

SURVEY THROWS LIGHT ON ATTITUDES TO SETTLEMENT

Ulster amnesty rejected

●Most Protestants in favour of emergency legislation.

●Most people would prefer to see the law run its full course.

●Most nationalists willing to accept some sort of amnesty.

OVER 3,000 people have been killed as a result of the Troubles. More often than not the paramilitaries regard the deaths as "regrettable" but apologies are quite rare as is condemnation directed against the activities of their own organisations.

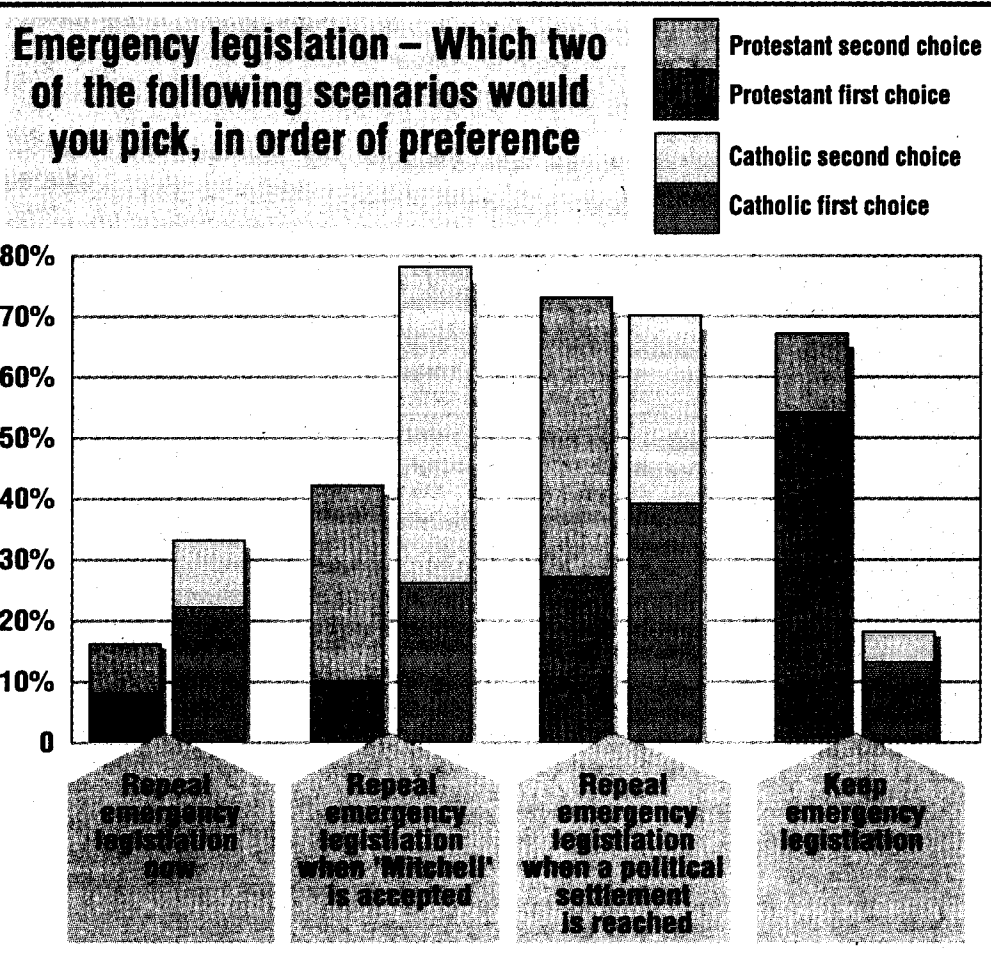
When the loyalists called their ceasefire they did apologise but out of deference to their victims they did not seek or expect forgiveness. The IRA have found similar statements more difficult to make but so too have the British government with regard to deaths in Londonderry on Bloody Sunday.

More frequently, relatives ask for no retaliation understanding fully the tragic consequences of "tit for tat" killings. Sometimes, but not often, parents do forgive the murderers of their son or daughter. Senator Gordon Wilson comes to mind.

But the paramilitaries want their prisoners released from jail. When and under what circumstances might the people of Northern Ireland give thought to such a proposition?

In the recent Rowntree poll on Peace Building and Public Policy in Northern Ireland, a random sample of the population were asked to put three government policies with reference to the peace process, remission of sentences and amnesty in their order of preference. You can try the question if you wish.

Option A — Prosecution and standard remission — prosecute all crimes committed by members of paramilitary groups and the security forces to the full extent of the law. Sentence those



Why you feel prisoners should serve their time

found guilty in accordance with standards of practice found in the rest of the United Kingdom.

Option B — Prosecution and amnesty — prosecute all crimes committed by members of paramilitary groups and the security forces but allow those serving sentences to be freed subject to terms negotiated as part of a political settlement.

Option C — Public admission of guilt and immunity from prosecution — allow members of paramilitary groups and the security forces to confess their crimes to a public 'Truth Commission' in return for immunity from prosecution and allow those serving sentences for such crimes to be freed.

Of the 715 completed questionnaires 74% of respondents selected option A — prosecution and standard remission, as their first choice, 21% preferred option B — amnesty, and only 5% were in favour of option C — immunity. However, when these results are broken down for Protestants

and Catholics and the five main political parties the statistics become more interesting.

Those in favour of some sort of special arrangement as part of a peace settlement (option B plus option C) are — Protestants 10%, Catholics 49%, Sinn Fein 77%, SDLP 47%, Alliance 19%, UUP 8% and DUP 3%.

Clearly the two main communities are divided on this matter with many Catholics, nationalists and republicans willing to accept some sort of amnesty while most Protestants and unionists find such suggestions quite unacceptable.

A similar result is achieved when people are asked to put four options on emergency legislation in their order of preference. In general most Protestants would like to see these laws kept in place with 54% selecting option D as their first choice. Only 13% of Catholics share this view. The choices were as follows:

Option A — Repeal emergency legislation now — immediately repeal emergency

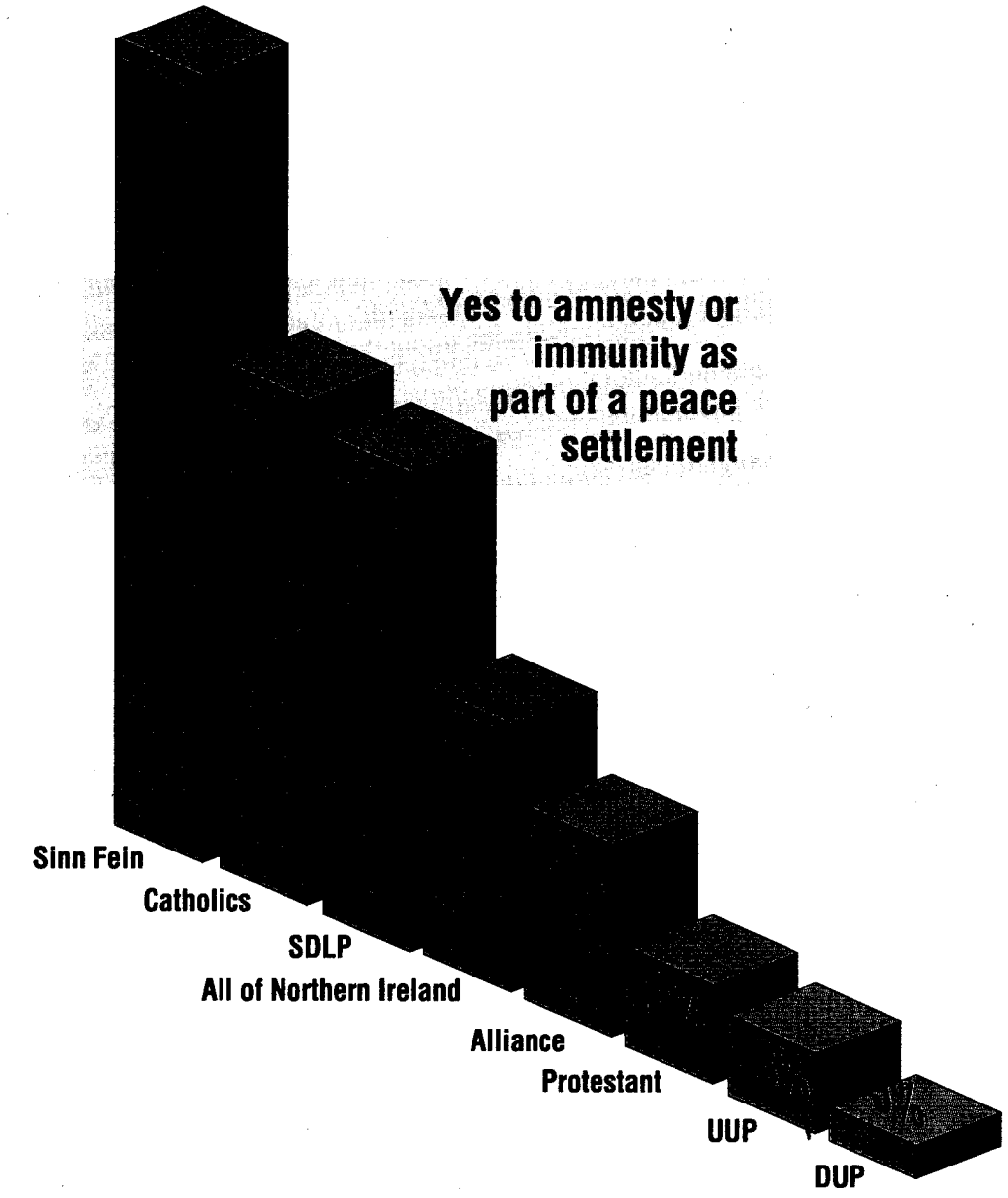
legislation brought in to deal with terrorism.

Option B — Repeal emergency legislation when 'Mitchell' is accepted — repeal emergency legislation brought in to deal with terrorism when all the political parties and paramilitary organisations accept the Mitchell recommendations for decommissioning and the peace process.

Option C — Repeal emergency legislation when a political settlement is reached — repeal emergency legislation brought in to deal with terrorism when all the political parties and paramilitary organisations accept the terms of a negotiated political settlement for the future of Northern Ireland.

Option D — Keep emergency legislation 'on the books' so that the police and courts will always have the powers of search, seizure and internment of suspected terrorists at their disposal.

However, finding an acceptable compromise on the question of emergency legislation may not be too difficult. Catholics prefer



All the political indicators suggest that a majority of the people of Northern Ireland could live with a political settlement negotiated by the SDLP and Ulster Unionists. But would such an agreement deliver peace? Three members of Queen's University explore public attitudes towards amnesty and emergency legislation and ask if deals can be made with paramilitary organisations. COLIN IRWIN reports on the findings of their research.

Hole in the wall gang in counter revolution

Airline tickets, mortgage facilities, even films clips are coming to automated teller machines near you. Garth Graham looks at this banking revolution.

ONE of the most remarkable success stories in modern banking has been the introduction and development of the automated teller machine or ATM.

These 'magic banks' were almost unheard of 10 years ago and yet now most of us have come to rely on them as the quickest and most convenient method for cash withdrawal.

In Northern Ireland alone there are over 500 in place at branches of the four main banks as well as a variety of off-site locations including shopping complexes, airports, universities and petrol stations.

The selection of facilities currently available in Northern Ireland range from basic cash dispensing and account balance print-outs to bill payments and inter-account transfers.

However, banks and technology suppliers across the world have been developing an extraordinary array of new features, many of which will be introduced here by banks such as the Northern within the next three years.

The US and South Africa are currently leading the way in the banking and technology revolution. In Johannesburg, for example, pilot machines are being tested which dispense tickets for hundreds of different cinemas.

The follow-up programme

will see 400 interactive ATMs installed across the country which will allow cinemagoers to preview clips of films on offer, reserve tickets for sporting events and even book holidays.

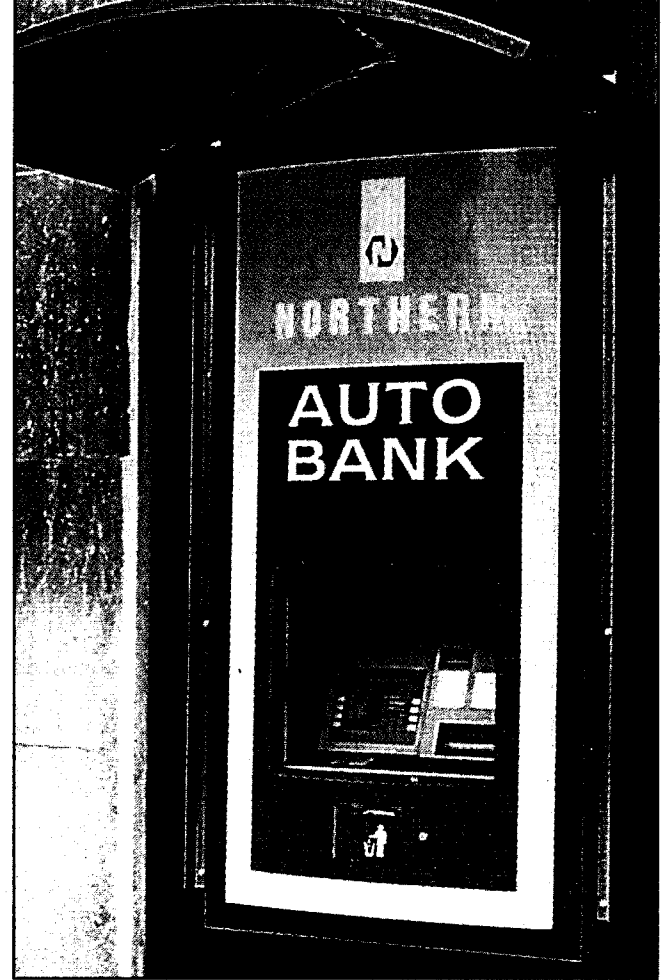
The Bank of America in Hong Kong recently launched a scheme which allows its cardholders to transfer money worldwide for any ATM base. Other initiatives being introduced there include ordering facilities for travellers cheques and printing airline tickets.

In the US, cash machines already provide stamps and manufacturers coupons for use in Safeways Stores. Meanwhile, closer to home, National Westminster Bank and Royal Bank of Scotland have introduced a discount voucher scheme for retail outlets to customers via their ATM networks.

Other exciting innovations which look set to transform our future transactions even further include the loan dispenser machine which grants loans as cheques or credit to the borrower's bank account in less than 10 minutes, as well as issuing customers almost instantly with everything from a credit card to a mortgage.

The machines have also been 'future-proofed' for a range of up-and-coming technologies.

Among the available options are cameras for live



Entry point: Tills like this could soon provide a whole range of new services

video-conferencing between customers and bank representatives over the ATM screen, bar code readers for paying utility bills and a chip-card reader for storing cash value onto plastic smart cards, something which National Australia Bank are already piloting.

By the year 2000 most of these will have become an everyday feature of banks in Northern Ireland, allowing customers optimum convenience at the touch of a button.

Garth Graham is chair of ATM Business Services at the Northern Bank

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