the demise of the left throughout the world meant that the Irish middle classes could now vote for a party with a left-sounding name and have nothing to fear. Labour at least sensed the search was on for something new, even if they could not deliver. It is significant that the biggest shifts to Labour took place in middle class constituencies. In working class areas, the erosion of Fianna Fail support was far less marked.

The ability of Labour to pick up the middle class vote highlights the historic role played by the Irish left. While organisationally weak to the point of non-existence, the left has always had a major influence at an intellectual level. It has always attacked the cause of Irish freedom, advocating surrender on the national question, both inside and outside the republican movement.



THE IRISH TIMES

Post-nationalist politics

The newest form of this approach is the post-nationalist politics devised by various academics on the fringe of the Workers' Party. While the Workers' Party itself failed to reap the benefits of its academic vision, (it received a mere 0.7% of the vote), its stridently anti-republican rhetoric informs every aspect of the vacuous pluralism which permeates Irish society. The Democratic Left lost two of its six Dáil seats. The Labour Party is, for the moment, the most adept at articulating this new approach.

No political party in Ireland is capable of articulating anything that resembles a political principle other than opposition to the IRA. The collapse of the old institutions under the impact of post-nationalist politics means that none of the parties have any distinguishing features.

Having discarded the Green Card of nationalist rhetoric, the parties are left with nothing but the parish pump, the other great symbol of Irish politics. Observers have noted the vastly increased number of TDs from all parties who owe their position to their local reputation. Although the parties still exist at a formal level, they are now made up of diverse individuals, each clinging to his own parish pump.

The political decay of Southern Ireland, made manifest by the election, in the long term can only accelerate the opening-up of new possibilities for Irish liberation. No institution in Irish society can escape the destructive effects of the new pluralism.

For the moment the Irish middle classes may rejoice in the arrival of their oh-so-cosmopolitan vision. They will be singing a different tune when they realise that their new set-up is not worth tuppence.

Mags Glennon is a student at University College Dublin. She has been actively involved in the campaign for abortion rights in the Irish Republic for several years. Here she writes for *Irish Freedom* from Dublin about her impressions of the changing attitudes to abortion revealed during the recent abortion referenda

In November the Irish people were asked to vote no less than three times on abortion. Firstly on the right of women to travel to get abortions. Secondly on the right of women to receive information about abortion services outside Ireland, and thirdly on what was called the 'substantive' issue of whether abortion should be legalised within Ireland in cases where the mother's life is under immediate threat.

The first two referenda were passed. The third was rejected. The results reflect the change of attitudes that have been evident in the country in recent years. The fundamentalism of the 1980s has been rejected and the move towards a compassionate realism has reflected itself in all sections of society.

Radicals demoralised

The defeats suffered by those campaigning around the referenda on abortion in 1983 and divorce in 1986 left these forces weakened and demoralised. The subsequent witch-hunt against well-women's clinics and students' unions offering abortion information met with little public protest.

It took the horror of the X Case (the 14 year-old rape victim banned from travelling to England to get an abortion) to reopen the debate on abortion. The ruling by the Supreme Court which overturned the travel ban and legalised abortion in certain circumstances, including the threat of suicide,

OPINION

ABORTION AND THE NEW IRELAND

shocked many traditionalists who had long boasted about Ireland being the only European country with an absolute ban on abortion.

While internationally abortion rights are being savagely curtailed from Poland to the USA, Irish public opinion has swung dramatically in favour of liberalising the country's abortion laws.

Too liberal for some

Fianna Fail, responding to pressure from the anti-abortionists amongst the party's grass roots, desperately sought a formula which would restrict the liberal ruling delivered by the Supreme Court. The result was the 'right to life' referendum, otherwise known as the 'substantive' issue. Abortion would thus be ruled out in cases where the mother's physical or mental health was under threat. It was this insult to Irish women that was rejected by the Irish people.

Paradoxically the anti-abortion lobby also called for a 'no' vote on the substantive issue, claiming that this restrictive proposal would lead to abortion on demand. But the strength of the anti-abortion lobby has diminished considerably since its triumphs in the 1980s. Some well-known pro-life campaigners from 1983 actually called for a 'yes' vote, and splits took place between different groups of anti-abortionists. The mainstream 'Pro-Life' campaign disowned their more militant acolytes in the recently-formed Youth Defence – a group that specialised in physical attacks on campaigners for abortion rights.

Yes and no – maybe

Central also to the collapse of the anti-abortion campaign was the failure of the Catholic hierarchy to come out en bloc for a 'no' vote.

The Bishop's Conference statement telling Irish Catholics they could vote 'yes' or 'no' 'in good conscience' left

the anti-abortionists without their most powerful ally.

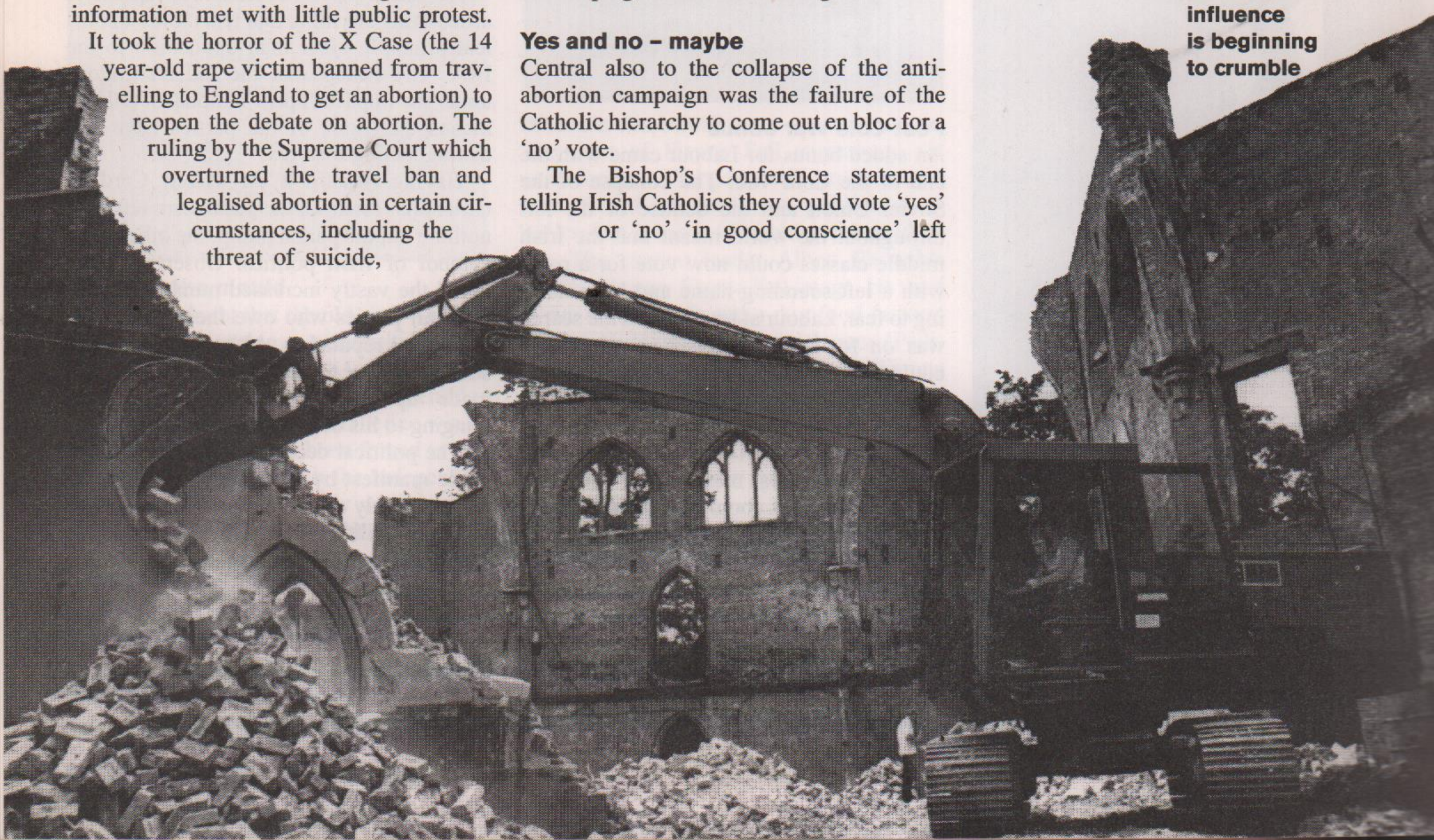
Widespread confusion attended the votes on abortion. However, the intentions of the electorate were quite clear on the issues of travel and information. A large majority of Irish people do not want to incarcerate women in Ireland to carry unwanted pregnancies. A large majority also don't want women to travel in fear and ignorance to search out clinics in England.

The anti-abortionists' celebration of the Irish people's rejection of restricted abortion ignores the real trends in Irish society. All the parties (except Fianna Fail), the trades unions and women's organisations called for a 'no' vote on this referendum on the basis that it was too restrictive.

The traditional anti-abortion fundamentalists of SPUC are the lost voice of a thankfully dying Ireland, unable to accept that the cloistered, virginal Ireland they believed did once exist (it didn't) has gone forever.

The parties of the coalition that has emerged as the new government have both committed themselves to legislating for abortion rights in some form or another. It seems SPUC may well have had its day in Ireland, but the struggle for abortion rights and the debate about what kind of Ireland we really want is set to continue for some time to come.

The church's influence is beginning to crumble





Fiona Foster

THE REAL LESSON OF BLOODY SUNDAY

Last January a lot of us Irish Freedom Movement activists were in Derry for the 20th anniversary of Bloody Sunday. To the astonishment of the people of Derry, the anniversary prompted a series of newspaper articles and TV documentaries, in which a number of politicians and army officers admitted for the first time that the British army had opened fire on an unarmed crowd without provocation.

Justifiable homicide?

Since then calls for a new enquiry into Bloody Sunday have come from the most unlikely sources, most recently from Tory MP and New Consensus member Peter Bottomley.

So after years of telling the people of Derry – and the rest of us – that those civil rights demonstrators fired upon twenty-one years ago deserved what they got, the British seem to be edging towards admitting that Bloody Sunday may have been ... a mistake.

As it happens, *Irish Freedom* has noted a few times that the Brits are so confident these days that they can admit to 'mistakes' and get away with them. After all, they got away with admitting to framing the Birmingham Six, Guildford Four and others, without so much as one politician having to resign.

Over 20-plus years you could count on one hand the number of members of the British security forces charged with attacks on nationalists. But last year alone, you needed

more than one hand. There were charges against the killers of Tyrone student Kevin McGovern and Peter McBride from Belfast, and against a group of Paras who went on the rampage in nationalist Coalisland.

But there does seem to be an exception to this trend. The murder of Pearse Jordan in November was similar to those of Kevin McGovern and Peter McBride. He too was unarmed. He too was shot as he tried to get away from the security forces. But there was one crucial difference. Pearse Jordan was a member of the IRA.

The thing that makes me mad about a British establishment that can come close to apologising for Bloody Sunday while gloating over the execution of young Pearse is that for me Bloody Sunday produced people like Pearse.

Turning point

Bloody Sunday was a turning point in the struggle by Northern Ireland's Catholics for justice and equal rights. It was the point at which large numbers of them decided enough was enough. Their non-violent campaign had been met with beatings, with internment without trial. Now it was being met with cold-blooded mass murder.

A section of the civil rights movement learned that day – brutally and conclusively – that if nationalists could not get equality under British rule then they would have to fight British rule. The British had made it pretty obvious that that fight would have to be a violent one.

The IRA came from the

nationalist community and enjoyed enormous popular support in that community after Bloody Sunday. But now Britain is dictating that some nationalist deaths are worth apologising for and some are not.

Deadly warning

Britain's reasons are clear enough. When they feared an upsurge in support for the anti-imperialist struggle, it was necessary to target the entire nationalist community for repression. Bloody Sunday was no mistake, it was a warning to Northern Ireland's Catholics of what was to come if they continued to challenge British policies.

This approach meant ensuring that British propaganda during the '70s and '80s presented the IRA and the nationalist community as one and the same thing. Hence there were no charges, no apologies.

Now that the British feel out of danger from the anti-imperialist struggle, it has become more useful for them to differentiate between groups of nationalists.

Sadly it's not just British politicians and journalists who draw this distinction between innocent victims and those involved in the armed resistance, that emerged from Bloody Sunday.

What remains of the Irish solidarity scene in this country

now does little but organise the annual Bloody Sunday march. Reviving the memory of the Irish as innocent victims of repression has long been a central part of their approach to building popular support for the Irish cause. They have primarily campaigned around the Irish as victims, of torture, of discrimination, of plastic bullets, of strip-searching and so on.

In this scenario, Irish resistance often becomes an embarrassment. It's hard to win sympathy for the Irish as victims, when they are bombing the shopping malls of Britain and sometimes injuring and killing civilians. This has led groups on the left here to condemn IRA violence in Britain as an obstacle to their attempts to build public sympathy with the Irish cause.

It is this kind of approach which has allowed the British to get away with apologising for the deaths of Kevin McGovern and Peter McBride while congratulating themselves for the killing of Pearse Jordan.

The real message of Bloody Sunday

I'm all in favour of reviving the memory of Bloody Sunday. But not because I want the British to admit to it and apologise for it. I want to revive the real message of Bloody Sunday. The lesson that transformed the Irish people from victims into fighters: the lesson that polite appeals for justice and equality don't work and the lesson that the guilty ones in the Irish war are the men with suits sitting in Westminster.

Last October Turkish forces unleashed a wholesale bloodbath on 'Turkish' Kurds, targeting the guerrilla fighters of the Kurdistan Workers' Party (PKK). The Turks launched a three-pronged ground offensive with 5 000 special commandos and 15 000 ordinary troops, overrunning PKK bases in the mountains of north-east Iraq. This was backed up by daily air strikes. An estimated 1 056 PKK fighters are believed to have been killed.

To make matters worse, the Turks were aided in their mass slaughter by the peshmergas of the Kurdistan Democratic Party (KDP). They claimed a further 800 deaths,

other. The growth of Western authority in the Third World is typical of the post-Cold War order, but for the Kurds, on whose behalf the West claimed to be intervening in northern Iraq, it has meant fragmentation along the border lines of Turkey and Iraq.

Turncoats

The Turkish regime is at the forefront of brokering a Western-imposed settlement with the Kurds. They have successfully organised the Kurdish infighting. The Kurdistan Workers' Party (PKK) have sustained an armed guerrilla campaign against the Turkish state since 1984. But recently

Barzani's collusion with the West reached new heights in October, when the Turkish army was sent over the border to massacre the PKK. Barzani protested that this was unnecessary as his peshmergas had already contained them. After the massacre, with their backs to the wall, the PKK accepted Barzani's offer to become a 'political force' within the Kurdish parliament. In return for this privilege they suspended their armed struggle against the Turkish security forces in the border regions.

The hangman's rope

There is no prospect that the West will grant the Kurdish people full self-determination. Kurdistan straddles Iraq, Syria, Iran, Turkey, and Armenia. To dismantle the borders of these states would undermine the legitimacy of all the borders in the Middle East artificially imposed by the West.

The 'safe havens' debacle and the recent massacre shows what kind of 'support' the West can offer the Kurds. When Douglas Hurd, Britain's foreign secretary, talks about the UN adopting an 'imperial role' and 'putting blue on the map', it is a code for more Western barbarism. The kind of support we should give to the Kurds is for nothing less than self-determination, against every Western-imposed border in the Middle East.

Chris Sweeney lifts the shroud of mystery hanging over the recent massacre of Kurds in northern Iraq

TURKISH TURKEY-SHOOT

with another 460 guerrillas captured. Clearly, this was a concerted attempt to wipe out the PKK as a military threat, once and for all.

Given the scale of the massacre, an outcry might have been expected. But Turkey is a Nato ally. So it was barely discussed in the Western press. Only two years ago John Major launched his 'safe havens' initiative, supposedly to save the Kurds from the clutches of Saddam Hussein. Today John Major is silent.

Four months after the West's victory in the Gulf war, the British deputy minister for foreign affairs announced that 'The British government has long supported and will continue to support the legitimate rights of the Kurdish peoples to self-expression within existing international boundaries.'

Talking-shop

Does British support for 'Kurdish rights' mean support for a Kurdish state? British politicians have pledged support for the so-called Kurdish parliament. However, their silence over the massacre indicates the parliament is merely a talking-shop designed to contain Kurdish aspirations for full independence. In fact, full Kurdish national self-determination is not and never was on the West's agenda. The massacre is a sign of the degradation of this struggle as Kurd fights Kurd.

Why has the Kurdish struggle suffered such a setback? The defeat of Iraq in the Gulf war might be seen as advantageous for the Kurds, given Saddam Hussein's record of bloody assaults upon Iraqi Kurds. But the enhanced authority of the West in the region has proved a disaster for the Kurds. It has strengthened the hand of the Turkish regime, a Western ally in the war, on the one hand, and bound the leadership of the Kurds in Iraq closer to the West on the

they have been forced to fight Iraqi Kurds collaborating with the Turkish security forces. Under pressure from the West and eager to stitch up a deal, peshmergas under Masoud Barzani's Kurdistan Democratic Party (KDP) were drawn into the confrontation with the PKK.



Built in America, bought by Turkey, killing Kurds, on behalf of the West



Stan Woods takes up Bill Clinton's Irish credentials

THE SPECIAL RELATIONSHIP

We want an end to the collusion between [British] security forces and the Protestant paramilitary groups.' This line was contained in a letter from the then presidential candidate, Bill Clinton, to Connecticut congressman Bruce Morrison of 'Irish Americans for Clinton' on 23 October 1992.

By 3 November the Republican administration was openly despised by a large majority of the US electorate. So Clinton won easily. Now, a lot of people are holding their breath, waiting for 'change'.

Among them are partisans of the Irish liberation struggle. There is considerable optimism among the emigre Irish that Clinton will 'give the Brits a kick in the arse'. Much of this hope is based on the letter quoted above. But how realistic is it? Let's take a quick look at the last time a Southern Democrat moved to the White House.

Jimmy Carter's 1976 campaign platform went much further than Clinton's letter. Carter incorporated a plank which called for the 'eventual reunification of Ireland'.

The peanut farmer was even photographed wearing an 'England Get Out of Ireland' button. Hopes were running high that the British occupation might even end, under pressure from the White House. But that's not exactly what Jimmy had in mind.

On 30 August 1977, the Carter administration issued a statement saying it was prepared to push for massive US investment in Northern Ireland, once hostilities had ended and a political settlement had been agreed. No details were forthcoming on what kind of political settlement. The campaign plank of a 'united Ireland' was nowhere to be seen.

This venture did not amount to anything. The constitutional nationalists were willing to bite the bullet, but the Loyalists were unwilling to give the slightest concession to the Catholic working class population. Her Majesty's Labour Party, then in power, were disturbed enough to fly defence secretary Roy Mason across the Atlantic on an eight-day anti-IRA speaking tour. Some increased investment did occur, most notably in the construction of John DeLorean's luxury car factory. Here Catholics were hired in large numbers, but relegated to the unskilled jobs.

Irish-American organisations were sorely disappointed by Carter's post-election reversal on unification and the failure of

his economic enterprise. To their credit, Sinn Féin saw through the Carter initiative from the word go, labelling the plan as 'counter-insurgency' and arguing that the Irish war could not be solved 'by bribes'.

The Democratic Party's national committee tried to salvage some credibility among opponents of British rule. They passed a policy resolution calling on Carter to 'urge the British government to first end the bloodshed and then to end the occupation of the territory of Northern Ireland by foreign troops'.

So contemptuous was Carter of this gesture that he did not even bother to respond. The Anglo-American alliance continued unimpeded. The SAS continued to train with the US Green Berets at Fort Bragg, North Carolina. The CIA worked hand in glove with the British intelligence agencies to intercept IRA and INLA arms shipments. So much for Jimmy Carter, the 'friend of Ireland'.

But things might be different now, some object. Like how?

Clinton seems just as keen to uphold imperialist intervention around the world as his predecessors

Judging from Clinton's bellicose campaign statements calling for an 'end to Saddam', this does not appear to be likely. Clinton seems just as keen as his predecessors to uphold imperialist intervention around the world. The American-backed UN resolution calling for a Serbian 'no-fly zone' over Bosnia is a case in point. Bush may have dreamt it up, but only after Clinton berated him for inactivity on the issue, and it will be Clinton that sees it through. As per usual, British diplomatic and military support would be invaluable.

Granted, Clinton just might decide on some sort of 'humanitarian' gesture towards the Irish. He may take a softer stance on extradition cases like those of Jimmy Smyth and Kevin Artt. And good luck to Smyth's defense attorneys in their attempt to utilise Clinton's rhetoric to their client's benefit. They are going to need it.

But to paraphrase the socialist anthem, the Internationale, don't look to 'condescending saviours' to put an end to the Anglo-American special relationship. It just won't happen.

In November the IFM was invited to contribute to a conference in Glasgow entitled 'The Media and the New World Order'. Here we reprint the speech given by Fiona Foster about the changes in the media coverage of Ireland since the end of the Cold War

TRIBAL OR WAR OF

First I'd like to read you some extracts from a lengthy feature which appeared in the *Guardian's* Saturday supplement in December 1991. The feature, called 'Kill thy Neighbour' was written by Kevin Toolis and was basically a profile of a small area in Tyrone, Northern Ireland, where 23 people have been shot dead in just 3 years.

I've chosen this article for two reasons. Firstly, because people keep telling me that the *Guardian* is less likely than other papers to swallow British propaganda on Ireland. Secondly, because I actually think this article is a classic example of British propaganda on the Irish war in the form it has taken since the end of the Cold War. The article goes like this:

'23 men have died in a bitter wave of assassination and retaliation that could easily grace the dark annals of the Sicilian mafia.... Part of this story is about the war between the Protestant-dominated security forces and the IRA, but part is about something deeper, something more personal. This is the story of an ancient blood feud. In other countries history happens and then dies.... But in Ireland history does not die. Like a vampire the crime of dispossession of the plantation returns from the grave to prey upon the living and demand revenge from the dead.'

Where are the British?

Powerful stuff! Throughout this evocative and well-written study of the conflict in Ireland there is absolutely no mention of the British – not one. Even the British security forces occupying the Six Counties are described as 'Protestant-dominated security forces'. The conflict is clearly presented as one between two irrational religious tribes intent on revenge for crimes committed centuries ago. They are equally sadistic, equally psychopathic: 'In Tyrone the UVF and the IRA are mirror images of each other. They are the

local thugs turned community warriors.'

So for Toolis the conflict is nothing to do with Britain and nothing to do with present-day grievances. The only reason the 'troubles' continue today is the long memories pertaining to this strange breed of people.

Not unique

Far from being 'good coverage on Ireland' this *Guardian* feature is entirely characteristic of the British media's enthusiastic reproduction of Britain's new propaganda line on the Irish war. Though many aspects of British media coverage of the Irish war remain unchanged, there has been a fundamental shift since the end of the Cold War. During the eighties the media argued that the central conflict in Northern Ireland was between the IRA – who were considered the root of the conflict – and the British government, forced to stay in Ireland to defeat the IRA and defend the right of the majority Protestant community to remain British. Politicians and the media were forced to react to the electoral growth of Sinn Fein through the eighties with a steady stream of stories criminalising and demonising Irish republicans. Anything showing the republican movement in a sympathetic light was censored or banned. BBC workers staged a one-day strike when a documentary showing leading republican Martin McGuinness as an articulate, compassionate individual was banned. In 1989 the government introduced a total broadcast ban on Sinn Fein and its supporters.

But despite repressive levels of censorship, one thing came through – the real conflict was one between the IRA on one side and the British, the Loyalists and the constitutional nationalists on the other side.

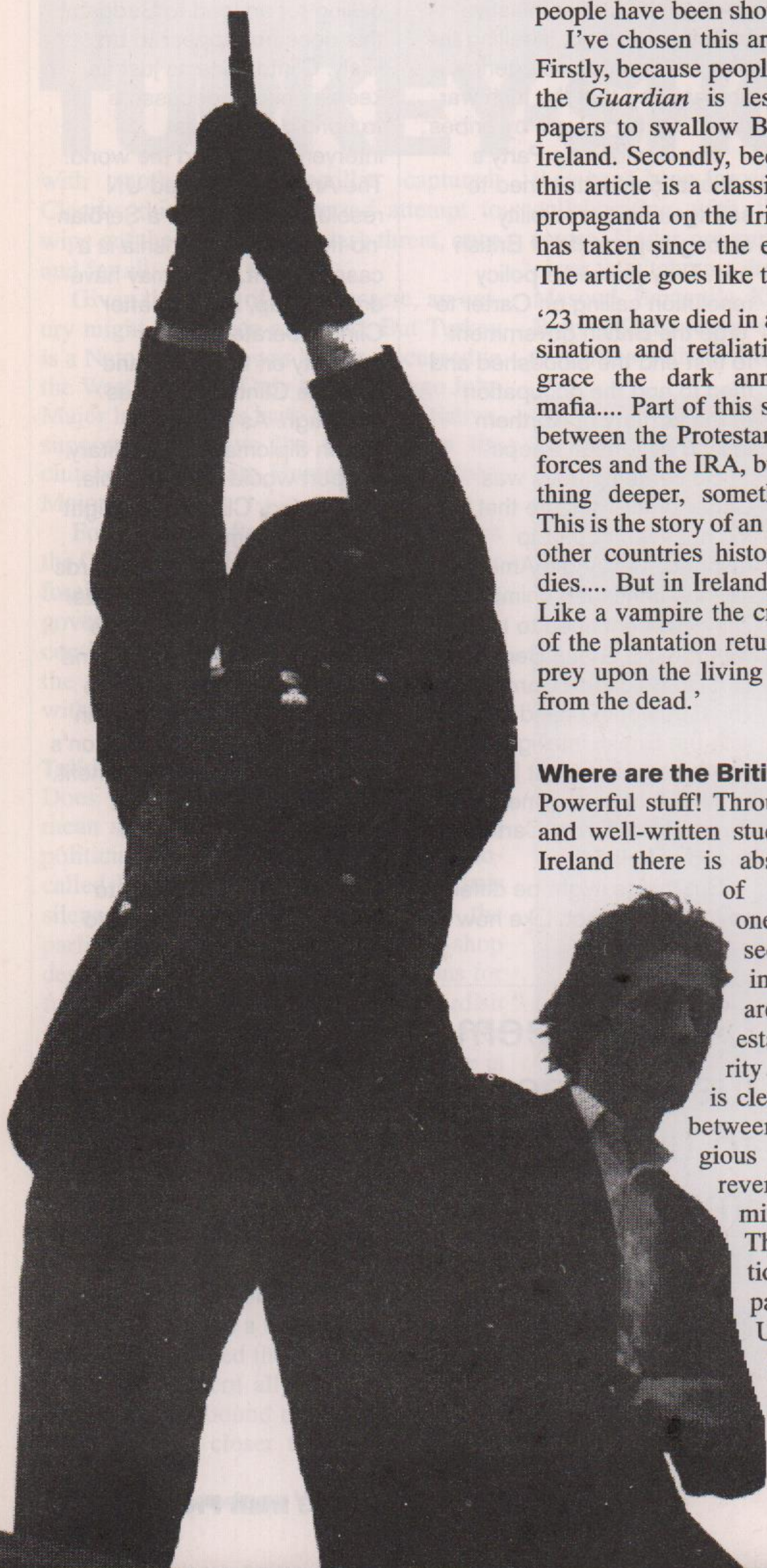
This fundamental conflict has now been obscured. People outside Northern Ireland increasingly see the conflict as one between two religious groups who, were it not for British troops, would massacre each other.

So how has Britain been able to extricate itself from being seen as one side of the conflict in Ireland?

The strategy of marginalising the anti-imperialist struggle received an unprecedented boost with the collapse of Eastern Europe and the end of the Cold War.

With the fall of Stalinism came the collapse of a number of national liberation

For and against British rule – the real combatants in Ireland



WARFARE NATIONAL LIBERATION

struggles that had inspired Irish republicans. Groups like the FMLN in El Salvador and the ANC in South Africa laid down their arms and agreed to compromise with their former enemies. These changes have had the combined effect of demoralising Irish republicans while boosting the confidence of British imperialism.

Less fearful of any growth in popular support for the Irish struggle, the British are now free to stand back and present their involvement in Ireland in a way which helps them reduce the impact of the Irish war in British politics even further.

So Britain is no longer in Ireland to defeat the IRA, but rather it is forced to stay in Ireland as a neutral arbiter between two warring sides that are just as bad as each other. Britain is no longer a party to the conflict, but a piggy-in-the-middle despairing at the antiquated tribal enmities that compel them to keep a peace-keeping force there to prevent a bloodbath.

The British media have completely gone along with this new presentation of Britain's role. Their uncritical acceptance of this change was put on display in their reaction to the recent announcement by the British government that it was to ban the Ulster Defence Association (UDA).

Within Northern Ireland the UDA ban was seen as a joke – not least by the UDA who put a 'Business As Usual' sign in the window of their Belfast office. The joke was a little more sick for Northern Ireland's Catholic community who are well aware that the UDA's success rate in murdering Catholics comes from the close relationship it has always enjoyed with its allies in the British security forces.

But British journalists, well aware of the evidence of collusion between loyalist death squads and the occupying forces, did not greet Patrick Mayhew's announcement with any cynicism or even questioning. Instead they welcomed the move as more evidence of Britain's new determination to be completely neutral between the two sets of 'extremists'. The reaction of Owen Bowcott of the *Guardian* was typical:

'On taking up the security portfolio at Stormont after the election, Michael Mates at first seemed to reflect the view that the IRA is the real problem and Loyalist violence a subsidiary matter. That is now evidently no longer the case.'

British journalists accepted that Patrick Mayhew decided to ban the UDA after a review he commissioned produced evidence that the UDA's new leadership had started to murder innocent Catholics. Not one journalist questioned this incredible statement, even though it came just months after it emerged at the Nelson trial that Brian Nelson was paid £200 a week by British army intelligence to work within a Loyalist death squad for several years. Nelson, who was chief intelligence officer for the UDA, told the court that his British army handlers were fully aware of his involvement in the murder of Catholics and very rarely acted to prevent the killings.

Modern not ancient history

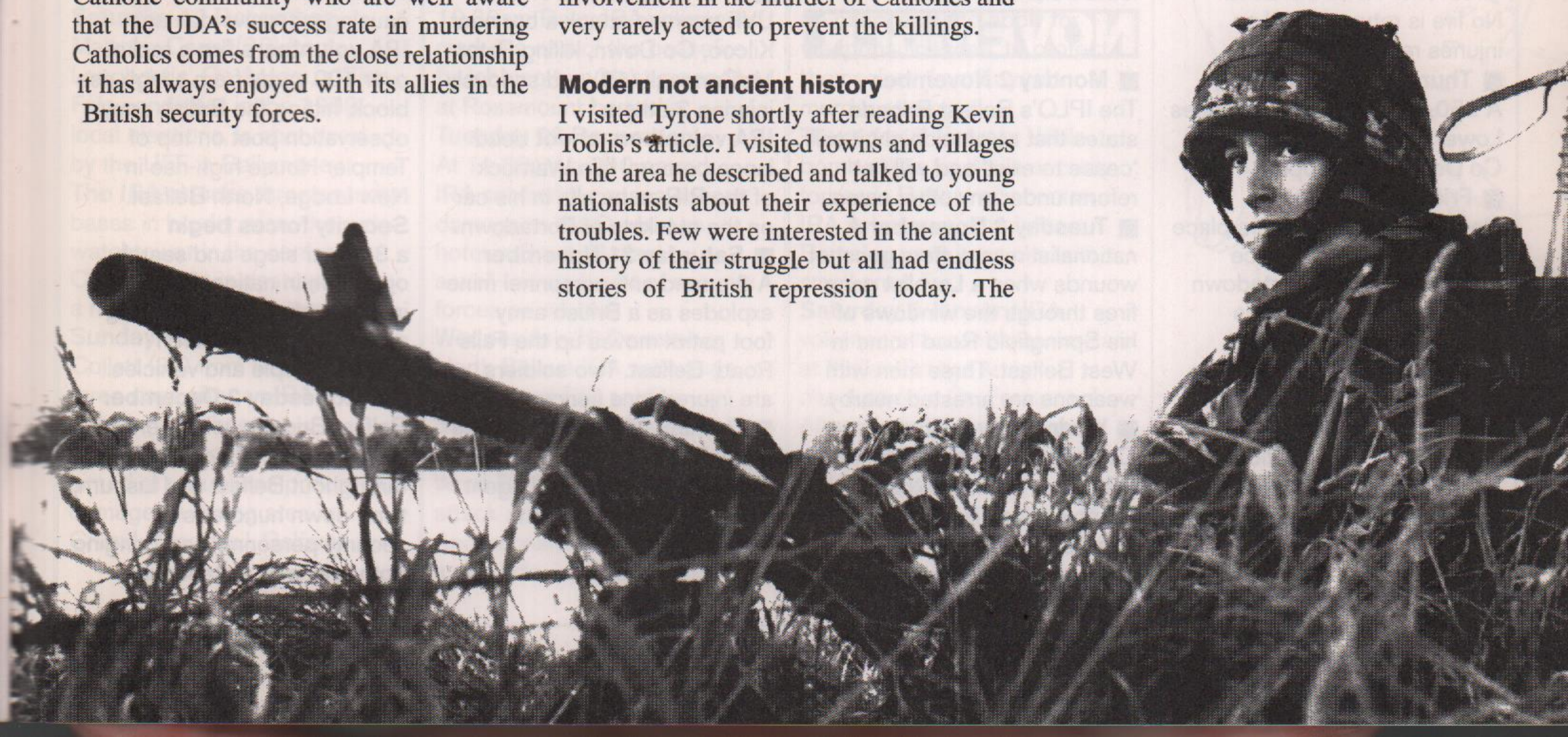
I visited Tyrone shortly after reading Kevin Toolis's article. I visited towns and villages in the area he described and talked to young nationalists about their experience of the troubles. Few were interested in the ancient history of their struggle but all had endless stories of British repression today. The

night they were beaten by the UDR, the night they were dragged into the British army barracks, the night they were visited by the RUC and told that their personal details were now in the hands of Loyalist death squads.

Repeatedly I asked people why they saw local Protestants as their enemies and repeatedly I was disabused of this. 'We've got no problem with our Protestant neighbours', said 20 year-old Feargal, 'our enemies are the British security forces, who target every one of us for harassment from the age of 10, simply because we refuse to accept that Tyrone belongs to Britain'.

The absence of any anti-imperialist movement in this country has allowed the British media to get away with representing Britain's role in Ireland as entirely neutral, as entirely even-handed between two religious tribes.

The fundamental conflict in Ireland today remains that between those who support Britain's right to rule Northern Ireland and those who continue to resist British rule. Developments in world politics have allowed the British media to obscure this reality more than ever before. There is no room in the British media for the views of Feargal and his friends – not even in the Saturday supplement of the *Guardian*.



WAR DIARY

COMPILED BY AUSTIN CAMERON

OCTOBER

■ **Tuesday 20 October**
Robert Irvine (40), RIR sergeant and ex-RUC member is shot dead by the IRA in Rasharkin, Co Antrim.

■ **Wednesday 21 October**
At 4.40pm, an IRA bomb explodes on the Network South East rail line near Silver Street station, north London, severely disrupting Liverpool Street services. The IRA states that the police had again failed to act on their warning.

An IRA bomb explodes at Edmonton BR station in north London, seriously disrupting rail traffic. A second explosion on the underground between South Harrow and Rayners Lane adds to the chaos.

An IRA statement says that British Transport police denied a security alert for a full 40 minutes after the warning.

A third device explodes at an army barracks in Hammersmith, injuring 3 TA personnel.

IRA volunteers fire 20 rounds at builders working on Belfast's Grosvenor Road barracks. No fire is returned and no injuries reported.

■ **Thursday 22 October**
A 250-pound bomb devastates Lower Main Street in Bangor, Co Down at 10.40pm.

■ **Friday 23 October**
North Armagh volunteers place a 2-pound Semtex device under the car of a Portadown UVF leader. The bomb is spotted and later defused.

■ **Sunday 25 October**
An IRA bomb explodes at Morpeth Mansions (near London's Victoria Station), home of former Northern Ireland secretary, Jim Prior.

■ **Wednesday 28 October** the IRA's South Armagh Brigade seriously injures a soldier in a bomb attack on a large army patrol in the Glasdrummond area outside Crossmaglen.

■ **Thursday 29 October**
A 400-pound IRA van bomb disintegrates the blast-wall of Glengormley RUC barracks in North Belfast, injuring 2 RUC members.

■ **Friday 30 October** An IRA bomb in a mini-cab explodes at the gates of Downing Street at 9pm. Delivered by the driver, the bomb is detonated when he is clear of his car. This, the 15th IRA bomb in London this month, marks Commander George Churchill-Coleman's last day as head of the anti-terrorist squad.

■ **Saturday 31 October** Over 100 IRA volunteers in Belfast begin a 4-day operation, targeting a number of known drug-pushers across Belfast, one of whom, IPLO member Sammy Ward, is shot dead in the Short Strand. Others are shot and wounded, or told to leave Ireland for good.

NOVEMBER

■ **Monday 2 November**
The IPLO's Belfast Brigade states that as of midnight it will 'cease to exist' and will not reform under any other name.

■ **Tuesday 3 November** A nationalist man suffers gunshot wounds when a Loyalist gang fires through the windows of his Springfield Road home in West Belfast. Three men with weapons are arrested nearby.

■ **Wednesday 4 November**
Catholic Michael Kilbride, from the Lower Ormeau Road in South Belfast, is shot and killed by a UDA gunman while visiting his parents in Fernwood Street, East Belfast.

■ **Thursday 5 November** IRA volunteers carry a bomb into the Bank of Ireland in Market Street, Downpatrick, Co Down. Staff have 30 minutes to clear the bank. The explosion causes substantial damage.

■ **Friday 6 November**
Catholic security guard John McManus (51) is shot in the back and stomach by a Loyalist death squad outside Mater Hospital, North Belfast.

■ **Monday 9 November**
IRA volunteers attack a joint army/RUC mobile patrol in Ballymurphy, West Belfast. Two shoulder-launched rockets hit an RUC armoured personnel carrier (APC). Four members of the RUC's DMSU are injured and 3 soldiers hit by shrapnel.

■ **Friday 13 November**
A 500-pound van-bomb explodes in the Diamond area of Coleraine at 11pm, devastating much of the street.

During an attack on a large army/RUC foot patrol close to Belcoo barracks, an IRA sniper of the Fermanagh Brigade shoots dead an RUC member.

■ **Saturday 14 November**
IRA volunteers abandon a massive van bomb in Stoke Newington, London after being stopped by police. One officer is shot and seriously wounded.

■ **Sunday 15 November**
A one-tonne IRA van-bomb in London's Canary Wharf is discovered and defused.

Two UDA members attack Murray's bookies in Oldpark Road, North Belfast, with a machine gun and a grenade, killing 3 and injuring many.

■ **Thursday 19 November**
UVF gunmen attack a bar near Kilcoo, Co Down, killing Peter McCormack (42) and seriously injuring 3 others.

IRA volunteers shoot dead lance corporal Iain Warnock of the RIR as he sits in his car on the outskirts of Portadown.

■ **Saturday 21 November**
A 2-pound anti-personnel mine explodes as a British army foot patrol moves up the Falls Road, Belfast. Two soldiers are injured, one seriously.

■ **Sunday 22 November** The Derry IRA executes informer Gerry Holmes – a paid agent for the RUC since 1981.

■ **Tuesday 24 November** IRA volunteers lob 2 blast grenades at an army/RUC foot patrol leaving Grosvenor Rd barracks in Belfast. An RUC man is injured as his APC overturns on its way to the scene.

■ **Wednesday 25 November**
Unarmed IRA volunteer Pearse Jordan (22) is shot in the back and killed by an RUC shoot-to-kill squad on the Falls Road.

■ **Sunday 29 November** IRA volunteers of the North Armagh Brigade position a one-tonne bomb close to Drumadd army barracks in Hamiltonsbawn Road. After 6 hours, the volunteers manage to lure out a foot patrol, but it goes down a different road. Clearing the area, the volunteers then detonate the mine.

■ **Monday 30 November**
While placing a 2-pound Semtex mine in Pomeroy, Co Tyrone, 2 IRA volunteers notice an army undercover team taking up positions nearby. Realising they are to be victims of a shoot-to-kill operation, the volunteers withdraw to safety.

DECEMBER

■ **Tuesday 1 December**
IRA volunteers place a half-pound Semtex bomb on the stairs of commercial premises in Ann Street, Belfast before phoning a 25-minute warning. The device explodes early as offices are being cleared, causing several minor injuries. The IRA state that the device must have been tampered with.

IRA volunteers leave a small bomb in Lowe's car showroom on Ormeau Avenue, Belfast, causing extensive damage.

IRA volunteers fire a rocket over 100 yards from a high-rise block, hitting the British army observation post on top of Templer House high-rise in New Lodge, North Belfast.

Security forces begin a 36-hour siege and search operation in nationalist areas in Derry, effectively imposing a curfew as they search homes, people and vehicles.

■ **Wednesday 2 December**
Belfast Brigade volunteers position over 40 hoax bombs throughout Belfast and Lisburn, tying down hundreds of security personnel and bringing both towns to a standstill.

■ Thursday 3 December

With armed roadblocks in London after earlier IRA operations, volunteers target Manchester city centre with 2 bombs. Police fail to react quickly to IRA warnings. The first, just off Deansgate, causes extensive damage and several injuries. The second explodes in Cateaton Street with similar results. Armed roadblocks are set up in Manchester.

■ Monday 7 December

Tyrone volunteers fire on Lisanelly barracks in Omagh. No return of fire by the army.

Tyrone volunteers position a 150-pound bomb outside Ballygawley barracks. Mounted on a tractor and trailer, it fails to go off, but forces the evacuation of the base.

■ Wednesday 9 December

Belfast Brigade volunteers leave 2 bombs in the multi-storey car park at the Victoria Centre, causing considerable damage to nearby property.

Two Belfast IRA volunteers carry a bomb into the CSC Electronics building on Ormeau Road, give a warning, then leave. As army technical officers approach, the device explodes causing slight structural damage.

An IRA bomb goes off near Woodside Park tube station in North London. No one is hurt.

■ Thursday 10 December

Two IRA bombs explode outside Wood Green shopping centre in London, slightly injuring 10 people, including 4 police officers. Warnings are given, but police fail to clear the area completely.

Saturday 12 December

Malachy Carey (36) from Loughguile, Co Antrim, a Sinn Fein candidate in the 1989 local elections, is shot dead by the UFF in Ballymoney.

The IRA attacks three security bases in border area; the army watchtower in the centre of Crossmaglen is destroyed by a new IRA flamethrower.

Sunday 13 December John Collett (37) from Derry dies three days after an IRA punishment shooting.

A Loyalist rocket attack, aimed at republican prisoners, damages a dining area in Crumlin Road jail, Belfast.

Shots are fired at the home of a Sinn Fein worker in Belfast's New Lodge.

Wednesday 16 December

Northern Ireland secretary Sir Patrick Mayhew announces that, were the IRA to abandon the armed struggle, the republican movement would be included in talks.

Two IRA bombs explode in Oxford St, London, slightly injuring four people.

Friday 18 December

IRA volunteers, South Armagh Brigade, launch five mortar bombs into Markethill army barracks, causing widespread damage.

Sunday 20 December

Five UVF killers shoot dead nationalist Martin Lavery (40) in his Crumlin Road, Belfast, home. The victim was not in the republican movement.

Monday 21 December

IRA volunteers again breach Belfast's 'ring of steel', to leave a car bomb in Wellington Place.

Tuesday 22 December

Soldiers at the Chapel Street base in Cookstown, Co Tyrone, find a 2-pound lump of Semtex inside a box of chocolates, donated by a woman IRA volunteer 48 hours earlier. The firing mechanism fails to detonate the device.

Wednesday 23 December

The IRA announces a 72-hour ceasefire from midnight.

Thursday 24 December

Half an hour after the IRA ceasefire begins, INLA fires several rounds at Woodburn barracks in West Belfast.

Sunday 27 December

At 12.30am Derry IRA volunteers mark the end of the ceasefire by lobbing two blast grenades at Rosemount barracks.

Tuesday 29 December

At 11.20pm a 250-pound IRA car-bomb causes serious damage to the Drumkeen hotel in South Belfast – a well-known haunt of security forces personnel.

Wednesday 30 December

North Belfast IRA volunteers shoot dead RIR soldier Stephen Waller, on leave from Cyprus.

West Belfast volunteers attack an army foot patrol on Andersonstown Road with a grenade, injuring one soldier.

Thursday 31 December UDA attack on a bookies in Flax Street, Ardoyne, at 3.30pm thwarted by punters' prompt action. The Loyalist gang flees in a car, firing on people in Flax Street; no-one is hit.

1993

JANUARY

Friday 1 January Two men, one Catholic and one Protestant are shot in the back and stomach by the Red Hand Commandos in Manor Street, North Belfast.

Saturday 2 January Several Paras are injured when IRA volunteers lob a blast grenade at their foot patrol in Duncairn Gardens, North Belfast.

Sunday 3 January Two UDA killers fire into the North Belfast home of a nationalist taxi driver, after failing to break in the front door. No-one is injured in the attack.

A UVF deathsquad enters Patrick Shields' grocery store in Lisnaskeer, Co Tyrone and shoots dead Patrick and his son Diarmuid, and injures another son, Davog. Mrs Shields and two other children escape injury by barricading themselves in the living room.

Tuesday 5 January IRA blast incendiaries damage shops in Oxford Street, London.

Three RIR soldiers are injured by a 10-pound IRA bomb in Adelaide Street, Belfast.

Wednesday 6 January IRA volunteers place two 5-pound bombs inside the perimeter of Belfast Harbour Airport.

Bernadette McAliskey calls on nationalists to apply for weapons licences, to protect themselves from Loyalist murder attempts.

Thursday 7 January While bomb alerts tie down security forces in Belfast city centre, IRA volunteers attack New Barnsley army barracks with small-arms fire.

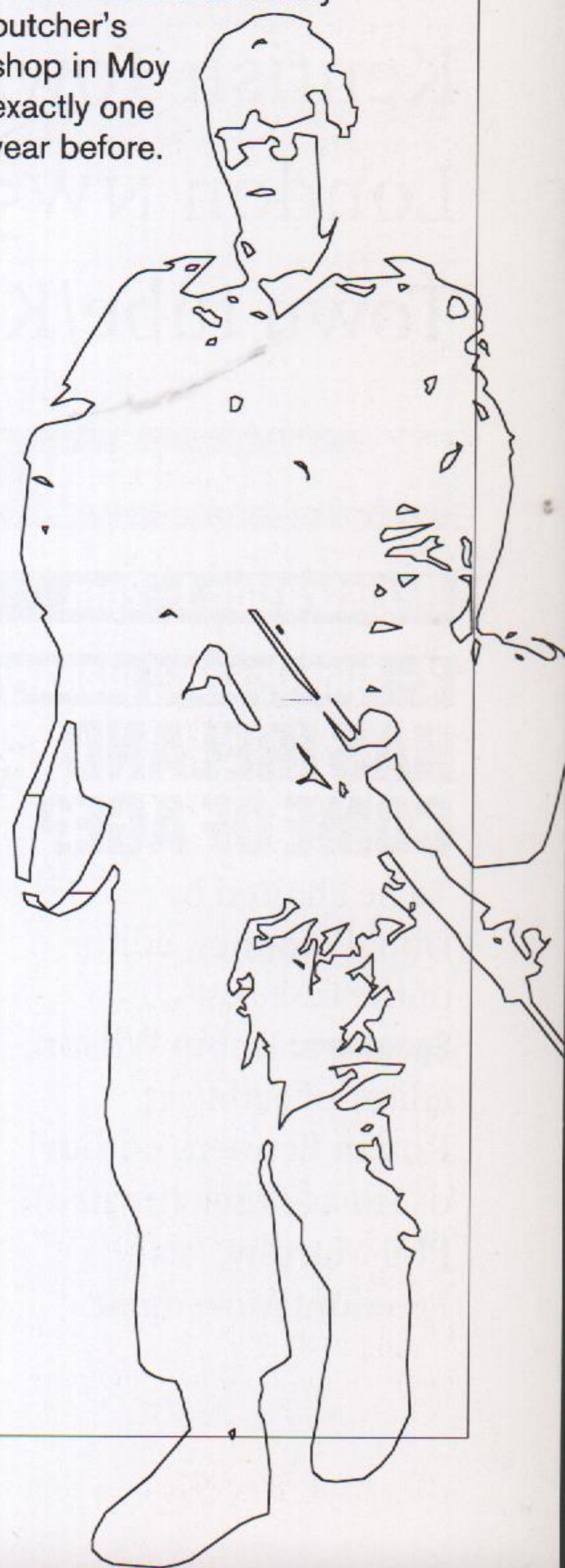
Saturday 9 January IRA volunteers launch three mortars at Mullan Bridge army checkpoint in Co Fermanagh. After two explode on target, an army helicopter responds, but is forced down by machine-gun fire from the ASU.

Sunday 10 January IRA volunteers place an anti-personnel device in College Street, Belfast city centre. They detonate the device as security forces approach.

A 10-pound bomb destroys the car of an RUC detective in North Belfast.

Monday 11 January Just before 7.00pm IRA volunteers fire a rocket at an RUC armoured car outside Donegall Pass barracks. The rocket narrowly misses its target, exploding against the barracks' blast wall.

IRA volunteers shoot dead UVF organiser Matthew John Boyd in his car on the Donaghmore Road, Co Tyrone. Boyd, said the IRA, had been involved in murdering nationalists since the seventies, and had recently used a repair business to gain access to nationalist homes and premises, collecting information to organise killings. He had visited Patrick Shields' shop before his murder, as well as that of Kevin and John McKearney, who were murdered in their family butcher's shop in Moy exactly one year before.





HAS IRELAND COME OF AGE?

A day of discussion and debate on modern Ireland

Event supported by: University of North London Irish Studies Centre, Fortnight magazine (Belfast), Irish Post, Irish Freedom Movement, UNL Students Union, University of East London Irish Society

VENUE University of North London,
Kentish Town site, Prince of Wales Road,
London NW5. **TRANSPORT** Kentish
Town tube/Kentish Town West BR

Wednesday 24 February 1993

Registration 1–2pm

2–4pm Opening plenary

HAS IRELAND COME OF AGE?

To be chaired by
Donal Mooney, editor
of the Irish Post

Speakers: Robin Wilson,
editor of Fortnight;
Ronan Bennett, author
of *Second Prison* (invited);
Phil Murphy, Irish
Freedom Movement

4.30–6pm Workshops

A: REVISING THE IMPACT OF PARTITION ON IRISH POLITICS — A DEBATE

Speakers: Austen Morgan,
New Consensus,
author of *Labour &
Partition* versus
Brendan Bradshaw,
anti-revisionist historian,
Queen's College
Cambridge

4.30–6pm Workshops

B: WHAT IS IRISH REVISIONISM?

Discussion led by Mary
Harris of the UNL Irish
Studies Centre and
Mark Reilly, editor of
the *Irish War Handbook*

7.30pm Debate

UNITED IRELAND — AN OLD-FASHIONED DREAM?

Speakers: Brian Walker,
senior lecturer, Institute
of Irish Studies at
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The idea of a 32-County Ireland is increasingly being presented as an out-of-date aspiration. What about the Protestants? Aren't religious feuds a medieval throwback? Would British withdrawal lead to the fragmentation of Ireland along ethnic lines, as we are witnessing in the Balkans? Or is the fight for Irish freedom even more relevant in 1993, when imperialism seems to have acquired a greater than ever moral authority and Western military intervention all over the world is the order of the day?