



Leaders of the Ulster People

Between them Ian Paisley and Gerry Adams are the leaders of something between one third and one half of the million-and-a-half people, Protestant and Catholic, who live in the Six Counties of north-east Ulster. Adams is the shogun of the Catholic Provisional IRA/Sinn Fein, Paisley the tribune of a large part of the Orange, Protestant working-class and leader of the Democratic Unionist Party.

Paisley is politically a hard 'law and order' man, subscribing to the icons and shibboleths of British nationalism and to the Protestant tradition; Adams is a physical-force-on-principle Irish Catholic revolutionary, who loathes Paisley's revered icons. The irreconcilable conflict between the two communities whose extremes are now given voice (and gun) by Adams and Paisley may well tip Northern Ireland over the edge and into civil war.

Yet Paisley and Adams have much in common. Though one is right-wing and the other tintured left, both are populists, who mesh into their politics the social discontents of their respective working-class supporters.

The tragedy is that there is no possible political common ground between Adams and Paisley within the Six County bearpit. On the one side there is a just revolt against oppression and against being an artificial minority within the Six Counties; on the other there is fear of being an oppressed minority in a united Ireland combined with the desire to regain Protestant majority rule in the Six Counties, expressed as a belief that it is their inalienable god-given British Protestant birthright. Using a new biography of Paisley and a new book by Adams, Stan Crooke examines the politics of the two men.

God's careerist

■ Paisley by Ed Molony and Andy Pollak, Poolbey, £5.95.

On the eve of the 1986 mini-general election in Northern Ireland, used by the Unionists as a referendum in the Hillsborough Agreement, Ian Paisley led a protest against the Roman Catholic Cardinal Suenens preaching in a Protestant Cathedral in Belfast during a visit from his native Belgium.

He accused Suenens of having presided over a theological congress in Brussels which began with dancing and a feast of wine and cigarettes, and ended with phallic worship, mass sexual intercourse, and the officiating priests smearing their bodies with the ejaculated semen, having offered it up for approval to Yahweh (Jehovah).

Within 48 hours, 34,000 voters in Paisley's North Antrim constituency were to cast their votes for him, the largest Unionist turn-out of the day. Why the author of such extravagant accusations should enjoy such mass support is the question addressed by Ed Molony and Andy Pollak in their book "Paisley", the length of which is in stark contrast to the brevity of its title.

Paisley's own answer to such a question is that he is God's Man, one of God's elect sent to save Ulster in its hour of need. Son of the leader of a breakaway fundamentalist sect, and "born-again" Christian since the age of six, this belief in a divinely ordained mission has been a constant refrain in Paisley's preaching and political speeches (insofar as any distinction can be made between them).

Molony and Pollak, however, do not share Paisley's high opinion of himself, nor his belief that he is playing a God-given role in Northern Ireland. Their answer is both more mundane and more accurate!

"Paisley's religious appeal, like his political appeal, is to the traditional obsession of Northern Protestants: their history of being an embattled religious minority in Ireland...He always saw theological and political liberalism as the major, twin, threats to traditional Protestant values...a manifesto that was to become increasingly attractive to Northern Ireland Unionists as the movement towards religious and political ecumenism slowly gathered speed."

Many readers of the book on the British Left will doubtless be saddened to learn that Moloney and Pollak fail to present Paisley as the servile yet cunning lackey of British imperialism intent upon maintaining imperialist rule over Britain's last colony. On the contrary, the authors point out that:

"The readiness of Protestants to rebel against Westminster...is a deep strain in Northern Ireland Protestantism and Paisley had successfully tapped it. His followers' first allegiance is to Protestantism, not to the Union...His Unionism is not about being British...He would cease to be a Unionist if a Catholic succeeded to the throne."

The book is also a challenge to the British Left's one-dimensional view of Paisley as a personification of political conservatism and religious bigotry, linked with the loyalist paramilitary assassins, and guilty of countless anti-Catholic provocations and pogromist tirades.

Maloney and Pollak do indeed bring out into the open such features of Paisley's political record, tracing his involvement in anti-Catholic campaigns and sectarian-based Unionist election campaigns in the 1940s, his leading role in Ulster Protestant Action (which was to give birth to the Ulster Volunteer Force murder gangs) in the 1950s, his continuing close links with members of the UVF even after their first killings in the mid-1960s, and his unending demagogic tirades of subsequent years, which could not have been delivered in ignorance of the violence they were guaranteed to provoke. (In fact, Paisley had already mastered the art of the pogromist tirade by the end of the 1950s. The book describes a night-time street meeting held by Paisley in June of 1959:

"Paisley was speaking and he said: 'You people of the Shankhill Road, what's wrong with you? Number 425 Shankhill Road — do you know who lives there? Pope's men, that's who!...Italian Papists on the Shankhill Road! How about 56 Arden Street? For 97 years a Protestant lived in that house, and now there's a Papisher in it. Crimea Street, number 38!...24 years a Protestant lived there, but there's a Papisher there now!'"

The inevitable result of this invective was an orgy of stone-throwing, window breaking, the daubing of "Taigs Out", and attacks and looting of shops thought to be Catholic-owned).

But the book's authors also stress other aspects of Paisley's religion and politics which have been equally important in ensuring his popularity: his opposition to "the Establishment" and his use of social and economic populism. As Moloney and Pollak point out:

"The ecumenical trend, like O'Neill's liberalism a few years later, was led by a small social elite who, to the fury of traditionalists, ignored the will of the

grassroots." And it was this "grassroots" hostility to the elite of the Establishment which Paisley successfully tapped: "There was a gulf between the middle class leadership of the Orange Order and its rural and urban rank and file...their resentment at the actions of their distant leadership could be easily roused, and Paisley was quick to realise that the ordinary Orangeman could be a ready convert to his cause."

Thus for example, when the Democratic Unionist Party was launched in 1971 by Paisley and Desmond Boal (who exercised an important influence on Paisley until their split in 1973), the latter "wanted the party to be socially radical and to have no links with the Orange Order...a party with radical social and economic policies which could embrace all people, whether Roman Catholic or Protestant...In some ways he was reviving the old Independent Unionist tradition and trying to secularise it as much as he could."

But Boal was a hard-line right-winger on law and order. And the aspiration to recruitment of Catholics to the DUP was hopelessly naive and swiftly dispensed with. Yet the social and economic populism has remained a feature of the DUP's policies, while Paisley himself has played the role of the caring constituency MP, in stark contrast to the aloofness of the traditional Establishment Unionist MPs of earlier years:

"Paisley (is) a conscientious worker on behalf of his North Antrim constituents, Catholic as well as Protestant. He has a reputation for turning up at all times of the day and night to deal with their complaints and problems...Paisley the inspirational leader gave way to Paisley the man of the people."

In fact, as Moloney and Pollak point out, one of the ironies of Paisley is that while he stands for a re-assertion of traditional Unionist and Protestant values, he has broken up the traditional Northern Irish Protestant Trinity of the Presbyterian Church, the Unionist Party, and the Orange Order.

Paisley split from the Presbyterian Church in 1951 to set up his Free Presbyterian Church, in protest at the increasingly ecumenical tendencies of the former and the growing gulf between its hierarchy and rank and file. The manifesto of his new church "not only attacked lifeless religion and godless tobacco-smoking ministers, but also...the mainstream church's "betrayal" of the Reformation...The Irish Presbyterian Church was out of touch with its own grassroots...there were ugly stirrings and social blemishes that would play right into the hands of Ian Paisley."

With the launch of the DUP in 1971, it was the same story repeating itself, albeit in the sphere of politics rather than

religion. Paisley had no difficulty in portraying the leaders of the Unionist Party as betraying the Ulster Heritage and as indifferent to the concerns and fears of their grassroots supporters. Thus, when the Paisleyites first contested an election in 1969 (under the banner of Protestant Unionism), it was on the basis of "uncompromising" traditional Unionism and social and economic populism".

Even on the central question of defending the constitutional status of Northern Ireland Paisley has carried out a bewildering number of political somersaults: "In the mid-1970s his Unionist coalition colleagues had hardly known from one day to the next which policy he would favour. "He vacillated wildly between full integration into the United Kingdom, devolution, full restoration of Stormont, and even independence. As one contemporary politician put it in 1974: "He reminds me of a corncrake. He makes a tremendous noise but one doesn't quite know which field he'll end up in next."

In 1971 Paisley had even suggested the possibility of a united Ireland if the Catholic South scrapped its constitution and changed certain of its laws, on the grounds that the "cancer" was not partition but the Southern Irish constitution and the role which it allotted to the Catholic Church:

"If the people in the South really want the Protestants of the North to join them in a united Ireland, then they should scrap entirely the 1937 Constitution and ensure that the Roman Catholic hierarchy could no longer exert an improper influence in politics. If this were done, then the Protestant people would take a different view."

(His comments were welcomed by the Provisional IRA. The Southern Irish Finance Minister invited him to Dublin to help draw up a new constitution. And the Irish Times prophesied that he would one day sit in the Dail. Paisley was quick to pull back, mindful of the less sympathetic response from his own followers).

But, as Moloney and Pollak point out, Paisley's grip on the DUP is less secure than his control over his church. If Paisley is the figurehead of the DUP, the organisational genius behind its growth is Paisley's deputy, Peter Robinson, one of the new breed of "duppies" — university-educated, ruthlessly politically ambitious, more strident in their loyalism than the DUP mainstream, and even more committed to the politics of sectarian provocation and conflict than the DUP's founding father.

The rise of this new aggressive breed of "duppies" has further exposed another chink in Paisley's armour, though it had already been obvious to some for a long time previously: in the final analysis, Paisley is not prepared to lead his troops

over the brink. God's Man has feet of clay.

Paisley's language is characterised by the violent metaphor. His speeches have undeniably helped raise the political temperature in the Six Counties and encouraged violence up to and including sectarian murder. / his links with the Loyalist paramilitaries date back to the Ulster Volunteer force of the 1960s: "A long thread...associated him and his campaigns with the climate within which Loyalist violence flourished...No evidence was ever produced to associate Paisley with any of those violent events but all of those who carried them out were, in one way or another, inspired by him."

At the same time, though, Paisley has always been careful to keep a safe distance away from direct involvement in the acts of violence which his demagogy has done so much to encourage.

Though Paisley had consistently attacked the civil rights movement throughout the 1960s as a Trojan Horse for the IRA, the infamous attack on a civil rights march in January of 1969 at Burntollet bridge was organised and led by his then side-kick Ronald Bunting, whose son Ronnie went on to become "chief of Staff" of the so-called Irish National Liberation Army. He was assassinated five years ago. Paisley was "safely distant — politically as well as physically...It was Bunting who the ambushers looked to for leadership. Of Paisley there was no sign at all." As Bunting later wrote to Paisley: "Dear Ian, you are my spiritual father...but politically you stink."

It was the same story again later in the year, when violent clashes resulted in the despatch of the British Army to the Six Counties: "Another disciple, John McKeague, played the role of Major Bunting, marshalling the troops of the Shankhill Defence Association...During the height of the riot Paisley was rarely seen...His fleeting appearances were to do him a lot of harm among the Loylists who expected more from a leader who claimed to embody a renewal of the spirit of Carson."

In 1974 at the start of the strike which was to bring down the Sunningdale power-sharing agreement Paisley flew off to Canada to attend a funeral — "There were conflicting versions at the time of whose funeral it was. Some were told an aunt, others an old fundamentalist family friend" — and returned only when it had become clear that the strike would win. But the contemptuous Loyalist paramilitaries spiked his bid to take over the strike.

Paisley's launching of a series of rallies (the "Carson Trail") and his "Third Force" of gun-license waving followers in 1981 was another exercise in showmanship and brinkmanship. The Carson Trail petered out into a poorly attended closing rally and an appeal to vote for the DUP in the forthcoming elections, while the Third Force quickly disappeared from view. Hardline loyalists were in any case already sneering at "what they called the "Third

Force" and at the calibre of its self-styled "county commanders" — the Rev. Ivan Foster in his dark sunglasses, and Rev. William McCrea with his gospel records."

Paisley's more recent campaign of opposition to the Hillsborough Agreement has likewise seen him keep a safe distance from its more violent side. Paisley pulled out of speaking at a violent rally at the close of a Derry-Belfast youth march in the New Year of 1986 on the grounds that he was officiating at the wedding of a close friend. On the violence-torn Day of Action of March 3, Paisley retired to play a marginal role in his home constituency. Two days before violence swept through the North on the occasion of the annual July 12 marches, Paisley left for a fortnight's holiday in America. And it was significantly Robinson rather than Paisley who led the foray into Southern Ireland in protest at the Accord.

Thus, contrary to popular imagery, a deep abyss of contempt lies between the Loyalist paramilitaries and Paisley. Alienated by what one of his former church officials described as Paisley's readiness to "fight till the last drop of everyone else's blood" without putting his own on the line, the paramilitaries view him as "a man of straw, who one day threatens civil war and the next day quickly retracts it."

As one member of the UDA commented on Paisley's condemnation of violence during the 1977 strike: "The rank and file didn't like it at all. We were being led by a man with no balls and from then on he was the Grand Old Duke of York to us." His words echoed those of leading UDA man Freddy Parkinson, spoken three years earlier in the luxurious surrounding of a Dublin jail: "He uses words to create violent situations, but never follows the violence through himself."

The Paisley portrayed by Maloney and Pollak — and, indeed, the real-life Paisley — is a figure riven by contradictions.

He aspires to defend the traditional tenets of Unionism and Presbyterianism, and yet has irrevocably split the traditional Northern Irish Protestant party and church. He encourages acts of violence but takes care to keep his own hands clean. He seeks to deny Southern Ireland any say in the affairs of the North, while working closely with Southern Irish Euro MPs in the European Parliament.

If Paisley is God's Man sent to help Northern Ireland Protestants in their hour of need, then God must be a poor judge of character, or have a refined sense of humour and little concern for Northern Irish Protestants.

The Green above the red

■ The Politics of Irish Freedom by Gerry Adams, Brandon, £3.95.

At first sight, Sinn Fein President Gerry Adams's book "The Politics of Irish Freedom" ("dedicated to the men, women and children who struggle for Irish freedom, and to freedom fighters everywhere") is an easy read. As publisher Steve MacDonogh points out in his introduction: "This book is neither an autobiography nor a statement of Sinn Fein's political programme. It is an expression by Gerry Adams of his politics."

Given the rather obvious overlap between the politics of the President of Sinn Fein and the politics of Sinn Fein as an organisation, what one ends up with is a mixture of descriptions of some of the recent major events in Ireland, analysis of developments in the Republican movement over the last two decades, and personal comments and anecdotes from Gerry Adams.

Despite the range of issues covered in this modestly sized book, Adams managed to portray the horrors of life for the Catholic community in Northern Ireland, both before 1969 — when it was victim to systematic discrimination, electoral gerrymandering and the draconian power of the Special Powers Act — and after 1969, when its plight was further exacerbated by the intervention of the British Army, new repressive legislation, the activities of the Special Air Service and Loyalist terror gangs, and a worsening economic crisis. It is within this context that Adams takes up developments in the Republican movement.

Adams does not write much of himself. Through his commentaries and judgements on events and people, he comes across as modest and willing to recognise mistakes committed by himself and Sinn Fein. Only in the opening chapter of the book does Adams describe his own political history

At the same time, though, the book, at a deeper level, reveals a variety of contradictions and inadequacies in the politics of both Gerry Adams and Sinn Fein. The book reveals the extent to which Adams' own politics have been moulded — not to say scarred — by his

reading and experiences in the mid to late 1960s, at the time of his initial involvement in politics.

"I read those history books which were not on our school curriculum," recalls Adams. "I became increasingly aware of the relationship between Ireland and Britain (and) reached the conclusion that this relationship was a colonial one." Twenty years later, Adams clings to the same notion: he talks of a "puppet state subservient to the British government" and of the "colonial power in London". He refers to the "colonial nature" and the "colonial situation" in the Six Counties.

But the Northern Irish-British relationship cannot be reduced to some traditional colonial relationship.

In any case, Adams contradicts himself on this. He also refers to Northern Ireland as "an administrative sub-section of one of the most prominent states in developed, modern Europe" and as "a dependent enclave within the UK economy". In doing so, Adams comes much closer to the truth: notwithstanding its own 'peculiarities' (i.e. in-built discrimination and sectarianism), Northern Ireland has developed as an integral part of the British state since it was carved out of the rest of Ireland.

And just to add to the confusion, Adams also makes the point that "the amount of Northern Ireland capital held outside Northern Ireland exceeded the amount of external capital held in Northern Ireland." A "colony" whose ruling class is itself an exporter of indigenous capital is assuredly a strange beast.

Pursuing the same logic, Adams runs into the same problems in attempting to characterise the nature of Southern Ireland. "In the 26 Counties we have a neo-colonial state," he declares, and talks of the "neo-colonial character of the 26 counties" which is rooted in its "dependency on Britain".

But, in reality, Southern Ireland has repeatedly shown that it enjoys full independence, insofar as the latter can be achieved within a world capitalist order — its neutrality in the Second World War, its clashes with Britain in the Common Market, its refusal to support Britain in the South Atlantic war, etc., etc.

In any case, Adams confuses *political* independence with the reactionary and utopian goal of *economic* independence. Because Southern Ireland does not have the latter he argues, it cannot have the former.

And again Adams contradicts himself. While referring to Southern Ireland as a neo-colony, he also describes it as "a small, divided and powerless part of a new kind of collective imperialism in Europe, an economic arm of NATO, and part of a common front of ex-colonial powers against the Third World".

In the mid-1960s Adams also drew the conclusion that no Catholic-Protestant unity was possible as long as partition remained. (Given that his formative political years occurred at a time when the Catholics faced first the threat and then

the reality of Loyalist pogromist attack, this is perhaps readily understandable, but not thereby excusable). He writes of his experiences in those early years:

"I felt that the analysis of the ways to unite the Protestant and Catholic working class ignored the very nature of the state and my own occasional personalised and parochial encounters with Loyalism...What we were saying to the Dublin (Republican) visitors was: 'Look, you can talk about all this coming together of Protestant and Catholic working class but...your notions just don't square with reality'."

Adams continues to argue in the same vein today, claiming that the ideas of unity which he rejects fly in the face of "James Connolly's analysis of the loyalist workers as the 'aristocracy of labour'." But Connolly never developed any such analysis. Though he once likened the mentality of Loyalist workers to that of skilled British workers in the past, he certainly never developed any rounded-out analysis based on notions of an "aristocracy of labour".

Running true to form, Adams contradicts himself on this point too. For despite his unthought-out reference to a loyalist "aristocracy of labour", he also writes that "the conditions I knew in the Falls were similar to those I saw in the Shankill Road...conditions in the Six Counties for working class people were pitiable, irrespective of whether they were Protestant or Catholic...At the level of the working class, privilege may be more perceived than real and to the extent that it is real it may be marginal."

Adams is correct to point out that marginal privileges are often the ones which are most fiercely fought for. But Adams' recognition of the similarity of conditions in the Falls Road and the Shankill Road, and of the limited nature of Loyalist privilege runs contrary to any notion of an "aristocracy of labour" as a Marxist-scientific historical concept.

And Adams' recognition of these points — just to add yet a further element of confusion to his arguments — flies in the face of his repeated comparisons of Northern Ireland and South Africa, with the Catholics cast in the role of the blacks, and Protestants in the role of the whites. Whites in South Africa are a small minority, not an artificial majority, and insofar as a white working class exists, it is massively privileged as against black workers — it exists on a qualitatively different level.

Moreover, Adams himself seems to recognise that notions of an "aristocracy of labour" do not suffice to explain the communal divisions in Ireland. He points out that in the aftermath of partition "the Irish identity was allowed to become synonymous with Catholicism, disloyalty, republicanism" and refers to "the Protestant people", "the Protestant community", and "the Protestant national minority".

This reference to a Protestant national minority could be denounced by many of

Adams' sycophants on the British left as "reactionary two-nations-ism". Strangely enough, Adams the Republican does not reflect upon the question that immediately arises if it is agreed that the Protestants are a national minority, namely: what rights do democrats and consistent republicans accord to such a minority? In fact Adams accords them no minority community or "national minority" rights, None at all.

Here Adams only adds to his own problems. On the one hand he writes of the recognition that "we (Republicans) could not free the Irish people. We could only, with their support, create conditions in which they would free themselves." But on the other hand, he argues that one in five of the Irish people ("...the Loyalists are Irish...they are Irish people who wish to be subjects of the British Crown...") can play no part in that liberation because of their support for the "British crown (which) protects the Orange ascendancy".

Adams attempts to escape the contradictory nature of the dilemma he has created for himself by simply asserting that British withdrawal (to be achieved how, and by what agency?) will solve everything. He recalls his youthful insight that "all we had to do was to get rid of the British", and is clearly still of the same opinion today.

"Violence in Ireland has its roots in the conquest of Ireland by Britain...the British government is the major obstacle and the most consistent barrier to peace in Ireland," he writes. If Britain is the problem, then its removal is the solution: "When the root cause of violence in Ireland is removed, then and only then will the violence cease."

And the Protestants? Adams consoles himself with the thought that they did not fight in the past, and therefore will not fight in the future: "The Unionists were opposed to Home Rule — they accepted Home Rule; they were opposed to partition — they accepted a Six County state; they would not allow the disbanding of the 'B' Specials — they accepted the disbanding of the 'B' Specials; Stormont was to be fiercely maintained — it was prorogued."

Indeed, British withdrawal will bring the Protestants to their senses: "The 'pro-British' elements will face up to the reality of the situation only when the British prop and the system which uses them as its tools and its stormtroopers is removed...Once their corner is no longer defined by the British presence, then I think that it becomes a matter of businesslike negotiation."

Adams' line of reasoning is less than impressive. Surely the point is that the Protestants did *not* accept Home Rule and mobilised *for* partition and the creation of a Six County statelet as their — fall back — defence against it? They stopped the

all-Ireland Home Rule the Liberals tried to bring in before World War I.

Given that the 'B' Specials were replaced by the UDR — the Specials under another name — the Protestants hardly had anything to lose by their disbandment. Abolition of Stormont certainly was a blow — but since it was replaced by Direct Rule from London, it hardly amounted to a fatal weakening of 'the Union'.

In any case — and this is the irreducible central issue — none of these things which the Protestants reluctantly came to accept put them under the power of the Irish Catholic majority. Even today, despite the Anglo-Irish Agreement, which they detest, they still think that the British state is their state. But threaten to put them as a permanent minority in an all-Ireland Catholic-controlled state and they would certainly resist, guns in hand. It is impossible to doubt it, in the year 1987.

Adams' reassuring noises about the Protestants sitting down to the negotiating table after British withdrawal are utterly hollow. It is questionable whether Adams himself really believes what he writes — why else would he call for the Army to disarm the RUC and UDR before it withdraws (although he does not mention this demand in this particular book) if not because he recognises that those weapons would be used to prevent attempted forced incorporation into a "united" Ireland? And even if the Army could achieve such a feat — in fact, it could not — what of the 100,000 plus guns in Protestant hands outside of the ranks of the RUC and UDR?

Adams' arguments are weakened yet further by his failure to draw any conclusions from the Protestants' response to the Hillsborough Agreement. How can he describe them as Britain's "tools" when it is they, the Protestants, who are to the fore in opposing the agreement? And given their reaction to the modest tinkering of the agreement, what does this suggest about their response to full British withdrawal?

Thus, despite his frequent and undoubtedly sincerely intended pleading of the case for anti-sectarianism ("Republicanism is nothing if it is not resolutely anti-sectarian... What republicanism has to offer loyalists is equality... We must remain totally opposed to the cult of sectarianism."), Adams' own politics, like those of Sinn Fein, are a form of sectarian politics, in that they are based on one of the two communities in the North and contain nothing capable of overcoming the sectarian relationship between the two communities.

Instead, unity between the people of Ireland is regarded as something which will conveniently and spontaneously come about once "the cause of sectarianism, the British prop which sustains it" is removed. And British withdrawal, Adams continues, will open the road not just to unification of the Irish people but also to socialism.

But Adams' ruminations on the question of socialism are no less problematic than many other aspects of his book's contents. Again, one cannot doubt the sincerity of Adams' claims to be both a socialist and a republican ("...because I am a socialist I continue to be a republican..."). The problems begin when one attempts to come to grips with this concept of socialism.

The notion of class struggle certainly does not loom large in it. In the course of his book Adams bemoans the fact that partition has "stunted the development of class politics" and occasionally refers to the "class nature of the struggle" or "class differences between ourselves and the SDLP". But his definition of socialism, in the abstract, is akin to the wooliness of the Labour Party's clause four:

"Socialism is a definite form of society in which the main means of production, distribution and exchange are socially owned and controlled and in which production is based on human need rather than private profit. Socialism is based on the most thorough-going democratisation of the economic system, side-by-side with the most thorough-going democracy in politics and public affairs."

At a more concrete level, however, his concept of socialism becomes infused with, and overshadowed by, Irish nationalism. Socialism means "the establishment of a real Irish republic and the organisation of the economy so that all its resources are under Irish control and organised to bring maximum benefit to all our people in a 32 county state in which Irish culture and national identity are strong and confident."

What is required is a "distinctly Irish form of socialism", in which "the economy is based on the needs of the Irish people" and in which "the people themselves (are) the Sovereign authority. We want Ireland for the Irish. We want an Irish democracy in Ireland." But this specifically Irish socialism is not something for the here and now: "Real national independence is the pre-requisite of socialism... Socialism includes and is a stage in advance of republicanism."

To be a socialist in Ireland today is thus reduced to being for British withdrawal. "The acid test of commitment to socialism in Ireland (and Britain as well) is to be found in one's attitude to the issue of Irish national self-determination... Until a united Ireland is established, being genuinely left wing is to be an out-and-out republican." Indeed, Adams goes on to condemn as "ultra-left" those who "break up the unity of the national independence movement by putting forward "socialist" demands that have no chance of being realised until real

independence is won."

Adams, in fact, goes even further and complains about the fact that "the emergence of Sinn Fein (as an electoral force) may have unnecessarily brought out some of the class differences between ourselves and the SDLP leadership," and because of this the SDLP "has consistently refused to examine the potential for pan-nationalist unity on even a limited basis." (Adams could have more accurately written: "on no basis at all", given Sinn Fein's offer of an electoral pact to the SDLP in last year's quasi-referendum on the Hillsborough Agreement, despite Sinn Fein being against the agreement, and the SDLP for it).

Adams bemoans such phenomena because his concern is not the creation of a socialist party (how could such a party be built without sharpening class differences, and in opposition to the big majority of the working class in Northern Ireland?) He wants instead to try to create that hoary old Stalinist chestnut — the "mass anti-imperialist movement."

Such a movement would not be a class movement — it cannot be "built around the slogan of socialism until socialism comes on the historical agenda," explains Adams. Instead it would appeal to "all major sections of Irish society... whose interests are adversely affected by imperialism." Such a movement would be "a new Irish-Ireland movement" of which the programme would "appeal to all those capable of taking a national stand and would require a multi-sided campaign of national regeneration." And what of the "British-Irish" minority? They are necessarily excluded from this "anti-imperialist" movement. In the final analysis, therefore, Adams rejects socialism in favour of tilting at Catholic Nationalist windmills. Having falsely attributed a colonial and semi-colonial status to Northern and Southern Ireland (though he contradicts himself throughout the book), Adams skips over the problem of communal divisions by pretending that British withdrawal will solve everything, and concludes by advocating the development of a "mass anti-imperialist movement" capable of realising the panacea of British withdrawal and of ending the hypothetical colonial and neo-colonial status of the two Irish states.

Adams' obvious sincerity and — however political critical of him one might be — the seriousness of his commitment to fighting oppression both in Ireland and internationally cannot compensate for his utter political confusion. It is a tragic confusion. Adams' political activity is rooted in a basic series of blinkered misunderstandings of the nature of the problem confronting the Catholic people of Northern Ireland, and because this is so the activities of Adams and his movement are more likely to lead to Catholic-Protestant civil war and to the repartition of Ireland, than to the united, independent 32 county Irish Republic they believe they are fighting for.