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Ulster Defense Association discussion paper

"Equal Citizenship - something to fight for!

Something to live for!"

The attached UDA discussion paper was given to me by John Cushnahan, leader of the Alliance Party.

Stating that the destruction of the Anglo-Irish Agreement must be their first aim, the paper, which is somewhat confused and poorly thought out, goes on to say that the UDA fully supports the campaign for "equal citizenship" which are the buzz words for integration. However, further on, it talks about the introduction of devolution, a Bill of Rights and a written constitution for Northern Ireland. It claims the only alternative to a solution which will have no institutional power-sharing is civil war. Civil war is an option they are prepared for but do not seek. The discussion paper, while it leaves many gaps, is nevertheless interesting as it gives some idea of political thinking in the UDA. It also shows that the UDA are not politically tied to any party, even the DUP, and they are not totally committed to UDI although it is still a possibility if "Ulster is driven out of the UK".

John Cushnahan believes that they got the "equal citizenship" line from Bob Mc Cartney who has been "infecting a number of Unionists with the idea".



Liam Caniffe

21 May 1986

cc Taoiseach ✓
Minister ✓
Secretary ✓
Mr. Nally ✓
A-I Section ✓
A-I Secretariat ✓
Amb. London ✓

EQUAL CITIZENSHIP

U.D.A. Discussion Paper No. 1.

SOMETHING TO FIGHT FOR!

SOMETHING TO LIVE FOR!

On the 15th November 1986, Mrs. Thatcher signed the 'Anglo Irish Agreement'. The facts (not the Thatcher propoganda machine) show that this agreement is another dilution of our British citizenship. No one representing Unionist parties were consulted, no mandate for it was sought. A brief show of hands in Westminster is merely 'comic relief' in the overall tragedy. The fact is, that not one of these mainland MP's parties bother to organise here. Ulster people are not allowed to join the Conservative or Labour parties. Discrimination against Ulster people only creates problems — it cannot solve them.

For too many years the Unionist people have been lacking in direction with Unionist leaders seemingly content with the status quo before the 15 November 1985. The parties even now in Ulsters darkest hour do little to inspire our people with something positive to fight for and live for! Plenty talk of war, fighting to the last man . . . etc. etc. none have actually suggested what it is we should fight for; it is the responsibility of leaders to tell us what we fight for. We must smash the agreement but we must also have progress . . . a new deal.

Against Carsons wishes and advice the British Government of the day imposed a peculiar form of Government upon us, specially designed to keep us at arms length — a sort of second class citizenship. We are governed by parties that we are not allowed to join nor vote for . . . and to cap it all against our wishes a Free State bunker was established at Maryfield — from which joint authority's exercised over us.

The UDA fully supports the campaign for 'equal citizenship' and looks forward to the day that it is granted . . . or won! But even this campaign was not organised by the parties and only a few individual MP's have had the sense to jump on the bandwagon. Equal citizenship with the UK is surely a necessary prerequisite to any solution here, or we merely return to the present second class citizenship — ever prey to Dublins clutches.

To gain equal citizenship is merely the return to us of our democratic rights within the U.K. — i.e. the right to join and vote for (and against) the National parties, — for all N.I. legislation to be debated . . . not merely Orders in council, — administration of local government to be locally democratically accountable; it is the foundation of democracy, and its denial is the indication of bad Government not only for us but for the UK as a whole.

The UDA has an expanded vision of equal citizenship, one that will sustain us in the difficult days ahead, that inspires us to win the greatest battle anyone can win for his people; a vision applicable to the concept of the U.K. or an Independent Ulster if we are driven out of it. To us (and apparently few others) equal citizenship is not merely constitutional reform it is the granting of equality amongst citizens; a reconciliation of old and young, the rich and poor, disabled and able bodied and of course catholics and protestants. We seek equality for all.

UNITY THROUGH DIVERSITY!

Man is capable of devising many kinds of political structures to accommodate minorities in divided communities. Unfortunately what he is incapable of doing is ensuring that all parties have a common desire to come together for the common good. Without reciprocal goodwill nothing ever can work! The UDA could invent many complicated constitutional structures guaranteeing minority involvement and input; but what we can not do is make Nationalist leaders read, never mind react or even agree to them. Even the most progressive proposals can be defeated by silence. Silence has become the greatest weapon since the armalite for Nationalists; for silence from them under the Anglo-Irish agreement veto's all proposals by loyalists. In fact silence guarantees the SDLP victory, for it ensures that Dublin have the greatest say.

Consequently we refuse to accede to the Nationalist veto. We refuse to be put in the position where the silent arrogance of the SDLP can negate all advance and reconciliation. We believe the only way to progressive politics in Ulster (i.e. if we are allowed the luxury) is to go above the heads of the despotical SDLP hierarchy, and offer their voters and all Ulstermen a new future, bound each together, 'Unity through Diversity'. We offer no complicated arrangements and we will have no institutionalised power sharing — for either only produce only new arguments and divisions. What we do offer is equality, democracy, and hope.

The only alternative is civil war! It is an option we are prepared for, but do not seek. What we do seek is reconciliation; what we offer is the will to succeed!

We believe that the people must be trusted, we must possibly even have to go beyond the parties to seek a consensus. For as the people have rights they also have responsibilities, and all too often the parties are put in the impossible position that they never can deliver. This position has become the folly of Ulster, a perversity that may destroy us all. Let none be mistaken, the UDA seeks nothing for itself. All we seek is a future for us all and if necessary we are willing to fight for it!

A NEW SICKNESS

Some people believe that the granting of equal citizenship in terms of the National parties organising here will eliminate sectarian politics (we believe it will help); but these people also believe in the introduction of so-called 'class politics'; with its antiquated ideologies. Do we really want to create new divisions in our community — should we allow ideologues to try out the failed policies of Labour and Tory? Sectarian politics — merely another disease! We believe at the end of the struggle to come our people will demand the politics of equality, unity and regeneration! Ulster has a 20% unemployment rate, by far the worst in the UK but other areas in the UK are coming close. Within Europe we are considered one of the worst areas. Government spokesmen constantly remind us of the massive funds they pump in . . . but why? For exactly the same reasons that all areas north of Watford Gap receive Government aid, all due to the Governments gross mismanagement (and that of those before) the fact that the UK has been relegated to the fourth division economically is Thatchers fault, not ours or the Scottish or Welsh or the English. Our manufacturing base has vanished because Thatcher has allowed it to!

For us to agree to stay in the UK we want not only the right to belong to the parties and to take part in the decisions that affect our future — but more importantly to help build and unite our country once again, to regenerate all parts of the Kingdom. We want to assume the responsibility of equality.

We call for the people in the rest of the U.K. to be granted their democratic rights, by the introduction of proportional representation and devolution to be introduced to Scotland, Wales and English regions, as well as Ulster. The National parties agreeing to organised here must be a prerequisite to any agreement here — for only through this means can we affect the laws made for us (and the rest of the UK) only then could Ulster play its part in this regeneration. Devolution in Ulster could then work for we would need consensus. We would be willing to make it even more democratic than anywhere else with the introduction of a Bill of Rights and written constitution for the province.

Such conditions for devolution would mean that we could formulate a far sighted strategy for our industry and economy — not something imposed by government . . . but one agreed to by the C.B.I., the unions and Government — matched by a new realism in the workplace, a reduction in restrictive practices and an increase in worker/directors. An industrial education programme linked to a research and development programme, leading to higher skills and strategic production by means of new technology, and a consequent regeneration of the industrial sector.

Of course this must be done within UK constraints . . . but why should our government not be a development agency as well? We could turn Ulster into a world-wide resource by offering our education system to the developing world (and by making it more in line with modern needs and technology) an investment that would come good in years to come. We could also introduce a 'national service' programme — but one that would enable any unemployed person with skill or interest to work on organised relief programmes in needy countries and still retain their dole: thus benefitting all. Ulster needs many thousands of jobs but taken on a world wide context it is a drop in the ocean, rather than looking inwards we should offer our skill, charity, hard work to the world . . . this combined with an export/marketing strategy would lead to our dole queues reducing drastically as well as increasing our esteem in the world. A sure investment in the future.

And for once we would be able to (through the party system) be able to affect Government as a whole. For if proportional representation was introduced there would almost certainly be a realignment of British politics and coalition governments . . . one where we would be part of one where Ulstermen could rise to cabinet level or become Prime Minister even; this way we always have an input into policy and the parties can never abdicate their responsibility. The United Kingdom would be truly united in democracy.

Either way things can never be the same. A new Ulster or a new UK . . . only the people win!

This dream of a new society is all very well but presently we are ruled by Peter Barry, so the destruction of the Anglo-Irish agreement must be our first aim. But as we have said it can only be the first step to something better.

THE U.D.A.

The UDA is not well regarded by some sections within the Ulster community. This is partly due to ignorance but perhaps what is worse is that some people seem happy to believe the caricature portrayed of us and this for years has given them a convenient excuse for inaction.

We are portrayed as unintelligent thugs and bully boys on the fringe of Unionism, as the hard men of loyalism. We have had to be hard, because hard things had and have to be done, and often we have stood alone, and we have hundreds of prisoners alone now! We never put respectability before action, and personal advancement before Ulster.

The fact that we are almost entirely working class says more about the other sections of the community who for so long have abdicated their responsibilities to not only defend our people but to seek a solution for the community as a whole.

It is worth mentioning that it was the UDA a product of divided society, that first examined the causes of sectarian division. We sought to understand and create a new framework for Ulster. We saw a negotiated Independence being the only way to create a new Ulster. We foresaw the day when the British Government would wash its hands of us. We wanted to head off the crisis that today is all too real! It is also worth remembering that while the UDA in the 1970's was seeking an answer to our problems, the churches, intelligensia and bigots ran for their secure bunkers, closing their eyes and ears to reality. These same people have now come back to the real world, a world ruled by Dublin where mere rhetoric is a useless weapon.

We do not preach sectarianism or seek confrontation, but we have never retreated from taking the necessary action to protect our people; either through our Community Action programmes or facing Republicanism directly.

"There is but one justification for violence . . . the freedom of our people".

We will never retreat from the action necessary to seek a lasting and just peace.

If you would like any further information about the UDA or its policies please contact:

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