

UNIVERSITÀ DEGLI STUDI DI NAPOLI "FEDERICO II"

FACOLTÀ DI SCIENZE POLITICHE

DIPARTIMENTO DI SCIENZE STATISTICHE SEZIONE LINGUISTICA

SEDE CONSORZIATA: UNIVERSITÀ DEGLI STUDI DI BOLOGNA

DOTTORATO DI RICERCA IN LINGUA INGLESE PER SCOPI SPECIALI

CICLO XVII

TESI DI DOTTORATO

The Language of Conflict in Northern Ireland: Gerry Adams vs. Ian Paisley

DOTTORANDA

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ANNO ACCADEMICO 2004/2005

[Conflitto, Irlanda, Discorso]

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Acknowledgments

I would like to thank the following people whose help proved fundamental for collecting the material for this work and for better understanding Northern Ireland's complicated socio-politics:

- Dr Kris Brown at Linen Hall Library, Belfast, Northern Ireland;
- Ms Joanne McCloskey at Belfast Central Library, Northern Ireland;
- Mr Tom Hartley, Sinn Féin Belfast City Councillor, Northern Ireland;
- Rev Dr Paisley's DUP office staff in Belfast, Northern Ireland.

I am especially indebted to my Irish Gaelic language consultants:

- My long-time friend Kathleen O'Connor from Dublin, Éire;
- Edelle O'Flaherty at WSI1, Milan, Italy;
- The following people at IrishGaelicTranslator.com:
 - o Breandán Mac An Bhaird;
 - o Conor McLaughlin;
 - o Audrey Nickel;
 - o Olchobhar Ó Greanáin;
 - o Jim Smith.

On a personal note, I am particularly grateful to my parents, to my friend Lele for his unparalleled support ("deadlines are the spice of life"), to the staff at "The Donkey and the Cats", Milan.

To Forgiveness

Chapter 1: Historical and political background

§ 1.1 - A brief chronology of the Northern Irish conflict

Ever since the occupation of Ireland by the Plantagenet king Henry II in 1172, the political histories of Ireland and Britain have been inseparably interwoven. The fight for freedom, on the one hand, and the fight for complete conquest, on the other, have been going on uninterruptedly for centuries, until the present day, when the conflict, after Ireland obtained its independence in 1949, has moved to Northern Ireland. Armed struggle and violence, as opposed to negotiations for peace, are Ulster's everyday talk.

Since this work deals with the Northern Irish conflict, which might not be known in detail to all readers, here is a concise timeline of the major events from the 20th century to the present.

- [**1845**: *Potato crops infested with a fungus bring about the Great Irish Famine; about one million people die of starvation, and as many flee the country to seek a better life elsewhere.*]

§ 1.1.2 – The road to Irish independence: the Anglo-Irish war

- **1916**: The famine crisis of the 1840s had strengthened the British rule on the island. Irish rebellion, already building among the poor and disaffected population, erupts on 24 April, Easter Monday, 1916, in Dublin. All the leaders of the rebellion, including the signatories of the Proclamation of the Irish Republic, are executed by the British government, except for Eamon De Valera who goes on to lead the then small and monarchic Sinn Féin (SF) party, making it into the most extremist republican party.
- **1918**: Sinn Féin obtains a groundbreaking victory in this year's general elections to the British Parliament.

- **1919, 21 January:** Sinn Féin's MPs elected to Westminster gather in Dublin and proclaim the Irish Republic, with the creation of an independent Irish Parliament (Dáil Éireann, or First Dáil). The Anglo-Irish war is thus started. The separatists are supported by the Irish Republican Army (IRA), which had already been behind the 1916 Rising.
- **1921:** A truce is reached, followed by the Anglo-Irish Treaty, establishing the status of British Dominion for Ireland.
- **1922:** Creation of the Irish Free State, comprising the 26 Southern counties, with dominion status. The six Northern counties opt out and remain part of the United Kingdom.
- **1922-1923:** Irish Civil war between the anti-Treaty faction (who wanted an Irish Republic) and the pro-Treaty faction (accepting the dominion status). The latter prove the winner.
- **1937:** The state of Éire is proclaimed by a new constitution.
- **1949:** The Republic of Ireland is born, independent after eight centuries from the United Kingdom. The Republic of Ireland remains neutral during WW2. Despite its efforts to achieve modernisation, the new independent state suffers from severe underdevelopment, which will not be able to shake off until the 1990s.

§ 1.1.2 – The conflict moves to Northern Ireland: the Troubles

- **1949-1969:** In Northern Ireland, the local government is virtually autonomous from London, and the Catholic and Republican minority suffer from discrimination in all aspect of public life. This gives rise to mounting discontent and public forms of protest.
- **1969:** On the 30 January, a civil rights demonstration in Derry, Northern Ireland, ends up in a massacre: fourteen people are shot dead by the British Army, without any evidence of the demonstrators having started or provoked the rioting by the use of arms. The day will be remembered as "Bloody Sunday", and it starts "The Troubles", a period of guerrilla or civil

war between the British Army, the police and paramilitary groups both Catholic and Protestant, among which the most important are the IRA and the Ulster Defence Association (UDA), respectively.

- **1969-1971:** Suspected paramilitaries are interned without trial.
- **1972:** Following the escalation of violence, the British Government abolishes the Parliament of Northern Ireland and assumes direct rule of the six-county region.
- **1973:** A Northern Ireland Assembly is elected.
- **1974:** Brief power-sharing experiment (known as the Sunningdale Agreement), whose failure brings back British direct rule until the mid-Nineties.
- **1974-1980:** The IRA starts a campaign of bombing and killings to pursue British withdrawal from the region.
- **1976-1981:** Prison protests by interned paramilitaries, namely the blanket protest, dirty protest and the hunger strike, the latter culminating in Bobby Sands' death in May 1981, followed by nine other republican inmates.
- **1985:** The Anglo-Irish Agreement sets up an agenda for regular meetings of British and Irish ministers to discuss Northern Ireland matters.
- **1985-1992:** The Anglo-Irish Agreement appears to dissatisfy both sides. Civil unrest and public protests become everyday experiences. Bombings and murders continue on both sides. No political solution seems to be in view.

§ 1.1.3 – The peace process: the road to peace?

- **1992-1993:** While IRA terror escalates, for the first time in more than twenty years, secret talks begin between the moderate and unionist Social Democratic and Liberal Party (SDLP), the President of the republican Sinn Féin Gerry Adams, and the British Government.
- **1993:** On 15 December, the British and Irish Prime Ministers make a 'joint declaration', offering Sinn Féin to enter the peace negotiations if IRA agrees to a ceasefire.

- **1994:** After perpetrating further violence in the first half of the year, on 31 August the IRA announces a ceasefire. So does the Combined Loyalist Military Command in October.
- **1994-1998:** Peace talks and killings continue, between an IRA ceasefire and an IRA bombing.
- **1998:** On 10 April Britain and Ireland reach and sign the Good Friday Agreement, endorsed by referenda held in both countries, the key points of which are: the principle that only the majority of Northern Ireland's citizens will be able to decide over Northern Ireland's constitutional future; the devolution of power to a local elected body, the Northern Ireland Assembly; the creation of a power-sharing Northern Ireland Executive; the amendment of Articles 2 and 3 of the Irish constitution, claiming territorial rights over Northern Ireland.
- **2000:** The Assembly is suspended from 11 February to 30 May due to disagreements over weapon decommissioning by the IRA.
- **2001:** The Assembly is further suspended on 10 August and 22 September over the same issue, then re-established.
- **2002:** On 14 October the Assembly is once again suspended. Power returns to London.
- **2003:** Talks continue in order to get the IRA to decommission. On 21 October London announces that the IRA decommissioning so far justifies a new Assembly election on 26 November. The election is won by the extremist unionist party DUP (first) and the extremist nationalist party Sinn Féin (second); the opposed views of the winning parties create an impasse. A review of the Good Friday Agreement by all parties involved starts. Talks proceed into 2004, without any practical results.
- **2004:** On 18 September, the Leeds Castle talks begin, which last three days, but lead to no agreement whatsoever. The search for a new power-sharing agreement, leading to the return of power to the Northern Ireland Assembly, continues. Ian Paisley goes south: he meets Éire's Prime Minister Bertie Ahern, for the first time officially acknowledging the Irish government.

- **2005:** A £ 26.5 million bank robbery and the killing of a Catholic man¹ in a pub row – both occurred in Belfast between December 2004 and January 2005, and both attributed to the IRA – alienate public opinion on both the Unionist *and* the Catholic side. Growing pressure on the Republican armed group, especially from former supporter SF and its leader Gerry Adams, leads to a crisis in the group, resulting in a definitive ceasefire and the complete decommission of its arms (September). Hopes for an agreement over the formation of a government grow stronger.

§ 1.2 – Gerry Adams: a short biography

Gerard “Gerry” Adams, born in Belfast on 6 October 1948, comes from a family who “had emerald green blood running through their veins”²: both his father’s and mother’s families had long traditions of republicanism and active fighting, with some of their members having been outstanding figures in the history of the Irish cause, like Dominic Adams, who “for a short period prior to the Second World War, [...] had held the highest rank in the IRA, that of chief of staff, a position his nephew was later to occupy, also briefly, but with much more effect”³. That Gerry Adams was to find himself in the same position in the IRA as his uncle Dominic is an allegation he has always denied⁴; his early embracing of the nationalist cause (as early as 1964, at only 16) is a fact: “The previous year Adams had witnessed the Divis Street riots and became actively involved in the conspirational world of republican politics. In 1965 [...] [he] left school and joined the IRA”⁵. Biographical information on Adams’ early career is difficult to find, as he lived most of his youth hiding or keeping a low profile, away from the media and the control of the British government. But, as he

¹ SF supporter Robert McCartney, killed outside Magennis’s bar in Belfast on 31st January 2005.

² Sharrock, David and Devenport, Mark (1997), *Man of War, Man of Peace: The Unauthorised Biography of Gerry Adams*, London: Macmillan, p. 27.

³ Moloney, Ed (2002), *A Secret History of the IRA*, London: Penguin Books, p. 38.

⁴ “But to this day - and it is one of the more unfathomable aspects of the man - he denies ever being in the IRA, even though it would have been impossible for him to have risen to the position he now holds if that were not the case.”, “Profile: Gerry Adams”, *BBC News*, http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/northern_ireland/1287262.stm

⁵ Sharrock (1997), p. 35.

himself acknowledges, his background almost guaranteed that he would become yet another relevant Adams in Irish nationalism: "Sinn Féin was a very small organization, then. It was also illegal. You could almost describe it as an incestuous association, made up as it was of members of a few spinal republican families"⁶ and "republican involvement tended to be an inherited rather than an acquired activity"⁷. "Predetermination" sounds perhaps too big a word; still, it seems appropriate to describe the social, political and certainly religious ties that bound Adams to *this* side of the barricade: wondering whether his parentage made him such a great nationalist leader, or whether he would have proved one, had he been born on the *other* side, is pure speculation.

After joining the Sinn Féin (and after those first eighteen months of pondering), Adams' story becomes similar to that of many other young republican activists: involvement in the party's local activities (his local area being Belfast's Ballymurphy), participation in the Troubles' outbreak in 1969, internment⁸ in 1971, with the accusation of belonging to the IRA⁹. Only, unlike most other young activists, he rapidly made his way up to the leadership of the party, to the point that, during the negotiations for the 1972 ceasefire, his release was indicated by the IRA as one of their essential conditions. On how he achieved this at only 24, Moloney says: he "was beginning to acquire a celebrity status"¹⁰, by keeping himself hidden, separating from the rankers, and allowing the use of a nickname, "the Great Man", that had been Michael Collins', and that advertised his outstanding republican ancestry¹¹. So, predestination might have been at work all along the way, but at this time Adams was ready to give it a hand by skilfully promoting his image despite his very little visibility. On the contrary, he exploited his forced secrecy to make himself a legendary figure in *both* his supporters' and opponents' eyes. By the time of his release, in 1972, his personal talent and shrewdness had begun to

⁶ Adams, Gerry (1986), *The Politics of Irish Freedom*, Dingle: Brandon Books, p. 4.

⁷ Moloney (2002), p.41.

⁸ Imprisoned without trial, which was made possible by that year's Special Powers Act.

⁹ "Ask Gerry Adams what his relationship is with the IRA and he will tell you that he does not have one", Sharrock (1997), p. 36.

¹⁰ Moloney (2002), p. 104.

¹¹ Interview with an ex IRA member, as reported in Moloney (2002), p. 105.

show, and he was already a charismatic leader, skilled at leading his followers, while opposing his adversaries. "If Adams learned another lesson from all this, it was to divide and discredit opponents lest they unite against him"¹²: Ed Moloney sees a new Caesar in him, and perhaps rightly so, also considering that his book on Adams is no hagiography.

The other turning point in Adams' career was the birth of the Provisional IRA in 1969, as a result of a split with the historical group, which would continue to exist as the Official IRA. Already very cautious and pragmatic, two of his features which only sharpened over the years, Adams has been accused of waiting for four months to see which faction would prevail, before joining the winning side in early 1970¹³. The success of the "Provos" had two effects. Generally speaking, it moved the nationalist fighters away from the communist and anti-abstentionist ideas supported by the Officials' leader, Cathal Goulding, and back into anti-communism¹⁴ and intransigent armed struggle. Specifically, it moved the core of IRA operations from the Irish Republic to the North, to Belfast in particular, which meant paving the way for Adams' rapid climb to power. That he chose to side with the Provisionals in 1969, though he himself was to purport a historic shift towards socialism and anti-abstentionism many years later, was only the first of Gerry Adams' unpredictable yet successful moves.

Assuming with Moloney (2002) that Adams had been long active in the IRA, it seems that, from 1969 onwards, he devoted himself to serving the nationalist cause by fighting the British rule, and to serving his own cause by eliminating his IRA internal opponents. It is a fact that the outbreak of the Troubles in 1969 led many young people to join or support the IRA: "In Ballymurphy, in West Belfast, for example, there were six semi-active republicans and ten supporters in 1969 [...]. Internment, introduced on 9 August 1971, had a major effect in making people conscious participants in the struggle."¹⁵ The infusion of young forces into the IRA, a "new breed"¹⁶ of

¹² Moloney (2002), p. 60.

¹³ Moloney (2002), p. 73.

¹⁴ To which the powerful Irish Catholic Church was traditionally opposed.

¹⁵ Adams, Gerry (1986), p. 56.

¹⁶ Moloney (2002: 118).

volunteers, gave Adams the chance to gradually win support against the older members and, in time, to take over the IRA leadership. Moloney (2002) reports that Adams took command of the Ballymurphy local IRA in 1969, became commander of the IRA Second Belfast Battalion in April 1971, was Belfast's IRA second in command after August 1971, then commander of the Belfast Brigade in September 1972 and, finally, IRA Chief of Staff in 1977. All this, according to his various unofficial biographers and to himself¹⁷, without any real evidence that he ever actually handled a gun. But not without suspicions of being a ruthless and calculating leader, according to Moloney (2002), as in 1969, when he ordered to avoid any retaliations against the British army in Ballymurphy, in order to exasperate the local population who would then heartily support the armed fight when *he* finally gave his ok¹⁸. And, behind the murders of several alleged traitors carried out by the IRA in the 1970s, including the shocking execution of Protestant informer and mother of ten Jean McConville, there seems to have been Adams' spoken or unspoken consent¹⁹. However, when we consider attacks such as the Bloody Friday bombings of 21 July 1972, that widely affected the local population and brought negative publicity to the IRA, it is hard to believe that Adams could have approved of them, since even at that time his careful attention to public opinion was very well known, as well as his skill in using the media for his own purposes, as he keeps demonstrating to the present day.

Gerry Adams only stayed Chief of Staff of the IRA for about two months, as he was again arrested in February 1978: although released later that year on grounds of insufficient evidence²⁰, IRA custom prevented him from reassuming the chief position, who had meanwhile gone to the future Minister for Education of Northern Ireland, Martin McGuinness. This was not the first time Adams had been in prison: after the brief internment of 1972, followed four long years in the Long Kesh camp between 1973 and 1978. All of these

¹⁷ See Adams' autobiography: Adams, Gerry (1996), *Before the Dawn: an Autobiography*, London: Heinemann.

¹⁸ Moloney (2002), p. 91.

¹⁹ Moloney (2002), p. 122-125.

²⁰ Palmowski, Jan (2003), "Adams, Gerard", *A Dictionary of Contemporary World History*. Oxford Reference Online. <http://www.oxfordreference.com>

experiences, and especially the 1973-78 one, seem to have marked a turning point in Adams' fighting policy. In the first place, in order to carry out whatever plans he might have, he needed to have full authority over the IRA and the support of its ranks. Therefore, having to give up the IRA leadership to Martin McGuinness, despite their being close allies, probably put him in a weak position. This might have been just the sparkle for his revolutionary shift towards Sinn Féin and parliamentary politics: looking for a top leading position, and having secured support of the IRA through his long-term comrade McGuinness, Adams now looked towards the IRA's "poor second cousin"²¹, the Sinn Féin. Thus far subject to its armed wing, this was a group where he still encountered strong opposition on the part of the older generation's leaders, Rory O'Brady and Daithi O'Connell. Moloney (2002) articulately maintains that the process of reversing the IRA-Sinn Féin relationship, gradually getting distanced from the armed struggle, while bringing the political party into the light, was Adams' long-term planned strategy. It could also be suggested, however, that it was his personal thirst for power that pushed him to make Sinn Féin, since circumstances robbed him of the IRA headship, the leading organisation. Whatever the motivations, thanks to his *divide et impera* strategy of lobbying and media manipulation²², by the early 1980s Adams had practically got rid of the O'Brady-O'Connell leadership, so much so that in 1983 he was easily elected Sinn Féin President. From then on, the shift to politics could not be stopped. The other event that helped producing this shift, but did not directly depend on him, was the unexpected success obtained in the 1981 British by-election by IRA prisoner and hunger-strike hero Bobby Sands, in the wake of the shock produced by his and his inmates' protest. In 1981 Adams had been very cautious about Sands' running for Westminster, but, after the seat had been won without any real support from the IRA leadership, he must have realised the full potential for political success possessed by the Sinn Féin

²¹ Adams, G. (1986), p. 150.

²² Adams' winning strategy included isolating and excluding his enemies, as well as securing popular support by controlling the republican media (the papers *An Phoblact* and *Republican News*); see Moloney (2002), p. 178-180.

²³, if it had the full backing of both the IRA and the republican electorate. In 1982, though still professing abstentionism, both Gerry Adams and Martin McGuinness were elected to the short-lived Northern Ireland Assembly (1982-86). In 1983, Adams was returned to Westminster as Member of Parliament (MP) for West Belfast.

Of course, the move towards parliamentary politics and negotiation with the British was not so clear-cut or abrupt as it may appear from this or any other condensed summary of Northern Irish history. On the contrary, for long years the armed and political struggle proceeded on parallel tracks, with Gerry Adams skilfully walking the fine line between them: he showed the world two alternatives and asked it which it preferred, always making it very clear that the balance could be tipped either way at just any time. The so-called "Armalite and ballot box strategy" explains why the violent conduct of the IRA continued throughout the peace process years, going from the smuggling of Armalite firearms from the USA into Ireland in 1972, to the first attacks conducted in England in the 1970s²⁴, to the targeted murders of English businessmen²⁵, to the outrageous 1990s bombings: London Canary Wharf, Manchester, Banbridge, Omagh... Incredibly enough, though, despite all of this violence, the peace process was being conceived and developed, and by the same people who still maintained that "members of Óglaigh na hÉireann [IRA] are just ordinary citizens who are forced through difficult circumstances into resistance"²⁶ (Gerry Adams in 1986), or that "face-to-face talks with the IRA 'would turn my stomach'"²⁷ (John Major in 1993). In fact, the seeds of the peace process had been sown as early as 1981, when at that year's Ard Fheis [party conference] Gerry Adams recommended that the SF candidate Owen

²³ "Adams and others, highlighting Sinn Féin electoral successes in the early and mid 1980s, when Hunger strikers Bobby Sands and Ciaran Doherty were elected to the British House of Commons and Dáil Éireann respectively, advocated that Sinn Féin become increasingly political", "Gerry Adams", *Biography.ms*, <http://gerry-adams.biography.ms/>

²⁴ The Old Bailey and Whitehall bombings in 1973.

²⁵ Starting with the murder of Jeffrey Agate in Belfast in 1973.

²⁶ Adams, G. (1986), p. 60.

²⁷ Major, John, to the House of Commons, as reported in "Major's secret links with IRA leadership revealed" (28 November 1993), *The Observer*, Special Reports, <http://observer.guardian.co.uk/nireland/story/0,11008,582058,00.html>

Carron run for the late Bobby Sands' seat²⁸. In his 1986 book *The Politics of Irish Freedom*, Adams, then SF President for three years, could finally start publicly and officially exposing his political participation strategy, the main argument for it being that, by so doing, they would "proceed at the level of people's understanding, winning support from that perspective, working alongside people and sharing in their struggles, never getting too far ahead and never getting removed from the activity of the situation."²⁹ The search for popular support, dwindling after years of useless IRA violence, was therefore the challenge proposed by Gerry Adams in the 1980s, which he was to win, because it was true that Northern Ireland, at that time, as well as from the conflict, was also suffering from serious social problems. Adams was clever enough to introduce issues such as unemployment, education, housing, women's conditions into his party policy *at the right time*, transforming the SF from just a nationalist party into a nationalist *and* a socialist party. It could now easily win the consensus of the working class and challenge the leadership of the middle-class, partitionist Socialist Democratic Labour Party (SDLP). All the new supporters that joined the republican cause from 1981 onwards (including the ex inhabitants of the H-blocks) were diverted from the IRA into the SF, a great number of younger members who, like Adams himself, were old enough to remember Bloody Sunday, but not too old to refuse the idea of a political solution for Northern Ireland. In little more than a decade, Gerry Adams had managed to do what the old IRA leader Goulding had not been able to do back in 1969: start steering the republican wheel away from the armed fight and towards socialism and politics.

The peace process has not been without problems and has not always unfolded smoothly. To carry it on, Gerry Adams and the SF have had to face and break the opposition of many sections, and not only on the British/Unionist side: many members of the IRA and the SF, part of the Catholic Church, the SDLP and, not last, the violence-stricken public opinion all have opposed the

²⁸ At the same time, however, true to his ruthless sense of tactics, throughout Sands' election and death and Carron's election, he never actually ordered the hunger-strikers to end their protest (as reported in Moloney 2002: 277).

²⁹ Adams (1986), p. 153.

peace process, at some stage or other. The fierce opposition of extremist Unionism and part of the British government, especially during the Thatcher years, was never in doubt. According to Moloney (2002), the idea of a peace plan was so disruptive when it first was conceived in 1982, that it was kept secret even to the IRA Army Council, at the beginning³⁰; only in 1985 was Adams able to remove the bulk of IRA resistance by removing its Chief of Staff, Ivor Bell. Meanwhile, the SF electoral consensus throughout the 1980s kept varying, alternating successes and failures, with a sharp fall in votes following the Anglo-Irish Agreement in 1985, which favoured the SDLP and its moderate, political approach. But in 1986, the SF Ard Fheis agreed to drop their abstentionist attitude towards the Dáil Éireann, Dublin's Parliament, and, at that point, it seemed that Adams could finally concentrate its efforts on his external opponents: the British government. Many appear to have been the mediators in the history of the peace process: priests, civil servants, secret agents, British and Irish politicians, and probably many other people whose names will never be disclosed, but the only real fuel of its development has been the will to seek peace on both sides. Both sides, then, had to make concessions, like when Adams, speaking for the SF, first criticised an IRA attack, the Enniskillen bomb in 1987³¹, or when the SDLP leader, John Hume, agreed to a historic encounter with Gerry Adams in 1988. Other steps had to wait for a change of political circumstances, namely for Margaret Thatcher to step down and leave the stage to John Major in 1990, for John Bruton to succeed Alan Dukes at the head of the centrist Fine Gael party (1990), for Mary Robinson to be elected the first Labour Party, female Éire President (1990), for Albert Reynolds to become leader of the Fianna Fáil progressive party and Irish Prime Minister in 1992, and even for Bill Clinton to become USA President in 1993. Further actors, such as the Ulster Unionist Party (UUP) leader, David Trimble, and Major's successor Tony Blair, were to enter the scene later in the 1990s and lead the way to a historic agreement, but at the

³⁰ Moloney (2002), Chapter 12.

³¹ "Sinn Féins [sic] Gerry Adams said it undermined the legitimate use of physical force.", "Timeline: Northern Ireland's road to peace", *BBC News*, http://newsvote.bbc.co.uk/mpapps/pagetools/print/news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/northern_ireland/4072261.stm

end of the 1980s this seemed (and was) light years ahead. In 1988, while Adams met up with John Hume, the IRA launched its "Tet offensive", so called after the Vietcong offensive that drove the Americans from Vietnam. Tons of arms were smuggled into Ireland from the USA and Libya³², and guerrilla attacks took place almost daily. 1987-88 were also the years in which the first Protestant paramilitary attacks began, conducted by groups such as the Ulster Volunteer Force (UVF). The IRA, at that time still trying to resist Adams' shift towards politics, failed to oppose the Protestant offensive effectively and, in 1989, he struck back at the them, with the first public condemnation of an IRA attack ever³³. By 1990, the population was so worn down with the violence, that it was ready to accept the notion of a ceasefire: the peace process had become "an acceptable and even welcome"³⁴ idea. On the political level, by appealing to the Northern Irish law courts against Unionist town councillors who refused to work with their SF colleagues, in 1988 the SF first recognised British law and the British state. In 1990, Adams called, in vain, for a division of the SF from the IRA, while the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland, Peter Brooke, declared that Britain had no "selfish strategic or economic interest"³⁵ in Northern Ireland. In 1991 came the declaration that the SF would not speak for the IRA anymore³⁶; in the same year, the Hume-Adams document was first drafted, which was to lead to the Hume-Adams joint statement in April 1993 and eventually to the Downing Street Declaration in December 1993.

On 4 March 2005, Gerry Adams stated that "his ambition is to see the IRA ceasing to exist."³⁷

³² Suffice it to mention the famous *Eksund* episode: in October 1987 the Panamanian ship *Eksund* was captured by the French authorities acting on a tip-off: it carried a huge consignment of arms coming from Libya and destined to the IRA.

³³ "Triple Murder by IRA Brings Sinn Féin Reprimand", *Daily Telegraph*, 9 March 1989.

³⁴ Moloney (2002), p. 323.

³⁵ As reported in "Timeline: Northern Ireland's road to peace", *BBC News*, http://newsvote.bbc.co.uk/mpapps/pagetools/print/news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/northern_ireland/4072261.stm

³⁶ "Sinn Féin Changes Tactics to Let IRA Speak for Itself", *Irish Times*, 26 January 1991.

³⁷ "Adams says he wants IRA to cease to exist", *Irish Times*, 4 March 2005, <http://www.ireland.com/newspaper/ireland/2005/0304/pf1312645196HM7ADAMSGERRY.html>

§ 1.3 – Ian Paisley: a short biography

Born on April 6, 1926 in Armagh, Ulster, Dr. Rev. Ian Richard Kyle Paisley has been a key figure of Northern Ireland's politics for over forty years. Religion and unionism have informed all of his life, with both his parents coming from old Scottish stock – the descendants of 17th century Scottish planters. However, "they were Church of Ireland, not Presbyterian as might have been expected from their Scottish background"³⁸: the change to Presbyterianism took place only recently, in 1908, when Paisley sr., Kyle, was converted to "born-again" Baptism, becoming Armagh's local pastor in 1918 and "acquiring a name for himself as a hell-fire and brimstone preacher"³⁹. Proudly defined "absolutely uncompromising" by his own son⁴⁰, Kyle was considered an "unorthodox" clergyman even by Baptist standards⁴¹: in 1933, over a dispute on the "modernist" (i.e. relaxed) attitude on drinking, smoking, dancing and cinema-going of his Baptist parishioners, Kyle Paisley left the Church with a small number of proselytes and founded his own very strict, very Puritan congregation. However, Kyle the "brimstone preacher" is also remembered as a kindly and generous man, when religious matters – and particularly Catholicism – were not at issue.

So far, it might seem as if it were Ian Paisley discussed here, so much his life and character resemble his father's. What really made the difference was the historical context in which Ian Paisley was born, which eventually led him to turn to politics and become one of Ulster's most influential, controversial leaders. In 1926, only ten years had passed from the Easter Rising, and only five from the partition of the island under the Anglo-Irish Treaty of 1921. Both the Protestant and Catholic communities had suffered great human as well as economical and psychological losses through the years of civil war. This had resulted in a territorial division that dissatisfied both those longing for a united, republican Ireland and those wishing to remain part

³⁸ Cooke, Dennis (1996), *Persecuting Zeal: A Portrait of Ian Paisley*, Dingle: Brandon Books Ltd, p. 23.

³⁹ Marrinan, Patrick (1973), *Paisley: Man of Wrath*, Tralee: Anvil Books, p. 10.

⁴⁰ Moloney, Ed and Andy Pollak (1986), *Paisley*, Swords: Poolberg, p. 20.

⁴¹ Marrinan (1973), p. 13.

of the fading British Empire, who found themselves instead enclosed in an island within another island. Only *ad hoc* laws (imposing gerrymandering and religious discrimination in all aspects of social life) made it possible for Protestants in the newly-formed six-county province to impose their predominance on the Catholic community, who just had to bow their heads – the civil rights marches of the 1960s were still to come. The province had wide rural areas, where religion still played a fundamental part in people’s lives. The Catholic population of Northern Ireland, who had found itself part of a Protestant-ruled statelet, was not only segregated by the dominating religion, but also tended to separate itself in self-protection, thus fomenting its own fundamentalism. On the other side, Protestants were well aware that Northern Ireland was now a Protestant citadel in a Catholic country, and were determined to defend it at all costs. Economy, traditionally based on shipbuilding and linen manufacturing, suffered from “secular decline”⁴², which resulted in unemployment and all other related social problems⁴³. If we also consider that the largest Protestant denomination in the province were and are the very rigid, very austere and exclusive Presbyterians⁴⁴, we see that the clash between the historically enemy Catholic and Protestant communities was inevitable. This was the context in which Ian Paisley, the son of schismatic Baptist pastor Kyle and Scottish-born Isabella Turnbull, who emigrated to Ireland in search of a better job, was born and grew up. Certainly, he was taught to beware of Catholics and behave like a good unionist, but he definitely made a particular effort to learn the lesson and put it into practice.

Religion, then, has always been Paisley’s main concern, ever since he was ordained to the Presbyterian ministry in 1946, by his own father the unorthodox pastor. The unorthodox streak must have run in the family, as young Ian Paisley was soon to depart from the Presbyterian Church to found his own Free Presbyterian Church, in 1951. Religious matters came first, but,

⁴² Bew, Paul, Peter Gibbon and Henry Patterson (1995), *Northern Ireland 1921-1994. Political Forces and Social Classes*. London: Serif, p. 65.

⁴³ “During the 1930s international competition became more intense and the recession hit the city even harder than that of the early 1920s; by the winter of 1939 there were 20,000 unemployed in Belfast.” Goldring, Maurice (1995), *Belfast. From Loyalty to Rebellion*. London: Lawrence & Wishart, p. 36.

⁴⁴ With the Church of Ireland coming second. Data: *CAIN Web Service*, “Background Information on Northern Ireland Society – Religion”, <http://cain.ulst.ac.uk/ni/religion.htm>

though it took him long years before finally entering politics, even before the early 1950s, he had clear political affiliations. For decades, he was a member of the National Union of Protestants (NUP), an English-born, very conservative, evangelical and anti-Catholic association, and of the Orange Order, the oldest Protestant and unionist association in Ireland. With both, however, he fell out when his dominant personality clashed with their established conservatism – for Paisley, as traditional and conservative as he may be, has always had quite a revolutionary way of pursuing his aims, and the strongest personal ambition to support him. After the secession from the Presbyterian Church, there was “concern among Paisley’s NUP colleagues, particularly the Presbyterians. It seemed to them that if he was declaring open war on Presbyterian churches all around the country [...], then none of them could rest easy.”⁴⁵ In 1954, Paisley sided with the English parent branch of the NUP and brought the Irish branch to court over the issue of an inheritance bequeathed to the NUP by an old lady, who had died without bothering to specify to which branch it was destined⁴⁶. As a result, the Irish NUP decided to drop its name and became the Evangelical Protestant Society. Paisley took hold of the name, and kept using it for his own political purposes for many years after. The split with the Orange Order came in 1962, after long years of frictions, as “Paisley’s separatist theology and domineering personality had repercussions in the area of personal relationships. Most of these rows were centred around his attitude to other members of the Orange Order, which was later to prove a major handicap in his bid for ultimate political power.”⁴⁷ In 1958 Paisley transferred to another lodge after accusing a fellow Orangeman and clergyman of apostasy from the pages of his magazine *The Revivalist*⁴⁸; in 1962 he definitely slammed the Order’s door behind him, again, over a religious technicality⁴⁹.

Paisley’s stormy separations from two of the most prestigious Protestant and unionist associations show two of his distinctive traits as a politician. First,

⁴⁵ Moloney (1986), p. 48.

⁴⁶ Moloney (1986), p. 50.

⁴⁷ Cooke (1996), p. 136.

⁴⁸ Cooke (1996), p. 137.

⁴⁹ The then Lord Mayor of Belfast and Orangeman Robin Kinahan had participated to a Catholic alderman’s funeral and attended a Catholic mass, thus breaking a traditional rule of the Order. See Moloney (1986), p. 54.

where he has encountered opposition to his plans or his way of achieving them, he has gone for the removal of the opponent, rather than reconciliation with him. Second, that if removing an opponent meant he had to alienate powerful elements (of whichever denomination or political colour), he has never been in the least afraid of doing it. It is true that when he started quarrelling with the NUP and the Orange Order, perhaps he was not really thinking of personally and officially entering politics in the future. On the contrary, he had been known to be all for religion and against any political involvement: "Paisley wasn't interested in politics in those days and when Porter [the then NUP secretary] got elected to Stormont, he attacked him at a big rally in the Ulster Hall saying "that was no place for a Christian to be."⁵⁰ However, his intemperance towards his fellow Protestant and unionist brothers remained and was well remembered when he finally did enter politics in 1969: ever since then, he and his party have always been on the margins of mainstream unionism, but this, instead of being perceived as ostracism on the part of the main unionist parties, has been seen as a strategic choice instead, and it has gained Paisley growing respect and support from an incredible number of voters over the years, to the dismay of the bigger unionist parties.

But, back in the 1940s, Paisley's main concern was still religion. His theology is in fact quite simple in its essence (and surely that is also its main strength): straight-forward, puritan, back-to-the-origins Presbyterianism, combined with the fiercest anti-ecumenism, the best expression of which has always been apartheid-like anti-Catholicism. Indeed, the first time Paisley's name became public was in regards to a mystifying episode with strongly religious connotations. In 1956, the so-called "Maura Lyons case" took place. Maura Lyons was an underage, working-class Catholic girl of 15, who was apparently converted to Free Presbyterianism by some colleagues at work. It seems that she was then threatened by her parents to be sent to a convent, if she did not agree to return to her old religion. And that is when she disappeared from her home (and seemingly from Ireland) for seven months, only to show up on the day of her sixteenth birthday, when she came of age

⁵⁰ One NUP member, as reported in Moloney (1986), p. 49.

and could legally choose to convert to another religion. The place where she reappeared was the house of the reverend Paisley. All through the long months of the girl's disappearance, Paisley had been the eye of the hurricane of the episode: though accused of having been behind the disappearance of the girl, having helped her escape to England and kept her hidden there for seven months, none of the investigations could discover the whereabouts of Maura Lyons, nor could the police ever prove Paisley's role in all that. But for seven months, the newspapers revelled in the mystery and Paisley revelled in the opportunity to discredit the Catholic Church as a breeder of backwards, repressive, secretive individuals, who would go as far as to hide away a daughter in a convent, for fear of losing her to another religion. He spoke and wrote widely about the case in his roaring, condemning tones, and he even managed to organise a huge anti-Catholic rally, at which he played a tape with a girl's voice – supposedly Maura Lyons' – telling of her conversion to Presbyterianism and escape from the threat of reclusion. On her reappearance, Paisley handed in Maura Lyons to the authorities, who eventually sent her back to her family after her parents had sworn to abide by the girl's decisions in terms of religion. She is reported to have eventually returned to Catholicism later in life, and married a Catholic man⁵¹.

The episode by which Paisley first came to public attention is usually mentioned as perfectly representative of the way he has been conducting his public affairs, both religious and political. Indeed, a sort of pattern may be recognised in all the episodes of which Paisley has been the protagonist. First, the issue must have ultimately religious connotations. Second, it has to be controversial – the more controversial, the better – so as to attract what Paisley always seeks: huge numbers and great public interest, which lead directly to another of his favourites: wide coverage by the media. Paisley would then tackle the topic headlong and publicly, as the presence of a complacent audience is another necessary element, which he gets by self-selection: he advertises his rallies, meetings or protests in his usual

⁵¹ For a detailed report of the case, see, among others, Marrinan (1973), pp. 23-42; Moloney (1986), pp. 67-74 and Bruce (1986), pp. 52-55.

provocative tones, and those who show up are certain to be at least mild sympathisers of his. He would then address his audience – and this is Paisley as is best known to the general public – in his late father’s same “fire and brimstone” manner that has made him an incredibly successful orator, no matter how questionable his argument. But in the Maura Lyons’ case it is also possible to recognise some of his less evident yet very subtle abilities, like that of manipulating people and taking immediate advantage of events to his own purposes, always appearing as his supporters’ hero and his enemies’ martyr. And, in addition, Paisley also has the ability to manoeuvre behind the scenes, so that his public image always remains unimpeachable, or just as clean as his clerical collar requires: he is the one who works in the background and comes forward to receive the praise, but never the criticism. Indeed, the reverend seems to enjoy playing the *deus ex machina*, a role for which he is admittedly very gifted and which obviously gives him enormous satisfaction. The Maura Lyons case, which caused a sensation back in 1950s’ Ireland, might look today no more than an ordinary tabloid story, and Paisley’s part in all that – which he probably did have – no more than an exalted (Protestant) clergyman’s overreaction to a bigot (Catholic) family’s overreaction. However, as said before, this is the same behaviour he adopted in many later occasions as a politician, and it should be noted that, over the years, his name has been associated with a long list of organisations of more or less overt paramilitary nature: the Ulster Protestant Action (UPA, formed in 1956), the Ulster Volunteer Force (UVF, f. 1966), the Ulster Constitution Defence Committee (UCDC, f. in 1966), the Ulster Protestant Volunteers (UPV, f. 1966, dependent on the UCDC), the Ulster Defence Association (f. 1971), the Third Force (f. 1981), the Ulster Resistance (f. 1986)⁵². The deaths attributed to the UDA and the UVF alone amount to 538⁵³: nothing like a Maura Lyons case. And, although Paisley has always denied personal involvement in any of the groups’

⁵² The Belfast-based Italian journalist Silvio Cerulli has counted up to 18 paramilitary organisations with which Paisley has apparently been involved: Cerulli, Silvio (2003), “Il Reverendo e i suoi discepoli”, in *Irlanda notizie*, <http://www.irlandanews.org/sc19.htm>.

⁵³ Deaths attributed to UVF and UDA between 1969 and 2001: 426 and 112 respectively. Total deaths attributed to Loyalist paramilitary groups between 1969 and 2001: 1,020. Source: “Malcolm Sutton, An Index of Deaths from the Conflict in Ireland”, *CAIN Web Service*, http://cain.ulst.ac.uk/sutton/tables/Organisation_Responsible.html.

violent actions, his preaching is surely responsible for attracting the big numbers who formed the ranks of hardcore loyalists, and it can be maintained that the reverend has helped loyalist paramilitaries in everything save active fighting: "During the [1969] August riots, and indeed for nearly two years afterwards, many militant Loyalists looked to the UCDC [founded by Paisley in person] headquarters for material assistance in their fight against Catholic/Republican menace."⁵⁴

So, when did Paisley actually enter politics? Officially, in 1969, the year the Troubles began, the year in which he challenged the Prime Minister Terence O'Neill in the Northern Ireland general election:

None of the Protestant Unionist candidates were elected, but Paisley claimed that the result was 'a great vote for Protestant Unionists'. As expected, his vote in Bannside was the one which registered the greatest number for the Protestant Unionist Party:

Terence O'Neill (Unionist): 7,745

Ian Paisley (Protestant Unionist): 6,331

Michael Farrell (People's Democracy): 2,310

The election must have disappointed O'Neill, considering the substantial measure of support for Paisley in O'Neil's [sic] own constituency.

The Protestant Unionist Party (PUP) had been founded by Paisley in the mid 1960s, mainly to provide a stable organisation for his protests and marches, and till then had only had two councillors elected. Paisley, who had been previously refused all personal political involvement, had preferred to send his own men forward into the political arena, while he did what he was best at: recruiting, inflaming, fomenting and reaping the results of it all. So, 1969 was the year when he himself entered official politics. In fact, had there ever been a moment when he had *not* been involved in politics? Probably not, as he is one true son of Northern Ireland and its particular society, where religion and politics are so strictly intertwined that – especially after the civil war, when Paisley was born – being born into a Protestant family meant being born a lifelong unionist, and vice versa. Paisley was born into a very Protestant family, and the fact that he grew up to be an extremist unionist is no surprise. As Marrinan 1973, in his strongly biased biography, puts it, "He was of course, by family tradition, Orange to the marrow of his bones, and had progressed from junior Orangeman to the fully-fledged species"⁵⁵. If religion has been his first

⁵⁴ Moloney (1986), p. 197.

⁵⁵ Marrinan (1973), p. 13.

and main concern in life, the way he conceives religion (as an active lifestyle) and the way he conceives Protestantism (as equal to anti-Catholicism and anti-republicanism) have automatically made him a politician, whether or not an officially elected one. When Paisley decided to “become” a politician, by standing in the 1969 election, he had already won two elections as a campaign agent for an Ulster Protestant League candidate in 1949⁵⁶ and another Protestant Unionists candidate in 1958⁵⁷, founded the UPA (1956), been sentenced for illegal march (1953) and disorderly behaviour (1963), been jailed twice for unlawful assembly (six weeks in 1966 and 24 hours in January 1969), and helped send one Northern Ireland Prime Minister home (as a result of his 1963’s “Brookeborough out” campaign). As seen above, in February 1969, he missed sending home the next Prime Minister – guilty of having made concessions to the Catholics – by a handful of votes, but he managed to do it two months later, after three years of “O’Neill must go” campaigning. When he was eventually elected to Stormont in April 1970 (in the same Bannside constituency that had been O’Neill’s), the reverend Ian Paisley could *not* be called a political novice.

Once he was elected, Paisley could never go back to his purely religious (at least officially) role: he was caught forever in the political net, and much to his own liking. Later in 1970 he was also elected to Westminster. In 1971, his most successful brainchild was born: the Democratic Unionist Party (DUP), formed from the ashes of the Protestant Unionists together with barrister Desmond Boal, who was its chairman until 1973, when he left the hard-line unionist party he had helped founding to espouse the federation cause. Ever since then, Ian Paisley has been the DUP’s undiscussed leader, and only today, when he is approaching 80 and his health starts failing, is his inheritance being put into question. In over thirty years, this young party with unbreakable religious ties, ruled rather than led by a pastor-turned-politician in the same way he has been ruling his self-founded Church, has obtained incredible achievements. Sneered at at first by its fellow brethren of the Unionist Party,

⁵⁶ Tommy Cole.

⁵⁷ Albert Duff.

the DUP soon showed everybody it was a force to be seriously reckoned with. With their political programme of mixed religious anti-Catholic, anti-republican fanaticism and populist promises, they immediately started subtracting large numbers of voters from the official unionists, especially from two social groups: the inhabitants of Protestant rural areas, and the Protestant urban working class, much disaffected with the established unionist elite of landed gentry and middle class, and seriously hit by the economic decline. Hinging on these groups' fears of losing jobs and social pre-eminence to the fast multiplying Catholic population, and merely helped by the escalating violence of the IRA attacks, from 1971 to today the DUP has grown from a seemingly freakish parish association to the first unionist party in Northern Ireland⁵⁸. Like its leader, whose strong personality and imposing physical presence have much contributed to the party's success, its political programme has remained unchanged throughout the decades, centring on banal yet mass appealing objectives: the defence of union with Britain, independence from Éire's influence, and preservation of Protestant privileges. Coherence is indeed one of the two features that have made the DUP so successful and long-lived. The other is its boldness in confronting not only its historical enemy the Catholic/republicans (of all types, from moderate to terrorist), but also the other unionist parties, especially when these were alone in power and fighting them meant alienating a large share of the Protestant voters. But, in spite of its total lack of diplomacy, or perhaps due to it, the DUP's *divide et impera* policy has paid back in due course, especially at times of uncertainty, as throughout the Troubles, when neither the Belfast nor the London government seemed able to stem IRA violence and take a clear stance towards terrorism. Actually, "When Protestant anxieties calmed, its support declined, as during 1982 and 1983 when Mrs Thatcher reigned supreme, her 'Fortress Falklands' mirroring Unionism's new found confidence."⁵⁹ Therefore, the other critical moment in the DUP's life was the beginning of the Peace Process. But, before

⁵⁸ In the Northern Ireland Assembly election of November 2003, the DUP came in first with the 25.71% of the votes and 30 seats. Sinn Féin were second with 23.53% of the votes and 24 seats. Source: "Results of the Elections Held in Northern Ireland since 1968", *CAIN Web Service*, <http://cain.ulst.ac.uk/issues/politics/election/ra2003.htm>.

⁵⁹ Moloney (1986: 265).

this began, the DUP had certainly not been idle. All through its first year of life, it worked on its “No surrender” campaign, to oppose the two Prime Ministers that followed O’Neill, James Chichester-Clark and Brian Faulkner. Then, when the latter was removed and the Stormont Parliament suspended by the British Prime Minister Edward Heath, following Bloody Sunday in 1972, it fought to have home rule back. When Heath offered Northern Ireland a new power-sharing Assembly through the Sunningdale Agreement of 1973, the DUP was in the front line to break it up, which it managed to do with the historic 15-day Ulster Workers’ Council strike, led by a reverend Paisley for once only allied to the other unionist parties. When Faulkner, chosen as the Chief Executive of the Sunningdale Assembly, resigned in 1974, he was the fourth Northern Ireland premier Paisley had contributed to bring down. Heath’s successor Mrs Thatcher was certainly not soft on terrorism; however, she was entrusted to God to be “hand[ed] [...] over to the devil that she might learn not to blaspheme”⁶⁰ by the reverend Ian Paisley, when she enforced another power-sharing experiment, the Anglo-Irish Agreement of 1985. All through these facts, the DUP apparently maintained covert links with some Loyalist paramilitary groups⁶¹; it is reported that, altogether, Loyalist deaths between 1969 and 2001 amount to 1,020⁶².

Therefore, to a party used to – and exceedingly good at – wreaking havoc and destroying agreements, the fragile solidity of John Major’s Good Friday Agreement (GFA) of 1998 must have been a bad shock. Actually, the GFA suffered from several weaknesses, as its long and difficult enforcement (lasting to this day) has proved. However, the reception it had was excellent on both sides, not because it was the best drafted agreement, we think, but because it came at a time of exhaustion, to a population worn out by 30 years of conflict and thousands of casualties. The GFA was also the first agreement that was put to the people for approval by referendum, and not imposed on them by their governments – another important difference with the past. To

⁶⁰ Ian Paisley, as reported in Cooke (1986), p. 1.

⁶¹ “[...] claims that such groups [Paisley-founded UCD and UPV] were associated with loyalist paramilitary groups these were accusations that Paisley was always to strongly deny”, “Ian Paisley”, *CAIN Web Service*, <http://cain.ulst.ac.uk/othelem/people/biography/pppeople.htm#paisleyi>.

⁶² See note 52.

nobody's surprise, the DUP campaigned hard for a "No" vote in the GFA's referendum, but for the first time it came out defeated, and the Agreement was approved in both the North and the South of Ireland, where the poll had taken place simultaneously. Then something unprecedented happened: Ian Paisley's DUP shifted from its 30 year long position, and accepted to take part in the multi-party talks provided for by the GFA. All that ensued – the slow and stumbling yet progressing Peace Process – took its origins from the choice Paisley's party made in 1998. Of course, the DUP was also the party to halt the whole Peace Process when they left the Talks, as Sinn Féin entered them. Of course, the DUP is also the party that has been insisting single-handedly on the IRA's total and documented disarmament before the Talks could go on. But for all the callousness and provocations of the DUP's statements, a dialogue with the other sides has started, which is hopefully irreversible. What the reasons for the DUP's U-turn may be is difficult to say. It could have been a panicking reaction to an unexpected occurrence (the GFA itself and the outcome of the referendum). It could be attributed to tiredness even on the part of its historic leader Ian Paisley, who has now turned 79. It could have been a choice encouraged by the younger members of the party, who may be open to some changes (in particular, Cooke 1996 holds that Paisley's deputy, the much younger and "softer" Peter Robinson, might be in for the succession). It could have sprung from the party's honest desire to evolve with the times, as 1998 was the first time in 30 years when things were actually starting to change. Or it could have come from the fear of losing lots of votes and power for the first time in 30 years. Did the DUP lose any votes or power at all, then? In the 2003 elections of the Northern Ireland Assembly according to the GFA, it got over 25.71% of the first preference vote, and was made by the people of Northern Ireland the strongest party in the country. Whether Paisley was merely lucky, or he had been able to perfectly interpret his electorate's desires is still not clear, as it will have to be confirmed or disproved by the next election. It is not, however, the only paradox in the history of Ian Paisley: a servant of God but a leader of people; a paramilitary supporter and a loving

father⁶³; martyr and inquisitor. Nor is it the only paradox in the history of his party: fighting in the name of all Protestants, yet double-tied exclusively to Free Presbyterianism; unionist, nationalist and anti-European, yet the most successful party of Northern Ireland in European elections; pledged to a “No surrender” policy, yet talking now to Sinn Féin to try and form a joint government.

In 1965, when the progressist Northern Ireland Prime Minister O’Neill unexpectedly invited the Irish Taoiseach⁶⁴ Sean Lemass to Belfast for a momentous meeting, Ian Paisley could be heard roaring “No Mass, No Lemass!”. On 4 October 2004, Paisley flew to Dublin to meet the present Taoiseach Bert Ahern – officially talking to the Irish government for the first time in 30 years – and said it was “a useful exchange of views”⁶⁵.

⁶³ See Paisley’s biography by his daughter: Paisley, Rhonda (1988), *Ian Paisley: My Father*, Auckland: Harper Collins Publishers New Zealand.

⁶⁴ Prime Minister.

⁶⁵ “DUP in Landmark Irish Meeting”, *BBC News, UK Edition* (4 October 2004), http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/northern_ireland/3701334.stm

Chapter 2 –The language of conflict: research presentation

§ 2.1 – Preliminary definitions and considerations

§ 2.1.1 – Conflict vs. war: a linguistic difference

This study deals with the language of conflict in Northern Ireland. Before moving any further, some clarifications need to be provided about what is meant by “language of conflict”. But, in order to do this, it is worth posing another question first, i.e. what *is* a conflict and what is meant by it?

A common usage dictionary will return the following definitions of “conflict”:

- 1) *a serious disagreement or argument;*
- 2) *a prolonged armed struggle;*
- 3) *an incompatibility between opinions, principles, etc.*⁶⁶

It has to be agreed on that the situation of Northern Ireland is perfectly described as all of the above. In fact, it may well be called, taking the best of each definition,

“a serious prolonged armed struggle over a disagreement between political and religious principles”.

But then another question immediately comes to mind: why cannot it be called a “war”, instead of a “conflict”?

The same dictionary defines “war” as:

- 1) *a state of armed conflict between different nations, states, or armed groups;*
- 2) *a sustained contest between rivals or campaign against something undesirable*⁶⁷.

According to this, the Northern Ireland situation could also certainly be called a war, or even, to do the same as with “conflict”,

“a state of sustained armed conflict between rival armed groups against something each party reposes undesirable”;

slightly redundant, but it still could apply to the circumstances. The game could go on for a while, using, for instance, “struggle”:

noun:

- 1) *an act of struggling;*

⁶⁶ “Conflict” *The Compact Oxford English Dictionary*, 2nd ed., (2003), *OED Online*, Oxford: Oxford University Press. http://www.askoxford.com/results/?view=dev_dict&field-12668446=conflict&branch=13842570&textsearchtype=exact&sortorder=score%2Cname.

⁶⁷ “war” *The Compact Oxford English Dictionary*, 2nd ed., (2003), *OED Online*, Oxford: Oxford University Press. http://www.askoxford.com/concise_oed/warx?view=uk.

2) *a very difficult task*;

verb:

1) *make forceful efforts to get free*;

2) *strive under difficult circumstances to do something*;

3) *make one's way with difficulty*;

4) *have difficulty in gaining recognition or a living*⁶⁸;

or even "guerrilla [force, warfare]":

1) [a member of] a small independent group fighting against the government or regular forces⁶⁹.

Applications in context could be:

- "the Republican side are *making forceful efforts to get free* from British rule and have *difficulty in gaining recognition* for Northern Ireland as part of the Irish Republic",
- "the British government are *striving* to maintain order and control *under difficult circumstances*",
- "the I.R.A. is a *small independent group fighting against the government* and its *regular forces*".

An easily repeatable survey over the difference between "conflict" and "war", as may be carried out informally by anyone among friends and colleagues or as a basic *Google* search, reveals a) that the words are mostly used as synonyms; b) that possible differences are seen in: duration, spatial extent, presence and extent of violence, presence and number of victims, subject of disagreement. It is evident, however, that these are no real discriminants: there has been a Thirty Years War, but the Arab-Israeli conflict has been going on for almost sixty⁷⁰; both wars and conflicts may involve two or more contenders and be fought over small areas or worldwide⁷¹; both can produce huge numbers of casualties; both may be started for the same reasons: a dispute over territory, resources, religion, ideologies, etc. It is then evident that, like love, freedom and other basic human notions, war/conflict is

⁶⁸ "struggle" *The Compact Oxford English Dictionary*, 2nd ed., (2003), *OED Online*, Oxford: Oxford University Press. http://www.askoxford.com/concise_oed/struggle?view=uk.

⁶⁹ "guerrilla" *The Compact Oxford English Dictionary*, 2nd ed., (2003), *OED Online*, Oxford: Oxford University Press. http://www.askoxford.com/results/?view=dev_dict&field-12668446=guerrilla&branch=13842570&textsearchtype=exact&sortorder=score%2Cname.

⁷⁰ And it can actually be traced back to earlier years, for example to the British conquest of Palestine of 1917, or even to the birth of the Zionist movement in the late XIX century.

⁷¹ For example, the American "war on terrorism" that followed the 2001 attacks, due to the uncertainty about the location of the attackers, was authorised by the U.S. Congress without clearly specifying where this should take place:

the President is authorized to use all necessary and appropriate force against those nations, organizations, or persons he determines planned, authorized, committed, or aided the terrorist attacks that occurred on September 11, 2001, or harbored such organizations or persons, in order to prevent any further acts of international terrorism against the United States by such nations, organizations or persons,

U.S. House, 107th Congress, 1st Session (2001), "Joint resolution to authorize the use of United States Armed Forces against those responsible for the recent attacks launched against the United States"(SJ 23 ES), 14 September 2001, Washington: Government Printing Office.

among the most difficult words to define linguistically and the hardest concepts to describe theoretically. This said, there is no reason why a clearer distinction between definitions, no matter how relative or partial, should not be attempted.

The first observation in this direction could be that all of the above definitions overlap widely and lack finite limits. Indeed, what immediately comes to attention, re-reading the various entries, is that they are cross-referential: "war", for instance, is defined by using "conflict". However, the opposite is not true, so the relation is one-way: a war is certainly a conflict, but a conflict is not necessarily a war. The first certainty, then, is that a war is just one type of conflict: it belongs to the "conflict set", as a subset delimited by specific features. Looking again at the definitions, the main characterising feature here seems to be the adjective "armed", so a first logical definition of war could be "a type of conflict characterised by the use of arms". Other adjectives used in the dictionary, such as "serious", "prolonged" or "difficult", cannot be considered characterising, as it has been seen that duration or extent do not make any real difference. If a war is "a type of conflict characterised by the use of arms", then the years of the Troubles in Northern Ireland were definitely one; still, the word "conflict" continues to be largely associated to Northern Ireland⁷².

It is obvious by now that the questions posed so far, "what is a conflict?", "what is the difference between conflict, war, struggle, guerrilla warfare, etc.?" and "why call the Northern Ireland situation a conflict and not something else?", cannot be answered by dictionary definitions alone, i.e. by mere linguistic means, but the concepts behind the words also need to be considered. Only after doing that, is it possible to move on to define the language of conflict.

⁷² For instance, the large and interesting section that BBC online dedicates to the Troubles, within the *Wars and Conflict* section, clearly refers to the "Northern Ireland conflict", not "war". "The Troubles: An exploration of the Northern Ireland conflict", *Wars and Conflict, History, BBC*, <http://www.bbc.co.uk/history/war/troubles/index.shtml>.

§ 2.1.2 – Conflict vs. war: a conceptual difference

In fact, the theoretical issue of “war” vs. “conflict” is an old one. Plato saw them as one thing, a necessary part of the art of politics, and considered it a positive force because it was aimed at protecting the Greek city-state, the place where men could exercise respect and justice⁷³. In modern days, it is international law, rather than philosophy, the field of research that draws the clearest practical distinction between war and conflict: according to the current understanding of the concepts, the necessary condition for a state of armed struggle to be called a war is that it be conducted between two internationally recognised countries⁷⁴. This implies a series of corollaries, for example that a war is fought between governments on behalf and with the approval of the respective sovereign states (as represented by a parliament, for instance); that, as a consequence, it must be officially declared; and that only regular forces are involved in it. However, although such a definition sounds much more normatively reassuring than that of a dictionary, it still leaves room for discussion at practical level, especially if we think that, according to it, the Falklands and the two Iraq wars, for example, cannot be considered as such, because they were never actually *declared*. The debate over official justifications and mandates for a war is highly topical, and new trends in international law have already started to emerge, also addressing the current discordance between theory and practice⁷⁵. By no means is it thought appropriate to discuss political sciences issues in this context; the reference is merely made to highlight the fact that the lack of clarity in linguistic definitions only reflects ambiguity in real life.

The definitions of war and conflict adopted in the present study will therefore have to be hybrid:

- “Conflict” will be considered
 - “a struggle between two or more opposed parties”⁷⁶;
- “Armed conflict” will be considered

⁷³ Plato, *Protagora*, trad. di Adorno, Francesco (1996), Roma, Bari: Laterza.

⁷⁴ See, for example, Conforti, Benedetto (2002), *Diritto internazionale*, 6 ed., Napoli: Editoriale scientifica.

⁷⁵ See, for example, Nye, Joseph S., Jr (2000), *Understanding international conflicts: an introduction to theory and history*, 3 ed., New York: Longman.

⁷⁶ Which could even apply, for instance, to a family situation.

"a struggle between two or more opposed parties (= a conflict), which involves the use of arms, which is conducted between sovereign and non-sovereign states, with the employment of regular and non-regular forces";

- "War" will be considered

"a struggle between two or more opposed parties, which involves the use of arms (= an armed conflict), which is conducted only between sovereign states, with the employment of regular forces only".

It should be pointed out that what is called "armed conflict" and "war" here may be commonly referred to as either "war" or "conflict" by other authors quoted in this study.

According to the newly-adopted above terminology, then, neither the struggle between Ireland and Great Britain before partition, nor that between the I.R.A. and the UK thereafter was ever a war, since a struggle for independence can never happen between two sovereign states, but always an armed conflict. The positive developments obtained by the peace process over the past decade, resulting in longer and longer ceasefires and breaks between bouts of violence on both sides, provide the grounds for defining the recent situation of Northern Ireland no longer an "armed conflict", but simply a "conflict", especially as the struggle has become more and more political and confined within institutional boundaries. Of course, while these definitions may prove convenient for addressing the issue theoretically, they do not intend to question what the people who lived through the situation actually perceived it to be, a war or a conflict. Most military personnel dispatched from Great Britain to Northern Ireland and whoever was affected by the Troubles on either side would probably have no reason not to call it a war, which is still the term most associated to the Troubles⁷⁷. Indeed, though no official war could ever be *declared* to internal opponents, Margaret Thatcher called it a "war against terrorism"⁷⁸ in 1979; Tony Blair did the same 20 years later: "We all need to accept that the war is over"⁷⁹; and even pacifist Dublin rock band U2 called their 1983 *Sunday Bloody Sunday* album *War*⁸⁰, not *Conflict*. A first possible

⁷⁷ A basic search on "war" and "Northern Ireland" on the *Google* search engine (www.google.com) returns about 5,599,000 pages, but the search "conflict" and "Northern Ireland" returns only about 2,540,000.

⁷⁸ Thatcher, Margaret (1979), Written Statement on Warrenpoint and Mountbatten murders, *Thatcher Archive*, <http://www.margaretthatcher.org/speeches/displaydocument.asp?docid=104135>.

⁷⁹ Blair, Tony (1999), Keynote speech by the Prime Minister, Mr. Tony Blair at Stranmillis University College, Belfast, Tuesday 15 June 1999, *CAIN Web Service*, <http://cain.ulst.ac.uk/events/peace/docs/tb15699.htm>.

⁸⁰ U2 (1983), *War*, London: Island Records Ltd.

reason for this prevalence could be that, back in the 1960s when the Troubles began, an armed conflict in Western Europe, with so many casualties and few hopes of reconciliation – at least until the 1990s – still evoked the ghosts from WWII. Other reasons will be investigated and hopefully identified in the course of this study.

So, although a definition of “war” and “conflict” has arbitrarily been provided based on what international law – a field of study that should reflect reality – holds, it still differs from both common and specific usage, just as linguistic definitions from a dictionary do not seem to reflect real life either completely or precisely. To overcome this impasse, a solution could be looking at the question not just from the point of view of mere *usage*, but also from that of *purpose*, so as to look at “language that is functional [...] language that is doing some job in some context, as opposed to isolated words or sentences”⁸¹. If, indeed, the descriptive aim is addressed from a functional perspective, as mediated from Halliday (1985)⁸² and Halliday and Matthiessen (2004)⁸³, the problem of finding absolute definitions will not be posed, since the “right” definition would be the definition suitable for the established purpose, or, as Halliday (1997) puts it, the one chosen with “the criterion of the ‘best tool for the job’”⁸⁴ in mind. The adoption of the systemic-functional approach for this study will be further outlined in § 2.4 on methodology; for the purpose of searching for the “best tool” to define the language of conflict, a functional view makes it necessary to clarify what applications are intended for it, which cannot be done without considering, even briefly, the role of two function-oriented fields of research, strictly related to the subject: Conflict studies and LSP studies.

⁸¹ Halliday, Michael A. K. and Hasan, Ruqaiya (1989), *Language: Context and Text: aspects of language in a social-semiotic perspective*, 2nd ed., Oxford: Oxford University Press, p. 10.

⁸² Halliday, Michael A. K. (1985), *An introduction to functional grammar*, London: Arnold.

⁸³ Halliday, Michael A.K. and Matthiessen, Christian M.I.M. (2004), *An introduction to functional grammar*, 3rd ed., London: Hodder Arnold.

⁸⁴ Halliday, Michael A. K. (1997), “Linguistics as metaphor”, in Simon-Vandenberg, Anne-Marie, Davids, Kristin and Noël, Dirk eds. (1997), *Reconnecting Language: Morphology and Syntax in Functional Perspectives*, Amsterdam, Philadelphia: Benjamins, p. 20.

§ 2.1.3 – Conflict studies and LSP studies

A wide bibliography now exists on the relatively new subject of Conflict Resolution and Mediation (also variously called Conflict studies or Peace studies), a subject that collects inputs from various disciplines, such as psychology, social and political sciences, law, economics and, not least, linguistics, and whose application to politics,

If we accept conventional genealogies of peace and conflict research, [...] is not yet fifty years old. Its origins have been traced back to many influences but its development as a relatively organised and coherent group of scholars began in Stanford and Michigan in the mid-1950s [...] ⁸⁵ Conflict studies, originated after WWII⁸⁶ as a reaction to cold war political stiffness, were taken aback by the fall of the Berlin wall: "If the Cold War was over and the arms race had stopped why did we need peace and conflict research anymore?"⁸⁷, but, "On the other hand, the end of the Cold War allowed for a rapid development of research in areas unrelated to nuclear weapons."⁸⁸ Thus, in the 1990s, with the new international scenario providing grounds for expecting more changes to the static post-WWII world order, Conflict studies quickly found political applications in non-nuclear related conflicts (e.g. in regions such as Northern Ireland, Israel/Palestine or, more recently, Iraq), that are hoped to transform soon into cooperation and then peace processes. In these cases, Conflict studies see "conflict as a dynamic process and peacebuilding as a multiplicity of interdependent elements and actions that contribute to the constructive transformation of the conflict"⁸⁹. But the 1990s also saw Conflict studies flourish in different fields from politics, such as business, medicine, society, and education, gaining reputation as a practical approach for harmonising relations in large communities, corporate realities or public institutions, bound to host internal conflict⁹⁰. In economics, it has encountered enormous popularity, especially since it merged with mathematical/behaviouristic views, like the game theory of strategic

⁸⁵ Ryan, Stephen (2003), "Peace and Conflict Studies Today", in *The Global Review of Ethnopolitics*, Vol. 2, n. 2 (January 2003), pp. 75-82.

⁸⁶ *A Journal of Conflict Resolution*, for instance, has been published by the University of Michigan ever since 1957.

⁸⁷ Ryan, Stephen (2003).

⁸⁸ Ryan, Stephen (2003).

⁸⁹ Lederach, John Paul (1997), *Building peace: sustainable reconciliation in divided societies*, Washington: United States Institute of Peace Press, p. 67.

⁹⁰ See, for example, Eadie, William F and Paul E. Nelson, eds. (2000), *The Language of Conflict and Resolution*, Thousand Oaks, London: Sage Publications.

interactions⁹¹, and has been used to design models for predicting economic outcomes⁹². In linguistics, Conflict studies have also been successfully received, especially by researchers of specialised discourse, who see "conflict as an essential feature of argumentative discourse"⁹³ and, as such, worth investigating and worth employing as a means to investigate. In fact, the nature of conflict in language has entered the wider debate on the nature of specialised languages: what are they? Are they genres, are they jargons? Are there any grounds for considering them epistemological frameworks *per se*? Or are they just convenient containers? This issue has been widely discussed and differently addressed and is under constant examination by researchers of languages for special purposes (LSP). For the present purposes, only a few remarks will be reported here, which can help provide a general idea of LSP:

- "[English for Special Purposes] ESP⁹⁴ is an approach to language teaching in which all decisions as to content and method are based on the learner's reason for learning"⁹⁵;
- ESP may be related to or designed for specific disciplines⁹⁶ [...] [and it] makes use of underlying methodology and activities of the discipline it serves⁹⁷;
- If in thinking of English for professional and occupational purposes, we need to accept that these purposes will change as the professions and occupations change, then it does not seem reasonable to account for them generically as stable sets of conventions.

⁹¹ The so called "game theory" was first developed in the 1940s as a mathematical model that could predict how players in a given strategic situation would act in order to gain the maximum profit. Its mathematical nature made it very popular among economists, while its behavioural approach was particularly successful in the social sciences, including Conflict studies. See Von Neumann, John and Morgenstern, Oskar (1947), *Theory of games and economic behaviour*, Princeton, Oxford: Princeton University Press.

⁹² See, for example, Vega-Redondo, Fernando (2003), *Economics and the theory of games*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

⁹³ Gotti, Maurizio, Dorothee Heller and Marina Dossena, eds. (2002), *Conflict and negotiation in specialized texts: selected papers of the 2. CERLIS Conference, Atti del convegno: Bergamo, 18-20 ottobre 2001*, Bern, Berlin, Bruxelles, Frankfurt/M., New York, Oxford, Wien: Peter Lang, reporting Werlich, Erich (1983), *A text grammar of English*, Heidelberg: Quelle & Meyer.

⁹⁴ ESP will often stand for LSP in this study, as one specific instance thereof.

⁹⁵ Hutchinson, Tom and Alan Waters (1987), *English for Specific Purposes: A learner-centered approach*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, p. 19.

⁹⁶ Dudley-Evans, Tony and St John, Mary Jo, (1998), *Developments in ESP: A multi-disciplinary approach*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

⁹⁷ Dudley-Evans and St John (1998).

These are important remarks because they reveal something about the fundamental characteristics of LSP, and may help clarify their nature: a LSP is no static theoretical framework, but rather a set of approaches of functional nature; these approaches may be multi-dimensional and may use practical means and theoretical frameworks derived from other fields of study; the objective of a LSP is to provide a multi-faceted tool to serve specific linguistic purposes; purposes may be usage-oriented (e.g. language teaching) or research-oriented (e.g. linguistic analysis). Dudley and Evans (1998) also specify that, as a multi-dimensional tool, a LSP has both absolute and variable characteristics, which explains the variety of specialised languages and purposes that can fall within the scope of LSP studies. If it is also considered that "Conflict and negotiation may [...] be studied as multi-dimensional phenomena"⁹⁸, then the language of conflict seems to show the necessary features to fit within the definition of a language for specific purposes. As such, it will be considered a composite communicative tool apt to implement or interpret a given conflict, where "composite" means making use of different communicative codes, be it spoken or written language, or other semiotic systems.

§ 2.1.4 – The language of conflict: a function-oriented definition

In line with all of the above observations, the definition of "language of conflict" adopted throughout this study will be

"the specific language of any given conflictual situation, displaying both generic features, common to other specialised languages, and features of its own, determined by the context underlying the specific situation and the nature of the texts considered".

When applied to the conflict in Northern Ireland, this definition will, for example, return "argumentation"⁹⁹ as a generic feature, and "IRA history" as a specific one. If the texts considered are language samples by two representatives of the Northern Ireland conflict, as in the case of the present research, its features will be linguistic in nature and will include, among the specific ones, "Sinn Féin terminology", or "Paisley's rhetorical style". However,

⁹⁸ Gotti, Heller and Dossena (2002), p. 11.

⁹⁹ A trait in common, for example, with the languages of politics, of society, of economics, etc.

other types of texts could be taken into account to exemplify the language of conflict in Northern Ireland, like, for instance, the Belfast murals from the Troubles: in this case, the expressive form would not be spoken or written language, but a different semiotic code, such as visual language; “argumentation” would still be a generic feature, but specific features could be “Loyalist subjects”, or “Republican colour use”¹⁰⁰.

In other words, the language of conflict as investigated in this study is a specialised language, the aim of which is to express or talk about conflict. The reason why it is possible to use it in a language-based study of Northern Ireland, like the present one, is because the situation there has changed from an “armed conflict” (expressed through fight and violence) to a “conflict” (a dialogic state expressible through language). The notion of language of conflict is a multi-dimensional, multi-disciplinary one, and is supported by the most recent results obtained in Conflict studies and LSP studies, within a functional-systemic perspective as proposed by Halliday (1985) and Halliday and Matthiessen (2004), so that it is no longer uncommon to find texts and research about it, be it applied to psychology, the social sciences, economics, politics or linguistics. Recognition to this subject of study is furthermore provided by the large number of academic and non-academic institutions founded over the past decades and dedicated to investigating the various aspects of conflict¹⁰¹.

§ 2.2 – Aim of the study

¹⁰⁰ See Rolston, Bill (1992), *Drawing Support: Murals in the North of Ireland*, Belfast: Beyond the Pale Publications; Rolston, Bill (1995), *Drawing Support 2: Murals of War and Peace*, Belfast: Beyond the Pale Publications.

¹⁰¹ Examples of which are:

the Stanford Center on International Conflict and Negotiation (SCICN), Stanford University, [http://www.stanford.edu/group/sccn/\(academic\)](http://www.stanford.edu/group/sccn/(academic)) ;

the Research Centre on Languages for Specific Purposes (Centro di Ricerca sui Linguaggi Specialistici or CERLIS, *University of Bergamo*, <http://dinamico.unibg.it/cerlis/page.aspx?p=3> (academic) ;

the Canadian organisation *Mediation Services: A Community Resource for Conflict Resolution*, <http://www.mediationserviceswpg.ca/> (non-profit);

the UN's Department of Peacekeeping Operations, United Nations Peacekeeping, *United Nations*, <http://www.un.org/Depts/dpko/dpko/index.asp> (non-profit);

the business Texas-based business *Chorda Conflict Management Services*, <http://www.chorda.com/> (for-profit).

The aim of the present study is to analyse aspects of the language of conflict in Northern Ireland. In particular, the following questions will be asked:

- how has the language of conflict in Northern Ireland evolved over the past decade? And
- how have language, politics and society influenced each other in the course of this process?

As an example of the language of conflict in Northern Ireland, two major local politicians have been selected, whose discourse, due to their outstanding past and present status in Northern Ireland politics, is thought to be highly representative of the subject: Gerry Adams, president of the Sinn Féin (SF) party and Ian Paisley, leader of the Democratic Unionist Party (DUP). The study of how the language of each of these politicians has evolved over time and the comparison between the two sets of results are expected to help answer the above questions.

It is hoped that the outcome of this analysis, as well as support the research on political discourse in Northern Ireland, will also offer a small contribution, though exclusively linguistic in nature, to the wider socio-political issue of how the conflict is going to evolve.

§ 2.3 – Research material

§ 2.3.1 – Origins

The material selected for the present analysis takes its origins from an initial interest in terrorist claims following attacks by the Italian extremist left-wing group *Brigate rosse* (Red Brigades). This was an armed group that spread terror in Italy during the so called *anni di piombo* (the “lead years”), between 1969 and 1980 approximately. During that period, the country was swept by multiple terrorist attacks and political killings – including the murder of a former Prime Minister and bombings of public places that killed dozens of civilians – carried out by a number of far-right and far-left groups, the biggest of which was the Red Brigades. Each attack was usually followed by a claim, a

“document” consisting of one or more pages, to be found in a public place such as a waste bin or a phone booth, or sent directly to the press. At times, more than one group would claim a certain attack, thus the relevant documents had to be analysed by experts from and outside the police, in order to establish their authenticity. It was a long and difficult task, and those who worked on political meaning had to share the original text with those working on physical evidence.

The Red Brigades were close to disbanded in the 1980s, following the arrest of many of its ideological and executive leaders. In the 1990s, a new generation of left-wing terrorists sprang up – apparently from nothing – and took up where their predecessors had left: the self-styled New Red Brigades assassinated two economists and government advisors, in 1999 and in 2002¹⁰², before being intercepted during a gun fight on a local train in 2003. After the 2002 murder of welfare expert Marco Biagi, a 26-page document claiming the terrorist act was e-mailed to various press agencies, newspapers and trade unions¹⁰³. Three decades had passed from the lead years: current technology allowed the terrorists to claim their attack via e-mail, and Italy’s main newspaper to publish a word by word analysis of the text, carried out electronically with computer-assisted means, only three days later¹⁰⁴.

The strict relationship between conflict and new technologies is a sign of the times and should not prove surprising for anyone by now: the use of information technology by and against terrorists, for instance, has been widely demonstrated after September 11th. But computer technology can also provide powerful and quick tools for linguistic analysis when conflict is expressed through a *text*, just as it happened with the Biagi claim in Italy in 2002.

An interest in *language expressing conflict* is exactly what inspired this study in the first place. The position of Northern Ireland as hosting one of the

¹⁰² Massimo D’Antona was shot in Rome on 20 May 1999, on his way to La Sapienza University, where he taught Labour Law. Marco Biagi was shot in Bologna on 19 March 2002, returning from Modena University, where he also taught Labour Law. Both were advisors to two different governments, working on devising new relationships between the government, unions, economy and society, and especially between public and private labour.

¹⁰³ Sarzanini, Fiorenza, “La rivendicazione delle Br arriva via Internet” [BR claim arrives via Internet], in *Corriere della Sera*, Milan, 22 March 2002.

¹⁰⁴ Stella, Gian Antonio, “Quindicimila parole, mai citati poveri e Meridione” [Fifteen thousand words: the poor and the South are never mentioned], in *Corriere della Sera*, Milan, 22 March 2002.

world's few armed conflicts in a Western country – where information technology, high levels of education and free press are available – makes it a strikingly rich resource of linguistic texts on conflict: press articles, academic publications, speeches, statements, surveys have always been part of the Northern Ireland conflict, even when guns and bombs led the talks. Today, with the current peace process well under way, language as an alternative means to violence is gaining more and more importance daily. A study on how the language of the Northern Ireland conflict evolved in the past decade – with hints as to where it is going in the future – is thought to be of help in understanding conflict dynamics and possible resolutions, and similarities may even be found with other conflictual situations in the world, including the one that initially inspired this analysis.

§ 2.3.2 – Selection

The extent of the centuries-long conflict between Ireland and Great Britain and the amount of texts written for and about it made it very difficult to select the appropriate material for this analysis. The interest in new technologies that spurred this study suggested making use of corpus linguistics tools, such as text analysers and concordancers; the interest in conflict required choosing texts from both sides that were both homogeneous and comparable.

The first criterion for limiting the choice was time: which period did the material have to take into account? Was it to be Cromwellian bills or *Guardian* online news articles? The latter, i.e. contemporary texts, perhaps coming in electronic form, seemed to be more compatible with the kind of tools that were to be employed. A diachronic perspective had been considered from the very start, which made it necessary to identify a considerable time span that was, at once, well limited. The Troubles period was an obvious choice and the first coming to mind: the twenty years between Bloody Sunday in 1972 and the three-day ceasefire called by the IRA in December 1992, which was to lead to the Downing Street Declaration the following year, seemed appropriate to give sufficient insight into the Northern Ireland conflict, and long enough to be

relevant diachronically. However, the significant and quick developments in the peace process, taking place even as this study was being planned, suggested that the years leading up to the present day could be another viable option, thus the choice of the peace process period, from 1993 till present, as the time reference for selecting the material.

As discussed in the previous paragraphs, with the beginning of the peace process, the Northern Ireland situation had changed (gradually) from an armed conflict into a political conflict. This considerably influenced the nature of the material to be chosen: IRA statements, for instance, were no longer one hundred per cent relevant, given that the struggle had emerged from paramilitary boundaries and moved onto a political level, and was now being conducted "in the open", within legal institutions, by legally acceptable representatives of Republicanism. Political texts seemed a necessary choice.

As for the authors, eligible political people and bodies (parties, associations, institutions, etc.) were numerous on both sides. However, first choice clearly had to go to the above mentioned "legally acceptable representatives of Republicanism" in the peace process, namely the political wing of IRA, Sinn Féin, which, with the early 1990s' secret talks between Gerry Adams of SF and John Hume of SDLP, consolidated its position as a primary actor in Northern Ireland politics. As Sinn Féin's opponent, the British government had to be excluded. First, a board of ministers is not comparable to a single political party; then, which of the two governments that have been in charge since the beginning of the peace process was to be chosen, John Major's or Tony Blair's? Each had a key role in starting and developing the cooperation. The very nature of the conflict in Northern Ireland suggested looking *within* Northern Ireland¹⁰⁵, at the opposite end of Sinn Féin's political standpoint. Although the major antagonist parties in the region have

¹⁰⁵ The British government's self-declared role, in contemporary times, has always been that of moderator and guarantor of the wish of the majority of the Northern Ireland people. The Downing Street Declaration reads: "The Prime Minister, on behalf of the British Government, reaffirms that they will uphold the democratic wish of the greater number of the people of Northern Ireland on the issue of whether they prefer to support the Union or a sovereign united Ireland.", Major, John and Reynolds, Albert (15 December 1993), *Joint Declaration on Peace*, par. 4, in *Policies, Department of Foreign Affairs, Government of Ireland*, <http://foreignaffairs.gov.ie/angloirish/jointdeclaration/default.asp>. Indeed, the issue has *always* been that the majority of the Northern Ireland people are unionist.

historically been the moderate Social Democratic and Labour Party (SDLP), on the Republican side, and the Ulster Unionist Party (UUP), on the Unionist side, both the SDLP and the UUP, despite the Peace Nobel prize awarded to their respective leaders following the Good Friday Agreement, saw their fortunes wane after 1998, in favour of the most extremist parties on both sides. So, as SF, always the most radical Republican party, gained credibility and influence among the Republican audience, so did the most radical Unionist party, the DUP, among Unionists. Both were minor parties, at Northern Ireland's political ends, firmly opposed, and fast rising in the local political scenario: the DUP was the party that, at the time the material for this study was being selected (2002), seemed the most appropriate to compare to SF. The victory of both the DUP and SF in the 2003 Assembly Election, which unexpectedly returned them as the first and second party in Northern Ireland, validated this choice; the trend has been confirmed in all of the following elections so far¹⁰⁶.

The final choice of texts fell on speeches, in particular the transcripts (full ones where possible) of the keynote speeches given by the party leaders at the parties' annual conferences. These seemed to meet all of the above indicated criteria:

- they belong to the peace process period;
- they are political texts;
- they come from the SF and the DUP;
- they are homogeneous, comparable and diachronically relevant.

In particular, these texts are homogeneous because they get written and given every year for and on the same occasion; they are comparable because they appear in exactly parallel contexts, i.e. the current political leader reads them to his exclusively favourable audience of party members at the party's general meeting; they are diachronically relevant because they are annual texts, commenting on the previous year's results and setting out the guidelines for the year to come. Their homogeneity is further strengthened by the fact that

¹⁰⁶ Since their first groundbreaking victory in the 2003 Northern Ireland Assembly Election, the DUP and SF came in first and second in the 2004 European Election, the 2005 Local Government Election and the 2005 Westminster General Election alike.

both parties have had the same leaders since 1993¹⁰⁷, both of whom are outstanding figures of Northern Ireland politics and long-experienced writers: Gerry Adams (SF), apart from being one of the masterminds behind the Downing Street Declaration and Good Friday Agreement, is a well known political and, recently, fiction writer¹⁰⁸; the Rev Dr Ian Paisley (DUP) is possibly the oldest among the main Unionist politicians, one of the UK's most successful members of the European Parliament, and an acclaimed religious writer.

§ 2.3.3 – Description

The search for the material selected proved very easy for some aspects and very hard for other.

Among the easiest texts to find were most of the "Presidential Addresses to the Sinn Féin Ard Fheis¹⁰⁹", which is what the leader's speeches to the SF's annual conference (Ard Fheis) are usually called, making it clear, by the use of 4 Gaelic words out of 8, the party's standpoint. However, SF is the only party in Ireland that is politically represented both in the Republic and in Northern Ireland, and the fight for the use of Irish Gaelic is one of its leading policies. Presidential Addresses appear on the party's official website as html pages (from which text files can be easily derived), in the Peace Process/Speeches section. The SF website¹¹⁰ is simply, if not always logically, structured, which makes it easy to access this section after a few tries. Here, the speeches from 1994 to 2004, with the exception of the 1993 and 2002 ones, could be integrally retrieved.

Much harder was to find the "Leader's Speeches to the DUP Annual Conferences". At the time when the first attempts were made to search for them, the DUP had two official websites, one being www.dup.org.uk, the other www.dup2win.com. The first one hosted an edited version of the 1998 speech and, later, the 2004 speech; the second one, which is currently the only DUP's

¹⁰⁷ Adams has been SF's President since 1983, Paisley founded the DUP in 1971 and has been its leader ever since.

¹⁰⁸ To the many political writings by Gerry Adams, a recent collection of short stories should also be added: Adams, Gerry (2001), *The Street and Other Stories*, Dingle: Brandon Books.

¹⁰⁹ "Ardfheiseanna" actually being the plural of Ard Fheis.

¹¹⁰ *Sinn Féin*, www.sinnfein.ie

website¹¹¹, did not contain any of the relevant speeches; both were particularly difficult to browse and did not offer a detailed enough search engine. Two more speeches, edited versions from 1999 and 2002, were found on the online edition of the *Irish Times*¹¹². However, due to the specific nature of these texts, it was impossible to retrieve any other DUP or SF speeches in or from Italy: contacting the parties was very easy; not so obtaining detailed help from them. Telephone calls, e-mails and letters received late and vague replies.

More useful were the indications of variously contacted individual people, among whom Prof. Ivar McGrath of University College, Dublin, SF Belfast County Councillor Tom Hartley and Rev Dr. Ian Paisley: as they all predicted, most other speeches could be located by visiting the Linen Hall Library in Belfast, which is reputedly the world's largest source of texts about the conflict in Northern Ireland and whose staff, particularly Dr Kris Brown of the Political Collection, were extremely helpful. Speeches found at the Linen Hall Library in May 2004 are:

DUP speeches from 1984, 1990, 1991, 1993, 1994, 1995, 1996 (edited), 1997, 2000 and 2001;

SF speeches from 1984 and 1993.

All of the Linen Hall Library texts were paper copies, so they had to be scanned and made into electronic files in order to prepare them for computer-assisted analysis. This was a particularly long process, the result of which can be summed up as indicated in Table 1.

At the time of writing, it has not been possible to retrieve any other speeches. Thus, in order to obtain two comparable corpora, only years in which speeches by both parties are present were considered, resulting in the two corpora as described in Table 2. Two parallel corpora of 10 speeches each, from ten different years comprised between 1993 and 2004, make up the material for the present analysis. Although the annual nature of the speeches makes these quantitatively small corpora, the density of each one – providing the balance of the previous year and the action plan for the following one – is

¹¹¹ The www.dup.org.uk website has now been discontinued.

¹¹² *The Irish Times*, www.ireland.com

believed to make it qualitatively relevant, especially as the analysis intends to use corpus linguistics as a tool and not as its objective¹¹³. The two 1984 speeches (the oldest found while researching at the Linen Hall Library) may be kept as “control elements”, since they are from almost ten years before the oldest speeches in the corpora – a time when the peace process was not even in sight – and might provide useful to understand what has changed between the Troubles period and the peace process.

The word count reported in the table had to take into account a typical feature of Adams’ speeches: most of them include a few Irish Gaelic words, phrases and sentences. So, for word counts and computer aided analysis, the original texts, including Gaelic, were used; for the non-computer aided analysis, edited versions of the texts, i.e. with the Gaelic parts translated into English, have been considered. All computer-aided operations have been carried out with WordSmith Tools 4.0¹¹⁴. A copy of all the speeches listed in Table 2 is attached.

§ 2.4 – Methodology

§ 2.4.1 – Theoretical frameworks

As mentioned in the previous paragraphs, the general approach adopted for this study is a functional one, i.e. one concerned with the pragmatic aspects of language, with particular reference to Michael Halliday’s systemic-functional linguistics. For the purpose of textual analysis, the main proposed theoretical framework is Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA). This, to briefly outline its place in linguistic philosophy, stems from the post-structuralist view originated in France during the 1960s. Post-structuralism¹¹⁵ shared with Ferdinand de Saussure’s structuralist theory the belief that the one privileged means to access reality is language, which is constituted by a network of single signs (*langue*), whose meaning is determined by their exclusive relationship with one

¹¹³ See § 2.4 on methodology.

¹¹⁴ Scott, Mike (2004), *Oxford WordSmith Tools 4.0*, Oxford: Oxford University Press.

¹¹⁵ Post-structuralist theorists include adherents such as Claude Lévi-Strauss, Jacques Derrida, Roland Barthes and Michel Foucault, to mention a few.

another (i.e. a sign is defined by what other signs are not), while *parole* is the manifestation of *langue* in context¹¹⁶. Unlike structuralism, though, it does not share Saussure's view as *langue* as a fixed network of signs, but maintains that the relations between them may be changed by language in context (*parole*), thereby focussing on this as the level where meaning is defined and redefined constantly. Negotiation and power are indeed key terms of post-structuralist discourse theory as set out by Foucault, who sees (social) meaning as the outcome of a struggle between contrasting powers, the strongest of which, by winning over the others, renegotiates it to its advantage. Foucault's primary concern, certainly influenced by the cold war order in which he lived, was with ideologies and society, rather than language, but his notion of discourse as "a limited number of statements for which a group of conditions of existence can be defined [...] posing its own limits, its divisions, its transformations"¹¹⁷ was the basis from which the linguistic notion of discourse was developed by founders of CDA.

Among these, Norman Fairclough seems to provide the most articulated (and applicable) framework within CDA theory. He defines linguistic discourse as a social practice which contributes to shaping the social world, but is at the same time influenced and shaped by other non-linguistic social practices¹¹⁸. Linguistic discourse, henceforth referred to as simply "discourse", comprises both linguistic (written and spoken language) and visual (gestures and images) semiotic systems¹¹⁹; however, the existence of discourses of non-linguistic nature is also acknowledged. Unlike Foucault, in whose ideology-dominated vision power rules out any social changes except those imposed on the weakest by the strongest, Fairclough maintains that even if discourse is ruled by power(s), social subjects retain their own negotiating power, and may use

¹¹⁶ The reference is naturally to Saussure's *Course*, first published as one text in 1916: De Saussure, Ferdinand (1966), *Course in general linguistics*, Bally, Charler and Sechehaye, Albert (eds.) in collab. with Riedlinger, Albert, translated by Baskin, Wade, New York, St. Louis, San Francisco, Toronto, London, Sydney: McGraw-Hill Book Company.

¹¹⁷ Foucault, Michel (1972), *Archaeology of knowledge*, transl. by Sheridan Smith, Alan M., London, New York: Routledge, p. 119.

¹¹⁸ Fairclough, Norman (1992), *Discourse and social change*, Cambridge: Polity Press. Fairclough, Norman (1995), *Critical discourse analysis: The Critical Study of Language*, London: Longman.

¹¹⁹ Chouliaraki, Lillie and Fairclough, Norman (1999), *Discourse in Late Modernity*, Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press. Such a definition is considered particularly applicable in the case of the Northern Ireland conflict, which is expressed, as mentioned in par. 2.1.4, also through the visual language of murals.

discourse to renegotiate their social position against the dominant ideology¹²⁰. In earlier publications¹²¹, he draws a well-known three dimensional model for representing discourse, according to which discursive practice mediates between texts and social practice:

1. text ↔ 2. discursive practice ↔ 3. social practice¹²².

It is "opacity of these relationships between discourse and society [...] [the factor] securing power and hegemony"¹²³. Fairclough's view as discourse as a tool for implementing social change is seen as particularly applicable for analysing the political speeches constituting this study's material.

At the same time, Teun Van Dijk's view of CDA is also taken into account. This varies from Fairclough's for adopting a socio-cognitive stance, thus introducing cognitive structures, i.e. ideological "filters" of social groups influencing their understanding of society, as further mediating between discursive practice and social practice:

1. text ↔ 2. discursive practice ↔ 3. *cognitive structures* ↔ 4. social practice.

While for Fairclough ideologies are "tied to action, and [...] judged in terms of their social effects rather than their truth values"¹²⁴, therefore only verifiable in terms of effects, for Van Dijk they are "abstract mental systems that organize [...] socially shared attitudes"¹²⁵, i.e. they are innate structural features of the human mind. However, Van Dijk shows that a "sociocognitive orientation [may] be embedded in a discourse analytical framework"¹²⁶, and further specifies that

beliefs and ideological belief systems need to be accounted for *also, though not exclusively*, in terms of mental representations and eventually in terms of neurobiological structures of the brain [...]. On the contrary, what we are after is to know precisely how elements of societal structure (such as groups, institutions, power or inequality), as well as the everyday social practices of discourse and other forms of interaction among people as group members, are systematically related to the socially constructed dimensions of their minds¹²⁷.

¹²⁰ Fairclough, Norman (1989), *Language and Power*, New York, London: Longman, p. 46.

¹²¹ Fairclough (1992), p. 73.

¹²² Free re-elaboration of Fairclough (1992)'s model.

¹²³ Fairclough, Norman (1993), "Critical discourse analysis and the marketisation of public discourse: the universities", in *Discourse and Society*, 4: 133-168, p. 135.

¹²⁴ Fairclough, Norman (1995), p. 76.

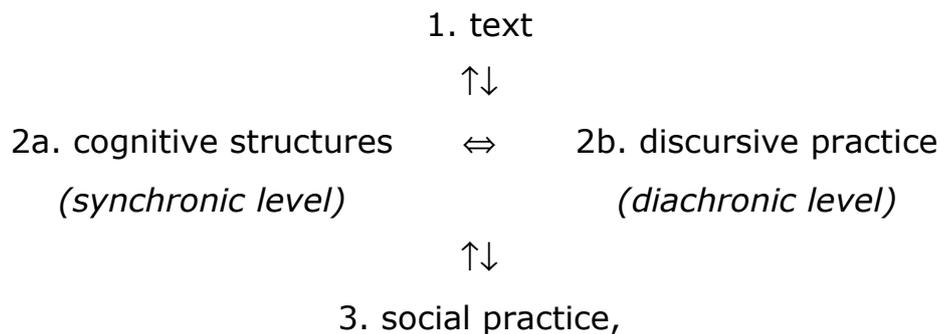
¹²⁵ Van Dijk, Teun (1995), "Discourse analysis as ideology analysis", in Schäffner, Christina and Wenden, Anita L. (eds.), *Language and Peace*, Aldershot: Dartmouth Publishing, p. 18.

¹²⁶ Van Dijk, Teun (1995), "Opinions and ideologies in the press", in Bell, Allan and Garrett, Peter (1998), *Approaches to Media Discourse*, Oxford, Malden: Blackwell, p. 22. See also Van Dijk, Teun (1995), "Discourse semantics and ideology", in *Discourse and Society*, 6: 243-289.

¹²⁷ Van Dijk, Teun (1995), p. 22, italics in the original.

Terms like “mind” and “neurobiological structures” immediately recall George Lakoff’s cognitive linguistics studies on “conceptual metaphors”¹²⁸ and in particular his “Embodied mind thesis”¹²⁹, maintaining, in brief, that thought and language function through metaphors and that reality can never be objectively understood, but is the result of metaphorical interpretations. Though the debate on mind, language and ideology underlies all of CDA recent developments, theoretical issues are not the focus of this study, which is primarily linguistic and analytical in nature. For this reason, it is suggested here that the previously underlined theoretical differences between Fairclough’s and Van Dijk’s positions should not be seen as totally contrasting, but, for practical (analytical) purposes, should instead be considered complementary.

The theoretical framework proposed for adoption in this study would then be:



suggesting that ideological restraints are indeed present in certain amounts and do influence a social group’s production and reception of texts, but also that ideologies may always be renegotiated – even to a wide extent – in discursive practice, with practical effects on the balance of social powers. Rather, the point being made is that cognitive structures, being subjective, should be looked at synchronically, while discursive practice expresses itself diachronically. Justification for this position may be synthetically sought in that internal and external contexts do represent innate filters, as every individual

¹²⁸ Lakoff’s theory was first clearly outlined in Lakoff, George and Johnson, Mark (1980), *Metaphors we live by*, Chicago, London: University of Chicago Press.

¹²⁹ Lakoff, George and Johnson, Mark (1999), *Philosophy in the Flesh: the Embodied Mind and its Challenge to Western Thought*, New York: Basic Books.

belongs to one or more social groups and his language and thought are objectively influenced both by his group(s)'s prejudice and by prejudice derived from personal experience; at the same time, history and evolution alone are proof that prejudice is dynamically negotiated, which indicates that there is always space, no matter how limited by more or less strong ideologies, for social change. No hope for conflict evolution and resolution could otherwise be allowed, which is ethically against the motive and scope behind this study.

§ 2.4.2 – Practical approaches

Bearing in mind the previously outlined theoretical assumptions, the following analysis is mostly adapted from Fairclough (2003)¹³⁰, a book that, though always stressing the limits of linguistic-only analyses, i.e. those not considering interactions of texts with the social world, provides excellent practical suggestions as to what CDA can actually consist in¹³¹, at textual level, and reports the author's latest theoretical developments. Among these, the most interesting one is the introduction of a "critical realist" philosophical perspective, which, while asserting the ontological independence of reality irrespective of its human representations, is nonetheless better inclined towards the role of cognition in determining our knowledge of reality¹³². As a result, the terminology adopted in Fairclough (2003: p. 21 ff) includes the concepts of "social structures" (macro structures in society, such as economic structures) and "social events" (texts), which are mediated by "social practices" (selective ways to control social relations and communication). Another innovation is the evolution of the "order of discourse" concept, derived from Foucault¹³³, which Fairclough defined, in 1998, as "a structured configuration of genres and discourses (and *maybe* other elements, such as

¹³⁰ Fairclough, Norman (2003), *Analysing Discourse: Textual analysis for social research*, London, New York: Routledge.

¹³¹ The author considers it his personal "manifesto" of CDA. See Fairclough, Norman (2003), p. 191 ff.

¹³² Names variously associated to Critical Realism are Roy Wood Sellars, George Santayana, Arthur Lovejoy and, lately, Roy Bhaskar, to whom Fairclough (2003) makes direct reference.

¹³³ Foucault, Michel (1981), "The order of discourse", in Young, Robert J.C. (ed.), *Untying the text: A post-structuralist reader*, London, New York: Routledge.

voices, register, *styles*) associated with a given social domain"¹³⁴. In his 2003 book, he definitely opts for including styles into the category: "An order of discourse is a network of social practices in its language aspect. The elements of orders of discourse are [...] *discourses, genres, styles*"¹³⁵. The addition of style, which is "realized in quite a range of linguistic features. First, phonological features [...]. Second, vocabulary and metaphor [...]. [...] And] also involves an interplay between language and 'body language'"¹³⁶ is seen as particularly relevant for an analysis of political speeches.

Orders of discourse and their constituents, then, as expressions of social practices, will be the objective of the present analysis. Fairclough (2003: 191-194) suggests a detailed checklist for carrying out textual CDA:

- Social events
- Genre
- Difference
- Intertextuality
- Assumptions
- Semantic/grammatical relations between sentences and clauses
- Exchanges, speech functions and grammatical mood
- Discourses
- Representation of social events
- Styles
- Modality
- Evaluation

The two corpora making up the material for this study present both common and specific features, which will be treated at different times. Not all of these features will be considered for analysis, and some will be discussed more in detail than others or not exactly as Fairclough suggests, as his is supposed to be a reference check list. A proposed analytical structure is:

1. Social Events and Discourses;

¹³⁴ Fairclough, Norman (1998), "Political Discourse in the Media: An Analytical Framework", in Bell and Garrett (1998), p. 145, italics added.

¹³⁵ Fairclough, Norman (2003), p. 24, italics added.

¹³⁶ Fairclough, Norman (2003), p. 162.

2. Genre and Speech Functions;
3. Semantic aspects: Difference, Assumptions, Styles;
4. Syntactic aspects and Exchanges.

Modality and Evaluation will not be seen in detail, as the particular nature of the AC and PC speeches makes it quite clear that both speakers totally commit themselves to the truth of their assertions, and what their values are. Special attention, instead, will be given to semantic aspects (with the use of corpus linguistic tools for determining keywords and frequency lists), as this is thought to be the quality that provides the best insight into other features such as Difference, Assumptions and, especially, personal Styles. The use of rhetoric (Exchanges) will be discussed together with the Syntactic Aspects.

In the tradition of CDA, which sees itself as a multi-disciplinary “toolbox” for studying discourse and society, the following analysis may at all times draw upon different approaches and different fields for practical purposes.

Chapter 3 – The conflict in language: a CDA-based study

§ 3.1 – Social events, discourses

§ 3.1.1 – Social events

The speeches composing the two parallel corpora, henceforth called Adams corpus (AC) and Paisley corpus (PC), were given on the occasion of the two parties' (SF and DUP) annual conferences. These are yearly events, usually taking place in a big hotel's conference room, held for and by the party members. Although the press and other guests – like representatives from other parties – may attend and usually do, as a rule the audience is favourable to the speakers, and the whole event takes place to celebrate and strengthen the party, even when there is internal conflict or critical decisions need to be taken. Thus, speakers and public share the same general ideologies (individual variation must be accounted for, of course), as well as the same political knowledge, which is allegedly greater than the man in the street's: e.g. although a convinced SF voter may be well informed about the current political situation, he may not know anything about the party's internal struggles, while a party member, allegedly, does. This makes party conferences selected events, with a privileged audience, represented by the party's strongest political and, often, financial supporters, to whom the party leadership is supposed to break news and plans first; at the same time, consensus is assumed, but not guaranteed, and must always be consolidated and, at difficult times, even renegotiated.

Though it has also been held elsewhere¹³⁷, the Sinn Fein's Ard Fheis' traditional location has always been Dublin city, while the Democratic Unionist Party's annual conferences have usually taken place in Belfast. These logistical facts already tell different narratives. SF is an international party, politically

¹³⁷ For example, the 1993 Ard Fheis took place in Dundalk, Co. Louth, close to the border with Northern Ireland.

active both in Éire¹³⁸ and in one of the United Kingdom's (UK) regions, and Dublin is an obviously symbolic choice: it is the city of the 1916 Easter Rising and the recognised capital city of Ireland, which, in traditional SF policy, is one nation and should be one official country. The DUP is a deeply Northern Ireland-rooted party, with Belfast being its main city and a symbol – possibly second only to Bloody Sunday Derry – of the local conflict. DUP conferences, however, are known to have been held in other locations, for instance in Dungannon, Co. Tyrone, in 1994 – always within Northern Ireland's borders; the party's known populist attitude and its leader's popularity among non-urban audiences may be a reason for leaving the traditional stronghold and decentring the meeting. The long "chain of events"¹³⁹ complementing the social events in question (party leader's speeches) includes the organisation, the invitations, the advertising, the reception, keynote speeches, debates, interventions, lunches/dinners/coffee breaks, press coverage, comments, etc., but these will not be treated in detail here.

§ 3.1.2 – Discourses

Social practices involved here are numerous. At a macro level, political discourse is being represented. Another underlying macro discourse is the Northern Ireland peace process discourse. At more specific levels, Northern Ireland political discourse, Republican/Unionist political discourse and SF/DUP political discourse are present. Other overlapping macro discourses are British political discourse (SF won 5 Westminster seats in the 2005 general election, DUP won 9), British foreign policy discourse (the British government and the Irish government both signed the Good Friday Agreement in 1998), European Union political discourse (SF and the DUP have one MEP each; the EU had a Programme for Peace and Reconciliation in Northern Ireland and the Border Region of Ireland 2000-2004, and currently has a Northern Ireland Transitional Objective Programme "Building Sustainable Prosperity" 2000-2006, both

¹³⁸ This will also be referred to as the "Republic of Ireland" or, in simple everyday language, "the Republic", to differentiate it from Northern Ireland.

¹³⁹ Fairclough, Norman (2003), p. 196.

stemming from the peace process). All of these different discourses overlap, creating a network of social practices influencing perception: whoever listened to the speeches in the AC and PC was bound to share such discourses, and “filter” the information according to his social group(s)’s and personal positions on the various issues.

A list of the topics and issues touched upon by each speaker in his speeches is available in Table 3. As can be seen, main social discourses are:

- *SF/DUP party internal issues*: regarding political views and decisions within each party; overlapping with
- *Republican/Unionist internal issues*: decisions/issues in common with other parties on the same political side; overlapping with
- *Home affairs issues*: consisting of social problems of all kinds, like employment, women's rights, security, economy, etc.; overlapping with
- *Anglo-Irish issues*: regarding the relations between Éire, Northern Ireland and the UK; overlapping with
- *Peace process issues*: deriving strictly from the 1998 Good Friday Agreement; overlapping with
- *Foreign affairs issues*: pertaining to countries other than Éire, Northern Ireland and the UK.

Although differently distributed and ordered, all of the above discourses are present in both corpora, with semantic relations strictly connecting them: “peace process”, “hunger strike”, “IRA/Sinn Féin” are just a few frequent collocations, which will be seen in more detail when discussing semantic and syntactic aspects. What is essential is that both speakers and both audiences ultimately share the same reality *and* the same network of discourses; it is their different social practices that influence the way they perceive texts.

§ 3.2 – Genre and Speech Functions

§ 3.2.1 – Genre

“Speech” is the macro-genre to which the AC and PC texts pertain. Possible further sub-categorisations are: political speeches, party speeches, leaders’ speeches, annual party conference speeches.

Schäffner (1997) specifies that “The characterisation of a text as political can be based on functional and thematic criteria”¹⁴⁰, i.e. what makes a text political may be either its function (to orient its readers politically), or its contents (it may be *about* politics, but not be politically oriented), or both. In practice, though, the distinction is not as clear-cut as it seems: for example, can a text on economics which supports a certain economic view, such as protectionism or the development of the New Economy, be understood as political because it supports/opposes a policy promoted/discouraged by the government? Can a textbook on the history of politics be completely objective and not convey any of the author’s views? Again, it is apparent that texts can be assigned political functions, irrespective of their original intention, depending on the reader’s set of social practices. In the present case, the political nature of the AC and PC is both function- and theme-based. Also evident is their belonging to the speech genre. However, the AC and PC texts present specific features worth discussing.

The speech genre is complex because it has a double nature: spoken and written. By definition, a speech is a text delivered orally by (no more than) one speaker to an audience (of at least one person), it may be about any topic and subject, it has no time limits (although common practice and sense suggest some), it is irreproducible (unicity and uniqueness of addresser, addressee, space and time), and its aim is persuading (it is one among rhetoric’s favoured genres). A text so defined, due to its oral nature, is volatile; that is when its written nature comes into play: speeches, since at least ancient Greek times, apart from having been transcribed, have of course also been written¹⁴¹ and

¹⁴⁰ Schäffner, Christina (1997), “Editorial: Political Speeches and Discourse Analysis”, in Schäffner, Christina ed. (1997), *Analysing Political Speeches*, Clevedon, Philadelphia, Toronto, Sydney, Johannesburg: Multilingual Matters Ltd, p. 2.

¹⁴¹ See par. 2.3. on speech writers.

rehearsed in view of delivery, thus sharing features from both spoken (oratorical techniques, improvisation, body language, etc.) and written (careful planning, internal and external references, authorship issues, etc.) language. The version of the speeches considered for the present analysis is the written one (transcripts), as circulated by the SF and the DP after delivery, for a number of reasons: no availability of video/audio footage (written versions were already difficult to locate), ease of handling, reproducibility. Drawbacks are that some of the features cannot be studied, i.e. phonological features, gestures, audience feedback and other stylistic aspects linked to the theatrical side of the event, although personal styles are nonetheless detectable in written language and will be addressed in the relevant paragraph (§3.3).

As mentioned earlier, speeches - political speeches in particular - are rhetoric's genre *par excellence*. Cicero's classical normative division of rhetorical speeches into five canons¹⁴², *inventio* [uncovering], *dispositio* [arranging], *elocutio* [speaking], *memoria* [reminding] and *pronunciatio* [delivering], would probably appear outdated in most linguistic studies today and perhaps sound sinister, if "Even some of those who engage in its study often treat it [rhetoric] as, at best, the art of manipulation of audiences, or of promoting a reality or truth discovered through other means: a kind of icing to a cake that is produced by real thought."¹⁴³ Notwithstanding the persuasive (perhaps even "manipulative") scope behind Gerry Adams' and Ian Paisley's speeches, unless a detailed rhetorical study is to be carried out, which is not the present case, Cicero's old structure seems accurate enough for a macro description of the speech genre. In fact, on a large scale, Adams and Paisley's rhetoric is still essentially arranged around: 1) posing the problem, 2) arranging the arguments, 3) exposing the arguments suitably, 4) summing up, 5) delivering the speech. More in particular, as can be inferred by looking at Table 3, the AC and PC speeches follow a structure essentially composed of: a) address/celebration of supporters; b) exposure of various issues; c) solutions/positions; d) future plans/appeals. Even if this does not always

¹⁴² Cicero, Marcus T., *De inventione*, Greco, Maria ed. transl. (1998), Galatina: Mario Congedo.

¹⁴³ Booth, Wayne C. (2004), *The Rhetoric of Rhetoric: The Quest for Effective Communication*, Malden, Oxford, Carlton: Blackwell Publishing, p. ix.

happen in Cicero's strict order, the nature and function of the rhetorical features in the AC and PC definitely prove these texts to belong to the political speech genre.

Finally, it is worth noting that various other genres appear in limited quantity, creating "genre chains"¹⁴⁴. The most evident contamination, apart from the social speech and war speech genres, upon which Adams and Paisley, respectively, largely draw, is the DUP's leader religious sermon genre, which makes up at least one third of most of his speeches and often provides Paisley with ready-to-use rhetorical means.

§ 3.2.2 – Speech Functions and Grammatical Mood

The primary function of a political speech, according to Roman Jakobson¹⁴⁵, is the conative function, with which the author tries to exert persuasion on the audience. A suggested quantitative distribution of language functions¹⁴⁶ in the speech genre is: conative first; then referential and emotive; phatic, poetic and metalingual last. With reference to Table 3, the first function is well expressed in the final appeals made by the speakers to their audiences, with which they invite them to support and follow them in their policies/plans for the following year. The referential function is oriented towards the context, to which constant references are made, that can only be understood because speaker and audience share the same social practices: in the sentence "Sinn Féin was founded here in the Rotunda on the 28th November 1905"¹⁴⁷, for instance, the deictic "here" refers to the very place where Adams is speaking and his public are standing. The emotive function, by which the author/speaker expresses his emotions, feelings or simply his ideas, recurs throughout all of the texts, and is especially signalled by the wide use of the first person singular, as well as by the presence of personal narrations, like the

¹⁴⁴ Fairclough, Norman (2003), p. 192.

¹⁴⁵ For a summary of Jakobson's communicative model: Jakobson, Roman (1960), "Concluding statement: Linguistics and Poetics", in Sebeok, Thomas A. ed. (1960), *Style in Language*, New York: Wiley, p. 357.

¹⁴⁶ According to Jakobson (1960).

¹⁴⁷ Adams, Gerry (1996), *Presidential Address to the Sinn Féin Ard Fheis 1996*, l. 7.

commemoration of the Hunger Strike in the AC 2001 speech, or the narration of Paisley's Orangeist youth in the PC 1993 speech. A large use of the phatic function, employed to relate directly to the audience, is another typical feature of the public speech genre, but examples would appear in the oral event rather than in the written version, in which phatic instances would not be included (if considering the script) or would be omitted (if considering the transcript). Instances of the poetic function, dealing with the aesthetic or formal aspects of the text, may be found here and there in the corpora, when poems and narrations by the speakers and other authors are included, or when Paisley mixes the political with the religious speech genre, employing outdated/Biblical vocabulary and syntax to recreate the sermon effect. Finally, the metalingual function (language talking about language) is not often present in either corpus; Adams often mentions language when claiming the right to Irish language use, but he treats the subject from a social point of view rather than linguistically.

As mentioned above, the speeches in the present study are considered in their written form. Once recorded (which today includes audio and video footage), an oral text such as a speech immediately becomes reproducible and falsifiable, with the peculiarity that current technology also has the great (dis)advantage of making a recorded text immediately available to a potentially worldwide audience. But, since much of the conative power of a speech – to the speakers' knowledge – still lies in the uniqueness of its oral delivery, availability often turns out to be a shortcoming, especially when it *anticipates* delivery. Therefore, an embargo may be imposed on the written version, to be lifted usually after the time of the oral delivery, which in most official events is the *only* valid version, i.e. it constitutes a "performative utterance" in John Austin's understanding¹⁴⁸. It is the case of the AC and PC speeches, usually embargoed to protect the important news regarding new policies and trends that a leader breaks at annual conferences to his loyalest supporters, considering that part of their consensus lies exactly in their actual

¹⁴⁸ Austin, John L. (1976), Urmson, James O. and Sbisà, Marina eds., *How to do things with words: the William James lectures delivered at Harvard University in 1955*, 2 ed., London: Oxford University Press.

and perceived sense of being a privileged audience. On the other hand, speech texts may be purposefully made public and circulated beforehand, whenever wide diffusion (even redundancy) is thought to be of advantage; in fact,

“media coverage has become an essential feature of contemporary speeches. In the current political context [...], ‘being there’ in the media, or making sure that the media will report on one’s speech event, has become more important than persuading the audience that happens to be around. The success of a public speech can no longer be measured by the applause of the people present, which means that the orator’s feedback is received after the next day’s media coverage, but no sooner than the television evening news.”¹⁴⁹

The conative function, today, is thus extended to the second-in-line addressee of any public speech: the media and their close-to-universal public.

Grammatical mood, in terms of declarative, interrogative or imperative quality of the texts, cannot be assigned unilaterally to these corpora, as they are made by individual texts, each of which contains, due to their genre, a mixture of the three. Generally speaking, the declarative mood is stronger, especially in Adams, who structures his speeches so as to sum up the previous year and describe the plans for the future one, but rhetoric questions and imperative invocations are also frequent, as they always close the speeches.

¹⁴⁹ Sauer, Christopher (1997), “Echoes from Abroad – Speeches for the Domestic Audience: Queen Beatrix’ Address to the Israeli Parliament”, in Schäffner, Christina ed. (1997), *Analysing Political Speeches*, Clevedon, Philadelphia, Toronto, Sydney, Johannesburg: Multilingual Matters Ltd, p. 37.

§ 3.3 – Semantic aspects: Difference, Assumptions, Styles

The semantic aspects of the AC and PC are thought to be particularly relevant for the aim of this study, in that, through the analysis of their features and variation over the years, it is possible to identify discourse patterns and to make hypotheses as to their possible future developments.

Table 4 reports the most frequent lexical words¹⁵⁰ in both corpora, obtained from the frequency lists returned by running WordSmith Tools. Even a simple analysis as this allows to make a few interesting observations.

First, each speaker most frequently addresses the “other” side, i.e. “British” in the case of Adams, “Ireland” in the case of Paisley. “British” is an adjective, and the noun that most frequently (137 times) goes with it (its first right-hand collocate or R1) is “government”, the no. 6 word in Table 4 AC list. On the other hand, the frequency of “Ireland” must of course be broken down into occurrences with “Northern”, as in “Northern Ireland”, and by itself, i.e. meaning the Republic of Ireland. If it is considered that “Northern” appears 153 times, each of which as the first left-hand collocate (L1) of “Ireland”, it is easily deduced that Paisley addresses his political “enemy” $210 - 153 = 57$ times. In the PC, reference to the other side is also indicated by the appearance of the word “Sinn” (“Fein” is not included, but it comes immediately after, in 11th position), of course referring to Sinn Féin. The DUP is not amongst the ten most quoted lexical words in the AC, on the contrary: it occurs 11 times, i.e. 0,01%.

Second in line is the concern for each speaker’s own side: in the AC, “Irish” is the second most frequent word, appearing 356 times, its most frequent R1 collocates being “people” (40), “government” (25) and “Republicans” (16). In the PC, the second most frequent word is “Unionist”, which is preferred to “Loyalist” (6 times, 0.02%) or “British” (53 times 0.16%)

¹⁵⁰ For a detailed definition of “word”, “lemma”, “word form”, “collocation” and other corpus studies-related words, see Stubbs, Michael (2001), *Words and Phrases: Corpus Studies of Lexical Semantics*, Oxford, Malden: Blackwell Publishers, p. 49. The term “lexical word” is preferred here to indicate minimum units of meaning (even though they may belong to the same lemma, e.g. “Unionist” and “Unionism”).

or even "Protestant" (20 times, 0.06%), thus underlying Paisley's political concept of identity, even stronger than his strong religious identity.

Differences may be found in Adams, a supporter and maker of it, mentioning the "peace process" (appearing 72 times as a phrase), contrarily to Paisley, mentioning it only 6 times. However, Paisley often refers to the IRA (128 times, 0.39%), while the AC does not have it among its 10 most frequent occurrences, perhaps due to Adams' ever increasing effort to dissociate his and his party's name from that of the Republican paramilitaries. It should also be added that in all of the PC occurrences, the IRA is mentioned only in negative (condemning, despising) tones, while in the AC it is often quoted to commemorate its dead members.

It is the keywords, however, that allow making the most interesting semantic reflections about these corpora. Mike Scott defines keywords as "those whose frequency is unusually high in comparison with some norm"¹⁵¹. As "norm", the reference corpus adopted has been the Oxford University Press' British National Corpus¹⁵². Table 5 reports the corpora's main keywords.

Keywords speak by themselves: it would just suffice to point out the relevant use by Paisley, but not by Adams, of "Ulster" (4th position), which is a word of Protestant usage and almost a stereotypical way of distinguishing between Republican/Catholic and Loyalist/Protestant speakers¹⁵³. Clearly evident is also the presence of Irish Gaelic words in Adams ("Féin" 1st position, "Sinn" 2nd position, "agus" 10th position, "na" 20th position¹⁵⁴), which of course never appear in Paisley. Of these Irish words, two are "Sinn" and "Féin", i.e. the name of Adam's party, which is, as seen above, frequently quoted; Paisley, on the other hand, does not frequently mention his own party, yet he does mention Sinn Féin often. "Our" (4th position) and "we" (8th position) are keywords for Adams, who, as leader of a traditionally left wing party, always

¹⁵¹ Scott, Mike (2004), *Help Pages, WordSmith Tools 4.0*, Oxford: Oxford University Press.

¹⁵² In particular, the wordlist used was derived from the BNC using WordSmith Tools 4.0 and made available as a downloadable file by Mike Scott on his website: *Downloading BNC, WordSmith Tools, Mike Scott's Web*, <http://www.lexically.net/downloads/version4/downloading%20BNC.htm>

¹⁵³ Republicans are historically associated to Catholics, just as Loyalists are to Protestants. This division, excluding few exceptions, is still largely valid. To get a clear perspective on Northern Ireland's demography, see The Northern Ireland Statistics and Research Agency (NISRA) 2001. *The Northern Ireland Census for Population 2001*. <http://www.nisra.gov.uk/census/start.html>

¹⁵⁴ "Sinn Féin": "We (Ourselves) Alone"; "agus": "and"; "na": "the".

insists on social aspects and participation by party members, but not by Paisley, who by formation tends to be the “spiritual” kind of leader, the one who actually leads while his audience follow. The adjective “Irish” (3rd position) is almost twice as relevant as “British” (6th position) in Adams, as could be expected of a Northern Ireland politician, but it is not in Paisley, who, as observed above, does not frequently mention the word “peace” either, as opposed to Adams.

Coming to the Paisley Corpus, “Unionist” (1st position), “Unionists” (9th position) and “Ulster” (4th position) are of course relevant keywords. “Ireland” (2nd position) and “Northern” (5th position and largely associated to “Ireland”) are also frequent, and they often appear together as in “Northern Ireland”. However, the higher relevance of “Ireland” confirms what has been said before, i.e. that Paisley actually talks about the Irish Republic (see Table 4 for frequency), which is further demonstrated by the presence of “Dublin” (10th position) among the first ten keywords of the PC. As a matter of fact, Paisley’s long lasting hostility towards Éire and its government is well known, therefore this result was only to be expected. Adams, whose party has historically enjoyed the support of many in the Irish Republic, does not frequently mention its capital (19th keyword in the AC). The IRA and Sinn Féin are, naturally, two of Paisley’s historical enemies, and as such he frequently mentions them. And, not surprisingly for those who are familiar with Paisley and his party policies, amongst his enemies also appear fellow Unionist/Protestant parties, including the United Unionist Party (UUP) and its then leader, David Trimble, whose name is also frequently pronounced by Paisley. Looking in detail at the contexts in which “IRA”, “Sinn” “Féin”, “Trimble” (7th position), “Dublin” and “Ireland” occur, it is easy to ascertain that Paisley does actually speak in negative terms about them.

It is also worth focussing on some context keywords that were specially selected from the corpora’s frequency lists for their unexpected presence or frequency: their relevance (keyness), their frequency and their context (collocates) indicate different discourse patterns and different social practices.

"Conflict" was the obvious word to look for in the first place. The AC has 59 occurrences of this word, but, surprisingly, it does not appear at all in the PC. However, Paisley does use the word "war" 13 times, which is also used by Adams a good 39 times. In particular, Paisley uses it 11/13 times to talk about Northern Ireland present and past, and twice (one each) about the two World Wars, but never about any other war. Adams, on the other hand, uses it 10/39 times to talk about other wars, like that in the Balkans, for example. This could be seen as proof of the wider interests SF has or shows to have, to include foreign policy into their annual programs. In the AC, the occurrence of "war" is concentrated in the early 1990s texts, especially 1993 and 1994; "conflict", instead, is used throughout the 1993-2004 decade, with more or less the same frequency, which is what happens with the word "war" in the PC. If this result is to be interpreted according the definitions of "conflict" discussed in § 2.1, true to their different political views, Adams describes their country's situation, refers either to a "war" (implying one side will win and the other will lose) or to a "conflict" (something that can be resolved), but with the tendency to drop the first over recent years, in favour of the second. For the DUP leader, the struggle has never been anything but a "war", unless next year's speech brings some changes, in the light of the recent developments in Paisley's attitude towards Ireland.

As regards the word "language", they both make use of it. However, while in the Adams corpus all 21 occurrences of the word "language" refer to the Irish language (Gaelic), one of Sinn Féin's key policies, consistently over the decade, none of the 6 occurrences of "language" in Paisley refer to Gaelic, but to either spoken language or body language. It is to be noted that Adams includes various Irish words, phrases and short passages (usually summing up what has been said in English) into almost every speech in the corpus, obviously as part of his own political propaganda, especially at the beginning and at the end, the key rhetorical moments; this would not be possible if his audience did not share the same Irish language social practice. Adams is also said not to speak Irish particularly well; it is to be doubted that he could afford to use Gaelic at length, if his speeches were not previously drafted.

"Friday" was also curiously discovered to be among the corpora's most frequent terms (AC: 53 times or 0.07%; PC: 0 times). Unexpected as this occurrence seemed at first, by checking the contexts in which it is used, it could easily be determined that it exclusively refers to the "Good Friday Agreement" ("Agreement" is its R1 collocate 48/53 times; the other times R1 is a synonym of "Agreement"), thus it is not at all as strange as it appeared. Adams, who worked towards this agreement for years, would often (48 times) use the phrase "Good Friday Agreement" (of course, starting from 1998), but Paisley, strongly opposed to it, never once does in more than ten years.

The lemma "Europ*" occurs 45 times in the AC, as foreign policy and European affairs in particular have always been one of SF's interests, also considering that, as a Marxism-inspired party, in the 1970s-1980s it received support from other left-wing parties all over the world, and felt particularly close to the Palestinian cause. Paisley, one of the UK's most successful Members of the European Parliament, only mentions Europe 8 times – a manifestation of the Paisley paradox, i.e. the fact that a politician and a party so concerned with strictly regional, local affairs has a long-time supranational representation. In Paisley's politics, European representation serves to shed international light on – and possibly divert funds to – the Unionist cause.

Adams mentions the DUP 11 times, 8 of which in the 2004 speech, due of course to the stalemate following the victory of both SF and the DUP in the 2003 Assembly election: addressing the DUP directly – and not as generically included into the Unionist category – had become vital. The UUP is only mentioned 6 times in the AC, once pre-Agreement, 5 post-Agreement, when the need to cooperate with the Unionist forces made SF look for dialogue, while before 1998 it had only sought to reach its goals the "Armalite and Ballot Box" way. It should be noted that only in 2004, after the election, did Adams turn to addressing the DUP, while, before, his Unionist interlocutor was necessarily the UUP. Adams' relationship with the SDLP, on the other hand, is frequent and constant. In the 1984 AC speech, the "control" text, the SDLP is addressed as the "establishment" Republican party; as the years pass, their relationship becomes more and more egalitarian; in 2004 Adams can afford to say:

Remember, in the Assembly elections we didn't compete only with the Unionists and the SDLP. Fianna Fáil, the PDs, Fine Gael and the Labour Party opposed us. In what was a great national effort by our activists from all over this island we roundly defeated them all¹⁵⁵.

As could have been expected, Paisley only mentions the UUP 4 times, never in complimentary terms, preferring to talk to his "fellow Unionists" instead. The SDLP gets 9 quotes, in less than complimentary terms. His favourite addressee is Sinn Féin, with 70 occurrences, 64 of which in the phrase "Sinn Féin/IRA" (i.e. with IRA as R1), as if SF were admittedly the force to reckon with. His associating SF and the Irish Republican Army has been constantly increasing over the past decade (24 occurrences between 2000 and 2004 alone), only as much as Adams has been trying to dissociate his party from it. More, 31 are the occurrences of "terror*" in the PC, regularly distributed diachronically, all of which are referred to Northern Ireland and to the IRA and SF in particular. This year's (2005) definitive ceasefire might bring changes in Paisley's next year's annual speech.

Back to the AC, "terror*" appears 17 times in it, 3 times (all of which after September 11th 2001) referring to the international situation. However, taking a position against terrorism immediately posed a problem for Adams, if, in 2001, he contextually said:

we will not be part of any effort to criminalise or to deem as terrorists those men and women who fought when they considered they had no other choice and who had the integrity courage and wisdom to support a peace process when they had that choice¹⁵⁶.

and "Terrorism is ethically indefensible"¹⁵⁷. Worth noting is also that Adams mentions Paisley personally 12 times, never in positive terms, but in 1993 and 1994 especially associating his name to Loyalist terrorism. Paisley mentions Adams 24 times (with a varied range of negative connotations), but less frequently in recent times (2 times in 2004) than in the past (6 times in 1993 alone), as if the need to cooperate with him after the election's results made him even more reluctant to communicate with him.

Finally, a curious, yet not useless remark is that the word "God" only appears in the AC once, in the 1984 text and in a common rhetoric invocation

¹⁵⁵ Adams, Gerry (2004), *Presidential Address to the 99th Sinn Féin Ard Fheis 2004*, Dublin: Sinn Féin, II. 340-343.

¹⁵⁶ Adams, Gerry (2001), *Presidential Address to the 97th Sinn Féin Ard Fheis 2001*, Dublin: Sinn Féin, II. 145-148.

¹⁵⁷ Adams, Gerry (2001), I. 494.

("God help us"¹⁵⁸) void of any religious connotations; in the PC, it occurs 39 times, both in varied rhetoric invocations and in quotations from the Bible, never in vain. This confirms the genre-mixing operated by Paisley, who designs his speeches not only rhetorically but also semantically to resemble (his own) religious sermons.

§ 3.4 – Syntactic aspects and Exchanges

As regards their argumentative structures, the AC and PC corpora may and should be looked at from several perspectives. Two of these perspectives are syntax and rhetoric. Here is a table reporting schematic observations on the syntax of the two corpora. For brevity reasons, extracts and data from only 3 years have been included here: the beginning of the peace process (1993), halfway through it (1997), and the present (2004)¹⁵⁹.

It is clear, even from these few and very short extracts, that Adams and Paisley's personal styles differ enormously, and while Adams tends to use short, plain periods, Paisley, as a consumed religious preacher, prefers very long, very rhetorical periods. This said, it should be pointed out that Adams started out with short periods and medium paragraphs, to get to very short periods and no paragraphs at all. Paisley, on the other hand, started out with long periods and long paragraphs, and recently changed to short periods and even verse.

Another aspect that has been taken into consideration to see the evolution of argumentative structures is rhetoric. The topic is wide and complex, and in the Table 7 there is only a small selection restricted to rhetoric questions, reported speech and lists of words. The occurrence of these rhetoric means are as reported in Table 7. Generally speaking, it must be noted that the use of rhetoric is much more frequent in Paisley than in Adams. Other aspects that are being analysed, but have not been reported here, are hypotaxis, parataxis, similes, metaphors, prefixes, infinitives, and more.

¹⁵⁸ Adams, Gerry (1984), *Presidential Address to the 80th Sinn Féin Ard Fheis 1984*, Dublin: Sinn Féin, l. 208.

¹⁵⁹ See the Appendix.

Providing only a schematic interpretation of the partial data reproduced here, it should be considered that 1993 was the beginning of the secret talks: on both sides there was uncertainty, and the need and difficulty to convince the respective audiences, therefore an abundance of rhetoric is justified by the moment's criticality. 1997 was the year before the Good Friday Agreement, both sides saw it coming, both were making their maximum efforts to reach it (SF) or avoid it (DUP), and both were worried about how their audiences would react to it: this was as crucial a moment as 1993, and even plain-speaking Gerry Adams felt the need to resort to rhetoric questions than usual, and even more than in 1993. 2004 was, on the other hand, the year of political victory for both parties, therefore it was a moment of self-celebration and cautious disclosure on both sides: both speakers started to change their usual trends, with Adams asking more rhetoric questions (12) and Paisley using only 3.

Conclusions

In 1994, David Miller wrote: "In general unionist public relations [...] targets a quite narrow range of audiences. The DUP targets perhaps the narrower range of the two major parties."¹⁶⁰ Ten years later, Irish journalist Olivia O'Leary responds: "Watching Ian Paisley ramming his November 2003 election victory, as he would describe it, 'down the thick gullets' of the media, one was reminded how much he loves the public Punch and Judy show."¹⁶¹ As stated at the beginning, the intricate social and political patterns that led the DUP from holding on to a fringe position in Northern Ireland's politics, to becoming the province's first party are not the objective of this study. Still, a few reflections may be made, starting from the linguistic analysis carried out in the previous chapter.

a) Paisley's oratorical style has not "moved an inch", as he would say, in the past ten years, or in the past sixty years, as far as he is concerned. His syntax, his semantics and the contents of his message show a rare consistency over the decades, which mark his personal style as highly peculiar and certainly unmistakable. What, then, has changed, that made the party he leads reach the top? Probably, all the rest. While Paisley's oratory is crystallised into the ritual sermon structure of his speeches, his celebration of Ulster history and Unionist heroes, his hell-or-paradise biblical invocations, this is exactly what his audience expect of him. Changing his style (as well as his ideas) would mean disaster, as the clever preacher is sure to have realised a long time ago. Building oneself a carefully crafted public figure, no matter how successful, can mean trapping oneself into it forever, unless one has either the strength or the necessity to change it (and this definitely has to be a more successful one): Paisley did not have either. Because, as the years went by, it was the Unionist public who came to him, appreciating him exactly for what he was: intransigent. While a part of Northern Ireland's society started

¹⁶⁰ Miller, David (1994), *Don't Mention the War: Northern Ireland, Propaganda and the Media*, London, Boulder: Pluto Press, p. 105.

¹⁶¹ O'Leary, Olivia (2004), *Politicians and Other Animals, Dublin: The O'Brien Press*, p. 157.

recognising the need for evolution (perhaps just *any* type of evolution) out of a stalemate condition – the thought that people like Gerry Adams had been working on spreading, another part would remain strenuously attached to their positions – and this would be Ian Paisley’s kind of followers. There remained a third group of undecided citizens, comprising those who panicked at the idea of change (perhaps just *any* type of change), and those would not welcome change because they did not realise exactly what it would consist of. This was the group that was to resort to the DUP as the upholder of the *status quo*, and cling to it in times of uncertainty.

More help arrived, free of charge, from the other Unionists, the Trimbles, the UUP. These won a Nobel Prize for peace and international renown, but lost their internal war. Very simply put, Adams himself had introduced radical changes into his party, making his followers shift 180° in the matter of years, and the reason why he managed to do trick is that his side had nothing to lose in practical terms. And, when economic crisis strikes hard, as it did throughout Europe in the late 1980s and early 1990s, ideologies tend to be diluted by key social needs such as employment, housing, access to education, to say a few. Standing on the constantly losing side, the Republican audience put Adams to the test to see if something could be gained at all from his policy of changes. In times of economic crisis and uncertainty, the ruling class hangs on to its privileges as much as it can, as these often represent the only subtle distinction between “them” and “the others”: ask an Israeli Arab what distinguishes him in practice from a Falasha Jew, or a Euro-struck impoverished Western European from a third generation Northern African immigrant. David Trimble lost his fight when he first publicly held out his hand to John Hume: although he thought he was transporting his party into the 21st century, that was the moment his audience ceased to see the difference between him and Hume. The quiet, hard working Unionist middle class started seeing no difference between themselves and the quiet, hard working Republican middle class represented by the SDLP. And the economic crisis made them wonder whether they should relinquish part of their already reduced privileges to their Republican counterpart. Ian Paisley told them –

shouted to them – what he had been shouting for fifty years: that they shouldn't. He had not budged an inch; they went over rushing to him.

b) "Heading into 2004 he is Ireland's most successful politician. One clue to his political success lies in his adroit handling of the media."¹⁶² The Paisley paradox (Paisley's success in the UE despite his strictly local interests) has been mentioned earlier in this study; the Adams paradox also exists. The Great Media Manipulator – because such he is considered North and South and, possibly, with reason – before the Belfast Agreement bet, had already been successful in at least a couple of high risk occasions: first, he had managed to avoid being caught in the 1969 IRA split (his ability), to cast his lot with the winning side (some luck) and to get on top of it (both the previous things); second, he had managed to seduce both his local audience and the rest of the world by expressing plain, clear ideas – and by changing them completely if u-turning proved necessary. The most prominent feature of Adams' language, as observed in the CA, is, indeed, his clarity. His rhetorical structure is like his semantics, like his syntax, unlike his thoughts: plain. Adams' plain technique would be, in plain words: "speak plainly and the audience will feel reassured that you are not trying to deceive them; at some point, deceive your affectionate audience in your usual plain, reassuring language, and they will not feel the difference". But, unlike Paisley, Adams has had to do more than to stick to his style and ideas and wait for the public opinion to move towards him. The reasons why he has sought and promoted change may be differently interpreted according to one's own social structures, but choices are limited: he could have done it out of ideological beliefs (because he believed in the need to change); out of personal ambition (because he craves power and has had to change to cater for the needs of present day society); out of mere luck (because he did the right thing just at the right time). As usual, a combination of all is the most probable option. But what Adams has had to do – and has successfully done – is bet everything on the occasion of his life: the peace process and, ultimately, the Belfast Agreement. In other words, no matter all the calculations he must have made, he has had courage. And luck, or both.

¹⁶² O'Leary, Olivia (2004), 38.

The gradual change in his politics is of course reflected in his language: year after year, his annual speeches never show dramatic changes, but they constantly ram home slight modifications, re-definitions, or the subtlest form of change of all: omission. Denial is too obvious: it was no use to him to deny his belonging to the IRA, as any biographical source today reports his “alleged” IRA militancy without feeling they have a scoop; it served the different, more practical purpose of confusing evidence about his illegal activities at times when the British government was after him. Probably, the one moment of embarrassment that is felt in his whole corpus is the 2001 text, in which he both has to condemn (international) “terrorism” and defend SF’s “revolutionary” past, including its past and recent links with the IRA. It can be suggested that he did it out of the need to preserve his traditional speech structure, which always included foreign affairs and could not, that year, ignore the September 11th attacks; indeed, in that one case, omission would have been even more eloquent, and decidedly strident. The use of Irish is another folkloric-sounding feature of his speeches that actually serves a serious scope: it links, it unites, it creates identity out of its mere presence, even if it is not perfectly spoken or understood by everyone, including the orator, even if it has most likely been written and edited for him. It helps Gerry Adams do what Ian Paisley does naturally with his own charisma: involve. Then, even his unending, plain, schoolbook lists of do’s and don’ts might make a fascinating annual presidential address.

c) Going back to the linguistic aspects of the Northern Ireland conflict, it is certainly possible to make some concluding remarks. §2.2 posed the following questions:

- how has the language of conflict in Northern Ireland evolved over the past decade? And
- how have language, politics and society influenced each other in the course of this process?

CDA can provide interpretative tools for answering both: political discourse *is* a representation of social, political and economic context, and an individual’s social structures *do* filter its perception. No matter how educated or politically

well-read, so socially-eradicated are the texts in the AC and PC, that hardly anyone without the right "fine tuning" to the relevant social structures (Northern Ireland politics, society, economics, history, etc.) could ever understand *every* discursive aspect of these speeches, leaving apart Gerry Adams' tentative use of Gaelic. The influence between language, politics and society not only exists in reality, but is also constantly shaped by our perception of it. Semantic analysis can prove this quite easily: language and politics influence each other in space and time, for instance when specific words are used by each of the two politicians and passed on to their supporters, the media, the world. Adams talking about "conflict", Paisley talking about "war", or phrases like "peace process" and "Good Friday Agreement" have already passed into everyday language and have become common knowledge, i.e. a brick into the social structure of political discourse in Northern Ireland. Not only. Someone who, for instance, sees or hears the phrase "Good Friday Agreement" would most likely relate it to the situation in Northern Ireland, but if they hear the expression "peace process", depending on the context, they might refer it to the Israeli-Arab conflict or to any other conflict currently going on in the world: it has become part of a wider social structure, shared by many more people.

As regards any hypotheses that may be made about the evolution of the conflict, tentative conclusions are as follows. For the time being, even if the conflict has moved to a political level, the struggle continues. The much awaited and hoped-for move towards political, parliamentary fight, does not seem to have produced all the practical expected effects: although both the DUP and Sinn Féin triumphed in the Assembly election of November 2003, ever since then they have not been able to come to an agreement over the formation of a government and the election of a First Minister of Northern Ireland. Hopes for a final ceasefire and an immediate solution to the conflict had been frustrated until only very recently. Still, saying that the slow move from armed fight to political fight has led to no achievements would be incorrect: decommissioning *has* started, street violence *has* decreased. Furthermore, since words are adaptable and interpretable, while armed conflict

is not, sometimes, somewhere, there seems to appear space for dialogue: ever since December 2004, two facts have been the focus of the political debate and the local press, a £ 26.5 million bank robbery and the killing of a Catholic man¹⁶³ in a pub row, both in Belfast and both attributed to the IRA. Though the pressure on the Republican paramilitary organisation was enormous, and violence was feared to break out again, statement after statement, the IRA chose "dialogue" rather than armed fight, and the decommissioning that it dreaded to stop kept going on. The tension that had mounted up against them came mainly from the Republican moderate side, which put them in the unusual and awkward position of receiving no support either from its leadership (with three members expelled and Adams repeatedly condemning the acts), and from the base. With the General Election coming up, SF was faced with the difficult challenge of regaining votes lost by IRA-attributed crimes, by siding either with them or against them (the underlying political discourse of Northern Ireland had people take for granted IRA-SF shared responsibility). Adams, once again, decided to act unilaterally, which fact probably saved his own post and career, as well as the party's reputation. Abandoned by its traditional political supporters, the IRA called for the cessation of all military operations (all to become political) in July and eventually decommissioned in September: Gerry Adams was rewarded by his audience with the victory obtained by SF in this year's Westminster Election.

It should be noted that all the steps in this last phase of the peace process took place through communication: threats, statements, appeals, declarations – an ongoing discourse which may well be called "conflict discourse". Its dynamics has once again shown that conflict resolution only occurs through social change, and that the actors of change may be aware of being in that position (Trimble, Hume, Adams), or serve the purpose unintentionally (Paisley, IRA), accept it (Trimble, Hume, Adams), or reject it (Paisley, IRA) encounter success (Adams, Paisley), or fail (Trimble, Hume, IRA). External factors of course are fundamental, today more than ever, when the globalisation discourse underlies all local political discourses (September

¹⁶³ Robert McCartney. See note 1.

11th has changed the very notion of the word "terrorism" everywhere, including Northern Ireland).

Predictions (mutable, fallible), based on the observation of conflict discourse, are that the peace process will continue to unfold, perhaps more slowly than expected in the beginning, but with "conflict" (i.e. communication) ever prevailing over "armed conflict" (i.e. fight). Success will go to those actors in the peace process willing to change and able to manage the change, which includes breaking with the past if public opinion requires so. This will particularly affect those politicians and parties with one foot set deep in terrorism and one foot in Parliament, like both Adams and Paisley: when these choose to stand in Parliament only, and *constructively* so (i.e. participating and contributing to the ongoing political discourse), then only will it be possible to imagine "conflict discourse" replaced by "cooperation discourse", and see surprising developments in the peace process, which not even these people may have conceived of in their past. The historic meeting of Ian Paisley with the Irish Prime Minister Bertie Ahern in September 2004, together with the announcement of total IRA disarmament no later than last September, may be the beginning of such a conclusion.

Tables

§ Table 1 – Research material

Table 1 – Research material			
Gerry Adams’ Presidential addresses to the Sinn Féin Ard Fheis:		Ian Paisley’s Leader’s speeches to DUP annual conferences:	
Year	Source, support	Year	Source, support
1984	LHL, paper	1984	LHL, paper
–	–	1990	LHL, paper
–	–	1991	LHL, paper
–	–	–	–
1993	LHL, paper	1993	LHL, paper
1994	SF ws, electr.	1994	LHL, paper
1995	SF ws, electr.	1995	LHL, paper
1996	SF ws, electr.	1996*	LHL, paper
1997	SF ws, electr.	1997	LHL, paper
1998	SF ws, electr.	1998*	DUP ws, electr.
1999	SF ws, electr.	1999*	IT ws, electr.
2000	SF ws, electr.	2000	LHL, paper
2001	SF ws, electr.	2001	LHL, paper
–	–	2002*	IT ws, electr.
–	–	–	–
2004	SF ws, electr.	2004	DUP ws, electr.

Key	*extracts
IT:	<i>The Irish Times</i>
SF’s ws	Sinn Féin’s official website
DUP’s ws	DUP’s official website
LHL:	Linen Hall Library, Belfast
paper:	paper
electr.:	electronic

§ Table 2 – Research corpora

Table 2 – Research corpora					
Gerry Adams’ <i>Presidential addresses to the Sinn Féin Ard Fheis:</i>			Ian Paisley’s <i>Leader’s speeches to DUP annual conferences:</i>		
<u>Year</u>	<u>Words</u>	<u>Source, support</u>	<u>Year</u>	<u>Words</u>	<u>Source, support</u>
1984	6325	LHL, paper	1984	3590	LHL, paper
1993	8895	SF ws, electr.	1993	4579	LHL, paper
1994	14,089	SF ws, electr.	1994	4976	LHL, paper
1995	2982	SF ws, electr.	1995	3491	LHL, paper
1996	8213	SF ws, electr.	1996*	1026	LHL, paper
1997	4789	SF ws, electr.	1997	3504	LHL, paper
1998	2279	SF ws, electr.	1998*	1098	DUP ws, electr.
1999	7247	SF ws, electr.	1999*	1011	IT ws, electr.
2000	6110	SF ws, electr.	2000	4642	LHL, paper
2001	7900	SF ws, electr.	2001	2652	LHL, paper
2004	5462	SF ws, electr.	2004	1940	DUP ws, electr.
<u>Total</u>	<u>74,291</u>		<u>Total</u>	<u>32,509</u>	

Key	<i>*extracts</i>
IT:	<i>The Irish Times</i>
SF’s ws	Sinn Féin’s official website
DUP’s ws	DUP’s official website
LHL:	Linen Hall Library, Belfast
paper:	paper
electr.:	electronic

§ Table 3 – Speech structures

Table 3 – Speech structures		
	Adams Corpus (AC)	Paisley Corpus (PC)
1984	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Address to political prisoners - Foreign affairs issues - Anglo-Irish issues - Home affairs issues - SF solutions - Previous year balance - SF present and future commitments 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Celebration of Unionism - Celebration of DUP - Condemnation of IRA/SF - Anglo-Irish issues - Appeal to truth and God
1993	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Celebration of SF past - Address to political prisoners - Commemoration of Republican victims - Home affairs issues - Anglo-Irish issues - Republican stance on new solution(s) - Appeal to Unionists 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Celebration of Ulster history - Celebration of British history - Anglo-Irish issues - Biblical quotes - Appeal to God - Condemnation of SDPL/IRA/SF - Foreign affairs issues - Anglo-Irish issues - Appeal to Ulster and God
1994	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Address to political prisoners - Foreign affairs issues - SF issues - Anglo-Irish issues - Commemoration of victims on both sides - Appeal to Unionists - Peace process description - Home affairs issues - SF position - War and peace - Poem 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Biblical quote - Celebration of Ulster history - Celebration of Ulster leaders - Anglo-Irish issues - Unionist issues - Appeal to Ulster and God
1995	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Previous year balance - Address to prisoners - IRA issues - SF position - Anglo-Irish issues - Peace process - SF present and future 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Biblical quote - Condemnation of IRA/SF - Anglo-Irish issues - Home affairs issues - Unionist issues - Appeal to Ulster and God
1996	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Celebration of Dublin - SF issues - Anglo-Irish issues - Foreign affairs issues - Home affairs issues - SF present and future 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Anglo-Irish issues - Condemnation of IRA/SF - Condemnation of John Major <p><i>(extracts)</i></p>
1997	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Future - Peace process - SF position - Appeal to Unionists - Home affairs issues - SF present and future 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Celebration of Ulster leaders - Condemnation of IRA/SF - Unionist issues - Anglo-Irish issues - Unionist issues - Appeal to Ulster and God
1998	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Celebration of SF past - Peace process - Anglo-Irish issues - SF present and future 	
1999	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Celebration of SF past - SF issues - Foreign affairs issues - Home affairs issues 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Anglo-Irish issues - Condemnation of IRA/SF - Appeal to Ulster and God

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Appeal to Unionists - Anglo-Irish issues - SF present and future 	<i>(extracts)</i>
2000	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Peace process - SF issues - Anglo-Irish issues - Appeal to Unionists - Foreign affairs issues - Home affairs issues - Commemoration of Hunger Strike 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Celebration of Ulster history - Celebration of Ulster leaders - Celebration of St. Patrick - Anglo-Irish issues - Home affairs issues / poem - Celebration of Ulster leaders - Condemnation of IRA/SF - Unionist issues - Condemnation of David Trimble - DUP position - Appeal to Unionists
2001	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Commemoration of 11 Sept 2001 - Peace process issues - SF position - Commemoration of Republican victims - SF issues - Home affairs issues - Anglo-Irish issues - Appeal to Unionists - Appeal to SDLP - Foreign affairs issues - Commemoration of Hunger Strike - Narrative of Hunger Strike 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Celebration of Unionism - Celebration of DUP - Unionist issues - Anglo-Irish issues - Condemnation of IRA/SF - Appeal to Unionists - Condemnation of David Trimble (poem)
2004	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Address to live and dead Republicans - Peace process issues - Anglo-Irish issues - SF issues - Foreign affairs issues - Home affairs issues - SF present and future 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Celebration of DUP - Condemnation of IRA/SF - Anglo-Irish issues - Appeal to Ulster and God - Poem

§ Table 4 – AC and PC frequency lists

Table 4 – Most frequent lexical words					
Adams Corpus (AC)			Paisley Corpus (PC)		
Word	Freq. no.	Freq. %	Word	Freq. no.	Freq. %
1) British	440	0.59	1) Ireland	210	0.64
2) Irish	356	0.47	2) Unionist	159	0.48
3) people	350	0.47	3) Northern	153	0.46
4) peace	338	0.45	4) people	139	0.42
5) Sinn	306	0.41	5) Ulster	131	0.40
6) Government	292	0.39	6) IRA	128	0.39
7) Ireland	280	0.37	7) party	111	0.34
8) political	251	0.33	8) government	110	0.33
9) Fein	236	0.31	9) Irish	72	0.22
10) process	208	0.28	10) Fein	71	0.22

§ Table 5 – AC and PC keywords lists

§ Table 5.1 – AC keywords list

N	Key word	Freq.	%	RC. Freq.	RC. %	Keyness
1	SINN	306	0,4072	441		3390,438232
2	FÉIN	236	0,314	39		3169,385498
3	IRISH	356	0,4737	5853		2402,257568
4	OUR	775	1,0313	93455	0,094	2305,875488
5	PEACE	338	0,4498	8707		1989,089233
6	BRITISH	440	0,5855	35530	0,0357	1632,283691
7	IRELAND	280	0,3726	9073		1524,053589
8	WE	978	1,3014	300833	0,3025	1358,57959
9	REPUBLICANS	126	0,1677	523		1173,736084
10	AGUS	73	0,0971	1		1039,045532
11	UNIONISTS	105	0,1397	934		830,8643188
12	ARD	64	0,0852	44		774,2952271
13	UNIONIST	99	0,1317	942		770,8084717
14	POLITICAL	251	0,334	30168	0,0303	746,8478394
15	FHEIS	50	0,0665	0		718,9152222
16	PROCESS	208	0,2768	22499	0,0226	658,6888428
17	IRA	95	0,1264	1646		631,1755371
18	GOVERNMENT	292	0,3886	56343	0,0566	625,420166
19	DUBLIN	101	0,1344	2215		625,3284912
20	NA	85	0,1131	1043		620,7980347

§ Table 5.2 – PC keywords list

N	Key word	Freq.	%	RC. Freq.	RC. %	Keyness
1	UNIONIST	159	0,4825	942		1640,25659
2	IRELAND	210	0,6373	9073		1366,15955
3	IRA	128	0,3884	1646		1133,30823
4	ULSTER	131	0,3975	2270		1084,63721
5	NORTHERN	153	0,4643	10833	0,0109	848,082214
6	FEIN	71	0,2155	368		749,670532
7	TRIMBLE	54	0,1639	54		715,784973
8	SINN	70	0,2124	441		713,987061
9	UNIONISTS	77	0,2337	934		690,252136
10	DUBLIN	65	0,1972	2215		452,644867
11	IRISH	72	0,2185	5853		379,667053
12	UNION	92	0,2792	17000	0,0171	341,015137
13	PARTY	111	0,3368	37720	0,0379	287,887939
14	CARSON	31	0,0941	461		265,723969
15	PROVINCE	41	0,1244	2114		252,401199
16	OUR	154	0,4673	93455	0,094	248,30777
17	THE	2708	8,2175	6E+06	6,0877	237,031281
18	MR	127	0,3854	66114	0,0665	236,383072
19	HUME	26	0,0789	313		233,408554
20	PEACE	57	0,173	8707		231,655518

§ Table 6 – Evolution of syntax

Table 6 – Evolution of syntax			
Adams Ccorpus (AC)		Paisley Corpus (PC)	
<u>1993:</u>	short periods + medium paragraphs	<u>1993:</u>	long periods + long paragraphs
<u>1997:</u>	short periods + short paragraphs	<u>1997:</u>	medium periods + medium par.s with short 1 period par.
<u>2004:</u>	very short periods + no paragraphs	<u>2004:</u>	short periods + verse

§ Table 7 – Evolution of rhetoric

Table 7 – Evolution of rhetoric			
Adams corpus		Paisley corpus	
<u>1993:</u>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • rhetoric questions: 4 • reported speech: 4 • lists: 3 	<u>1993:</u>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • rhetoric questions: 14 • reported speech: 27 • lists: 0
<u>1997:</u>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • rhetoric questions: 6 • reported speech: 5 • lists: 0 	<u>1997:</u>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • rhetoric questions: 14 • reported speech: 13 • lists: 0
<u>2004:</u>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • rhetoric questions: 12 • reported speech: 4 • lists: 0 	<u>2004:</u>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • rhetoric questions: 3 • reported speech: 6 • lists: 0

Appendix 1 – Adams Corpus

§ Presidential Address to the 80th Sinn Féin Ard Fheis 1984

Spell-checked, English-Gaelic version.

Ar dtús, ba mhaith liom ón Ard-Fheis seo, a chur in iúl do chimí pholaitiúla ar fud an domhain go bhfuil muid ag seasamh leo. Ba mhaith liom, go mór mhór, ar dtacaíocht a chur in iúl do phríosúnaig pholaitiúla na hÉireann atá i mbraighdeanas i Meiriceá agus ar fud na Breataine, a bhfuil ualach ar leith curtha ar a muintir sa bhaile.

To begin, comrades, brothers and sisters, I would like to express from this, the 80th Sinn Fein Ard Fheis, our solidarity to political prisoners in jails in America and in Britain, where the prisoners' families bear special hardships.

Tacaíonn muid leofa siud i bPortlaoise ata ag fulgaint gríosala agus na socraithe speisialta fa choinne cuairteanna: leofe siúd i bPríosún Luimní, i bPríosún Bhéal Feirste, i Magilligan agus i Blocanna agus cásanna na Céise Fada, ba chóir dúinn cuimhniú ar mhná Ard Mhacha thar dream ar bith eile.

We extend solidarity to prisoners in Portlaoise, where the beatings and special visiting arrangements cause particular hardship, to comrades in Belfast Prison, Limerick Jail, Magilligan and the H-Bloc and Cages of Long Kesh. Of them all, however, I would like to single out for special mention the courageous women prisoners in Armagh Women's Prison.

Sé an rud atá coitianta i dtír ina bhfuil an lámh in uachtar ag na fir, go mbíonn na mná sa chúlra, faoi scath na bhfear. Agus sin mar a tharla ins na príosúin. Le blianta beaga anuas tugadh níos mo poiblíochte de dhrochbail na bhfear ins na príosúin ná do dhrochbail na mban. Tharla seo in amanna de thairbhe gur iarr mná iad féin seo. Ós rud é gur fhulaigh na mná an oiread seo leis na blianta, go háirid o chleachtadh bruidiúil seo na "Nocht-Chuardaithe" is cóir duinn, chán amháin a chur in iúl go bhfuil muid ag seasamh leo, ach is cóir duinn fosta, áris an t-ainchleachtadh seo a nochtadh don phobal agus é a scrios nó is e rud atá ann ná cleachtadh rialtais lenár ndeirfuiracha in Ard Macha a dhidhaonnú agus lena spiorad a bhriseadh. Ar bhur son geallaim go seasóidh muid leo ar fad agus go dtabharfaidh muid ar dtacaíocht dóibh. Tá sé de dhualgas orainn uilig inár gceanntracha féin, tréan-iarracht a dhéanamh na nocht-chuartaite a stopadh.

In a male-dominated society like ours and even in a movement like ours, the women are usually eclipsed by the men. So too in the prisons. In recent years the plight of male prisoners has eclipsed the plight of women prisoners. At times this has been at the request and with the consent of the women prisoners themselves. However, the suffering endured by these women over the years, especially as a result of the brutal and degrading practice of strip-searching, warrants more than mere expressions of solidarity from us. It demands a renewed effort to expose and bring to an end an administrative practice which is geared to dehumanising and breaking the spirits of our sisters in Armagh.

Strip-searching of the Armagh women is now almost two years old. During this time nothing of a security nature has been found and yet women, young and old, regardless of their physical condition, are probed and examined after being stripped naked by prison warders. I listened recently to a former remand prisoner recount how she was strip-searched over two hundred and fifty-nine times, how sanitary towels were removed as she was stripped naked while having her period, how another prisoner was stripped naked and probed while pregnant, and how after she had given birth to a baby daughter, she and her child suffered the same humiliating treatment.

This, comrades, is the regime suffered by the remand prisoners, "innocent until proven guilty" – some of them victims of hired perjurers. These are the methods to which the British government stoops in order to subdue those it has imprisoned. The women in Armagh are our sisters in struggle and in pledging them our continued solidarity and support I remind you all again of the onus upon us, to make a renewed effort to have the process of strip-searching brought to an end. By doing so we will be making our solidarity meaningful not only to the Armagh women, but to all the political prisoners and their families.

Agus muid ag cur in iúl daofa siúd i bpríosún go bhfuil muid ag tacú leo cuimhníonn muid sa chúigiú bliain déag den streachailt stairiúl seo ar son na saoirse, cuimhníonn muid orthu siud ar fud an domhain a bhfuil a mhacasamhail de throid er bun acu. Leis an bpobal gorm san Afraic, ar ndeartháireacha agus ar ndeirfiúracha, go mórmhór an mhuintir atá ag fulaingt faoi apartheid san Afraic Theas. Cuireann muid ár dtacaíocht in iúl. Tacaíonn muid fosta leis an bpobal i Meiriceá-Láir atá fá dhaorsmacht ag rialtaisí ollsmachta. Leis na Palaistínig atá gan baile gan d'fhir. Leis na Bascaigh fosta, geallann muid ar dtacaíocht d'fhir agus do mhná ar baineadh a saoirse daofa agus do na daoine a bhfuil sé de mhion acu saoirse a bhaint amach daofa féin. Cuimhníonn muid gurb ionann deireadh cathréimeach a bheith ar throid s'againne agus buaidh a bheith agaibhse agus buaidh againne. Cáineann muid polasaí eachtrannac Mheiriceá, polasaí apartheid rialtas na h-Afraice Theas agus polasaí seoinneach na nIosraelithe.

In expressing solidarity to those suffering in prisons we recall in the fifteenth year of this last phase of our historic struggle for independence, those throughout the world who are engaged in similar struggles. To our black brothers and sisters in Africa, and especially those who struggle under apartheid in South Africa, we express solidarity. To those in Central America, oppressed by totalitarian regimes, to the Palestinians, deprived of a homeland, to the Basques and to all men and women denied freedom and to people committed to gaining freedom, we pledge our solidarity, mindful that the successful conclusion of our struggle is a victory for you, just as a victory for you is a victory for us.

We make no apologies for condemning the American government's foreign policy, the apartheid policy of the South African regime, the Zionist policy of the Israeli government or the imperialistic and colonial attitude of the British government.

Recent television coverage of the famine in Ethiopia has illustrated starkly and tragically how capitalist governments govern in the interests of the 'haves' against the interests of the 'have-nots'. Ethiopia was ruled for thirty years by a corrupt dictator Haile Selassie, a man supported and much loved by the Western powers. His regime and those who supported it in the West are mainly responsible for the plight of the starving millions whose fate is a result of a seven-year-old drought in a period during which the West cut back its aid programmes and covered up the extent of the problem because it didn't like the politics of those who overthrew Selassie. The plight of the starving Ethiopian people was well known to those in power, yet they refused to tackle the problem. Indignant public opinion, now aware of the depth of the Ethiopian problem, has forced Western governments to do a little. They are not doing enough.

The Dublin government in particular, which has the dubious privilege of presently holding the presidency of the EEC, is failing to tackle this issue-the way Irish people would like it tackled. The surplus of food in the West, stored at a great cost, and the miserable refusal of the EEC countries to give this surplus food to the starving millions, is an indictment of capitalism and those who claim to represent us at local and international level. Famine in Ireland was used to depopulate our country. Famine in Ethiopia is being used to undermine the government there. In the West and in the EEC the food surplus is massive, enough to feed and provide a basis for the development of countries whose underdevelopment is a result of the retarding colonial rule or neo-colonial rule which many of them suffered or suffer yet.

Garret FitzGerald, he of the great bleeding-heart liberalism and Peter Barry, the tea baron, have failed on this issue, as on so many others, to give the moral leadership which a country like Ireland should be giving in world affairs. They have the opportunity to use the presidency of the EEC and the EEC food surplus for the benefits of humanity.

Instead, in a world capable of feeding all its people, millions die of starvation, not because those of us lucky enough to have food wish it that way but because those who control the food have decided to use it as a weapon of war. FitzGerald and Barry would, of course, deny this. If they were to attempt to have the food surplus distributed, as the people they represent would like it distributed, and failed in those attempts, then they should resign the presidency of the EEC. In doing so, they would be sure, for the first time, of representing in a courageous way, the wishes of the Irish people and of using their power in a just and moral manner.

All-of this, of course, is asking too much. When they refuse to act in a just and moral manner in regard to the question of British colonialism in the North, or even within the parameters of their own state, we can hardly expect Dublin politicians to do the right thing in international matters. Ireland, even that part of it within Dublin's jurisdiction, needs a meaningful and positive policy of Irish neutrality, as the cornerstone of our foreign policy against world war and the arms race and for a world composed of free federations of free people.

If Dublin's submissiveness and willingness to assist in Reagan's controversial electoral visit to Ireland is any indication, then we can be sure that Dublin, despite lip-service to the principle of Irish neutrality, is content to make us pawns in Reagan's NATO chess board, a chess-board upon which that ageing geriatric whizz-kid seems intent on starting World War III.

Irish republicans need to be active in campaigning for world peace, against nuclear weapons and for an Irish neutrality. And before our opponents point to our position on the legitimacy of armed struggle in pursuance of national independence and freedom, let me point out that there is no contradiction.

The suppression of small nations throughout the world and the arms race being pursued by the super-powers are but opposite sides of the one coin. To support national liberation is to be opposed to imperialism and Dublin's position on international issues is based on its position on the national question as surely as London government's foreign policy is reflected in its attitude to Ireland.

Recently we suffered London's media response to the IRA's attempted execution of the British cabinet in Brighton. The London government's response to that Irish action was, dare I say it, much quicker and probably much more considered than its long-awaited response to the Dublin Forum is likely to be. Regardless of what one thinks of that operation, and we can be assured that Margaret Thatcher got little sympathy from nationalist Ireland, or indeed from an increasingly disaffected working class in her own country, it is obviously totally hypocritical for British apologists to describe the Brighton bombing as an attack on democracy.

The quality of democracy in Britain is, of course, a matter for the British people. It is their business, not ours. But the British connection, the partition of this country, and the resultant suffering and grief is far from democratic. On the contrary, it is un-democratic, unwanted, illegal and immoral. All casualties and fatalities in Ireland or Britain as a result of the war are sad symptoms of our British problem and the Brighton bombing was an inevitable result of the British presence in this country. Far from being a blow against democracy it was a blow for democracy. Having said that, I am mindful of the consequences of this action. I have no doubt that the British government will attempt reprisal action in vengeance for the Brighton operation. As always, we in Sinn Fein, in the public leadership of the republican struggle, are the most likely victims of British assassination plans.

Aware as always of the dangers of our position, but committed nonetheless to the struggle in which we are engaged, we will continue to campaign for the restoration of Irish democracy and to articulate the desire of our people for freedom and independence, regardless of Dublin smears or British violence.

Ireland geographically, historically and culturally is one nation. We as one people have the right to be free, and in that freedom the dividing sections of our people will find the will to unite, regardless of religious affiliations, in establishing a society which meets the needs of all our people.

The Dublin Forum report does not provide the basis on which such a society can be built. On the contrary, after all the pomp and ballyhoo at the formal launching of an 'agreed' Forum Report and the subsequent less-dignified but telling disagreement over the options outlined, the participants are still waiting... and waiting... and waiting for a British response. They are also, as emerged at the individual party press conferences, waiting for different answers.

The reasons for this lie not so much in the superficial party political differences of the Forum parties, but more in the real reasons for the Forum being established in the first place. If it had been convened because the parties involved had decided that there had to be an end to British rule in Ireland and self-determination for the Irish people then we may have seen a different report. As it was, the Forum met only because the establishment parties realised, mostly through the promptings of John Hume, that by their failure to do anything about the national question they had, in fact, surrendered the high ground of Irish nationalism to Sinn Fein. As Dick Spring stated, "Constitutional politics is on trial".

What emerged thereafter was not a blueprint for a united, independent and peaceful Irish society but an Irish establishment alternative to the policies of Sinn Fein. Nowhere in the Forum report is the reality of Britain's claims to Irish sovereignty contested. Nowhere in the report is the right of the Irish nation to national self-determination asserted.

Indeed, it should be noted that Sinn Fein's exclusion from the Forum effectively disenfranchised at least 102,000 nationalist and republican voters, the very people whose alienation the Forum report stressed. Sinn Fein's view, as was stated then and since, is that

the British government needs to be met with a firm, united and unambiguous demand from all Irish 'nationalist' parties, for an end to the unionist veto and for a declaration of a date for British withdrawal.

Within the new situation created by these measures, it is then a matter of business-like negotiations between representatives of all the Irish parties, and this includes those who represent today's loyalist voters, to set the constitutional, economic, social and political arrangements for a new Irish state.

We assert that the loyalist people must be given, in common with all other citizens, firm guarantees of their religious and civil liberties and we believe that, faced with British withdrawal and the removal of partition, a considerable body of loyalist opinion would accept the wisdom of negotiating for the type of society which would reflect their needs as well as the needs of all the other people in Ireland.

The establishment of a society free from British interference, with the union at an end, will see sectarianism shrivel and will see the emergence of class politics proper with a re-alignment of forces along left and right lines. Of course, these suggestions will be ridiculed at present by the same leaders. No wonder! They have no real reason for doing anything else.

The Forum report, far from tackling the question of loyalism and the veto, actually reinforces loyalist intransigence and institutionalises the veto. Indeed the Forum report does not permit Loyalists to examine any option other than the present arrangement guaranteed to them by the British connection and far from spelling out basic demands, the report merely spells out various options which permit the British, if they are so moved, to pick and choose from a 'dolly-mixture' selection of alternatives. They will obviously choose to do only that which suits their interests.

All of this, arises, as I have said before, because the Forum was not convened to deal with the real problem of British interference or its social, economic, political, sectarian and cultural side-effects, but because those participating felt threatened by the rise of Sinn Fein. The Forum was not meant to tackle the root causes of violence and instability in Irish society. It was established merely to tackle the root causes of the swing to Sinn Fein in the six counties, or to quote the much-used cliché "the alienation of Northern Nationalists".

Thus have been worded the exhortations of senior Churchmen, politicians and other establishment apologists: "Get involved in housing and prevent these men of violence from exploiting the housing crisis". "Get involved in helping the poor and prevent the terrorists exploiting their plight". "Get involved in cultural agitation and prevent the republican paramilitaries from monopolising this situation".

Thus too are Dublin now dealing with sixty years of neglect – a number of civil servants appointed to denounce British actions and pronouncements and an increased profile for Peter Barry. God help us.

Protests about Diplock courts or the odious hired-perjurer system on the one hand and the extradition of Irish people into the very same system on the other hand; protests over RUC behaviour, plastic bullets, shoot-to-kill actions on the one hand, and inviting James Prior to a farewell lunch a week after the slaying of John Downes on the other hand. And in the last few months we have seen the re-emergence of a pattern of beatings in the RUC's interrogation centre to elicit incriminating statements, whilst the recent scandalous revelations in the Kerry babies case, in the murder of Peter Matthews in Shercock Garda barracks and the frame-up of Nicky Kelly, are but a few examples of how this potato republic mimics its British imperialist masters.

No wonder Northern nationalists treat these carefully rehearsed outbursts from Free State politicians with increased cynicism, and no wonder Douglas Hurd last week said he was glad to be in Dublin.

Over sixty years of partition, of neo-colonial status, has so conditioned the Dublin establishment that it is not within their grasp to tackle the British government in the way that government understands. The Thatcher government has no respect for Dublin. Mrs. Thatcher accepts silver tea pots from Haughey and heaps praise on FitzGerald. For our part we are not surprised by any of this. Nothing has really changed – things are merely becoming clearer and the contradictions inherent in our two partitioned statelets are becoming more starkly exposed. As this process continues then real change will become possible. The Dublin Forum report fails to represent nationalist aspirations but again this is not surprising because, apart from what I have said here, there is really no such thing as constitutional nationalism.

Constitutional nationalism in the Irish context is a contradiction when the constitutionality involved is British constitutionality. And British constitutionality in Ireland means the maintenance of a six-county colony which is not, never has been and never will be a viable social, political or economic unit. Its existence represents in a very real way the denial to the Irish people of our right to national self-determination and places a national minority in a position where they must adopt a most reactionary stance in order to defend their own vested interest. Loyalism can only be tackled by removing the system of privilege which sustains sectarian divisions and by undermining its quasi-religious base by the creation of a just and pluralist society. Sinn Fein offers to those presently tied to loyalism nothing but the equality denied to them for so long under the British connection. Irish independence means for Loyalists the opportunity to play, for the first time, a meaningful role, with the rest of us, in shaping a new Irish democracy.

Dublin has failed these people and left them to the mercy of the Paisleys of this world in much the same way as successive Dublin governments have failed Irish nationalists. Indeed, it is becoming increasingly clear that Dublin has failed to deal even with the problems experienced by citizens of its own statelet. A lot of attention is drawn by Dublin's politicians to the 'threat to democracy' in the twenty-six counties. Most of these 'dangers to democracy' are self-inflicted. Democracy within this statelet is diluted by Section 31, by extradition, by disenfranchising voters, by the denial of the true origins of this statelet and the facts of Irish history – particularly that part of our history dealing with physical force resistance to Britain's claims on Ireland – and by an impressive armoury of repressive legislation.

The smokescreen of nationalist rhetoric raised by Dublin fools no-one, no more than the verbal and intellectual gymnastic displays by establishment speakers at monuments through this statelet. We at least are consistent. We not only salute Roger Casement. We salute also the brave men aboard the *Marita Anne*.

Since last year's Ard-Fheis Sinn Fein has been involved in a number of elections – the Dublin Central by-election, by-elections to Belfast city and Dungannon councils, the EEC elections on a thirty-two-county basis and the Udaras na Gaeltachta election. The general secretary, in her report, has dealt with some aspects of these campaigns and there are many reorganisational lessons to be drawn from them all, especially the Udaras one.

For my part, I wish to concentrate on another election in the North this year – an election that we all missed. It was, however, based on that central principle of democracy, the secret ballot. So secret was this ballot that the names of the candidates were kept a secret, their election manifesto was kept a secret and even the date of the election itself was not disclosed. Even the voters were unaware, until afterwards, that it had taken place. The results, however, have been well publicised. Apparently Northern nationalists voted in a secret landslide for Garret FitzGerald, Peter Barry and Dick Spring to be their representatives. Not surprisingly the British government has accepted this election result. They were obviously in on the secret as well.

Perhaps I could give them all a wee bit of advice. If Dublin wishes to represent nationalist opinion in the North then they are quite welcome – I'm sure the SDLP wouldn't object and the UDR, RUC, British army, UVF and UDA shouldn't put them off – to contest as many seats as they like. In the meantime, on behalf of those we represent in Derry, Tyrone, Armagh, Fermanagh, Antrim and County Down, Sinn Fein denies Dublin any right to speak or act on our behalf. We are quite capable of doing that ourselves.

While on this theme – it's called democracy – have you noticed the effects of just 2,304 votes cast for us in Dublin Central? As soon as the upholders of democracy discovered that over two thousand people voted for Sinn Fein they decided that all Sinn Fein Councillors elected in the twenty-six counties several years before, should suddenly stop representing those who elected them.

And so we have seen the ministerial campaign of refusing to meet Sinn Fein Councillors making representations on behalf of their constituents. We have even seen attempts to interfere in the internal elections of a trade union. All of this in the name of democracy.

Yet according to the EEC election results, Sinn Fein represents just about the same number of voters as the Official Unionist Party; 52,500 more voters than the Labour Party; 90,000 more voters than the Workers Party – with or without their fund-raising wing – and 112,000 more than the Alliance Party. None of this counts, of course. And yet those in high places continue to pontificate about the threat to democracy.

In another equally important and related dimension of life in Ireland there is an absolutely hypocritical attitude on the right to family planning and contraception, the question of divorce and marital breakdown, the invidious social distinctions which surround the question of illegitimacy, one-parent families and so on. I have said this before and I repeat it now. These are questions which we as a people are mature enough to decide and settle for ourselves without fear of croziers or duplicity by salaried politicians and without the tragedy of an Anna Lovett to remind us that such problems exist in Ireland.

This is the quality of life on this little island of ours. Or what passes for the quality of life, because as well as all this, living standards here are being eroded by the application of Thatcherite monetarist policies which deprive an increasing number of people of their right to a meaningful existence.

According to official statistics, unemployment in Ireland, North and South, is now very close to 350,000. That is one in five of the workforce without job. The real jobless figure, however, must be well over half a million when we include all those artificially trimmed from the official figures – whether married women who want to work, older workers, school leavers, short-term job trainees, and so on.

In the most deprived areas of our major cities the jobless figures are much more staggering, with four out of five workers having no job, no prospect of a job and, in many cases, no experience even of a job.

The economic social hardship which accompanies this is evident in sub-standard overcrowded housing, insufficient health services, inferior educational opportunities, a total absence of recreational or cultural facilities; deprivation piled upon deprivation.

And what has been the response of those who follow the monetarist gospel, North and South? Where there are few jobs, more factories are allowed to close. Where workers have jobs, their wages, in real terms, are reduced. Where there is sub-standard or a total lack of housing, the house-building programmes are cut back. Where social welfare is already insufficient, it is restricted further and discretionary grants are withdrawn.

We have the situation where the entire revenue from the PAYE Taxation system is expended simply to service the interest charges on the accumulated borrowings from international banks and financiers. Essential public services are being either drastically cut back or paid for by the panic-imposition of water-rates and such.

Where classrooms are over-crowded, and special educational needs exist, teachers are left on the dole and made to pay to travel to school. Where health services are needed more than ever, less medicine is available free, hospitals health centres are closed, health workers are made redundant. Where young people are left, through no fault of their own, with time on their hands, there are no facilities to occupy that time – and joy-riding, drugs, vandalism and petty-crime become aimless attractions further adding to the spiralling misery.

In response to this, the Coalition government offers the Irish people a plan; they call it a 'National Plan' and entitle it 'Building on Reality'!

It quite obviously is not a national plan because – for all the time spent in the Forum – it ignores the economic and social cost of partition and deliberately fails to recognise that Irish unity is a pre-requisite of the economic independence required for progress. It refuses to acknowledge the economic possibilities opened by the removal of partition.

But does it even address itself to the reality it claims to be building upon? Does it offer any hope to the people of the twenty-six counties to which it is addressed? On the contrary, it actually promises an increase in unemployment, cuts in public spending, redundancies in the public service, the recruitment embargo extended to local authorities and health boards, wages kept below inflation rates, taxation of social welfare payments, the removal of the remaining food subsidies and increased education costs.

Those least able to afford it are going to be made to pay. Those with no responsibility for the recession in the capitalist economy are going to be forced to make all the sacrifices.

Yet there will be no extra taxes on that tiny minority who own the vast majority of wealth. There will be no embargo on the profits which the multinationals are allowed to export. There will be no cuts when it comes to the millions spent on maintaining British borders. Like the pantomime dame in a sad, but ironic, parody of Marie Antoinette, Fitzgerald declares "Let them drink whiskey!"

A sobering reminder that the economic and social misery that these policies bring is as nothing to those in power.

Double-jobbers, with their perks and their pensions, living in comfort, transported by limousine, eating subsidised meals, taking long holidays abroad, increasing their own salaries, only paying tax on half those salaries, placing their relatives and friends in well-paid positions

.....

Their response to the misery they have created is to make the victims pay, to jail workers who have resisted redundancy, to imprison students who have objected to spending cuts and to denounce and insult those desperately concerned parents who have tried to free their communities from some of their policies' worst side-effects.

Their response to the problems they have created is typified by the Criminal Justice Bill which is now almost law: the extension of the methods of legalised political repression across the whole of society. This law does not address the problems of urban crime, as it pretends, but rather, quite coldly, deprives every person in the state of most basic civil liberties. A government concerned with the growing disillusionment of those it governs has deliberately set out to give the forces or the state extended powers of unrestricted repression.

Sinn Fein has consistently presented an alternative to this. First of all we state that the Irish-people themselves must have the power to take the decisions themselves and that this can only be done in a united, independent Irish Republic which is not fettered by the interests of other states.

We advocate a planned economy which is not concerned with the maximising of profits for multinationals and private enterprise, but is concerned with maximising the benefits to the Irish people themselves.

Sinn Fein urges that job creation should concentrate in the areas of the most obvious potential development: natural resources; processing food for the neglected home market and for export; expanding the fishing fleet and processing industry to the level of other similar-sized countries; diversifying from the current secure industries to manufacturing industry with export potential; developing agriculture through selective subsidies and land restructuring, particularly in its labour-intensive areas such as market-gardening; and providing the necessary social services through planned public spending programmes particularly in the construction industry, with its spin-off potential.

We reject the negative, misery-inducing policies of the establishment parties, directed, as they are, at the protection of the interests of capital.

We declare our concern to be people, not profits. We state our confidence in the ability of the Irish people, through the implementation of a radical socialist economic programme in a united Ireland, to solve their own problems and to end the years of joblessness and social misery.

But Sinn Fein, in presenting an alternative – the only alternative – has a responsibility to be in a position, and this doesn't rest merely with those at national leadership level, to deliver the attainment of those objectives.

This means the development and expansion of our organisation through detailed and arduous work. Our policies must be well researched and kept up to date. They must be presented at every opportunity through an efficient publicity machine and we must win more and more people to work in support of them by recruitment throughout Ireland. The relevance of an anti-imperialist political and economic programme to the jobs question and the worries of parents and young people North and South need to be spelt out. We need to expound not only the patriotic reason for unity and independence but the logical, social and economic reasons as well.

The E.E.C. elections were the major focus of Sinn Fein activity in the past year. In our manifesto we put forward a well-researched and detailed analysis of the failure of the EEC miracle which was promised on entry. We advocated withdrawal from the EEC, the negotiation of trading agreements with it and an alternative based on a radical socialist programme. We were the only party to do that.

In the election we won a total of 146,148 votes in the thirty-two counties. In the twenty-six counties we estimated that a vote of 5% of the poll would be a considerable achievement given lack of electoral experience, organisational weakness and the effects of Section 31. We achieved that target.

The vote in the North was 91,476, and although we maintained our percentage, our actual vote was down in the number of votes cast.

We have already publicly analysed this result in all aspects; the campaign of the churches, the tactical voting of Alliance supporters, the strength of the Hume campaign, the effects of some aspects of the armed struggle, and so on. We have also acknowledged our mistake in publicly allowing a confident campaign aimed at enthusing election workers, supporters and voters to run away from our private predictions.

However, we have shown that there is a solid vote for Sinn Féin putting forward a definite political ideology and not attempting to follow the 'all-things-to-all-men' policies of the SDLP, or indeed, the other establishment parties.

The organisation benefited a lot from the EEC campaign, but unfortunately in the twenty-six counties we have neglected in many areas to expand on those benefits and the work done in the election campaign.

This is a task to which we must apply ourselves between now and the local government elections. Republican public representatives should be tribunes of the people, not just in council chambers but outside these bodies as well, taking up issues which affect people and linking together representational and propaganda work with agitational and organisational work.

We are 80 years old, as a political organisation, this year. Another great organisation, the GAA, is one hundred years old. We congratulate all Gaels, but especially those enthusiasts who give freely of their time to teach our youth the skills of hurling, camogie, handball and football and we wish them well and hope that in the future the GAA, as a national organisation, succeed once again in raising national pride and national consciousness.

For ourselves, it's back to hard work in the year ahead.

Last year we set ourselves a number of internal targets for the development of Sinn Féin. Our success in achieving these targets has been mixed but nonetheless, against all the odds, we have made progress. Next year we must build and expand on the gains made. Last year we made no promises except the promise of hard work.

Last year I outlined the practical measures needed, at a working level, if our party's aims are to become the tough practical policies by which we can give leadership now and provide results, even in the present partitionist set-up. Sinn Féin has succeeded in the Six Counties in doing just this. There is absolutely no reason why the same thing cannot happen in the twenty-six counties. Where we have done the work we have had success and in all areas of that work our success has been directly related to our input.

Sinn Féin members throughout the twenty-six counties must get stuck in, whether through separate political campaigning, advice centre services or full involvement in existing trade unions, tenants groups, cultural bodies and social agitational associations, always promoting the republican viewpoint in the context of the particular aims.

We must be in there with the people, making it clear where the present system is wrong and what our alternative would mean in practice. We cannot afford to be elitist. We can only afford to win. And we can win, which is what terrifies the establishment, but we can only win if we work at it.

There are no shortcuts in the task of making revolution. There are no easy options or magic formulae. Only by painstakingly perfecting, educating and structuring our organisation so that it becomes relevant to our people and their needs will we be ready and capable of giving the leadership which will be demanded of us in the years ahead.

Inniu is páirtí sinn áta níos láidre, níos beomhaire ná mar a bhí muid anuraidh ná an bhliain roimhe sin. An bhliain seo chugainn beidh muid níos láidre arís. Is cuma caidé chomh minic a castar Gearoid Mac Gearailt agus Margaret Thatcher ar a chéile agus is cuma cá mhéad ollchruinnithe idir Bhaile Átha Cliath agus Londain a bhéas ann tá muidinne dóchasach – nó níl fuascladh na faidhbe ann amach á neamhspleachas iomlán. Agus de thairbhe go bhfuil rún daingean againn gan tabhairt isteach do bhrú ar bith dá mhéad, tá muid cinnte go mairfidh ar bpáirtí ag fás le go mbeidh sé rannpháirteach mar ghníomhaí nach beag ar son saoirse iomláine daonlathas agus cearta sóisialta dár muintir. Ní fhásfaidh sé uaidh féin, áfach, tá obair le déanamh. Déanaimis an obair sin.

Today we are a stronger and a more vibrant party than we were last year or the year before. Next year we will be stronger again. Regardless of how often Garret Fitzgerald meets Margaret Thatcher or how many Dublin/London summits are held, we are confident, because there is no solution short of full independence, and because we have the determination to withstand all

pressures, we are confident that our party will continue to grow so that it can act in a major way as the catalyst for full freedom, democracy and social justice for our people. It will not grow on' its own, however. There is work to be done. Let us do it.
CRIOCH END

§ Presidential Address to the 89th Sinn Féin Ard Fheis 1993

Spell-checked, English-Gaelic version.

Fearaim fáilte romhaibh chuig an Ard Fheis seo. Bliain eile, bliain chrua, de streachailt ach táimid anseo go fóill agus táimid ar lorg ár gcearta agus ár saoirse. Beidh muid ann go mbainimid amach ár gcearta agus ár saoirse. Is é sin teachtaireacht na hArd Fheise seo. Tá Sinn Féin ann agus beidh Sinn Féin ann.

This is the 88th Ard Fheis of our party. It is also the centenary year of Conradh na Gaeilge. We extend solidarity and best wishes.

When Conradh na Gaeilge was founded the Irish language was still a living language in very large areas, but the decline was already well advanced – the language having been devastated by political, social and economic oppression throughout the 19th Century. The credit for arresting this decline and starting the fight-back goes to Conradh. The Irish people were alerted to what was being lost, and the complete extinction of the language was averted.

Today, 100 years later, discrimination against the Irish language remains one of the hallmarks of the political administration in both the Six and 26 Counties. Despite this, the language has not only survived but the fight-back is obvious in the spread of Gaelscoileanna GAELIC ONLY SCHOOLS throughout the country. The Dublin government's attitude, its efforts to reduce the status of the language, is insulting, though hardly surprising. It would be a fitting, though belated gesture by that government to establish an Irish language television station immediately. We note however that no provision has been made for an Irish station in the government estimates published this week. An bhfuil feall eile le teacht? IS THERE ANOTHER BETRAYAL COMING?

For our part, we need to re-emphasise as Dr Douglas Hyde did 100 years ago, that we cannot be complete without our own language and that the language is the language of all the Irish people.

It is traditional at Ard Fheiseanna that we extend greetings to republican prisoners throughout the world. At present there are over 700 republican prisoners. They and their families have borne long years of hardship and loneliness with fortitude and inspiring endurance. It is especially fitting that we remember Roy Walsh, Paul Holmes and Billy Armstrong who were returned to prisons in the North after over 20 years in prisons in Britain. We look forward to their release and the release of all political prisoners. We extend best wishes to those who work for prisoners and their families, through the POW Department, through An Cumann Cabhrach [institution], Green Cross and the prisoners support groups and campaigns.

On a sadder note, we remember the death of IRA Volunteer Christy Harford. We extend sympathy to his family. We remember also the murder of IRA Volunteer Pearse Jordan. We do so in the knowledge that republicans have no monopoly on suffering and we are mindful of all the dead of this long conflict. Pearse Jordan was a young man of 22 years. It was my sad duty to speak at his graveside. We and his family were surrounded by British crown forces. His murder had been shrouded by British disinformation. At that time, his parents said about Pearse: "Yes he was an IRA Volunteer, and we shall always respect him for that." In contrast to the dignity and the gentle courtesy of the Jordan family, the British government have yet to officially tell them of Pearse's death. It is as if he never existed. This Ard Fheis extends sympathy to the Jordan family.

The last year has seen an increase of the pressures bearing down on the democratic struggle in Ireland and the protracted national crisis has intensified since our last Ard Fheis. This crisis is not restricted to the conflict in the North, although this remains the greatest running sore in our society today. The national crisis has intensified also on the social and economic fronts, with increased poverty and unemployment in both states on this island.

The main victims of this crisis, in whatever form it affects them, are the dispossessed.

It has also been a year of elections and of new governments in London and Dublin and a new administration in the USA. It was the year which saw the end of the farce of the Brooke/Mayhew talks and even though this process may be regurgitated in some form in the future, it is now clear to all that it is a flawed process which cannot achieve justice or peace.

Before turning to these wider issues let me begin by examining briefly how Sinn Féin, as the party in the vanguard of struggle, has weathered the storms of reaction in both states on this

island. Since the last Ard Fheis Malachy Carey and Sheena Campbell, valued friends and activists, have been murdered by pro-British elements. These murders are, of course, part of a protracted campaign which has seen 12 Sinn Féin members killed and scores wounded in the last few years. We extend solidarity to Sheena and Malachy's family and friends.

Women in struggle

I am sure that Malachy's family will forgive me if I dwell for a while on Sheena's murder. Sheena was murdered because she was a republican, because she was a woman, because she was a leader of our struggle.

In the context of the social and political realities of today and particularly in the context of our continuing development as a party committed to equality between men and women, Sheena, like Maire Drumm, was a remarkable woman. They represented the core of this struggle, the unbreakable spirit of resistance of republican women.

This role has been virtually written out of our history. There is little we can do about earlier phases of this struggle but we can do something about this one. We can ensure that the role of women in our struggle and their sacrifices are recognised. Women must have equality of treatment in the making of struggle itself. Women in Irish society are relegated to a secondary role in all institutions. We have to ensure that this is reversed in Sinn Féin and that women have, as of right, equality. If this happens, women, as a matter of course, will take positions of leadership.

The pro-British killers who murdered Sheena and Maire had no difficulty in recognising them, in seeing how special and important they were to us. They were killed to send a message to other republican women activists. They were not killed by accident or despite being women. They were murdered because they were women. Many of us knew Sheena. Everyone of us knows a Sheena Campbell or a Maire Drumm. They are our sisters, as she was our sister. She was one of our leaders. There have been many tributes paid to her. The best tribute we can pay to her memory and to the memory of other sisters who have been killed in this struggle and who have died from heartbreak and stress – wives, sisters, mothers and partners – the finest tribute we can pay to them and, just as importantly, perhaps even more importantly, to those who still share this struggle with us is to do our utmost to advance our policy of equality and ensure that no hint of sexism or tokenism remains in our struggle.

Loyalist death squads

In recent weeks, UUP MP John Taylor and DUP MP Peter Robinson, SDLP MP Joe Hendron and others, including British ministers, have sought to present loyalist violence as reactive to that of the IRA. There is also a fiction, sponsored by those who know better, of a tit-for-tat murder campaign. There is no such campaign. One prominent unionist has even claimed that the loyalist death squads have "become so efficient and the Protestant paramilitaries are able to identify better targets and do it more efficiently, that they are not getting caught".

From January 1990 to December 1992, the various loyalist murder gangs killed 95 Catholics in the North. Of these, eight were republicans, two of them Sinn Féin councillors. This year, loyalist attacks occur almost on a daily basis. Loyalist violence is not reactive. It pre-dates partition and has been consistently employed by unionists and British governments to deny nationalists our right to democracy and equality.

The British government has repeatedly refused to face up to the threat of loyalist violence. On the contrary it has used that violence to advance its own political agenda in Ireland. It is doing so at present. The comments of senior unionist spokespersons are not the observations of neutral observers. They are cheerleaders of loyalist terrorism with a vested interest in playing the Orange card. This is the historical and political context in which the loyalist death squads operate.

I measc bhfáthanna atá bainte le hathbheochaint na ndronganna dúnmharaithe dílseacha, tá

- Bunú Ulster Resistance (eagraíocht atá dleathach go fóill) ag Ian Paisley, Peter Robinson agus daoine eile nach iad .
- Usáideann na dronganna dílseacha comhaid de chuid seirbhis faisnéise na Breataine – comhaid atá michruinn in amanna lena chuid íobartach a roghnú.
- Fuair na dílseoiri gléas chogaidh le fios ioman sheirbhis faisnéise na Breataine tríd a bhfeidhmeannach Brian Nelson.

Among the factors involved in the current resurgence of loyalist death squads are:

- The founding of Ulster Resistance (still a legal organisation) by Ian Paisley, Peter Robinson and others;

- The use of British Intelligence files by loyalist death squads to target some of their victims;
- The arming of the loyalists with the full knowledge of British Intelligence, by British agent, Brian Nelson.

In my view, the Brian Nelson case is the tip of the iceberg of British covert operations in Ireland. The use of agents is a long established practice and the use of 'counter-gangs' is a long standing element in British counter-insurgency strategy. Through Nelson, British intelligence controlled and directed the UDA. There is nothing to suggest that they have ceased to do this. They obviously have other agents in the UDA and other loyalist paramilitary groups. These groups have declared war on the entire nationalist community in the Six Counties as well as the Dublin government.

There is an urgent need to have the entire Nelson case fully investigated. There are a number of key aspects about which some details have emerged through his trial and from other sources. These are now a matter of public record and include:

- The cover-up of the Brian Nelson affair including the deal at his trial;
- Nelson's role as a British Intelligence agent;
- British Intelligence involvement with loyalist paramilitaries and their activities – during Nelson's time the UDA were responsible for the killing of dozens of Catholics;
- British Intelligence operations in the 26 Counties;
- The arming of loyalist death squads.

Last month, following detailed revelations by Sinn Féin, Patrick Mayhew denied that the weapons imported by Brian Nelson with the knowledge of British Intelligence, are being used to kill Catholics. Mr Mayhew is wrong.

The modern weapons used in recent killings, including the Milltown Cemetery attack, the Ormeau and Oldpark Bookmakers' shop attacks, and scores of individual killings are part of this consignment.

Mayhew's denial has been contradicted and our claim vindicated by subsequent British Army briefings to the BBC, in which it was admitted that they knew of the shipment, were monitoring it, but "lost track of it!"

As I have already said, the Brian Nelson case is the tip of the iceberg of British covert operations in Ireland. There is an urgent need for a full, public and independent inquiry into this affair. I call upon the SDLP leadership and Dublin government to support the call for such an investigation!

Elections

Ní raibh dílseacht s'agaibh riamh in amhras, ach tá níos mó ná sin de dhíth. Tá a fhios againn nach bhfuil aicearra ar bith ann. Nuair a éiríonn linn tarlaíonn sin mar thoradh ar réamhphleanáil, ar obair chrua agus de thairbhe gur féidir linn streachailt in aghaidh gach deacracht.

OUR DEDICATION HAS NEVER BEEN IN QUESTION, BUT IT TAKES MORE THAN THAT TO SUCCEED. WE ARE AWARE THAT THERE ARE NO SHORTCUTS TO TAKE. WHEN WE SUCCEED, IT WILL BE AS A RESULT OF FOREPLANNING, HARD WORK AND THE ABILITY TO STRUGGLE IN THE FACE OF EVERY DIFFICULTY.

That we have survived the establishment-sponsored campaign of vilification, censorship and terrorism, is a tribute to you all and to the thousands of people you represent. We are the only anti-partitionist party with a national organisation and while that is an achievement in itself, it means that we must contend with the challenges presented by the two different political realities on this island. This brings its own difficulties as well as its advantages.

In the last year, we fought two parliamentary elections. In the North, although the loss of the West Belfast seat was a symbolic one, our vote increased there and held up at 10% of the overall electorate and 30% of the nationalist electorate. This is a remarkable testament to the staunchness of our electorate and to the tenacity of our activists. In the course of the election we put our peace proposals firmly on the political agenda.

We are facing another electoral challenge in May in the local government elections. Sinn Féin is represented on 17 of the 26 district councils in the Six Counties and is the second largest party on Belfast and Derry city councils, and a significant force on a number of others.

Our councillors have consistently challenged and exposed loyalist bigotry and discrimination at all levels and a number of court cases taken by the party have successfully highlighted such practices.

Sinn Féin has been to the fore in introducing motions in councils attacking repression, harassment, cutbacks in health and social services, opposing privatisation and the destruction of our environment.

Sinn Féin has also been to the fore in exposing discrimination against the Irish culture and language and discrimination in employment. Discrimination perpetrated by the councils themselves has been consistently exposed over the last five years by our party. Our councillors also spear-headed a campaign to expose the thousands of pounds of rate-payers money which has been squandered every year on 'junkets'.

Unionist behaviour on the councils, and I mean all the councils not just Belfast, shows how little the unionist parties have learned.

In many ways, our councillors have been in the front line. I commend them and the northern leadership of our party. We enter the May election unbowed and unbroken and confident of renewing our mandate.

IN THE SOUTH

Our results in the Leinster House election show clearly that our party has yet to develop a niche in electoral politics in this state. This is hardly surprising given our underdevelopment and the impact of the censorship ethos. Indeed, that we were able to contest on such a wide basis is to the credit of our candidates and activists. I commend you all. Your loyalty has never been in question but we need more than that. We know there are no short cuts. Our successes come only as the result of serious preplanning, sheer hard work and our ability to struggle against the odds.

Sinn Féin's objectives in the Leinster House election were limited ones. In the state sponsored climate of McCarthyism we were asserting our right to exist and utilising the limited publicity outlets available to us during the election so that citizens can receive our material and hear our views, so that we can strengthen our party structures and mobilise local activists. While the vote we received was a disappointing one, we must examine, in detail, the reasons why.

I have found that there is widespread and general sympathy with the national aims of our party throughout this state. The political establishment here know this. That is why we are denied access to the media. That is why we are harassed by the secret police. That is why our opponents seek to marginalise us.

Political debate is increasingly conducted through the broadcasting media. This is especially so during elections and the big parties have the resources and the ability to create and present an image of themselves and their leaders which most times has little to do with the reality of their record or policies. How well would any of the other parties have done if they were denied the right to party political broadcasts; to involvement in the election programmes or even the right to have the name of their party or candidates carried on television and radio programmes?

Of course it is not enough to rail against this or the other obstacles which are placed in our way. Our failure, so far, to advance electorally in the 26 Counties is broader than electoralism. It is to do also with the management of our struggle and of our political project in this state.

It is not possible to successfully contest elections purely on an electoral basis or during an election campaign. We need to be involved on a daily basis in political struggle of which elections is a part.

There are many areas throughout this state in which sterling work has been done. Our councillors, in particular, like their colleagues in the North, have advanced our agenda and against all the odds, the 26 County comhairle social SERVICES have provided leadership on many issues.

We are a small party but we need to continue to put the issue of partition on the electoral agenda. Our activists need to be campaigning on the issues of unemployment and low pay, women's rights and local issues which affect their communities. We must continue to build this party in this state, to assert our right to exist, to build links with others, to put forward our analysis. We must prepare now – and on an agreed and realistic basis – for the next local government election; not a few months or weeks before polling day but now, coming out of this Ard Fheis.

A party which is committed to progressive social and economic changes and to Irish unity would be in accord with the thinking of great numbers of people in the 26 Counties. That is the challenge facing us all – to build such a party.

Articles 2 and 3

The last 12 months has seen a heightening of efforts by some politicians and media commentators to have a referendum called to delete or dilute Articles 2 and 3. We should be very clear about the motivations of those involved. The campaign being led by John Bruton and Patrick Mayhew is an attempt to put the blame for the ongoing conflict on the backs of nationalists north and south. It is an attempt to say that British rule and the British claim to sovereignty is right and just and superior to any claims to Irish reunification.

Any amendment of Articles 2 and 3 would be used around the world by the British government as an indication of support for British rule and the full apparatus of British repression. It would leave the British claim uncontested in law.

Amending Articles 2 and 3 would also remove from northern nationalists (and indeed unionists) their right to hold an Irish passport and would be a repudiation of the birthright of Irish people born and living in the Six Counties.

This must be resisted and republicans should be joining with all those opposed to ditching Articles 2 and 3. This ties in with the need for a broad-based movement for Irish unity and peace. The desire of the vast majority of Irish people for the resolution of the conflict, with an end to British involvement and the peaceful unification of Ireland, has been ignored by most of those who claim to represent us. The building of a movement to translate that desire into action must continue.

We are going through a period of intense effort on the part of the British government and its allies to defeat Irish republicanism, the most intense effort for many years. The first task of republicans in the 26 Counties, as elsewhere, is to stand their ground, strengthen our organisation and be ready to move forward again.

Censorship

I want to touch briefly again on the issue of censorship. It is widely acknowledged that censorship of Sinn Féin prevents public opinion from being properly informed. Censorship helps to create a political climate which is consistently flawed. There is a relationship between the censorship of Sinn Féin and the murder campaign against our members in so far as censorship helps to create the climate in which these murders happen. Political censorship also disinforms, it encourages ignorance, it breeds and perpetuates conflict.

Above and beyond state censorship there is always an additional danger of self-censorship by sections of the media. Broadcasters often tell us that they must be careful that they do not become party to the propaganda war. They are right but their caution must be in all aspects of this issue. They should never allow themselves to become an instrument of state propaganda against dissidents or of the more general McCarthyism which is so prevalent today.

I appeal to broadcasters to recognise the importance of their role in these matters. They need to be impartial and courageous in defending and fulfilling this role.

It is regrettable that at times local broadcasters in BBC, RTE and UTV appear to lack these qualities. In saying this, I am mindful of the problems which they face but I am especially mindful of the censorship ethos which springs from state censorship. These difficulties should never be permitted to become an excuse for the media acceptance of censorship or for broadcasters to become complacent about their role.

While some sections of the media have endeavoured to focus attention on alternative views to the establishment attitude to unemployment, emigration, public spending cuts, partition, the war in the Six Counties, sectarianism, poverty, women's rights and the other pressing problems which bear down on huge sections of our people, the general media coverage is exclusive, not inclusive, and reflects the status quo.

I am thinking here specifically of RTE where news manipulation and censorship is blatant and obvious. The RTE Authority now actively and unapologetically seeks to disinform, not inform; to cover up, not investigate.

RTE coverage panders to the big parties and reduces politics to the level of a televised auction of promises and counter promises. The first to be censored over 20 years ago was Sinn Féin. Now all nationalists are censored. Censorship was broadened to include alienated people in the Six Counties. Now the alienated of the 26 Counties are censored also. The unemployed, the disadvantaged, the poor. They have little say in the RTE view of things.

In those conditions, it may be difficult for journalists or presenters to fulfill their responsibilities, to stand up and to demand proper coverage of the crisis in Irish society, and

of those marginalised by it, north and south. Difficult or not there must be an end to media manipulation and censorship.

The British government excuses its use of censorship of Sinn Féin by citing the long standing employment by Dublin of Section 31 of the Broadcasting Act.

Michael D Higgins is Minister for Art and Culture. We wish him well. He is also responsible for Section 31. He would be the first to admit, poetically perhaps, the irony of a situation where the Minister of Culture is in charge of censorship. Michael D Higgins knows what he must do about that. Amending the Censorship Act to allow the broadcasting of the voices of trade unionists, or prize winning Gaelgeoiri NATIVE IRISH SPEAKER, or mushroom growers, or authors who are members of Sinn Féin, will not be good enough. Sinn Féin should not be censored. Michael D knows that. He and his party is opposed to Section 31. He has the power to end this injustice. He knows that also. He must end the censorship of this party.

Economic development

The basic facts of the failed economic entities that are the Six and 26 County states are depressingly familiar; in the 26 Counties we are heading for 400,000 unemployed, there are well over one million living in poverty and another million in economic exile.

Poverty is commonplace in both parts of Ireland. Poverty is obviously about the lack of money. It is also about rights and relationships; about how people are treated and how they regard themselves; about powerlessness, exclusion and loss of dignity. The lack of inadequate incomes is at its heart.

In the 1980s, poverty increased faster in the North than in any other part of the EC.

Over 27% of people live in poverty.

A staggering 39% of our children live in poor households.

Support for people on low income has been reduced. Some benefits have been abolished.

Basic essentials, particularly fuel, costs more.

In a recent analysis of unemployment figures which included both Britain and the North, out of the top ten areas with the highest levels of unemployment, eight were in the North, and almost all were predominantly nationalist areas. These were led by Strabane and included Cookstown, Derry, Newry and Magherafelt. This scandalous situation predates the current conflict.

Partition

Clearly some of the disadvantages of the Irish economies are directly attributable to the partition of the country. Ireland is not a poor country. It is a relatively wealthy one but the development of the 26 County and Six county economies have been unnaturally isolated from each other.

The political division of Ireland is becoming increasingly indefensible in the context of greater economic integration and unity. More than ever before the economic argument against partition is compelling and in the last year a range of business and conservative interests have publicly supported an agenda for economic unity. These include the Confederation of Irish Industry, Co-operation North and George Quigley, Chairperson of the Ulster Bank. The Dublin government itself produced 'Ireland – Europe – A Shared Challenge'. All of these favour (or outline the benefits of) a common financial system across the two economies.

Partition was designed to serve a British economic agenda for Ireland, splitting a natural economic unity, an island economy, into two unequal imbalanced segments.

Even the New Ireland Forum which was set up to halt the increase in support for Sinn Féin admits: "The division of the island has been a source of continuing costs, especially for trade and development in border areas, but in general also to the two separate administrations which have been pursuing separate economic policies on a small island with shared problems and resources."

In addition, Irish tax payers in the 26 County state must bear the enormous financial burden of defending Britain's border. Ray Burke, as Minister for Justice in January 1992, admitted that the state had spent more than £2 billion pounds on border "security" since 1971. In 1991, the figure was £180 million. These figures suggest that the true costs of partition have never been counted. How many hospitals, houses, schools or roads could have been built with this finance?

ECONOMIC DEMOCRACY

The joining together of two economies or cross border co-operation on a range of economic projects will not bring an end to the economic and social problems which dispossess the

majority of Irish people, though it would help to reduce some of them. The end of partition and the establishment of a national democracy would however be a positive development as it would set the stage for the democratic transformation of the economy allied to the radical transformation of Irish society and the securing of a lasting peace which is needed to give hope to the jobless, the poor, the emigrants, women and all those who are marginalised and disadvantaged by the present failed system.

This is not to say that we have to wait until partition ends before economic progress can be made. Of course not. It has long been our view that even within the limits of partition, there is a need for a change of the social and economic ethos which governs society, and which has created and sustained a two-tier society in this country. Republicans have consistently argued that the conservative nature of both states in this island is a direct result of partition. We have asserted that a national democracy is the natural basis on which a just society can be established but, at the same time, we have also insisted that things don't have to be as bad as they are. In the 26 Counties, the responsibility for this lies with the Dublin establishment. The North is a peripheral part of the British economy. It is governed in British not Irish interests. In the South we have an economy where job creation, wages, the environment, health and welfare considerations all come secondary to profit.

The record of successive Dublin governments show how the limited freedom won for them has been squandered and abused in the sectional interests of a wealthy elite in this state. The record shows how the Dublin establishment has established a golden circle as the centre of a relatively comfortable tier of 'haves' surrounded by an increasingly alienated and cynical mass of dispossessed, unemployed and disillusioned 'have-nots'.

THE FIANNA FAIL/LABOUR COALITION

The Programme for Partnership adopted by the Fianna Fáil/Labour coalition, gives little hope that a successful salvage operation will be mounted. Although job creation is the alleged priority, there is no recognition of the need for a major change in economic strategy to achieve this end. Instead there is a ritual reaffirmation of the plan which has produced the unemployment blight.

We are told repeatedly that the basics are right. These basics, exports, growth, reduction in debt and low inflation have proven to be an illusory quantity. The economy of the 26 Counties had the fastest growth rate in the industrialised world in 1991 with record growth figures. Yet the 26 Counties also has the worst record for unemployment. Unemployment has risen by over 70,000 in the last two years; a rise which the government policy makers had not envisaged possible in January 1991.

Over the past five months, the Dublin government has been forced to intervene in day-to-day business activity, not to create jobs, not to create public sector enterprise, but to protect profit margins. Profit is what has been at stake, profits of the banks and building societies, profits of business.

There is no long-term policy, only crisis management. The punt has never been an independent autonomous currency. It has moved from parity with sterling in 1979 to the EC Exchange Rate Mechanism (ERM). Never has there been an agenda for economic autonomy and we are now caught between two imperialist economic powers – Britain and Germany. As we face into mortgage interest rate increases and an economy rife with sectional interests, we see that not only has membership of the ERM dissipated our limited economic sovereignty, it has also turned sectors within the economy against each other.

The only option left is to float the punt and only re-enter the ERM if basic conditions of equity and democracy are adhered to. Otherwise the ERM will remain dominated by the Germans and their chosen economic satellites, and the 26 County economy will face another costly 'crisis'.

TRANSITIONAL MEASURES

The viability of domestic economy has been eroded under the distorting weight of the multinationals, instant radical change is not possible. But transitional short-term measures can be introduced to initiate a new era of economic change. The outflow of profits, investment funds and capital must be staunch. Wasteful pampering of big business must be halted. Such transitional measures would include:

1. Rescheduling of Foreign debt

Despite the cuts in public expenditure external debt continues to grow and now stands at £13 billion. Repayments over the past decade have cost about £8 billion. 1991 repayments were over £2 billion. This is an indication of the scale on which foreign debt gobbles up domestic

resources. Any government seriously concerned with job creation must consider the option of rescheduling – unilaterally if necessary debt payments. At the very least interest payments should be suspended until employment and emigration have been substantially reduced. This would immediately release significant funds for major employment projects.

2. Nationalisation of the banks.

The Programme for Government admits that "state controlled banks are commonplace in the EC", but the state bank proposed is on too small a scale to dislodge the stranglehold of the private banks. A state bank is more likely to be on the receiving end of the private sector's cut-throat practices. The £3 billion assets quoted are only but a fraction of what is at the disposal of the major banks.

In 1992 the top ten private financial institutions made £652 million in profits. It is evident that if a state bank is to have resources capable of having a real impact on job creation, the major private financial institutions will have to be brought under state ownership. Ownership of these institutions would, give the government greater flexibility with funds and release more finance for tackling unemployment.

3. Controls to limit the export of capital.

Each year billions of pounds in private capital are exported for speculative and other purposes which give little or no stimulation to the 26 County economy. Profit is the only motive. Little of the profits made are ever reinvested at home. In 1990, £1.8 billion of private capital was exported.

4. Taxation of profits exported by multinationals.

Between 1985 and 1991, multinationals repatriated £7 billion. For 1991 alone, the figure was £2.7 billion. These profits were generated by the endeavour of Irish workers and rightly belongs to the Irish people. This sum, taxed at the normal rate of 40% corporation tax would yield about £1 billion.

5. A real corporation tax.

In tax on 1991/2 business profits amounted to only £527 million out of a total tax take of £9.8 billion, ie, only 5%. The same year the private sector received £327 million in grants and subventions from the taxpayer. Its net contribution was a mere £155 million (1.6%) – hardly a fair share of the state's revenue.

The Sunday Tribune on 27 December listed "the top 500 companies in Ireland in 1992". Of these it identified the profits of 246 firms which came to almost £2.4 billion. A corporate tax of 40% (the norm in most countries) on these profits would have yielded nearly £1 billion, ie, twice the sum actually handed up by the entire corporate sector.

Apart from tax avoidance there is also the problem of endemic tax evasion. The 1992 report of the Comptroller and Auditor General indicates that there was a total of £563 million in recoverable corporate capital and property taxes outstanding from the previous year.

Using a perspective quite different from the establishment consensus, these measures would mobilise over £7 billion of finance which could be used democratically to create tens of thousands of jobs.

We are far from imagining that all this finance could be acquired instantly or painlessly but the objectives of more equity and environmental control converge to a common conclusion; the need for a bottom up, participatory democracy which seeks to reverse urban alienation, rural underdevelopment, the urban rural divide and the crisis of poverty and unemployment.

There is no evidence in the Fianna Fáil/Labour Programme for Partnership of a strategy to address these issues. Indeed the conditions which sustain them are liable to worsen. No matter what the desire for change among Irish people, no matter what the aspirations of those who voted for change, these aspirations will not be fulfilled unless the newly elected TDs are prepared to implement radical change. This means tackling the issue of partition and the related social and economic malaise which affects both party of Ireland. They must initiate a process for the democratic resolution of the conflict in the Six Counties and encourage open debate about all these matters.

The clear message from the electorate here has been for an end to the politics of strokes and selfish conservatism and the main party political benefactors of that so far have been the Labour Party.

Labour took many years to rid itself of the stigma of the 1982-'87 Thatcherite coalition with Fine Gael. Its support in this election has been built up on the basis of opposition to the anti-people policies of the Fianna Fail/Progressive Democrats Coalition.

Admittedly this coalition has the potential for being much more progressive than its predecessors but only if those who represent its republican and socialist tendencies are prepared to stand by their political principles. All nationalists, republicans and socialists must demand that they do so.

THE POLITICS OF PEACE

The establishment and development of a peace process remains a priority for Sinn Féin and a personal and political priority for me. Unfortunately this commitment is not shared by the British government at this time. That government is engaged in intensified efforts to force British terms on Irish nationalists and is currently waging one of its most intense counter-insurgency campaigns of the last 20 years. We are in the eye of the storm, the centre and the object of a massive British offensive which is most keenly felt in the Six Counties but which has its 26 County dimension as well as an international focus. The aim is pacification of nationalist and republican dissent so that the main British political objective can be secured. As minister Mayhew has pointed out this is to "return to the situation to the extent at least that it was when Stormont had jurisdiction. That is our objective".

Níl amhras ar bith ann ach go bhfuil Rialtas na Breataine faoi bhrú mhór go hidirnáisiúnta déaláil le diúitú cearta náisiúnta agus cearta daonlathacha in Éirinn go háirithe le na hathruithe móra atá ag tarlúint fríd an domhain mhóir. Téann na hathruithe seo uilig i bhfeidhm ar an suíomh Angla-Éireannach, go speisialta i gcomhthéacs na hEorpa.

There is no doubt that the British government is under considerable pressure internationally to resolve the many instances of denials of national and democratic rights arising from its involvement in Ireland. This is especially so as the world order goes through many profound changes, all of which affect the Anglo-Irish situation especially in the European context. In particular, the reports of international human rights organisations such as the Helsinki Committee and Amnesty International can be credited with restraining the British from even greater excesses.

The international community can do much more to inhibit the British government in its use of repressive acts. The European Community through the Conference on Security and Co-operation in Europe (CSCE) and the United Nations through the UN Commission on Human Rights are mandated to perform that role.

Likewise the parent bodies are mandated to address the central issue of national self-determination; the denial of which is at the core of the conflict in Ireland. The main responsibility for putting all of this on the agendas of international forums lies with the Dublin government. It is a constitutional imperative that it do so and Dublin's consistent refusal to take up that responsibility is a key element in the prolongation of the conflict. It is in this general context that the pre-election comments of President Bill Clinton are to be welcomed. So too are the endeavours of those in the Irish American community who put Ireland on the Presidential election agenda; and who, as media reports have since demonstrated, are determined to keep Ireland on the agenda of the President.

None of this would be possible of course, if it was not for the continued struggle here in Ireland and it is clear that the republican struggle remains the main catalyst for any potential change on the national question. It is the resilience of nationalist resistance which has kept the British government under pressure over its failure to 'settle the Irish question' and which has acted also as a brake on Dublin and the SDLP.

Our peace strategy is central to this project and we have been generally successful, despite all the difficulties, in promoting our position. The evolution of party policy and its public promotion will, of course, be seized and has been seized upon in an effort to confuse us and our base of support. This exploitation and misrepresentation of our position is part of the British sponsored 'psyching-out' process which aims to wear us down. Again and again we are told that we cannot win and every effort is made to marginalise us and our political programme, to make us feel irrelevant and to make us give up.

As part of this 'wearing down' process elements of the republican struggle, whether they are aspects of armed actions of the armed struggle itself, or Sinn Féin's electoral strategy, will be utilised as our opponents attempt to isolate and defeat us. As experienced political activists, Sinn Féin accepts this as part of the daily grind of political struggle. We know that we have to exhaust the British – that we have to survive every offensive against us and that our will to secure a lasting and peaceful settlement – our desire for freedom – is greater than the British will to remain in our country.

BRITISH POLICY

The present British policy is untenable, and most observers know it. They say they "will not talk to Sinn Féin", they "will not countenance meetings until a significant and lengthy ceasefire has held", and yet Mr Mayhew devotes and directs the bulk of his recent speech at the University of Ulster, Coleraine, to the republican community in Ireland.

Such keynote speeches are evidence of the continued centrality of the republican struggle and of our ability to affect the political agenda.

As I said after the Mayhew speech, "despite the flaws in his analysis, nationalist and republicans will be concerned that this should be built upon and so I approach Mr Mayhew's remarks, as Sinn Féin always seeks to approach such developments, in a positive way".

I am aware that there are vast gulfs between ourselves and the British and the unionists. It is foolish to declare otherwise but if the desire for peace and reconciliation is to be fulfilled then we must all of us, examine all options. This war has been ongoing for almost a quarter of a century. There are over 3,000 people dead and countless thousands others damaged and maimed, physically and psychologically.

There can be no solution that denies the existence of any protagonist to the conflict. Dialogue will require courage, perhaps a leap of faith, certainly an imaginative empathy so sadly lacking in Anglo-Irish affairs and undoubtedly also, democratic compromise.

Every British initiative to date has been within the context of partition, a British political agenda and with the unionist veto underwritten.

A peace process, if it is to be meaningful and genuine must address the political problem which has been a part of our history for generations. Such a policy shift by the British would meet with a positive response from republicans and usher in a new era.

What is needed is a strategy for change and peace. This means London adopting a policy aimed at ending partition and which seeks, with Dublin, to achieve this in the shortest possible time consistent with obtaining maximum consent to the process and minimising costs of every kind and recognising the centrality of inclusive dialogue in this process.

As I have said many times, the international community can help the peace process in Ireland. The European Community, which is involved in a process of economic and political restructuring, can provide valuable assistance, while the UN, which has the authority to monitor a decolonisation process in Ireland, could during any transitional period convene an international conference on the democratic resolution of the conflict in Ireland.

Every British effort to rule Ireland has failed. The Irish people have been the main victims of this failure. It is ironic in this year of "Europe Without Frontiers" that Britain's imposed border still remains; that this is an increasingly militarised zone and that the military closure of 173 cross border roads denies Irish citizens the right to travel within our own country.

The Partition Act – the Government of Ireland Act – is obviously not a solution. Since its creation 70 years ago, the Six County state has been in a permanent state of crisis and for the last two decades there has been open conflict. Partition has failed. Britain's presence in Ireland and peace are incompatible.

A new approach is needed. One which would involve comprehensive negotiations between all of the parties. This brings me to the role of the Dublin government.

A new initiative

For those who may have forgotten, the Hillsborough Treaty was signed by Garret FitzGerald and Margaret Thatcher in November 1985. It was intended, as admitted by Garret FitzGerald in his memoirs two years ago, to assist the SDLP and to defeat republicanism.

Publicly it was meant to end "nationalist alienation" from the Northern state and give the Dublin government a role in policy making for the Six Counties.

Like so many previous British sponsored initiatives it was heralded as a new beginning for nationalists. The "nationalist nightmare" was at an end, we were told. That was the wrapping paper on the treaty. What it really contained was a strategy for the Dublin government to assist the British in governing the North as part of the United Kingdom.

Recently one of the key negotiators of the Hillsborough Treaty criticised the Dublin government for not making full use of the Hillsborough process.

Former top Irish diplomat and civil servant Michael Lillis urged the incoming government to "work the agreement vigorously and creatively as though from a new beginning". He called for agreement with the British on a "drastic scenario of new structures which would come into effect immediately the violence clearly ended". This should include, he argued, "(British) army

withdrawal, disarming and local recruitment of police, drastic reduction of sentences for special court prisoners and an appropriate role in future negotiations [for republicans]".

Coming from the former head of the Dublin government group at the Maryfield secretariat set up under the Hillsborough treaty, these remarks are interesting. I welcome the recognition that a new approach is needed. Republicans have made clear in the past that we would welcome a new initiative, a real initiative, to break the political log-jam. That initiative must involve all parties to the conflict in discussions.

The Dublin government has a responsibility to take such an initiative. I have outlined above the strategy for change and peace which is required.

As part of such an initiative the British government should be invited by Dublin to explore in discussion with all interested parties the steps that would be needed to get northern majority consent to Irish reunification, and the guarantees and assurances that would be needed to safeguard Protestant rights and interests in such a situation.

Surely the British government could not refuse such an invitation? Surely Mr Mayhew with "no blue print or master plan" would be eager to facilitate such a discussion?

THE UNIONISTS

It is important that voices from within the unionist section of our people rise above the sectarian and other pressures of this time. I welcome therefore the recent statement from Jack Weir and Godfrey Brown that: "We also recognise that 80,000 of our fellow citizens by their votes have shown their support and sympathies for Sinn Féin... However, deeply we may disagree with them they will not disappear because we choose to ignore or suppress them but the fact remains that they are part of our society with whom, we as Christians must try to find a way to live and find a better future". This sentiment represents, I believe, the feelings of a significant section of unionism.

I want to reiterate that the republican demand for a British withdrawal is not aimed at Northern Protestants. It is a demand that the people of Ireland, and that includes the essential contribution and participation of northern Protestants, be allowed to control our own destiny and shape a society which is pluralist and reflective of the diversity of all our people.

I wish also to reassure Protestants that there is no desire among nationalists or republicans that they should be made to suffer for the actions of British sponsored murders of nationalists or Catholics. And I repeat my firm conviction that attacks on Protestants are wrong for exactly the same reason that attacks on Catholics are wrong.

The unionist veto over the future of the Irish people is undemocratic. It is sustained by force but it will inevitably come to an end. Unionist consent on the shape of a new Ireland is clearly desirable but this cannot entail a veto over the future of the Irish nation.

Unionists can take reassurance from the fact that electorally in an all-Ireland democracy they would command far greater weight than they do now in union with Britain. Because, under British rule, the political status of the Six Counties is exactly what the unionists say it is – a province of the United Kingdom – and its people cannot hope to have any significant say in the direction of their own affairs until they choose to democratically exercise their influence within an all-Ireland system.

A genuinely free Ireland will reduce all forms of religious fundamentalism, privilege and sectarianism and new political alliances will emerge as the current divisions arising from the British connection disappear and social and class lines become the main points of unity. This cannot occur without the full involvement of the Protestant people.

Their future lies with the rest of the Irish people. I appeal to unionists to come to terms with this reality. It is a challenge facing us all. It is our future.

'Se to dhchaí na hÉireann daonlathas náisiúnta. Sa daonlathas sin beidh ár muintir, idir Caitlicigh, Protastúnaigh agus uile, in ann teacht le chéile chun poblacht ina mbeidh an cothrom i réim a thógáil. Bí linn sa daonlathas sin'.

'THE FUTURE OF IRELAND IS A NATIONWIDE DEMOCRACY. IN THAT DEMOCRACY, WILL BE OUR PEOPLE, CATHOLICS, PROTESTANTS AND ALL, ABLE TO JOIN TOGETHER TO FORM A SOCIETY WHERE EQUALITY REIGNS. BE WITH US IN THAT DEMOCRACY'.

At the beginning of this decade I warned that we were entering into a period of high risk which would also involve great potential for our struggle. At that time, I outlined my view that the pressures upon us would intensify as the situation moves hesitantly towards resolution. It appeared to me that we needed to manage our affairs even more diligently than usual as the

British and their allies intensified their already frenzied efforts to defeat us so that a settlement could be made which excluded the democratic option of Irish national self determination.

It is important that we all realise the difficulties facing the British because of their failure to resolve the conflict – even temporarily – on their terms. For as long as they fail to do this and for so long as we succeed in exhausting and surviving their offensives – then the irreversible thrust of this struggle moves relentlessly towards the end of British rule in our country.

The loyalists know this. The British establishment knows it also and sections of the British political establishment favour a change in British government attitude to Ireland. There is no significant international support for the partition of this country. On the contrary it is widely acknowledged that international opinion is dissatisfied with British handling of its involvement in Irish affairs. Public and political opinion throughout the world favours inclusive dialogue as a means of ending conflict. That is what is advocated and supported by the majority of governments including the British, in conflict situations in other parts of the world.

In Ireland all opinion, except the unionists, want a peaceful and democratic end to the conflict and British domestic opinion would welcome the end to the long strife between our countries.

It is important that we always keep our eye on this big picture and that we are mindful of the strength of our struggle and of the weaknesses in the British position. Our political position has an integrity which the British one lacks.

When asked, as I often am, if the British government will talk to Sinn Féin, I give my view that such talks are inevitable and long overdue. It is the British government which is causing the delay. It has already conceded the principle and is currently setting down its conditions.

This issue of talks and of the conditions in which they will be conducted is an area of struggle for us but Sinn Féin does not make it difficult for the British government to play a positive role in creating the conditions for a peace process in Ireland. On the contrary, we seek to persuade that government that such a role should be its main function at this time in our history.

The British Prime Minister, so far, has rejected this role. By so doing he is swimming against the tide of history. But while he persists with such folly the pressures upon us will remain and indeed they may intensify yet again. This therefore is a critical stage in the affairs of our nation. It remains one of high risk and also of great potential as we experience and influence the working out of our future.

Already this year our anti-partitionist and democratic position has been vindicated by the abject failure of the Brooke/Mayhew process to re-establish Stormont.

The inevitable and widely predicted collapse of the recent Stormont talks, despite the efforts of both governments, proves beyond any doubt that there are no partial solutions and that there cannot be partial negotiations about the future on this island.

The position has now moved on irreversibly beyond such arrangements. All the main players know that and as the British cast about for another option, we must continue to face them with the democratic one. That is, an end to the British presence and for a lasting peace in our country.

§ Presidential Address to the 90th Sinn Féin Ard Fheis 1994

Spell-checked, English-Gaelic version.

Welcome to you all. I extend greetings and solidarity to the families of republican prisoners and to the prisoners themselves here in Ireland, in Britain and throughout the world.

We are meeting here this weekend at an historic juncture in the struggle for Irish democracy. The events of this past six months have moved at a breath-taking pace as change unfolded rapidly. At the centre of the whirlpool of developments is the prize of peace, much sought after by all sensible people in both these islands. For the last quarter of a century, the political landscape has been frozen over – those with real power to thaw out the situation seemed to be in a permanent state of paralysis.

But the ice is beginning to thaw and much has been done in the last six months to create the climate wherein a real debate, open-ended and inclusive of everyone, can take place. But a lot more needs to be done before certainty of purpose can replace the atmosphere of suspicion and doubt on all sides. I want to extend a special welcome to the scores of journalists who do not usually attend our Ard Fheiseanna, in particular the media from outside Ireland. Your coverage of this Ard Fheis will assist the search for peace in the same way your coverage of events in South Africa, Palestine and elsewhere has contributed to internationalising those conflicts.

For 25 years and longer, the British government misled the world about their involvement in Ireland. Their power and influence in the world made it easier for them to portray themselves as 'honest brokers'. Their censorship laws and exclusion orders silenced the voices of reason. Your presence here can help to break the wall of silence which the British have built around their involvement in Ireland.

Censorship

I welcome RTÉ into the debate for the first time in 23 years. You and your listeners and viewers are welcome to the real world of republican politics. You will notice that we are not demons, nor demagogues, but ordinary people like yourselves, pledged to complete a task begun by previous generations of Irish nationalists.

The RTÉ management have still a long way to go to rid themselves completely of the ingrained effects of state censorship and we in Sinn Féin have a long way to go to reverse the effects of 20 years of revisionism, propaganda and disinformation, but a start has been made. I commend Michael D Higgins for his stand on this issue and for restoring to citizens their right to information. I congratulate all those groups and individuals who campaigned for this over the years. I call upon the British government to follow the example of the Dublin government and to restore to listeners and viewers of the British broadcasting services their rights to information, and to our electorate, its right to freedom of speech.

I want to turn now to those issues which have dominated our activities and the wider political and public agenda here, and at times abroad, this last year. Your presence and the attention being paid to our deliberations this weekend is ample evidence of the potency of this party and of the struggle to which we have committed ourselves. The strength of this struggle today and its potential for growth is a measure of the courage, self-sacrifice and tenacity of republicans. The last year has been a hectic and historic one. It was a year in which the heart-felt desire for peace in Ireland was meaningfully and widely demonstrated. It was a year in which an opportunity to attain peace was created. It was a year also, tragically, of continued war, when many people died in the conflict which has been part of our history for the past 25 years and for many years before this.

Ní bhaineann an Ard Fheis seo sásamh as bás ar bith. Leoga, is ionadaithe sinne do phobal a d'fhreastail ar i bhfad barraíochta sochraidí. Pobal a d'fhulaing an iomarca. Tá bá againn le daoine eile atá ag fulaingt mar tuigimid dá dtaití agus dá mbrón. Nuair a dhéanaimid comhbhrón, déanaimid go hionraice agus go f'reannach é.

THIS ARD FHEIS DOES NOT GET ANY SATISFACTION FROM ANY DEATH. WE ARE MEMBERS OF A SOCIETY TOO USED TO ATTENDING FUNERALS. A SOCIETY THAT HAS SUFFERED TOO MUCH. WE HAVE SYMPATHY FOR THE OTHER PEOPLE WHO ARE SUFFERING, BECAUSE WE UNDERSTAND THEIR EXPERIENCES AND THEIR SORROW. WHEN WE EXTEND OUR CONDOLENCES, THEY ARE GENUINE.

This Ard Fheis recalls all those who died in Ireland and in Britain, whether in Warrington, or the Shankill Road, in Greysteel, Castlerock or Kennedy Way. We remember them all and extend solidarity to all the families of the victims of the Anglo/Irish conflict.

We remember our own members who died and extend solidarity to the families of Alan Lundy and Peter Gallagher, both victims of the loyalist death squads. We extend best wishes also to the families of the many other Sinn Féin activists who were injured or whose homes were attacked as part of the British-sponsored campaign of terror. In particular, I would like to single out the family of Belfast city councillor, Bobby Lavery and Val, whose son, Seán, was killed in an attack on the family home last August, on the evening that republicans reclaimed Belfast city centre in a joyous, peaceful demonstration of goodwill and celebration. Sections of the establishment media often attempt to project the struggle as a sectarian one, composed in the main of tit-for-tat killings. They seek to portray republicans and loyalists as opposite sides of the one coin. They should listen to Bobby Lavery's words as he buried his son:

"I don't blame the people who shot my son. I blame the people who taught the killers that they were right to do so, the teachers knowing better. They are taught that we are subhuman and it is quite understandable that they would want to kill us".

Bobby's words are an awesome inspiration. His family are an example to us all. Many republican families have been targeted by the loyalist and British forces. All of these families have our solidarity, from the Maskeys, the McGuigans, the Austins and Armstrongs to the Carahers, the Fullertons, the Foxs, the Daveys, and all the rest. To the women especially, the strong, gentle women who carry this struggle and their partners and their families, this Ard Fheis extends love and admiration. We recall too the two IRA Volunteers who were killed, Jimmy Kelly and Thomas Begley. Jimmy Kelly was killed with workmates by loyalist gunmen in Castlerock, Co Derry, and Thomas Begley died on the Shankill Road in Belfast, along with nine innocent victims of an IRA bombing.

I sympathise with all the families bereaved in this conflict and especially with the innocent victims of IRA actions. I have pointed out on behalf of republican Ireland our attitude to IRA actions like the one on the Shankill Road, but our disapproval does not mean that I will abandon young Volunteers or their families for the gratification of Fleet Street. We extend solidarity to these families also.

This Ard Fheis takes no satisfaction from any death. Sinn Féin represents a section of the Irish people who have had to attend too many funerals and who have had to endure too much suffering. Our solidarity with other victims is founded in our own experience and in our own grief. Our expressions of sympathy are genuine and heartfelt.

I want to deal now with the relentless campaign of the loyalist death squads. Since 1988, when the South African weapons were brought into Ireland by Brian Nelson, with the knowledge and approval of British intelligence, 198 people have been killed by loyalist death squads, 176 of these were sectarian killings. These bereaved families receive a minimum of media attention. Nationalists in the North are murdered, buried and their families are left to grieve in isolation. Nationalists feel that in death, as in life, they are treated as second-class citizens. Attacks by loyalist death squads, even when they are against civilians at funerals, or in bookmakers' shops, or against individual Catholics, or the families of Sinn Féin activists or SDLP members, are not as indiscriminate as they are often portrayed.

The objectives are specific and clear. One of these is to terrorise. For this reason, as in similar situations in South Africa, Palestine or parts of Central America, where minorities resist democratic change, non-involved civilians, families, women and children are the premeditated targets. The aim is to terrorise as many people as possible and to make all perceived opponents feel that they could be the next victim.

The weapons and propaganda of loyalism today may be modern. The intent and the reason for its existence and behaviour and its sponsors and backers remain as before.

It is important also to understand that while the loyalists have their own agenda, their attacks also fit into British counterinsurgency strategy. This is why there has always been collusion, both at an official and unofficial or personal level. Examples of this collusion are many, from the Dublin and Monaghan bombings to the Brian Nelson affair. They predate this phase of the conflict. Attempts by the British to distance themselves from, or to deny involvement in loyalist terrorism are totally at variance with the historical and contemporary record. Collusion between elements of the British military and intelligence community and the loyalist death squads is a fact of life and death in Ireland.

We are told that loyalist actions are reactive. Yet the first major post-war riot in Belfast in 1964 was incited by Ian Paisley. The first murders of Catholics - just because they were Catholics - in this period occurred on the Shankill Road in Belfast in 1966, where the first RUC man was killed some years later. Loyalist violence was used against the early Civil Rights Movement and the first bomb explosion was the work of loyalists. The activities of loyalist death squads have been most intense during suspensions of IRA activity in 1972 and 1975 - a complete contradiction of assertions that loyalist violence is simply reactive to the IRA.

Loyalist extreme reaction occurs when there are signs of political progress, of the croppies getting up off our knees. This is the reality of the situation. It has been so for a very long time now and it will continue to be so while one section of our people believe that their selfish interests can only be advanced by the repression of another section. From its inception, the Six-County statelet was stamped with the mark of sectarian violence and its unionist leaders were, and are, all politically on the extreme right. That statelet is still the greatest political monument to religious sectarianism in Ireland and its unionist politicians feel no shame in appealing to the most backward sort of religious prejudices when it suits them.

Yet they are supported, and have been supported, by the British ruling class. Of course, British politicians and others would be anxious to deplore bigotry and indeed some may be genuinely embarrassed by some cruder aspects of unionist sectarianism. They like to disassociate themselves from these expressions of their principles but they know that this is a fundamental ingredient of grass-roots unionism, and not the sole prerogative of Paisley and his bellowing bigotry, or in Jim Molyneaux's tight-lipped service to reaction. They also know, though they may not like to admit it, that the Anglo/Irish problem is compounded by the support which the British government gives to unionism and the inability, therefore, of unionists to come to a democratic accommodation with the rest of the Irish people.

The British government supports the union and the unionist minority in our country.

This is the nub of the problem between Ireland and Britain.

Loyalism is part of the British way of life in Ireland. It, like unionism, is a child of the British connection. Its extremists will be redundant when that connection is severed and when the Protestant section of our community can shake off the shackles of unionism. The development of democracy in Ireland is smothered by the union.

Democracy demands Irish self-determination.

In the struggle to achieve this and in the face of such terrorism, republicans must always be aware of the justness of our cause and the intentions of our opponents. Our task is to frustrate these intentions, not to serve them. We must never sink to their level. The loyalist death squads, and their masters, are yesterday's people. We must aim towards tomorrow, not yesterday. We can take succour from the truth that their peculiar and utterly irrational blind bigotry cannot survive for long when the political circumstances which breed it and which nourish it are removed. Any movement towards a peaceful settlement of the conflict must therefore aim to remove these circumstances. That is our firm intention. It must also become the intention of the British government.

First and most reasonably - and immediately on the opening of any serious talks - that government must deliver a convincing indication of their sincere intent to pursue an attainable formula for a lasting peace. That means them withdrawing political support from the unionists.

The unionists must be relieved, by those who have supplied them for so long, of the delusions that have sustained them. The unionists must be told plainly that, contrary to their illogical belief, the Six-County area does not belong to them. It belongs to all our people equally, irrespective of falsely created majorities and minorities.

Protestants need to be encouraged to recognise that they share a common history with their Catholic fellow-countrymen and women the Irish people for self-government?

I want once again to assure northern Protestants, that the republican demand for British withdrawal is not aimed at them. It is directed solely at the British government's control in Ireland. It is a demand that the people of Ireland, and that includes the essential contribution and participation of northern Protestants, be allowed to control our own destiny and shape a society which is pluralist and reflective of the diversity of all our people.

Agus sinn ag meabhrú ar tráidisiúin uaisle na bProtastúnach san Eirinn Nua cuimhn'mis fosta gur mÚ sa chéad seo caite a rinne a sinsir féin ná dream ar bith eile le déanamh cinnte nach gcaillf' ár n-oidhreacht Ghaelach. Mur bé obair na bPréisbitéireach sin, i mBéal Feirste ach go háirithe, seans nach mbeim's ag ceiliúradh céad bliain de Chonradh na Gaeilge anuraidh ar

chor ar bith. Droichead i dtreo a nEireannachais a bh' sa Ghaeilge sa chéad seo caite, níl fáth ar bith nach mbeadh an scéal sin amhlaidh ar's inniú.

It is also time that the Protestant people heard the voice of reason and sanity from their leaders. They need a De Klerk to lead them and us into the next century. John Mitchel of the Young Ireland Movement, a Protestant Ulsterman, writing an open letter to the Protestants of the North in 1848, put it like this:

"There is now no Protestant interest at all; there is absolutely nothing left for Protestant and Catholic to quarrel for: and if any man talks to you now of religious sects, when the matter in hand relates to civil and political rights, to administration of government, or distribution of property - depend on it ... he means to cheat you."

These words are even more valid now than they were in Mitchel's time. The Protestants of the North have been cheated for long enough. They have been cheated by being ensnared into that sectarian trap prepared for them by British imperial administrations. They can be released from that trap if peace negotiations are allowed to follow a realistic course.

Peace process

The republican struggle has often been described as ineffective, out-of-date or counterproductive. Such claims are no more than the wishful thinking of our political opponents echoing the political propaganda of our enemies.

Twenty-five years ago the nationalists of the North were an impotent, suppressed and largely apathetic section of the Irish people, locked against our will, without our consent, into a vicious sectarian state. The British government, as much as the bigotry of unionism, was responsible for this, and successive Dublin governments allowed this unjust situation to continue. There is no avoiding the fact that it was the policies, or lack of policies, of both governments, respectively, which contributed so much to the terrible tragedy with which we are now living. In December, the leaders of these two governments were moved to address republicans directly through the Downing Street Declaration.

This effort to address republicans directly is a fundamental shift in policy and in contrast to strategies which aimed to ignore republicanism as part of a policy of marginalising and isolating us. Like all other initiatives, this one marks the failure of every strategy which preceded it. It is also specifically, a direct response to the developing, and increasingly effective, peace strategy which Sinn Féin publicly launched almost seven years ago and which we are totally committed to bringing to a positive conclusion.

Sinn Féin's peace strategy is now the central plank of party policy. As well as the public promotion of this strategy, there has been protracted internal discussion. Promoting our peace strategy has also involved us in external discussions with a wide spectrum of political and religious opinion in Irish society. The inter-party talks with the SDLP in 1988 were part of that, as were all subsequent discussions and exchanges between myself and SDLP party leader John Hume. Likewise, we approached the protracted contact and dialogue with, and initiated by, the British government, in the context of our peace strategy. So too, other discussions and exchanges which have either been made public or privately reported to the Ard Chomhairle.

All of these initiatives arose because of the strength of our struggle, the resilience of our support and the durability and credibility of our analysis. Some of them occurred also because we took the initiative and because we had the confidence to engage our opponents in a meaningful way. This is an area of struggle for us. It is an area of struggle as important as any other one and one which we must collectively apply ourselves to developing.

To the degree that our resources have permitted, we have engaged in an amount of international work on our peace strategy also, particularly in the United States and Britain. We have also taken some limited first steps to do this in the EU. Sinn Féin believes that a lasting peace can be achieved by the eradication of the causes of conflict.

We have reasonably and rationally held up the democratic and universally accepted principle of national self-determination as the route through which that can come about. We have argued that both the London and Dublin governments should adopt this as their policy objective, to be achieved within an agreed timescale - in other words, as part of a process. Again, both reasonably and rationally, we have argued that this be accomplished in consultation with all the parties involved, and the consent of the unionists must be actively sought during this process, a process during which national reconciliation can begin, a process of negotiations culminating in a negotiated settlement.

In all of this we have correctly identified the British government as the major player. They have the power and responsibility to move things on. Their policy in Ireland casts them, either in the role of keepers of the status quo or as key persuaders in forward movement towards a lasting peace, founded on democratic principles. We have also correctly recognised that a united Irish nationalist/republican voice in support of such an end and a process for its achievement, as being a potent political force, not just in Ireland itself but in Britain and internationally.

The sub-theme of that, of course, is that Irish republicans, by ourselves, simply do not possess the political strength to bring about these aims. While that situation obtains, it must continue to influence the political and strategic thinking of Irish republicans. However, we do possess the ability to create conditions which can move the situation towards these aims and we have the power to prevent another settlement on British government terms, which would subvert Irish national and democratic rights.

We fully accept and acknowledge that there is no quick-fix to this. A peace process has been set in train. Our immediate and ongoing task is to move this process onwards. With the evolution of policy and in particular, our thinking on Sinn Féin's peace strategy, we aimed to provide a broad strategy, a momentum and a framework which took on board both the political reality confronting us and our desire, despite the many difficulties this represented, to advance our peace strategy. It is in this context that we should examine the potential of any proposal put before us.

Our strategy has been both politically defensive and offensive. We have defended our own political and organisational integrity and cohesion, and you will recall that most of this recent period has been marked by murderous attacks on us and our families against a background of propaganda and reactionary agitation by well-funded right-wing minority groups. It is worth noting that this was the period when we improved our standing, and our support, against all the odds, in the local government elections in the North. Comhghairdeas to all involved.

We also endeavoured at all times to communicate, in an effective way, with our membership and base in order to prevent confusion, especially on the developing situation. Our own shortcomings, organisationally and politically, and media hype, can aid establishment efforts to divide us. We are conscious at all times of the need to prevent this. At the same time, we have attempted to reach out, to engage with our opponents and enemies and to explore and influence any potential to create a genuine peace process.

Members of our national leadership were given specific areas of responsibility in this regard. Let me take this opportunity to pay tribute to those who were charged with a direct responsibility to conduct dialogue or negotiations and to the others who formed the advisory committees which dealt with these discussions. Everyone involved conducted themselves with integrity and amidst all the pressures, with political discipline and commitment. Members and officers of the out-going Ard Chomhairle played a special role and I want to thank and commend the entire Ard Chomhairle for its patience and discipline and for the latitude it allowed me in what were, at times, very trying and taxing conditions. Tá mé buíoch daoibh go léir. I AM GRATEFUL TO ALL OF THEM.

Our party paper, Towards a Lasting Peace in Ireland, clearly places the onus on the two governments to secure change. It especially calls on the British government to 'join the persuaders' and on the Dublin government to persuade the British that partition is a failure, the unionists of the benefits of Irish reunification, and the international community that they should support a real peace process in Ireland.

The prolonged contact between Sinn Féin and the British government, which began in late 1990, must be seen in this context. I will deal with this only in summary form here. It is by now a matter of detailed public record, but because of the controversy which marked it, I would like to extend a special word of appreciation to our representatives and the others involved in this specific aspect of our project. They served the cause of Irish democracy and peace with distinction.

The British government is not in contact with us at this time. It unilaterally ceased communicating with us in November last year. However, I am confident that this is merely a temporary, though totally intolerable, tactical manoeuvre and an unacceptable standoff. It is my confident prediction that we will be in dialogue again, either with John Majors' administration or with their successors. For our part, we are ready to recommence talks at any

time. The British should move speedily to engage with us. They were right to talk to us in the past and should be commended for this. There cannot be peace without dialogue.

None of this movement would have happened, of course, without your involvement in struggle. We would never have moved the British to engage with us if we had been the isolated, non-representative group depicted by its propaganda machine. Our advances are a testimony to your endeavours and resilience. Never allow anyone to tell you anything different. You are in the front line and all the gains in this struggle have been and will be won by people like you.

I wish to deal only with one part of the dialogue with London. At the beginning of last year, the British government proposed delegation meetings between Sinn Féin and its representatives. We negotiated the preliminary procedures for these discussions. In order to assist this process, the IRA responded positively to a British request for a temporary suspension of operations. The British then moved away from this position. Fair enough. Such to-ing and fro-ing in negotiations is not unusual.

But the British government had decided that it dare not admit that it had made a proposal which met with a principled, flexible, but positive response from both Sinn Féin and the IRA. So, John Major threw this back in our faces and, in order to cover his own failure to engage meaningfully in a dialogue for peace, he abused the line of communication and tried to lie his way out of it.

Why do the British government behave in this way? Why the exclusion order against me? Why, more recently, their hysterical opposition to an inclusive peace conference in New York? Why the lies, omissions, falsifications, forgeries, diversions and distractions? And remember, London did not confine itself to dealing only with Sinn Féin in this way. Our dialogue with London was conducted against the background of the developing Irish Peace Initiative and both governments were kept fully informed of all developments at every stage of my discussions with SDLP leader John Hume, before and after these discussions became public.

The British government knew, for some long time before its existence became public knowledge, that the Irish Peace Initiative represented a real opportunity for peace. John Hume told them this privately and publicly. Yet John Major denied any knowledge of its contents. We told them this privately and publicly. John Major denied being in contact with us. The Dublin government told them also. (As did public opinion, in both Ireland and Britain, with the exception of the unionists.) The British government's attitude to peace proposals from nationalist Ireland, whether represented by Albert Reynolds or John Hume or Sinn Féin, has been despicable, devious and damnable. It has been marked by stalling tactics, refusals to engage meaningfully in the peace process, diversions, lies and petty manoeuvrings. This phase of our history, when the opportunity for peace was so near, is one of the most shameful in 25 years of conflict, or perhaps since the partition of this country. It is a story which must, in the greater interests of the peace process, remain largely untold at this time. Suffice to say, that at all times in its dealings with nationalist Ireland, the British government sought to insist on its position, tried to apply pressure, to create and win a contest of wills, to mislead as to its bottom line and to demand concessions and one-sided gains. It sought victory on its terms, not peace on democratic terms, and it aimed at all times to fragment the consensus around the Irish Peace Initiative.

Observers and apologists for the London government may seek to discount these allegations and I have provided no evidence. Fair enough. But let us not forget, that in the battle of the documents, Sinn Féin's version of the exchanges with the London government was proven to be the correct and truthful one. So when we witness the stalling tactics of the British since the Downing Street Declaration, remember this stance goes back beyond 15 December, through its dealings with us, to Major's very public rejection of peace-making efforts by John Hume, to the exclusion order imposed upon me, to Major's Tory conference speech, to his dependency on the unionists and his own right wing. If you are concerned at British responses at this time, then remember the distractions, the diversions and the lies which marked British attempts to sideline the Irish Peace Initiative at all times since its conception.

So, we must be patient. Making peace is a very difficult business and we must persevere with our efforts, despite the British government's stance. We have to always see this against the failure of British rule in our country. But there are positive aspects to this situation. For example, no government on these islands can ever again claim that there is any popular support for a policy of excluding Sinn Féin. We have always known this. We knew there was never any principle involved in the British stance. The pompous, self-righteous rhetoric of

British government officials and of John Major that he would not talk to us, has been totally exposed as cheap political manoeuvring. People support inclusive dialogue. Even the British House of Commons supports dialogue with us, despite all the posturings of the past by all of the parties in that establishment. Now they tell us they want peace. We shall look for the evidence of that. We are keen to find it. We will seek to do so in indications of a clear and irreversible British strategy for peace, one indication of which must be their public recognition of the legitimacy of the Sinn Féin electorate, their public recognition of the legitimacy of the electoral mandate bestowed upon Sinn Féin by our voters.

The Irish Peace Initiative

My talks with SDLP leader John Hume have been the most significant element in the peace process so far. As is now well known, we reached agreement on a process based upon a set of principles, containing the political dynamic which could create the conditions for a lasting peace and a total demilitarisation of the situation. This was dependent on the adoption of these proposals by the two governments and a positive attitude from the leadership of the IRA.

John Hume has been subjected to a lot of vilification for engaging in this dialogue and initiative. It has been a risky enterprise for him. I am sure republicans, for totally different reasons, have also been mindful of the risks from our perspective and I have no doubt that there must have been, (maybe there remain), and there may be again, occasions when some of you will be justifiably nervous about what is, or is not, going on. After all, Sinn Féin and the SDLP remain locked in electoral, as well as ideological battles and we have lots of reasons from our respective experiences to be distrustful of each other. John Hume and I have never attempted to disguise the political differences between our parties. What we have attempted to do is to put the cause of peace and a negotiated settlement before narrower party political considerations.

My republican analysis is, of course, not identical with that of Mr Hume on all the issues of the day. For example, I would not agree with his views on the out-of-datedness of the nation state, which we regard as the basis of democracy. Also, we do not believe that we are living in a post-nationalist world. But we are at one with him to holding that 'an internal settlement is not a solution' and 'that the Irish people as a whole have the right to national self-determination', and 'it is the search for that agreement and the means of achieving it on which we will be concentrating'.

It is obvious that the Irish Peace Initiative - and particularly the agreement between Mr Hume and myself - acted as a major catalyst, not only on Irish nationalist opinion, North and South, but also on focussing the two governments on the issue of peace in Ireland in an unprecedented manner.

There would have been no Hume/Adams Initiative without John Hume. We have yet to realise the prize of peace that all our people desire, but when it is achieved there will be no doubt of the central role that John Hume has played in bringing this about, despite the petty nastiness of 'Independent' newspapers and the orchestrated barrage of reaction from Dublin 4.

Credit must be given also to Albert Reynolds. No matter about our opinion of the Downing Street Declaration, or of government policy on many issues, Mr Reynolds is the first Taoiseach to have taken the steps he has taken to address the core issues of a negotiated settlement. Sinn Féin's recognition of the central role of the Dublin government in the creation of a peace process was a major shift in the traditional republican (and northern nationalist) attitude to Dublin. Our involvement in this process and the time and energy we have committed to it is an illustration of our seriousness. I acknowledge that the present Dublin government shares this commitment to find a settlement. This is evident, for example, from Mr Reynolds' efforts to provide the necessary clarifications for us, from his perspective, of the Downing Street Declaration. His attitude to the issue of clarification has been a commonsense one, while the attitude of the British government throughout, has significantly added to an already difficult situation. In addressing these matters, Mr Reynolds has resisted the antinational malevolence of the Harneys, MacDowells, de Rossas and Brutons, all of who, despite their hypocritical protestations of wanting peace, would like nothing better than that the whole peace process should be sidelined, with Irish republicanism politically isolated.

It is in this context, in the context of the ongoing development of our peace strategy, and of the Hume/Adams Initiative, and the Irish Peace Initiative, that the Downing Street Declaration was produced.

British government says no?

The process of examination and consultation within Sinn Féin, and at a wider community and political level, is being conducted in the most adverse and difficult of circumstances, particularly because of the belligerent, arrogant and provocative attitude of the British government. London's interpretation of the Downing Street Declaration is also politically at odds with the Dublin government's interpretation and there is now a general acceptance that the document itself is riddled with ambiguities, contradictions and confusion.

Despite recent efforts by British spokespersons to put a different, more positive, spin on their utterances, it is little wonder that the declaration is a disappointment to many nationalists, especially when one remembers the way in which expectations were raised in the run-up to Christmas and when they examine John Major's clarifications to Jim Molyneaux in the British House of Commons, within hours of signing the document.

These comments caused Jim Molyneaux and Eddie McGrady to remark that there was nothing in the declaration which threatened unionists, and little to benefit the nationalists. The subsequent statements by both governments and the actions, particularly of the British government, with their Select Committee and their new boundary commission recommendations Ú both sops to unionists Ú have created an ambiguous and contradictory situation adding to the already ambiguous text of the declaration itself.

This has led to an ambiguity of responses to it, which is reflected, for example, in the diverse character of the submissions to the Sinn Féin commissions.

What is in the declaration?

It is not my intention to examine here all the significant words and phrases in the declaration. You will all have done this yourselves, even if only by way of mine-sweeping. That is an exercise which must be done, for nobody in this world is so adept as the British civil service in the laying of documentary booby-traps. But because it is, I believe, the most important single issue the document raises for republicans, I feel I must deal with the way the issue of self-determination and, allied to it, the question of a veto for unionists, is treated. That the declaration addresses the issue of Irish national self-determination at all is a significant departure from an attitude of the British towards Ireland which has endured for centuries.

However, the serious flaw in the document is that having declared that the Irish are entitled to exercise the right to self-determination without external interference, they then proceed, or so it seems to me, to interfere. This is at odds with the meaning of self-determination. A nation cannot have a half right, or a quarter right to self-determination. There can be no justification for trying to instruct the people whose right to self-determination you have just conceded, how they are to use it.

Yet the British government appears to be prepared to accept our right to national self-determination only in the context of its claim to sovereignty over all "persons, matters and things in Northern Ireland", (Section 75 of the Government of Ireland Act).

There is no suggestion by the British prime minister of the need for British constitutional change. And remember, in British constitutionality, the parliament is sovereign. The British parliament has the authority to change any act of that parliament without reference to anyone outside the parliament. Yet there is not even a hint of any proposed change in the Government of Ireland Act. It is not even mentioned. On the other hand, the Taoiseach pledges changes in the Irish Constitution in the context of an overall settlement.

It is worth repeating again that how Irish national self-determination is exercised is a matter for the Irish people to decide. It is not the business of the British. In my discussions with John Hume we accepted "that the Irish people as a whole have a right to self-determination". We went on to say, "this is a view shared by a majority of people on this island, though not by all its people. The exercise of self-determination is a matter for agreement between the people of Ireland. It is the search for that agreement, and the means of achieving it on which we will be concentrating. We are mindful that not all the people of Ireland share that view or agree on how to give meaningful expression to it. Indeed we cannot disguise the different views held by our different parties. As leaders of our respective parties, we have told each other that we see the task of reaching agreement on a peaceful and democratic accord for all on this island as our primary challenge."

This remains the challenge. It is a challenge for all of the Irish people without external interference. Having addressed the issue, the British should now move to permit the Irish people to take up that challenge and they should seek to persuade the unionists that their future lies in that context.

There are other issues of concern which many people have brought to my attention. For example, northern nationalists are not even explicitly mentioned in the declaration, though there are numerous references to the unionists. John Major tells us why this is so saying: "I have gone to great trouble to ensure that the constitutional guarantee is firmly enshrined in the Joint Declaration, so that there can be no doubt that those people who care about the union - and we are primarily concerned about the people in Northern Ireland who care about the union - shall have it within their own hands, with the full support of the government, to remain within the union for so long as that is their wish".

Are nationalists invisible, Mr Major?

Yet at the heart of northern nationalist concerns are fears about loyalist violence and unionist bigotry, the intimidation of nationalist communities by the British army and the social deprivation and job discrimination. Also, there is the denial of full and equal recognition of Irish cultural rights within the Six Counties.

Many nationalists are concerned that Britain remains unwilling "to join the ranks of the persuaders". Major says no and refuses to embark on a policy of working to undo the wrong of the partition of Ireland. Why? There is an assertion of British "neutrality" between the nationalist Irish majority and the unionist Irish minority but Mayhew now says the British government will be "persuaders for an agreement", without it necessarily being Irish unity, as if Britain has no independent, self-interested views of its own about the Irish boundaries of the United Kingdom state. Is that credible? It can only be tested in practice, and that is one of the challenges ahead.

On the positive side, Major says that Britain has no longer any "selfish, economic or strategic interest" in staying in Ireland. In a general sense that may be true as a result of the ending of the Cold War and the unlikelihood of a war in the North Atlantic. He fails to say that they have no political interest. Indeed he asserts that his interest is to uphold the union.

The British government certainly has a political interest in remaining, at least for the present. They remain politically committed to the union. They may see the weakening of the union as the first stage in the disintegration of the United Kingdom. John Major has said that he does not wish to oversee the disintegration of the United Kingdom. In the shorter term, Major depends on Molyneaux and his own right wing for his majority. As "back to basics" scandal follows "back to basics" scandal on the British political scene, Major comes to need unionist support ever more desperately if he is to hold on to office. It will not be so for too long of course. But it could be for the next two to three years. That is the reality. It is part of the more general present reality within which republicanism needs to adapt its political strategy and tactics in the period now opening up.

The Downing Street Declaration marks a stage in the slow and painful process of England's disengagement from her first and last colony, Ireland. It may be a small step, as was the Hillsborough Agreement of 1985, which - leaving aside justifiable republican criticisms - gave Dublin, for the first time, a 'foot inside the door' in the Six Counties. That door, which is now slightly ajar as a result of the struggle and sacrifices of the past 25 years, culminating in the advances made possible by the Irish peace initiative, needs now to be pushed wide open to let the clean, fresh and invigorating air of Irish democracy blow through the politically stagnant atmosphere of the Six-County prison house which so many of us have to endure and which we are so anxious to get rid of.

National nightmare

Neither Hillsborough nor Downing Street have brought the northern nationalist nightmare to an end. The pointers to how that nightmare can in reality be ended can only come in the process of clarification on the ground which republicans and nationalists require if they are to be confident that the way ahead will improve our position, not disimprove it.

This is why it is essential that the British government use the channels of communication it possesses, and which it has used before, to spell out the implications of a fundamental demilitarization of the situation. That is if the British government is serious about real peace and expects to be taken seriously by republicans or, presumably, by its Irish counterpart.

The clarifications required relate fundamentally to the position of northern nationalists. What are Britain's long-term intentions regarding Ireland? What guarantees are there or will there be that there will be no return to bigoted orange supremacy in northern nationalist communities pending final British disengagement? What about security issues? What about collusion? What about equality and parity of esteem for nationalists in all areas? What about

an end to electoral gerrymandering — the recent Boundary Commission - to keep nationalists down? What about the prisoners? The devil is in the details, as the phrase goes. But the details must be provided if republicans are to take British protestations of goodwill and good intentions seriously. And republicans and public opinion generally are entitled to these details.

The British government, the IRA and Sinn Féin

Last year, in response to questions from journalists, I made it clear that if a peace package is produced, that I am quite prepared to take this to the IRA. I am, of course, seeking a package which would allow me to make definitive proposals to the IRA in relation to the future conduct of its campaign. It would then be up to the IRA to decide. I am quite confident that the IRA would respond positively to a package containing the principles, process and dynamic which were presented to the British government as a result of the initiative undertaken by John Hume and I.

To the best of my knowledge the IRA's door remains open and the IRA leadership has outlined its positive attitude to these proposals in a series of public statements. Why does London say no? If a formula of words was all that was required one has to presume that we would have had peace two decades ago. The reality is, of course, quite different. There is a conflict. We, therefore, need a programme to end it. The governments cannot argue that they have a basis for peace unless they can produce and explain what it is.

The Dublin government has been concerned to do this but both governments need to do this because while Sinn Féin remains committed to building a real peace process, as I have said many times before, we cannot do so without the cooperation of the British government. Given the historic and current stance of that government this will not be an easy task. As I have said before I will not mislead the IRA. Neither will I mislead others about the IRA.

The British are in no doubt, I am sure, about the capacity and commitment of the IRA. If this is the case then it appears to me that the utterances of British ministers, including Mr Major, especially since 15 December, are deliberately provocative. They persist with their stubborn refusal to recognise the validity of Sinn Féin's electoral mandate. They refuse to admit that our call for clarification is a reasonable one. Yet all other parties receive clarification on request and there appears to be no end to clarifications of a provocative and negative nature, about 'decontamination' periods, about 'no amnesty for political prisoners, about an 'IRA surrender of weapons'. The London government also demands an IRA surrender, as a precondition to dialogue with Sinn Féin. Yet, for over three years, the British government was involved in contact and dialogue with Sinn Féin without such preconditions. The declared purpose of that contact was to explore the possibility of developing a real peace process. Now that they say they have such a possibility they cut the contact. Why?

Incidentally, on the question of clarification, on a number of occasions in the course of this contact, and in both written and oral messages, the British side stated that it was 'ready to answer specific questions or to give further explanation'. Now when it claims to have the basis of a peace settlement it refuses to do this. Such a cynical attitude suggests that John Major is simply playing games with the demand for peace, responding to public pressure but with no intention of developing a real peace process.

Sinn Féin's experience in direct contact and dialogue with the British adds weight to this view. On 10 May last year, as I have outlined above, the IRA responded positively to a British government request for a short suspension of military activity to assist intensive talks between Sinn Féin and the British government. This is an indication that republicans were prepared to take considerable risks in the search for a lasting settlement. The response of the British was to walk away from their own proposal. This, and their subsequent abuse of the line of communication, is the context in which the IRA will almost certainly judge any proposition put to it. Why can London not go the extra mile to accept the proposals put to it and to which the IRA gave a positive response?

One also has to ask does anyone really expect the IRA to cease its activities so that British civil servants can discuss with Sinn Féin the surrender of IRA weapons after we have been 'decontaminated'? Anyone who wants me to put this proposition to the IRA has little real interest in developing the peace process. Yet this is what John Major is demanding of me and he is threatening dire consequences if I do not acquiesce to his ultimatum.

Sinn Féin is committed to a lasting peace

It is against this background that Sinn Féin is being asked to judge the Downing Street Declaration. Clarification of this declaration is necessary, not just because republicans are asking for it but because there are valid questions which need to be answered.

I have publicly acknowledged the efforts of the Dublin government to provide clarifications to us. This week I made a detailed and considered response to Mr Reynolds' recent letter to me and we seek to build upon the positive attitude he has taken on these matters.

On Thursday, Mr Reynolds asked us to clarify our position on the unionists. I am happy to provide this clarification. Republicans have never argued that the unionists could or should be coerced into a united Ireland. We have consistently, as I have again in this address, demanded an end to the unionist veto but we acknowledge that consent and agreement of all sections of our people is necessary and essential in the building of an agreed and stable Ireland. Our proposal that the British join the persuaders is in fact the logical extension of this position. It is our firmly held belief that the consent of the unionist community is realisable in the context of a clear policy change on the part of the British government and there is an onus on all of us, on everyone interested in achieving a lasting settlement, to join in this process of democratic persuasion.

Sinn Féin has long accepted that northern Protestants have fears about their civil and religious liberties and we have consistently asserted that these liberties must be guaranteed and protected. Sinn Féin seeks a new Constitution for a new Ireland. This Constitution would include written guarantees and a Bill of Rights. What is required is an approach which creates political conditions in which, for the first time, the Irish people can reach a democratic accommodation, in which the consent and agreement of both nationalists and unionists can be achieved, in which a process of national reconciliation and healing can begin. Unionist participation in this is essential.

In the meantime, the onus is clearly on John Major to clarify his position. He should be mindful of the advice of one of his own:

"There is a tide in the affairs of men, which taken at the flood, leads on to fortune; omitted, all the voyages of their life is bound in shallows and in miseries. On such a full sea are we now afloat, and we must take the current when it serves, or lose our ventures"

- Brutus, Act IV, Scene 3, Julius Caesar

Mr Major continues to hold the key. Until that key is turned he has locked us all into a stalemate and he is preventing any real movement on the issue of the Downing Street Declaration.

Despite this, Sinn Féin remains committed to a lasting peace and to developing and promoting the peace process until this is achieved. Mr Major may hope that his refusal to provide clarification and his efforts to stall the momentum will have the effect of defusing the peace process and thus let his government off the hook. I can assure him that this will not happen. The search for peace and the need for peace in Ireland is too serious an issue to be sidelined in this way.

Since the Downing Street Declaration, there has been a lot of other sideline and unhelpful debate and statements from many quarters which are distracting attention from the central issue. It should be self-evident that the most important element in creating a lasting settlement is the attitude of both governments and the principles and process to which they commit themselves in order to achieve such a settlement.

It is with both governments that the main responsibility and authority rests. That is why we have consistently concentrated on trying to focus the governments on these issues. That is why we have refused to be sidetracked by the many distractions. One such distraction is whether Sinn Féin accepts what has been called the principle of consent.

There is much unnecessary confusion, as well as deliberate misrepresentation of the republican position on this point. We subscribe to, and I have no hesitation in reaffirming, the classical, democratic position of Irish nationalism. It was Britain that partitioned Ireland, turning the Irish unionist minority into an artificial majority in the Six-County area. Unionists are not - and do not claim to be - a nation with a right to national self-determination, as this is universally recognised in international law. Unionists are an Irish national minority, a religio/political minority, with minority rights not majority ones. Unionists can have no veto of British government policy or Irish government policy either for that matter.

The unionist position is in fact logically and politically an absurd one, for they in effect claim to possess a unilateral right to union with the British state, the majority of whose people do not want them, when there can only be unilateral rights of separation, never of union.

At the same time, while nationalists deny that unionists have any right of veto over British or Irish policy directed at seeking to dissolve the Union, most nationalists and republicans recognise as a matter of pragmatism that it is desirable in practice that the consent, or assent, of as many unionists as possible should be obtained to the steps that would be practically required to bring about the ending of partition and establishing a united Ireland.

These steps relate, of course, to the complex financial, constitutional and legal aspects of a final all-Ireland settlement, as well as other details and the time-scale involved. Republicans recognise that the national interest demands that the consent, or assent, of as many of our unionist fellow countrymen and fellow countrywomen as possible should be obtained to these steps. We believe indeed that the consent of the majority of present day unionists could in fact be won over time to these steps to reunification, provided that the two governments, and primarily the British government, made that the basis of their policy. That is why nationalists want Britain to 'join the ranks of the persuaders', to base their policy on encouraging the coming together of Protestants and Catholics, not underwriting our continued separation; as up to now.

My joint statements with John Hume have made very clear that the ultimate objective of the peace process in which we are involved seeks agreement among the divided peoples of Ireland, an agreement that must earn the allegiance, an agreement of all traditions and that both governments and all parties must be involved in this process.

The underlying assumption of these joint statements is that the only interest to be accommodated and the only problem to be resolved would be the division between the two main sections of the people who inhabit this island and that there would be no selfish British interests involved. But as the whole world knows, the view of republicans and nationalists, and it is a view which is historically correct, is that there are more serious elements in our problem and that these laments are selfish British interests.

British imperialism created the problem in the first place and has maintained it ever since. If we are now being told that this is no longer the case, that Britain has no longer any selfish interest in Ireland, and that the only problem today is the legacy of that past - the divisions among the people in Ireland - then it is obvious that this division can only be healed by agreement and it must be an agreement which earns the allegiance of all traditions, to quote again from my joint statements with John Hume.

But in these circumstances, is it not also reasonable for democrats to seek from the British government, given not only its responsibility for that legacy and its authority in the present situation that it should commit all its resources to heal that division and to promote agreement among our people?

Is it unreasonable to ask the British government what process, time-frame and frame-work it proposes for reaching such agreement?

Is it unreasonable to ask in advance what would be its reaction if any section of the people who inhabit our island refused to seek such agreement given the cost of disagreement not only to the Irish people but to the British people as well? And are these not reasonable requests, given that unionist politicians have never faced up to the central problem of reaching agreement with the rest of the people of this island and, in fact, have acted in collusion with the loyalist death squads to prevent such agreement?

Ba mhaith le poblachtúirí síocháin a bheith ann. Ba mhaith leis an ghlún seo de phoblachtúirí an gunna a thógáil amach as polaitíocht na hEireann go deo. Má tá Rialtas na Breataine sásta a thacaíocht iomlán a thabhairt do chur chun cinn an pholasaí atá leagtha amach agam anseo, déanfaimid poblachtúirí amhlaidh. Caithfimid ár gcuid fuinnimh agus ár gcuid áiseanna ag iarraidh réiteach a bhaint amach. Agus nuair a bhainimid amach an réiteach sin, leanfaimid linn ag baint úsáide as gach áis atá againn le príúseas na síochána a chur chun cinn. Déanfaimid ár ndícheall leis na cnéacha idir ár muintir a leigheas chun gur féidir iad a aontú i sochaí nua a chosnaíonn dínit, cearta sibhialta agus oidhreacht gach duine againn.

Republicans want peace. This generation of republicans seeks to see the gun taken out of Irish politics forever. If the British government commits itself to embracing and promoting the policy I have outlined here, then we republicans will commit all our energies and resources to reaching such an agreement. And, when such an agreement is reached, we will continue to use

all our resources to promote the healing process that will be necessary to unite the Irish people in unity that will protect the democratic dignity, civil rights and heritage of all our people.

The cost of war and dividends of peace

The compelling logic of our situation and the climate of international opinion demands a democratic and negotiated settlement of the Anglo/Irish conflict. The alternative locks all of us into a perpetuation of conflict. Is this what the British government wants?

Since 1969, the war has cost 3,290 lives. Most of the deaths have been in the Six Counties but almost 100 have occurred in the 26 Counties and 118 people have been killed in Britain. The London government and others have tried to blame all the killings on the IRA. The IRA is in fact responsible for 53% of the total deaths, having killed over 1,000 crown forces, over 30 loyalist activists and more than 100 persons working in direct support of the British crown forces. One hundred and one IRA Volunteers have lost their lives in premature bomb explosions. A further 230 civilians have died as a result of premature explosions or in engagements between crown forces and the IRA.

The British themselves are known to be directly responsible for 370 deaths and loyalist groups, with or without the assistance of crown forces have killed 915 people. At least 80% of these have been uninvolved Catholic civilians, 18 members of Sinn Féin and 43 civilians in the 26 counties. Thirty three of these were killed with the assistance of British intelligence in the Dublin/Monaghan bombings, the worst day of atrocities in all of the past 25 years. Loyalists have killed 12 members of the crown forces and four times that number of their own membership have died in loyalist feuds. Of the British killings, more than 54% of the victims have been civilians. One hundred and twenty one IRA Volunteers have been killed by crown forces.

Thirty three and a half thousand people have sustained injuries as a result of the war. Two thirds of the injured are civilians. This is the reality of the conflict in human terms. It needs to be ended. Unconditional inclusive dialogue is required, leading to a durable settlement, a total demilitarisation of the conflict and a healing programme of national reconciliation.

Financial costs

In the six counties, the economy is heavily geared to the war. Military occupation, policing and prisons directly employ over 35,000. This is equivalent to more than a third of those employed in what is left of the north's manufacturing industry. There is now one member of the crown forces for every 3.5 nationalist male aged 16-44. Every year the British spend £9,500 policing each and every one of these.

The war-related costs of British intelligence, the British army, the RUC, the juryless courts and the prisons now stand at £1,200 million a year. This is about the same as the North's education budget, two and a half times what is spent on industry and employment, and five times the amount spent on housing. Fifty thousand jobs in manufacturing may have been lost in the Six Counties because of the war. In many other smaller ways the financial burden of the war is felt in compensation costs, financing British propaganda abroad, for example in the fight against the MacBride lobby in the States, the extra resources put in to promoting tourism and securing inward investment, delays at border and other checkpoints, private security costs, health service costs, payments for informers, the money used to contest extraditions and cases brought under the European Convention of Human Rights.

In the Six Counties alone, the British have spent nearly £18 billion (£17,800 million) on this war since 1969. It is not known how much of this is spent on hiring actors to speak for Sinn Féin.

The costs of the war are increasing in Britain itself; the Prevention of Terrorism Act; other policing costs such as security for politicians; damage to property; higher insurance premiums; the proliferation of closed circuit TV; and the disruption of commuter traffic. These costs now run to billions each year. Sealing off the city of London has been priced at £100 million, with recurring costs of £25 million a year. The war has cost Irish governments an estimated £2.5 billion over the years. The North costs the 26 Counties £200 million a year now. It is a sad and expensive irony that tax payers here pay two to three times more to maintain the border than their counterparts in Britain.

Peace dividends

Ireland and Britain have much to gain from peace. A lasting peace in Ireland is as much in the interests of the British people as it is in Irish interests. The billions now spent on war can

become investments in peace. Investment in jobs, in housing, child care, transport, health and education, Britain's subvention to the Six Counties has now reached £4 billion a year. But most, if not all, of this could be saved within the North and in Britain if a lasting peace could be agreed. With no other changes in economic policy, the unification of the economies will generate tens of thousands of jobs. Peace will release a tide of new economic activity and investment. A proper peace process will involve a plan for economic transition and reconstruction, including an international aid package. The logic of economic and social development lies with Irish unity, not in union with a declining British economy, nor with the escalating costs of war.

This is now recognised by even the most conservative elements of Irish society, by the bankers and business community, as the 1983 Report of the New Ireland Forum put it:

"The division of the island has been a source of continuing costs, especially for trade and development in border areas, but in general also to the two separate administrations which have been pursuing separate economic policies on a small island with shared problems and resources.

"(We) conclude that partition and its failure to provide political stability have resulted in extra costs in many sectors and have inhibited the socio-economic development of Ireland, especially in the North. Division has had an adverse effect on the general ethos of society and has contributed to a limiting of perspective, North and South. Had the division not taken place, or had the unionist and nationalist traditions in Ireland been encouraged to bring it to an end by reaching a mutual accommodation, the people of the whole island would be in a much better position to benefit from its resources and to meet the common challenges that face Irish society, North and South, towards the end of the 20th century".

Thus the full benefits of integrating the two economies can only be realised by ending partition. Last January, the official unemployment figures in Ireland totalled 468,000. While there is no official record for emigration in the Six Counties, in the 26 counties last year, 12,000 people became economic exiles. This was against the background of record profits for the banking community and of get-rich-quick sales of shares in Greencore and Irish Life in the South, and the continued sell-off of the hospitals and health services in the North.

Economic democracy does not exist in Ireland today. Inequality reigns. Take the recent controversy about property tax which affects around 12,000 people here. This was put at the top of the media agenda and led to a Dublin government climb down on the issue. Yet the voices of 300,000 unemployed in this state are marginalised and virtually silenced and there is little media attention on the Dublin government's plans to tax unemployment benefits for part-time and seasonal workers.

As republicans, we recognise that creating an island economy without creating democratic structures will leave the economy in the hands of a minority of financial institutions and business interests. Democratic control of any economic initiative is required.

Recognising that a new national economy must reflect everyone's interests democratically, we believe that for anti-imperialists building this must be part of the process of building a new Ireland. We struggle for an economic as well as a political democracy, and for functioning democratic structures to promote economic regeneration throughout Ireland.

Today the debate about Irish self-determination and the fight to end partition takes place within a political, social and economic context that has been fundamentally altered by the creation of the European Union. The fight against the Single European Act and the Maastricht Treaty has been lost, and the reality is that Ireland will remain in the European Union for the foreseeable future. We face new challenges as a result, but the fight for national self-determination is if anything more urgent, more relevant, than it has been at any time since partition.

The European elections in June will be another opportunity for republicans to revitalise the debate and to reiterate our commitment to genuine democracy, both within Ireland and in the international arena. There is also, and this brings us back again to the search for a lasting peace, a popular consensus, reflected even by some governments, that Irish reunification is not only inevitable but a prerequisite on the road to a durable peace. It is essential that the Dublin government galvanise that opinion and translate it through the political mechanisms of the EC, into practical proposals. Already various EC reports have recognised the 'anomalous' status of Britain's remaining jurisdiction in Ireland.

The political and economic transformation of Europe provides a golden opportunity for Ireland to finally resolve its British problem and embark on a process of economic and political reunification and transformation to the benefit of all its people.

The United States dimension

A recent editorial in the Dublin Sunday Business Post commenting on my recent visit to New York asked, "... what might be achieved if the Irish Government made a coherent attempt to galvanise Irish America in support of national policy?"

This is something Irish republicans and nationalists need to think about. For the outcome of the visa controversy showed that for the first time ever in Anglo-American relations, Washington, faced with a choice between Ireland and Britain, chose Ireland. And it would not have happened either but for the extraordinary effort of lobbying and campaigning by leading members of the Irish-American community, including political leaders, business leaders, trade unionists and media people or without the support of people in Ireland. Full credit to everyone involved. Of course this could only have happened in the new international political context where, with the Cold War over, Britain's value as America's principal ally against Russia is no longer relevant.

What the coming together of progressive political forces over the visa issue demonstrated was the potential and possibilities of what can happen if Irish nationalism unites and wins powerful allies. It might seem a relatively minor matter - obtaining a visa for one Irish republican. But what was achieved was of enormous symbolical and political importance. It also illustrated that international interest and concern can play an important and constructive part in the development of a viable peace process. There has been a consistent need for the international community to exercise its good will and influence to help end conflicts worldwide. This is generally recognised and at times acted upon. It has not however, been a factor in the Anglo-Irish conflict. This situation needs rectified.

There is a widespread interest in, and concern about Ireland within public opinion in the United States. This stems from the historical links between our two countries and the large Irish American community in the USA. The potential has, therefore, always existed for the US to play a part in the construction of an effective response to human rights abuses and this has been done particularly in the MacBride Campaign for Fair Employment. It is only proper that this potential is realised in the wider search for a lasting settlement and while I acknowledge and applaud the efforts that have been made, I would appeal to all those in civic, political and industrial leadership in the USA to apply their energy in this direction.

The US government can play a significant and positive role in encouraging the peace process by helping to create a climate which moves the situation on. It can do this by facilitating free exchange of information and in this context I commend President Clinton for the waiver on visa denial which allowed me to address the National Committee on American Foreign Policy. I welcome the committee's concrete contribution to the search for peace in Ireland and the substantial and significant support which has been generated on these matters in the past several weeks in the USA.

The British have been bent on damage limitation since. But don't believe anything they say in this regard. They have a difficulty you see. London still believes that it rules the world. It doesn't. One thing is clear, however, we must apply ourselves to finding ways to enable wider allies to be won, and won more firmly and solidly in the US, in Europe, in Britain and internationally.

Moving Forward

So in all of this we need to make advances. We cannot stand still. The struggle must be developed. This, of course, must itself be balanced by the equal reality that we are not dealing with a simplistic black and white situation. Indeed we may be in a situation of such potential political fluidity that no one - not us, the British or Dublin governments - can accurately predict the outcome. The catalyst effect referred to earlier, and the effect of the strategies employed by the various parties, will all bring their own influence to bear on that. There is a high risk for all involved but Sinn Féin, for reasons already stated, is taking a greater risk than any of the others.

But what is clear, and has been made abundantly clear in the past several months particularly, is that we need to bring all-Ireland nationalist opinion with us. In all of this, we in Sinn Féin have a responsibility to build on the progress which has been made.

In the political conditions in which we struggle, as I outlined earlier, an ongoing defensive/offensive strategy is required. The major difficulty with this, of course, is our strength. We are the weaker party to the conflict. An offensive strategy by its nature is more risky than a defensive one. There is a direct relationship between political strength and the willingness to take political risks; a direct relationship between the value of the objective being pursued and the degree of political risk any party is willing to take.

For us in the short term, at least, we must take risks, without being cavalier, to compliment our strength, as it is, in relation to the stronger positions of our opponents and enemies. We must use what we have to offer in conjunction with accurate analysis, appropriate strategy and whatever political skills we possess. No matter about the short-term effects and validity of the above there is no substitute for political strength, which of course, can be built as a consequence of this. So where do we go from here?

In essence, Sinn Féin should be attempting to reconstruct a broader, deeper, sustainable Irish political consensus on the basis of the principles, dynamic and process contained in the Irish peace initiative, to politically reinforce commitment to such a consensus and to sustain political action based upon it so as to create a significant and possible irreversible political movement towards a lasting peace. Sinn Féin has accepted that the Irish Peace Initiative could form the basis for a lasting peace. Nevertheless, we are politically and morally bound to consider the Downing Street Declaration in the context to our own peace strategy and with a view to determining what contribution it has to make to the development of a peace process aimed at delivering a lasting peace.

Again, as stated, we have publicly committed ourselves to a process of internal and external consultations on our own peace strategy, the broader peace process and on the declaration and we have established a commission for that purpose.

A peace strategy

As has also been shown, Sinn Féin has a clear view of what is required to achieve a lasting peace founded on democratic principles. We have a clear peace strategy aimed at moving the situation in that direction.

It is my view that Sinn Féin should attempt to keep building on the conditions created by our peace strategy and the Irish peace initiative and to seek to ascertain what role there is for the Downing Street Declaration in advancing the peace process.

This would involve Sinn Féin in bringing into play, in a very direct way, what we have to offer. Theoretically, what we have to offer is our electoral mandate, our total commitment to establishing a lasting peace in our country and whatever political influence we have to secure a political package so that the IRA can make judgements in relation to future conduct of its armed campaign.

The reality is, however, that the IRA will take its own council on this. We are not the IRA. Sinn Féin is not engaged in armed struggle but we have helped to formulate proposals which have been enough to move the IRA to say publicly that their acceptance by the British government could provide the basis for peace. The rejection by the British government of this offer has made our task more difficult. Nonetheless, we must seek to move the situation forward and we must do so in conjunction with those who formed the Irish Peace Initiative.

And indeed, we must do this regardless of the outcome of our assessment as to whether or not the Downing Street Declaration represents a first step in the direction of peace for the British government. In essence, Sinn Féin would be attempting to reconstruct an Irish political consensus on the basis of the principles, dynamic and process contained in the Irish Peace Initiative, to politically reinforce commitment to such a consensus and to sustain political action based on it. What is additionally required are narrower, more specific short-term and intermediate-term objectives to advance the possibilities which our established peace objectives have provided.

The political reality of all this is that there can only be advance, continued advance, if we grasp the opportunities of the times. This means working together, even though we are rivals with other parties. It means winning and maintaining the backing of the Dublin government for the long neglected northern nationalist people and cooperating together to obtain the powerful international allies the Irish nationalist cause needs.

In the short to medium term we need to advance the position of northern nationalists in every conceivable way. This means strengthening the nationalist agenda.

It means no return to unionist domination over local nationalist communities in the Six Counties. What is abundantly clear, and the political representatives of unionism must tell themselves and their supporters, that there is no going back to the days of Stormont and unionist rule.

It means local republican activists being able to represent and speak for our communities in conditions of peace, uninterfered with by the British military or the RUC, free of personal harassment and free from the threat of the death squads.

It means the real ending of job discrimination against Catholics, who are up to 3 times more likely to be unemployed than Protestants.

It means full recognition of the rights of 'gaelgeoir' and an equality of status for the Irish language including proper funding.

It means the speedy release of all long-term prisoners pending a full amnesty for all political prisoners.

It means an end to all repressive legislation.

It means an end to collusion. Political concessions of this kind from Britain will not be won without a hard and disciplined struggle.

It will require unity between republicans and nationalists in the North, such as the Hume-Adams initiative presaged.

It will require the support of the government in Dublin. And it will require the support of the powerful allies abroad, within the USA, the EU, in Britain itself and internationally.

Irish Freedom Charter

To ensure that the demands and interests of northern nationalism are given maximum weight and brought to bear fully on the British government in the period ahead, it is essential that public opinion all over Ireland, but particularly in the 26 Counties, presses the government in Dublin to give wholehearted support to the democratic cause, and helps to obtain allies for this cause all over the world. This is the main political task for republicans in the South in the period ahead. There are powerful reactionary interests in this part of the country who resent deeply the efforts on the northern issue made by Mr Albert Reynolds' government in the past few months in response to the Hume/Adams Initiative. The West Britons, the slave minds, the neo-unionist and anti-nationalist people on the opposition benches in Leinster House and in Dublin 4 are all deeply dismayed at the success so far of the Irish Peace Initiative. They are biding their time and will do everything to turn Dublin again in an anti-national and anti-republican direction. To revert to a position of bolstering the British government's failed strategy for victory. That is why all republicans and nationalists need now to consider how best to advance the basic national demands in the new conditions and possibilities opening up before us. We need particularly to consider how we can appeal to the national sentiment that is strong particularly at the grassroots of Fianna Fáil, among the ordinary members of and voters for that party, but also among many Labour Party people, and more widely among those disenchanted with, or uninvolved in, party politics.

They need a political focus for their aspirations and activity. They need something around which they can build political unity and concrete common action that will appeal to all true Irish patriots. That is why I use this occasion to suggest the need for nationally minded people to consider the possibility of launching of an Irish Freedom Charter - A Charter for Justice and Peace in Ireland Ú around which the broadest sections of the Irish people can rally and unite. This would consist of the most fundamental national demands and aspirations, relating to Irish politics, the Irish economy and our society as a whole, which the widest range of nationally minded Irish people can support and which can provide not only a focusing point but a rallying point as well.

The demands of this Freedom Charter should be directed at the British and Irish governments and appeal to international support. I suggest that the first proposition of such a charter should be an adaptation of the first principle of the Freedom Charter of the South African National Congress, which guided their long and inspiring freedom struggle that is now coming to fruition in a free South Africa. It would read 'Ireland belongs to all who live in it', just as South Africa belongs to all who live in it.

I would like to discuss the possible character of such an Irish Freedom Charter with nationally minded people all over Ireland in the period ahead and I would welcome suggestions as to its possible content and mode of launching from all Irish nationalists and friends of Ireland abroad in the coming months. I believe such a development, if made a focus for national unity and

joint political activity, can play a valuable role in advancing the peace process from its present position. It can also advance the cause of Irish unity and independence.

For the first time in 20 years there is tangible evidence throughout Ireland of increasing self-confidence and awareness among nationalists. Every effort must be made to harness this energy, to build upon it, and to direct it in a way which will advance the peace process and secure a negotiated settlement based on democratic principles.

This year marks 25 years of British crown forces being redeployed on Irish soil. They have been traumatic, mind-bending years of human tragedy for all caught up in the conflict. Patrick Galvin, the poet, had a word for it:

"When you came to this land
You said you came to understand.
Soldier, we are tired of your understanding,
Tired of British troops on Irish soil
Tired of your knock on the door
Tired of the rifle butt on the head
Soldier, We are tired of the peace you bring
To Irish bones.
Tired of the bombs, exploding in our homes
Tired of the rubble, growing in the streets
Tired of the death of old friends
Tired of the tears and funerals -
Those endless, endless funerals."

In other parts of the world, conflicts which were formerly deemed intractable are moving towards resolution. To the people of South Africa and the Palestinians, we extend our warmest greetings and best wishes for the future. Their struggles may be more politically developed than ours but what is at the core of all our efforts is our will to be free. This makes the impossible possible. We are into a new and final phase of struggle which will allow us to put the legacy of conflict behind us. It is that time in our history.

"We dream here.
We dream that this land Is our land.
That one day Catholic and Protestant
Believer and non-believer
Will stand here
And dream as Irish men and women.
We dream
Of a green land
Without death
A new silence descending
A silence of peace"

The republican struggle is strong, confident and will continue for as long as it needs to. We have come through the years of vilification and marginalisation. We are never going back to that. We are moving forward. This is the clear message from this Ard Fheis to all our comrades in struggle and to our opponents. There are no backward steps, no standing still - there is only one way - and that is forward.

§ Presidential Address to the 91st Sinn Féin Ard Fheis 1995

Spell-checked, English-Gaelic version.

NINETEEN NINETY FOUR was a momentous year, a year of significant and far-reaching changes. The road from Tallaght last February back to the Mansion House has not been easy but it has been eventful and it has seen Sinn Féin advance our broad strategic and political objectives.

It was not without its tragedies. In all my presidential addresses it has been my sad duty to remember those comrades who have been killed between Ard Fheiseanna. This year is no different. Since our last Ard Fheis, Theresa Clinton, wife of Sinn Féin activist, Jim Clinton, and the mother of Siobhán and Roseanne, was murdered in her home by loyalist death squads in South Belfast. Here in Dublin, a major atrocity was averted and countless lives were saved by the brave action of IRA Volunteer Martin Doherty, who confronted loyalist bombers at the Widow Scallan's bar. He too was to die. We remember also Paul Kinsella, a republican prisoner from Derry, who died in British custody after a long illness. To their comrades and their families we extend solidarity and condolences.

Nineteen ninety four was the year which saw the first fruits of our recent efforts to strengthen the nationalist agenda and to end British and unionist domination. It was the year when Sinn Féin's crucial and pivotal role in laying the foundation for the peace process became clear. But we have yet to get peace. There is a hard road yet to be travelled. Peace means justice. Justice demands freedom.

I extend a special word of solidarity to the families of republican prisoners and especially those prisoners in Britain and in other jails outside Ireland. I extend a hearty céad míle fáilte to those who have come from prisons to this Ard Fheis. We are totally committed to the release of all political prisoners. There cannot be a peace settlement without them.

One cannot mention the political prisoners without commending their support groups here in Ireland and abroad. I want to single out for special mention the work of the Irish Northern Aid Committee. This year marks the 25th anniversary of the founding of Irish Northern Aid. The INAC's work in support of political prisoners and their dependents and in promoting Irish national reunification and independence has been an integral part of this struggle. Their continuing role in this regard remains vital.

The most significant contribution to the peace process came on 31 August when the IRA leadership announced the cessation of military operations. This was a courageous initiative, universally recognised and applauded throughout the world.

For many republicans it was also unsettling, difficult and traumatic. For over two decades, IRA Volunteers had conducted an unprecedented and unbroken period of armed resistance. For many republicans this was one of the certainties of our time and of our struggle. The 31 August statement changed all that. But it not only removed one of the certainties for us, it also put the onus on the British and persuaded the loyalists to call a tactical halt to their campaign. It put a moral obligation on all who portrayed the IRA operations as the cause of our troubles. Now in the absence of these operations, how have they dealt with the real cause of our troubles?

The IRA's initiative has also placed a heavy responsibility upon us and upon everyone committed to ending conflict in this country. We must all become guarantors of the peace process. We must bring it to a democratic conclusion. That is the implicit and explicit import of the IRA's statement.

Who here will ever forget the moment when we heard the IRA announcement? When I went with other leaders of our party to address a spontaneous demonstration outside Connolly House in Belfast, I saw assembled before me a section of those who have carried the struggle since the late 1960s in that city. My brother reminded me that that day was the 21st anniversary of the death of Volunteer Patrick Mulvenna. I saw Patrick's parents in the throng. He had been killed by the British army along with another dear friend of mine, Volunteer Jim Bryson, in Ballymurphy in 1973. Patrick was married to my sister. She was six months pregnant when he died. I am sure I was not alone as this and many other thoughts crowded my mind. All of us felt the same. All of us who have lived and hoped, who have fought for

freedom and justice and who have lost friends and comrades along the way thought of them and their friends.

For this reason alone the IRA's initiative was a brave one. To sue for peace is a noble thing and the 31 August initiative was undertaken by a confident, united and unbroken army. This Ard Fheis commends them for their courage. In commending this initiative and the men and women Volunteers who brought it about, we are mindful also of our responsibility to ensure that this opportunity for peace is not squandered, that it is built upon and that it leads to a permanent peace settlement.

We want to see an end to partition. This is our primary objective at this time. Our strategy between now and the ending of partition should be based upon the widely-accepted view that there can be no internal solution, that there has to be fundamental change and that during a transitional phase there must be maximum democracy. There has also to be equality of treatment and parity of esteem.

The wording of all the statutory undertakings by the British is intended to maintain the union. There is a general debate about how committed the British are to this and there can be no doubt about our commitment to bring an end to it. But it is important to note that the current British position does not prevent, without the stated consent, other constitutional changes or political advance which falls short of that.

What does 'parity of esteem' mean in practice? Sinn Féin believes that this term would be better replaced by the more specific term of 'equality of treatment'. There is a pressing need for physical, legislative and practical expressions to deliver positive proof that nationalist rights, identities and allegiances are guaranteed actual parity. In political terms it must mean all parties being treated equally.

There is a need for:

1. Equality of opportunity in employment;
2. Equality of treatment for the Irish culture and identity;
3. Equality of treatment of elected representatives and voters;
4. Proper security provision for all citizens according to need;
5. Equality in the provision of education, particularly through the medium of Irish;
6. Equality of treatment in economic development.

Níl sampla níos fearr den dearcadh naimhdeach, leatromach atá ag rialtas na Breataine ar na náisiúntúirí ná an dÚigh a gcuireann siad cosc ar chur chun cinn na Gaeilge. Scannal atá ann go bhfuil scoileanna scairte go fúill sa Tuaisceart – áirím Meán scoil Feirste, Meán scoil Dhoire, agus bunscoileanna san Iúr, i Machaire Rátha, in Oileán an Ghuail, in Ard Eoin agus i mBaile Uí Mhurchú ina measc. Agus ar nÚs na scoileanna scairte a bhíodh ann fadú, tá scoth an oideachais sna scoileanna seo.

Agus níl ansin ach gné amháin den chosc ar an Ghaeilge Ú Thuaidh. Tríd is tríd, caitheann Rialtas na Breataine le hÚireannaigh mar bheadh coimhthígh ina dtír féin ann. Níl sin inghlactha. Úilímid na cearta céanna – comh-urraim – don Ghaeilge agus don Bhéarla sa Tuaisceart.

THERE IS NO BETTER EXAMPLE OF THE HOSTILE, BIASED ATTITUDE SHOWN BY THE BRITISH GOVERNMENT TO NATIONALISTS, NOR OF THE WAY THEY OBSTRUCT THE PROMOTION OF THE IRISH LANGUAGE. IT IS A SCANDAL THAT THERE ARE STILL "HEDGE SCHOOLS" IN THE NORTH - I LIST BELFAST SECONDARY SCHOOL, DERRY SECONDARY SCHOOL, AND PRIMARY SCHOOLS IN NEWRY, MAGHERA, COALISLAND, ARDOYNE AND BALLYMURPHY AMONG THEM. AND AS IN THE HEDGE SCHOOLS OF LONG AGO, THE STANDARD OF TEACHING IN THESE SCHOOLS IS OF THE VERY HIGHEST. AND THAT IS JUST ONE ASPECT OF THE IMPEDIMENTS TO THE IRISH LANGUAGE IN THE NORTH. THROUGH AND THROUGH, THE BRITISH GOVERNMENT TREATS IRISH PEOPLE AS THOUGH THEY WERE FOREIGNERS IN THEIR OWN COUNTRY. THAT IS NOT ACCEPTABLE. WE DEMAND THE SAME RIGHTS – EQUAL RESPECT – FOR IRISH AND ENGLISH IN THE NORTH.

It is in these areas of our daily lives that the quickest changes can occur. These changes do not require negotiation – they should happen as of right. The absence of equality of treatment is one of the clearest examples of the failure of past and current political and constitutional structures. The reality is that the status quo is unacceptable and will have to be changed.

Partition has failed – it has failed the people of this island, nationalist and unionist. It has failed for the British too. The political structures and institutions born out of partition fail the democratic test. The other state on this island has failed the people also, forcing hundreds of thousands to emigrate and impoverishing over a million more. Change is needed throughout this island.

How will we accomplish this? By agreement. By sitting down in inclusive peace talks and agreeing a settlement based on democratic principles. Why by agreement? Because coercion doesn't work. How do we know that? Because British governments have been using it for centuries and we're still here – defiant as ever – unbowed, unbroken and telling Britain it's time to go; and telling the world that Irish people have the humanity, the intelligence and the creativity to map out our own future, free of conflict and free of outside interference and impediments.

It is often said that there are two traditions, or two cultures, in Ireland. There are not. There are scores of traditions, maybe hundreds. All making up a diverse and rich culture. All equally valid. All part of what we are. Female and male. Urban and rural. Small town and hill village. Fishing port and island. Inner city and farming community. Gaeltacht and Galltacht. Labour and artisan. Literary and oral. Feminist. Song and dance. Orange and green. Pagan and Christian. Protestant and Catholic. North and South. East and West. The sum total of all of this and all that it represents is part of the diversity of Irishness.

I have consistently argued that the consent and allegiance of unionists is needed to secure a peace settlement. But unionists cannot have a veto over British policy and Mr Major and others must stop pretending they have. The balance must be tilted away from the negative power of veto towards the positive power of consent, of seeking consent, of considering consent, of negotiating consent. Our proposal that the British join the persuaders is the logical extension of this.

Once again the unionist leaderships are playing the Orange card. The politics are politics of not an inch. But those days are over and I would appeal to unionists to engage fully in the search for a lasting peace. I too am an Ulsterman. We don't need British ministers to rule us. We are well able to agree our own future. I appeal to unionists bring your hopes and dreams, your concerns, your fears to the conference table and let us all, as equals, seek to find ways to persuade each other of our good intentions – let us together agree the democratic basis on which we can all live on this island in peace.

The publication of the framework document by London and Dublin should now clear the way for inclusive peace talks and for the next phase of this process.

Sinn Féin will enter these peace talks on the basis of our republican analysis. We will put our view that a lasting peace in Ireland can only be based on the right of the Irish people to national self-determination and an end to British jurisdiction in our country and the creation of a new agreed Irish jurisdiction.

The framework document is a discussion document. But its publication by the two governments is a clear recognition that partition has failed, that British rule in Ireland has failed and that there is no going back to the failed policies and structures of the past. While the political framework envisaged is clearly an all-Ireland one and even though we would like to see this more deeply rooted, prescriptive and thoroughgoing, Sinn Féin will judge the framework document pragmatically and in the context of our objectives, policy and strategy.

For over two years now, Mr Major has had a minimalist approach to the peace process. Now after the publication of the framework document the strategy pursued by the British government will indicate the extent to which it is prepared to engage in advancing the peace process.

The framework document is neither a solution nor a settlement. Irrespective of its contents – of how much of it we might like or dislike – the onus is on both governments, but particularly the British government, to move the situation speedily forward into inclusive dialogue. The Dublin government has a responsibility to ensure that this happens without preconditions or delay.

Clearly, negotiations cannot take place above the heads or behind the backs of our people. For republicans, negotiations are another area of struggle in which we will seek to advance our broad strategic and political objectives. We are not afraid of the prospect of inclusive negotiations.

There is a need for fundamental constitutional and political change if we are to bring this phase of the peace process to a democratic conclusion. Sinn Féin's objective is to bring about an inclusive and negotiated end to British jurisdiction in Ireland. We seek to replace it with a new and agreed Irish jurisdiction.

In our view this poses no threat to any section of our people, including the unionists. However, we know that others hold a different view. Therefore agreement is required. New relationships will have to be forged between all the people of our country. This will be difficult. It will take time. It will require negotiation. It demands inclusive democratic dialogue. It demands a process of inclusive negotiations without preconditions and without any predetermined outcome. Negotiations need to take place in a climate where no section of our people hold an undemocratic power of veto.

The British have successfully militarised an essentially political problem. The process of demilitarising the occupied area has been too slow. There needs to be an end to all forms of repressive legislation; an end to house raids, arrests and harassment; all our cross-border roads should be opened now.

There needs to be a decommissioning of all the British crown forces, including the disbandment of the RUC. British spy posts, whether in housing estates, in sports fields, in farming land, on hillsides – where ever they are they should be dismantled. If we are to agree a lasting peace then there needs to be the permanent removal of all the guns – British, loyalist, unionist as well as republican.

There needs to be speedy movement on the release of all political prisoners, whether in Ireland, Britain, Europe or the USA. In the immediate future, Irish prisoners held in Britain should be transferred to Ireland to be closer to their families.

During a recent visit to London I was struck by the welcome there for the peace process. British public opinion clearly favours an end to war on these islands.

During my visits last year, particularly to the United States and Canada, I was struck by the confidence of Irish people in these countries. That confidence has manifested itself in the vital and positive role they have played in the peace process.

In the US, Canada, Britain, Australia and elsewhere, people of Irish descent, our more recent exiles, and those who have no direct or ancestral connection with this nation, have contributed immeasurably to the struggle for freedom, justice and peace in our country.

The event which, more than any other, began the Irish diaspora throughout the world was an Gorta Mór, the Great Hunger of 1845 to 1849, the 150th anniversary of which is marked this year. At Grosse Isle in Canada where the coffin ships landed and where thousands died on the threshold of the New World, at Philadelphia, Boston and at Ellis Island in New York, where I visited last year, the tragic legacy of the past is still evident. One of the great tragedies of course is that economic injustice in our country still forces so many of our young people into exile today. In a sense, we are all survivors of the Great Hunger, that most appalling manifestation of British colonial misrule in our country. It is time now to end that legacy of colonialism.

For a number of years now I have promoted the notion of a freedom charter or a charter for a new Ireland around which the widest section of Irish opinion might rally. Such a charter would be useful as an outline of the fundamentals of a new national democratic programme around which to build, in time, an alliance of progressive opinion in Ireland. We have already commenced preliminary discussions about this with others and this is an idea which we will return to in the future.

Sinn Féin believes that there is a need for the transformation of all Irish society, not only in the occupied area but throughout the entire island.

We believe that there must be fundamental changes in the whole structure and nature of Irish political, social, economic and cultural life. Our vision is of a new beginning for all our people. We seek an end to conflict and division. To reverse inequality and poverty. To establish and to protect the rights of children. We seek to enshrine and guarantee the rights of women in a new and non-sexist society. We demand civil and religious liberties and the separation of church from state. We seek a redistribution of wealth, a new economic democracy to end unemployment and emigration, to guarantee education, houses and jobs. We seek to turn this vision into a reality.

How? In the first instance by refusing to have our expectations lowered. By refusing to be caged in or conditioned into accepting anything less than full freedom. There are two kinds of

freedom – freedom from and freedom to. We want both kinds of freedom. We want freedom from oppression, inequality, foreign rule and poverty. We also want freedom to build a better, more equitable, decent society.

All of this is possible and we demand that this British government give the people of Ireland the opportunity to realise these objectives. We demand that the British government commence the process of disengagement from our country.

A peace process has been built. 1994 was a year of change. 1995 must consolidate the peace and make change irreversible.

§ Presidential Address to the 92nd Sinn Féin Ard Fheis 1996

Spell-checked, English-Gaelic version.

Fearaim Fáilte Romhaibh chuig an Ard Fheis seo.

Bliain eile, Bliain crua de streachailt. Ach tá muid laidir, agus ta muid ag dul ar a ghaigh.

I WOULD LIKE TO WELCOME YOU TO THIS ARD FHEIS. ANOTHER YEAR, A HARD YEAR IN THE STRUGGLE. BUT WE ARE STRONG, AND WE WILL GO FORWARD.

As we are all aware the City of Dublin is steeped in history. The city centre in particular and this general area was the scene of many historic events. So too is the venue of our Ard Fheis this year. The Rotunda Rink has played a central role in some of the most defining moments of Irish history. Sinn Féin was founded here in the Rotunda on the 28th November 1905. In addition this venue has hosted meetings by the United Irishmen, the Young Irelanders and the Home Rule League. It was here that Thomas Francis Meagher presented his French silk flag of orange, white and green. And it was here too that the Irish Volunteers were formally inaugurated in 1913. After the 1916 Rising, Seán Mac Diarmada and Tom Clarke spent their first night in captivity in the grounds of the Rotunda Hospital.

Eleven years later when Countess Markievicz, a champion of the poor, a socialist, a feminist, a nationalist and a republican died, permission for her lying in state in the City Hall or the Mansion House was refused by the state. Her remains were brought here to the Rotunda where over 100,000 people filed by her coffin to pay their last respects.

This Easter also marks the 80th anniversary of the 1916 Rising. There are plans for a national commemoration here in Dublin on 27 April. We all need to ensure that this is a fitting commemoration to the sacrifices of the men and women of that time.

On other occasions we have analysed the developments in Ireland and between Ireland and Britain in the period since then. It is not my intention to do that in any detail today though it is worth noting that the potential and the intent of the 1916 Proclamation has yet to be fulfilled and that Irish society today sadly lacks the social, economic, cultural or political freedom which underpinned the Proclamation of an Irish Republic which was declared only yards from where we meet.

Taking Risks

I do intend however to attempt a more modest review of more recent developments. On writing this speech I discovered to my surprise that it is 13 years since I was elected president of Sinn Féin.

At that time I tried to set out the course which I felt our party should take. In so doing I examined the course we had taken in the years before that, particularly since the mid and late 1970s. That was the period when, for many reasons, anti-imperialist politics and the struggle for Irish independence had become, to a large extent, isolated and restricted to its active base.

At that time I noted that there was an unconscious slipping into 'spectator politics'.

I also referred to the isolation, at times the self-isolation of Sinn Féin, reinforced in the 26 Counties by censorship. I argued that we needed to end our isolation in a determined and planned fashion and for the need, indeed the duty on those of us who are striving to build radical and revolutionary alternatives, to put our policies before the people in the clearest and most understandable terms.

Just over a week from now our vice president Pat Doherty and John McCann will be representing Sinn Féin in by-elections in Donegal Northeast and in Dublin West. We wish them well. We know that these are difficult contests, but 13 years ago I said; 'If Sinn Féin stands on the side lines, separate from and isolated from the people we cannot hope to attract support for what looks like a vague utopian image of some perfect Eire Nua of the future. The solution is for Sinn Féin to get among the people in the basic ways that people accept....this means new approaches and difficult and perhaps risky political positions have to be faced up to by us'. I argued that we needed to reconstruct our organisation so that it could absorb a new and expanded membership in the future and that we required tough practical policies, which gives leadership now and which provides results even in the present partitionist states. At the same time I asserted the radical nature of our republican objectives and our opposition to partition,

to the British presence and our commitment to an independent Irish democracy. I pointed out that we have a decided preference for a democratic socialist republic, but in a post-British withdrawal situation, with democracy restored, we will be bound by the wishes of the people of Ireland.

I insisted that while our struggle has a major social and economic content that 'the securing of Irish independence is a pre-requisite for the advance to a socialist republican society and that we should avoid all forms of ultra-leftism'.

Is iomaí rud a tharla ó thug mé mo chéad aitheasc mar uachtarán ar Shinn Féin. San am sin, thug láidreacht agus neart ár mball ardó spioraid dom i gconaí. Thug tacaíochta an phobail phoblachtach cian dom. In achar gearr, chuir muid an troid seo níos faide chun cinn ná ariamh agus tá ár dteachtaireacht anois ag dul chuig n'os mó agus n'os mó daoine in óirinn agus tríd an domhan.

A Crossroads in Our Struggle

In so doing we have encountered many dangers and we have indeed faced up to 'new approaches and difficult and risky political positions'. All of this has brought us to what many see as a crossroads in our struggle and in the welter of different influences and the fluidity of a fast moving situation there is an understandable amount of confusion and apprehension. I want to address all these matters in this part of my speech.

First of all let me reassert the centrality of our goals in whatever strategy we pursue. Let me also reassert the legitimacy and achievability of these goals. Some may think that this is a very defensive thing to do. Maybe it is. But it is necessary in struggle at all times to defend the struggle. It is necessary to uphold the possibilities, to give hope, to be confident in our own strength. It is also necessary to know our own weaknesses.

Some years ago in trying to tease out these matters I compared our struggle to a journey, the destination of which was an Irish Republic. I compared this to a journey to Cork. We may not have the ability to go so far on our own. There needs to be enough of us prepared to make the full journey. We need a vehicle. The bus to Cork. Maybe there are others who will go part of the journey with us, from bus stop to bus stop, or from strategic objective to strategic objective. It is obvious that the more people we can get to make the journey the further we will go and the more able we will be to overcome difficulties on our way.

The Battle of Ideas

All of this brings us to our current strategy. This has been underpinned for some years now by the policy position Towards a Lasting Peace in Ireland – the vehicle – which was ratified by the 1992 Ard Fheis. Apart from the serious commitment to develop a feasible peace process which this contained, and we have seen the effects of this commitment in recent years, this departure involved a key and relatively new element. That was a decision by us to engage our opponents on the question of peace and to stand up to them while reaching out for allies on this fundamental issue. In other words we decided to go on a political offensive, to take initiatives, to go toe to toe with them in the battle of ideas. This was at a time when our struggle was on the defensive. When the British were seeking yet another pacification pact with Dublin. Our political offensive wrong-footed them. The initial success of our strategy may also have wrong-footed some of our allies and confused some activists. In a struggle like ours there will always be fears of a sell-out – of a leadership going soft. The greater the dependency there is upon a leadership and the more political underdevelopment there is among activists the more these fears will grow to be exploited by our opponents, to cause confusion and division.

Fortunately, we have avoided this so far and to the degree that any confusion exists this can be easily dealt with in open and comradely discussions. Of course there is always a danger of us being out-manoeuvred. This is all the more so if our struggle is reduced to a high wire act with a minimum, as opposed to a maximum participation by our activists and allies. In other phases of the struggle many nationalists and republicans depended upon the IRA to go toe to toe with the British on their behalf. But as we in Sinn Féin sought to advance our peace strategy all of these old certainties were removed and in the fluidity of that situation we could look to no one else to deliver for us. We had to rely upon our own skills, our own judgement, our own ability. For many Sinn Féin activists that was a new experience, bringing new pressures and new challenges.

The Strength of our Message

Our party has responded valiantly to those challenges. In forcing the British government to seek a new settlement, in which they will obviously attempt to secure their own interests, we have pushed open the door to change. We must therefore recognise the opportunities and the potential, as well as the risks, inherent in this situation. Yet we should not exaggerate our successes.

We have changed the political climate but there is still a lot to be done in all aspects of our struggle. We remain in many ways underdeveloped politically while at the same time we are potentially the most potent and progressive political tendency in Ireland today. This potential is rooted in the strength of our message and our commitment to it, in our skill in promoting that message and in our ability to reach out and to join with others in developing and strengthening our struggle. This is an individual as well as a collective responsibility for us all. It is important also to know what we are up against and to be able to differentiate between those who oppose us ideologically and those who may for other reasons not agree with us or even not agree fully with us. We need to learn how to make alliances. We need at all times to rise above sectional, local or narrow concerns. We need to develop an overview. We need to think strategically and not just tactically.

Our goal remains an Irish socialist republic. Our primary objective at this time is an Irish national democracy. This requires a democratic and a negotiated settlement of the conflict in our country. Our strategy is to create political conditions which tilt the range of possibilities in that direction or which makes movement in that direction irreversible.

We are back to the bus to Cork. To getting the right vehicle and getting the maximum number of people aboard to go the furthest distance. There is no guarantee that we will be successful. That is one of the high risks involved. That however is equally true of any big strategy. It is in this context that we set the strategic objectives which have guided us for some time now. In the course of this we learned that negotiations are an area in struggle which we use to further our overall objective.

No Bottom Line

Our opponents also have their strategies and their objectives. We should not be confused about this. The British government remains the continuing source of the major political difficulty endured by the people of this island. That government is involved in a real negotiation but its objective is not a democratic peace settlement. Its negotiation is with Dublin, the SDLP and the US administration in an effort to outflank us. That is with bigger players who it hopes will accept less. London's overall aim is to pacify Ireland and to concede the minimum possible. The maximum which London will concede is directly related to the amount of political influence which can be created. In this spectrum of possibilities the British government has no bottom line.

Nevertheless, its objective is a lasting political settlement on its terms. If they succeed, no matter how imperfect this settlement may be from the Irish viewpoint, the British will aim to sell it as a lasting settlement. For example, the partition of Ireland by British government standards represented a lasting political settlement, a flawed one, but one which suited London.

A Defining and Dangerous Point

So we are at a very defining and dangerous point in our struggle and the stakes are very high. In essence our immediate tasks are democratic ones. The Six-County statelet is not a democratic entity. In fact it is a failed political and economic unit. The establishment of democracy throughout this island is therefore of primary importance. Democracy means equality – it is a variety or form of society which formally recognises and guarantees the equality of all its citizens and the equal rights of those citizens to determine the structure and administration of the state. Our urgent priority therefore is to assert equal rights for all citizens. In the debate and argument with all of the protagonists to this conflict and in a proper all-party format we, along with others, can win the argument for democracy. It is however imperative that there must be no preconditions to that debate.

To set any parameters on the negotiations for democracy is a contradiction. From a republican perspective proper all-party talks have a definite potential to create a democracy within which the struggle for the republic can be pursued. I know that many republicans have become extremely sceptical and suspicious of the very concept of all-party talks especially if these are limited to a partitionist framework. Republicans also know that a lack of focus and attention by

Dublin, or a refusal to pro-actively seek the shared objective of an Irish national democracy or a failure to marshal all available resources will mean that the result of negotiations will fail to produce the change necessary to provide stability and a permanent peace.

People Power

However, the democratic instincts and aspirations of popular opinion throughout the island of Ireland, if mobilised, can provide an effective counter to all that. But only if mobilised, only if people power becomes an active ingredient in the negotiations; only if the people own the process. For all these reasons, even in an optimum situation, international assistance is required to tilt the balance of possibilities towards the democratic conclusion. In particular this means Irish-America and the US administration.

Equally important is political and popular opinion in Britain itself and this is one area about which our party needs to develop thoughtful strategies similar to our US initiatives.

It is the type of real negotiations proposed by Sinn Féin – inclusive, everything on the table and everyone at the table, no vetoes, no pre-determined outcomes and with an agreed time frame – which the British and the unionist leaderships have been attempting to prevent since the inception of the peace process. Their opposition to negotiations is in line with their political objectives. The unionist leadership, supported by this British government, do not want change. They are conservative in their instincts and in their politics. They want to maintain a status quo which perpetuates supremacy, inequality and repression. But real negotiations inherently imply change – political, constitutional, social economic and cultural change. A negotiated settlement clearly requires change. John Major, David Trimble and Ian Paisley know, as history has proven that change can only be in the direction of democracy, of equality, of justice and of freedom.

They know that at the end of a process of inclusive dialogue, of real negotiations, the union with Britain cannot be strengthened, only weakened, that their demands for a return to Stormont become ever less and less realisable, that equality and justice become inevitable. Conservatives always fear the consequences of change. They fear that change, once started, will become unstoppable. They fear that change will leave them behind.

As democrats, as nationalists and as republicans, real all-party talks, as the first step on the road to a negotiated settlement, remain an important objective for us to achieve. We need to break the political log-jam which has sustained the British presence and unionist hegemony in the Six Counties for 75 years. We wish to see change. We are not afraid of the prospect of inclusive and fair negotiations. A successful conclusion will only be achieved if all involved reach an agreement. There are three main areas which have to be dealt with. These are:

1. Constitutional and political change
2. Demilitarisation
3. Democratic Rights

Constitutional and Political Change

If we are to restore the peace process there must be a concrete prospect and facility for substantive change. There is a need for fundamental constitutional and political change if we are to bring a peace process to a democratic conclusion. Sinn Féin's objective is to replace the British jurisdiction in Ireland with a new and democratically agreed Irish jurisdiction. We know that others hold a different view. New relationships will have to be forged between all the people of our country. This will be difficult. It demands honest dialogue and a process of inclusive negotiations without preconditions and without any predetermined outcome.

Demilitarisation

The British have successfully militarised an essentially political problem. There needs to be an end to all forms of repressive legislation; an end to house raids; arrests and harassment. There needs to be a decommissioning of all the British crown forces, including the disbandment of the RUC. British spy posts, whether in housing estates, sports fields, farming land, on hill sides – wherever they are they should be dismantled. If we are to agree a lasting peace then there needs to be the permanent removal of all of the guns – British, loyalist, unionist, as well as republicans.

There needs to be a speedy release of all political prisoners whether in Ireland, Britain, Europe or the USA. However, instead of taking a progressive attitude to the prisoners issue and building confidence the British government's attitude is punitive and negative. This is most graphically and tragically illustrated by the treatment of Paddy Kelly who is now terminally ill with cancer. That he was denied proper medical treatment at any time is reprehensible. That

this occurred in the course of an IRA cessation is barbaric. John Major should immediately authorise Paddy Kelly's release.

At a wider level, the British attitude to the political prisoners, and in particular their blocking of transfers of POWs in England, underlined their failure to move away from the old agenda. What prospect was there of a good faith or positive engagement from a government on the wider constitutional and political issues when their attitude to individual prisoners and their families remained so bitter and vindictive.

Democratic Rights

It could be argued that some of these issues I have mentioned need careful management, or that they are part of the give and take of negotiations. The same thing cannot be said of the need to restore democratic rights. The absence of democracy and the presence of religious, political and economic discrimination, of cultural discrimination, has contributed to the conflict. This needs to be rectified immediately.

Our struggle has been about securing the changes necessary to a lasting peace. Our struggle has been the engine for change in this country over the past 25 years but we must also recognise that real negotiations are the only democratic mechanism for change. Change is, in fact, implicit in any process of democratic negotiations. I know most republicans and nationalists have little confidence in John Bruton and less trust in John Major. This is understandable but we cannot wish or wait for different governments. We cannot suspend our strategy. We have to deal with the objective reality of the situation. No matter how difficult it is we need to help to create, to encourage, to welcome and to engage in the mechanism for change. Despite our reservations, our experience and our instinctive caution, we should welcome any real movement towards inclusive peace talks. It is only our opponents who fear a real process of democratic negotiations.

A Cessation is Not Peace

If anyone doubts this the last 18 months provides ample evidence. On 31 August 1994 the IRA announced its historic complete cessation of military operations. This was the decision which presented everyone, but particularly the British and 26-County governments, with a unique and unprecedented opportunity to build a lasting peace. That potential for peace was most effectively summed up by the Nobel laureate Séamus Heaney when he described the promise of the new situation as a 'space in which hope can grow'. We tried to deepen that space.

We tried to widen it and to nourish that hope. Our goal then was to turn that moment of pause into a permanent settlement, a lasting peace. We set ourselves the task of building with others a new beginning for all of the Irish people.

But a cessation is not peace. The mere absence of war is not peace. So, sadly, that new chapter has for the moment been ripped from the pages of our history by a British government unwilling to seize the opportunity which the Irish peace process represented.

Anglo-Irish history and the international experience, teaches us that the road to peace is often tortuous. It is dangerous and fragile, fraught with tremendous challenge. It demands that we take risks.

We face perhaps the greatest challenge of our history – how to overcome the fear, the suspicions, the lack of trust and confidence which has been deepened by the British government's attitude to the peace process. To achieve that we need to look at the lessons of August 1994, at what persuaded the IRA to call its cessation and at the elements of the peace process which offered so much hope for the future.

A Political and Diplomatic Package

The package which I had worked out with Mr Hume, the Irish government, under Mr Reynolds, and key elements of Irish American opinion was a political and diplomatic alternative which aimed at removing the causes of conflict in our country. That package would not have been possible had it not been for the willingness of President Clinton to ignore bad advice from London and to implement, for the first time, a new US policy towards Ireland.

The alternative we presented sought to effect new agreements on constitutional change and political arrangements and a new dispensation which would be acceptable to all the people of the island. It sought to bring about democratic rights and to remove issues of inequality and injustice in the north and the total demilitarisation of the situation including the removal of the apparatus of war and the release of prisoners.

It was the argument that a determined approach on these matters by the breadth of Irish national political opinion with the public commitment by both governments that negotiations

would commence after a specified period of three months, without pre-conditions, vetoes or any attempt to pre-determine the outcome, which delivered that IRA cessation.

What we have seen in the intervening 19 months has been delaying, obstruction, convolution, contortion, dilution and dishonesty. At times, if this were not so serious, the responses of the British have bordered on farce – proximity talks 400 miles apart and only this week a proposal for a 'broadly acceptable' elective process which is acceptable to no-one and confusing to everyone.

The breaking of the commitment to negotiations by the British undermined one of these two key elements of the peace process. The second element, the commitment on the Irish side to a consensus approach to addressing the causes of conflict was significantly weakened by the collapse of the Reynolds led government and election of a new Taoiseach, John Bruton.

Once the basis of the cessation had been removed through the renegeing on the negotiations by the British and the breaking of the nationalist consensus by the current Irish government, the collapse of the peace process became inevitable.

In his recent speech to the Fine Gael Ard Fheis Mr Bruton addressed the collapse of the peace process. There is no doubt a temptation for political leaders or their advisers to seek to absolve themselves from responsibility from the present difficult situation. While this may be satisfying in party political or propaganda terms much more is required from all of us if we are to face up to the challenge of restoring the peace process.

For that reason I have studied everything John Bruton has said and I have tried to be very measured in my responses to his comments. I know that successful peace-making requires that each of us must try to see the situation from a different viewpoint. It is in that spirit that I direct these comments to Mr Bruton.

If we are to restore the peace process – and in my view we must restore it – the Irish Taoiseach cannot act as a facilitator. He has to reach beyond his party political analysis and represent the interests of the Irish nation and he must understand that the Irish nation extends beyond the state which he governs.

He must also face up to the British government so that that government understands that it has to play a full partnership role in the search for peace. The reality is that this has not happened and this has eroded confidence in the peace process and contributed directly to the ending of the IRA cessation.

Almost immediately after the IRA cessation ended John Hume and I met and pledged to do our utmost to restore the peace process and to redouble our efforts to talk to everyone who could help to bring this about. We decided at that time, as part of our wider initiative, to seek a meeting with the IRA leadership.

At that meeting John Hume and I were told that the Army leadership would explore any viable alternative strategy to bring about justice and that they would embrace a real effort to end the conflict through inclusive negotiations without preconditions.

Clearly what is required is an effective political process which removes the causes of conflict and delivers the changes necessary to a lasting political settlement. This must involve:

Agreement by both governments to initiate inclusive and comprehensive negotiations, without preconditions or vetoes and with no attempt to predetermine or preclude any outcome. For instance, the Government of Ireland Act must be on the agenda;

There must be specific and unambiguous assurances that these real negotiations will begin at the earliest possible time and be conducted with an agreed time frame. There should be clear procedures which prevent obstacles being erected around any issue;

International assistance and guarantees are required to ensure that commitments given are honoured;

In the context of negotiations, an Irish democratic strategy should be agreed to:
guide the negotiations;

secure democratic rights in the transition period;

remove the consequences of conflict;

to establish agreed structures to implement this Irish democratic strategy and the employment of all available resources in pursuing it.

The objective reality is that peace in Ireland can only be achieved through honest dialogue and democratic negotiations based on equality. This is not a military problem. It is a political problem which was militarised by the British. It needs a political solution.

Clearly these are extraordinary times and we face extraordinary challenges. There is no single simple policy which can meet these challenges; there is no grand or magic formula for peace. Genuine peace, real peace, must be dynamic, changing to meet the many challenges confronting it.

A peace process must be at its core a way of solving problems, democratically and on the basis of equality and understanding.

John Major's Responsibilities

Let me be very frank about John Major's handling of the peace process.

For the last number of years Mr Major has embraced the rhetoric of peace-making but avoided the real challenges. In doing so he has blamed the unionists and everyone else. It isn't just that he has failed to meet the challenges. That would be bad enough but he has gone further by pro-actively seeking to frustrate every positive effort to tackle the causes of conflict.

He, more than anyone else, bears the greatest responsibility for the current impasse. Think back on the opportunity that has been wasted; reflect on the expectations which greeted the IRA initiative of 1994.

This universal sense of hope has been dashed by Mr Major's refusal to convert a cessation into a permanent process for justice and peace.

Could it be that it is not only because the Tory establishment does not want to preside over the type of change that is required in our country but that they also resent the fact that all the initiatives originated from nationalist Ireland and initially from myself and John Hume.

Having said all of this I must also make it clear that if John Major is prepared, even at this juncture, to engage properly in the necessary honest dialogue to restore the peace process then we will meet him halfway. Peace-making is a two-way street.

Political leaders cannot dodge their responsibilities. Most politicians measure risk in terms of popularity, party political considerations or electoral concerns. Peace in Ireland requires much more of political leaders.

Crucially we cannot have peace in Ireland unless the British government wants peace also and is totally committed to bringing it about and sustaining it through risky and dangerous times. I regret the ending of the cessation. My heart goes out to those who died or were injured in the London bombings, and to their families. To the families of Inan Ul-Haq Bashir and John Jeffries I extend our sincerest condolences. No words of mine can ease the pain which they are enduring.

I extend our condolences also to the family of IRA Volunteer Edward O'Brien. His death was a particular source of sorrow. For generations Irish men and Irish women have resorted to armed actions in protest at British involvement in Irish affairs. Volunteer Ed O'Brien's family were unaware of his IRA involvement. His death, and the circumstances in which he died therefore was doubly shocking for them. There was much tabloid commentary about this young man but little attempt to understand why he was moved to act as he did. The lesson for all of us is clear. If we are to get an end to armed actions we must build an alternative.

There will be some commentators who will read this speech for signs that the IRA is going to resume its cessation. They should know that this would not be the vehicle for such announcements. I want to see an end to all armed actions and I am working for that end but there needs to be an understanding of the difficulties which British bad faith has created for all of us. There are efforts by both John Major, John Bruton and others to scapegoat Sinn Féin. The last 18 months have been a learning process and there are lessons for us all. One thing is clear. The IRA cessation should not be devalued. It is real evidence that despite provocation, and a clear lack of positive involvement by the British government, that the IRA's commitment stretching over a year and a half to enhance a real opportunity for peace is a genuine one.

Closing doors to dialogue will not bring peace sooner. On the contrary it undermines the search for peace. Moreover, removing the causes of conflict is bigger than any one person or party. Making peace must be the sum total of many acts. It is a risky enterprise and must be a collective effort.

For our part Sinn Féin stands for peace. That is our conviction; that is our commitment to others. Our record in the peace process will stand scrutiny from even the most doubtful. We have demonstrated a real and determined commitment to democratic negotiations and debate. I assert the democratic and electoral integrity of Sinn Féin and of our electorate and of our right to be treated on the same basis as all other parties. We are not second-class citizens and we will never accept anything less than equal treatment.

We believe in the resolution of conflict through negotiation. Our party remains willing to enter into dialogue without preconditions. We do not want a veto over the agenda for negotiations or the outcome of those negotiations.

I want now to address the unionist section of our people and I would like to do so at two levels. That is at the level of organised unionism and at the community level. I am making this distinction because I believe different things are happening at these two levels.

But before I do, let me say to unionists I am speaking to you in a spirit of openness, honesty and frankness, I know you are listening and I'm choosing my words very carefully to ensure there is no confusion in your minds about republican intentions.

We want to make peace with you, we want to end the centuries-old conflict, we want to be reconciled with you; this is your country every bit as much as it is ours and we want to share it with you on a democratic and equal basis. We take no comfort from the fact that you live in fear about your future, that you feel besieged by Irish nationalists on one side and on the other side you are distrustful of the British government. We know this instils a deep sense of insecurity and that this makes movement difficult.

I am concerned that you appreciate our commitment to reconciliation with you on the basis of respect for your beliefs, your tradition and your hopes for the future. It isn't easy for either nationalists or unionists to trust each other. I'm not going to ask you to forget the past nor to forgive republicans for the pain we have visited on you. At the same time I don't expect nationalists or republicans to forget what you inflicted on us. However the wrongs of the past must not paralyse us. We must not be trapped in a web of suspicion and doubt about each other.

We need to open up our minds unconditionally to one another. In this way we can learn more about each other; in this way we will find common ground and a shared understanding will emerge about the future.

Sinn Féin is making its contribution to this process of understanding by engaging on a weekly basis with unionists. I'm certainly satisfied that these exchanges are leading to a better and clearer understanding among republicans of the unionist outlook and vice versa. Those republicans directly involved find these engagements both stimulating and challenging.

I am also satisfied that the meetings reflect a mood among many unionists for a negotiated settlement and that this mood is being ignored by the unionist leadership.

David Trimble and Ian Paisley like the rest of us have a moral responsibility to give positive leadership to their people. They have a responsibility to instil confidence in their people, not to fan the flames of uncertainty. They have a responsibility to lead them into the future not lead them back to 1912. They know that change is on its way and they should be leading the debate among their people not leading Orange parades through the Garvaghy Road or the Ormeau Road or denying nationalists freedom of assembly in Lurgan.

The republican tradition is a democratic and progressive one. It was founded by Irish Presbyterians. It is non-sectarian and pluralist. It sought and it still seeks to unite the people of this island around a common set of democratic principles and ideas which embrace the diversity of our people.

This is not the 1790s and much has happened since then to blur the vision of the men and women of those times but they left us a legacy which remains viable today. In my view it will provide the foundation upon which we can build a new Ireland, an agreed Ireland for all the people of this island.

As well as engaging in dialogue with unionists we have also developed our contact with governments and political parties throughout the world.

There has been considerable focus on our engagement in the USA. Let me say that I have been uplifted and gratified by the concern of Irish America for freedom and peace and justice in Ireland. These sentiments are not confined to our old friends in Noraid or Clann na Gael. There is a new and increasing consciousness throughout the breadth of Irish America. I must pay tribute to the Friends of Sinn Féin, to Mairéad Keane who heads up our mission in Washington, to the others who lead our organisation and to our many friends and allies.

We have also established a presence at the European Union under the tutelage of Tony Catney and while this work is much slower than the US engagement, a very good start has been made. Sinn Féin representatives have also visited other part of the world from Australia to Italy.

For me a visit to South Africa last summer remains the highlight of that year. Rita O'Hare, Richard and Chrissie McAuley and I travelled as guests of the ANC. We met President Nelson Mandela and the ANC leadership, as well as the other parties, including the National Party, to learn about their process of negotiation. It was like going home. I am therefore very pleased to extend a céad m'le fáilte to Ian Phillips, the ANC delegate and to all the other fraternal delegates and visitors present at this Ard Fheis.

We need to be confident about our own strength. Republicans have been at the receiving end of so much vilification, marginalisation and sheer state oppression that many observers are surprised, and our opponents are disappointed that we have never succumbed to the pressure. Our task is to articulate the core democratic republican demands in a way which is reasonable and attractive to the broad mass of the Irish people. In so doing – and we have had some measure of success in that regard – we will reverse the years of revisionism, censorship and isolation. We will heighten national consciousness and nationalist confidence and we will put the British and their allies on the defensive.

Sinn Féin has the potential to join with others to build a mass movement for an Irish democracy throughout this island. Many of those who are our potential allies have yet to be persuaded about how British disengagement can be brought about. It is up to us to outline our strategy and our tactics in a manner which is relevant to the mass of people.

One of the most significant advances of recent times is the widespread acceptance that an internal Six-County settlement is not a solution. Some have come to this position because they recognise the failure of partition, and the reality that it is not only the governance of the Six Counties which has been the problem – it is the existence of the statelet itself.

We want to see an end to partition and our strategy between now and the ending of partition should be based upon the widely-accepted view that there can be no internal solution, that there has to be fundamental change and that during a transitional phase there must be maximum democracy. There has also to be equality of treatment and parity of esteem.

The achievement of equality of treatment for nationalists in the North will erode the very reason for the existence of that statelet. The unionist leaders know this. That is why they so dogmatically turn their faces against change. Unionists traditionally support the union because it enables them to be 'top of the heap' in the Six Counties. A level playing pitch will make this impossible for them in practice and much of unionism will be left without any rational basis. Apart from this, all citizens have the right to equality of treatment. We do not seek preferential treatment or privilege for any section of our people. We have always demanded equality. The northern state was founded and is sustained on discrimination. It was and is underwritten by policies determined by London.

Unionists can no longer be blamed for London's failure through 24 years of direct rule to effectively tackle economic and structural political discrimination against Catholics; unionists alone cannot be held responsible for the continuing cultural discrimination which denies Irish children their right to be taught through the medium of Irish, our national language; it is British policy which labels nationalists generally and Sinn Féin voters in particular, as inferior and second-class. None of this can be tolerated any longer.

The British need to remove all anti-nationalist symbols and appearances from the Six-County statelet by providing 'parity of esteem' in that area and by eliminating as far as possible all obvious and visible difference between there and the rest of the island of Ireland. They need to bring about legislative change to improve the position of nationalists while protecting the rights of other citizens.

Democratic rights include national rights. Nationalists in the occupied area are not an ethnic minority living in a foreign country. We are Irish citizens living under foreign rule without our consent in our own country.

The Dublin government also has a responsibility, indeed a moral and political imperative, a constitutional imperative, to uphold the rights of citizens in the North.

There is a pressing need for physical, legislative and practical expressions to deliver positive proof that nationalist rights, identities and allegiances are guaranteed actual parity.

There is a need for:

Equality of opportunity in employment;

Equality of treatment for the Irish culture and identity;

Equality of treatment of elected representatives and voters;

Equality in the provision of education, particularly through the medium of Irish;

Equality of treatment in economic development.

Can we restore the peace process? We have to. Can it be done through the proposals presented by London and Dublin? This is a time for clear heads and steady nerves. It is my firm conviction that we will get a peace settlement but I cannot say when this will happen or whether indeed it can happen under the present administrations.

The 'framework for an elective process' released by John Major on Thursday provides yet more evidence of his concern to stay in power and of the protracted effort to subvert and frustrate a meaningful restoration of the peace process. That the Irish government permitted the British government to take such decisions is not encouraging.

It took over 50 years for Stormont to be overthrown. There is no way that Sinn Féin will be party to any restoration of that kind of institution. Our preference would be to boycott both the election and the elected body. However, we live in the real world. We will be guided therefore by whether it is necessary to defend our vote or to uphold the rights of our electorate. Some of you may have hoped that towards the conclusion of this speech that I would have been able to look forward to a more trouble-free future for our party and for the rest of the people of this island. The last 18 months have shown everyone what the future could be like. It was a good 18 months and as people embraced the new possibilities they became incredulous as other politicians rejected every meaningful offer to talk. The people of our island have the right to peace.

We have the right to shape our own future. We have the right to develop an economic democracy which tackles unemployment, bad housing and which provides a proper health service and an open education system for all citizens. We deserve a non-sexist, pluralist, democratic Ireland. An Ireland which cherishes all the children of the nation equally.

No British government has the right to condemn us to continued conflict and division. But we have to face up to the reality that John Major has frittered away the best opportunity for peace in 75 years. In developing a strategic overview and in seeking to restore the peace process, this fact cannot be avoided. For years we were told that the British government was neutral, that it had a benign attitude towards Ireland, that an IRA cessation would be met with a generous and flexible response. We were the ones who were sceptical about this. I was the one who insisted, even as the IRA announced its cessation, that the struggle was not over. Sinn Féin's vision of the future is both realistic and obtainable. There is no doubt that the peace process can be restored if the energy and concern that exists within nationalist Ireland and internationally can be structured and organised. In this context the Dublin government have a weighty responsibility.

Nationalist Ireland and the Irish diaspora possess considerable political and economic strength to move us out of conflict. This power and influence can be utilised and nationalist Ireland can be energised in the search for peace based on democratic principles. But the lessons of the last few years must be learned if we are to be successful. There is also an onus on Irish republicans to use all our resources and influence to reach out and to develop a viable strategy to address the core issues at the heart of the conflict. It is not going to be easy.

Our party has matured. We have faced up to all the challenges positively and with dignity and confidence in our cause and in our analysis. We will face many other challenges. Our party has an absolute commitment to a transformation of Irish society and to a negotiated and democratic settlement of the conflict in our country. We know that peace is not simply the absence of violence. Real peace – a lasting peace – is based on democracy, justice, freedom and equality. Our vision sees beyond the present conflict and beyond the present phase of our history. Our vision foresees the unity of the people of this island. East with west, north with south, urban with rural, Catholic with Protestant and dissenter.

Our vision is for the redistribution of wealth, for the well-being of the aged, for the advancement of youth, for the liberation of women and for the protection of our children.

Our vision rejects forced emigration and unemployment, the destruction of the environment, cultural oppression, sexism and inequality.

Our vision embraces education. It embraces democracy. It is economic, as well as political. Our vision is for a free Ireland and a free people. It is for bread and roses, as well as an end to war. It foresees the relationship between Britain and Ireland resting upon our mutual independence. It is this vision which sustains our struggle. It demands that we take risks. It demands that we persevere in our efforts to reach agreement, to reach agreement and a new accommodation between all our people.

Our last Ard Fheis was the first one in 25 years without conflict so we are well schooled in the politics of repression but we know also that we need to be generous and flexible. So we extend the hand of friendship to our enemies as a sign of our strength and our willingness to be inclusive.

There are lots of reasons for republicans to be bitter. But bitterness is a wasted emotion. This time 15 years ago Bobby Sands was on the 23rd day of his hunger strike. He had lots of reasons to be bitter. He knew the difficulties which he faced yet he was resilient and coherent and thoughtful in what he had to do. After five years in a prison cell, smaller than the average bathroom, denied any mental or intellectual stimulation, naked except for a blanket, he wrote his thoughts on cigarette papers with the refill of a biro pen which he secreted on his person. He wrote once about revenge. "Let our revenge be the laughter of our children". That is the sense of the future which we seek to emulate.

We are united, we are stronger than ever, we are more experienced. We face the future confident of our own strength and conscious of our weaknesses and prepared for the work which we need to do.

There are no partial solutions and there can be no partial negotiations about the future of the people of this island. The position has now moved on beyond such arrangements.

All the main players know that and as John Major casts about for other ways to keep himself in power we must continue to press forward with the democratic option, that is, for an end to the British connection and for a lasting peace in our country.

§ Presidential Address to the 93rd Sinn Féin Ard Fheis 1997

Spell-checked, English-Gaelic version.

I want you to take a journey with me over the next short time, a journey of imagination, a journey of vision, a journey of time, a journey into the future.

I want you to imagine what Ireland will be like on that day when a lasting peace is established. I want you to imagine where you will be, where our nation will be. I want you to imagine what it will be like as we cross that extraordinary moment into a new beginning.

Imagine an Ireland in which the guns are silent. Permanently. An Ireland in which all of the people of this island are at peace with each other and with our neighbours in Britain.

Imagine an Ireland united by a process of healing and national reconciliation.

Imagine the people of this island free from division, foreign occupation, injustice and conflict.

Imagine the 5 million people of this small island applying our collective energy, our wisdom, our intelligence to building the future.

Imagine an island economy thriving, working hard to produce the wealth which can reduce unemployment and improve the quality of life of our people.

Imagine an Ireland using that wealth to tackle poverty, to build homes, to improve education, to care for our environment, to heal the sick, to help the weak, the aged - all the children of the nation.

Imagine.

Some will say this is a dream. But it is a dream which we can turn into a reality.

Had I asked you 5 years ago to imagine the changes which have happened elsewhere in the world, you would have scoffed at me. If I had outlined developments here in Ireland, the potential which had been created, the expectation and hope; what would you have said?

What do you say now? The expectation was dashed but the hope has not been crushed. But now, looking back we can see what is possible. We can see what can happen and we can see that we have made it happen. And more importantly, we have created the hope and the expectation that much more will happen in the time ahead of us. Why? Because we never give up. We have kept the light of hope alive.

And not just our generation. In the lean years of the 30s, 40s and 50s, Irish republicans kept the Fenian faith. Today we are reaping the seeds of their unbroken determination. In our time, we have shaped and evolved, and we are shaping and evolving our party and our republicanism to meet the needs of today and for the future.

The civil rights campaign, the prison struggles, our electoral strategy, the demands for decent houses, for cultural rights, for real jobs, the cry for national freedom - are all proof of our commitment and of our refusal to give in to repression.

Even as they vilified us and demonised us and repressed us, we never gave up. Instead of giving up we challenged them. We sued for peace. We tried to make friends of our enemies. And we did so with confidence and commitment. And even now, despite all the messing and bad faith engagement, despite the provocative actions of our opponents and enemies, even now we remain committed to our peace project. We face forward, determined to play a positive and principled role in building a new peace process and a new Ireland.

Níor éirigh linn go fóill síocháin bhuan a bhaint amach dár dtír. Cuireadh moill ar an phróiseas sin i dtreo na síochána ach níor cuireadh deireadh leis. Ní féidir lenár naimhde an strechailt a scrios mar ní thuigeann gur ina n-intinn féin a chéad ghlac muid seasamh ar son na córa. Mhínigh Bobby Sands go maith é nuair a dóirt sé i nGaeilge ina dhialann ar Lá na Féile Pádraig 1981. "Muna bhfuil siad abálta meon na saoirse a bhriseadh, ní bhrisfidh siad thú. Ní bhrisfidh siad mise mar tá meon na saoirse, meon saoirse do mhuintir na hÚireann, i mo chroí. Tíocfaidh an lá nuair a bheidh meon na saoirse ag muintir na hEireann uile. Ó Sin an fáth ar theip ar riail na Breataine in Úirinn - thar na céadtaí bliain - an streachailt ar son neamhspleachais agus saoirse a chloí.

The search for a lasting peace has not succeeded so far. It was subverted but it cannot be crushed. It can only be postponed. The forces ranged against us are powerful but despite their power they have failed to defeat our struggle. They have failed to defeat our struggle because they fail to comprehend that the first step of liberation is in the human mind. Bobby Sands explained it well in one of the darkest moments of our struggle: "If they aren't able to destroy

the desire for freedom, they won't break you". That is why centuries of British rule in Ireland has failed to subdue the struggle for independence and freedom. That is why they have failed to break us.

George Bernard Shaw once said: "Some people see things as they are and ask: why? I dream things that never were and ask: why not?"

For most people on this island, but particularly those living in the north, peace was a dream which appeared forever destined to be played out as a nightmare. For many the conflict in Ireland seemed endless, a burden fated to be borne by successive generations.

No one has been untouched by the events of the past 28 years or by the decades of violence and inequality which preceded them.

This reality, the reality of British rule in Ireland, means that the IRA remains a potent force in this situation with volunteers like Diarmuid O'Neill who was gunned down in London, prepared to unselfishly pit themselves against British rule in our country. That is the stark reality of the situation. But it does not have to be forever so.

The cessation of military operations announced by the IRA in August 1994 did not occur because the IRA had succumbed to threats, demands, or preconditions. Meaningful dialogue, force of argument, and openness to the historic possibilities that this course of action might create were the key factors in the IRA's decision.

When John Major decided to scupper the peace process he had the active assistance of the Unionist party at Westminster. But we are undaunted. Heath, Thatcher, Major - British Prime Ministers come and go as we face them down and prepare for freedom day.

Ian Paisley and David Trimble do not give progressive leadership. Their every word betrays a veiled contempt for, and an utter lack of faith in the ability of their supporters to come to terms with a new situation. In 1985 Ian Paisley stood on a 'Smash Sinn Fein' ticket at the local government elections in the north. He posed with his sledgehammer, that symbol of loyalist death squads and our councillors and our families paid with their lives to represent our electorate.

DUP councillors blew their whistles and squealed their wee heads off in Belfast City Council and other Unionists took to chaining themselves to office furniture in Derry City Council. But despite it all we persisted and eventually the Unionist campaign petered out. It did so because their electorate wanted real council representation.

Today the Unionist leaders say they will not sit down with Sinn Fein but today there are no empty seats in the Council Chambers in the north. So Sinn Fein cannot be denied access to all party negotiations because of this threat from the Unionist leadership. If the Unionists do walk out they know the door will not be locked behind them. If they walk out they know they will have to walk back in again.

Peace is the issue here. When the British announce publicly that there can be no negotiations without yet another precondition, they merely echo the Unionist position on Sinn Fein's entrance to all party talks. They used the Unionists as an excuse. They encourage Unionist inertia. These exclusionist attitudes cannot create peace.

The Sinn Féin peace strategy, the Irish peace initiative, and the subsequent peace process are all part of our effort to change this. Sinn Fein know the lessons of the past. Irish republicanism is 200 years old next year and its principles are still relevant. The need to break the connection with England is as pertinent now as it was then. For Irish republicans the aim has never been the victory of one section of our people over another but a new union of Catholic, Protestant and Dissenter. It is not a pseudo peace - pax Britannica - but a real peace built on a solid democratic foundation and a future of justice and equality.

We have a vision of that future and the spirit and confidence to work in partnership with others to achieve this.

This means change.

Our task as republicans is to be agents of change; it is to build equality and partnership, and to empower change within our society. It is to change minds and attitudes and to rebuild relationships between the people of this island and with our nearest neighbour Britain.

We must be prepared to act as a beacon, lighting the way through the darkness to a safe and better future.

Sinn Fein is a party of the future and our leadership is absolutely united behind our peace strategy. We have pursued this strategy with singular determination.

For us, and thus for everyone else there will be no going back to the bad old days of Unionist domination. There will be no going back to second class citizenship, there will be no return to Stormont rule.

Irish Republicans are prepared to do business, now, with the British government and with the Unionists, without preconditions, without qualification, without delay. We are prepared to meet, to discuss and to reach agreement, to come to a democratic accommodation with unionism. But we are not prepared to pander to bigotry or the out-dated concepts of Orange supremacy and Unionist domination. We are not prepared to tolerate triumphalism and sectarianism. We will not be reconciled to the burning of churches and schools, to the denial of civil or religious liberties.

We make no apologies for this or for our commitment and our efforts to create a new political culture throughout this entire island. We stand for equality. We make no apologies for wanting an end to British rule and a new agreement between all the people of our island.

I want to speak directly to the Unionists. Some Unionists say that we do not comprehend or appreciate the effects of the last 25 years on them. We do. Or at least some of us do. Or we are trying to and we are also trying to reach out because we who have suffered do understand your sense of hurt. When Irish republicans talk about British interference and the British presence we do not mean the Unionist section of our people. We want to make peace with Unionists, to work with Unionists so that when we collectively reach the end of our journey we will be able to accommodate and celebrate our diversity as equals.

And today, through an ongoing dialogue with members of the Northern Protestant and Unionist community we are trying to develop a much better understanding of the political analysis that represents the bed-rock of their thinking.

Many important insights have emerged from this dialogue which will help us to see unionism in its totality and which gives us a sense of what is going on inside the Unionist section of our people.

The erosion of their political power base since the late 1960's, their belief that they have given a lot and received nothing, their deep mistrust of the British and their perception of an all powerful nationalist agenda are the elements of a deepening crisis within the Unionist section of our people.

'Not an Inch', 'What we have we hold' and 'No surrender' are more than ever the anchors of the Unionist leaderships political philosophy. On the surface David Trimble and Ian Paisley seem unable and unwilling to move away from its 'top dog mentality'. In reality they are paralysed by the idea of real talks, honest talks, with them actually negotiating. They are afraid that this means them negotiating themselves out of existence. They are afraid of change.

Republicans need to be concerned about what is happening inside unionism. It is not in the national interest that Unionists remain trapped inside a siege mentality.

We must make every effort to ensure that the Northern Protestant and Unionist section of our people are not forced to occupy that political space we wish to escape from. If being marginalised, abandoned and disempowered was bad for us, then it is bad for the Unionists.

Giving up on the Unionists is not an option for Sinn Fein. By-passing the Unionists is not an option for us. Our option is for dialogue and engagement.

Republicans recognise that there will be no peace in Ireland if Unionists are not a part of shaping that peace. Therefore our heartfelt wish is for a Unionism that is capable of shaping its future inside a negotiating process based upon equality. Our wish is to reach an accommodation with unionism.

This will not be easy. The road ahead will be difficult and dangerous and risky for all of us but working together I am convinced we can succeed. It is my conviction that we will have a peace settlement. If we are resilient, if we dig deep, we can overcome all obstacles.

We have all suffered over the generations, we have all lost loved ones, and friends and neighbours. I can think of many of our loved ones. So can you. Think, for example, of our friend, Councillor Pat McGeown, who died tragically last October. Pat Beag was described in death even by our opponents as a bridge-builder. Go ndeanfaidh trochaire air. OUR SYMPATHIES. We must learn the lessons of the past - not to recriminate, for as William Butler Yeats said:

"We need not feel the bitterness of the past to discover its meaning for the present and future."

I believe that we can put the anguish of the past behind us; we can heal the wounds; we do not need to forget but we can learn to forgive.

And of course dialogue is a two-way process. We actively listen but we also seek to inform. So Unionists need to see that Irish nationalists and republicans are forced to live in a British statelet which treats us as second class citizens. A statelet which for all of its existence has accorded the Orangemen the right to march through nationalist areas in triumphalistic coat-trailing and sectarian parades. There are also lots of reminders that the ethos which feeds this is not confined to the street or to working class loyalists. It permeates through the institutions of the six counties. These institutions remain faithful to Brookeborough's suffocating structure. Today the six counties is still run by Unionists for Unionists and policed by Unionists for Unionists.

But those days are numbered.

To those nationalist communities which in recent years have challenged Orange supremacy I extend our best wishes and solidarity. We salute the courage of the people of the Lower Ormeau, of Garvaghy Road, of Rosslea, of Dunloy, of Harryville, of Bellaghy, and the many other small isolated nationalist communities. We salute the people of Derry who did not stand idly by when these smaller communities were under threat and we salute those from the Protestant tradition on this island who took a stand for equality.

When republicans speak of change we want change through this entire island. A resistance to change is not confined to the Unionists or the British. Throughout this state also there are partitionists for whom Ireland is 26 Counties. For the partitionists, the censors, the revisionists, nationalists of the Six Counties are outside the pale. But the republican peace strategy, the Irish Peace Initiative, the IRA cessation and the entire peace process was a major set-back for those forces. The nay-sayers had to acknowledge the strength of Irish opinion at home and abroad, and the support for an inclusive peace settlement, for the end of the partitionist status quo and the need for political and constitutional change.

Then to their own surprise some of those who had been most negative about my dialogue with John Hume and about the Irish Peace Initiative and the IRA cessation, found themselves in government in the middle of the peace process. "A bit of a shock" as John Bruton said.

At the time we acknowledged that it was difficult for him to address the new situation and we commended efforts to create progress in the face of British government intransigence.

We were flexible and open minded. We kept every commitment we made and we did so in good faith. Mr Bruton knows this. But we refused to lower our expectations. We refused to be caged in or conditioned.

Whatever shade of government emerges from the general election in the 26 counties Sinn Féin will endeavour to work with it to rebuild the peace process. That is our pledge given here today. But that government must respect the mandate which our voters give us. No one in government buildings in Dublin should expect us to collude in our own exclusion or in undermining the rights of our electorate.

Mr Bruton has called upon the people not to vote for Sinn Féin. But when they ignore him then he, or whoever succeeds him as Taoiseach, must respect and uphold the rights of that section of our people. Nil aon slí eile ann.

Unlike Fine Gael Sinn Féin is offering people the opportunity to vote for us on both sides of the border. We stand on our strategy for peace, our record in building the peace process, our continuing efforts to restore that process on a sound basis, our social and economic analysis, our work in communities, our progressive policies on the range of issues which concern the electorate in both urban and rural areas - north and south.

In this election Sinn Féin is the only party of the left standing on an independent platform. We represent that tradition in Irish politics which may be described as the republican left, the legacy of Pearse and Connolly and Mellows. As Councillor Caoimhghín Ó Caoláin said at Easter here in Monaghan, Sinn Féin is the "voice of an idea". It is the idea of republican Labour; the thought of a free Ireland. And in the last few years, for the first time in over two decades, people here are hearing that voice. They are receiving our message and they are increasingly receptive to it.

For us the struggle is where the people are and where the activist should be. It is our collective responsibility to succeed, to continue our journey, to get others to join us.

Sinn Féin's idea of social justice involves the harnessing of economic activity for the benefit of all. Instead the wealthy are rewarded and the inequality gaps are widened between the low

paid and the well-paid, and between those in work and the unemployed. While the fat cats get the cream, our young people are threatened with a drugs epidemic and rural communities are robbed of much needed resources. It is a disgrace.

Politics here has been reduced by some politicians to an ivory tower of back room dealing, scams, backhanders and strokes. The Irish general election provides voters with a chance to dent the smug, self-satisfied circle of power in Leinster House. This general election provides the chance for our party to challenge this culture of privilege and inequality. This Ard Fheis is enjoying the hospitality of the people of Monaghan. It was the constituency of Cavan/Monaghan which elected Ciaran Doherty as its TD (I want to welcome Ciaran's father, Alfie, here today along with the families of the other hunger strikers. Failte mor rombaibh uilig).

Sinn Fein is fighting three elections this year and in this state there is a real prospect of a seat for Caoimhghín Ó Caoláin in Cavan/Monaghan.

This chance of a breakthrough and strong votes for our party in another 14 constituencies from Dublin to Donegal, from Louth to Sligo, from Kerry to Cork can be a milestone in the development of republican politics.

So let us go out there and make that breakthrough.

Today there are many in Ireland and throughout the world, who at this defining moment in our history are fearful of the future. There is a current of hope, coupled with uncertainty, of optimism combined with apprehension. The journey to a peaceful Ireland is a difficult one. But the people of Ireland, from every corner of our country, and from throughout the Irish diaspora across the world, have expressed their hope that that journey will reach a lasting peace settlement and new democracy.

Sinn Fein have played a pivotal role in creating this opportunity. We are here as peacemakers. Our objective is clear. It is to build a democracy which will be owned by every woman, man and child, on this island.

That means removing the causes of conflict from our country. British policy in Ireland has manifestly failed. One of the achievements of my dialogue with John Hume is our agreement that an internal settlement is not a solution. There is no going back to the failed policies and structures of the past, to the domination of a one-party Unionist state supported by the British government.

How do we move forward? And brothers and sisters, let there be no doubt about that - we must move forward. How do we do it? How do we fulfil the potential, the ideals and dreams, so that our children and our children's' children can enjoy peace and justice?

Sinn Fein is absolutely committed to democratic and peaceful methods of resolving problems and part of our responsibility is to make alliances with others, to help chart the journey forward, to illuminate the way and to work with the people of Ireland to establish beacons or guide-lines, based on international experiences, to help us all to traverse this period of transition. We are on a journey from the past into a new future.

Irish freedom, democracy and peace are in the interests of all the people on the island. Partition affects all of us. Sinn Fein seeks national self-determination, and the unity and independence of Ireland as a sovereign state.

In our view this issue of sovereignty, the claim of the British government to sovereignty in Ireland, is the key matter which must be addressed in any negotiation.

There are some who say the British government is neutral. Whatever about its strategic or economic interest, John Major has made it clear that he is a defender of the Union. This policy and the Unionist veto are at the core of the conflict.

The aim of democratic opinion must be to seek a change in British policy towards Ireland and an end to the Unionist veto. Negotiations are an area of struggle for Irish republicans.

There are many issues which fuel the conflict which must be tackled but which do not require negotiation. For example, parity of esteem and equality of treatment will have to be dealt with; the imbalance in the employment ratio; equality in economic development; greater and more equally shared prosperity; the Irish language and culture need equality of treatment; there is a long overdue need to bring about the empowerment and inclusion of deprived and marginalised communities. These should be pursued inside and outside negotiations.

The whole issue of demilitarisation needs to be resolved. This includes the release of all political prisoners. The treatment of convicted killers from the British Army in comparison, for example, with the treatment of untried, remand prisoner, Roisin McAliskey, is proof of British

double standards. Disarmament, policing, the administration of justice and an end to repressive legislation also needs to be tackled.

Is páirtí é Sinn Féin ar mhaith leis cúrsaí a athrú. Níl aon eagla orainn roimh an athrach. Leoga ghlac muid go fonnmar leis an athrach. Is é an t-athrach bun agus bárr an scéil nuair atá streachailt pholaitiúil ag dul ar aghaidh. Agus is é an t-athrach an dúshraith don tsíocháin bhuan. Is é an tasc atá romhainn a dhéanamh cinnte nach féidir an t-athrach atá ag teacht a chur siar a choíche.

Sinn Fein seeks change. We are not afraid of change. We have embraced change. It is the life-blood of political struggle and the basis for a lasting peace agreement. Our task must be to make change irreversible. Some time ago, in a spirit of generosity and in an effort to create a space in which progress could be made I made it clear, in the context of proper all-party talks and in a situation in which all the other parties sign up to the Mitchell Report, that Sinn Fein will do so also.

We ask no more than is accorded to any other party, open and honest dialogue, everyone at the table, everything on the table and no Unionist veto. For us there is no room for failure. We need to be persistent and pragmatic because we have a confidence in ourselves and in the future and because we know that what has gone before has failed all of us. This is especially true of the relationship between Irish republicans and the British. A new government is about to be elected in London. That new British government knows precisely what is required and knows just as precisely our position on the issues of concern to it. Let the British government face up to its responsibilities. Let it and Sinn Fein face up to each other on our own terms. Let each of us put behind us the failures of the past, the lack of confidence, the distrust. We can do business, we can find agreement if political leaders and especially governments are prepared to take risks and if political will exists on all sides. A lasting peace is the prize.

Sinn Féin is prepared to take risks. This leadership has that will. Our party has that will. Sinn Fein is engaged in this struggle because we know we will be part of the democratic thrust forward into a free Ireland. The Westminster elections and a new administration taking power in London, do create a new opportunity to reconstruct the peace process. But that cannot be accomplished without an Irish republican involvement. Sinn Fein is an essential key component in any lasting peace settlement. We stand ready to play our part. We, the men and women of our generation will not be deflected from our historic task as we journey forward into the future. We know that the driving force against oppression is the moral superiority of the oppressed. This must guide all our efforts.

Today I pledge Sinn Fein's commitment to peace and to negotiations and to agreement. We have the political will to pursue these goals and we ask others to demonstrate that same commitment.

That is the only reliable guarantor for all our future.

The Westminster elections on May 1 are a watershed moment in our history which must be seized. We must send a clear message to the new London government and to the Unionist leadership. Last May, in a great national effort, our party made an unprecedented appeal to voters in the north. Our vote increased in every constituency. I want to commend you all. I want to thank those who put their trust in us. We will never betray that trust.

Next month, on May 1 voters throughout Antrim and Down, Derry and Tyrone, Fermanagh and Armagh - every one of the six occupied counties and in 17 of the 18 constituencies - voters have the chance to vote once again for Sinn Fein. I am confident that they will do so with great heart. Despite all the negative campaigning by our opponents our voters know that their vote is a vote for freedom and justice and peace in Ireland and for an end to all violence. They know that we will never let them down and we know that they will never let us down.

So we have a job of work to do in the days ahead. We must elect Sinn Fein MPs to put the republican analysis. We must help to create a new opportunity for peace.

We can do it. You can do it.

We are going to do it. We are going forward together into the next century. We are going forward to a new future as equals.

§ Presidential Address to the 94th Sinn Féin Ard Fheis 1998

Spell-checked, English version.

Fifteen years ago when I became party president of this organisation it was not long after the hunger strikes in Armagh Women Prison and in the H Blocks of Long Kesh. It was never my ambition to represent you in this position or to stay for so long. Indeed my commitment was from one to three years. Having said that, and although I have been known to complain the odd time at the trials and tribulations of this office, let me tell you that I consider it an honour to be a member of this party and to be a part of our leadership.

There have been many changes in the fortunes of Sinn Fein especially over the last ten years. This generation of Irish Republicans have never retreated from the tough decisions, nor have we been rushed into making rash or hasty judgements. Together, collectively, we analyse, we assess, we examine options, as Sean MacManus says 'we cogitate' until finally, and democratically, we move forward together.

Sinn Féin's Peace Strategy

Sinn Féin realises the need for strategies and tactics which can advance our struggle for freedom and justice. We understand that our strategies and tactics need to be constantly reviewed and reassessed in light of changing political developments and of our growing power and influence. Our political goals require the development of a process which is evolutionary and transitional, which moves through phases, building our political strength, until Irish independence is achieved.

Our peace strategy has transformed the Irish political landscape over the past 5 years. It contains the dynamic which led to the Irish peace initiative and to the cessation of military operations by the IRA in August 1994.

It was Sinn Féin which put British constitutionality and sovereignty on the agenda; it was our party which placed equality, partition, injustice and national and Democratic rights at the top of the agenda in Ireland, Britain and internationally.

Building Democratic Alliances

In February 1994 I pointed out in my Presidential address to the Ard Fheis that "Irish Republicans, by ourselves, simply do not possess the political strength" to bring about Irish unity.

A critical part of our strategy to "politically engage our political opponents and enemies alike" meant seeking allies to build alliances. That is why I sought meetings with John Hume. That is why we entered into dialogue with the government in Dublin. That is why we developed our relations with Irish America.

The vast majority of people in Ireland want peace. Peace demands justice. Nationalists, including those with reservations about the outcome of the talks process, want to exhaust every possibility of achieving peace. They wish to see their representatives concentrating their efforts to bring about a just and lasting settlement.

All experience to date shows that a shared understanding and common positions between Nationalist on the most advanced positions possible is needed to further the Democratic demand. An absence of such common positions is detrimental to the national position.

I would like to take this opportunity to speak to the Protestant people in the six counties and say to you that we in Sinn Féin remember with pride that our Republicanism grows from the separatist roots of the mainly Presbyterian United Irishmen. Sinn Fein is not a Catholic party. We uphold the right to civil and religious liberty for all and we want to see the emancipation of Catholics, Protestants and Dissenters.

I am conscious of the difficulties faced by unionists. Let me try to assure you and your leaders that Sinn Fein comes to these latest developments and that we face the future seeking a good faith and a genuine engagement with you.

When we call for the end of the British presence in Ireland we do not mean our unionist neighbours. You have as much right to a full and equal life on this island as any other section of our people.

I have a word of advice for the British Government and more particularly the British establishment.

Any judgement by Nationalist and Republicans on the Good Friday document will be determined by whether it can produce justice and how quickly it positively affects the day to

day lives of citizens. How quickly will the prisoners be released? When will the RUC be replaced by an acceptable policing service? How will the British government process the constitutional changes which they have agreed? Is this truly a transitional, a rolling process? Will the British and Irish governments pro-actively pursue the establishment and development of all-Ireland bodies? When will the British Army, and especially the RIR be taken off the streets? How quickly will the equality agenda take effect? How will the mechanisms of change be managed? How deep-rooted will it be? Will orange marches be pushed through nationalist areas this year?

There is a huge responsibility on the Irish government to develop strategies which remove the divisions on this island and which advance a process to replace British rule.

The Referendums

It is clear that the referendums do not constitute the exercise of national self-determination. Self-determination is universally accepted to mean a nation's right to exercise the political freedom to determine its own social, economic, and cultural development without external influence and without partial or total disruption of the national unity or territorial integrity. These criteria are not observed in Ireland. British government involvement in our country is in contravention of the established international norms which create and sustain conditions to the establishment of internal peace, democracy, justice, stability and national freedom.

It is also clear from our debate here today there are elements in both referendums that present difficulties for some Republicans and Nationalist. In my view these difficulties trouble a wider section of national opinion than we represent. Let me seek to give assurances to these people. While Sinn Féin has made it clear that we are not opposed to changes in the Irish constitution we do accept that there is real and justified concern at the changes in Articles 2 and 3 of the Irish Constitution.

Sinn Féin opposes changes that would dilute the definition of the territory of the nation, weaken the imperative to unity or dilute the citizenship rights in the North and incorporate the 'consent' clause. We do not accept the legitimacy of the six-county statelet. And we never will. As I have said earlier, all experience to date shows that a shared understanding and common positions between Nationalist, Republicans and Democrats on the most advanced positions possible is needed to bring about national change. But while seeking at all times to advance such a consensus let me tell you that I understand fully why some Nationalist or Republicans will not vote yes or will abstain entirely from voting in the referendums. That is your right and this leadership will not be pressing anyone to do anything against your beliefs. It is enough and a great tribute to your vision and commitment that you voted yes to the continuation of our strategy. We have advanced our struggle here today. That is our business. What you do in the polling booth is your business.

It is important that we all realise that the peace process is not concluded. The Good Friday document is another staging post on the road to a peace settlement.

It also provides a benchmark against which British government and Irish government actions in the coming months can be measured. It is a significant challenge to unionism. It is also a challenge for us.

Changing British Policy

The British government is the central player in all of this. It is British policy which has underpinned unionist intransigence, domination, inequality and injustice. British policy in support of the Union, as well as the unionist veto, has been at the root of the conflict here. A key Republican objective is to change British policy. That is why one of the most significant developments during the last phase of negotiations was the fact that the British government moved unionism further than the unionists wanted to go.

I can understand why the British do not want to unsettle the unionists any more at this time but the logic of the proposed changes must be that the British government must move to encourage and facilitate progress toward Irish unity.

Today we decided collectively how we will approach the Good Friday paper. On the one hand it upholds the unionist veto over the constitutional status of the North, and, on the other hand it reduces the British territorial claim to that one hinge while it compels unionists to accept key and fundamental changes involving all-Ireland dimensions to everyday life.

Our negotiating team went into the talks to get the Government of Ireland Act repealed. We succeeded in that. We also secured the inclusion of a clause in the new British constitutional legislation which states that the new act "shall have effect notwithstanding any previous

enactment". This includes the Act of Union and the Northern Ireland Constitution Act 1973. There is now no indefinite commitment, no raft of Parliamentary Acts to back up an absolute claim. This is a long way from being as British as Finchley. But British rule has not ended. Neither has partition. That is why our struggle continues.

Because the Act we want to see is the Act which ends the union. We haven't got that yet. But we will. That is the reality.

An Historic Decision

Today's decision that successful Sinn Fein candidates should participate in the assembly in the North is a historic one. It must be underpinned by a strategy wedded to mobilisations, campaigning, street activism and the international dimension. Caoimhghín Ó Caoláin has set a high standard for all our representatives and we need more constituencies like his throughout the twenty six counties represented by Sinn Fein deputies. The work in the North will assist this but our party is the only national one in Ireland and we have to build our political strength everywhere on this island if we are to secure the national advances we require.

So the struggle has to be where the activist is and it has to be social and economic, as well as political. It has to be about ending poverty, about building an economic democracy, about treating all the children of the nation equally, as well as about ending British rule.

The Assembly elections will give us the opportunity to renew and to increase our mandate. The preparatory work must start now.

Building Our Political Strength

I also want to call for a truly national effort in this crucially important election for Sinn Fein. Increased political strengths in the election will ensure Republican representation in the North/South Council and enhance the effort to expand the all-Ireland structures.

So those who will be elected to represent us face huge challenges. I hope I am wrong but I do not believe that the status quo can be changed without putting ourselves in danger. This party has already paid a very high price for our mandate. Last weeks bomb attack on Brendan Curran's home is a reminder of that. Twenty of our members have been killed and scores of our activists have been injured. Family members too have been killed. So when we uphold the Republican position we do so mindful of all the dangers. As I have said before we are doers and we are not distracted by the naysayers and begrudgers or intimidated by the task before us or by our opponents and enemies.

No amount of messing, of refusals to accept the Sinn Féin mandate or the rights of our electorate will deter us. The efforts to resurrect the issue of decommissioning as a means of undermining the rights of voters or this party is a nonsense.

The IRA has made it clear that it will not surrender its weapons. So have all the other armed groups including the British forces. Sinn Fein is not an armed group. We are not the IRA. We want to see all the guns taken out of Irish politics and we will continue to work for that. We go into this next phase of struggle armed only with whatever mandate we receive, armed only with our political ideas and our vision of the future.

This has been a good Ard Fheis. We are forever moving forward and like every other party, and including the two governments we are moving into uncharted territory. It is our responsibility to liberate that territory. Like you I have concerns and apprehensions about the future. But I am confident of our growing strength. I am encouraged at our growing ability to devise new strategies and I am uplifted by our commitment to press ahead come what may.

This is the day that James Connolly was executed here in this city eighty two years ago. It is a good day for us to recommit ourselves to our Republican ideals and the struggles which lie ahead of us. In one of my first presidential addresses I quoted from Connolly's Sinn Féin and Socialism. He wrote;

"Sinn Féin. That is a good name for the new Irish movement of which we hear so much nowadays. Sinn Féin, or in English, 'Ourselves'.

It is a good name and a good motto."

And so it is.

Today is an important day for us. In many ways an historic day. But it is not as important as tomorrow, or the next day, or the day after that with all of the challenges which they will bring.

Today we cleared the way for the future. Tomorrow we start to build the future. The future is freedom. Together let us build a bridge to freedom.

§ Presidential Address to the 95th Sinn Féin Ard Fheis 1999

Spell-checked, English-Gaelic version.

Shaping the Future

I speak to you today at the last Ard-Fheis of Sinn Féin in the Twentieth Century - a century whose opening witnessed the origins of our party. A century, which as it draws to a close, has seen Irish republicans advance our goal of an independent and free Ireland.

Emancipation and empowerment are the key themes of Sinn Féin. We envisage not only the political independence of our country, but also the social and economic liberation of all citizens within it. This means freedom from foreign domination, freedom from ignorance and fear, and freedom from poverty and inequality.

Ours is a noble heritage of self-reliance and self-determination. We have sought to assert the distinctive character and fundamental rights of our people, while also seeing ourselves as part of a world-wide trend in modern history towards democracy and equality in all spheres of society.

It has been a difficult year for us but in these tasks there is no room for despondency or complacency. That is why the oldest political party on this island is also the youngest - in its spirit and very membership. Idealism is not dead in Ireland while Sinn Féin lives. People require a vision of where we are going and what we can be, and Sinn Féin is not afraid to proffer it. Our endeavour must be to spell out the policies and detail the tactics that will lead to a new Ireland in the new millennium.

I would like at this time to welcome our visitors to our Ard Fheis. Cead míle Failte romhaibh. A HUNDRED THOUSAND WELCOMES TO ALL OF YOU.

I want to say a special few short words of tribute to Joe and Annie Cahill. Joe ends his 17 years as Treasurer of this party at this Ard Fheis. He has devoted all of his very long life to the struggle for freedom in Ireland and it has been my privilege to work with him. It is also a great honour for us that he is going to continue his work as a Vice-President of Sinn Féin, and he will be visiting with all of you in that capacity.

Building political strength

Republicans can also look back on the last year with some degree of satisfaction. We have built our political strength on both sides of the border.

This increased electoral support has been matched by an unprecedented development of the party's organisational capability. But we have still a long way to go. We need to build, to organise, to recruit and to develop our skills, and if we are truly to establish an alternative politic to the establishment parties then we need to surpass them, not just in our commitment, but by our determination to convince others of our relevance, and by our ability to shape a better future for all the people of this island.

In this context I would especially commend Ogra Shinn Féin YOUNG SINN FEIN ASSOCIATION for its pioneering work in establishing itself as the fastest growing youth section of any party in Ireland.

I also want to commend our international section and to thank the comrades who have taken up and advanced the work of our mission in the USA and in other parts of the world. We continue to develop our relationships with the African National Congress and other progressive movements worldwide. We are also moving to establish Friends of Sinn Féin in Australia. And we are re-prioritising outreach work in Britain where we need to build a solidarity movement, the lack of which has enabled British governments to do what they liked for decades in Ireland.

Last year's Ard Fheisanna ARD FHEIS PLURAL saw us making huge changes to our constitution and taking enormously difficult but important decisions in respect of the Good Friday Agreement. We also celebrated the election of Caoimhghín Ó Caoláin as a TD. This followed the election of two MPs and our strongest electoral mandate for decades in the North. Since then our party has scaled new heights with the election of 18 Assembly members on an increased vote. But we could have done better. Our strategists and party managers have pin-pointed new areas of growth, and in the time ahead we need to focus on these, and with confidence develop and build upon them.

Next month fresh opportunities will arise to confirm and increase that growth. Local elections will take place in the twenty-six counties.

Sinn Féin's election campaign is up and running. We believe the local government elections will signal the emergence of Sinn Féin as a major radical force in Irish politics. I am confident that the republican project will be supported wherever we have developed our potential. All our resources of youth, vitality and dedication must be applied to the challenges at hand. The banner of Sinn Féin will be raised the length and breadth of Ireland with the object of planting it permanently on new heights of achievement.

Positive neutrality in Action

Elections to the European Parliament also will take place across the thirty-two counties. In many ways these elections are the important contest. Not only can we make real gains but they provide a clear opportunity to amplify the republican position on the economy, on neutrality, on European policy, and on many related issues.

It is of crucial importance that we build a 32-county wide struggle. Our country is facing two huge political problems - the north, and the whole question of the political and economic direction of the southern state, particularly our role in Europe. It is hard for a small country to face two major problems at once. It is even harder for a national independence struggle to deal with such a conjuncture.

One of these two problems, the north, has absorbed the energy, thinking and resources of the best elements of the Irish people, leaving the other problem virtually untackled. The key strategic challenge facing Irish republicanism at this time - in the context of the re-conquest of Ireland - is to advance our work in the north, while at the same time establishing a capability to mount a real challenge to the central political and economic line of the southern political establishment in the coming period so that we can build support for the alternative - Irish unity and independence.

Here in the twenty-six counties, a cosy, conservative consensus has emerged among the main parties in Leinster House. For example, on neutrality Fianna Fáil has reneged on its own commitment through a U-turn on membership of the NATO-inspired and cynically named Partnership for Peace.

Fianna Fáil is not the only party seeking to foist Partnership for Peace on the people of this state. That has been Fine Gael policy for a long time. And the Labour party only recently cobbled together a face saving position in support of a referendum.

Sinn Féin believes that there is no role for the European Union in military and defence matters. These should be left up to the individual states. International peacekeeping should be under the auspices of the United Nations. We are totally opposed to membership of the so-called Partnership for Peace.

This party is for positive neutrality in action. We have a world view, as well as a distinctly Irish view. We make common cause with oppressed people throughout the world against economically and militarily powerful states.

Ireland is a small country and we should not overstate our influence but the Irish have a very special role to play in international affairs. As a people who have been fighting against colonialism for centuries we are unique in the European union, most states of which are former colonial powers. Our responsibility therefore should be to work with other nations to develop a bridge within Europe, between those emerging nations in eastern and southern Europe which are disadvantaged through years of repression and poverty, and between Europe and the peoples of what is called the 'south' - the poorer nations of the world representing the majority of humanity who are crippled by a foreign debt which keeps them permanently impoverished.

The Irish government should be pro-actively supporting the campaign which is demanding that this debt be scrapped. This is our place in international affairs. Promoting the peaceful resolutions of conflicts, for disarmament, protection of the environment and the fair distribution of the world's resources. We cannot do this if we acquiesce in the creation of a European Super-state with a military arm.

I am mindful of the fact that the Amsterdam Treaty came into effect on May 1st, and I am conscious of its 'military alliance' subtext. I am also mindful that Germany produced a proposal in March to turn the European Union into a straight military bloc, doing away with even the Western European Union. While this is only a proposal it shows the road we may be forced down.

But little or no substantive argument is made to convince us as to why we should join Partnership for Peace. Instead, we are told that we should acquiesce lest we be seen to be alone. But alone where? Not in the real world. Not when we extend our gaze to other continents. Not when we think of the Third World and those ex-colonial countries with which we have so many connections, past and present.

Sinn Féin is a party which can be trusted to give expression to the spreading disquiet among Irish people at the perils of Partnership for Peace, and the threats it may pose to the lives and safety of Irish men and women.

There must be a referendum on the subject if the government is really intent on membership. But in the meantime we have to raise this debate in the European election in particular and public consciousness generally. The question of neutrality underscores the importance of providing voters with Sinn Féin as an option in elections and in grass roots political activity. For those who are put off by the conservatism of Fianna Fáil and Fine Gael, for those who are looking for a radical choice beyond an increasingly centrist and catch-all Labour, Sinn Féin is that alternative. This is especially so as Labour is inclined, not to be the vanguard of the working class, but rather with DL - the Disappearing Left - to be the mudguard of Fine Gael.

Stop the War in the Balkans

Partnership for Peace is linked body and soul to NATO and clearly there is a community of interests in maintaining and expanding NATO, not between the peoples of the NATO member states, but between the armaments industries, the military establishment, the intelligence agencies, and sections of the political establishment, who are interested only in holding on to power, profit and prestige.

NATO now acts as a world policeman, usurping and dominating the United Nations. This aggressive policy is responsible for the obscenity of the sanctions against Iraq, where an estimated half a million children have died because proper food and medicines are denied to them. Albert Reynolds spoke for most of the people of this country recently when he called for an end to these sanctions. We support that call.

We also believe that the NATO bombing of Serbia should end. Slobodan Milosevic is a gross violator of human rights and all right-thinking people will repudiate his actions. But other such violators have been supported and armed by the NATO allies, including the Indonesian regime, which is still committing genocide in East Timor, and Turkey which ruthlessly suppresses the Kurds.

The bombing of Serbia is not the solution to the complex political crisis in the Balkans. All previous experience shows that military intervention by foreign powers will serve only to deepen the national and social divisions within the region and postpone the prospect of peaceful long term solutions.

Instead of passive support for NATO aggression Ireland should be part of the effort outside NATO, in the EU and in the UN, to secure a diplomatic solution. There should be a determined effort for a peaceful negotiated settlement under the auspices of the United Nations. I urge the government to call for an emergency meeting of the neutral member states of the European Union to bring forward a peaceful alternative to this war.

Essentially the issue of neutrality is about our self-respect and self-confidence as a people. It is about how we see ourselves. It is about our world view. How sad and tragic it is, as we strive to take all British and Irish guns out of Irish politics we are being asked to keep the nuclear bomb in European politics and to break international law by backing a war when we should be actively working to bring all war to a speedy end. By the same token it is amazing how tons of bombs dropped in the Balkans are morally and politically acceptable while the silent guns of the IRA, we are told, are a threat to peace.

Finally, on this issue all of us have been moved by the plight of the refugees. Their stories of ethnic cleansing, of rape, murder and brutality, can be replicated across the world. There are millions of refugees from many parts of this planet and the developed world needs to do more to help them. The Irish government needs to do more. And in so doing the Irish people must extend a genuine *cead míle fáilte*. We Irish who have suffered so much from racism, we who have sought refuge world wide from political, economic and social upheaval in our own country have to exorcise any trace of racism from within us.

Our message from this Ard Fheis to those who proclaim a narrow sense of Irishness is a clear one. We want none of it. We say no to racism, and we say no to bigotry.

We have a spirit of genius in this nation - no less. It reaches back to our Gaelic roots and draws as well on our interactions with the other cultures of this continent, and indeed of the world further afield, particularly where our people have travelled and settled. Our unique Irishness is the outcome of a rich inheritance and the result of constant innovation. We must therefore continue both to cherish our past and recreate the present. In so doing, we should think of that great family of the Irish across the globe which now numbers no less than 70 million, and forge new and firmer links with them in a mutually supportive bond of cultural and material interest.

Challenging Corruption

Many people on this island, particularly young people are cynical about politics. Who can blame them? The failure of politics led to the partition of this island and to almost thirty years of war. Even now a peace process is being resisted by those who are against the primacy of politics and who cling even yet to the old agenda. Here in this state people feel betrayed as scandal follows scandal. Stories of the ill-treatment of those in the care of the state, particularly young children and the mentally ill, have led many, and especially the young, to question the morality of all of this. Scandals of child abuse have infected some of the main institutions, and the extent of the cover-ups have shocked many citizens.

It is against this background that people have caught the smell of the stench of corruption - the culture of brown envelopes - which surrounds the bigger parties. This corruption may not always entail violation of the law, but it is still morally reprehensible.

By putting money in the pocket of a politician, you put that politician in your pocket. So out there among the people, side by side with their cynicism there is a necessity and a desire for a wind of change which will sweep away sleaze and cronyism and restore respect in politics. More generally, people who want this change are seeking a party which is not comprised of place-seekers, gombeenism and those in search of illicit monetary gain. Sinn Féin is that party. Our credentials are clear and our principles are intact.

More recently, we have learned that corruption is not confined to politicians and is to be found among the bewigged and begowned who lord it over us, in courts designed as though the British Raj had never left any part of Ireland. The class bias of the legal system is plain for all to see. Petty crimes by the socially disadvantaged result in harsh prison terms, while much more serious offences by the better-off, are treated leniently. We even have to listen to errant judges, who get caught, bemoaning that their future is bleak on a pension of £30,000 a year! That is a bleakness which many people in Tallaght or Ballyfermot, for instance, could readily live with. Who do these individuals think they are? It is time for the wigs and the gowns to go along with the class prejudices that they reflect.

The Re-conquest of Ireland

Writing in 1915 James Connolly said: "The conquest of Ireland had meant the social and political servitude of the Irish masses, and therefore the re-conquest of Ireland must mean the social as well as the political independence from servitude of every man, woman and child in Ireland."

Sinn Féin is an Irish republican party in the tradition of Connolly and Pearse and Tone and Lalor and Markevich and Sands and Farrell.

We stand for the re-conquest of Ireland. We look to James Connolly and those others for guidance on our path to Irish freedom but we understand that they were of their time and that we in Sinn Féin must be of our time. Connolly understood this. He wrote, "We are told to imitate Wolfe Tone, but the greatness of Wolfe Tone lay in the fact that he imitated nobody."

So too is it with Sinn Féin. We are mapping out our own vision for the future and our policies for the here and now. In the immediate future that means Sinn Féin will be standing in the European and local government elections on a broad republican labour platform promoting common sense policies that will improve everyone's quality of life, but particularly the most disadvantaged, who deserve equal treatment and the right to share all the benefits of society, including the new wealth created by the Celtic Tiger. Every section of our people deserves the best.

Decades of emigration displaced many Irish people. Now the Celtic Tiger is bringing some of them home. But the Celtic Tiger is partitionist. It has a hard heart. Even the relatively well off, particularly young people with decent incomes can no longer afford houses. The Celtic Tiger does not cherish all the children of the nation equally and the plight of the less well off, the people on the poverty line, and the conditions of the disadvantaged remain unchanged.

Drug abuse, housing shortages, crowded classrooms and hospital queues are not the mark of a just and equitable society. Meagre handouts are not enough. Citizens have the right to equality, to real jobs, to decent homes, access to education at all levels and to a proper health service. Citizens have the right to a real future as equals for themselves and for their children.

We believe that local communities must have as much say as possible in how they are governed, the needs that are defined and met, the facilities that are provided, the sustenance of family integrity. The scourge of drugs is a particular evil that must constantly be confronted and eliminated.

We are particularly aware of the distinctive nature of various localities and regions and articulate this. In doing so, we have to understand that Ireland is not Dublin and Dublin is not Ireland. Our capital should be fostered and developed, and areas of underprivilege within it tackled earnestly, but the regions must not be neglected in the process. The rural dimension must be kept in sight as well as the urban. The agricultural population, and most notably the devastated small farming sector, deserves to be catered for equally with those in industry and services.

Even in a country the size of Ireland, there is too much centralism and bureaucracy and, indeed, a woeful lack of transparency at times in how decisions are arrived at and implemented.

Empowerment of the nation should be accompanied by empowerment within the nation.

We therefore welcome the proposed insertion of a section in the Constitution on local government. Furthermore, we would call for new Local Government Acts, north and south, to introduce a reformed structure of powerful regional, county and district councils. And we ought also to be mindful of what is termed civil society - the associations of citizens which address the problems not just of locality, but specific groups according to cultural interest and social requirement.

The Good Friday Agreement

The most important political development in the past 14 months, and probably in recent modern Irish history, was the Good Friday Agreement and its endorsement in referendum by all of the people of this island. All of the citizens of this island, whether in the north of Antrim or in west Cork, in Connemara or Dublin, or whatever part of Ireland you live in have a stake in the Agreement. Clearly, the vast majority of people who voted Yes did so because they wanted to see a transformation of the situation in the north.

Sinn Féin decided in an historic Ard Fheis to advocate a Yes vote in the referendums. This decision caused difficulties for many of us and it was taken after weeks of intense debate which saw republicans accept that the Good Friday Document is not an end in itself, but is a transition towards a full national democracy in Ireland. For Irish republicans the struggle for full independence and sovereignty is not over. The struggle continues. Let it be clearly understood that Sinn Féin is neither weary in our stance nor limited in our horizon.

We made substantial concessions in committing ourselves to the Agreement. We did so in the context of our overall objectives, and our commitment to the peace process, and because we believed that this would advance the peace process and move us towards those objectives. It is worth noting that the concessions made by us have been largely ignored by those who repeat the propaganda line that republicans have given nothing.

We committed ourselves to implementing the Agreement and we have participated in the process on that basis and in good faith. This party has honoured all our commitments. The unionist political leadership and the British government have not. The Good Friday Agreement is now in its second year. The Executive, the all-Ireland Ministerial Council, and the other all-Ireland bodies should now be functioning with full power. Instead only one institution, the Assembly, is in partial shadow formation. This is the one institution most desired by unionists and least desired by nationalists and republicans.

Freedom from Sectarian Harassment

Other aspects of the Agreement are in abeyance also. The most obvious of these is the right to 'freedom from sectarian harassment' and the 'right to freely chose ones place of residence'. This is most sharply felt by the people of Garvaghy Road. Portadown is the Alabama of these islands and the killing of Rosemary Nelson is the most savage and recent evidence of that. In the wider context hundreds of people have been forced to flee their homes because of intimidation and violence.

I welcome David Trimble's talks for all of the elected representatives for Upper Bann. The negative response of some orange leaders and of the DUP is not unexpected and Sinn Féin is participating positively and in support of the residents.

The Irish government also has a responsibility to defend the people of the Garvaghy Road. Since last July the people there have experienced over ten months of living under siege. Racism and sectarianism have been the daily diet of the men, women and children who have had to endure over 160 loyalist marches in and around that district. The situation for these people has got worse since the Good Friday Agreement. Sinn Féin pledges our support to the people of Garvaghy Road. Their plight is proof of how far we have to go before there is justice. I also want to commend all those families, individuals and groups, who have campaigned on justice issues.

In keeping with human rights organisations across the world we have pressed for a number of independent and internationally based investigations and inquiries. The recent killing of Rosemary Nelson, the Robert Hamill case, and the release of Lee Clegg all demonstrate the corrupt nature of the British judicial system in the north and the unacceptability of the RUC. There is also the Pat Finucane case and the role of Brian Nelson and other British intelligence agents. People here in Dublin have suffered also as a result of collusion. Sinn Féin supports the demands of the relatives of victims of the Dublin-Monaghan bombings for a tribunal of enquiry, and I call upon the Irish government to set this up.

This is an issue which is totally within the competence and authority of the government. Millions of pounds of tax-payers' money are being spent investigating corruption in politics and in big business and collusion between some politicians and big business. Surely, the circumstances of these bombings deserve investigation also.

We have pressed the British government and the Irish government on all these issues at every opportunity and we will continue to do so.

The RUC Must Go

The British government is also obliged under the Agreement to publish an 'overall strategy' on demilitarisation. This should tackle among other things the dismantling of hilltop forts in South Armagh, Derry and Belfast (Divis Tower, New Lodge flats and RVH property at Broadway); the standing down of the RIR; the ending of British Army patrolling; the withdrawal of plastic bullets; action on the 140,000 licensed weapons; keeping the RUC out of sensitive areas; the closure of the interrogation centres at Castlereagh, Gough and the Strand Road. This was promised last November. We are still waiting.

While the Patten Commission was set up in June 1998 there has been no change on the ground in the behaviour and attitude of the RUC. In the 11 months since its establishment more and more evidence has emerged exposing the RUCs brutality and sectarianism and reinforcing its unacceptability. For nationalists policing is a touchstone issue. A new police service must be established. The RUC must go.

It is also important to point out that there have been no changes to the Emergency legislation. All such laws in place before the signing of the Agreement are still in place. In fact more draconian laws have been introduced since then in both states on this island.

There has been no real progress on the critical issue of the equality agenda. The Equality Commission has not yet been established, and the Unionists succeeded, with SDLP support, in preventing agreement on a separate stand alone Equality department in any future Executive.

Nothing concrete has yet happened on the Irish language front. There have been lots of plans and promises but no action. For example; there was a commitment to ratify the European Charter for Minority languages in respect of Part 3 for Irish in 1998. It has not yet happened, nor has the promised extension of Irish language broadcasting involving Telifis na Gaeilge IRISH TELEVISION CHANNEL been implemented.

The Good Friday Agreement promised much and even in those areas ostensibly under the direct control of the two governments it has delivered insufficient and minimal change.

Specifically, there is also a responsibility on the Irish government to open up institutions in this state to Irish citizens in other parts of this island. Sinn Féin has made formal representations to the all-party Oireachtas committee on Constitutional reform to extend voting rights in Presidential elections and referendums. We also want people in the north to be given the right to representation in Leinster House.

This too is within the competence and authority of the government and parties in the south. We have lobbied all of the parties and the government on this issue. In fact Sinn Féin was

referred to the Oireachtas Committee following discussions between myself and the Taoiseach Bertie Ahern during the Good Friday negotiations. What kind of message would it send if the Dublin parties or government said No to the people of the north.

Unionists Block Implementation of Agreement

The success of the unionist tactical approach to the Good Friday Agreement is that they have successfully impeded and frustrated progress on many issues but most particularly the institutional matters.

The Agreement is now over one year old. It is clearly in crisis. Indeed the hopes and relative confidence of many people in the north comes mostly from the continuation of the cease-fires and not from any confidence in the political process, even though there has been some obvious and welcome progress there. There has been a promise of change, not yet realised, but clearly foreshadowed in the Good Friday Agreement.

But progress in the search for peace has been thwarted by those who have seen the peace process as a party political contest or war by other means. They ignore - and indeed some may even be involved in or encouraging the constant campaign of bomb attacks against Catholic homes and property - including over 120 individual attacks on Catholic families and at least six deaths since we last met here in the RDS.

These elements, including securocrats, sections of unionism north and south and parts of the British establishment refuse to recognise the significance of the IRAs role in creating and maintaining the conditions in which peace can be established. Indeed some see the IRA cessation as the 'most destabilising development' in the north since partition.

At Easter it was my privilege to speak here in Dublin. I praised the men and women of 1916. I paid tribute to that generation of IRA Volunteers. Today I want to pay tribute to every generation but I want to especially commend today's IRA Volunteers. On this the 12th anniversary of the killing of the 8 IRA Volunteers at Loughgall I want to pay tribute to the courage and resilience and sacrifice of the families of IRA Volunteers and all of those families who have suffered. Be assured that you are constantly in our thoughts and in our prayers.

Honouring Commitments

I know that there is a lot of justifiable anger and frustration, among republicans especially, and nationalists generally, at the refusal of the British government and the unionists to implement all aspects of the Good Friday Agreement.

Our history and more importantly our own experiences teach us that thus far this century unionism has exerted a veto and it has been this veto and British policy towards Ireland which are at the core of conflict and injustice in our country. I have been challenged and confronted by this justifiable anger many times since the last Ard Fheis but particularly since the negotiations at Hillsborough. I know our party well enough to know that these doubts will not necessarily be voiced at an Ard Fheis but in private meetings and in one to one conversations activists have made it very clear where they stand and of how they view the British and Irish governments' handling of the situation and the approach of sections of the SDLP and the unionists.

Notwithstanding this we have a job of work to do and we should not be mesmerised by the tactical manoeuvrings of the moment. We need to have a longer term view - a strategic view - of where we are going so that we can apply ourselves to getting there.

Recently, I said that I was prepared to stretch our constituency. Some republicans understandably asked me what that meant. It means us being far sighted. It means us working out if and how we can move and it means most importantly doing all of this in the context and the terms of the Good Friday Agreement. And it means the governments and the other participants doing likewise.

The current negotiations cannot go on indefinitely. In Downing Street this week we urged the British government and the Irish government to set a dead-line and to bring these negotiations to a conclusion. We also urged them to reconvene last Thursday's talks as quickly as possible. For our part we will be meeting with the UUP on Monday morning. We remain in regular contact with the other parties but these conversations cannot go on forever. The governments have to act.

At the beginning of this latest round of talks we put a number of ideas, set firmly within the terms of the Good Friday Agreement, which we felt could break the present deadlock. Maybe they will not have this effect. Maybe this British government, despite a good start when it came into power, is not up to the historic task facing it at this time because the only way

forward is through Mr. Blair asserting the primacy of the peace process, of the Good Friday Agreement, and focusing on righting the wrongs that have endured for too long as a direct consequence of British involvement in our affairs.

Let me tell you what we have been telling the British government and the Irish government. First of all we have been telling the British government that we want them to leave our country. We have also told both governments that the implementation of the Good Friday Agreement is the bedrock of this phase of the peace process. There can be no renegotiation of the agreement; no rewriting of the agreement by any of the parties to it and no further parking of its implementation. The various provisions of the agreement are quite clear. The multiple breaches of the agreement are well known and have threatened the entire process. This must stop.

Republicans Committed to Peace Process

Let me also try to give some assurances. I want to make it absolutely clear to the people of this island and to our many friends and allies in the US, in South Africa and elsewhere in the world, that Sinn Féin is totally committed to the peace process.

As I said in my opening remarks we are on the threshold of a new millennium/a new century. This compels us to develop new politics, new ways of dealing with old problems, new ways of understanding each other.

Is it too much to hope for, to expect, to work towards, to ensure that the century we are leaving behind is the last century the people of this island will be in violent conflict with each other.

For my part I believe that we have inflicted enough hurt and pain on each other over the last four centuries. The fact that the enmity has lasted for so long and has resulted in so much hostility and bitterness between us is not an excuse for not trying to overcome the legacy of mistrust and suspicion. On both sides it must act as an incentive as a spur pushing us forward, pushing us together.

In recent years Sinn Féin has prioritised our work with Unionist people. We have learned much about their perceptions of us as republicans and their views of the nationalist people. We have learned much about the state of mind that unionists are in.

It is true to say and we recognise this that they are living in a siege mentality. They believe they are under attack from many quarters, from republicans and nationalists and they cannot trust either the British or Irish governments.

They fear for their way of life, for their religious liberty, for their identity. Protestants and Unionists have been in Ireland for four centuries yet they feel their belonging here to be precarious.

That might seem hard for republicans to understand given the experience nationalists in the six counties have had under unionist domination since partition. But if we are to be reconciled with our unionist neighbours then we must accept how they see themselves and work to change the circumstances in which they make these judgments.

At present they trust only themselves. As a consequence many of them are, euphemistically speaking, circling the wagons, retreating into a laager world of their own creation which reinforces their fears and suspicions.

We are constantly looking for ways of building bridges between us and it is my belief that the majority of unionists want this process to work.. We believe the Good Friday agreement is the foundation upon which new relationships between unionists, nationalists and republicans can be forged. It provides for new institutions, the Assembly, the Executive, the all-Ireland Council wherein we can all work together for the good of all the people of this island. The sooner these are established the quicker we can begin the process of national reconciliation.

It is of course a source of deep frustration that unionist political leaders have yet to respect the democratic mandate of Sinn Féin and the rights of our electorate and are not prepared to embrace the provisions of the Good Friday agreement.

However let me repeat what I have said many times to unionists from this podium. Republicans have no wish to discriminate against you or to dominate you, or to marginalise you, or to drive you from this island, or to make you second class citizens in the land of your birth.

We want to go forward in agreement with you so that we can all live in peace, justice and harmony together. This means recognising each other's integrity as well as listening to each other.

But at the heart of this process of national reconciliation there needs to be an acceptance that there is going to be change. The old agenda has failed. It cannot work any longer. The Ireland of the 21st century must celebrate our diversity and all our people must go forward as equals. There can and there will be no more second class citizens.

This is a major job for all of us. But it will be particularly so for the two people chosen by the Ard Chomhairle to be our Ministers in the new institutions. If and when they are established this will be an entirely new area of struggle for us. But I believe that our nominees will do a tremendous job. They will need our full support. Please acknowledge Martin McGuinness and Bairbre de Brun who we will be nominated as Sinn Féin Ministers.

Finally let me reassure republican activists. Sinn Féin's position is very clear. We understand our obligations under the Good Friday Agreement and I have spelt these out privately and publicly. We have also made it clear both privately and publicly, that Sinn Féin cannot deliver the demand for IRA weapons no matter how this is presented. Sinn Féin's clear intention is to manage this phase of the process so that we emerge with real progress in the search for peace. Let me remind you all once again that the democratic and republican position will only be advanced by clear strategic thinking and by intelligent, disciplined and forward thinking activists. We are about shaping the future. That is our collective task.

Republican and Labour

The core of republicanism, both semantically and ideologically, is the public, that is, the people. The people must be sovereign. That means government of the people by the people. But what ultimately is the point of republicanism unless it signifies not only political democracy, but the maximal welfare of the maximum number? The end of authoritarianism does not automatically mean the end of privilege. Sectional and powerful groups can and do get control of a republic and, through their wealth and their command of state institutions and the media, run it in their own interests and to the disregard of others, while pretending that they are the people. They are often content that, for many citizens, existence means subsistence. But that is entirely unacceptable to us.

We want an economic democracy, as well as a political democracy. A genuine republic must entail, not alone a novel political dispensation, but a new social and economic order. It must be based on enabled collective self-help which is how Sinn Féin might be politically translated in modern Ireland and if we are to succeed then we can do so only by building our political strength, by developing alliances and by broadening our struggle to all parts of this island. The alliance of Connolly and Pearse marked out a great divide on the Irish Left which still persists. Sinn Féin adheres to the legacy of Pearse and Connolly, while others have repudiated it. One would think that Connolly in particular never existed. The British killed him in 1916 but there are those today, calling themselves socialists or social-democrats, who would murder his memory and his message. But so long as Sinn Féin endures - and endure we will - they shall not prevail and Connolly and Pearse shall survive.

Sinn Féin has seen many trials and tribulations, especially in the decade of the Nineties. We have faced daunting tasks of analysis and policy-formation, of strategic perspective and tactical decision. Yet we have come through this period not only undiminished but strengthened. We have proven ourselves adaptable without being opportunistic. In this, we have been sustained by the enthusiasm, industry and selflessness of our members and supporters. Sinn Féin has been and will persevere in being a voice for the voiceless, a lobby for the marginalised, a champion of the forgotten, a campaigning party, while at the same time appealing to a broad range of people on the platform of all-round national democracy and social equity. We are not therefore only a party of protest. We are also a party of serious opposition and good government, as the case may be, and increasingly will be so in the years to come as we decidedly contribute to the construction of the Ireland of the future.

A hundred years ago, the notion of an Irish republic would have seemed wishful thinking to many people. But since then, we have experienced the steady advance of the republican cause. There have been setbacks, but never has there been total reverse and that is because of you. I thank you all for your commitment, for your idealism, for your efforts. I thank you especially for allowing you to serve along side you all in the struggle for a new and better Ireland. We are conscious as we enter into the new millennium of defeating discrimination. We are conscious of the final ebb of empire. We also want to establish a new brother- and sisterhood across old divides and throughout this land; we want people to be proud of all the

enriching traditions that Ireland has to offer; we want to see the flourishing of our culture in every facet; we want the prospect of peace and prosperity for our children.

As I said to start with, this century opened with the seeds of Sinn Féin being sown. It closes with our organisation firmly growing throughout Ireland. The next century will commence with a further expansion of Sinn Féin. There is business to be completed, the final establishment of a united, democratic, and progressive Republic of Ireland, and Sinn Féin is the party to complete it.

We want to shape the future. And we shall.

§ Presidential Address to the 96th Sinn Féin Ard Fheis 2000

Spell-checked, English-Gaelic version.

If asked, 'Where stands the Good Friday Agreement today?' most nationalists, and all Republicans, would say that it's dead.

This response is hardly surprising given the two years of time-wasting and obstructionist politics by Unionists, the body-blows inflicted on the process over that period, and the British Government's suspension of the institutions, including the all-Ireland bodies.

I do not intend to take this Ard Fheis through every twist and turn of the 12 months since we last met. Instead, I want to deal in a broad, brushstroke way with the politics of this phase in our struggle.

And I want to confront the need for us all — that is every single activist here — to review our individual stewardship of the process and our personal handling of the various issues. I also want to see us doing this in a constructive and comradely way, not just at this Ard Fheis but as part of an ongoing process, through every level of this party from the Ard Chomhairle PARTY LEADERSHIP to the cumann PEOPLE.

Tá a fhios agam go bhfuil cáineadh éigin ann faoin dÚigh inar lamhseáil an ceannasaíocht gnéanna áirithe dár stráitéis agus ar ndÚigh tá cuid daoine ag ceistiú an stráitéis féin. Tá sé sin uilig maith go leor, mar abhár fíor creidim go bhfuil an t-idirphlé agus an díospóireacht sin Iárnach dár gcoimhlint agus d'obair an pháirtí seo.

I know there is some criticism of how the leadership have handled elements of the strategy. And indeed there is some questioning of the strategy itself. All of this is fair enough. In fact, I believe such ongoing dialogue and debate is an essential part of this struggle and of the work of this party.

Let me also say that I appreciate immensely the great commitment shown by our activists and by the Republican base in the face of frustrating and, at times, provocative actions, particularly by the British Government and the Unionists.

While the main focus of your dissatisfaction is with the British Government, I also know that many of you are critical of the Irish Government's and the SDLP's handling of some aspects of the process.

London's approach has created a real anger within Republicanism and nationalism. There was confusion, though that should have disappeared by now. I know there is considerable frustration, and let's face up to it, there is also disappointment at the current state of the peace process.

That disappointment reflects in many ways the feelings of people, north and south of this island, and others throughout the world who support the search for a lasting peace in our country.

Peace Requires Justice

But I have to say that Republicans should be the last people to be surprised by what happened here over the last two years.

Who said it was going to be easy?

Everyone here knows that peace requires justice.

Everyone here knows that this demands great changes within society, particularly, but not exclusively, in the North.

Everyone here also knows, or should know, that such changes will be resisted by those who cling to the old order, the old agenda.

There is no comfort in this for the faint-hearted or the weak-willed. But then we know that people like ourselves who want to see a total transformation of society on this island cannot be faint-hearted or weak-willed.

When war was a daily fact of life or death — unlikely or unpopular as it may be to say this, many people — including perhaps some of us, took refuge in that. Depending on one's perspective, you either blamed the IRA or depended upon the IRA. These totally opposite viewpoints had one thing in common — the war was the reason or the excuse for doing nothing or for not doing as much as we could.

Rising to the Challenge

Sinn Féin's peace strategy has challenged all of that. And the peace process, which is a consequence of our strategy, has clarified issues for many people and closed down the hiding places for many others.

At a time of widespread conflict it challenged those who paid lip service to the role of peace maker.

At a time of censorship, misinformation and revisionism, it challenged the opinion makers in the media and the censors.

It challenged the partitionist attitudes of the government and of the Establishment political parties here in Dublin.

It challenged the cosy consensus between church and state on this island.

It also challenged political opinion in the North, most clearly within the Unionist section of our people.

While rejectionist unionism opposed our efforts, we recognise that more progressive and modernising elements of unionism, who voted for the Good Friday Agreement, and others within civic unionism and the business community, have risen to that challenge.

And, of course, our peace strategy challenged the British Government and political parties in London.

The first organisation to accept that challenge was the IRA. Its cessation in August 1994 — six years ago — created the space in which politics could grow, if others were up to the challenge.

Out of all of that came the Good Friday Agreement.

Many things have and can be said, for and against that Agreement, from the Republican perspective. But I believe that one of the most compelling arguments in favour of the Agreement is that, for the first time, a British Government and others were made to face up to what is wrong in the North.

Whatever happens to the Agreement, we have to understand that this is ground gained which must never be conceded.

From our perspective, the measures contained in the Agreement may not go far enough to right these wrongs. But this has to be seen as work in hand because, from the Unionist perspective, these measures go too far and there has been an ongoing effort to reduce them still further or to remove them entirely.

This is what has created the current crisis.

Huge Mistake

The British Government made a huge mistake and miscalculation on February 11th when it endorsed the Unionist view that the issue of decommissioning was a precondition on the continuation of the institutions. Whatever reason is put forward to justify this decision, this is the reality. It is also the biggest single mistake by the British Labour Party since it took power in May 1997.

It is totally contrary to the Good Friday Agreement. There is no default link between 'government and guns' in the Agreement. This is also the reality.

Credit for this is sometimes given to the Sinn Féin negotiating team. Let me make it clear that we did not have to change one word in the decommissioning section of the Good Friday Agreement.

The governments knew the score. They accepted reality and they valued the cessations. This is the truth.

The Agreement took the wise course, the conflict resolution course, which saw the resolution of the arms issue as an objective of a process and not as a blockage on progress on all of the other matters.

But the ink was barely dry on the Agreement when the British Prime Minister stepped outside of this framework and produced his side letter for the Ulster Unionist Party. From then on this issue was treated as an issue of tactical political management.

It ceased to be an objective of a peace process. Instead it became a precondition dogging the process. This reduced the Good Friday Agreement to something less than the people voted for. It also subverted the electoral mandates of genuinely committed pro-Agreement parties. The value of the vote and the implementation process was, and is now, subject to Unionist terms. From that point on, the current vacuum was a crisis waiting to happen.

That's the flaw which the British Government introduced into the Good Friday Agreement.

Tackling the Arms Issue

This is what has subverted all of Sinn Féin's efforts to resolve this issue.

All these efforts were based on our view that the purpose of any peace process must be for opponents or enemies to see each other's point of view and to find a compromise, an agreement, an accord which accommodates the difficulties that exist.

On a number of occasions we went far beyond our obligations under the terms of the Agreement as we tried to resolve this issue.

Some might think this was a mistake. I disagree. And furthermore, let me make it absolutely clear here today that this Sinn Féin leadership will continue to support efforts to resolve the arms issue.

We remain wedded to our objective of taking all of the guns out of Irish politics. This is a collective responsibility and there is no special onus on our party to do this above and beyond the responsibilities of every other party in this process.

We will continue to do our best but if a British government, with all of its military firepower and muscle, could not get an IRA surrender in 30 years of war, then Unionist leaders or British ministers cannot expect a Sinn Féin leadership to do it for them.

British Strategy has failed

That is not the way to build lasting peace on this island. It is not the way to build a new, inclusive political dispensation.

Had the Agreement been implemented as agreed, I am quite sure that a way of resolving the weapons issue would have been found by now because politics would have worked.

Instead, the opposite has been the case and the entire process of change and the rights of citizens has been made conditional on Unionist approval. Worse still, it has been made conditional on those Unionists who have clearly set their face against change and against the Good Friday Agreement.

The responsibility for this rests squarely with the British Government. There is no way that a workable solution to the current crisis can be found unless Mr Blair and Mr Mandelson come to terms with this.

The strategy pursued by the two governments on the weapons issue, insofar as it can be described as a strategy, has failed.

It has failed to resolve the issue itself.

It has failed to win the confidence of unionism.

It has moved outside the Good Friday Agreement.

It has alienated Republicanism.

It has brought the entire process to the current impasse with the British Government in breach of the Agreement.

Like all of the other failures of the past, this failed strategy has to be set to one side.

Outstanding Aspects

The question Mr Mandelson has to answer is: Where is the peace process to go from here? Is everything to be thrown away?

These are questions that all the parties to the Good Friday Agreement, and especially the British Government, must ponder on.

There is a vacuum.

There is the possibility that all of the good work of recent years could be frittered away. Worse still, there could be a slide back to conflict.

This has to be prevented.

The priority at this critical point in the peace process must be to get the institutions back in place as soon as possible.

The two governments must also urgently co-operate to implement all the outstanding aspects of the Good Friday Agreement. The reality is that we are still awaiting delivery of the:-

Equality Agenda;

A New Policing Service;

Justice Matters;

Human Rights;

Cultural Rights;

And Demilitarisation.

Saving the Good Friday Agreement

I said earlier that Republicans are disappointed and confused by the suspension of the institutions. It is my view that this confusion is a direct consequence of the unfulfilled hope shared by the vast majority of people on this island that this British government actually

showed signs that it was prepared to keep to the commitments which it made in the Good Friday Agreement.

In my view, those Republicans who dared to hope that this British government was different, though they may never admit it, are hurt that London once again caved in to Unionist threats and reinstated the veto.

But it is still not too late to save the Good Friday Agreement.

The biggest problem facing the Agreement arises from the British Government's attitude to it. Not only is London in breach of its commitments but there is also no tactical or strategic merit in its approach. Apart from everything else, the institutions were working and they were popular. And let me give full credit to all our Assembly team, to the Sinn Féin chairs and deputy chairs of the various committees and to our two ministers, the Minister for Health, Bairbre de Brún, and the Minister for Education, Martin McGuinness.

In the most difficult circumstances they behaved with great courage, honesty, impartiality and magnanimity. They were a credit to this party and showed that Sinn Féin is indeed ready for government.

Maybe that is the real problem.

It is an indictment of British rule in Ireland that since partition we have endured 50 years of one-party rule under the old Unionist regime, 30 years of war, and eight weeks of inclusive institutions.

The British Government's suspension of the institutions is illegal and unilateral.

For a British government with such an unprecedented majority to behave in such a way is an unmitigated disaster and an enormous setback for the peace process.

If the decline of the Good Friday Agreement is to be reversed before it becomes terminal then Mr Blair must steer his government and the process out of the current wobble.

He must act to save the peace process.

He must order the reinstatement of the institutions.

A Message for Unionism

I also have a very clear message for the Unionists.

We in Sinn Féin remain prepared to and have proven our ability to work within shared structures with your representatives, and we remain willing to develop a shared and agreed future for all the people of this island.

We know that, by its very nature, this historic task cannot be completed unless unionism has ownership of it. And I have acknowledged and I appreciate the huge challenge and the difficulties that this presents.

The way ahead for Unionists and the rest of the people of this island is to walk forward together, to jointly carry the burden of our history.

That way the weight will not be as heavy.

That way we can chart a course for the future.

That way we can secure a shared future for everyone, especially our young people. Sinn Féin has not given up on the Unionists. Bypassing the Unionists is not an option for us. Our option is for dialogue and engagement.

But those Unionists who have set their faces against progress need to reflect that while change can be delayed it cannot be prevented except in one circumstance – and that is if those of us who want change are prepared to give up.

Let me make it absolutely clear that we are not prepared to give up.

The days of second-class citizenship are over.

Let me make it clear that we will continue to be relentless in campaigning and working, agitating and struggling for change.

It would be a lot easier for everyone if the Unionists would join with us in managing this change, and I personally believe that this is the best way forward.

But I also believe that the British Government cannot pass the buck on this issue or make this opportunity for peace conditional on the whims of rejectionist unionism or British securocrats.

London has to face up to its responsibilities.

A Hierarchy of Victims

One of the open wounds within nationalist and Republican communities is the real sense that there is a hierarchy of victims. Those at the lowest tier are the victims of state terrorism, or of collusion between the state terrorists and their allies within loyalism.

If we are to have a real healing process then those most in need of healing, the victims' families, must have ownership of it. There also has to be recognition that no section of our people has a monopoly on suffering but that every section has a responsibility to provide and to work for a solution.

This is an equality issue as important as any other.

The refusal by some to accept this is at the core of the current difficulties. It is little wonder that there is a scarcity of ideas from the British Government and the Unionist parties about how to resolve problems when they feel no responsibility for causing these problems.

Not only have the British Government refused to accept responsibility for these victims of their actions, but successive British governments, including this one, have actively engaged in a cover-up of the activities of their forces.

There is no other way of describing the refusal of the London government to come to terms with this issue.

For example, I have raised many cases with both Tony Blair and the present and the former British Secretaries of State. These include the high-profile cases of Rosemary Nelson, Pat Finucane and Robert Hamill.

I have also given them files on the case of the British Intelligence agent, Brian Nelson.

I have raised the cases of the 400 victims who have died as a direct result of killings by British Crown Forces and I have received no satisfactory answer to any of my representations.

This refusal to deal with these cases has to be challenged. Many people here welcomed the recent very public proclamation by the Irish Government that there was state collusion in the killing of Pat Finucane and that Pat's killing was only one of many such cases.

It is understandable that victims' families expect the Irish Government to go much further than this. The British Government has to be faced with its responsibility to address these matters in an honest and forthright fashion.

I want to commend the relatives of those killed on Bloody Sunday and their supporters who successfully campaigned for the scrapping of Widgery and for a new inquiry. I also want to pay tribute to those families of victims of shoot-to-kill actions by the British state forces who this week took their cases to Strasbourg.

There are many, many more families who have stories to tell.

If we are to have a lasting peace there can be no restrictions imposed on fact, on truth, on grief, or sense of loss. There has to be an acceptance of the equivalence of grief. There can be no grief more worthy than any other.

These are difficult issues which we have to face up to, which everyone has to come to terms with.

Building Political Strength

As activists this party also has to come to terms with the need for us, the men and women of Sinn Féin, and our young activists in Ogra Shinn Féin, to be tenacious, resilient, and relentless in our efforts to advance our project.

Sinn Féin has an intelligent, methodical strategy grounded in reality. This strategy needs to be implemented right across the range of issues which it encompasses if we are to achieve the strategic and tactical objectives which we have set ourselves.

The theory needs to become practice. This is not a task for the faint-hearted or the short-sighted. It certainly cannot be accomplished through rhetoric alone.

People struggle for two reasons: either because they perceive it to be in their self-interest or because they are motivated by a big idea.

For us, Irish Republicanism is the big idea! We also believe it is in the self-interest of the majority of the people of this island.

Sovereignty

What is Republicanism? In its essence it proclaims, defends and asserts the core principle that the people are sovereign.

In Ireland today the people are not sovereign.

We are not sovereign because of the partition of this island and the involvement of the British Government in our affairs. Even those leading partitionists who described the Good Friday Agreement, endorsed in referendum North and South as the exercise of self-determination by the Irish people, have had to skulk away from that propaganda assertion.

Sinn Féin took a more measured view. It is clear now who was right, given the way the British Government ignored the votes of the people of this island.

Ireland voted and Britain vetoed.

So self-determination for the people of this island has yet to be achieved.

Neutrality

This means not only winning independence from Britain but asserting our sovereignty in terms of the promotion of an independent foreign policy and positive Irish neutrality.

It means keeping this state out of the NATO camp.

It is deplorable that the government here failed to honour a Fianna Fáil election pledge to hold a referendum on membership of NATO's so-called 'Partnership for Peace'.

I welcome the draft Bill co-sponsored by Caoimhghín Ó Caoláin to write neutrality into the 1937 Constitution in an effort to prevent Dublin governments from exceeding their authority and bringing this state into military alliances against the will of the people.

An Inclusive Citizenship

I also want to totally repudiate the hostile and racist attitude being shown to asylum seekers.

The Republican concept of citizenship has always been inclusive.

It includes all who share this island, whether their ancestors lived here for thousands of years, whether they came in as part of the Plantations, or whether they have just come recently to make a life in our country.

Today there are people from many countries seeking asylum here. There are also economic migrants looking for work. Our own history encompasses the experience of both. We know the pain of exile whether forced by political, social or economic circumstances. We also have experienced discrimination, hostility and racism.

We have resisted such treatment when we were the victims. The people of Ireland must reject and resist such treatment of others.

Cancel Foreign Debt

This party has also long supported the demand for the cancellation of foreign debt and we commend the work of Jubilee 2000 which is seeking to achieve this in this jubilee year.

The time for the cancellation of developing countries' debt is long overdue. The World Bank and the International Monetary Fund cannot continue to act without accountability to the people their programmes affect.

After disasters, many caused by the environmental policies of richer countries, the international media focuses in on the plight of the victims. The most recent example of this was in Mozambique, where many thousands were killed by some of the most devastating floods in recent memory and many more thousands were left homeless.

What was not deemed so newsworthy, however, was that while the people of Mozambique were clinging to trees and roof-tops just to stay alive, their government was being forced to send 1.4 million dollars a week to its debtors in the G7.

After 'Hurricane Mitch' hit Central America, Honduras and Nicaragua were spending over half their government's revenue on debt repayments.

This week we have learned that 16 million people again face starvation in the Horn of Africa. Thirty-seven African countries owe a total of 354 billion dollars.

The UN estimates that if the funds to pay off debt were diverted back into health and education the lives of seven million children a year could be saved, seven million children! Just think. That is two million people more than the entire population of this island.

That is 134,000 children a week.

We have raised this issue with the US Government, the Irish Government and the British Government; and our party will continue to support the demand for debt cancellation.

Poverty and Corruption

The social and economic problems here in Ireland are but a shadow of the great poverty, inequalities and distress experienced by other nations.

But they are no less real for those who have no jobs, for the elderly, for the sick, for lone parents, the disabled, for the travelling community, for working-class neighbourhoods emasculated by the scourge of drugs, for all who face hardship and obstacles to securing a decent quality of life.

In the 26 Counties, in the midst of plenty, there is great poverty, inequality and disadvantage. The North faces similar social and economic disadvantage with the additional burden of sectarian and political discrimination and Unionist elitism.

But in addition, the economy, social policy, health policy, education and all other aspects of society in the Six Counties are controlled by London. The short-lived institutions did not have enough time to dent the decades of mismanagement by transient British ministers.

The Celtic Tiger is partitionist. It has clearly benefited many, many people in this state and Sinn Féin welcomes that. But for many others the Celtic Tiger does not exist. This is indeed the best of times and the worst of times.

While being preached at by business and political leaders about the need for pay restraint, those working people who pay their taxes, who obey the laws of the land, who do not wield political power or have the means to amass wealth, have watched one scandal unfold after another.

We have experienced abuses of the planning processes.

We have witnessed improper payments to politicians and massive tax evasion by big business, politicians and the banking system.

We have seen illegal off-shore bank accounts and the systematic siphoning off of funds out of the country, and banks stealing from their own customers.

And we are expected to believe that no one knew.

There is clearly one law for the rich and another law for the rest of us.

One of the dangers about all of this is that Irish society at this stage in its evolution could be redefined into a less caring and a more selfish form of 'mé féinism', with cynicism about politics replacing idealism and materialism replacing compassion and a sense of public service.

In my view this does not represent the feelings, and the views and aspirations of the vast majority of our people.

So what is to be done about all of this?

The heart of the question is whether all Irish people are to be afforded equal rights and equal opportunities and a share in the wealth of the nation.

Sinn Féin's task is to make sure they do.

Republican and Labour

Our policies can best be summarised by what I have called the Republican and labour position.

At its most basic level, this means that Republicans see the individual and the community we belong to as the core building blocks of society.

Market-led ideology sees society as being constituted of the businesses that make up the economy.

The market-led approach cedes power and rights to big business while, at the same time, disempowering people and their communities. It is a sad indictment that businesses in the Irish economy have more protection under the law than the ordinary people.

In the Republican society, the rights of individuals must not only be guaranteed but actively promoted.

A Republican and labour position is people-centred. It puts people first.

It sees economic and political democracy and empowerment as the opposite sides of the one coin.

Wherever you go on this island you will find Sinn Féin acting on this agenda in our local communities, in environmental lobby groups, in local development projects.

Our analysis is a long-standing one. It is for a new Ireland. A different Ireland. An Ireland which will cherish all the children of the nation equally.

In the 1970s we predicted that the European Union would erode Irish sovereignty and that the farming community would fall victim to Common Agricultural Policies. We were right.

Sinn Féin was among the first organisations to call for the closure of Sellafield. Our views were dismissed. Now it is accepted that Sellafield is rotten to its nuclear core. We were right on that one also. Sellafield needs to close. And it needs to close now.

We warned about the scourge of drugs. Sadly and regrettably, we were right on that one as well.

Our argument for remedial and rehabilitation programmes needs to be acted on.

We want the chance to implement our policies on social reform and economic democracy, as well as women's rights, cultural development, children's rights, environmental protection, civil liberties, administrative reform, sovereignty and unity.

None of this is achievable unless those who share this vision are part of the struggle to make it a reality. This is perhaps one of the biggest challenges we face. To broaden and widen this

struggle, to empower people to form alliances, to network, to become a catalyst for change. We are in a prime position to do so.

Coalition?

Sinn Féin is the fastest-growing political party on this island.

We are also the only all-Ireland party. And tomorrow our increasing political strength will be manifest as we seriously debate resolutions regarding the approach of this party to the possibility of coalition in the wake of the next general election in the 26 Counties.

Speculation about a Fianna Fáil/Sinn Féin coalition has been widespread in the media. This is a novel experience for our party and it has provoked a great deal of internal debate. It is important to set out some basic points on this very important issue for the future of Sinn Féin.

First of all, I want to challenge the assumption that we in Sinn Féin are only waiting to win the right number of Leinster House seats and the correct parliamentary arithmetic before heading straight into a coalition government with Fianna Fáil. That is news to me.

Some pundits are speculating whether Fianna Fáil will go into coalition with Sinn Féin. As I told the Taoiseach recently, the real question is whether Sinn Féin would go into coalition with Fianna Fáil.

Secondly, there is an assumption abroad that our only consideration in such a scenario would be the peace process.

Let me emphasise this: Sinn Féin is not, and never has, been a one-issue party.

We approach the question of coalition informed by the principles on which our party is based, by the policies adopted by Ard Fheiseanna such as this, and by the experience of our elected representatives and our activists.

Delegates may decide to completely rule out any coalition.

Or they may decide that this party will not enter any coalition unless mandated by a special delegate conference.

I will argue for the latter position which is being put forward by the Ard Chomhairle.

Because we need to take every opportunity to inform the electorate of our positions, and to get our political opponents to come to terms with the principles of our party and the policies which we would seek to have implemented.

These range from advancing the peace process, to Irish neutrality, from housing and health to education and the welfare of the disadvantaged in Irish society.

Sharing the wealth and creating real change in our country as opposed to creating careers would be the Sinn Féin priority in that political context as in all others.

More fundamental still is the point that this party, small though we are at present, is out to transform Irish politics.

We want to see the dominating and conservative forces in Irish politics replaced with real people's politics.

Ultimately, the coalition we want to build is the coalition of the dispossessed, North and South, East and West, urban and rural.

We want, in the words of James Connolly, "a regenerated Ireland, an Ireland reconquered for its common people". Are we up to this task?

A Party on the Move

Before we meet again in Ard Fheis we could be contesting elections on both parts of this island. It is our duty to ensure that we consolidate and continue to build our electoral strength. We must work to modernise our party by building on the progress we have made.

I have consistently said that Sinn Féin gets the vote that we deserve.

The next elections could be a watershed moment for us. We must seize that moment.

In the last elections our vote increased in every constituency, in every part of this island.

Until recently, most of our good election news has been in Ulster. In the Six Counties, Mitchel McLaughlin came extraordinarily close to taking a seat in Europe when he received 117,643 votes. Now the four main parties in the North are divided by only 4 percentage points.

In this state, Cavan and Monaghan have long been the pace-setters.

But now the Sinn Féin vote is on the rise through Connacht, Munster and Leinster. Our vote increased everywhere in these provinces with breakthroughs in Dublin as well as in rural areas. Seán Crowe, Seán MacManus, Arthur Morgan and Martin Ferris almost trebled the Sinn Féin vote in last year's European election and now we stand at 6.3 per cent.

We are still a small party but we are a party on the move.

The test for this generation of Republicans is how we modernise our ideology to meet the needs and conditions of our time.

The tens of thousands of Irish people who voted Sinn Féin, and the many others who demand a lasting peace, and who expressed that desire when they voted YES for the Good Friday Agreement, are watching our deliberations intently.

How we respond, what strategies and tactics we apply, what leadership we demonstrate, and what inspiration we provide will determine our success or failure.

Is Sinn Féin equal to these challenges?

I believe we are.

I believe we have the ability, the imagination, and the wisdom to achieve the goals we have set for ourselves.

I believe we can succeed.

It won't be easy.

The change we seek is profound.

Níl aon réiteach draíochta ann. Níl aon roghanna furasta ann dár leithéidí. Tá alán daoine ag brath orainn in san gearrthearma chun rudaí a dhéanamh i gceart i dtaobh le prúiseas na síochána. Sé mo bharúil go bhfuil tabhacht ar leith ag baint leis seo don todhchaí.

There are no magic solutions. No easy options for activists like us. An awful lot of people are depending on us in the short-term to get things right in terms of the peace process. In my view, the future very much depends on this.

Despite our frustration, anger and annoyance, the search for peace will continue to make great demands on us. It's not fair but that's the way it is.

So we need to have great resilience, tenacity and a commitment to hard work.

Hunger Strikers Remembered

None of this is about forgetting the past. It is about learning from the past. For example, this year marks the anniversary of the first hunger strikes. Next year marks the 20th anniversary of the hunger strikes of 1981. We also remember Michael Gaughan and Frank Stagg who died on hunger strike in England in 1974 and 1976.

Earlier this year, Barry McElduff suggested that the 20th anniversary of the hunger strikes be marked by the establishment of 1981 committees. I want to commend that idea.

I want to see all of those people from the prisoners' families, former hunger strikers, former blanket men, women in Armagh, Relatives Action Committee activists and supporters, Smash H-Block/Armagh Committees and everyone who played any part in that epic struggle, coming together nationwide and abroad not just to remember the hunger strikes but to talk, to discuss, to debate and to learn the lessons of that period and to build them into further advances for the freedom struggle.

For those of us who survived that period it is a matter of wonderment that almost 20 years have passed since then. It's as if it was yesterday when the prisoners in the H-Blocks and Armagh women's prison stood against the intransigence of Margaret Thatcher and her cohorts. Today Thatcher is remembered as an extreme right-wing friend of Pinochet while the memory of Bobby Sands and his comrades is revered throughout the freedom-loving world.

Let us recall the names of:

Bobby Sands MP

Francie Hughes

Patsy O'Hara

Raymond McCreesh

Joe McDonnell

Martin Hurson

Kevin Lynch

Kieran Doherty TD

Tom McElwee

Mickey Devine

Frank Stagg

Michael Gaughan

Let us rededicate ourselves to their idealism, their unselfishness and their dedication.

Let us take a deep breath.

Let us refocus.

And re-energise ourselves.

Ní thigean saoirse go furasta. Ní go furasta a scoileadh lucht an chumacht, nÚ lucht siombail an chumhacht, nÚ an lucht a creideann go bhfuil cumhacht acú, ní go furasta a scaoilfidh siad an cumhacht sin uathu.

Freedom will not come easily. Those with power or the symbols and perceptions of power will not relinquish that power easily. All history teaches us that. We will only get as much freedom as we can take.

But all history also teaches us that the determined movement of people, organised and relentlessly demanding their rights, wears down the old order. That is what we have to do.

§ Presidential Address to the 97th Sinn Féin Ard Fheis 2001

Spell-checked, English-Gaelic version.

I want to begin my remarks by extending solidarity and condolences to the victims of the terrorist attacks in New York, Washington and Pennsylvania. This Ard Fheis, the first of the 21st century, takes place in the shadow of these outrages.

Ionsaí millteanach a bhí ann ar la millteanach do mhuintir na Stait Aontaithe chomh maith le muintir na tíre seo.

In the week or so after these attacks, like many other people on this island, I spent several hours each night on the phone trying to get through to friends in New York and Washington, including our representative in the US, Rita O'Hare, to make sure they were safe, and to hear news of the extent of the tragedy. The enormity of this catastrophe for them is very personal. It is for me also.

Two years ago I visited the North tower of the World Trade Centre. Some Irish/American friends who are associated with Friends of Sinn Féin and who work at the World Trade Centre and in the Mercantile Exchange adjacent to it, had organised lunch in the Windows on the World restaurant.

The restaurant was at the top of the tower and gave a spectacular view of New York and New Jersey, of the Hudson river, of Ellis Island and the Statue of Liberty. It was an impressive sight and our friends were clearly enormously proud of this engineering marvel where each day 50,000 people worked.

Sadly, tragically, one of those who organised our visit is now dead. Others we met that day or on other occasions, are dead also.

Many of us in the North of Ireland and here in Dublin have experienced the grief and hurt of loss during the years of our conflict. We understand the personal trauma that is now touching thousands of American homes, and homes in Ireland, in Britain and elsewhere in the world.

Our thoughts and prayers are with them at this terrible time and I have sent deepest condolences and sympathies on my own behalf and on your behalf to the people of the United States. I welcome the US Ambassador Richard Egan to this Ard Fheis and I welcome the President of the Friends of Sinn Féin in the USA, Mr. Larry Downes.

Of course seeing the Irish names on the list of the dead, particularly among the fire-fighters and the New York police reminds us of the close ties between us and America and of the millions of US citizens who proudly trace their roots to Ireland. The people of Ireland owe a huge debt of gratitude to the Irish American community, to Congress and to the US Administration who devoted time, energy and resources to help the peace process here.

Sinn Féin, in particular, has benefited from the generosity of Americans who want to bring about peace, justice, equality and a United Ireland. The support of Irish America has enabled us to bring about real change in Ireland. The back bone of our fund raising effort in the US is the construction industry and workers in New York. Many of them, who follow in the footsteps of 'the Irish who built America' have suffered grievously in these atrocities. That is why we have endorsed the Friends of Sinn Féin's recommendation to dedicate the proceeds of the annual November fundraiser in New York to the families of the construction workers who lost their lives.

It is right that we express solidarity and sympathy with the people in the USA and that we repudiate these atrocities. But we have to go further than these expressions of our sorrow, shock and denunciation.

Crisis in the Peace Process

Our own peace process is in a mess and it must now be obvious to everyone that the political institutions established under the Good Friday Agreement are going to collapse unless the Unionists lift their threats and work with Sinn Féin and the other parties, as they committed themselves to do under the Agreement.

The institutions will collapse because Unionists are refusing to administer them except on their own terms. They have prevented the all-Ireland institutions, and ironically the British-Irish Council from functioning. They have vetoed the work of the Minister of Education and the Minister of Health and now they are moving a motion to exclude Sinn Féin from the Executive. In my view all of this has been greatly influenced by the manner in which the British

government approaches the process. That approach has been characterised by making all other issues secondary to the issue of IRA arms.

In other words the issue of IRA weapons has been made a precondition for progress on all other issues. This is in direct breach of the Good Friday Agreement. The British government may protest that this is not the case, or insofar as it is the case, that it arises from David Trimble's resignation and from the price which Mr. Trimble has put on the future stability of the political institutions. But this is not the whole truth. The whole truth is that resistance to change in the North of Ireland comes not only from those within Unionism, but from within the British system also.

This goes back much further than the current crisis. Indeed, it has been an historic factor in every effort to deliver equality, justice, and peace.

In this phase, it goes back to the private assurances in the side-letter that Tony Blair gave to David Trimble hours after they had endorsed the Good Friday Agreement three and a half years ago. It is his government that is responsible for permitting a virus to enter and to remain at the heart of the Agreement.

The fault line in the Agreement, and of every crisis in it can be traced to that point. That letter showed a willingness on the part of the British government to pander to Unionism and to create the space for Mr. Trimble to commence his effort to hollow out the Agreement.

For my part, I believe that the issue of arms can be resolved. We in Sinn Féin have done our best and enormous progress has been made in the past 6 years, particularly in relation to IRA arms.

But, as I have said many times, I do not believe that the issue of arms, all arms held by all armed groups, including those held by the British state forces, will be resolved on British government or Unionist terms, or on the basis of threat, veto or ultimatum.

Some accuse Sinn Féin of being opposed to the decommissioning of arms and of not doing enough to achieve this. This is untrue.

In stark contrast to the continued use of loyalist and British weapons IRA guns are silent and the IRA cessations are now into their 8th year. The IRA has acknowledged that the issue of arms has to be dealt with as part of a conflict resolution process, and last year the IRA leadership set out a context in which it would put its weapons verifiably beyond use.

In addition, as a confidence building measure it took the unprecedented initiative of agreeing with the two governments the appointment of two International Inspectors and allowing them to examine its arms dumps to verify that their weapons have not been used.

Last month in a historic breakthrough the IICD announced that it had agreed a scheme with the IRA to put arms completely and verifiably beyond use. And the IRA is presently engaged in ongoing discussions with the IICD.

These are not small, unimportant events. No one who lived through the 70s, or 80s, or most of the 90s, or who has even as a cursory understanding of Republican history and theology would ever have considered any of these things possible. These are huge developments, which, in the proper context, point the way to a future free of IRA weapons.

The Sinn Féin leadership helped to create the conditions that made this possible. We did so because of our commitment to a lasting and just peace settlement on this island.

The UUP response to this progress has been to ignore Sinn Féin's democratic mandate, the mandate of the other parties, the referendum, the Good Friday Agreement itself and their responsibilities and obligations.

The British government have not done much better.

Many Republicans are angry at a Unionist leadership that frustrates, belittles and undermines this progress, while at the same time doing absolutely nothing to end the daily bomb and gun attacks by loyalists on Catholic families.

They are angry at a British government which underpins the UUP position, in breach of the Agreement, and which has remilitarised nationalist and Republican heartlands.

Universal Rights

This is a huge mistake. Republicans and nationalists want to be convinced that Unionism is facing up to its responsibilities. They want to believe that a British government wants to right wrongs and usher in a new dispensation based upon equality.

For the Unionists to reject the IICD determination as they did and for the British government to suspend the institutions, as it has done, not once, not twice, but three times, is hardly the stuff of peace making.

The democratic rights and entitlements of nationalists and Republicans cannot be conditional. These rights are universal rights. They effect all citizens.

In the Good Friday Agreement these matters, that is policing, the political institutions, demilitarisation, human rights, the justice system and the equality agenda, are stand alone issues. These are issues to be resolved in their own right. They cannot be withheld or granted or subjected to a bartering process.

The Only Direction is Forward

So what does Sinn Féin do about all of this? Do our heads go down in frustration because at every point when it appears that progress is possible the Unionists do something to make the process more difficult?

Do we stand on our dignity and our record and put it up to others to fulfil their duties and responsibilities?

Do we give way to righteous anger at the way a British government panders to a Unionist veto?

Or do we resolve, despite all of this, or perhaps because of all of this, that Sinn Féin is going to continue to try to resolve this issue. The choice is clear.

This Ard Fheis meets at a time that is deeply sombre, from any point of view. Whether you stand in Ardoyne, or America or Afghanistan reflecting on the peace process here or the massacre in Manhattan it is hard to avoid a foreboding about what lies ahead. Hope seems to sink and apprehension seems to grow, but we cannot afford to succumb to despair. For the true political activist the only choice is struggle not acquiescence. The only direction is forward. Ní pairtí Sinn Féin a chuireann a dhroim leis na deaicreachtaí. We are a party that has learned through decades of struggle, to deal with the objective reality in which our struggle finds itself. But there is no easy way to sort out these issues and for my part I want to reiterate my total commitment to playing a leadership role in bringing a permanent end to political conflict on our island, including the end of physical force Republicanism. I say this conscious of the dangers, risks, and history of such departures.

I have no illusions about any of this and I know my commitment is shared by the Sinn Féin leadership. From within the broad Republican constituency we are working for the day when all the armed groups, including the IRA, cease to be. But we will not be part of any effort to criminalise or to deem as terrorists those men and women who fought when they considered they had no other choice and who had the integrity courage and wisdom to support a peace process when they had that choice.

Forgotten Ten

I want to welcome the steps being taken by the Irish government to re-inter the ten IRA Volunteers buried in Mountjoy jail and to urge people to attend their State funeral on October 14th in Dublin. Republicans have always remembered and commemorated with pride those who gave their lives so that future generations may live in better times.

Republicans continually look to the future and how best to achieve our goals but we also acknowledge that it was the sacrifice of previous generations that has brought us closer to the objectives of independence, justice and a lasting peace.

The forgotten ten played their part and we will commemorate their lives with pride.

Súineas sioraí do ETERNAL REST TO Kevin Barry, Thomas Whelan, Patrick Moran, Thomas Bryan, Patrick Doyle, Frank Flood, Bernard Ryan, Thomas Traynor, Patrick Maher and Edward Foley. I measc laochra na nGael go raibh siad. THEY ARE AMONG THE IRISH HEROES.

We know the difference between a freedom fighter and a terrorist. And that the second can be an agent of a government and a foreign one at that. There are elements on this island who say there should be a repudiation of those who used force to win freedom and that Ireland should apologise for our patriots.

I am sure that even at this serious juncture America is not going to apologise for George Washington, who would expect them to, neither should the Irish nation apologise for Wolfe Tone, or Pádraig Pearse or James Connolly, or Maire Drumm, or Mairead Farrell or Bobby Sands or Kevin Barry.

Building Political Strength

Many Republicans and nationalists are disillusioned with the pace of progress and frustrated by the hypocrisy and cynicism of anti-Republican elements who have sought to use events of this summer to gang-up on Sinn Féin or to relaunch their anti-Republican agenda. Following the arrest of three Irishmen in Columbia and the atrocities in the USA it was almost like the bad

old days of vilification, demonisation and media disinformation once again. While loyalist paramilitaries threw over 250 bombs, while their murder campaign intensified on a daily basis, while young Catholic school children were blockaded on their way to and from school, there was an unrelenting agenda to pressurise, marginalise and blame Sinn Féin for all of this. And the hypocrisy and opportunism wasn't limited to the usual anti-agreement elements in the British and Unionist establishment. Others North and South clambered onto the anti-Republican bandwagon.

Why was this so?

Could it be that what all these elements have in common is a fear of the growing strength of Sinn Féin. Could it be that many of those who railed against us in the old days - who were against the Hume/Adams initiative, who were for censorship - or could it be that in June of this year they saw their worst nightmare starting to become a reality, and seized upon other events in an unprincipled and opportunistic attempt to batter us and to unnerve our support? This will not be successful.

I spoke here in Dublin, in March, at a special conference held in place of our Ard Fheis which was cancelled because of the foot and mouth crisis. At that conference I predicted that Sinn Féin would win more votes than ever before in the elections in the North. I said and I quote: 'Despite the obvious intent by the SDLP of introducing Brid Rodgers as a spoiler into West Tyrone I am confident that when our Ard Fheis finally meets later this year it will be to welcome Pat Doherty as the MP for West Tyrone.' Failte WELCOME Pat.

I want on to predict significant gains in North Belfast, Mid Ulster, Newry and Armagh, Foyle, and all other parts of the North.

I want to commend Comhairle na Se Chondae SIX COUNTY COMMITTEE for the outstanding achievement of putting forward the biggest number ever of local government candidates and achieving significant breakthroughs everywhere. I want to commend them and the people for making Sinn Féin the largest nationalist party in the six counties.

In March I also pointed to the opportunities in the Nice Treaty referendum for Sinn Féin to mount vigorous opposition to that Treaty and to put forward our policy against an EU superstate and the loss of sovereignty. I want to commend all those who played such an important role in a vigorous public campaign to mobilise opinion for the defence in Europe of Irish democratic rights, not the erosion of them.

In the face of all elements of the Irish establishment, including the government itself and all the establishment parties, the people's voice was heard. When the votes were counted Sinn Féin's voice was with the majority for democracy, sovereignty and economic and social justice. The government and the establishment were defeated. The people won.

And finally, my friends in what was a deeply personal and emotional campaign for me we put it to the people of Fermanagh and South Tyrone that it would be a fitting tribute to Bobby Sands if they could elect Michelle Gildernew, as their MP and the first woman Sinn Féin MP since Countess Markievez. And the people answered a resounding yes.

We will see this growth continue in the months ahead. Nuair a theann an TD do Cabhan/Muineachan Caoimhghín Ó Caoláin ar ais go Teach Laighinn ní bheidh se ag siul isteach leis féin ach beidh daoine eile tofa mar TD ag Sinn Féin. WHEN THE TD FOR CAVAN/MONAGHAN CAOIMHGHÍN Ó CAOLÁIN GOES BACK TO LEINSTER HOUSE, HE WILL NOT BE WALKING IN BY HIMSELF, BUT WITH OTHER PEOPLE ELECTED AS SINN FEIN TD'S.

And it is in this movement forward, it is in this strengthening of Sinn Féin's position that will bring about real and lasting change.

All Ireland potential

Sinn Féin is the only meaningful and truly Republican party on the island because we are the only party organised throughout the island which genuinely strives to give democratic voice to the sovereign people of the 32 counties.

- We are the only party that puts forward candidates in all elections held among the Irish people;
- We are the only party that has representatives elected to Westminster, to the Assembly, to the Dáil, and to local authorities, North and South, and which sits in all but the first of these - for obvious reasons;
- We are the only party that nominates members of all-Ireland Implementation Bodies on both sides of the border;

- We are the only party which has the potential to have members of the all-Ireland Ministerial Council from both parts of this island;
- We are the only party which can influence membership from both Belfast and Dublin of the all-Ireland Joint Committee of the Human Rights Commissions;
- We are the only party which will be able to make an input to Northern and Southern membership of the 32-county Consultative Forum of Civil Society;
- We are the only party which will have participants from North and South in the Joint Parliamentary Forum;
- We are also seeking representation for Northern MPs in the Dáil and full membership as of right for nominees of Northern political parties in the Seanad SENATE;
- And we have campaigned for votes for citizens in the six counties in Presidential elections and relevant constitutional referenda.

Sinn Féin is the only all-Ireland party. Not just geographically, not just politically, not just strategically but also because we have a vision of a new future - a united, independent Ireland.

Ending inequality

The political landscape of Irish politics is changing and Republicans in every corner of this island are at the forefront of that change. People are sickened by what they have seen from the Beef tribunal, through to the McCracken, Lindsay, Moriarty, and Flood Tribunals. Many politicians here make a genuine contribution to public service we seem to have a prevailing political ethos which is all about legitimatising a two-tier society.

You walk through the streets of our towns and cities and you can see young men and women sleeping in doorways. There are others who are less unfortunate and conspicuous, but are still among the excluded and deprived.

21% of Irish workers live on low incomes. This is the second highest proportion in the EU. The 26 Counties also has the second largest gap between rich and poor in the EU. The income inequalities in the Six Counties are just as pronounced.

A recent border education study found that there are 1.1 million people on the island who can be categorised as education poor, in that they had little or no formal educational qualifications and that 24% of the adult population North and South had literacy difficulties.

In a world where literacy and education are the key to a better and more fulfilling standard of living this is a shocking indictment of the society that has been built in Ireland, North and South.

The last official assessment of poverty showed over a third of persons falling below the 60% relative income poverty line. In the midst of plenty, it would be easy for society to forget those who have been left behind. But, while Sinn Féin exists, they will not be forgotten and they will not be abandoned. We must ensure that, for everybody, Ireland is a place in which to live and not to leave.

In the months ahead, and before we convene as an Ard Fheis, there are certain issues that we have to particularly address, under the headings of:

- Health care and provision;
- Crime and drugs;
- Housing;
- Childcare;
- Education;
- Transport; and
- The environment - with particular reference to waste disposal and proposed incineration.

We have developed policies on all of these and we must continue to carry them to the people.

We need a coalition of all of those seeking an end to poverty, and inequality.

We need a coalition across sectarian and racial divisions. We need a coalition of those in urban and rural communities who have been shut out of the increased prosperity of recent years. We need a coalition between Republicans in the broadest sense and all those campaigning for real and lasting change in our country, including decent politicians of all parties.

Tá polaitíocht na hÉireann ag athrú agus tá poblachtánaigh ó gach cuid den tír chun tosaigh san athrú sin.

THE POLITICS OF IRELAND ARE CHANGING, AND REPUBLICANS FROM ALL OVER THE COUNTRY ARE AHEAD OF THIS CHANGE.

Saoirse, fuascailt agus ag tabhairt cumacht don pobal príomh téamaí Shinn Féin.
FREEDOM, LIBERATION AND THE GRANTING OF POWER TO THE PEOPLE, THESE ARE THE
MAIN AIMS OF SINN FEIN.

Tá muid ag lorg níos mó ná saoirse polaitiúil ár dtír. Tá muid ag lorg saoirse soisialta
agus eacnamaíochta na saoránaigh ar fad atá in Éirinn..
WE ARE LOOKING FOR MORE POLITICAL FREEDOM FOR OUR COUNTRY. WE ARE LOOKING
FOR SOCIAL AND ECONOMIC FREEDOM FOR ALL THE CITIZENS OF IRELAND.

Ciallaíonn sin, saoirse ó smacht eachtranach, saoirse ó aineolas agus eagla, saoirse ó plá na
ndrugáí, saoirse ó ranganna scoile plódaithe, ó scuainí oispidéil agus ó easpa tithíocht.
THAT MEANS FREEDOM FROM FOREIGN CONTROL, FREEDOM FROM IGNORANCE AND FEAR,
FREEDOM FROM THE OF DRUGS, FREEDOM FROM OVERCROWDED CLASSROOMS, HOSPITAL
QUEUES AND LIMITED HOUSING. FROM A LACK OF HOUSING AND HOSPITAL CARE.

Sharing the Wealth in the island economy

The combined effects of Foot and Mouth and unease about the faltering global economy has
had a significant impact on us all.

This makes it all the more important to take the steps across the island to create linkages and
new structures that will rebuild an island economy and ensure that the Irish economy of the
21st century is one where everyone has access to a dignified standard of living, where they are
employed in meaningful work, where they are housed adequately and educated in line with
their needs, where health and other social services are delivered locally and with quality.

Most importantly we want to construct a society where people decide, plan and deliver these
issues for themselves.

Sinn Féin wants to help build a society that rewards those people who actually make the
profits, the goods and the wealth.

What we want to construct is a society where decision making is increasingly taken out of the
hands of central government and placed in the hands of the communities to decide for
themselves the sort of local economy that suits their needs.

Surely this would be better than the golden circle of corruption uncovered in Irish society over
the past 10 years. A golden circle where decision making at a national and local level was
something often bought by wealth and bribes by those who had the resources rather than by
any real exercise of democratic decision making.

We want a decentralised Ireland where the East coast Dublin-Belfast power axis is replaced
with regional government empowered to shape political and economic society.

To stop the decline of rural Ireland. To rebuild the depopulated communities. To bring much
needed resources and investment to deprived areas rural and urban. To educate for good and
eradicate the bad.

This requires political will and competence which is absent in the establishment political
thinking of today.

It is Sinn Féin which has been spearheading the agenda for a just all Ireland economy through
our efforts in Leinster House through the Assembly Committee on Trade and Investment
through InterTrade Ireland and through our representatives in local government.

An example of this was the meeting in Sligo where the mayors of Derry and Sligo, along with
the chairpersons of Cavan, Donegal, Fermanagh, Leitrim, Monaghan, Sligo and Strabane
councils met and discussed the formulation of a common strategy to develop the eight North
Western counties of Ireland.

Sinn Féin's Sean MacManus, Mayor of Sligo Corporation, was the catalyst for making this cross
border conference on economic development happen.

Making Politics Work

This is the first Ard Fheis attended by Bairbre de Brun as Minister of Health and Martin
McGuinness as Minister for Education.

Sinn Féin is responsible for two of the most difficult Ministries in the Executive. And I want to
commend Bairbre and Martin for the remarkable job they have done in conditions which no
other Minister in these islands has had to endure.

Inside and outside their departments they have won the praise and admiration of many
people, including some who are not Sinn Féin supporters.

As part of Sinn Féin's drive to provide a more effective patient centred Health Service Bairbre de Brun has taken a range of initiatives designed to:

Improve the standard and efficiency of health care service delivery; and

Develop a strategic direction for health, social services and public safety which will deliver modern, effective, accessible services and commend public confidence.

Bairbre's initiatives include:

- A review of acute hospital services;
- Establishing a Social Care Council to improve protection of vulnerable patients and raise standards of practice;
- The expansion of children and young people's services;
- Placing the equality agenda at the heart of Health Care Service delivery;
- Bringing forward strategies to reduced drug and alcohol related hardship and to reduce teenage pregnancies;
- Increased the priority given to Health in the Executive's Programme for Government;
- And she has led the debate for an all-Ireland health service.

Tá sí tar éis bheith chun tosaigh ag úsáid an Ghaeilge ina rannóg, istigh san Assembly, áit a bhí uirthi cur suas le drochíde seicteach ó aondachtóirí.

SHE HAS BEGUN TO USE IRISH IN HER SECTION INSIDE THE ASSEMBLY, WHERE SHE HAD TO PUT UP WITH SECTARIAN ABUSE FROM UNIONISTS.

Ba mhaith liom tacú le iarrachtaí Bairbre an Ghaeilge a chur chun cinn agus tá mé ag súil leis an lá a bheidh muid ar fad san Assembly agus ins na institiúidí eile ag déanamh ár ghnó chomh maith céanna tré Ghaeilge agus Béarla.

I WOULD LIKE TO SUPPORT BAIRBRE'S ATTEMPTS TO PROMOTE IRISH AND I AM LOOKING FORWARD TO THE DAY WHEN WE ARE ALL, BOTH IN THE ASSEMBLY AND IN THE OTHER INSTITUTES, CONDUCTING OUR BUSINESS THROUGH IRISH AS MUCH AS THROUGH ENGLISH.

Molaim chomh maith na teachtaí (MLAs) eile ag Sinn Féin nach bhfuil líofa sa Ghaeilge ach atá ag lorg bealaí chun an Ghaeilge a chur chun cinn tré brú a chur ar an gcóras.

I ALSO PRAISE THE OTHER SINN FÉIN DEPUTIES WHO ARE NOT FLUENT GAELIC SPEAKERS BUT WHO ARE LOOKING FOR WAYS TO PROMOTE IRISH BY PUTTING PRESSURE ON THE SYSTEM.

Martin as Minister for Education has made a real impact on the practice and development of Education in the North. This year alone we saw a massive 130 million investment in the schools infrastructure. That means 17 new schools for our children.

We also saw increased funding for a new trust fund to support Irish-medium education and he has initiated a fundamental review into the way schools are funded in order to ensure equality and fairness.

Martin has won the hearts and minds of large sections of the educational community by his straightforward, honest and thorough approach. Including many who would be our most trenchant opponents. Wherever he goes he builds up a warm rapport with the pupils and teachers.

He has ensured that there is regular interaction between Na Ranna Oideachais, between Belfast and Dublin. Four Education Working Groups were set up dealing with:-

Special needs;

Child protection;

Exchange programmes;

North-South teacher mobility to increase the mobility of teachers throughout the island of Ireland.

In the field of equality, like Bairbre, Martin has ensured that his department has an Equality Scheme and he has added an Equality Division to oversee the implementation of equality measures.

He has targeted social needs, aimed at distributing funds more fairly, and supported small rural primary schools. And he made clear his opposition to the 11+ and initiated a review of that unfair selection system.

I want to commend all our MLAs, those on Committees, as well as our Ministers. We have all been on a learning curve in terms of our input into the Executive, the Assembly and when they existed the all-Ireland institutions. I am satisfied thus far we have made a valuable and constructive contribution to decisions and developments at all levels. We have been extremely patient also in the face of provocation from Unionism.

UNIONISTS

The cause of Unionism is being disgraced daily on the Ardoyne Road, as it was previously at Harryville and Garvaghy Road. There is no excuse and no right to protest and blockade against children. The leaders of Unionism need to make that clear. Sinn Féin has been working in North Belfast, not only to lower tensions but, while repudiating the protest, attempting also to deal with the fears of Unionists in that part of Belfast city.

I want to assure Unionists that we will have no truck with sectarianism of any kind whether or from any source. Irish Republicanism is against sectarianism. Everyone should have the right to live, to shop, to work, to travel, to be educated, or entertained wherever they wish free from sectarian harassment of any kind.

We want to reach out to Unionists. For Republicans they are in the culture of everyday life, no less Irish than the rest of us. However if they or some of them, to one degree or another, do not choose to look at it in that way that is their entitlement.

They should not be compelled into acknowledging what they do not want to, and we accept that narrow green conservatism has contributed at times to their sense of alienation from the community of Ireland which we desire them to embrace.

And we recognise that in looking to Britain some of the Unionists think, not so much of Empire, but the traditions of the Reformation and the democratic struggle in England against absolutist monarchy. Both of which should be accorded the deepest respects.

Unionism overall is locked into a leadership battle which is being fought out around the Good Friday Agreement and the changes which that Agreement involves. There is resistance to these changes and Unionist no leadership has yet to emerge to actively and consistently promote an acceptance of them.

Despite this a lot of progress has been made and our difficulties and our differences in many ways have been put in context by what is happening in other parts of the world. And I am sure that our horror at recent events is shared by the Unionist family.

Our collective responsibility at this time is to settle our differences and I appeal to the leaders of Unionism to join with us in doing that so that all sections of our people can go forward on the basis of equality.

John Hume and the SDLP

I want to pay tribute to SDLP leader John Hume. His resignation as party leader and that of his Deputy Leader Seamus Mallon marks the end of an era.

They and we have a different analysis and different objectives.

But it is to John Hume's credit that he responded to the invitation from Sinn Féin to dialogue with our party in the late 1980's and reached out to work with us in trying to find a peaceful resolution of the causes of conflict on this island and between Britain and Ireland.

He was vilified, of course, including by some within his own party. But in a short period the Hume/Adams dialogue, as it became known opened up the possibility of a new beginning. This gave all our people hope and led an agreement which was endorsed by rank and file Unionists as well as nationalists and Republicans.

That period of hope is often forgotten now as the peace process stumbles from one crisis to another. But that hope should be a lasting tribute to the finest hour of John Hume.

I extend to John and Pat and to Seamus Mallon and his wife Gertrude my warmest best wishes for the future.

I look forward to working with this new leadership of the SDLP. Sinn Féin and the SDLP represent a shared constituency which has come through too much and endured too many indignities to settle for anything less than equality and justice.

The new generation of leaders seeking to take up the mantle of John Hume have a choice to make as momentous as that made by John Hume when he joined with me in a search for genuine resolution of this conflict.

The SDLP can play a vital role in delivering peace or it can retreat into 'post nationalist' fallacies and fantasies and a narrower, more negative agenda. The decision is for them to take

but I have to say that their move, taken in the final days of John Hume's leadership, to endorse the revamped RUC which falls short of the basic Patten requirement, and does not augur well for the future.

To support a failed police force when our shared constituency cries out for a new policing service is to attempt to impose an inequitable solution on a people who demand equality. Let me make it clear that Sinn Féin will not acquiesce to or be neutral about the need for a new beginning to policing. We are committed to continue the work to bring this about and to reject anything less than what people are entitled to.

I appeal to the new leadership of the SDLP to join again with us and others who seek an end to the causes of conflict on these islands. This will require courage and it will require sacrifice but we owe this to our shared constituency and to the rest of the people of this island.

However, I am very conscious that there is a section of the SDLP which is virulently and obsessively opposed to us. The only thing that keeps it going is looking over its shoulder at Sinn Féin. The problem is that it does not therefore see the future coming and is likely to bump into it, with even more unpleasant electoral consequences in the time to come.

So, whether John Hume's vision survives within his party depends on whether this tendency comes into the ascendancy in the party leadership in the time ahead. These are all issues for the SDLP to sort out for themselves but people in the six counties will watch that space to discover if the SDLP is more about initials than ideas. Whether the vision is limited by an artificial border or whether it can grow to meet the challenges of the future.

International Situation

Before I deal with the international situation I want to call on all political parties in Ireland to sign an anti-racist pledge and make a commitment that they will not play party politics with the race issue and that they will not tolerate racism in any form in their party.

Furthermore we are calling for all of those asylum seekers who arrived in Ireland before January 1st 2001 to be granted an amnesty and for the government to take a more humane attitude to the issue of asylum seekers and refugees in general.

Sinn Féin has consistently argued that the United Nations is the international institution with the responsibility to prevent armed conflict and to protect civilians. While nations have an individual right to defend themselves and their citizens we agree with Kofi Annan UN Secretary General that only the United Nations can give global legitimacy to the struggle to eliminate terrorism.

Terrorism is ethically indefensible. Those responsible for the atrocities in the United States must be brought to justice.

What happened in New York and Washington and Pennsylvania was, as the UN Human Rights Commissioner and former Irish President Mary Robinson said; 'A crime against humanity.'

Progressive struggles throughout the world have been set back by the attacks in the USA. There is no excuse, no justification for those types of actions. But neither should anyone who is truly concerned with world peace be deflected from that task or be carried away by the

notion of a clash between civilisations. The real challenge is for dialogue, not retribution. That is the lesson of the peace process on this island. That is what Sinn Féin is about. It is about standing up for your rights while recognising the rights of others. It is about dialogue. It is about being inclusive. It is about equality. It is about justice. It is about righting wrongs.

- It is wrong that anyone should have to suffer because of their nationality, their colour, or their creed.
- It is wrong that the third world should be crippled with debt while the first world is affluent.
- It is wrong that an elite group of less than a billion people control more than 80% of the world's wealth.

It is wrong that 1.2 billion of the world's people live on less than one dollar a day.

- It is wrong that armaments production and sales exceed by over 60 times the World Health Organisation's annual expenditure on the world's four main preventable diseases.

It is wrong that 11 million children under 5 die each year from preventable causes. This is equivalent to 30,000 children a day

- It is wrong that at least one million civilians, half of them children have died in Iraq as a result of the embargo imposed by the US and Britain.
- It is wrong that the British government sells weapons to Israel.
- It is wrong that the middle east conflict has been allowed to endure for so long and that the people of Palestine have to endure illegal occupation by Israel.
- It is wrong that our environment and the protection of this planet, the protection of nature, has been destroyed at the whim of big business
- It is wrong that 5.3 million people in Afghanistan - that's the population of our island - are on the brink of starvation as the result of a three year drought, in what the UN has described as the world's worst humanitarian crisis.
- It is wrong that justice has not been brought to the various long-standing conflicts that have troubled this planet for a very long time.

The Irish government takes responsibility for the Chair of the UN Security Council for a month. None of these great wrongs can be righted in that time, but we look to the Foreign Minister Brian Cowan to send a very clear message to the world, on behalf of the people of this island that now is the time to strengthen bonds between people.

It is time to strengthen and extend democratic international institutions.

This year has been proclaimed by the General Assembly of the UN as the Year of Dialogue among Civilisations. It is of the utmost importance that this dialogue takes place and that those of us who live in the West come to learn that we are not the world - we are only a part of it.

We need to build peace, freedom, human rights, tolerance and promote the idea of a international society based upon the rule of law, on justice and equality - a truly united human family.

The 1981 Hunger Strikes remembered

As you all know this year marks the 20th anniversary of the 1981 hunger strike.

I want to commend everyone who established and participated in the 1981 committees, and who sought to celebrate the lives of the hunger strikers.

A few months ago I had the opportunity to bring a small number of people, most of whom had played a part in that desperate struggle 20 years ago, to visit Long Kesh.

It was an emotional visit for all of us and it brought back to my mind my visit to the prison hospital on July 29th 1981 along with Owen Carron and Seamus Ruddy of the IRSP.

By this time Bobby, Francie, Raymond, Patsy, Martin and Joe were dead.

We met Thomas McElwee, Laurence McKeown, Matt Devlin, Pat McGeown, Paddy Quinn and Mickey Devine and Bik McFarlane in the prison hospital. They all looked rough, prison-pale skin stretched across young skull-like faces, legs and arms indescribably thin, eyes with that penetrating look that I had often noticed among fellow prisoners in the past, and that Bobby Sands had described as "that awful stare, of the pierced or glazed eyes, the tell-tale sign of the rigours of torture."

As they smiled across the table at us, all my fears and apprehension vanished. Big Tom offered me a jug of water.

"Ar mhaith leat deoch uisce?" WOULD YOU LIKE A GLASS OF WATER?

"Ba mhaith," arsa mise. I WOULD, I SAID.

"Lean ar aghaidh, ta a lan uisce san ait seo," arsa se. DON'T WORRY, THERE'S A LOT OF WATER IN THIS PLACE.

We were left alone and began to discuss the hunger strike, the campaign outside, the British government's position and the hunger strikers' personal attitudes to events.

We outlined the situation to them. The lads were fully aware of all developments, but we persisted in detailing in a factual and harsh manner everything that had happened over the past few weeks. They sat quietly, smoking or sipping water, listening intently to what we had to say.

They were all crystal clear in their attitudes. There was no basis for a settlement.

The British government were still persisting in their refusal to move meaningfully on work, association, or segregation. Yes, they knew they could come off the hunger strike at any time. Yes, they knew that there would be no difficulties in explaining the end of the hunger strike. If there was an alternative to the strike, they told us they wouldn't be on it. Five years of protest was too much. A reasonable and common-sense approach by the British would end, permanently, all the prison protests.

They knew the score; they didn't want to die, but they needed a settlement of the issues that caused the hunger strike before they would end their fasts. No, they were not driven by a personal loyalty to each other.

Regardless of what the others chose to do, each was personally committed to the five demands and to the hunger strike. They were not under any duress.

I painted the darkest and blackest picture possible: "You could all be dead," I said. "Everyone left in this room when we leave will be dead."

"Sin é," THAT'S IT said somebody. "They won't break us. If we don't get the five demands, then the rest of the boys and the women will."

"We're right," declared another. "The British government is wrong and if they think they can break us they're wrong twice. Lean ar aghaidh. DON'T WORRY"

Bik arranged for us to go and see Kieran Doherty.

Doc was propped up on one elbow on his prison bed: his eyes, unseeing, scanned the cell as he heard us entering.

"Mise atá ann," said Brendan McFarlane. HERE I AM

"Ahh Bik, cad é mar atá tú?" arsa Doc. 'AH, BIK, HOW ARE YOU?' SAID Doc.

"Nílím romh dhona, agus tú féin?" 'NOT SO BAD, AND YOURSELF?'

"Tá mé go hiontach; tá daoine eile anseo? Cé?" 'I'M WONDERFUL; ARE THERE OTHER PEOPLE HERE? WHO?'

"Tá Gerry Adams, Owen Carron agus Seamus Ruddy anseo. Teastaíonn uatha caint leat." 'THERE ARE GERRY ADAMS, OWEN CARRON AND SEAMUS RUDDY HERE. I'M GOING TO SPEAK WITH HIM'.

"Gerry A', fáilte WELCOME." He greeted us all, his eyes following our voices. We crowded around the bed, the cell much too small for four visitors. I sat on the side of the bed. Doc, whom I hadn't seen in years, looked massive in his gauntness, as his eyes, fierce in their quiet defiance, scanned my face.

I spoke to him quietly and slowly, somewhat awed by the man's dignity and resolve and by the enormity of our mission.

He responded to my probing with patience.

"You know the score yourself," he said. "I've a week in me yet.

How is Kevin (Lynch) holding out?"

"You'll both be dead soon. I can go out now, Doc, and announce that it's over."

He paused momentarily and reflected, then: "We haven't got our five demands and that's the only way I'm coming off. Too many suffered for too long, too many good men dead. Thatcher can't break us. Lean ar aghaidh DON'T WORRY. I'm not a criminal."

I continued with my probing. Doc responded.

"For too long our people have been broken. The Free Staters, the church, the SDLP. We won't be broken. We'll get our five demands. If I'm dead well, the others will have them. I don't want to die, but that's up to the Brits. They think they can break us. Well they can't." He grinned self-consciously. "Tiocfaidh ár lá." ("Our day will come.")

"Thanks for coming in, I'm glad we had that wee yarn. Tell everyone, all the lads, all the women, I was asking for them" and he gripped my hand.

"Don't worry, we'll get our five demands. We'll break Thatcher. Lean ar aghaidh DON'T WORRY."

Outside Doc's cell, the screw led us in to speak to Kieran's father, Alfie, and his brother, Michael, who had just arrived to relieve Kieran's mother.

We spoke for about five minutes. I felt an immense solidarity with the Doherty family, broken-hearted, like all the families, as they watched Kieran die. Yet because they understood their son, they were prepared to accept his wishes and were completely committed to the five demands for which he was fasting.

Talking to Alfie, his eyes brimming with unshed tears, in the quiet cells in the H-Blocks of Long Kesh, I felt a raw hatred for the injustice that created this crisis.

I never saw Thomas McElwee, Mickey Devine, Kevin Lynch or Big Doc alive again.

How do you explain the Hunger strikes? How do you come to terms with what happened? It can be understood only if we appreciate the incorruptibility and unselfishness and generosity of the human spirit when that spirit is motivated by an ideal or an objective which is greater than itself. People are not born as heroes. The hunger strikers were ordinary people who in extraordinary circumstances brought our struggle to a moral platform which became a battle between them and the entire might of the British state.

One of the greatest achievements of the hunger strikers was that they set a moral standard for the conduct of struggle. I'm sure that this was not their intention but it is a fact. Their generosity commitment, idealism and unselfishness set an example for the rest of us to follow. We Irish, all 70 million of us across this globe are no petty people.

If our opponents, if our detractors, if our enemies want to understand us, if they want to understand our struggle, if they want to understand our commitment and our vision for the future, then let them come to understand the hunger strikers.

For the rest of us there is peace to be made, elections to be fought and freedom to be won.

As Brendan McFarlane sings in his song

We're stronger now

You showed us how

Freedom's fight can be won

If we all stand as one

Comrades, let us stand together and move forward together as one. Ar aghaidh linn LET'S MOVE FORWARD TOGETHER.

§ Presidential Address to the 99th Sinn Féin Ard Fheis 2004

Spell-checked, English-Gaelic version.

A chairde

Ba mhaith liom fáilte a chur roimh gach duine atá anseo inniu, na hoifigh, an ceannaireacht, na baill uilig agus chomh maith leis sin ár gcairde ón tír seo agus thar lear.

Tá súil agam go bhfuil sibh ag baint sult as an chaint agus díospoireacht thar an deireadh seachtaine.

I want to welcome all of you here to this very unique gathering, the Ard Fheis of the only all-Ireland political party on this island.

I want to greet our international visitors, our delegates, members and activists and our Friends of Sinn Féin visitors from the United States, Australia and Canada who do such a great job for us.

I want to extend a particular céad míle failte to our team of MLAs, those men and women newly elected to represent Sinn Féin in the Assembly in the North - if we had an Assembly in the North. Failte romhaibh uilig. WELCOME TO ALL OF YOU.

I also want to extend, on behalf of the Ard Fheis, a warm greeting to two people who cannot be here today but who are watching on RTE. Bheatha agus slainte BLESSINGS AND GREETINGS to Joe and Annie Cahill.

The process of change has been set to one side

A lot has happened since our last Ard Fheis.

Sinn Féin has become the largest pro-Agreement party in the North.

In the South increasing numbers of people are looking to us as an alternative to the self-serving politics of the conservative parties.

Little wonder that the more hysterical of our detractors are regurgitating the old propaganda nonsense of the past.

So, this party is once again in the eye of the storm, the main target of invective by all the other parties.

More importantly and of greater concern is that the process of change has been set to one side.

So today I will resist the temptation to react to the agenda put forward by our opponents. Today is a day for talking about our agenda.

Tá Sinn Féin ar an phairtí is sine ar an oileán seo. Tcífimid an bhliain seo chugainn ceiliúradh céad bliain ar an tsaol don phairtí seo. Tá muid iontach bródúil a bheith pairteach sa phairtí mór stairiúil seo.

Ach cosúil le stair na tíre seo tá stair Shinn Féin á scríobh go fóill. Tá an cuid is fearr le teacht go fóill.

The History Makers

Next year is the centenary year of the foundation of this party.

A hundred years is a long time in politics.

Yet the history of Sinn Féin continues to be in the making and you, the people assembled here, are among the history makers.

If I was asked to measure Sinn Féin's successes in our era, I would not only cite our political growth - the number of votes cast for us - though that is important.

I would also state that the success of a party like ours has to be measured by how much change we have brought about. And I believe that this has been considerable.

Other parties have more votes than us. They have been in power many times but what changes have they created?

A decade of change - Moving out of conflict into a better future

Let's look briefly at the situation a decade ago.

1993 was a violent year. Eighty-eight people lost their lives and many others were injured and maimed. Seventeen people died in the Shankill bombing and the Greysteel attacks alone.

It was also the year of the Hume/Adams initiative.

The Peace Process was emerging from a protracted bout of secret and private diplomacy involving Republicans, John Hume, the British and Irish Governments and influential Irish Americans.

There was a huge resistance from elements in both establishments on these islands to such developments.

Remember, this party was censored, denied the use of municipal buildings in Dublin city, and party colleagues and family members were killed. John Hume was stigmatised for daring to talk to us. His detractors included leading members of the coalition government and of his own party.

As you all know John Hume announced his retirement last month. I want to pay tribute to John. I extend best wishes to him and Pat, and wish them well for the future.

John Major, the British Prime Minister, was vehemently denying any knowledge of the Hume/Adams initiative. He declared that his stomach would 'turn-over' at the thought of dialogue with Republicans.

Predictably the Unionist leadership declared that they would not participate in dialogue. In November 1993 Ian Paisley announced that Unionism 'faced the greatest threat to the Union since the Home Rule crisis'.

At this time exactly 10 years ago, just two months into the new year of 1994, 8 people had already lost their lives.

I rehearse all of this today only to underscore the massive changes that have occurred and the progress that has been made.

While there are now very real and immediate difficulties in the peace process I can say without any fear of contradiction that we are still in a far better place than we were 10 years ago.

I can say without fear of contradiction that Irish Republicans have driven that process while others have tried to bring it to a halt.

All of this change has happened because of courageous and imaginative thinking in the early 1990s by Republicans and others.

Within Republicanism the debate about conflict resolution crystallised in the Sinn Fein peace strategy which was the catalyst for breaking the stalemate in the conflict in the North.

The key lesson from that period for Irish Republicans is that we did not allow ourselves to be locked into or paralysed by the immediacy of the conflict, by the hurt we suffered or by the short-sightedness of our opponents.

We sought to create a political alternative by initiating dialogue, by politically empowering our own constituency, by mobilising and campaigning in new and innovative ways.

We sought to bring an imaginative, creative and magnanimous approach to our political work.

We sought to engage our opponents and to understand their perspective.

We sought to over-come rather than sustain difficulties and differences.

Therein lies the key to the resolution of the current difficulties.

Firstly, everyone genuinely committed to the process has to recognise that the current situation is untenable in the longer term.

Secondly, we have to resolve that the improvements, hard won by dint of huge effort, will not be destroyed by those whose only vision of the future is the past.

Thirdly, there has to be an ongoing process of sustainable change.

In other words the peace process must deliver.

British are allowing anti-Agreement Unionists to dictate pace of change

Last April, the British government in their Joint Declaration with the Irish government acknowledged their failure to implement many outstanding elements of the Agreement.

They did so again in October.

In November Ian Paisley's DUP emerged as the strongest Unionist party.

That shift to the right within Unionism occurred because the UUP leadership allowed the rejectionists to set the agenda.

And worse than that the British government acquiesced to, and at times encouraged, this approach so that the process of change became dependant on the whim of a Unionist leader constantly looking over his shoulder at his rejectionist rivals.

Thus, for the last six years rather than fully enforcing the Agreement London has proceeded only at a pace, which Unionism and its own government agencies, have been prepared to tolerate.

This is the core difficulty in this process.

And now we are at our greatest crisis because we have no process of change.

At this time the process is static.

This process, any process by its nature cannot be static. It either moves forward or it moves back. We are determined that it moves forward. That is why we are arguing that the programme of change must continue.

The reality is that we do not have parity of esteem and equal treatment for different allegiances.

The Human Rights Commission is in a mess.

There is no Bill of Rights. Discrimination remains endemic. The Human Rights Commission failed the children of the Holy Cross Primary School in Ardoyne. The Chief Commissioner should go and go now.

We still do not have the new beginning to policing and justice promised in the Good Friday Agreement.

Where stands the promised demilitarisation of our society when the British Army is still in occupation of Republican heartlands?

There is a need for stable political institutions with the people's elected representatives making decisions on important issues, which affect all our lives, across a range of social and economic issues.

The suspension of these institutions must be lifted. It is a breach of the Agreement.

So we have our work cut out for us. Bringing the process as far as it has come has not been easy.

It will not be easy in the time ahead.

It will challenge us.

But the challenges are not only for Republicans.

The British state in Ireland is a contrived political entity. It was created and moulded to ensure a permanent Unionist majority. It is entirely Unionist in its ethos, symbolism and management. So any attempt to bring about equality is bound to be very difficult.

And this isn't just about the section of people in the North who are Unionist. I think that they know that London has little loyalty to them.

They distrust London even more than nationalists. And correctly so. London acts and will always act in London's interests.

But the senior policy makers within the British system and particularly those unaccountable branches of the so-called security agencies are entirely anti-Irish, anti-Republican and anti-democratic.

Their version of the peace process had a very different script from the one that has been written in recent years.

In their script the SDLP and the Ulster Unionist Party were to form the so-called centre ground. In essence British policy is about modernising the union so that a section of Protestants and Catholics in the North, and these are British government words, not mine, could be persuaded to support the union.

Sinn Féin was to be perhaps a significant but nonetheless small, incohesive element of an anaemic political system in the North.

But it hasn't turned out like that. Sinn Féin is now within 15,000 votes of being the largest party.

We have the right to the position of the Deputy First Minister.

The Good Friday Agreement has also correctly been seen as an instrument of change, real change in real ways in peoples, lives.

All of this is a nightmare to the securocrats.

The truth on collusion must be revealed

Despite their protestations to the contrary, so far the Good Friday Agreement has been too big a challenge for the British government, or perhaps more accurately it is a bridge too far for its agencies.

And let there be no doubt about the continuing power and influence of these elements.

The refusal to co-operate with a range of investigations into state and state-sponsored violence is symptomatic of a culture of concealment that infects the entire British system.

They have obstructed the Saville Inquiry into the events of Bloody Sunday, the Barron Inquiry into the Dublin and Monaghan bombings; they have refused to initiate full and independent inquiries into a number of controversial killings, and vital inquest evidence in respect of numerous state and state-linked killings is being withheld by the PSNI and the Chief Constable Hugh Orde.

The British government has also refused to publish the Cory Report. 15 years after the death of Pat Finucane his family is still waiting for the truth.

Bhí baint láidir ag rialtas na Breataine i ndúnmarú na céadta daoine in sa tír seo. Bhí siad ag comhoibriú leis na gasraí dílseacha agus tá siad ag obair leo go fóill.

Bhí na grúpaí marfacha seo ag obair lámh le chéile leis na péas agus le arm na Sasann agus le polaiteoirí is stat seirbhísí den leibhéal is airde i rialtas na Sasann.

Mharaigh siad na céadta poblachtánaigh, náisiúnnaigh, caitlicigh.

Dúnmaríodh 20 baill de Shinn Féin, ionadaithe tófa san aireamh, maraíodh ár gcairde agus baill clanna san fheachtas fíochmhar de sceimhle polaitiúil.

Collusion - the control, resourcing and direction of Unionist death squads by British state agencies - was sanctioned at the highest level of the British government.

It resulted in the deaths of hundreds of Republicans, nationalists and Catholics.

Twenty members of Sinn Féin, including elected Sinn Féin representatives, our family members and friends were killed in a vicious campaign of political terror.

This is a human rights scandal, which anywhere else would have brought down governments.

The murder of citizens through collusion with Unionist death squads has been and remains British state policy in Ireland. The apparatus is still in existence.

Earlier this month 100 families of victims of collusion took their campaign for the truth to London.

Some of them are with us today. I want to acknowledge and support them.

Irish government must represent Irish national interests

Issues of inequality and injustice will continue to demand our attention. That is why an Irish government must have additional and more far-reaching strategic objectives than a British government.

British government strategy aims first and foremost to serve British national interests.

Are Irish national interests the primary focus of Irish government strategy, now or over the past 5, or 30, or 80 years? The answer, unfortunately, is no. The Barron report is eloquent, tragic, pathetic testimony to that.

Conservative and neo-Unionist elements in the South serve only their own narrow interests which in some cases are fundamentally anti-Republican and pro-partitionist; and at times against the national interest. They are comfortable with the status quo. It has served them well.

So the strength and energy of an alternative, radical Republican view is as important in the South as in the North.

But we don't have all the answers and in our endeavours to make progress we readily recognise that Republicans are not exempt from criticism. I have consistently acknowledged this in a very public way and I do so again today.

Irish people are not stupid. We can tell the difference between slick opportunism and legitimate comment; between people doing their best to make progress and people doing their best to prevent it.

Republicans take risks and governments and Unionists walk away

The outworking of the British government's strategy was brought very much into stark profile when Mr. Trimble aborted the sequence of initiatives agreed on October 21st last year, after Republicans honoured commitments as part of an agreed sequence of statements and actions. This included the IRA putting its third and largest amount of arms beyond use.

But Mr. Trimble wasn't the only one to walk away from his commitments.

He was joined by the British and Irish governments and neither one of them have moved one inch since then on the undertakings they gave.

Only Sinn Féin and the IRA upheld their parts of the agreed sequence.

This has caused profound difficulties for the Sinn Féin leadership. Many Republicans have raised what they and I consider to be reasonable questions about our handling of that episode. There was, as one comrade put it to me, a question over the decisions made by us and by the Army leadership. 'Surely you knew better than to depend on David Trimble? Did you really expect the two governments to keep their commitments?' 'Why is it always Republicans who have to take initiatives?'

And the irony of it all is that there is no doubt, even among its detractors and opponents, about the significance of the IRA's act.

Governments and rejectionist Unionists alike have acknowledged this fact.

Despite what happened subsequently I want to make it clear that I stand over the remarks I made that day.

I set out a peaceful direction for Republicans because I believe that is the proper position.

I will argue that position with anyone, in any place and at any time.

But the British Prime Minister and the Taoiseach must deliver also.

They must stand up to the rejectionists.

They too must take risks for peace.

Leadership is needed

There is an understandable focus on the DUP at this time. It is right that their position should be explored. Sinn Féin is for that. But we're against time wasting.

The process of change and the rights of citizens cannot wait for Ian Paisley to embrace the concept of equality.

The two governments have to face up to that reality.

They also have to face up to the reality that Republicans have very little confidence in them and their commitment to the Good Friday Agreement at this time.

So, the governments have to be energetic in how they approach the next phase.

This places a heavy responsibility on them - and especially on Mr. Ahern and Mr. Blair - to provide the essential political leadership that this dangerous crisis urgently demands.

This means that the two governments have to honour their obligations made in the Agreement, made in last year's Joint Declaration and in subsequent discussions.

They know that a vacuum will encourage those who want to tear down this process. We only have to look to the Middle East and the terrible events there to realise the danger of a stalled peace process.

For our part Republicans recognise that building peace is a collective endeavour.

We who want to see the maximum change are called upon to take the greatest risks.

So there can be no doubt if the two governments apply themselves to acts of completion of the Good Friday Agreement then others must do likewise.

In fact the IRA leadership clearly put its position on the public record in May last year when it said that the full and irreversible implementation of the Agreement and other commitments will provide a context in which it can proceed to definitively set aside arms to further its political objectives.

Such a commitment would have been unimaginable ten years ago.

So too would the last decade of IRA cessations.

The opportunity provided by these developments should not be wasted.

This party is actively working to ensure this.

But threats, ultimatums, or the imposing of preconditions can be no part of this. Holding up a process which is essentially about basic rights and modest entitlements is totally counter-productive.

No matter how daunting, tedious and frustrating this process may be for the governments and the rest of us there is no alternative way forward.

The resolution of difficulties will only be found through dialogue and keeping commitments.

Efforts to put Sinn Féin under pressure are a waste of time.

I state that as a fact, plainly and simply, not through any wish to be macho.

Republicans are committed to this process by choice. We want it to work. We intend to make it work. But we will not be bullied or denied our rights.

Two of the great challenges facing us nationally are to get a British government to embrace a strategy to bring an end to the union and to work with the representatives of the people of this island to bring about a united and independent Ireland.

But why should a British government move on these democratic objectives or even on the Good Friday Agreement when others will accept less?

The Irish government in particular should know that nationalists and Republicans look to them to persuade the British government on these matters.

The Irish government is a co-guarantor of the Good Friday Agreement and that Agreement is both an international treaty and a part of the Irish Constitution.

Citizens want delivery on those issues, which are directly the responsibility of the Irish Government.

This includes the status of the Irish language and proper funding and resourcing for it.

There is also the issue of prisoners within this jurisdiction who should have been released under the terms of the Good Friday Agreement.

And most importantly the right of Northerners to have representation and participation in political institutions in Dublin continues to be withheld.

The Taoiseach needs to explain why this is so? He needs to sustain and build confidence in the peace process and in politics - all the more so when others seek to undermine the process.

He should act energetically and consistently on his commitments. He should resist and confront the securocrat agenda, which now openly demands a return to exclusion and repression - to the failed policies of the past.

Dialogue must be about change and equality

At the same time all of us who share the Republican ideal are continuously challenged by the need to agree with Unionism about how we should live together on this island.

Caithfidh muid smaoineadh ar siombalachas an bhrat náisiúnta - agus an dóigh chun aontas is síochán -idir buí agus glas - a chur i gcrích.

Caithfidh muid glacadh go mothaíonn aontachtóirí faoi bhagairt ó phobhachtachas agus náisiúnachas.

Tá eagla ar aontachtóirí dá mbeadh an seans ag poblachtánaigh agus náisiúnaigh go gcaithfimis leo mar saoránaigh den darna leibhéal.

Ní dhéanfaimis a leithid agus ní dheanfaidh.

Tá na laethanta mar soránaigh darna aicme críochnaithe.

Nuair a éilimid comhionannas, tá muid ag éileamh comhionannas do gach aon duine.

How do we make the symbolism of our national flag - unity and peace between orange and green - a reality?

We must acknowledge that Unionists feel threatened by Republicanism and nationalism.

Unionists fear that if given the chance Republicans and nationalists would treat them as second-class citizens.

We would not, and we will not. The days of second-class citizens are over.

When we demand equality, we demand equality for everyone.

So, these fears must be dealt with.

We have that duty, as do the leaders of Unionism.

For this reason Irish Republicans are ready to do business with the various Unionist camps.

The DUP and the UUP, the two largest Unionist parties, are involved in a cynical, frustrating exercise in macho posturing.

Ian Paisley and David Trimble are fighting for control of Unionism, both trying to prove how tough they are. And while they play their power games, the peace process stalls, and withers.

Sooner or later, we and the Unionists must begin a real dialogue, an anti-sectarian dialogue, designed to move us all beyond the impasse of the present into a living, hopeful future in which they, as well as we, tell the British government to butt-out; that no longer will London, which is not trusted or respected by any constituency in Ireland, set the terms for us.

The DUP is now the senior Unionist party.

The logic of its position is that it should be in government with Sinn Féin.

Republicans are not naïve about the DUP.

We know that they want to minimise the process of change.

But the DUP also knows that if it wants a return to sustainable devolved administration it will be with Sinn Féin in government and it will be with the all-Ireland model contained in the Good Friday Agreement.

So, our party is prepared to explore the DUP position, not because we have any illusions about Mr. Paisley's position, but because we have confidence in our own position and because one of our objectives is for a strategic alliance with Unionism for the benefit of all our people.

We recognise and respect the mandate of the DUP, they must recognise and respect our mandate.

So too must the parties here in the South.

Remember, in the Assembly elections we didn't compete only with the Unionists and the SDLP. Fianna Fáil, the PDs, Fine Gael and the Labour Party opposed us.

In what was a great national effort by our activists from all over this island we roundly defeated them all.

So the battle lines have been drawn for the next contest. Between now and June and the local government and European Union elections we can expect more nonsense from Minister McDowell.

The Taoiseach and Fianna Fáil should not be part of this short-sighted anti-Republican agenda. These elections are important for us and the other parties but they are not more important than the peace process.

This isn't to say that we should not defend ourselves and the integrity of our party. On the contrary we will do that with gusto. We will also put before the people our record, our policies, our agenda for change.

I never take voters for granted but I have a feeling that Sinn Féin is going to advance again at local level.

I wish all our candidates well and look forward to another national effort to build Republican politics, to send a clear message to our opponents and to consolidate support for our peace strategy.

Another Europe is possible

The European Union elections have already begun. Sinn Féin is the only party contesting on an all-Ireland basis.

Sinn Féin wants a Europe of equals.

We will not accept an EU where more than 55 million people face poverty and social exclusion.

An EU whose combined military spending is almost three times higher than the global development aid budget.

We, who live in this part of the world, have a huge responsibility towards our brothers and sisters in other parts of the world.

There can be no doubt that the greatest global sources of insecurity are disease, poverty, hunger and injustice.

So, I welcome this week's Dublin Declaration. It is a step in the right direction.

Global military spending remains 14 times higher than the global development aid budget. This is a disgrace when you consider that 30,000 children in Africa and in other parts of the world die each day.

Eliminating poverty is not impossible.

It requires far-sighted, progressive global leadership.

It means taking the actions which are necessary and making these an international priority.

There is also a need to end wars.

It is an outrage that the occupation of Iraq continues, it is an outrage that the conflict in the Middle East continues and that the suffering of the Palestinian people continues to be largely ignored.

The apartheid wall is a human rights outrage. It is contrary to international law and it must come down.

So, we want to be part of a European Union that leads by example on human rights, on demilitarisation and conflict resolution.

Sinn Féin is pro-Europe but we want to be part of a European Union that defers to and supports the United Nations, a European Union that leads the way in the cancellation of debt in the developing world, that is nuclear weapons-free, that protects the environment, and that trades fairly with other regions.

We want a mandate to argue that the European Union should promote and work towards the full spectrum of national, collective and individual rights.

We want to defend our fishing industry, our farmers, and our small indigenous businesses.

I also have to say that I totally reject the Irish government's attitude to the status of the Irish language within the EU. It is totally unacceptable that during the Irish Presidency of the Union the government has refused to move in order to secure official status for the Irish language as a working language.

The Nice Treaty referendums are proof that our view is shared by almost 40% of the electorate.

I want to appeal to voters who traditionally vote for the other parties to look at the record of those parties.

I want to appeal to them to vote for the only all-Ireland team.

In the North we have Bairbre de Brún, South - David Cullinane; North West - Pearse Doherty; East - John Dwyer; and Dublin - Mary Lou McDonald.

Transforming Irish society

The past decade has been the decade of the peace process in Ireland.

The politics of Sinn Féin's peace strategy is to empower people.

But the past decade has also been the decade of tribunals when the corrupt relationship between leading politicians in this State and big business was exposed as never before.

Most of the scandals centred on planning.

Corrupt politicians, land speculators and property developers profited from the misery of others.

Communities suffered from atrociously sub-standard housing in bleak estates without facilities. They endured the worst of the drugs scourge and the poverty and the unemployment of the 1980s and early 90s.

This party stood shoulder to shoulder with those people.

We opposed cuts in health and education. We fought for facilities and decent homes. We stood up to the drugs barons. We organised in the most disadvantaged neighbourhoods.

We protested at the senior politicians who grew rich through criminality while they cynically urged the rest of us to tighten our belts.

Since then of course and for the last decade the wealth of this state has been greater than at any time in its history. We welcome that.

Do we have better schools, better hospitals, affordable homes?

Have people with disabilities benefited? No.

May I in an entirely non-party political way applaud all of those people who cherish those citizens with disabilities. The Special Olympics was the best event in this country last year. I thank everyone involved especially the athletes and the voluntary workers.

Today, despite the wealth created, children and teachers are forced to teach and to learn in substandard school buildings.

Today land speculators and property developers benefit from Government policy while young people who have obtained a mortgage are working all hours to keep up payments.

Those who are most in need and who can least afford to pay for housing are left at the end of the line.

There are nearly 50,000 family housing units - representing some 130,000 people - on the local authority housing lists.

There are families living in overcrowded homes, and tenants living in sub-standard accommodation for which they are paying exorbitant rents.

Within walking distance of this Ard Fheis there are homeless people preparing to sleep rough in doorways in one of the wealthiest cities in the world.

The housing crisis is a direct result of the disastrous housing policy of this coalition government.

Our TDs have proposed a constitutional amendment to enshrine the right to housing in the Constitution and Sinn Féin is committed to the implementation of that right in law and in bricks and mortar for all who need homes.

During the general election in 2002 Fianna Fáil promised the people that if they were re-elected they would, and I quote 'permanently end waiting lists in our hospitals within two years'.

That two years is up in ten week's time.

Do you think they'll do it in ten weeks?

Ten months?

Or in the remainder of their term of office?

Not a chance.

Over 27,000 people are languishing on waiting lists.

Staff in Accident and Emergency departments are struggling to cope.

There is a bed shortage and a staff shortage in our public hospitals while the private health business flourishes.

I believe it is an obscenity that a public patient diagnosed with a serious illness requiring surgery must join a massive queue while those who have the money to do so can skip the queue and receive private hospital care almost immediately.

That is the reality of the two-tier health service in this State. It is wrong.

Let us send a clear message from this Ard Fheis that Sinn Féin is in the business of righting these wrongs.

People have the right to a home, to a job, to education, and to health care from the cradle to the grave.

Campaigning on all of these issues is the core of Sinn Féin activism. It is the key to bringing about change now.

By acting locally, while thinking nationally we tie together the great historic elements of our philosophy.

Tá a lan obair le deanamh againn. WE ARE DOING A LOT OF WORK.

Tá páirt ag gach duine, is cuma cé chomh mór nó cé chomh beag. EVERYBODY HAS A PART, NO MATTER HOW BIG OR SMALL.

We as individual Republicans do not put ourselves above anyone else.

Equality is the key.

We are committed to building the Ireland that Bobby Sands, Maire Drumm, James Connolly and Pádraig Pearse and their comrades gave their lives for, an Ireland of equals, a united and free Ireland.

The downside of the 100 years of Sinn Féin is that we have yet to achieve our objectives.

The upside is that we are capable of doing so. In fact what this generation of Republicans is attempting is unprecedented.

We are seeking energetically to build the peace while vigorously debating and campaigning on social and economic questions.

We are endeavouring to bring an end to the union, while constructing a political party that will both improve conditions now and be ready to take power in the future, to shape a new Ireland, in collaboration with its people, into a truly national and egalitarian republic on this whole island.

We have a lot to do.

Ar aghaidh linn. LET'S MOVE FORWARD.

Let's go out and do it.

Appendix 2 – Paisley Corpus

§ Leader's Speech to the Annual DUP Conference 1984

Spell-checked version.

A sense of history always gives a sense of destiny. It is most fitting therefore that I commence my speech to this conference with a word, a reminder, about our origins. The founders of our party were to the fore at the commencement of the present Ulster crisis warning the people of Ulster about what really was happening. It was our endeavour to help forward the establishment of a united Unionist front. This has always been our aim, irrespective of whether it was in the best interest of our party or not.

The establishment of a united Unionist front. This has always been our aim, irrespective of whether it was in the best interest of our party or not. Unfortunately the official Unionists only co-operated in Unionist unity when their electoral fortunes waned but when the chestnuts had been pulled out of the fire for them they reverted quickly back to their Sinn Fein policy "we ourselves alone".

Let me put it firmly on the record that the first Unionist unity Forum, the Unionist alliance, came into being as a result of the efforts of the founders of the Democratic Unionist party. Let me also remind you that the united Ulster Unionist council was born in my room in Stormont. In true succession to Carson Unionism the party itself was a coalition of Unionists interests with a coming together of the four members of the Stormont Parliament, Mr Desmond Boal, M.P. for Shankill, an official Unionist, Mr Johnny McQuade, M.P. for Woodvale, an official Unionist, the rev. William Beattie, M.P., for South Antrim and myself the M.P. for O'Neil's old seat - Bannside - both of us at that time being protestant Unionists. Others who pledged with up-lifted hand to join us fell by the way-side.

The Democratic Unionist Party was born in the throws of the agonies of Ulster. Its formation was actually announced by me on the Shankill Road after an I.R.A. bombing and murder attack. Its principles were and are simple.

One, to uphold and maintain the Constitution of Northern Ireland as an integral part of the United Kingdom as at present constituted. Two, to impose and maintain the rule of law in all areas of Northern Ireland so that all citizens are not only equal under the law but are equally subject to it. Three, to devise and urge a policy of social betterment and equal opportunity for all sections of the community. In the economic, education and social welfare spheres.

The Democratic Unionist Party is not an ordinary staid political party but rather a political crusade to achieve and maintain these vitally important objectives. It is not and must not become, because of its voting strength, an establishment party with its members in office more and more practising a conforming role.

The other Unionist party would like us to be like them, a party, whose leadership and membership excel in the mediocre and whose representatives will hold on to office and salary at the expense of political conviction integrity and honour.

They boast that their respectability has gained Ulster a place and made us friends throughout the world. Not so, their respectability dug Stormont's grave, betrayed the Carson, Craigavon tradition, sold out the 'b' specials, disarmed the police, banned the Loyalist orders from parading, handed Stormont over to Republican squatters in the power-sharing executive and signed Ulster's Munich betrayal paper - the Sunningdale Agreement.

When one views some of these political "has beens" surfacing again in the official Unionist party one wonders what the end of the story is going to be.

The way of conformity to the deadening routine of establishment politics is not for us. The chain of office, the seat of administration power and the trappings of the prestige of being elected representatives have left a deadening hand on many who were once strong and true Loyalists and Unionist representatives. We must guard against this contagious and paralysing plague.

As Ulster faces her greatest challenge our party has surely come to the kingdom for such a time as this. This challenge however is our opportunity, the opportunity to give determined,

resolute, imaginative and courageous leadership to our people and by so doing save not only ourselves but our beloved province for further generations.

The I.R.A./Sinn Fein murder plot

Mr John Taylor speaking recently in Bangor informed his audience that Sinn Fein was no threat and in a press release a few days ago talked about our battle with Sinn Fein as a sham fight. Let me in the name of the Ulster Protestants inform Mr Taylor that the widows of Ulster are not sham widows that the orphans of Ulster are not sham orphans that the graves of Ulster stalwarts are not sham graves. our security forces are not fighting a sham enemy, the I.R.A. bombs are not sham bombs, the I.R.A. bullets are not sham bullets, the tears of Ulster's bereaved are not sham tears. Mr Taylor would not have been a member of the European assembly if he had not received thousands of my transfer votes yet in the interests not of Ulster, not even of the party to which he belongs but in the interests of one John David Taylor he is prepared to minimise the greatest threat to our constitutional position - the rapid and increasing rise of Sinn Fein's political strength at the polls. Mr Taylor in forwarding his own interest even stoops so low as to denounce as a gimmick those who display the Union Jack and nail their loyalty and political creed to the post in this simple but resolute message "Ulster is British". In this time of crisis and challenge we will leave Mr Taylor to his vain attempt to turn Loyalist against Loyalist and Unionist against Unionist. we will leave him to wander aimlessly in that dreadful political habitat of his own making his advocacy of a nine county independent Ulster outside the U.K., his betrayal of the 'b' specials, his disarming of the R.U.C., his banning of Loyalist parades aid his winning of the wooden spoon for taking 8 months to make his maiden speech in the house of commons and to be so unknown there as to have the speaker gall him twice by the name of Mr John Hume. We will leave him in the company of Sinn Fein as a fellow Stormont boycotter. One thing I ask of Mr Taylor that he now declares whether he wants any of my transfer votes at this election. It is his duty to make his position absolutely clear on that issue. The I.R.A. Sinn Fein candidate Danny Morrison must be totally humiliated at the election on the 14th of June. The only way that this can be done is for a massive protestant and Unionist vote to be recorded in my favour. That will increase the number of votes required to make the quota and as a result the Sinn Fein/I.R.A. candidate can be smashed and the election fortunes of Sinn Fein receive a solid and effective set-back. The vote that will be scrutinised throughout the world at this election will not be the votes cast for John David Taylor but the vote cast in favour of Ian Paisley. For that vote will give to the world in plain unmistakable language the courageous and resolute determination of the Ulster people not to give in to the I.R.A. campaign of murder, not to bow the knee to the ultimatum from the Dublin Forum and never to surrender their place completely outside the Irish Republic and firmly inside this United Kingdom. It is for Ulster's sake and not for any personal desire of mine that I am asking for this massive vote on the 14th of June. Anyone who studies the previous election figures for Europe will know that I am the only Unionist candidate in the field that can achieve this and I am asking the people of Ulster at this time to give me their number 1 preference vote. The reason being that by so doing Sinn Fein can be smashed at the polls. remember this that if there is not this humiliation of Sinn Fein at the polls then a weak-kneed spineless British administration surrounded in Parliament by many who hate and detest Ulster (and let us spell it out plainly) will seek to bolster up what they call constitutional nationalism at the expense of a Unionist majority in Northern Ireland. As we expect and demand Mr prior to defeat the I.R.A. terrorists so we must defeat Sinn Fein at the polls.

The official Unionist leadership is on record during the past few days of talking about going soft against the S.D.L.P. the Godfather of the Forum report. I must say that this party which I lead will never go soft against any form of Republicanism. Republicanism is anathema to us and we will fight it at the polls continually and use the democratic process for its defeat and overthrow. Could I also make a comment upon this misnomer that has now been freely bandied about by political commentators and politicians "constitutional nationalists"? A person who is a constitutionalist will give their support to the security forces of the legitimate state under which they live. Those nationalists who claim to be constitutional nationalists do not give their support to the security forces of our province and that includes the S.D.L.P. in fact the most blatant demonstration of black-mail in the whole Irish Forum report, is found in paragraph 4.5. Let me read it to you:

"Nationalists for the most part do not identify with the police and the security forces. It is clear that the police will not be accepted... until there is a change in the political context in which they have to operate..."

So it is clear that those who claim to be constitutional nationalists are issuing this black-mailing threat to the British government and to the Ulster Loyalist and Unionist people. If you don't agree to a united Ireland then our people will not accept the legitimate security forces operating in the province.

It is self evident now that the Irish Forum rides on the back of I.R.A. terror if there had been no I.R.A. terrorism there would be no Irish Forum. So the Irish Forum has a vested interest in I.R.A. terrorism and is using it now in an attempt to blackmail the British administration. Hence everyone of us must dedicate ourselves in the coming weeks of this election to a great crusade, everyone of us must be a political activist, everyone of us must leave no stone unturned to smash the I.R.A. and to give the answer to the world that Ulster will not consent to an annexation of her territory to be ruled by Dublin, under the heel of Dublin rule we will never ever bow our necks.

The Irish Forum

Let me turn for a moment to the report of the New Ireland Forum there is nothing new about the Ireland envisages. Instead of being a way forward it is a way back, in fact the foreign minister as a fine Gail member of the Dail talks about a return to civil war so of course he is looking backward and not forward. The Forum's report is as green as green as green as Mr Haughey can make it. One thing and one thing only is the solution to the Irish problem in their findings and that is a unitary state. Northern Ireland forced against its will outside the United Kingdom and forced against its will into an all-Ireland Republic. In the coming months a world wide propaganda campaign will be carried out. Its aim is to crucify Ulster on this S.D.L.P. cross of the Dublin Forum and then to bury us in the tomb of an Irish Republic. This S.D.L.P. crown of thorns, no man shall press on Ulster's brow and the Irish Republic is a tomb in which we refuse to be buried. These grapes from the thorns of Haughey we will not eat and these figs from the thistles of Fitzgerald we will not partake of.

The report which on the one hand states that Irish unity can only be brought about on a freely negotiated democratic basis and then faces up to the fact that that consent does not exist in Northern Ireland, yet demands that "the British government should create the frame-work and atmosphere within which such negotiation should take place", is in reality a document of duplicity, falsehood and hypocrisy and no right thinking Democrat could treat it seriously. Of course we know that it has no respect for the consent of the Ulster people for at the heart of this document lies the trust that the consent of the Ulster people must be destroyed and that their right to remain outside a united Ireland must be overthrown.

I challenge Mr Hume at the coming election to secure for his proposals the consent that they need and if he does not obtain that consent and he knows that he will not obtain that consent then let them cease from this campaign that can bring no jobs, no success, no alleviation to Ulster woes and let him turn to constructive politics by coming to the assembly and debating, not in a foreign capital, the future of the Northern Ireland people, with the other elected representatives of the Ulster people. It is our duty to seek ways for their future by having meaningful discussions and debate with the other elected representatives of the Northern Ireland people. It is the Unionist people only who have faced up to the reality of the situation. They realise that they cannot return to the old Stormont form of government with its senate and its house of commons and having faced up to that they brought in the convention report while rightly rejecting power sharing. A report which offered to minority parties a role unparalleled in any democratic state throughout the whole of civilisation by turning their minority into an equality with the majority, on the committees of a Northern Ireland Parliament and guaranteeing the minority certain chairmanships of those committees. That generous offer was spurned but the Unionist people are still prepared in the interests of Ulster, its stability, its future and the well being of all its people, Roman Catholic and protestant alike to give that special position within the Parliamentary frame-work to the minority. I ask the S.D.L.P. to carefully consider. Surely here is a ground for discussion a proposal for debate and a place for some forward movement. there is moreover a way whereby without any executive, legislative power could be devolved to the Northern Ireland assembly so that we could have a real say in making the laws that govern our province, what is more there are many levels of administrative matters that effect the everyday life of the people of Northern Ireland, matters

concerning agriculture, the environment, education, health and social services that could be administered in Northern Ireland by Northern Ireland's elected representatives. My party would welcome a bill of rights guaranteeing the rights of every citizen in Northern Ireland whether they belong to the minority or to the majority or whether they belong to a minority within the majority community, or a minority within the minority, because the very ethos of Protestantism is civil and religious liberty for all men.

How fortunate for us at this time that we have an elected representative body in Northern Ireland that has statutory powers under the Westminster Parliament to put up proposals for the future good government and administration of our province.

Let every elected representative who believes in the democratic process and pays lip allegiance to that process get into the assembly. Let there be no longer a boycott of this very important body. A body that can make such representations and has the power under statute so to do. The solution to Northern Ireland's problem lies within itself and surely as we see some hopeful signs in the economy of this province and surely as we face the difficult days that lie ahead every elected representative has a solid duty and responsibility to the electorate to put forward as best as they can efforts to get us out of the stalemate and carry us forward to better days.

I myself, and my constituency work shows it across this province, want to see the best possible deal for every citizen of Northern Ireland whether he be Protestant or Roman Catholic. I care not where he may hang his hat on Sunday I care that every citizen may have a future. A future in a democracy where as the old prophet described it every man can sit down under the fig tree without fear or threat to enjoy what is rightfully his.

In the economic field let me say that the Democratic Unionist Party will not take from the mouth of labour the bread it has so strenuously earned. We will see to it that those that labour will get a just reward for their labours. I believe that the lowest rate of taxation should be on the necessities of life and that the highest rate of taxation should be on the luxuries of life and there is a standard beneath which we should not permit any of the citizens of this country to fall.

I am convinced that we should not at this time follow the Whitehall overlords I believe that Ulster should lead. We should be taking the lead at this time leading instead of following Whitehall. Authority, political authority must be derived from the people. Only the elected representatives of Northern Ireland have that authority from the people of Northern Ireland. We alone are answerable to the people of Northern Ireland. Therefore the Westminster overlords must recognise the authority that is vested in us. It is not for them to try by any means fair or foul to undermine the authority vested in the public representatives of the Northern Ireland people. They should be seeking to strengthen those who have that authority vested in them and that is why James Prior and Margaret Thatcher should be at this time encouraging those who are seeking for a solution firmly within the U.K. let me say to them that if they try in any way to undermine the expressed democratic will of the vast majority of Ulster people including many Roman Catholic people who have voted for the Union. Then their actions will not be tolerated in this province, they have a responsibility and their responsibility is to abide by the will, the democratically expressed will of the Northern Ireland people. Let the Dublin leaders remember this that there will not be and cannot be any surrender as far as Ulster is concerned and let them also know that it is not Jim Prior that they will have to deal with in the final analysis but the tough resolute determined Protestants of Ulster. Yes and after all the loud professions of honesty and goodwill and a desire to understand the convictions of the Ulster Protestants let them take the two steps necessary to have a proper neighbourly relationship between the two parts of this island.

Let them delete from their Constitution their claim over this territory and their claim to make laws for this territory. Let them also sign the convention for the prevention of terrorism as has been enacted by the Council of Europe in which both they and we are members, so that no part of Ireland will give a safe hiding place to anyone who has put his hand to deeds of blood and violence anywhere in this island.

In taking those two steps the Republic can demonstrate in a tangible manner that they do want to live in neighbouring relations with the North. Let the people of the South of Ireland develop as they have their will not be hindered by us in the North, but let us develop the way we want to develop so that both parts of Ireland adhering to the democratic process will secure for all the people who reside in their respected territory the prosperity and the future that we all want to have.

I have one final word. Let all men know North and South that truth is omnipotent and will finally triumph no matter how hard the way, truth will have to take to climb the hill, no matter what days of darkness and days of disappointment it may have to face, yet at the end truth will stand triumphant on the summit of every hill of difficulty.

I am confident that those who are dedicated to truth, those who are dedicated to those principles that are written into the Constitution of this party to maintain the rule of law in all areas so that all citizens are not only equal under the law but are equally subject to it and to devise and urge a policy of social betterment and opportunity for all sections of the community in the economic, educational and social welfare spheres I believe that those who hold those principles of truth will finally and fully be victorious. May God speed that day so that the people of this war torn province who have endured so much agony so much bloodshed so much hardship and so much misrepresentation will once again walk proudly in the paths of prosperity and in the ways of peace.

§ Leader's Speech to the Annual DUP Conference 1993

Spell-checked version.

When I was a boy and watched the Orange men march past on the 12th of July I was impressed by banner which portrayed a Biblical scene - the Incident of Ruth the Moabitess and her faithful pledge to her distressed mother-in-law Naomi.

It was entitled "The Pledge of Loyal Ulster".

"And Ruth said, intreat me not to leave thee, or to return from following after thee: for whither thou goest, I will go; and where thou lodgest, I will lodge: thy people shall be my people, and thy God my God: Where thou diest, will I die, and there will I be buried: the Lord do so to me, and more also, if ought but death part thee and me."

(Ruth 1: 16 & 17)

Over and over again Ulster paid the price of the redeeming of that pledge.

In 1641 they redeemed it in rivers of blood in that murderous scheme to exterminate Protestants forever, from Northern Ireland. Like France, Ulster had its dark St. Bartholomew massacre.

In 1688-1690 they redeemed it again by their sacrifices in the defence of the Maiden City and by their courage, valour and unflinching dedication saved not only themselves but the whole of the United Kingdom.

In World War One they redeemed it so magnificently on the poppied fields of Flanders. At the Somme they became a spectacle to Almighty God, to angels, devils and all mankind by a crimsoned heroism unsurpassed and unsurpassable.

In World War Two when the world was darkened by the hell of Nazism and when the Irish Republic acted the part of a hyena to the Fascist wild beast happy and ready to pick the bones of its victims, Ulster again with great honour redeemed her pledge.

So much so that Winston Churchill, the British Bull Dog and at one time no friend of Ulster, paid the following most eloquent and glowing tribute.

"MR CHURCHILL ON USE OF PORTS - It is announced from 10 Downing Street that the King has approved the Right Hon. J.M. Andrews, M.P., be appointed a Member of the Order of the Companions of Honour.

"The following letter has been sent by the Prime Minister to Mr. Andrews on his relinquishing the office of Prime Minister of Northern Ireland:

"I am indeed sorry that the ties which have been so warmly established between us in our public work should have to be broken. After your long services to Northern Ireland as Minister of Labour and as Minister of Finance, you became Prime Minister in December, 1940. That was a dark and dangerous hour. We were alone, and had to face single-handed the full fury of the German attack, raining down death and destruction on our cities and, still more deadly, seeking to strangle our life by cutting off the entry to our ports of the ships which brought us our food and the weapons we so sorely needed.

Only one great channel of entry remained open. That channel remained open because loyal Ulster gave us the full use of the Northern Irish ports and waters, and thus ensured the free working of the Clyde and the Mersey. But for the loyalty of Northern Ireland and its devotion to what has now become the cause of 30 Governments or nations, we should have been confronted with slavery and death, and the light which now shines so strongly throughout the world would have been quenched.

"To you fell the honour of being at the head of the Government of Northern Ireland not only during the supreme crisis but throughout the two and a half years which have led us steadily forward to safety and final deliverance. I have always found you a faithful and helpful colleague and comrade, and a man who had no thought but to do his duty. During your Premiership the bonds of affection between Great Britain and the people of Northern Ireland have been tempered by fire, and are now, I firmly believe, unbreakable.

"You carry with you in your retirement the regard and respect of all who have worked with you, including in a grateful spirit, Yours very sincerely, Winston S. Churchill."

And what of the many years of carnage where the pan-nationalist front in all its many forms and differing incarnations wrought havoc amongst us.

We only need to enter Ulster's cemeteries and graveyards and there the many grave stones, the milestones of Ulster's pilgrimage of blood demonstrate that Ulster still redeems her pledge. Ulster Protestants have been slandered throughout the world. They have been vilified by the tongues of the uncircumcised Philistines. They have been used by those who needed them most and then cast aside when their days of usefulness have ended. Their deepest wounds have been inflicted upon them in the house of their friends. Yet fearless and loyal they have kept on their way resolved to do and die for the cause of God and Ulster.

In their dark hour of trial it is as their own Unionist leaders who like Brutus of old struck the fatal blow. Lundy is the Ulster synonym for Judas and the Lundy brats have been plentiful in Ulster's history.

The names of these Iscariots have been buried in the ignominy of their own self-dug graves of shame but Ulster men and women true to their pledge have survived and today they ride again against their ancient foes.

I must tell John Major and Patrick Mayhew and the British Government that Ulster men and women will never surrender to the IRA the murderers of their kith and kin.

For your dirty deals behind our backs. Enter into cahoots with Taoiseach, Tanaiste, Cardinal and every other offspring of the IRA Republican beast.

Sell out loyal Ulster to those who have already committed genocide amongst us. Destroy our democracy. Dislodge the Union. Forswear your Privy Councillors oaths. Turn your back on your friends. Embrace our enemies. Enter into the assembly of the wicked. Stain your hands in the congregation of the murders. But remember.

That Almighty God of justice still rules.

That truth can never yield the throne.

That the lie is bound to perish.

That wickedness cannot prosper.

And in the end righteousness shall

Shine as long as sun and moon endureth.

I have gone into the House of God. I have seen the end of the green Republican plant. That great song book of the Church Militant the Psalter has the answer.

"I have seen the wicked in great power, and spreading himself like a green bay tree."

(Psalm 37: 35-36)

"But as for me, my feet were almost gone; my steps had well nigh slipped. For I was envious at the foolish, when I saw the prosperity of the wicked. For there are no bands in their death: but their strength is firm. They are not in trouble as other men; neither are they plagued like other men. Therefore pride compasseth them about as a chain; violence covereth them as a garment. Their eyes stand out with fatness: they have more than heart could wish. They are corrupt, and speak wickedly concerning oppression: they speak loftily. They set their mouth against the heavens, and their tongue walketh through the earth. Therefore his people return hither: and waters of a full cup are wrung out of them. And they say, How doth God know? and is there knowledge in the most High?"

(Psalm 73: 2-11)

"When I thought to know this, it was too painful for me; Until I went into the sanctuary of God; then understood I their end. Surely thou didst set them in slippery places; thou castedst them down into destruction. How are they brought into desolation, as in a moment! they are utterly consumed with terrors. As a dream when one awakeneth; so, O Lord, when thou awakest, thou shalt despise their image."

The gravity of the situation in Northern Ireland dare not be underestimated at this time. Those who would do so are deliberately blinding themselves to the truth. The darkest facts stare us all in the face. We are facing a campaign that arrogates to itself the sign of peace in the names of two persons, the

SDLP leader and the leader of the IRA/Sinn Fein Gerry Adams. Those who long and sigh for peace are told that the proposals are a recipe for "peace in a week" and "peace's best chance for 25 years". The Cardinal of the Roman Catholic Church has given his blessing and approval. Mr. Mandela has been given details of the so-called peace plan. The Kennedy lobby in the United States has been made privy to it, as have the Dublin Government; and the army council of the IRA is aware of the details. The people of Northern Ireland however, whose safety, well-being and destiny are at stake, are not to be given the details. Rather, if they do not support wholeheartedly that which they do not know about, they will be, and have been castigated for

throwing away the best chance of peace since the IRA commenced its hostilities. Mr. Hume come clean, stop your concealment. Lay your so-called peace proposals face up on the table: Or is it you love darkness rather than light because your deeds are evil.

True peace cannot come through concealment, a hidden agenda or the buy-off of the men of blood. If anyone else tried a con trick such as the Adams/Hume proposals on the public, he would be laughed out of court. Those whose destiny is at stake have a right to know what that planned destiny is to be, especially when its authors are both dedicated to the utter destruction of Northern Ireland within the United Kingdom. Moreover IRA/Sinn Fein is dedicated to the genocide of the Protestant population of Northern Ireland.

Now the Reynolds/Major proposal is that, as soon as the IRA announce the end of violence, it will immediately have the right to the conference table to help decide the future of our part of the United Kingdom. Such a proposal is anathema to the vast majority of the people of Northern Ireland. Those with blood on their hands and the guilt of years of devilish carnage have no right to be at the negotiating table, no matter what their religion may be or what votes have been cast for them at any ballot box. The conference table is for ever blocked to those hellish murderers. Martin Smyth's welcome to the Reynolds/Major plan was a sell out of colossal dimension. It was the boost which Hume needed and its timing was most advantageous to the enemies of Ulster.

In his embassy in London last weekend, Albert Reynolds' cry that there could be no settlement without the IRA is in reality a plea to strengthen his hand by having his allies with him in the negotiations. Anything to weaken the unionist position - even bloodthirsty murderers - is welcomed by Mr. Reynolds in his campaign for the destination of the Union.

There are two matters of which you should all be aware, and I draw your attention to them. The first is the recent visit to Washington of the Dublin Foreign Affairs Minister, Mr. Dick Spring, and the important speech that he made during that visit. I hear people on all sides saying what a gracious, understanding, conciliatory man he is, fully sympathetic to the Unionist position and most anxious to be helpful. He certainly did not have even a tiny vestige of those characteristics in Washington. He must have jettisoned them in the ocean on the way over there because, in that speech, he appeared in his true colours.

I look in vain through the speech for any condemnation of the Irish Republican Army and its activities. Instead I find an indictment of the Unionist population. "No democracy" is Mr. Spring's thrust when he talks about Northern Ireland. He told his American audience: "an internal approach to Northern Ireland is unlikely to work, and warned the Unionists that their future depended on what he called "the growing nationalist community."

In other words, "We are breeding faster than you, so you had better cut your losses before we take you over. You had better make a deal now."

Mr. Spring went on to claim that his country was "a country in transition", moving towards "perspectives of a modern, self-confident and pluralist society". However, that self-confident pluralist society is encumbered with notions of political and territorial expansion an irredentist stand because it seeks to annex part of the island of Ireland which does not belong to it, never has belonged to it and never will. Articles 2 and 3 of the Irish Constitution rob all the people of the island of Ireland of any notion of plurality, or even of accommodation.

Bearing in mind the society that Mr. Spring was addressing, he told his audience that he was dedicated to preserving their "cultural heritage" - that is, of course, the Gaelic Roman Catholic ethos. Mr. Spring went on to claim that the problem of Northern Ireland was about "the unresolved legacy of Anglo-Irish history".

To Mr. Spring, the territorial question is unresolved. I have heard that idea continually from the hon. Member for Foyle. They both conveniently forget the truth of the matter. In the 1920s, the Irish leaders resolved the territorial question by signing the 1921 treaty and later the 1925 tripartite accord, which accepted the recognised boundaries and had them ratified in the three Parliaments - the Dail Eireann, the Stormont Parliament and the United Kingdom Parliament. The document was then registered with the League of Nations as a record of international boundaries. Nothing could be clearer than that.

The South, under the bloodthirsty leadership of Mr. De Valera. then plummeted into a bitter civil war. We often hear from republicans about the treatment meted out to Irish people by the United Kingdom, but we are apt to forget that the bloodiest deeds ever carried out in Ireland took place when Irishman fought Irishman in the civil war, led by De Valera. De Valera was however defeated, and the settlement was established and stood.

However, when De Valera won power in the Irish Republic, he tore up the agreement and introduced the 1937 Constitution, as a result of which we have the problem of the territorial claim in Articles 2 and 3 - the claim that Dublin, rather than the United Kingdom, is really the possessor of Northern Ireland, and that even the laws of the Republic had power over that part of the island, which Dublin neither owned nor controlled.

Mr. Spring forgets all that. He went on to say the nationalist community had "little sense of ownership of the structures set over them". That is an amazing statement. Unionists must rightly ask what those structures are. There are no Northern Ireland political institutions over the community in Northern Ireland, whether Protestant, Unionist, Roman Catholic or nationalist. Of course, the structures are joint Anglo Irish structures, not only owned by the nationalists but controlled by Dublin. Yet Mr. Spring told his American audience that all those evil people in Northern Ireland set over his people institutions that they did not own. He said of the nationalists: "there is no prospect that they will ever redefine themselves as British to conform with the official doctrine of their state."

So much for the nationalists. But what about the majority, the Unionists? Are they to be forced into a position with which they will not conform? Mr. Spring's answer to that question is yes. In his madness and bigotry he indicts the Unionist people as being responsible for the Irish civil war.

That is the man who is supposed to be conciliatory, the man with such a great understanding of the Unionist position. He then declared that our Union flag, our symbol of identity, must be changed - the cross of St. Patrick and all. In all Mr. Spring's speech, there is no indictment of the Irish Republican Army, no catalogue of the dreadful crimes that it has committed. But he did say this: "violence is not a problem which can be solved by security means." Reynolds is at the same game, "The British army cannot defeat the IRA."

Are we to take it from that that he considers concessions to the men of violence to be the only way forward? The answer is "Yes" and that is what Dublin advocates "Surrender to the IRA on the Adams/Hume terms!"

So much for Mr. Spring who, I am told, held out his hand in the Senate of the South this week and said that he wanted friendship with the Unionist people. That is not what he said when he was in Washington a few days ago. Some friendship!

The second matter of which the House should be aware concerns the confidential document leaked in the Irish Press. There was a furore in Dublin when it was leaked, and great denials. But in the Dail Eireann yesterday, the truth came out in the wash. Mr. Reynolds admitted that the document was absolutely authentic, and had set negotiations back by being leaked in a terrible manner. If he could find out who had leaked it, heads would roll, he said. At first the document was denied but now, on the floor of the Dail, it is admitted to be authentic. The Garda Commissioner has been called in to find a stolen document which at first had its authenticity denied.

The document is amazing. Anybody who expected any Unionist who believes in Northern Ireland as part of the United Kingdom whether that person were a Roman Catholic or a Protestant - to find anything acceptable in the document would be out of his senses. The document tells us that British and Irish officials were instructed at the Anglo Irish intergovernmental conference on 10th September to use their best endeavours to draft the paper, and it says that the liaison group met and had discussions.

Who is the liaison group? I learned from the Secretary of State in Downing Street yesterday that the liaison group consisted of a number of civil servants from the Foreign Office, from the Dublin Government and from the Northern Ireland Office. The document was born out of those discussions and represents a hidden agenda' which is why the people of Northern Ireland are so angry about it. It states: "It is accepted on both sides" - that is, by the British and Irish Governments - "that this joint paper and the discussions related to it will not be the subject of discussion, still less negotiations, with the Northern Ireland parties unless both Governments agree beforehand whether and how this should be done."

That means that what is being planned for the people that I represent in the House of Commons will not be known without the consent and support of Dublin. That alone damns the document for ever in the minds of all right thinking people in Northern Ireland. What do they take the long-suffering, law-abiding people of our Province for? They have suffered. carnage for years, and have given their young men to fight against the terrorists and buried them in their graveyards whom the IRA have murdered. To think that those people should be

disfranchised because the Dublin Government say so. How can there be any settlement on such a basis?

The document proposes that the intergovernmental conference on the Anglo Irish Agreement will serve as the embryo of a united Ireland Parliament that could interfere in any other structures that might be established in Northern Ireland. It will have supreme authority to interfere in those matters.

Moreover the United Kingdom Government must in reality forswear the Union.

It is common knowledge that my colleagues and I visited Downing Street this week and had long discussion with the Prime Minister about these matters, which cause us all so great a concern. When we raised the question of the leaked document, I noted the Prime Minister's remarks. I asked the right hon. Gentleman's permission to use that record, and he said that I certainly could - so I am not breaking any confidence. He said: "If this paper had been presented to me, I would have booted it out over the roof tops."

I welcome that statement but it leaves many questions unanswered. Who were the officials that discussed and agreed to that paper? How often does the liaison committee meet? Who agreed that the paper should state that no one in Northern Ireland should ever hear anything about it until the Dublin Government or the British Government mutually consented? The people of Northern Ireland are asking themselves those questions tonight.

While I welcome the Prime Minister's comments, but this is not the last of the papers. Another will soon appear from the same source, and it will have the same thrust - and that will be repeated over and over again. Unless the Government have the guts and the resolution to stand up to the Irish authorities on Articles 2 and 3 - which Dublin is fighting so desperately to save and for which they are making all sorts of apologies - and have them removed, there will be no solid basis for peace.

Instead of peace breaking out there is preparation for war.

I say to the Government that the sooner that situation is dealt with, the better for us all. There is only one way. Establish that the Union is not negotiable, that Dublin cannot have any say in Northern Ireland's internal arrangements, and that there can be no advance whatsoever by the Dublin Government towards achieving the objective of Articles 2 and 3 - which is a constitutional imperative laid on every Irish Minister according to the Supreme Court in Dublin. What is more the consent of the people of Northern Ireland alone must be sought for any structures which would be set up for the future governance of Northern Ireland.

We have put our positive proposals on the table. They offer a way of breaking the political logjam. They are simple, practical and positive. They are based on democratic principles and can be put into operation immediately. The underlying principle is power back to the people of Northern Ireland who have to live in this Province and who must have the final say in how their destiny is going to be shaped. I fought long and hard and won the battle that Dublin could have no say in the internal affairs of Northern Ireland. Hence in Strand 1 of the previous Talks Dublin was not permitted at the table.

That principle cannot be surrendered. To surrender it would be to surrender all. Weakness here would prepare the way for eventual surrendered to Dublin. On that there can be no giving in. It is the principle which is under vicious attack by Gerry Adams, John Hume, Albert Reynolds and all Ulster's enemies. It is here that successive British Governments have proved to be weak and successive Secretaries of State have been prepared to sell us. Is it any wonder that the SDLP viciously attacked our document? Is it any wonder that the Alliance Party, whose Leader Mr. Reynolds claims went away satisfied from Dublin after an hour's talk with him, is it any wonder he attacked it? It is too Unionist a document for them. Is it any wonder that Ken Maginness, the originator of a united Ireland Parliament in embryo in his presentation paper on the last day of the Talks, also found our paper too Unionist and slandered a Northern Ireland Assembly as a sectarian parochial council. However, the Belfast Telegraph admitted that a mandate would be forthcoming for such a proposal from a large majority of the Ulster electorate while the News Letter praised the proposal as a positive contribution to a certain future where democracy could prevail.

The announcement by James Molyneaux that he is now urgently seeking an Assembly for Northern Ireland is welcome news. I believe the gap between the Unionists has been narrowed

by this gesture and that the Unionist Party leadership has subdued the loudmouths in his Party.

When our Party released our proposals - "Breaking The Logjam" - Mr. Maginness, David Trimble and Jim Wilson, all rounded on our proposals. But, of course, the paranoid reaction highlights the misjudgement of the mood of the Ulster people which those people made. Mr. Maginness has been out of touch with Unionist thinking for so long. He is on record as stating that the Hume/Adams proposal is "much ado about nothing" when, in reality, it is the greatest threat to the Union since the Home Rule crisis.

Now that James Molyneaux has endorsed the "Assembly" proposals he has marginalised those who are out of touch with traditional unionist values. A local internal solution is the only way forward for our country. We must be makers of our destiny.

An outline of our proposals is contained in simple presentation form in the current issue of the Protestant Telegraph. Let's give it the widest possible circulation. Unlike our opponents we have our document face upward on the table. Boldly, openly and honestly we say "Here we stand."

The British Government are going to get nowhere with Gerry Adams, John Hume, Albert Reynolds or Dick Spring. For them all it is a united Ireland or nothing. Tear away the blarney and the same republican heart is revealed. Northern Ireland must be destroyed and by stages swallowed up in an all Ireland republic. All the pleas of Albert Reynolds, all the platitudes of Adams and Hume, all the overtures of Dick Spring do not deceive the ordinary Ulsterman. They see through the hypocrisy, the lying, the blarney and the doublespeak. They have seen 80% of the Protestant population eliminated in the Irish Republic and they are well aware the same fate awaits them if they allow themselves to be cajoled into a country which refuses to enter the 20th Century even although that century is about to end.

Our message is loud and clear. We believe in civil and religious liberty for all men. We want every Ulster man and woman, boy and girl, to enjoy the fullest possible freedom in a democratic society. While claiming civil and religious liberty for ourselves we deny it to no one else. All men equal under the law, all men equally subject to the law, is the principle upon which this Party was founded and that principle can be the regeneration of our society.

We invite all those who respect it to join with us in an elected forum of the Ulster people where we can all openly and above board, with no concealed so-called peace proposals, or no hidden agenda, strive together to restore once again peace, tranquillity and freedom from fear to our people. I cannot offer you an easy way but obstacles are made to be overcome. The hill, though steep, is before us to be climbed. The way, though long and arduous, has an inviting and encouraging goal. We owe it to our history. We owe it to our families. We owe it to our future, to engage with all our soul, with all our might and with all our courage to help bring our Province that day that every right thinking person longs for - the day when liberty is proclaimed throughout the land. With God's help it can be done.

§ Leader's Speech to the Annual DUP Conference 1994

Spell-checked version.

The State Of The Union

A true patriot and statesman must also be a watchman. The Old Testament prophet Ezekiel heard God speak to him and in verses 2-6 of chapter 33 he outlines the responsibility and the duty of a watchman. These Scriptures also outline the sin or the crime that the watchman can commit, and as a result the blood of those he did not warn will be required at his hand from God Himself: "Son of man, speak to the children of thy people, and say unto them, When I bring the sword upon a land, if the people of the land take a man of their coasts, and set him for their watchman: If when he seeth the sword come upon the land, he blow the trumpet, and warn the people; Then whosoever heareth the sound of the trumpet, and taketh not warning; of the sword come, and take him away, his blood shall be upon his own head. He heard the sound of the trumpet, and took not warning; his blood shall be upon him. But he that taketh warning shall deliver his soul. But if the watchman see the sword come, and blow not the trumpet, and the people be not warned; if the sword come, and take any person from among them, he is taken away in his iniquity; but his blood will I require at the watchman's hand."

It is as a faithful watchman that I want to address you today. I care not about popularity. I care not for the siren voices of those who will raise them against me. I care not for the strength of the opposition I only care that the blood of the people I represent will not be upon my garments in the day of final judgment before my God.

This speech could well be called the "state of the Union", that is the state, of the Union between this part of the United Kingdom Northern Ireland and the rest of the United Kingdom Great Britain.

Let us first put the birth of the Union in historical perspective. During the terrible massacre of 1641, Phelim O'Neill poured out a fiendish cruelty and torture on our Protestant forefathers for no other crime than that they were Protestants and would not bow the knee to the Papal Antichrist at the Vatican. This extermination of Protestants became from that time a contagious disease in Ireland but was cured for a time by the Williamite Revolution Settlement. The enemy's claws were cut, but they continued to grow again. The end of the 18th century witnessed another terrible tragedy: the Rebellion of 1798. In the County of Wexford, especially, the maws of Rome protruded once again from the glove of velvet, and the massacre was repeated. The horrors of Wexford Bridge and its aftermath were a second historical reminder of what would befall us if Popery were once again to gain the ascendancy in this land. The Act of Union of 1800 was thus conceived in the spirit of defending religious liberties and civil rights. It took effect on 1st January, 1801. It abolished the Irish Parliament and provided that Ireland was to be represented by 100 members in the British House of Commons, 28 Irish peers in the House of Lords, and 4 bishops of the established church.

The first Article of the Act of Union unites Great Britain and Ireland (now Northern Ireland) into one kingdom "for ever". This Article has as great a force as any other statutory provision, and it is by the Act of Union that Northern Ireland forms part of the United Kingdom. It is the basis of the Parliamentary sovereignty exercised by Westminster over all parts of the United Kingdom.

The Act of Union thus legally created the United Kingdom "for ever", made the provision that its sovereignty resided solely and exclusively in Westminster, and guaranteed the ascendancy of Protestantism, the defence of the Faith.

The famous Section 75 of the Government of Ireland Act of 1920 secured the establishment of the Parliaments of Southern and Northern Ireland but in no way impinged on the supreme authority of the United Kingdom over all persons, matters, and things in Ireland and every part thereof.

The 1921 Treaty, however, superseded the 1920 Act, providing the 26 Counties as a self-governing Dominion

on which the Parliament of the United Kingdom had no claim. All references in the 1920 Act which included "all Ireland" now were defined as "Northern Ireland", thus establishing in law the unity of Northern Ireland as part of the United Kingdom. This was confirmed in the 1922 Consequential Provisions Act, which contains a modification of the 1920 Act in the following

words: "[...] the Government of Ireland Act 1920 shall cease to apply to any other part of Ireland other than Northern Ireland."

We then come to the Boundary Commission of 1925, whose forecast, which was leaked, so alarmed the Free State Government that they immediately entered into negotiations for an agreement, which was signed on 3rd December, 1925 by representatives of Great Britain, Northern Ireland, and the Irish Free State. Under Article 1 the extent of Northern Ireland, as defined by the Act of 1920, was confirmed, and consequentially the whole of the six counties (Armagh, Antrim, Down, Fermanagh, Londonderry and Tyrone) were definitely secured to Northern Ireland. This agreement was ratified by an Act of the Imperial Parliament, and also by an Act of the Irish Free State, which was number 40 in their Statute Book of the year 1925. In fact, it was accepted by overwhelming majorities of both Houses of Parliament sitting in Dublin.

The 1925 Agreement thus underpins the 1920 Act's definition of the six counties of Northern Ireland, and agreement by the three Governments was formally enacted in the Ireland (Confirmation of Agreement) Act of 1925, duly deposited with the League of Nations.

Despite the 1925 settlement, de Valera, on coming to power, spoke of "the outrage of partition". In a letter of 5th April, 1932 he protested to the late Sir Winston Churchill, who wrote on 1st May, 1935 of the "shameful manner" in which the 1925 Treaty had been "broken and repudiated by Mr de Valera" and asserted that this had "lowered the standards of good faith upon which the interests of small peoples depend".

On 11th May, 1949, the Prime Minister Clement Atlee made a move to establish that no change in the Constitution of Northern Ireland be made without the consent of Northern Ireland, and that guarantee was part of the Ireland Act 1949:

"It is hereby declared that Northern Ireland remains part of His Majesty's dominions and of the United Kingdom and it is hereby affirmed that in no event will Northern Ireland or any part thereof cease to be part of His Majesty's dominions and of the United Kingdom without the consent of the Parliament of Northern Ireland."

When the Parliament of Northern Ireland was suspended by the Heath Government, I moved in the House of Commons that Northern Ireland remains part of Her Majesty's Dominions and of the United Kingdom, and this is incorporated in the Northern Ireland Constitution Act of 1973:

"It is hereby declared that Northern Ireland remains part of Her Majesty's dominions and of the United Kingdom, and it is hereby affirmed that in no event will Northern Ireland or any part of it cease to be part of Her Majesty's dominions and of the United Kingdom without the consent of the majority of the people of Northern Ireland voting in a poll held for the purpose of this section in accordance with Schedule 1 to this Act."

The great traditional Unionist leaders

This was traditional Unionism as embraced and defended by the four successful unionist leaders Carson, Craigavon, Andrews and Brookeborough, who always said that the price of our liberty was eternal vigilance. Yet now - in a day when everyone knows that the Union is in dire crisis, under threat, and has been seriously weakened by the Anglo-Irish Agreement, by the Downing Street Declaration, by the Hume/Adams conspiracy, and by Irish-American and European Union interference - in contrast to these great men we have a Leader of the Ulster Unionist Party who is actually saying that there is no threat to the Union and that the Union cannot be betrayed. Evidently, Mr Molyneaux and the present Official Unionists have not learned the lessons of history.

Carson

Our greatest Leader, Lord Carson, knew that undiminished union with Britain was vital for Ulster's freedom. The fight of Ulster's majority in the days of Lord Carson was consequently the fight for the Union. The struggle to maintain the political, economic and social union with Great Britain was of crucial importance to them. They knew that the British connection was an essential safeguard for the practice of religion and the freedom to pursue their way of life. They feared the power and influence of the Roman Catholic Church. They did not want citizenship in a State dominated by a religious-political power which made the rules for the politicians and determined the spiritual standards of belief and the moral standards of conduct for everybody. They refused to be absorbed into a culture which they saw as backward, superstitious and priest-ridden. We have had in the past few weeks the uncovering of the rottenness of the state system of the Irish Republic and its manipulation to cover over priestly

crimes for the advantage of the church. When we consider the fate of our co-religionists in the Irish Republic since its inception, 80% of whom have disappeared because of discrimination, incompatibility or insecurity, we know that history has confirmed our fathers' worst fears. Ironically, it was the Unionist Party that betrayed the 300,000 Protestants of Southern Ireland in 1921. The British Parliament was at that time overwhelmingly Unionist, and today it is also a Conservative and Unionist Government that is busily engaged in repeating its historical treachery. Lord Carson said:

"I speak for a good many, for all those who rely on British honour and British justice, who have in giving their best to the service of the state seen themselves now deserted and cast aside without one single line of recollection or recognition in the whole of what you call peace terms in Ireland." Those words could have been written today.

Carson also said: "In my long experience of the Government of the country I have always felt certain that the parties of disorder would in the long run come to the top." We have also seen that happening today. He also said: "I only came into public life because I cared for my fellow loyalists in Ireland. I went all through my public life doing my best for them, and I saw them in the end betrayed, but at all events betrayed under the pretext that certain safeguards were provided. Now I have lived to see every one of those safeguards absolutely set at nought and made useless."

I issue a similar warning today. If we do not resist every step marked out for us by the present British Government, then we will see every so-called safeguard which they mouth set aside at their convenience to further the monstrous act of the final betrayal of the Union.

"I belong," said Carson, "I believe, to what is called the Unionist Party. Why it is called the Unionist Party I fail to understand, unless it is to remind people in this country that it was the Party that betrayed the Unionists." That comment of Carson's requires no amplification by me. As for his old friend F.E. Smith, known during the Home Rule crisis in Ulster as "Gallop" Smith, and who eventually became Lord Chancellor and Earl Birkenhead, Carson in his anger in a speech in the House of Lords proscribed his friendship forever and made him an outlaw to this respect.

The present Leader of the official Ulster Unionist Party Mr James Molyneux, has stated in the midst of this, the worst crisis in Ulster's history since the setting up of the state, that there is no sell-out, that the Union is secure, that the IRA has been conned, and that there is no possibility of betrayal. Let us examine these four assertions.

Firstly, that there is no sell-out. We might well ask what a sell-out is. A sell-out consists of those who should know well the value of what is their possession and to which they have paid the most wholesome allegiance in words, selling that possession to the enemy.

Secondly, Mr Molyneux asserts that the Union is secure. Two men, Hume and Adams are both the inveterate haters of the Union. They came together and planned a conspiracy against the Union - a conspiracy whose details have never been revealed to the people of Northern Ireland. Why? Because men like them love darkness rather than light, because their deeds are evil. From the womb of the Hume/Adams conspiracy came the Downing Street Declaration.

Despite the monstrous blunder of signing the Anglo-Irish Agreement, the British Prime Minister failed to learn the lesson and went even further down the road to a sell-out of the majority community when he and his Southern Irish counterpart, Albert Reynolds, issued a "Joint Declaration" in London on 15th December, 1993, dealing with the future governance of Northern Ireland. This so-called Downing Street Declaration is a Jesuitical document, to quote the Jim Molyneux of that day, but its core is contained in the idea that the Government of the Irish Republic, a foreign State, will work together with the British Government, which declares that it has "no selfish, strategic or economic interest" in Northern Ireland, to achieve "peace, stability and reconciliation established by agreement among all the people to inhabit the island". The agreement would "embrace the totality of relationships". They accept that any such agreement may bring about a united Ireland by consent. Even on a generous interpretation, this represents a significant dilution in the constitutional guarantee hitherto given by the British Government that there would be no change in the status of Northern Ireland without the consent of the majority of its people. If carried out, the policies indicated in this Declaration will materially weaken the Union and encourage nationalists to believe that their goal of a united Ireland is within easy reach. The Irish Republic, in effect, achieves an equal say in the governance of the United Kingdom, since the parts thereof are indivisible

under the sovereignty of Her Majesty the Queen until the Union is dissolved by the United Kingdom Parliament.

The Downing Street Declaration is in reality the blue-print of the Republic endorsed by Whitehall to destroy Ulster unionists as they have already destroyed Southern Irish unionists. The Declaration aims through a carefully camouflaged joint partnership of the two Governments, to bring about the sole and sovereign authority of a Dublin Government over us. The stated objective of the Declaration is to bring about an end to violence. The IRA is to be persuaded to give up the bullet and work through the ballot box. In October, 1994, the IRA declared a so-called ceasefire but no counterfeit ceasefire will convince the people of this Province that the IRA thugs and murderers have had a change of heart. Dublin, like Rome, is the proverbial leopard which cannot change its spots. The Ulster Democratic Unionist Party's predictions have been consistently correct, and events have already proved us right: punishment beatings continue in the no-go areas where the IRA rules, and the IRA has now admitted that it was behind the murder of an innocent Post Office worker in Newry during a robbery which netted over £130,000 for their terrorist activities. Clearly, when the IRA realises that the British Government will be unable to deliver the goal of a united Ireland, it will return to the methods of coercion that it knows best - bombing and murder.

The Downing Street Declaration, like its forerunner the Anglo-Irish Agreement, had the aim of betraying the Ulster people, bribing the IRA and appeasing the Republican enemy. It was a total breach of the promises that Major had made on 10th December, 1993, that no Government he led would compromise the constitutional position of Northern Ireland, negotiate or bargain with terrorists, or derogate from United Kingdom sovereignty in the Province.

The Official Unionist Leader, after saying that the Downing Street Declaration had run its course, now claims credit for it, exalts it to a place of authority, and appeals to it, and talks of Major, Reynolds and Clinton.

Thirdly, Mr Molyneaux asserts that the IRA has been conned. Is the IRA being conned when the British Government is forced to do a U-turn through pressure from America and bring the men of blood to the proposed economic forum? The Leader of the Unionist Party likens this economic forum to a parallel forum to Reynolds' child the Nationalist Forum in Dublin. This is an amazing comparison as the Nationalist Forum has one end - to unify what the Republic calls the national territory, while this economic forum has for its aim the regeneration of the economy of Northern Ireland. Now the IRA which has done its [best] to destroy Northern Ireland's economy is to be given a place of prestige at Molyneaux's much praised forum. Who is conning whom? The British Government has conned Mr Molyneaux and the Official Unionists, and anyone who would believe that getting the men of blood to the economic forum shows that the IRA has been conned only proves his own readiness to swallow any deception and then repeat any deception to smokescreen his own deception. Is the IRA being conned by the dismantling of the security arrangements taken by a British Government to defeat them? Is it being conned when the British Government allows them to retain their killing machine intact and hold on to all their murder weapons, both guns and explosives?

The fourth affirmation of the Leader of the Unionist Party is that there is no possibility of betrayal. One has only to look around to note the betrayals of a Prime Minister who Mr Molyneaux said never told a lie.

One - The Prime Minister said that the IRA must repudiate and renounce violence. That is exactly what the IRA has not done. The Prime Minister said that there must be a complete cessation of violence. That complete cessation of violence has not taken place, and during the so-called three month period of the ceasefire there has been a whole tide of vicious violence, culminating in the self-confessed murder by the IRA of Mr Kerr in Newry and the stealing of £130,000 from the Royal Mail.

Two - Mr Major maintained that the word "permanent" must be in the IRA's declaration. In fact an ultimatum of a few hours was given by the Secretary of State to get the word "permanent" into the declaration. Once again Mr Major went back on that principle.

Three - Mr Major said there could be no clarification whatsoever of the Downing Street Declaration. Then he took large pages in newspapers to clarify the Downing Street Declaration, and then he got the Secretary of State to write a love letter of over 20 pages to Gerry Adams in order that Adams might have the Downing Street Declaration clarified.

Four - Mr Major maintained that the South of Ireland would have no say in the internal settlement in Northern Ireland. Yet the whole force of his negotiations with Dublin after the Downing Street Declaration, have been along the lines of an internal settlement in Northern Ireland agreeable to the Irish Republic. He is the first Prime Minister who has handed over any part of the United Kingdom to be governed jointly by himself and the Prime Minister of a traditional enemy country, a country claiming sovereignty over Northern Ireland. Mr Major promised he would come to grips with getting rid of the territorial claims of Articles 2 and 3. Dublin has made it clear that as far as Article 2 is concerned it will never be removed from the Republic's Constitution. Evidently Mr Major has given up the ghost on this one as well. How can anyone tell us that the Union cannot be betrayed when we have only to open our eyes and see betrayal on every hand?

Now what about Mr Molyneux and his Party's own betrayal? I signed with Mr Molyneux a declaration of war against Sinn Fein. Now Mr Molyneux has given his blessing for the British Government to meet Sinn Fein, his colleague Martin Smyth and Grand Master of Ireland has stated that he is prepared to sit down with the IRA to discuss the future governance of Northern Ireland. Mr Molyneux claimed that the Anglo Irish Agreement was a complete and total betrayal of the Union. Mr Major claims that the Downing Street Declaration is built upon the Anglo Irish Agreement. Mr Molyneux now claims that he is for the Downing Street Declaration. The foundation document, the Anglo-Irish Agreement, is according to Mr Molyneux a betrayal, but the house built upon the Downing Street Declaration according to the same Right Honourable Gentleman is a great defence of the Union. This is a good example of a consistent politician of the Major breed.

The issue of consent

I have been busily engaged during these past months in seeking to take soundings among various sections of the Ulster community. Recently I had talks with an influential organisation which spans both unionist parties and with other unionists who belong to no party. They requested me to meet with them and Mr Molyneux.

I want to put it on record that I have made it clear to the chairman of that particular organisation that I would be very happy at any time to meet with them and Mr Molyneux to put the case that I have put in public and the soundings that I have taken concerning the present attitude adopted by the leader of the Unionist Party and the end product of the policy that he has been advocating and pursuing with great concentration. A Unionist Forum where all members of the unionist family can get together and deal with the issues at this moment confronting us - and especially dividing the unionist population from the Official Unionist Party - is in my opinion an imperative, but if the Official Unionist Party and many parts of

the Orange Institution which it controls do not want to bring the unionist family together but prefer to swear

allegiance to John Major and his betrayal policy, then the Unionists of Ulster must come together to defend their hard-won rights and liberties. However let me come to the all important matter of the final court of appeal, the final arbiter in this dispute, let me say that the final court of appeal and the final arbiter in this dispute must be the people of Northern Ireland alone.

For the people of Northern Ireland, the principle of consent freely given must prevail over the bullet, in the way in which they are to be governed in future. There can be neither compromise with terrorist minority pressure nor external interference by a foreign state in their internal governance. The Ulster Democratic Unionist Party welcomes the Prime Minister's promise of a referendum in Northern Ireland to obtain the electorate's consent for any outcome of political talks. The consent of the people of Northern Ireland was not sought before the signing of the Anglo Irish Agreement or the Downing Street Declaration, both of which ironically reiterated the traditional guarantee of "consent" given to the Unionist majority. These documents were carefully worded so that the term would only apply to the constitutional issue of the severance of Northern Ireland from the Union: the consent principle did not apply to any immediate step which might lead the Province out of the United Kingdom, in particular any changes in the governance of the Province and the creation of any institutions or structures impacting upon it. The limitations of this sort of majority consent were clearly recognised by the DUP even before the Eire Premier stated that it did not extend to "all forms of political progress or other decisions by the two Governments". Even though the Prime Minister's commitment to a

referendum expressly applies only to the outcome of three-stranded talks the DUP recognises it as an advance. Our position is that the principle of consent should apply in all sets of circumstances and for all time.

Self-determination is a basic human right: it is incorporated as a principle of the Charter of the United Nations, and the people of Northern Ireland must be unflinching in their fight to see that it is upheld in how they are governed in future. Although Northern Ireland is de facto and de jure indisputably part of the United Kingdom, it is a universally established principle that the inhabitants of any territory subject to claim by another country will decide their own future. Remember that at first Mr Major would not even grant this: it was DUP pressure that forced him to do so.

Therefore the ballot box, not the bullet, must prevail in Northern Ireland. The freely expressed democratic will of the people of the Province must be respected and implemented. By the same token, a commitment to the principle of democratic consent rules out not only any compromise with the terrorists of IRA/Sinn Fein, but also any imposed solution. Neither will work. The former is morally unthinkable; the latter, already tested in principle through direct rule and the Anglo Irish Diktat, has had nothing but disastrous consequences. Both conceptions breach the right of the people of the Province to decide their own future, including how they are to be governed, democratically without pressure or interference.

For the avoidance of any doubt we call on Mr Major to clarify unambiguously that Her Majesty's Government will: (a) accept and abide by the verdict of a majority in a referendum; (b) accept that a referendum of the people of Northern Ireland alone will determine any change; (c) undertake to implement a referendum prior to implementing any change; (d) commit itself to holding a referendum on change impacting upon Northern Ireland in all circumstances and for all time; (e) seek Parliamentary endorsement for this principle of consent.

The recognition, the acceptance and most importantly the implementation of Ulster's right of self-determination, of Ulster's right to give her consent, is absolutely imperative in the midst of the present political crisis. The Ulster Democratic Unionist Party has therefore launched a major initiative which we believe will help to focus attention on this issue which has been left to one side not only over the past year but over the last 25 years. The details of that initiative will become clearer in the coming days. But as a result of our actions I am certain that no one either here in Northern Ireland or nationally or internationally will be left in any doubt about the seriousness which we in this Party view this vital issue which must be at the very heart of the political process. Neither will anybody be left in any doubt as to the validity of the case that we have been making and making alone on the need for the Ulster people to give their consent on all the issues which affect their constitutional position and governance.

Let me speak a final word.

Are we, the sons and daughters of Ulster become so craven as to allow our ancient foes to triumph over us?

Are we the offspring of the defenders of Londonderry and the descendents of the men of the Boyne given to turning back in the day of battle? Are we going to surrender to a State so blatantly priest-ridden and core rotten as to be the butt of all right thing peoples throughout the world? The last few days have demonstrated the stinking rottenness of the corpse of body politic in Dublin. Are we going to bow our necks and agree to a partnership with the IRA men of blood who have slain our loved ones, destroyed our country, burned our churches, tortured our people and demand now that we should become slaves in a country fit only for Nuns men and Monks women to live in?

Are we going to permit those who wear the garments of Unionism to lead us by the nose to the noose which our false friends in London have prepared for us?

Are we going to suffer ourselves to become beggars at the door of the American Whitewashed House presenting our bowls for the mess of American grits?

Are we like abject slaves to Salam the new United States overlord sent to us by the Whitewater crook? Are we going to allow minor Majors or major Minors to take us for a ride to the paedophile priests?

Rouse you, men and women of Ulster. You are free born. Refuse the chains prepared for you by treacherous unionists and their ilk.

Let Dublin know that there still be those who must not, shall not, will not, and cannot bow to these traitors who tread the smoke-filled rooms of Whitehall, nor to those enemies the

offspring of the Vatican who walk the corrupted corridors of power in Dublin, in Europe and in Washington.

In the propaganda war we must excel answering the lies with truth and smoking out from their lairs the media skunks and cleansing their putrid odour from the earth.

Ulster men and women we mean business, real business. To the task of saving this Province we have put our hand. By God's help we will win or die in the attempt. God Save Ulster.

§ Leader's Speech to the Annual DUP Conference 1995

Spell-checked version.

For such a time as this

One of the darkest hours in the history of the Jews had come. Haman, the would-be destroyer of the Jewish race, was in control. The die was cast. The irrevocable decision had been signed and sealed. The scene was set. The plans were perfected. The genocide date was announced and the sun in the heavens seemed to hasten to that dead hour.

What could be done to reverse death's doom? How could the already perfected plan be undone? What hope was there that the nation could yet be saved? Could the irreversible be reversed?

Humanly speaking, there was but one faint hope. The Queen was a Jewish maiden. She could get the ear of the all-powerful Emperor but she was but a frail slip of a maiden and a very frail creature amidst the nest of vipers in the Royal Palace. Moreover, for some reason or other her royal husband had not sent for her for thirty days and to come into his presence unwanted meant death except he extended the golden sceptre to the intruder. Otherwise it would be instant death. Mordecai, her cousin, however, exhorted Esther in the following words: "Then Mordecai commanded to answer Esther, Think not with thyself that thou shalt escape in the king's house, more than all the Jews. For if thou altogether holdest thy peace at this time, then shall there enlargement and deliverance arise to the Jews from another place; but thou and thy father's house shall be destroyed: and who knoweth whether thou art come to the kingdom for such a time as this?" (Esther 4:13-14). Esther, conscious of the need of Divine Intervention called for intensive prayer then risked all: "if I perish," she cried "I perish", and as a result saved all.

The final word was both dramatic and dogmatic: "So they hanged Haman on the gallows that he had prepared for Mordecai. Then was the king's wrath pacified." (Esther 7:10).

For such a time is this!

This is the time when our would-be destroyers have succeeded in arranging the future of our Province in such a way that we, the people of this Province, have no say whatsoever in the shaping of our own destiny. At every turn IRA/Sinn Fein are consulted and Unionists insulted.

Blood-soaked murderers presiding over arsenals of terrorist weaponry are dictating the structures of the negotiating forum where the minority will have more seats than the majority and will set in concrete the final plan for the destruction of Ulster's position within this United Kingdom.

What is more, so weak-kneed, vacillating and dishonest is the British Government that the grater the concessions demanded by IRA/Sinn Fein, the more those will be placed in the category labelled "legitimate", while on the other hand the basic elements of democracy demanded by Unionists are immediately branded as illegitimate.

In the new phraseology of the ceasefire habitat everything demanded by the murderers and their parrots backed by John Hume, Dublin, Clinton and the Vatican is reasonable. On the other hand, everything supporting the blatant denial of these demanded concessions is intransigent.

A jaundiced view is taken of any proposal which would call this Province back to sanity, lawfulness and answerable democracy. The proposed talks are founded on a democratic deficit to construct an even greater democratic deficit.

With every fresh meeting with IRA/Sinn Fein, with every new twist in the much-worked-over formula of the Civil Service communications, with every new ingredient added to the politicians' double-talk there is one message that rings out loud and clear to the murder gangsters, their cohorts and fellow travellers, and that is: "Violence pays. Your bombs are stronger than the Unionist ballot boxes. Your bullets are more influential than votes and your battalions of gunmen more beneficial than elections won. You lost the West Belfast seat but you have gained more than if you had ten seats in Westminster."

Is it any wonder that the IRA will not yield a single weapon or surrender one ounce of Semtex? If they did so they would speedily become like John Bunyan's giant, a toothless monster who can only grin at his opponents and bite his nails because he cannot come at them.

To disarm the IRA is to destroy them, but that the British Government is too craven to contemplate. They are prepared to take the more convenient alternative - destroy the Unionists; after all, we have "no economic, strategic or selfish interest in Northern Ireland". I must warn them today that this alternative which they seem hellbent in pursuing, they will discover to their great loss, is no easy option whatsoever.

The spirit which inspired our forefathers to refuse to bow the knee to the enemies of liberty still burns in the breast of their sons and daughters. Its recent bursting into flame in Drumcree should be a warning to the Government and those who hound them on to neuter the Union that the last word will not be spoken by Whitehall Government but by the men and women of Ulster themselves. At the Somme it was rightly said that the men of Ulster were lions but the English officers directing the battle were asses.

When the English asses are dismissed from the negotiations and Ulster men and women take charge, then and then alone will democratic progress be made.

An Ulster Forum to settle the Ulster question is the need of the hour

That Constitutional Assembly or Constitutional Forum must be free standing, having power to negotiate for those who have mandated its members.

It cannot be the puppet of London, Dublin or Washington.

The two Governments are running scared of the proposal first put to the British Government by this Party and shot down then by Ken Maginness and the Official Unionists as a "sectarian caucus". They have been busy stealing our political clothes since Mr Trimble's election to their leadership.

The so-called Building Blocks proposal uncovers the two Governments' plan to rewrite the whole value of such a Convention by placing it under the dictatorial control of London/Dublin. Here we have joint authority with vengeance.

The Building Blocks proposal was conveyed to me in a letter from Paddy Mayhew. He said the proposal would set out the "essential elements of the twin-track approach, covering both the role of an international body in relation to decommissioning and preparatory talks to discuss the ground rules for all-Party negotiations."

The proposal gives a place of prominence to the Dublin Government in the internal affairs of Northern Ireland. There is no mention of democratic consent within the proposal whatsoever.

It is littered with numerous references to what the "two Governments" have planned for us.

The DUP does not recognise the authority of the Dublin Government in relation to Northern Ireland and will not be packaged and processed in any arrangement set up under joint authority.

The Government had better learn the lesson that the Building Blocks of joint authority have been ejected. The foundation for that process is unsafe and unsatisfactory. It is a building condemned from the beginning. It will never be erected. It is an abandoned and doomed site.

What is more, the Prime Minister's new proposal to John Bruton is that there can be no such Constitutional Assembly except it is agreed by Sinn Fein, the SDLP Dublin and the White House. The Assembly can only be given to the Ulster people by the patronage of our would-be destroyers.

I am invited by the Government to a twin-track negotiation structure where I talk to IRA/Sinn Fein, Dublin, and the SDLP while the IRA pressurises the outcome of such talks with the threat of the use of their arsenal of murder weapons.

My answer to that proposal is no. "No" unconditionally "No" emphatically and "No Surrender" finally.

There can be no more tinkering with the democratic process. There must be a return to basic democratic principles. The question must be put to the people. It must be put NOW.

The legislation is in place. A stroke of Patrick Mayhew's pen and we could have elections inside a month. This is urgent. This is imperative. It must be done.

We Unionists have been lectured long enough by John Hume of being afraid of facing the Dublin Government. We did face them in the last Talks and they did not like it so they closed them down - cowards that they are.

Mr Hume is afraid of democracy. He can only debate in a forum where the numbers are rigged and the voting weighted undemocratically in his favour. I have not forgotten what he said at the last Talks: "We will not have a Unionist majority Assembly ever again at Stormont."

That is why the new negotiation chamber was constructed without consultation in the Stormont estate with eight seats for the Unionists and 20 seats to the Republicans and Nationalists and their fellow travellers.

This is the nature of the gauntlet thrown down by our enemies. Its challenge is: "When you in the majority agree to be treated as a minority then we will meet you and tell you what we have decided your future to be."

The twin-track carriages stand at the Stormont Station, each at a separate platform; the first, the decommissioning carriage and the second the political peace carriage. The twin-track, shortly after leaving Belfast for Dublin, merges and both carriages are linked together. Under the supervision of Gerry Adams and Martin McGuinness, shotgun riders employed for the protection and comfort of all, the passengers from the second carriage are all transferred to the first. So much for the twin-track and the twin-carriages. The empty carriage is then abandoned before the border is reached! One, Ancram, is ticket collector while big Pat is acting guard with a not-so-well-known bearded assistant. All passengers must purchase single tickets only; no return tickets are issued.

Before the train arrives in Dublin the entire passenger group resolved with IRA guns to their heads that the so-called decommission group be disbanded. The good work of Adams and McGuinness must thus be suitably re-warded. The resolution was on the proposal of John Hume, seconded by the not-so-well-known bearded assistant. It was not put to the vote because consensus was evident on the faces of all with the guns to their head.

The train came into the Dublin Station renamed - the "End of the Union Station".

This Party will buy no single ticket to Dublin from Ancram. It will not ride under the guns of the IRA, and into the End of the Union Station it will never come.

Twin-track is nothing less than side-track on endeavours to take the focus of the IRA arms and their murderous intent.

What of the so-called peace dividend?

We hear so much from the Government about the benefits the phoney peace has bought to our country. One could be forgiven for believing we are living in Utopia where all is well. The fact is, all is not well.

The Government is keen to promote a mood of normality. A week does not go by without another glossy folder produced about the peace process apparently yielding more benefits to the people of Northern Ireland. There is much talk about the 'peace dividend'.

Many people would be only too glad to welcome good news. However this Government has a long way to go before it will convince me that all is well.

Our economy is not soaring, the unemployed are not checking in for new jobs, the promised investment is yet to be realised.

I would caution the Government about the folly of taking up an economic peace dividend that has not arrived; and for as long as the terrorists remain capable of violence there will be no peace dividend.

Many of my constituents hear about the peace packages, read about the new jobs but have not experienced one single tangible benefit from the so-called peace dividend. In fact many in the private security sector have been laid off as a result of the ceasefire, while other jobs are at risk.

It gets a bit sickening to hear about all the promised new jobs which the IDB repeat with their promotions week in and week out in the run up to Clinton's visit. None of these jobs have been realised. In fact the most recent promotion of 1000 new jobs at Montupét are only proposals that will not be in place until the year 2003. Montupét has still to realise its original job creation projection of 900 new jobs. It currently has a work force of 500.

For every job promotion over the past 14 months by the Government and its agencies there has been at least one actual job lost, be it in redundancies or in lay offs. It becomes rather insulting to be told about all these new opportunities when none are actually available.

The Government would be better focusing its attention on developing local enterprises, developing schemes for the rural economy and assisting local manufacturing industries rather than hyping up fly-by-night investment opportunities which do not deliver long term employment and have so far made little impact on the long-term unemployment figures. It is into such schemes as I have mentioned that the EEC money should go. It was intended for those who suffered, not for those who caused the suffering. There is a grave danger of its being hijacked.

The Tenth Annual Economic and Business Review for Northern Ireland states that many of the post-ceasefire economic out-turns announced in the past year were, "in the pipeline and not determined by the aftermath of the ceasefire. In truth apart from the sustained rise in local house prices and the expected surge in tourism, the peace has yet to provide a clear economic dividend."

Let's now turn to this so-called peace process. Are we to be lulled into a false sense of security by the Secretary of State? Will we permit Ulster to be chloroformed into accepting the peace is a real peace? It is not peace. It is a phoney peace held in place by concessions to those most capable of breaking the peace. It is neither honourable, just, permanent, nor reasonable. It is a surrender process which we must resist.

Even Sinn Fein/IRA refuse to say there is a peace process, and they would know! The concessions have been non-stop to them but they refuse to make peace until they have won the surrender of Ulster. The release of terrorist prisoners is but a foretaste of what will be delivered to the IRA. The British Government has embarked upon a policy of the most cunning evil to deprive the people of Northern Ireland of their British rights, heritage and way of life.

Anyone who believes that the current process offers a roadway to a permanent peace is deluded. Look at the hoax peace process:

- A postal worker lies murdered and they have the audacity to call it peace;
- over £1 Million stolen by the IRA in armed robberies and they have the cheek to call it peace;
- three gruesome IRA punishment beatings every week of the ceasefire and they have the effrontery to call it peace;
- over 60 Orange Halls and Protestant churches up in flames courtesy of the IRA and they dare to call it peace;
- over 360 petrol bombs thrown at the police and they call it peace;
- over 700 buses attacked in the last 14 months and they call it peace;
- the discovery of two massive bombs on the South Armagh border and they have the brass neck to call it peace;
- the release of 88 terrorist prisoners and they call it peace;
- over 100 military concessions to the IRA in spite of the violence and they have the arrogance to call it peace.

This is not a peace. This is a shameful process of deluding the people while they surrender to the IRA.

I have in my hand the glossy prospectus of a new company expert in gerry-building and producers of building blocks. The company is already bankrupt and presides over unemployment which increases every day. Its plan is the execution of a policy of those who would destroy any real structures of lasting, just or honourable peace in Northern Ireland. The booklet "Building on the Peace" is a shamefaced attempt to sell the peace process, marketed in glossy pictures to the public, hoping nobody pulls back the wrapping to expose the truth. You cannot build without a sure foundation and there is no foundation to the peace process.

There is an urgent need, as the pan-Nationalist front cements itself together in apology for IRA guns, bombs and murder weapons, for the Unionist family to unite.

I am glad my efforts though often thwarted and reviled for a United Unionist Convention succeeded and that that Convention is a reality.

The Convention itself consists of the Unionist Family with but one absentee, the Official Unionists. The Convention in a recent statement said:

"The Convention is the umbrella body which set up the 14-member Unionist Commission earlier this year and charged it with the task of analysing public submissions on the Framework Document and formulating a democratic alternative acceptable to the people of Northern Ireland. The Convention was formed from delegates from the DUP, the UPUP, the Orange and Independent Orange Orders, the Apprentice Boys, the USCA, the Knights of Malta and the business and professional people for the Union.

"All groups unanimously rededicated themselves to the goal of Unionist unity and the principles of traditional Unionism, and made an impassioned plea to all Unionists to come together at this time of grave crisis in the history of our Province.

"They deplored the fact that the UUP, which had hitherto half-heartedly sent two representatives to the Convention in an observer capacity, had this week issued an official letter advising its members not to establish any formal links with either the Convention or the

Commission. Such a decision was incomprehensible in the gravity of the situation and once again demonstrated the UUP's familiar principle of acting in its own interests by putting party before people. The meeting expressed grave regret that a handful of UUP officers had independently passed this resolution contrary to the interests of Unionism and to the UUP leader's stated dedication to Unionist unity"

The Unionist unity demonstrated recently in Westminster at the 10th anniversary of the signing of the Diktat, should be replicated speedily by the Official Unionists joining the other members of the Unionist family in united defence of the Union.

A pan-Unionist front is surely needed now as never before.

If the Official Unionists can talk with Dublin, why can't they join in closer family talks with their fellow Unionists? For such a time as this!

A time when fair is foul and foul is fair. A time when men call good evil and evil good. A time when the murderers are honoured and the murdered dishonoured. A time when the faithless are eulogised and the faithful are ostracised. A time when the prisoners are consistently released and their victims conveniently forgotten. A time when darkness is put for light and light for darkness. A time when hell is put for heaven and heaven is put for hell.

For such a time as this!

We should make it a repenting time. Our own sins and our national sins need to be repented of. We need to return to the God of our fathers.

These words of the Holy Book are appropriate: "Thus saith the Lord, Stand ye in the ways, and see, and ask for the old paths, where is the good way, and walk therein, and ye shall find rest for your souls. But they said, We will not walk therein." Jeremiah 6:16.

For such a time as this!

We should make it a resolving time.

We must resolve that we will not barter our liberties or sell our Protestant birthright. It costs too much. It is too valuable to be sacrificed on the altar of political expediency.

I have no intention of surrendering. Have you?

I have no intention of accepting any bribe. Have you?

I have no intention of insulting the memory of Ulster's honoured dead. Have you?

I have no intention of going back on my resolve to keep Ulster from Dublin rule. Have you?

I have no intention of lowering the Union Flag. Have you?

I have no intention to stop singing the National Anthem. Have you?

That being so I use the words of our founding father Lord Carson of Duncairn and I say to the Government:

"By no law can the right to govern those whom we represent be bartered away without consent. You may betray us but you will not deliver us bound into the hands of our enemies."

We will defend and retain our liberties. God save Ulster.

§ Leader's Speech to the Annual DUP Conference 1996

Spell-checked, edited version.

The Prime Minister has spoken but his method of speaking is strange in both manner and message.

In reply to a planted question by Mr Andrew Hunter MP in the House of Commons on Thursday last, Mr Major referred to the IRA/Sinn Fein/Adams SDLP/Hume proposals and informed the House that a paper had been made available in the Library.

This was a ploy to stifle debate on the subject and to keep Northern Ireland MPs from probing into the matter.

My two Parliamentary colleagues and myself met the Prime Minister afterwards and were able to question him most effectively about the matter.

The facts are startling and most solemn and serious. They point to more and more surrenders and concessions to the IRA and the terrorists.

It was announced in the Republican and Nationalist press that IRA/Sinn Fein, in agreement with John Hume, were requesting certain conditions.

The Secretary of State had already been playing footsie with IRA/Sinn Fein man McGuinness in a political puppet show, supposedly clarifying the Government's position, after it had been announced that the IRA could not use the word "permanent" to define any ceasefire, because that would breach the constitution of the Provisional IRA. Sir Patrick Mayhew made it clear that the Government was prepared to find a way so that the IRA would not have to breach its constitution but would be able, nevertheless, to enter the Talks. He talked about more ways than one of skinning the cat. I told him that the Government had no intention of killing the cat but rather were in the business of fattening and keeping the cat.

What were the IRA requesting, according to the Republican press?

1. The renegotiation of the Union of Northern Ireland within the United Kingdom.

In Mr Major's statement that is conceded. The Union is on the table even though the law of the land makes it clear that only by the vote of the people of Northern Ireland can the Union ever be broken. In reference to the Union the Prime Minister's statement says, I quote: "No negotiated outcome is either predetermined or excluded". So the law of the land does not predetermine the Union. It is up for grabs to the IRA. Of course, Her Majesty's Government has already stated that it has "no selfish, strategic or economic interest in maintaining the Union" - Downing Street Declaration.

2. Resumption of open meetings with the Government at various levels with IRA/Sinn Fein.

Mr Major concedes that. Page three of his document: "Meetings with Slim Fein at various levels to explore with them what assurances can be given and what confidence-building measures established".

3. A meeting between IRA/Sinn Fein and the two Governments.

Mr Major concedes that. Page three of his document: "The British and Irish Governments would invite Sinn Fein to meet them together".

4. An agreed time frame for Sinn Fein to get into Talks and for their duration.

Mr Major concedes that. Page three of his document: "The two Governments would then propose bilateral and other consultations with all the parties including the issue of the participants adopting an agreed indicative time-frame for taking stock of their progress".

5. Invitation to IRA/Sinn Fein to join the Talks.

Mr Major concedes that. Page three of his document: "Following a successful conclusion of the process set out above, including due time for consideration, the two Governments would expect the independent chairmen to convene a plenary session for all participants with Sinn Fein invited formally to participate".

6. Keeping up the pace.

Mr Major concedes that. Page five of his document: "We have already proposed that a plenary meeting should be held in December to take stock of progress in the negotiations as a whole.

The two Governments will also review progress at regular intervals. I will be meeting the Taoiseach on 9th December and the Secretary of State regularly meets the Tannaiste. Progress will be reviewed again by the end of May 1997."

7. Confidence building measures.

Mr Major concedes that. Page five of his document: "It is worth recalling that in response to the ceasefires of autumn 1994 and the changed level of threat we undertook a series of confidence building measures. These included changed arrangements for the release of prisoners in Northern Ireland under the Northern Ireland Remission of Sentences Act 1995, security force redeployments, a review of emergency legislation and others. If the threat reduces again the opportunity for further confidence building measures returns."

Mr Major has gone back on his undertakings over and over again. His word is not his determined bond, it is rather his disposable baggage. The Daily Telegraph of 29th November, a day after his statement was issued in the Library of the House of Commons, editorialised thus: "If IRA/Sinn Fein were allowed to enter the Talks on that basis they would be coming armed to the table... Mr Hume's actions are based on the assumption that the Republicans must be appeased. We are not convinced after yesterday's events that the Government has entirely rejected that assumption either." Mr Major is in the surrendering business to the IRA and its bedfellows John Hume, Dublin and the White House. Mr Major is in the capitulating business to the IRA. Mr Major is in the concession business to the IRA. Mr Major is in the deceiving business with the IRA. Mr Major is in the sell-out business to the IRA.

On behalf of the Unionist people I must tell him loudly and clearly that Ulster is not surrendering to the IRA or any of its allies. Ulster is not capitulating to the IRA. Ulster is not conceding to the IRA. Ulster is not selling out to the IRA. Ulster is not going down the Dublin road, not an inch.

We are determined to have no truck with the IRA whatsoever or with any other murdering gunmen.

Ulster deserves our prayers.

Its people deserve our endeavours. Its children deserve our sacrifice.

Its past deserves our gratitude.

Its present deserves our determination. Its future deserves our dedication. Its enemies deserve our resistance.

Its slanders deserve our condemnation.

Its would-be destroyers deserve our undying opposition.

§ Leader's Speech to the Annual DUP Conference 1997

Spell-checked version.

The majority of the people of Northern Ireland want the naked truth from the Unionist leaders. History has a habit of repeating itself. During the British Government capitulation to the IRA in the South of Ireland, which led to the bringing into being of what was called the Irish Treaty. Lord Carson of Duncairn, our founding father had this to say:

"The terms of this treaty were passed with a revolver pointed at your head and you know it." This was a speech in the House of Lords. "You know you passed them because you were beaten. You know you passed them because Sinn Fein with the army of Ireland has beaten you. Why do you not say so?" He went on to say that "Unionist leaders undertook to defend this capitulation policy. The truth of the matter is that if you go on like this, if you have men in high positions stating today that black is white and tomorrow arguing that it is certainly black you will destroy the confidence of the democracy of this country in its rules and institutions. Of all men in my experience that I think are the most loathsome it is those who will sell their friends for the purpose of conciliating their enemies and perhaps, still worse, the men who climb up a ladder into power which even I may have been part of a humble rung and then when they got into power kicked the ladder away without any concern for the pain or injury or mischief or damage that they do to those who have helped them to gain power."

Those words, which Lord Carson spoke of the Irish Treaty, could be spoken concerning the present misnamed peace process.

I personally welcome the fact that at long last these Unionist leaders who have been preaching that the Union is safe have been forced to face the naked truth - the Union is in danger, and in greater danger at this time than at any other time since the founding of Northern Ireland.

We heard it from Terence O'Neill, the Union is safe. We heard it from Chichester-Clarke the Union is safe. We heard it from Brian Faulkner the Union is safe. We heard it from James Molyneaux the Union is safe. We heard it from Harry West the Union is safe and we have heard it in more recent times from Mr Trimble the Union is safe. Now, even Mr Trimble admitted in a recent debate in the Forum that what I said about the Union being in greater danger at this time than at any other time since the founding of Northern Ireland, was correct. All Unionists with any sizable electoral base have reached agreement either beforehand by a right reading of the situation or by being forced to do so by the unfolding events which they refuse to face. The representatives of the Ulster Democratic Party and the Progressive Unionist Party, spokesmen and frontmen for the outlawed UDA and UVF respectively, will still act as ventriloquist dummies of the Stormont regime as they did when they were patronised by the previous Conservative Government ministers in Northern Ireland. My Party will have no alliance whatsoever with them. As the Leader of this Party I will not be escorted into sitting down with IRA/Sinn Fein with them at my side.

These parties allow themselves to be used by the Government in power as the excuse for the retaining of weaponry by the IRA and, in the words of their spokesman, are prepared to give the benefit of the doubt to Gerry Adams concerning the Canary Wharf bombing. The Pan-Nationalist Front has convened a misnamed peace process conference at Stormont with the help of the British Conservative and Labour Governments. Then IRA/Sinn Fein, without the surrender of one ounce of explosives or one gun, has been welcomed at the table as democratic and on an equal footing with the Official Unionists. In spite of all professions to the contrary the Official Unionists have sat down with IRA/Sinn Fein at the negotiating table and are now proceeding with the agenda. What is the agenda? The Framework Document. What is the Framework Document? It is a document with only one option - the united Ireland option and on their agenda the British Government has made it clear that that is the best bet.

The Official Unionists maintain now that all Unionists should be at the table with IRA/ Sinn Fein. This, of course, is not what they said in the past.

Let me just quote Deputy Leader. In July of this year Ulster Unionist Deputy Leader, John Taylor, said he would refuse to sit down with the Provisionals' political wing under the present circumstances. "I personally could not take part in talks with Sinn Fein with a gun to my head." So he was not going to sit down with them but now he has sat down with them. What is more, he is deeply impressed by them and their behaviour. In the last issue of The Sunday Times Mr

Taylor says he has also been impressed by the demeanour of Sinn Fein in the talks. He says "The body language is suggesting to me that Sinn Fein are beginning to slowly, slowly become realistic." Think of that! Here is a man who would not sit down with them but now is impressed with their body language. Is this a man who is going to defend and maintain the Union? A man who is actually impressed with the body language of gunmen and IRA terrorist leaders.

So we need not go any further. I could give quotation after quotation from Mr Trimble who said if the IRA did not give in their arms he would close down the talks. Have they given in one weapon? No, but instead of that they are going to receive new licensed weapons from the British Government. So the British Government, instead of taking away the weapons of the IRA are going to supply them with legally held weapons and yet Mr Trimble still maintains his place at the table with them. On every real principle essential to the defence of the Union the Official Unionists have weakened and are continually weakening.

In the Forum on 3rd October we had a debate on a DUP motion in regard to Articles 2 and 3. In that debate I moved the following motion - "This Forum condemns the illegal and immoral territorial claim contained in the Constitution of the Irish Republic and calls for its immediate and unilateral removal." I said during the first talks that there was a meeting at Downing Street which was attended by the Leader of the Official Unionist Party (then Mr Molyneaux) the Leader of the Alliance Party, the SDLP Leader and myself. Mr Hume said to Mr Major that the territorial quarrel between the Republic and the United Kingdom is now settled. I asked the Prime Minister if he thought that was the case, given that Articles 2 and 3 of the Republic's constitution remain. After a lot of squirming the Prime Minister admitted that the quarrel had not been settled.

Article 2 states: "The national territory consists of the whole island of Ireland, its islands and the territorial seas". Article 3 says: "Pending the re-integration of the national territory and without prejudice to the right of the Parliament and Government established by this Constitution to exercise jurisdiction over the whole of that territory the laws enacted by that Parliament shall have the like area and extent of application as the laws of Saorstát Éireann and the like extra-territorial effect."

The history of this is interesting. On 1st July, 1937, the people of the Free State, as it was then called, went to the polls on two issues. The election of a Parliament under the Government of Ireland Act and acceptance or repudiation of the new Constitution which had been drawn up by de Valera with the approval of the Roman Catholic Church.

The 1937 Constitution, as far as de Valera was concerned, was an actual progression towards true independence from Britain. The fact that it significantly undermined any prospect of co-operation between the two states in Ireland which share the national territory, their words seemed of little importance to de Valera. The Constitution itself aimed to restore Ireland, its Gaelic civilisation, a civilisation viewed by Ulster and the rest of the United Kingdom as backward and negative. The preamble to the Constitution makes it clear it was based on the moral theology of the Church of Rome, thus alienating the Protestant North. Articles 2 and 3 laid claim to all of the island of Ireland, the islands of Ireland and the territorial waters.

That irredentist claim brought anger and contempt from Ulster. It unilaterally altered British/Irish relationships from constitutional devolution based upon conciliation to the converse - confrontation and alienation of those they profess to represent. Dublin's irredentist claim of jurisdiction over the whole of Ireland swept away any hope or prospect of good relations between North and South. In one movement it entirely undermined the internationally binding and legal status of both the Irish Free State and Northern Ireland and disrupted democratic evolution in both North and South.

The people of the South of Ireland did not pass this Constitution by acclamation. To hear some folks nowadays you would think that the whole 26 counties to a man rose to hail this as a final deliverance from British rule and from any degree of liberty for Protestantism within this state. The Constitution was passed by only a small majority even though it was drafted supposedly to accommodate the interests of 93% of the people in the Free State. It was approved by 685,105 people and rejected by 526,945. Only 56% in favour. If there had been an input from Northern Ireland adding to the no vote it might not have had a majority in Ireland as a whole.

At the same election De Valera's Party failed to win a mandate. He got back into power only by relying on the Labour Party for support. Irish unity, if it were ever to come, would be on the basis of Northern Ireland's submission and subjection to the ethos enshrined in the 1937 Constitution.

On 4th July, 1940, corresponding with Chamberlain, then Prime Minister of this United Kingdom, De Valera stated, I quote: "Our present Constitution represents the limits to which we believe our people are prepared to go to meet the sentiments of Northern Protestants." If ever there was a case of De Valera's taking a "not an inch" attitude to the North, this was it. In other words, the Unionists were to have no say about ethos, a position which still exists, with the Irish Government telling us that they can only alter Articles 2 and 3 if there were a Unionist pay off.

We were told at the last talks that if we would negotiate with the Southern Government we would be staggered by their magnanimity towards the North. The Foreign Minister, who is still Foreign Minister today, said that the best day's work that De Valera ever did was to get this Constitution into place and in no way would they approve any changes to it.

The battle for the Union demands that these Articles 2 and 3 are not to be changed but they are to be immediately and unilaterally removed. That is the traditional Unionist view.

In that debate on 3rd October the Official Unionists moved an amendment to our motion. Our motion was "This Forum condemns the illegal and immoral territorial claim contained in the Constitution of the Irish Republic and calls for its immediate and unilateral removal."

Professor Alcock, as the official spokesman for the Official Unionists, moved the following: "This Forum condemns the territorial claim to Northern Ireland contained in the Constitution of the Irish Republic and calls upon all Unionists to unite within the framework of the talks in order to bring about its eventual removal."

Notice the dilution of the traditional Unionist principle. The territorial claim is condemned, but it is not condemned as being illegal and immoral. Then the way to have this changed is not to force the Irish Government to unilaterally do away with it. They unilaterally brought it in, they must unilaterally do away with it. Rather, we have to unite within the framework of the talks, that is, in negotiation with the Irish Government and with the SDLP and with IRA/Sinn Fein to bring about its eventual removal. What is more Professor Alcock said, and I quote, "I am not at all sure that they are illegal, these Articles, and I shall explain, immorality lies not with the Irish Republic but elsewhere."

So the Official Unionist spokesman condemned the principle always held by traditional Unionists that this claim was illegal and immoral. He now is not sure whether it is illegal and he is not at all convinced. In fact, he says it is not immoral and that the immorality lies elsewhere.

This is a pointer, as a man thinketh in his heart so is he. As a Party thinketh in its motions so is it. The Unionist Party has weakened and diluted and is now engaged in talks which hope to jettison the principles of traditional Unionism.

Then we have the new development - the breakthrough, as it is hailed - between Bertie Ahern and David Trimble. What is this? That they are prepared to talk, not to do away with, but to talk, about Articles 2 and 3 provided Section 75 of the Government of Ireland Act, (that is the Section that declares British sovereignty over Northern Ireland) is on the table as well. That, of course, is the Union. Mr Trimble now is prepared to put the Union on a par with Articles 2 and 3 which Professor Alcock has discovered are not illegal or immoral, and to put the Union on the same basis as the illegal claim of the Irish Republic.

I maintain that no Unionist should be at any talks with IRA/Sinn Fein. I go further and I say that no Unionist should be at any talks negotiating the Union with Bertie Ahern, John Hume, Gerry Adams or anyone else. The Union is not negotiable. It is illegal to seek to negotiate it. The pledge that the Union would not be on the table has been broken. The Secretary of State has rejected a numerical majority as a lock on any movement towards a united Ireland. According to press reports Mr Trimble is in agreement with Bertie Ahern and has placed the 1920 Act on a par with Dublin's immoral, criminal and illegal claim of Articles 2 and 3. The proposed all-Ireland body with executive powers put to the DUP by the Prime Minister earlier this week and elucidated in the Dail by Bertie Ahern strikes a mortal blow at the Union. It leaves Unionists always in a minority in matters relating to Northern Ireland. 50% of the membership of such a body would be from the Irish Republic. At least a third of the representatives from Northern Ireland would be republican orientated leaving the Unionists always in a permanent minority, and that is going to be the body which, if a Northern Ireland Assembly fails to operate the way Dublin wants it to operate, can be abolished and that all Ireland body can take over its duties and responsibilities.

Union with Dublin cannot be achieved under the present law without the consent of the majority of the people of Northern Ireland, and they alone, voting in a referendum. Both the Conservative Government and the present Labour Government and Mr Blair again this week has stated that no such opportunity will be given to the Ulster people. In view of such duplicity, deceit and treachery on the part of the present Government we can expect a sham referendum on a cobbled together accommodation which, in reality, would be a form of the Framework Document. That is a further step on the road to the attainment of the full republican agenda. Such an attempt to override the Border Poll legislation which is already in place and which is the only referendum which enables the people of Northern Ireland to give their democratic verdict on the Union as of right, is an example of the despicable political immorality to which this Government has sunk.

My Party believes we must prepare ourselves to defeat this referendum. Unionists who take part in helping to produce the referendum could hardly expect to unite Unionists to reject it. The Official Unionists have a choice to make. Much more so when the Prime Minister himself made it clear to us that if the Official Unionists left the present talks a new process would have to be sought. Unionists attending the talks are responsible for keeping them going. There is no use in them blaming the IRA.

There is a life-and-death need for the Unionist community to come together and if there are those who are prepared to dilute or jettison Unionist principles they must be rejected and Unionist unity must be based on a firm foundation.

On September 2nd, 1997, the Official Unionists agreed and issued a joint statement with us on three points:

1. That the people of Northern Ireland alone, have the right to determine their own future is fundamental, it must apply in all circumstances, and must be accepted by the Government and all parties.
2. The issue of the decommissioning of all illegal terrorist weaponry must be resolved to their satisfaction as a precondition to any substantive political negotiations. That is to the satisfaction of the Official Unionist Party and the Ulster Democratic Unionist Party.
3. There is an urgent need for greater Unionist unity at this critical time.

Unfortunately the Official Unionists backed away from this agreement so we find ourselves in the most difficult of situations. We have a crisis. A crisis which it was denied even existed by the Official Unionist Party but has now come to a head and, what is more, is coming to a head swiftly, as every day more and more concessions are made to the IRA and Mr Trimble continues on the pathway of weakening the Union by determining to negotiate the Union with the Pan-Nationalist Front majority in the misnamed so-called peace process at Stormont.

When an attempt was made to destroy the new Jewish nation a man called Mordecai said to Esther the Queen of the great Persian Empire: "You have come to the kingdom for such a time as this".

For such a time as this - a time when fair is foul and foul is fair. A time when men call good evil and evil good. A time when the murderers are honoured and the murdered dishonoured. A time when the faithless are eulogised and the faithful are ostracised. A time when the prisoners are consistently released and their victims conveniently forgotten. A time when darkness is called light and light darkness. A time when hell is called heaven and heaven is called hell. For such a time as this.

We should make it a repenting time, our sins and our national sins need to be repented of. We need to return to the God of our fathers. These words from the Holy Book are appropriate: "Thus saith the Lord, stand ye in the ways, and see, and as for the old paths, where is the good way, and walk therein, and ye shall find rest for your souls but they said we will not walk therein." (Jeremiah 6:16)

For such a time as this. We should make it a resolving time. We must resolve that we will not barter our liberties or sell our Protestant birthright. It cost too much, it is too valuable to be sacrificed on the altar of political expediency. I have no intention of surrendering. Have you? I have no intention of negotiating with the armed IRA/Sinn Fein. Have you? I have no intention of accepting any bribe. Have you? I have no intention of bowing to any occupant of Washington's White House. Have you? I have no intention of insulting the memory of Ulster's honoured dead. Have you? I have no intention of going back on my resolve to keep Ulster from

Dublin rule. Have you? I have no intention of lowering the Union flag. Have you? I have no intention to stop singing the National Anthem. Have you?
That being so, I use the words of our founding father, Lord Carson of Duncairn, and I say to this Government - "By no law can the right to govern those whom we represent be bartered away without consent. You may betray us but you will not deliver us bound into the hands of our enemies. We will defend and retain our liberties and Almighty God will defend the right."
God Save Ulster!

§ Leader's Speech to the Annual DUP Conference 1998

Spell-checked, edited version.

"The worst and most loathsome person in society is the traitor - the Judas, the Iscariot. Who dares to excuse and whitewash treachery but he who is a party to that treachery?

Who dares to sustain the treachery but he who has helped the traitor to bring it about and remains to see the vile deed through, eager to enjoy the pay-off?

Of him who professes to be a dedicated ally but who goes over to the enemy because of personal advantages, no words in any language are adequate to describe.

He is a liar, a cheat, a hypocrite, a knave, a thief, a loathsome reptile which needs to be scotched. I will let the people of Ulster detect for themselves the traitor and then pass their own verdict. I will but level the charges. I will make no attempt in any way to use any coating of eloquence to make these charges stick. This past week was, according to London and Dublin, a great historic week for us all.

Tony Blair, to the echoes of the rafters of Leinster House, announced as the Prime Minister of the United Kingdom (the words Great Britain and Northern Ireland carefully dropped by the agreement of Downing Street), declared that Northern Ireland's legal position within the United Kingdom was gone. He announced that under the agreement the basis of Ulster's constitution in the United Kingdom, the 1920 Act, was repealed.

No wonder Dublin rejoiced. They could hardly believe it! Under the agreement they had destroyed Ulster's foundation, but to have a British Prime Minister, who was even prepared to have the name of his country diminished by its ancient foes, come and announce this was surely the icing on the cake. What he could also have done is tell the rest of the truth, that the Act of Union of 1800 and all the laws binding Northern Ireland to the United Kingdom had been superseded by the Belfast Agreement of treachery.

But had not Mr Trimble backed the destruction of the 1920 Act and the superseding of the Act of Union? With Trimble's blessing, what did Blair care for the consequences to the unionists of Northern Ireland? The sop that Ahern will not suppress the debate on joining the Commonwealth is set forth by Official Unionists, especially one Dermott Nesbitt of South Down, as a great gain, a constitutional victory of immeasurable consequences.

Think of it! The Republic will not suppress discussion about joining the Commonwealth - the sop the Official Unionists are prepared to accept after they supported the total destruction of the Union.

This week the figures on violence committed by those supposed to be on ceasefire were published. Shocking new figures they were! FAIT, Families Against Intimidation and Terror, revealed that since the signing of the agreement there were 421 recorded terrorist incidents.

Republican terrorists, in November alone, drove into exile nine people, intimidated 67 and carried out two shootings and seven beatings. Loyalists were involved in exiling 11 people,

intimidating 48 and carrying out five shootings and seven beatings. This makes an alarming total of 20 people exiled, 115 people intimidated, seven shot and 14 beaten and that only for this as yet unfinished month of November.

This is not peace, Mr Blair.

In his speech Mr Blair added a further insult to injury to the unionists when he picked out two men as worthy of praise. Here are his words:

"Daniel O'Connell, who fought against injustice, to extend the franchise restricted by religious prejudice."

"Charles Stewart Parnell, whose statue stands in the House of Commons and whose political skills and commitment to social injustice made such an impact in that House."

It is interesting to note those whom he selected for praise. He did not select honourable men - one unionist and one nationalist. After all he could have praised Carson, a native of Dublin, who wanted to keep the entire Union of Britain and Ireland. No - instead he chose to select the most loathsome and despicable of Irish nationalists.

Let us look at those whom the Prime Minister elevated. Daniel O'Connell, a man who married his cousin and was rightly accused of all kinds of sexual deviancy. No surprise that the Prime Minister, with a Cabinet of many self-confessed homosexuals and partnerships without marriage, would find a place for him.

O'Connell was the self-styled "great repealer" of the Union. Thank God he failed then. He was repulsed by Henry Cooke and today we invoke the same spirit of the true loyalist people of Ulster to repulse the modern-day repealers of the Union.

These men whom Blair admires were revolutionaries. He may as well have congratulated Gerry Adams and Martin McGuinness because they are from the same filthy nest of murderous Irish nationalism. O'Connell gloried in revolution.

What about Parnell? Oh, our enemies will say 'sure he was a Protestant'. Aye, a turncoat is always the worst!

These are the men Blair favours: perverts, provocateurs and perjurers. People who oppose the police. Like Dr Cooke of old we must repulse Blair the modern repealer and the self-confessed emancipator. His talk about the Union cannot be trusted. He is no unionist. He is the greatest aider and abetter of its destruction that Dublin and the IRA have ever had.

Mr Blair could not have got so far without the compliance and support of Mr Trimble. No wonder Gerry Adams said 'Well done David!' Time and time again David Trimble has reneged on his promises and capitulated to the sell-out of our province.

Today Orangemen cannot walk their traditional routes to their place of worship or return in peace. Today the national flag is insulted. Today the Queen is reduced to the same level as the President of the Irish Republic.

Today the worst murdering scoundrels ever put behind bars are being set free. Today those scoundrels are being paid compensation by the Government. Today those they have maimed for life, the injured and bereaved, have to suffer in silence, a deaf ear having been turned to their cries for help. Today Protestants are being discriminated against in the workplace. Today those who should be in the front line defending the Union are in cahoots with the enemy and

surrendering in an unholy partnership the very principles that they swore to uphold. Today is the eve of the abolishing of the RUC.

This is Trimble's legacy to our province. The Ulster Unionist people themselves must make their own judgments and pass their own verdicts. The facts stare them in the face and those facts need no arguing."

§ Leader's Speech to the Annual DUP Conference 1999

Spell-checked, edited version.

A great sale is being conducted today in the Waterfront Hall. It is the sale of the second millennium and what a sale that is.

After historically stating that Sinn Fein/IRA must decommission, Mr Trimble has proposed compromise. He will give them until February to start their decommissioning and then he will come back to an adjourned meeting in the Waterfront Hall. He is going to let the fox into the hen coop and then he is going to come back and talk to the people after the crunching of the bodies.

There can be no compromise, Mr Trimble, on this issue. But I want to say to you, Mr Trimble, you still have to face the real opposition, of people whom you have by deceit and lying betrayed. Your sin is unpardonable and unforgiven and we can never accept any word from your mouth.

The Northern Ireland Assembly, with all the claims that are made for it by David Trimble, is not a proper and democratic Assembly.

The proposed order paper has been published by the Speaker-designate of that Assembly and the motion states that Mr Mallon never resigned, that he offered to resign and must now be reinstated by the Assembly. Mr Mallon did resign. When he walked out of the Assembly, his official car was taken from him. He lost his driver, he lost his car and he also lost his salary.

The government regretted that they had to accept his resignation, but when I spoke to the deputy Speaker he said it was doubtful whether Mr Mallon had resigned, because he had to go back.

Through their own laws that they themselves concocted to get him there, that needed a majority of the majority and a majority of the minority must agree to his reappointment, but that is something that he would not get now.

So by a backdoor, in fact by the keyhole, they're now going to squeeze Mallon back into office. Not only should Mallon be out but under their own law, Trimble should be out.

But the Secretary of State has only to draw his pen and Mallon is back and the Assembly has no say whatsoever in its own standing, and then we are told we are to respect democracy. But there is no democracy.

Now this salesman has come to the Waterfront Hall to sell the great birthright of democracy, the birthright of only those who are totally and absolutely committed and practise the principles of liberty and advocate alone the rule of law and eschew all violence should be admitted to government.

And I want to say today, we do not discuss or negotiate whether such people should be in government. There is no room for debate. There is no room for discussion. There is no room for argument. Democracy says no. Any government that discusses such a proposal has already sold out.

David Trimble is saying here is a way whereby we can get you Gerry Adams and Martin McGuinness into the government of Northern Ireland and the unionist leaders are telling the people of Northern Ireland that this is the way to save the Union.

Mr Trimble, you can fool the unionist people some of the time but you're not going to fool them all the time. The leadership of unionism has forever passed from David Trimble, no matter what the vote is on the day.

Every vote cast today in the Waterfront Hall for Mr Trimble is a vote of shame. It is a vote of darkness, a vote that tramples on the graves of innocent victims and a vote that not only tramples on them but dances on their graves.

Let me say every hand that is raised for Trimble today and for his prophecy is a hand just as much the enemy of Ulster as a hand of the IRA.

After the result of the UUC vote became known, Dr Paisley again addressed the conference; the following are edited extracts:

First of all, Mr Trimble was defeated on the first issue. His proposal was to get approval to go into an executive with the IRA. Now because of the opposition that arose, Mr Trimble changed his mind. He couldn't put the first resolution to his delegates. If he had, it is now well known that he would have been defeated.

He proposed that they go ahead in a temporary way with having the executive set up - bringing in the IRA, giving them their kiss-in and their love-in.

And then he handed a letter to the president of the Unionist Council, which has not been made public. But it is said that if there is not decommissioning by February, then the council will return and they will give their final decision.

Then when he met the press, he wouldn't take any questions. But it was admitted by the party that of course the IRA-Sinn Fein were to jump together with him. He now admits he jumped first and he said "over to Mr Adams now".

Mr Adams has already spoken. He said this postponement is totally opposed to the agreement and they will give it no support whatever.

What we can say now is Mr Trimble's leadership is now in question. It is the leader's business to lead the party.

If I could only get 57 per cent of the delegates here today, I'd be man enough to go away. Of course, the trouble is that Mr Trimble is holding on to office for the spoils of office.

He has said in this letter that he is going to resign. How many have trusted Trimble and he never kept his word? Why should he keep it this time?

We have told the people in the elections that if we have the proportion we will take up those seats. We would not be sitting in any executive but we would stop the IRA from getting an extra member into the executive.

We are all ready for Monday, we are ready for the battle and I believe God will give us a victory. And I am content that the first great dent in the armour has been made.

§ Leader's Speech to the Annual DUP Conference 2000

Spell-checked version.

I am proud to be an Ulsterman. I have no apology of any kind to make for my religion, my native province, my politics or my people.

"Breathes there a man with soul so dead,
who never to himself has said,
'This is my own, my native land.'"

There are those who disclaim history and whose mouth is filled with "highfaluting" talk about facing the future.

I happen to believe that we can only face the future if we have knowledge and understanding of the past. For a nation to forget its history is for that nation to commit national suicide.

History is a ploughed field upon which we can sow the seeds of our inquiries and its soil will bring to fruition the good and bountiful harvest of well-tested wisdom, a wisdom that both entreats and inspires. In the pages of Ulster's history we will find, time and time again the appearance of men and women who showed leadership in the Ulster way.

What is history?

Is it not really biographies, life-stories? – What stories! What lives! Yes, and it is in its biographies we find the life-blood of history.

The history of Ulster summonses from the past a whole line of leaders, both false and true. There is one thing undeniable, there has never been a shortage of would-be leaders in this Province.

Each age, each section of the community, each segment of the Ulster people, have produced such persons.

Advantaged by hindsight we have discernment and are able to sort out the good from the bad, the true from the sham, and true leadership from the false.

Two Leaders from the Past:

I want to take two renowned figures from Ulster's history and seek to discover from them Leadership the Ulster way.

One of these is Patrick, and the other the founding father of political Ulster, Lord Carson of Duncairn, popularly known as Sir Edward Carson.

Patrick's story is short, simple and sublime.

"When a youth, nay almost a boy, I was taken captive, before I know what I ought to avoid. Hence I blush today, and greatly fear to expose my unskilfulness, because, not being eloquent, I cannot express myself with clearness and brevity.

But after I had come to Ireland I daily used to feed cattle, and I prayed frequently during the day; the love of God and the fear of Him increased more and more, and faith became stronger, and the spirit was stirred: so that in one day I said about a hundred prayers, and in the night nearly the same; so that I used even to remain in the woods and in the mountain; before daylight I used to rise in prayer, through snow, through frost, through rain, and felt no harm; nor was there any slothfulness in me, as I now perceive, because the spirit was then fervent within me.'

Patrick became the leader of Ulster, and indeed the apostle of the Christian Church in Ireland - (the Roman Church in Ireland was still some centuries away). Let it never be forgotten that Rome came to Ireland on the backs of the Norman invaders who had paid the Pope for the grant of Irish soil. Instead of arguing about Ireland's ills with Ulster Protestants, Nationalists and Republicans should be arguing with their newly-found English friends, the Blairs and the Hague's, the fellow architects of the notorious Belfast Surrender Agreement.

The temper of true steel is only proved in the furnace.

Like one of old, Patrick was chosen in the furnace of affliction. In the imprisonment of slavery Patrick was taught the application of Christian truth in his inmost soul. In the darkness he saw the Light of the World, which is Christ Himself, and he was transformed. His whole life was changed by devotion to God.

First Mark of True Leadership - Devotion to God

"And there indeed one night in my sleep, I heard a voice saying to me, 'Thou fastest well, fasting so; thou shalt soon go to thy country'. And again, after a very short time, I heard a

response saying to me, 'Behold thy ship is ready'. And it was not near, but perhaps two hundred miles away, and I never had been there, nor was I acquainted with any of the men there.

"After this I took flight, and left the man with whom I had been six years, and I came in the strength of the Lord, who directed my way for good; and I feared nothing till I arrived at that ship. And on that same day on which I arrived, the ship moved out of its place, and I asked them (the sailors) that I might go away and sail with them. And it displeased the captain and he answered sharply with indignation, 'Do not by any means seek to go with us'.

And when I heard this, I separated myself from them in order to go to the hut where I lodged. And on the way I began to pray, and before I had ended my prayer I heard one of them calling loudly after me, 'Come quickly, for these men are calling you'. And immediately I returned to them, and they began to say to me, 'Come, for we receive you in good faith, make friendship with us in whatever way you wish'. And in that day I accordingly disdained to make friendship with them, on account of the fear of God.

But in very deed I hoped of them that they would come into the faith of Jesus Christ, because they were heathen and on account of this I clave to them. And we sailed immediately."

Let us learn that it is devotion to the Eternal God which will make us good servants of His creatures.

Ulster-Scots were brought up on porridge and the Shorter Catechism. The first question of that Scriptural manual is:

'What is man's chief end?' Its answer is simple: 'To glorify God and enjoy Him for ever'.

It is that truth which shapes a man or woman for leadership in society of any age in this world of ours.

Rejection of God is rejection of all true and lasting enjoyment in this world and in the world to come.

Devotion to God is the foundation of effective leadership.

A person devoted to God will not lie, will not dissemble, will not act dishonestly, will not cheat, will not act dishonourably.

The Israelite King Jehu said of the two heaps of the heads of the slain sons of the wicked King Ahab, 'Who slew all these?' The political world today has many heaps of found-out lies.

Well may we ask 'From whose lips did these come?' The answer is written in the columns of the record. The dark fact stares us in the face. What has man by his word?

Mr Sam Foster is now the great apologist for IRA/Sinn Fein in the Executive. He castigates the DUP at every turn. His Orange collarette has been transubstantiated into a green Hibernian one. Hear him in the Assembly on 15th December 1998:

"We are talking about setting bodies and Departments - that is ridiculous before decommissioning. We are being asked to set up a Government in spite of the fact that we know that, outside in the undergrowth, there are weapons and equipment ready to be used - a gun-to-the-head attitude. Is that what we are being asked to do? Are we being asked to govern in spite of the fact that there are illegal armies and equipment out there?"

"Mr. Presiding Officer, do you really feel that you could preside over a Government? Would it be credible or incredible? Would it be dishonest or honest? Would it be deceit or falsehood or a lack of integrity? Are there no morals whatsoever?"

When will they learn that they cannot fool all the people all the time?

Patrick was stamped with another mark of true leadership, Dedication to the Task.

Leadership can know no discharge from its yoke.

It knows nothing of stops and starts. Its seal is constancy.

Nothing can halt the process or in any way stop the momentum of the programme in hand.

The leader conquers the obstacles, he does not for a moment allow them to conquer him. We should always remember that the temper of a person's character is known by what it takes to stop him.

Third Characteristic of Leadership - Determination.

"But you know how much I paid to those who acted as judges throughout all the regions which I more frequently visited. For I think that I distributed among them not less than the hire of fifteen men. So that you might enjoy me and I may always enjoy you in the Lord, I do not regret it, nor is it enough for me - I still spend and will spend for your souls. God is mighty, and may He grant to me that in future I may spend myself for your souls. Behold, I call God to witness upon my soul that I lie not, neither that you may have occasion, for because I hope for

honour from any man. Sufficient to me is honour which is not belied. But I see now that I am exalted by the Lord above measure in the present age; and I was not worthy, nor deserving that He should aid me in this, since I know that poverty and calamity suit me better than riches and luxuries. But Christ the Lord was poor for us.

"But I, poor and miserable, even if I wished for riches yet have them not, neither do I judge my own self, because I daily expect either murder or to be circumvented, or to be reduced to slavery, or mishap of some kind. But I fear none of these things, on account of the promises of the heavens: for I have cast myself into the hands of the Omnipotent God, who rules everywhere, as saith the prophet, 'Cast thy thought on the Lord and He will sustain thee'."

The obstacles placed in our way by the Pan-Nationalist Front - which now includes the Government and Opposition Parties in Westminster - we must make our means a triumph, not a scourge, whipping us into capitulation. This was demonstrated in the South Antrim By-Election. There the obstacles were faced up to and with dedication miraculously overcome. The unbelief of those who thought the seat was unwinnable was shown to be unfounded.

When I was a lad at school I learned a poem which epitomises this simple truth: 'Strike the nail aright, boys,

Hit it on the head.

Strike with all you might, boys,

When the iron is red.

When there's work to do, boys,

Do it with a will.

Those who reach the top, boys,

First must climb the hill.'

There are hot irons all around us. Let us seize the hammer of dedication and strike them hard. There is a tremendous task before us. Let us face it with all the willpower it is humanly possible to muster. A very steep hill is before us. Let us determine to conquer it. To do so we must climb and climb and climb. The Hill Difficulty can be conquered but not without total commitment. If we allow ourselves to be beaten we have only ourselves to blame.

Our failures must be turned into stepping-stones of success.

Dedication which refuses to be exhausted, which spurns all easy ways of compromise, which refuses to change its goals and settle for second best is the dedication which in the end will have the last laugh at impossibilities, and will finally cry triumphantly, "We have reached the tip!"

Patrick the slave-boy had it.

There is no reason why we too cannot share its blessing if we pay the price. It cannot be obtained on the cheap.

Fourth Characteristic of Leadership - Demands Readily Met.

"During this time I gave presents to the kings; besides which I gave pay to their sons who escorted me; and nevertheless they seized me, together with my companions. And on that day they eagerly desired to kill me; but the time had not yet come. And they seized all the things that they found with us, and they also bound me with iron. And on the fourteenth day the Lord set me free from their power; and whatever was ours was restored to us, for God's sake, and the attached friends whom we had before provided."

What demands were made of the slave-boy Patrick as he grew both in age and in work. The demands in sacrifice were colossal, but Patrick determined whatever the sacrifice he would make it. That became his guiding star throughout his life, not what he could get but what he could give. That must be the attitude of us all. Not what my country can give me, but what can I give to my country.

Search your heart. Have you this Devotion? Have you this Dedication? Have you this Determination? Have you this Spirit of Sacrifice? If you have not, you cannot win. Does not Ulster deserve our unstinted allegiance?

Let us turn now to the consideration of the leadership qualities of Sir Edward Carson.

"Edward Carson was a giant among men. Not only did he dominate them physically, standing out head and shoulders in the common throng of mankind, but he possessed in an exceptional degree qualities of character which set him apart from his fellows. Courage, perseverance and kindness of heart - these were the characteristics stamping his peculiar genius. He was a valiant man. He was also a stayer. His experience in the affairs of life was that so few were able to finish the race, 'run the last hundred yards', as he put it. He could and did so. Kindly

and understanding, Carson was the soul of honour in all his dealings. He hated injustice and disloyalty." (Sir Douglas Hyde's 'Life of Carson')

First Characteristic of Leadership - Unassailable Conviction

The drive behind Carson's leadership was first, unassailable convictions. Carson had settled in his mind and heart and soul that the best for Ireland, his native land, was union with the rest of the British Isles.

He knew the mind of his fellow-countrymen and women, both Nationalist and Unionist, and he knew the land of his birth. He saw that the best days for his country was when the Union was strengthened and London rejected the voices of Irish chaff and accepted the voices of Irish wheat, and ruled with fairness and firmness.

History records that the best years were when there was firm Tory government from London. Once Carson's convictions were settled there was no changing them. His were not ready-mixed pragmatic convictions which came and went as the popular political weathervane changed its direction. He never contemplated their doctoring or altering.

He was Luther-like - 'Here I take my stand; I can do naught else, God helping me.'

His enemies knew his fixed purpose and his friends learned it in a bitter school. Many of them were fair-weather colleagues only.

The day of debate Carson saw was past, and the day for the battle had come.

Let me mention one instance from the gun-running.

"In the beginning of February 1914 Crawford was in London on his way to Germany. Although he had the authority of James Craig and his Committee to accept the offer of arms, he suspected that some of the members had little liking for the business, and it was partly to get the support and countenance of their leader that Crawford paid a call on Sir Edward Carson at 5 Eaton Place.

"Crawford has given his own account of that strange interview between the gun-runner and the statesman, at that time engaged in vain negotiation with the Prime Minister. Each was serving the cause of the Union after his own fashion, and it may have seemed to Carson that Crawford's way was the more hopeful.

"Crawford told his leader that as far as he was concerned, once in Hamburg, he was committed: there could be no turning back; he would accept no cancellation, and he asked Carson if he was willing to back him to the end.

"'We were alone', Crawford reports. 'Sir Edward was sitting opposite to me. When I had finished, his face was stern and grim;... he rose to his full height, looking me in the eye; he advanced to where I was sitting and stared down at me, shook his clenched fist in my face and said in a steady determined voice which thrilled me ...'Crawford, I'll see you through this business if I should have to go to prison for it'.

"'I rose from my chair. I held out my hand and said: 'Sir Edward, that is all I want. I leave tonight; good-bye.'"

Place Mr Trimble and his fellow-travellers with IRA/Sinn Fein beside our founding father. What miserable, despicable characters they are. Before the words of Unionist allegiance are scarcely uttered, they are wheeling and dealing with the murderous pact of IRA gangsters in Stormont. If they want to stop IRA/Sinn Fein in Government they only need to do a simple thing - say goodbye to their love-in with IRA/Sinn Fein in the Executive. Quit playing Sinn Fein representatives on the North/South Council of Ministers, but his office pays for what are illegal meetings of that body from which he banned them! And now for their law-suit against the Government!

What, Mr Trimble, of the two other Nationalist Front delegations - Dublin and the SDLP?

Mr Trimble has preached unceasingly the value of the North/South bodies. Why suddenly does he find them so dangerous? But, wait for it, he says he is now teetering on the verge of re-consideration!

The people of Ulster know that the British Government has him in its straight-jacket. He is not a free agent. He negotiates as a man with a knife in his back. Many of us would like to know when and where it was manufactured and whose hands hold its handle. Official Unionist leaders are dispensable commodities with Westminster governments, who by fair means or foul, can have them removed. They laud them as they sell out them and then destroy them when they are of no further use in their scheme.

Second Characteristic of Leadership - Unquenching Constancy.

What Carson could not stand was the action of those who were prepared to throw all their past commitment away because it suited them, irrespective of the terrible harvest that others would reap.

"I only came into public life because I cared for my fellow-Loyalists in Ireland. I went through my public life doing my best for them, and I saw them in the end betrayed; but at all events betrayed under the pretext that certain safeguards were provided. Now I have lived to see every one of these safeguards absolutely set at naught and made useless. That is not a pleasant political career. I belong, I believe, to what is called the Unionist Party. Why it is called the Unionist Party I fail to understand unless it is to remind people in this country that it was the Party that betrayed the Unionists.

"...Now they propose to abolish what I think is the last of the safeguards. The Oath is gone, the Veto of the King is gone, the Representative of the King is subordinate - he is gone. They are all gone, and now they are to abolish - it has in fact been abolished for a long time - the only remaining safeguard which was so flaunted in our faces... Every single promise we have made to the Loyalists in Ireland has been broken, every pledge of law and order destroyed, everything that makes life and property safe has gone, and now the last remnant is to be taken away."

Carson hated unfaithfulness and then the whitewashing of lies which accompanied it.

How low can men sink in order to mind the all-important Number One?

How can a party leader be trusted who has lied and lied and lied again and destroyed the integrity of the unionist people and the constitution of our Province?

In the name of the people, I indict him and those backing him with their votes in the Assembly and elsewhere, of successive acts of the gravest treachery.

I am in a position to indict him, and well he knows it. I have behind me five elections in a row, all-Ulster elections. I do not forget the frantic efforts which he made to keep the dreaded name of Paisley off the ballot paper in the Forum elections. I remember too those who were his colleagues in Westminster who supported John Hume's name to appear but made a deal with the rotten Tory government not to allow my name to appear.

Here I stand this day with a renewed mandate from the majority of the Unionists of Ulster and I solemnly indict the prime doer of treachery in this Province.

Trimble's Treachery - here are his promises

'The Union is Strengthened'; 'No Unreformed Terrorists in Government'; 'Unionists will have a veto'; 'The Agreement is the death of Frameworks'; 'Eire's Territorial Claim will be surrendered'; 'Maryfield will go'; 'No United Ireland'; 'This is no Sunningdale'; 'There is No Licence to Terrorists'; 'The RUC has been saved'.

'I will pull the plug on the talks unless the IRA decommission right away' - 6th June 1996.

In the Assembly he claimed he had not made representations to the US administration about the censoring of information about the IRA arms running from Florida. The next day he had to return to the Assembly and withdraw his remarks because they were not only misleading but untruthful.

The Bottom Line:

'The new Agreement provides an end to the Anglo-Irish Agreement and Maryfield.' 'It has provided an Assembly. The territorial claim of the Republic will go.' 'The Act of Union stays.' 'Any North/South co-operation will be under the control of the Assembly.' 'The UUP has obtained a Council of the Isles which brings the Republic into the British Isles family of regions and nations.' 'The Agreement will be good for the economy.' 'Any prisoners released will be on licence and will go back to prison if they offend.' 'The Union is safer than it has been since 1985.'

'I have a message for Unionists: the bulk of the pain is behind us' - David Trimble, 6th October 2000.

David Trimble, I Indict You.

In the name of Ulster's honoured dead, I indict you.

In the name of the majority of Unionists, I indict you.

In the name of the anguished bereaved, I indict you.

In the name of those who trusted you and discovered, after the Referendum, your hellish treachery, I indict you.

This day I say 'David Trimble, in God's name go before you bring any more sacrifice, sorrow and shame to the people of this Province.'

There is one thing the people of this Province are not going to give you - the right to force us under the jackboot of the Dublin Rule of corruption and fascism. We were born free, and by God's help we will remain free.

Third Characteristic of Leadership - Faith to the End.

The faith which Carson imbibed from his mother in his early days, which supported him in the most wearisome and cruel days when he stood in the breach for the Union, was also his stay when he came to die.

"At the beginning of June 1935, Carson caught bronchial pneumonia. To this attack it seemed that he must succumb, but he put up a vigorous fight, as ever, and eventually pulled through. Among those who visited his sick-room was Dr. Charles D'Arcy, the Protestant Archbishop of Armagh and Primate of All Ireland. 'I have seen much to shake my faith', said the invalid to him, 'and what remains with me is no more than I learned at my mother's knee: 'God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son...' 'It is enough', said the Primate."

A fierce and most bitter battle is before us. Unionism needs to recover its roots and return to its well tried traditions. The unity of Unionism can only be found on the definitive platform of traditional Unionism. The downgrade to a United Ireland must at all costs be stopped. The coming election will give us a democratic platform to take on the enemies. That election will be our destiny-deciding hour. The battle can only be won with God's help and with careful preparation.

In view of the strong united position of the Pan-Nationalist Front, with the SDLP in the pocket of IRA/Sinn Fein and with Tony Blair prepared to sell out even the very security of our Province to retain his tattered world influence, every right-thinking unionist who cherished their heritage must take stock of the critical position in which they find themselves.

The first duty is for us all to know exactly what our basic unionist principles are. I list an essential ten:

1. The maintenance of Northern Ireland as an undiluted integral part of the United Kingdom.
2. That the Principles of democracy as practised elsewhere in the Kingdom be applied in the same way throughout Northern Ireland.
3. That the con-dominion status of Northern Ireland as a lackey of Dublin should forthwith cease. The internal affairs of Northern Ireland should be solely the responsibility of the Northern Ireland people, as in the Scottish devolution. Recently the Speaker of the Northern Ireland Assembly handed out to all parties a paper indicating what action the NI Assembly should take on the death of the person named by the Speaker as 'the President of Ireland', and on the death of the 'Prime Minister of Ireland', upgrading them to the plane of equality with the Queen and the Prime Minister of the United Kingdom. If this is not con-dominion status nothing else could be.
4. No executive powers should be vested in any body dominated by the Republic's representatives.
5. No representatives of any group which maintains illegal and terrorist weapon arsenals should be in the Government of Northern Ireland.
6. As long as the terrorists carry out their campaign there should be no dismantling or diluting of the RUC either in name, numbers, uniforms or structures.
7. All who have suffered at the hands of terrorists should be adequately compensated, with all handouts open or covered, to terrorist groups to cease forthwith.
8. Interference with the flying of the Union Flag as it flies in the rest of the United Kingdom, should cease. This must also apply to the displays of the Monarch's portrait and Remembrance Day activities.
9. All protocol regulations should apply to the Irish Republic as a foreign power, as applied to all other nation states in the European Union.
10. Elections should be free and not postponed or the ballot papers rigged to give advantage to any section of the population. All basic common civil rights should be honoured in reference to parades, etc. These basic principles, which are enshrined in all the nations in the European Union should be part of the practice in Northern Ireland.

Traditional unionists should come together and affirm agreement on these common principles and on other essentials, joining in common purpose and action to achieve them. The foundations upon which Ulster must build must be rock solid, not the sinking sands of the Belfast Treachery Agreement. The fact of the matter is that the Belfast Agreement advocates are set to destroy democracy.

The sooner a Pan-Unionist Front is forged, the better for everyone in this Province.
Agreement on principles comes first, then agreement on policy to achieve these principles,
must follow.
Time is of the essence.

§ Leader's Speech to the Annual DUP Conference 2001

Spell-checked version.

I want to take this opportunity to heartily welcome you to our Conference today. In this our thirtieth year we meet at a time when Ulster's democratic freedoms have never been more under threat. This Party has and continues to be the single greatest obstacle to thwarting the plan of Ulster's enemies to take us through the gates and into a United Ireland. That is why we, in the DUP have been vilified, harried and attacked over the past thirty years.

We have a proud history. It was the Ulster Constitutional Defence Committee and the Ulster Protestant Volunteers who first raised the standard against O'Neill's treachery.

The Protestant Unionist Party grew out of those bodies and in Council elections defeated Official Unionists who were prepared to surrender to Dublin.

The Protestant Unionist Party, strengthened by the election of Rev William Beattie (South Antrim) and myself (Bannside) — O'Neills's old seat — to Stormont, took steps to engage in getting the Unionist family together.

Along with Captain L.P.S. Orr, I helped to convene the first Unionist Unity meeting in my room at Stormont. Under pressure Captain Orr capitulated to Glengall St and pulled out.

Then, along with Mr Desmond Boal MP, I helped to form the Unionist Alliance. This platform for the Unionist family brought together the loyal orders and the Unionist parties and groupings. Mr Boal was Chairman.

As the Province slipped into utter disarray, at a meeting in the Grand Central Hotel, Belfast, this group met and decided to come together in a new Unionist party, uniting all the various strands of Unionism, the Official Unionists — Rev Martin Smyth, Mr Harry West MP, Bill Craig MP, Captain Ardill, the Protestant Unionists, Independent Unionists and the associated loyal bodies in support. The vote was overwhelming with only two dissidents. The Official Unionist MP's mentioned above failed to keep the commitment. "

That night there was a pub bomb on the Shankill Road, Belfast. Mr Boal and myself were summoned to attend. The Shankill was seething with thousands of people and Mr Boal rightly recognised that leadership must be given, told me that I should right away announce the birth of a new Unionist party. Realising that only such an announcement would create hope in the hearts of those so sorely stricken and so blatantly betrayed, I announced what had happened at the Hotel that night. In such travail the new Unionist party was born — later to be christened the Ulster Democratic Unionist Party. Desmond Boal MP, Johnny McQuade MP, Rev William Beattie MP and myself, along with Senator Charles McCullough were the Stormont representatives of the new party.

So the baby conceived in the Grand Central Hotel, born on the Shankill Road has grown and today is taking on the enemies of Ulster.

This thirtieth year has been historic for our party – the message is clear to friend and foe alike, the Democratic Unionist Party speaks for the majority of Unionists in the Province, we are the party the people trust, to lead, guide and act as the guardians of traditional Unionist principles.

The past thirty years have taken their toll on the Ulster people. Who would have believed that at the start of the twenty-first century the Provisional IRA, armed by the Dublin Government in the early 70's, would be sitting in the heart of the Government of Northern Ireland?

Who would have believed that the Dublin Government would roll across the Border in a fleet of black Mercedes cars, into Northern Ireland dictating policy to the people of Ulster through the North South Ministerial Council?

Sadly each and every sell-out initiative has revealed that there are those so-called Unionists who are prepared to slither and slide down the road of deceit and betrayal. Today they are found grouped together in the David Trimble led Unionist Party. They are defeatists, not prepared to stand and fight, but to settle for any terms offered to them by Dublin and the Pan Nationalist Front. That is why Ulster's in the state it is today, that is why this Party must prepare for the task ahead. Our unprecedented victories this

year are but a start on the long road to rescuing Ulster from the treachery of Trimble and negotiating a better future for the people of Northern Ireland.

Let us examine the treachery of the Ulster Unionist Party. How the attitude of that Party has undergone major surgery. Now it's a case of fellow unionists ignored and derided and IRA Sinn Fein praised and clapped. It's Mark Durkan in, soon to be followed by Martin McGuinness and Peter Weir and Pauline Armitage out. Let this Conference be in no doubt how low the Official Unionist Party has stooped in order to keep this flawed Agreement alive, and how low it will go to stay in bed with IRA/Sinn Fein.

Only last Saturday, the failed Chairman of the Ulster Unionist Party, Mr James Cooper claimed that his Party had been honest with the people of Northern Ireland. What nonsense. His party told the people of this Province at the time of the Referendum that prisoners would not be released until violence was given up for good. They told us Cross Border bodies would be accountable to the Assembly. They told us the RUC had been saved, that Unionists would have a veto in the Assembly for key decisions. They also told the people they would not sit in Government with IRA/Sinn Fein until decommissioning was complete AND Paramilitary organisations had stood their units down. All of this turned out to be a litany of broken promises.

The Ulster Unionist decommissioning policy has been an utter failure for the people of Northern Ireland. Now Trimble claims he has delivered decommissioning in an attempt to hide his total failure as a negotiator and to

remove the spotlight from the ever-growing list of concessions to Nationalists and Republicans.

He claims that the process is starting to 'pay dividends'. Trimble has surrendered everything his own party ever stood for in order to deliver what – a stunt of smoke and mirrors from murdering evil thugs.

It would take a speech itself to detail how many occasions the Official Unionist Party has surrendered on the issue of decommissioning. Back in 1994 the Unionists said that the IRA would have to totally disarm before they could enter political talks.

Then in 1995 they reduced that requirement to the point where the Provo's needed only to decommission some weapons in order to enter political talks.

Trimble then moved the goalposts yet again in 1996 as part of Mitchell's dirty little deal. Now the IRA was only required to decommission alongside the political process.

By the time of the signing of the iniquitous Agreement Trimble had bought into the idea that all participants in the process were to use any influence they may have to achieve the decommissioning of all paramilitary arms within TWO years.

Trimble claimed he would not sit in the Executive in the absence of a creditable and verifiable beginning to the decommissioning of IRA weapons. We will all remember the final surrender of the Official Unionists when in November 1999 they welcomed murderers and thugs into the heart of our Government. David Trimble himself handed over the future of Ulster to a man as vile as Martin McGuinness.

Just as his track record suggests David Trimble is the chief sell-out agent, and a master of deception. He has however learned new skills in recent times, he can dump his policy in a record time of seven days, he can claim to be a Unionist with a straight face, while leading a party comprising some members who openly declare their willingness to join a United Ireland.

I refer of course to his alleged re-election as First Minister. At the start of the week he told us his re-election on the back of Women's Coalition votes would not be credible but by the end of the week was grovelling around in the mud begging the party of cross dressers to support his re-election.

Today of course Trimble is a minority Unionist leader in the Assembly – he no longer enjoys the support of a majority of elected Unionists in the chamber. His was the only act of dishonour assuming the job of First Minister knowing full well the only group supporting him was a collection of the enemies of Ulster and a bunch of political half-wits.

Trimble told the public a week ago in his newspaper article that 'we tell Unionist people the truth' – why then was he prepared to jump to the tune of IRA Sinn Fein and cheat against the wishes of the majority of Unionists when he previously claimed that Unionists would have a veto in the Assembly.

The answer is clear – the Trimble led Unionists in conjunction with the British Government are running scared of the ballot box. If Trimble is so confident that this process is paying for Unionists let's have an election. Let's ask the people and let them decide – this party has no fear of the ballot box.

Of course Trimble knows he and his 'team' are in no position to take to the elections field. Perhaps he might want to take some coaching advice – he could start by putting Lady Hermon on the transfer list.

Any Unionist that would dare to suggest that IRA/Sinn Fein could come to share tea and buns at a Unionist meeting is not worthy of calling themselves a Unionist. What a slap in the teeth to the orphans and the widows of this country, what a slap in the teeth to those who mourn today. These IRA leaders are the same men who have consistently refused to say sorry instead aligning themselves with terrorism and bloodletting.

The record of the Official Unionist Party is one of pledge breaking and dishonour. They have, under the leadership of Trimble abandoned every traditional Unionist principle they ever held. Today, more than ever it is the Democratic Unionist Party that is the custodian of traditional Unionist values. It is the sound political judgement and leadership provided by this Party that has often made the difference. Throughout our proud history the DUP has proved to be the Unionist Party that can be trusted.

We have a responsibility as never before to lead the unionist people and to defend their interests in a way which demonstrates our determination to defend Ulster and the Union. The British government must understand that no matter how often the rules are changed, no matter how often sordid deals are concluded they will never strip us of our resolution to defend our liberties and our heritage.

We are going to defend that which is our right. With no malice against any individual we believe that all men should be equal under the law, and all men equally subject to the law. I say that Ulster's Unionist people will not be beaten. They will stand for what is their right – to decide their future as part of this United Kingdom. No amount of blackmail, murder or terrorism will bring the Ulster unionist people to their knees.

Like Carson of old we must be careful upon whom we trust. The mainland parties are double dealers, speaking with forked tongues, behaving with neither honour nor dignity. The record of this British government is one of hypocrisy – Ulster people do not believe Blair – even Trimble now realises the folly of relying on the Prime Minister and his pieces of paper. We had the graffiti on the walls, the pledges. We were told to vote for peace – yet where is the peace today?

Instead we have Government run by appeasers and Provo's, we have criminality out of control and a Police force that is weak and demoralised. This is all courtesy of Mr Trimble and his sidekick Taylor. We now live in a country where the Police cannot fly the Union flag, even on a Royal visit and Official Unionist Councillors are running to placate Sinn Fein over when to fly our nation's flag.

Aiding and abetting Mr Trimble in this trickery is of course that reprehensible little Secretary of State John Reid. Now he is crying that he is a Unionist, that he doesn't want to see Unionists out in the cold.

Well it's time to put Dr Reid to the test. He has refused to meet my party. In doing so he is snubbing the majority of Unionists who registered their support for us at both the General and Local Government elections.

We need action not words from the Secretary of State. He must now treat this Party and those who voted for it with respect, he must recognise publicly that the majority of Unionist do not support the Agreement. He must recognise that any settlement will require the consent of the majority of both Unionists and Nationalists, and he must admit that renegotiation of the present arrangements is the only way forward.

Ladies and Gentlemen we must prepare ourselves for the major battles ahead. Decommissioning remains unresolved. Bertie Ahern wants to take a low-key approach to this issue. He wants IRA in Government here, yet he won't have them in his Government. He along with Trimble wants to bury the issue.

This Party will not allow decommissioning to be forgotten. We are not in the business of handing over Ulster's future to a Canadian General who is not accountable to the people of Northern Ireland, a man who has treated the people with contempt.

We met this General and when we did he told us he did not know which country the decommissioning stunt had occurred in. He told us he did not know if the IRA would meet him again or whether there would be another stunt. De Chastelain is the begging boy, sent by Trimble and the British Government, to fetch the crumbs from the IRA table. The Ulster people will not tolerate this – they have not been fooled by this charade.

Today as we celebrate our Anniversary we look back to past battles and to past glories. However we must build upon our solid foundations for the struggle that is yet to come. Our job is far from done. We must leave here today to prepare to seize control of our destiny. Elections will come. Those who fear the ballot box will have to face the inevitable. Only a strong, united and effective Democratic Unionist Party can lead the Unionist people out of the wilderness. Our party is strong, youthful, and vibrant. We have the strength and courage to defend the law-abiding citizens of Ulster.

Only by taking our mandate into the Assembly can we finally complete the job in hand. It is a challenge for each one of us here today from elected representative to Party Member. We must go forth and spread the message in every village, town and city that only by supporting this Party can we halt the slide and end the concession granting process. By God's help and grace we cannot, we will not fail.

There was a boy called David
Not like the one of old
For this boy called David wondered
How Ulster could be sold!

He said, I'll enter politics
And work to reach the top
I'll pretend to be a Unionist
Until I reach that spot

So David, Reg and Michael
And the rest of all his crew
Backed the Belfast Agreement
And welcomed Gerry too

But the garden's not so rosy now
The cracks begin to show
David's world is collapsing
And the Agreement has to go

David trembles now with fear
For him the end will come
He pretends to be a Unionist
But his plans have come undone

Little Brid Peep
Was looking for her sheep
And went to South Armagh
To find them

But no sheep were at home
Just the farmers alone
And now she won't even FINE them!

§ Leader's Speech to the Annual DUP Conference 2004

Spell-checked version.

Speaking at the Democratic Unionist Party Annual Conference at the Ramada Hotel, Shaw's Bridge, Belfast today, DUP Leader Dr Ian Paisley MP MEP MLA said:

"The majority of Ulster's unionists have given the Ulster Democratic Unionist Party the custodianship of our Province. They have charged us with the trust deeds of our future.

We have a solemn and terrifying responsibility. Every evil force which seeks the destruction of our Province, the betrayal of our heritage, the abolition of the Union and the final victory of our enemies, is united to achieve that goal.

This is war, war waged in every sphere. It is a fight to where no Queensbury Rules are honoured. It is a battle where no international agreements are upheld. It is a struggle for the very existence of democracy. Every evil force is harnessed to the chariot of the vilest treachery and diabolical deception.

Destruction of Ulster is the aim and the IRA is the instrument of the entire Judas Iscariot strategy. Treachery is their order of the day.

The great objective is to discredit the loyal unionist majority and seek, by the most underhand schemes, to turn the Democratic Unionist Party into another easy push-over spineless organisation, as has happened to the Ulster Unionist Party.

Let me tell you that as long as I lead this party it is going to honour the election pledges it has made. It will not be entering any talks, negotiations, pow-wows or socialisations with IRA/Sinn Fein.

Until Sinn Fein has surrendered its murder weaponry and turned away completely, totally and forever from its campaign of treachery, murder and mayhem, we will not be speaking to them in any way or negotiating with them at all.

I would remind you of the answer Tony Blair gave to me in the House of Commons in November 2002, when I asked him, "What is an act of completion? Does it consist of IRA/Sinn Fein repudiating and ceasing violence, and being disbanded, or does it simply mean that they make a statement that they will give up violence? Can the Prime Minister tell us what he believes it means?

Here is his reply, "I can. It is not merely a statement, a declaration or words. It means giving up violence completely in a way that satisfies everyone, and gives them confidence that the IRA has ceased its campaign, and enables us to move the democratic process forward, with every party that wants to be in government abiding by the same democratic rules".

Today I say to the Prime Minister, there is no going back Mr Blair. There is no letting off the hook. There is no diluting of the promises made. It is all or nothing. It is action, not promises. It is public demonstration, not concealed equivocation smoke-screened behind false undertakings. This is your promise. This is your self-appointed programme Mr Blair. This is the way you said you would go. The Ulster electorate is determined you will walk this road of your own choosing. Away then from prevarication, dilution and compromise Mr Blair. Going over to the enemy is treachery and betrayal. You made the promise. You declared it. You set it in stone. You wrote it on the wall. You promised to fulfil it.

The DUP stands ready to enter real talks, provide total decommissioning has been accomplished. Without that, there is no future peace in Northern Ireland. The IRA are busy, aided and abetted by Dublin, notching up a further victory, gaining another raft of concessions and taking another step in the destruction of our place in this island. Make no mistake about it, it is war to the end. It is a matter of life and death, freedom or bondage, whether we shall be serfs of Dublin or free citizens of Britannia.

In the election campaign, a certain journalist insisted in putting to me the question which has been asked over and over again. "Will you talk with IRA/Sinn Fein?" I caught him by the lapels of his coat and told him in no uncertain language – never and never it is.

"To talk is not to negotiate" they cry. We have seen that in the fate of the Unionist Party.

That party had its back broken by such talks. IRA/Sinn Fein must learn that there is a price to be paid by them for a place at the table and until they get rid of the guns on the table, under the table and outside the doors of the negotiating chamber, they will have no place in the

talks. They have a choice to make, and until they make it, the door of democracy is locked against them.

If Mr Blair is going to lie again to the people of Ulster, he will reap what he sows.

The time has come to face up to IRA/Sinn Fein terrorists. Concession will not buy them off. The price is too high, because the payments will continue until we are bankrupt and finally devoured. No amount of appeasement will ever satisfy this monster of blood.

He who quickens and makes stronger the appetite of this monster will become its final gulp and swallow. This monster must be killed off or it will kill us off.

This is something Mr Blair refuses to learn.

As long as the DUP is around, Mr Blair will not be allowed to escape from his promise. Prime Minister, it is time you honoured your pledge.

This issue is even more serious than the European issue at this time. It is literally the right to live. As long as IRA/Sinn Fein murder squads and other terrorists hold on to their weapons, all right thinking citizens are in danger. This threat must be smashed once and for all and forever. The Government must face up IRA/Sinn Fein and stop facing down the law abiding citizens of this country. Every right thinking citizen of Northern Ireland expects Mr Blair to keep his word and give them the right to live.

Let it be carefully noted, that every time IRA/Sinn Fein has come under pressure, all the energies of the Roman Catholic Church are called into action to pressure the Government to concede something more to them and save them. At the time of the hunger strikes, the Pope himself made the suicides of the IRA participants religiously respectable by sending himself own special emissary to meet them and present them with gold crucifixes blessed by himself.

Then pressures were put on John Hume to make Gerry Adams and his murder organisation respectable. John Hume became the engineer of his own party's destruction. He now sits in retirement upon its ruins. Who got Gerry Adams elected to Westminster? John Hume. Dr Hendron himself ousted by the action of his own leader, at the best of the Church. Dr Hendron was the first victim and now his whole party has become the second victim of Hume's Church dictated actions.

Now the Roman Church has been called in once again. The Church sees the rise and renewal of resurrected traditional unionism as a menace to IRA/Sinn Fein thus Archbishop Brady's intervention.

Running true to form, the Jesuits within the Church have refused to reveal the full contents of the speech. Only a specially prepared version is available. Why, at this particular time, do we not get the full story? Is it not interesting how quickly the ecumenical clergy have hastened to run to the aid of the Archbishop? No wonder the enemies of our Province are worried. Before the last election they were crowing victoriously. Traditional unionism was about to be buried forever. But low and behold, a resurrection took place. A newer and stronger spirit came down upon the unionist cause which had been so blatantly and barefacedly betrayed by one David Trimble. A fresh power driven determination and resolution overcame those who had been viewing the situation as beyond repair. Unionist traditionalism united and at the end of the election the tide had turned and best of all, IRA/Sinn Fein was defeated in West Belfast and unionists are back in business in that area. The DUP now has an elected representative in the Assembly from every electoral area.

Many inside the Unionist Party left that party and rallied to join the revival of the old heroic unionist spirit.

Fellow unionists, we are not going to allow IRA/Sinn Fein to rule over us. We are not going to pull down our flag and join with the Trimbleite slaves in the tents of republicanism. We are not going to nominate republicans to the House of Lords.

True unionism, unionism cleansed and delivered from the softness of political expediency, has arisen and is on the march. Let all prevaricators tremble, for truth will always win. Let all compromisers retreat, for I hear the marching feet of the enlarged and newly regenerated battalions of traditional unionism.

Let those of you rejoice who have stood by the old cause in its darkest days.

Weeping has endured for the night but joy has come in the morning.

We welcome to your true family those who have left the Trimble conspiracy and we trust that together with one God, one flag, one covenant and one aim, we shall live to see the day of ultimate victory.

To all right thinking people of Northern Ireland we extend the hand of friendship. We pledge to work for the Province wide practice of the basic principle upon which this Party was founded – all men equal under the law, and all men equally subject to the law.

For the past thirty four years, I have kept the promise I made when first elected as MP for North Antrim, to serve all my constituents with equal dedication. This whole party is dedicated to the same resolve.

What we ask for ourselves we are pledged to fight for all other law abiding citizens. No person, irrespective of his or her religion, colour, class or creed, has anything to fear from us. Come with us, and we will do you good, is our warm invitation to you to join us in the rebuilding of our beloved Province. It is in this spirit we have entered these talks with the British Government.

We are all creatures of the one and only Creator, God. We are all travellers on the same road of mortality. We will all one day stand before God and give an account of our stewardship. Let us gird ourselves with a new undimmed consecration so that we shall fight a good fight, finish the course and keep the faith.

Once to every man and nation
Comes the moment to decide,
In the strife of truth with falsehood
For the good or evil side;
Some great cause, a new beginning,
Offers each the boom or blight –
And the choice goes by forever
'Twixt that darkness and that light.
Then to side with truth is noble
When we share her wretched crust,
'Ere her cause brings fame or profit
and 'tis prosperous to be just;
Then it is the brave man chooses,
While the coward stands aside
Till the multitude make virtue
Of the faith they had denied.
Though the cause of evil prosper,
Yet 'tis truth alone is strong;
Though her portion be the scaffold,
And upon the throne be wrong,
Yet that scaffold sways the future,
And, behind the dim unknown,
Standeth God within the shadow,
Keeping watch above His Own.

(Poem by James Russell Lowell)

The British House of Commons in its prayers each day, repeats this benediction, and I would repeat it now, not in hypocrisy or formality but in truth and reality: "The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, the love of God and the communion of the Holy Ghost be with you all, Amen."

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