

E. R.

DEMOCRATIC UNIONIST PARTY

The DUP's manifesto was launched by Dr. Paisley on 12 April at a press conference in the party's headquarters in the Albertbridge Road. Of the one page variety, the manifesto, as uncompromisingly Loyalist as ever, covered both constitutional, security and social issues. The manifesto contained particular criticism of the UUP for the break-up of the UUUC, for its lack of commitment to the principle of Unionist unity and for selling Ulster short at Westminster. The main points were:

(a) its emphasis on defeating terrorism -

"For over a decade Ulster has suffered under the jackboot of IRA terrorism. The British Government has refused to deal effectively with this cancer in the belief that to do so would cause the IRA to bomb the mainland. The Province must be put on a war footing, the IRA assault dealt with once and for all and our Province allowed to return to freedom.

Any reduction in troops must be gauged to the necessary increase in RUC and RUCR strength, their arming and equipping, so as to outgun and outmanoeuvre the IRA, with no limitation on their overtime, and their use in every part of the Province. All restrictions on the UDR must also be lifted so that the Regiment can give the necessary back-up to the police. The withdrawal of troops by Mr. Mason without these safeguards has led to a weakening of Ulster's defences, an overstretching of RUC resources and recent IRA successes.

The DUP will continue its campaign for the return of capital punishment believing that it is the only suitable punishment for the heinous murders being committed. We would demand an increase in full time border security."

(b) its absolute commitment to "democratic" devolved government and its opposition to any local government alternative -

"Only a strong devolved parliament and government based firmly on the tried and trusted principles of British Democracy, with no room for "power-sharing", can meet the needs of NI."

"We regard mere tinkering with local government or extra parliamentary seats as utterly inadequate. While local government must be reformed, and meaningful powers returned to the District Councils, it is not in itself the answer, and anyhow this task should be left to a new Northern Ireland Parliament".

(c) its suggestion of a new convention and referendum -

"As a starting point we believe a new Constitutional Convention should be elected, the result of which would be automatically put by Referendum to the Ulster electorate on the same conditions as applied to Scotland and Wales. Such is the essence of democracy and such is the stance of the DUP".

(d) its opposition to colonial direct rule and to the system of nominated boards -

"The colonial type system of 'Direct Rule' which has been imposed on Ulster for too long is wholly unacceptable and must be ended, in particular the Government controlled 'Nominated Boards', which are destroying our education and

hospital services, must be scrapped."

- (e) its opposition to the Republic -
"The DUP emphatically rejects any suggestion that the Dublin Government should have a say in the affairs of NI and we repudiate the compromising approach of successive British Governments. We believe that effective pressure could be brought to bear upon the Republic by our Government to secure extradition, which is the only acceptable and realistic way of dealing with cross-border terrorism. The DUP rejects the notion of an all-Ireland Court and believes that the existing facility of extra-territorial trials is useless. Equally the Republic must be forced to stop its territory being used as a sanctuary and training ground for the IRA, only then and when Dublin ceases to claim jurisdiction over this part of the UK can good neighbourly relations be contemplated".
- (f) its continued claim for extra seats (between 20-24) at Westminster.

On the socio-economic front, the manifesto emphasised its total opposition to the EEC and attacked the attempts to introduce comprehensive education, the run-down of local hospitals, and proposed reforms relating to homosexuality in NI and prostitution. Amongst other matters it pressed for a gas pipeline and for an equalisation of fuel prices, for greater democratic control over the NIHE and for the continuation of agricultural subsidies to counter the threat of the EEC's CAP.

In its emphasis on the security situation and the demand for the Province to be put on a war-footing in the face of the IRA's election campaign of violence, the DUP's manifesto was predictable; its significance lay in its total rejection of local government reform as an alternative to full devolution and in its proposal for a new Convention and subsequent referendum, both matters only relatively recently floated with the Secretary of State.