

Editorial

Britain's war against Ireland

President Clinton's intervention last year to negotiate a cease-fire in Northern Ireland was perceived as an intolerable insult by the British monarchy. With the aid of his National Security Council, President Clinton bypassed the traditionally pro-British careerists in the State Department, in a move which threatened to break the so-called special relationship between the United States and the United Kingdom.

A crucial step in the process was the decision by the President to issue a visa to Sinn Fein's Gerry Adams, which was followed by President Clinton's visit to Ireland in December 1995. The peace process was reversed, by a series of deliberate moves initiated by John Major's Tory government, with direct support from the British Crown. A pretext for Major's refusal to allow all-party talks to continue, were bombings purportedly carried out by a group of intransigents in the Irish Republican Army (IRA).

Under the circumstances, although there is no direct evidence, it is difficult to believe that the bombings were in fact not orchestrated by British Intelligence, working under the direction of the Queen's Privy Council. Certainly, the latest riots and bombings were triggered by the Privy Council, which provocatively first banned and then allowed demonstrations by Irish Protestant zealots, in and around Belfast.

The current round of violence started on July 11, when the Royal Ulster Constabulary rescinded orders that would have kept the Protestant Orange Order from marching in their annual victory parade, commemorating the Battle of Boyne, through the Roman Catholic section of Portadown, south of Belfast. Ostensibly, the police were motivated to stop a riot by the thousands of Orangemen who had gathered to protest, not to march. But, the Orange constabulary immediately began to beat up Catholic protesters, who were staging a sit-in to stop the march.

That night, unknown snipers shot three members of the Ulster Constabulary, and all hell broke loose. In all, some 200 Catholics have been arrested and 121 civilians

injured, often by plastic bullets fired by the Ulster Constabulary; one Irish Catholic was killed when he was run over by an armored personnel carrier; 110 police officers have been injured; over 300 hijackings took place; and more than 900 gasoline bombs were thrown.

Still, on July 12, the Ulster Constabulary allowed another march by the Protestant Orange Order along Ormeau Road in Belfast. Police, backed by troops, threw a heavy security cordon around the road, near the city center. Catholic residents were kept behind police lines. Over 1,000 more special forces were flown in, raising troop levels toward 20,000—the highest they have been in Northern Ireland in 15 years.

The Catholic population of Northern Ireland rightly feared that the British Crown intended to foster the *ethnic cleansing* of Belfast. This created a climate in which the bombing of a hotel at Enniskillen, near the border with the Irish Republic, might be ascribed to the IRA—*notwithstanding their denial of any involvement.*

The blatancy of this latest British outrage has not been lost on Irish Prime Minister John Bruton, who has generally been extremely restrained, even as the peace-process was being sabotaged by the British. And Sinn Fein President Gerry Adams suggested that the bombing might be part of a "dirty tricks" campaign by pro-British agents to discredit his organization: "It comes at a time when the British government is in the dock, and I think it is quite fortuitous for them at this time. I am saying it comes as a major distraction," he said, characterizing the peace process as "in absolute ruins."

Cardinal Cahal Daly, leader of Ireland's Catholics, said angrily: "This was a wrong decision, a disastrously wrong decision. I feel it will have very negative consequences. . . . I, with regret, have to say that I feel betrayed, betrayed by the British government."

If the British monarchy and the Major government thought that they would be giving President Clinton a black eye by blowing up Northern Ireland once again, their calculations may be backfiring, as their own perfidious methods now stand exposed for all to see.