

## NATIONAL ARCHIVES

### IRELAND



<b>Reference Code:</b>	2007/111/1967
<b>Creation Date(s):</b>	16 February 1968
<b>Extent and medium:</b>	8 pages
<b>Creator(s):</b>	Department of Foreign Affairs
<b>Access Conditions:</b>	Open
<b>Copyright:</b>	National Archives, Ireland. May only be reproduced with the written permission of the Director of the National Archives.

## Campaign for Democracy in Ulster

Dr. Brennan,

1. As arranged, I attended, as an observer, the C.D.U. one-day Conference at the Irish Club, London, on Sunday, January 28th. The first session began at 10.30 a.m. and ended at 12.30 p.m. The second session was from 2.00 p.m. to 5.00 p.m. Mr. Chris Norwood M.P. presided at the first session and Dr. David Pitt, a Hampstead Councillor and a West Indian was the Chairman for the second session. About 134 delegates, including four M.Ps. Mr. Gerald Pitt, Mr. Paul Rosé, Mr. Chris Norwood and Mr. Austin Currie attended. Delegates of C.D.U. branches in London, Manchester, Nottingham, Oxford, Bristol and St. Albans attended as well as the representatives of the United Ireland Association, The National Council for Civil Liberties, the Movement for Colonial Freedom, the Communist Party, the Connolly Association and representatives from 23 Labour Constituency Parties and seven Trade Unions. From Belfast came Mr. Douglas McIlldoon (Six Counties Labour Party); Messrs. P. Fox and J. McCann (National Democratic Party); Miss P. Sinclair, General Secretary of the Belfast Trades Council, and Messrs. P. Murphy and B. Patterson of Queen's University Republican Club.
2. Mr. Paddy Byrne (Dublin) National Secretary, told the Conference that C.D.U. was formed on 2nd June, 1965 at a meeting in the House of Commons, to achieve the following aims:-
  - (a) To secure a full and impartial enquiry into the administration of government in Northern Ireland and into allegations of discrimination in the fields of Housing and Employment.
  - (b) To bring Electoral Law in Northern Ireland into line with that in the rest of the U.K. and to examine Electoral Boundaries with a view to providing fair representation for all sections of the community.
  - (c) To press for the application of the "Race Relations Act" to be extended to Northern Ireland and that it be amended to include religious discrimination and incitement.



Mr. Byrne mentioned that C.D.U. had sent speakers to 20 Labour Constituency Parties in the London area, 7 Trade Union Branches - A.E.U., N.U.R., E.T.U., D.A.T.A., P.O.E.W.U., N.U.P.E., T.G.W.U. and Students Union Reading University. Meetings and rallies had been organised and a new newspaper "Spotlight Ulster" had just been issued and sent to all members of Parliament in Britain and Ireland. Recently alarmed by the dreadful unemployment situation in Derry, C.D.U. organised a protest of telegrams to the Prime Minister asking him to intervene in having the new University sited in the obvious and natural place Derry as a step to help the economic situation there. About 100 organisations in the Six Counties and London sent telegrams to No. 10, but Mr. Byrne stated "that they might as well have been sent to The Rolling Stones for all the difference it made". Mr. Byrne explained that C.D.U. is not a political party although based on the left in British politics. About 100 members of Parliament are now sponsoring the movement. C.D.U. members have used every opportunity to press the British Government to fulfill its promises made when in opposition to enquire into the injustices in the Six Counties. Further Conferences will be held in other regions - Birmingham, Manchester and in Cardiff on Mr. Callaghan's doorstep.

3. The Labour M.Ps. who are sponsors of the Campaign for Democracy in Ulster are to be called on to take action questioning the convention which forbids discussion of N. Ireland domestic affairs in the House of Commons. An emergency resolution to this effect was carried unanimously at the Conference on the motion of Mr. Gerry Fitt M.P. Mr. Fitt said the resolution would provide a test of their sincerity. After the meeting Mr. Fitt told journalists that an immediate meeting of the M.P. sponsors would be convened to examine ways of querying the convention and it was possible that early action would be taken on the floor of the House. Mr. Ken Graham a left-wing union official complained that Mr. Wilson had failed to carry out his promises made while in opposition, to investigate N. Ireland's affairs. He felt like other speakers



that if the present Government did nothing about discrimination then the Conservatives who could well be returned at the next general election certainly would do nothing either. Mr. Fitt explained that the convention that Westminster does not interfere in affairs within the competence of Stormont had grown up since the passage of the Government of Ireland Act and would not be allowed to over-rule that statute. Mr. Fitt went on to say that the British Government had taken a stand and imposed sanctions on Rhodesia on the basis that people were being denied social justice in that country. Yet, the same Government were themselves enduring a heavy economic burden in supporting the Six Counties, where there was flagrant examples of social injustices and discrimination. Mr. Fitt demanded that an inquiry be held into the operation of the Ireland Act and also demanded that the Race Relations Act should be applied to the Six Counties.

4. C.D.U. in recent years and the United Ireland Association for many a year have publicised Section 75 of the Ireland Act. So too has the Connolly Association. Since support in Britain for the D.D.U. and indeed the Connolly Association comes predominantly from the Left Wing of the Labour Party and since the Left Wing is disenchanted with Mr. Wilson's performance over Vietnam, Rhodesia and social policy in Britain, the hard line C.D.U. members hope that the North could be a new rallying point to the benefit of both C.D.U. and the Labour Left.

5. Dr. David Pitt, Chairman of the Campaign against Racial Discrimination (C.A.R.D.) presided at the second session of the Conference. He mentioned that as a native of the West Indies, he was well aware and had experience of the problems in N. Ireland. The fact that the British Government continued to claim that it would not act because of the Convention was complete nonsense. The Central African Federation had also a "convention" by which matters could not be debated in the Westminster Parliament. But, it had been challenged and overcome.



"The claim that a convention cannot be changed is utter rubbish", Dr. Pitt said.

The denial of human rights to people in Northern Ireland should be publicised at every opportunity. People in Britain, who actively concerned themselves about other countries, should concern themselves about what is happening in the United Kingdom. It is possible to assume, he suggested, while not admitting it, that Northern Ireland is part of Britain.

In the circumstances the people there and in other parts of Britain should demand their rights.

The British Government had, after all, been a signatory to the Human Rights Convention. Dr. Pitt listed many of the basic principles of freedom allegedly denied the minority in the North.

"Call on the British Government to implement its signature", he advised. <sup>is</sup> His own organisation, C.A.R.D., was insisting on the laws against racial discrimination which would not alone be comprehensive, but would carry enforcement penalties.

"You insist that this law will include religion. We will support you," he added.

6. There were enough Irish voters in Britain to matter, and he urged delegates to make it clear to Parliamentary candidates that they must take note "of your wishes or he will not get your vote". They would be amazed to find out how often the candidate would be expressing their views.

The British Government had said that Northern Ireland is part of the United Kingdom, but this "might well be bluff". If so, he counselled, "it should be called."

Discrimination, he continued, could be challenged in the European Court by any individual who felt he had been excluded from public office, while one with lesser qualifications had been appointed. Discrimination in housing and in jobs could also be challenged.

Dr. Pitt concluded by again calling on the Campaign to make use of "Green Power" - the Irish vote in Britain - <sup>to</sup> ~~for~~ force the Labour Government to fulfill its promises to secure social justice in N. Ireland.



7. Mr. Austin Curry M.P. said that with the return of a Labour Government in 1964 they had hoped that pressure would be exerted on Stormont. To date, however, the record was disappointing. No Royal Commission of Inquiry had been set up, the Race Relations Act had not been extended to the Six Counties. Mr. Wilson had met Mr. O'Neill and had warned him about the necessity of introducing reforms. There was still no change in the position of the second class citizens in the North. It was time, he stressed that Mr. Wilson honour his promises.
8. Both Mr. Pitt and Mrs. Curry stressed that the mood of the minority was such that constitutional action was considered ineffective and campaigns of civil disobedience (squatting in mis-allocated houses or not paying rates) could well result from this disillusion. Mr. Pitt denied that he had ever advocated violence but added: "Who could blame them (the people of Derry or Newry) for taking action into their own hands in order to remedy the situation?".
9. A controversial keynote of the conference was provided by a suggestion from Mr. Illdoon (Six Counties Labour Party) that it would be wise to "play carefully" the campaign against democratic injustices in N. Ireland. "It is facile and sensational to play up too much the similarities with South Africa and America ..... This problem is reckoned by most people to be getting better, not worse ..... The attitudes of people are coming closer ..... What is in the hearts of people is more important than (passing) laws." Mr. McIlldoon was pulled up by Mr. Norwood and warned that "people come here from somewhat different backgrounds", and his caution that the people of the North must be listened to was thrown out by Mr. Graham - "We do not intend to play this issue down." He said that C.D.U. wanted not just to end discrimination but to promote social change.



10. Mr. Paddy Fox, Chairman of the National Democratic Party, said his Party felt privileged to associate itself with the campaign aimed at extending democracy in N. Ireland. There was general agreement that discrimination existed. The evidence amassed by the Campaign for Social Justice had contributed to a much clearer understanding of the extent of the problem.
11. Great interest was expressed in the Republican Clubs Ban which was explained by the Queen's University Republican Club representatives and in an address by Mr. Paul Rose, M.P., Vice-Chairman of the Campaign. Mr. Rose said that he had a great deal of doubt about the will of the British Government at present to deal with the Northern Ireland situation. He explained that the object of the C.D.U. Campaign was to make the citizens of Derry equal with those of Newcastle and that they were going to use all the means at their disposal to see that this was achieved.
12. Miss Sinclair, speaking on behalf of the Belfast ~~Irish~~ Trades Council, said that they were part of Britain and wanted to be part of it, but as such they must have such rights and social justice as was enjoyed by any other part of Britain. They wanted to see fair play and justice in every facet of life. She wanted a link, but a voluntary one, with the working people of England.
13. A Communist Party delegate suggested that British monopolies had a big stake in N. Ireland industry and was taking out much more than they were investing. While British imperialism existed, it would want to divide Ireland, because this was the only way it could rule Ireland. Of the 30 human rights principles he alleged, at least 24 of them were being broken in Northern Ireland.
14. Mr. Bert Edwards, a member of the District Committee of the



National Union of Vehicle Builders made a fiery speech. He is married to James Connolly's youngest daughter, Fiona. He said the Campaign had a colossal case but it had to be published more widely. The trade union movement in Britain was becoming more aware of the situation in the Six Counties. But in the North they would never get anything if they played the situation down. He suggested that all the Irish constituents in Mr. Wilson's constituency should write to him every week about Northern Ireland and the same should happen to all the other Government members. That would convince them that they should do something concrete for the establishment of democracy in "Ulster".

15. Mr. Frank McCabe, National Organiser of the United Ireland Association said that successive Labour Governments had left Ireland "down" in the '30s, in 1949 and now it appeared that the present Labour Government was not prepared to do anything about discrimination etc. in the Six Counties. The Labour Government will not get involved on the Partition problem, he stated. Mr. McCabe felt that the Westminster Government should exercise more control on how the British tax-payers money was spent in the Six Counties. He went on to state that the only solution to the Six County problem was the ending of Partition. He mentioned the efforts of the Anti-Partition of Ireland and the U.I.A. in bringing the attention of the British public and members of Parliament to the Six County problem.

16. The representatives of the U.I.A. and some of the Irish delegates from the Labour Constituency parties to whom I spoke to after the Conference felt that at the moment most of the almost 100 M.Ps. whose names are given as sponsors of ~~P.S.U.~~<sup>C.D.U.</sup> would dislike risking the anger of the Whips by blowing up a constitutional crisis over the North. It was also felt that Mr. Pitt and Mr. Graham were putting a challenge to Mr. Chris Norwood, M.P. for Norwich South - the Chairman of C.D.U. If these almost 100 M.Ps. did decide to make a demonstration, the Government certainly would have to pay attention.



17. This Conference was well organised and the standard of discussion was high and indeed responsible. Support from the Labour Party and the Trade Unions was impressive. As a pressure group C.D.U. could be pretty effective. I spoke to Mr. Michael Casey, (National Vice-Chairman U.I.A.) after the Conference. A disappointing feature for Mr. Casey and indeed for the U.I.A. is the hostility of C.D.U. to any suggestion that the Partition issue might be given consideration. An appeal was made at the opening of this Conference that the question of the re-unification of Ireland should not be introduced. It is certain that the C.D.U. has little support among the Irish in Britain.

16 February, 1968.