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③ PS/SoJS (B&L)

Seán Pádraig Ó Súilleabháin,

'The Government does not believe that to treat Northern Ireland, which has a long history of self-government and which is very different historically, geographically and culturally from Great Britain, in exactly the same way as the rest of the UK would serve to promote reconciliation because it would not give sufficient recognition to the heritage, tradition and identity of the minority Catholic community.'

This quote comes directly from your Northern Ireland Office. Protestants are denied the rights which are extended to their Great Britain counterparts. Their heritage has been betrayed.

Roman Catholics will not live in Ulster as part of the United Kingdom and so for six years now the Protestant population has been penalised in this first stage of their final rejection by and expulsion from the UK under the auspices of the Anglo Irish Agreement.

The Anglo Irish Agreement signed by the London and Dublin Governments in Hillsborough on 15 November, 1985 promised the people of Northern Ireland 'peace, stability and reconciliation'. The Agreement has manifestly failed to deliver the slightest hope of fulfilling any of these aims.

The Agreement intended to rob Northern Ireland of its political identity as an integral part of the United Kingdom. It recognised for the first time in Northern Ireland's history that the Dublin Government had a direct input and a say over the affairs of the Province. That say was bolstered up by a joint Anglo Irish Conference and a Secretariat to assist in the administration of Northern Ireland.

This betrayal was deliberately envisaged to go over the heads of Northern Ireland's elected representatives.

At no time before the signing of the Agreement were the people of Northern Ireland consulted about their future. The Agreement was imposed, without dignity, upon the Ulster people.

The Anglo Irish Agreement brought in its wake a legacy of violence. Ostensibly designed as a framework within which a solution might be found the Agreement has closed the door on political progress.

The Agreement set itself the task of alleviating the supposed alienation of a minority. In effect that objective was partly achieved but the price was the alienation and ostracism of the majority in Northern Ireland.

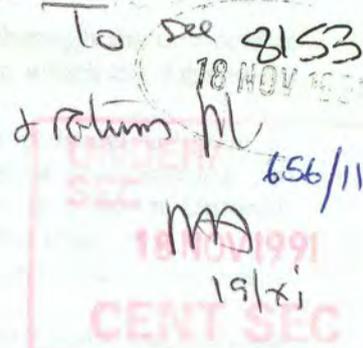
If one studies the immediate background to the Anglo Irish Agreement the treachery was already set that a solution to the internal problems which face Northern Ireland would include an all Ireland dimension. This trend encouraged the SDLP to opt out of its responsibilities by failing to play their role in the Northern Ireland Assembly.

The SDLP in opposition to the devolved Assembly set up at Stormont preferred the New Ireland Forum. Its Report issued on 2 May, 1984 set out its objectives:-

HOUSE OF COMMONS
LONDON SW1A 0AA

MR Maxwell

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15 November, 1991

'... lasting peace and stability could be achieved in a New Ireland through the democratic process and to report on possible new structures and processes through which the Agreement might be achieved.'

The Forum Report pressed the two governments to establish a political solution or framework compatible with the idea of Irish unity, thus establishing a constitutional *fait accompli*. The British Government should then use its resources to face down Unionist opposition and to persuade and cajole Unionists to come to terms with the idea.

The Anglo Irish Agreement asserts that common ground exists between London and Dublin concerning the future of Northern Ireland.

The Agreement embodies these priorities concerning the long term future and political development of Northern Ireland.

The most likely to engage in this compromise policy are those who do not believe passionately and absolutely in their respective causes. The Agreement has taken on itself the constitutional monstrosity of the Unionists being told they are under the guardianship of the British Government while the Nationalists now have a guardianship and protector in the guise of the Dublin Government.

The Unionist response to the Agreement has been clear and uncompromising. The parties that represent the Unionist cause, i.e. the Ulster Unionist Party and the Ulster Democratic Unionist Party, set aside the luxury of party loyalty and established a joint working relationship for the greater constitutional good.

Never before have Unionists demonstrated with such singlemindedness and determination their opposition to Government policy. The joint Unionist Manifesto outlines our abhorrence and opposition to the great wrong imposed upon us. What is more we have a solid mandate from the Ulster people supporting our policy.

Our aim is the replacement of the Anglo Irish Agreement with a process which reflects the self-determination of the people of Northern Ireland.

The replacement of and alternative to the Agreement must take on board the hopes, designs and wishes of the people of Northern Ireland. We must be consulted about our future.

In order to get to a point where the Agreement can be replaced we seek the suspension of the Accord and the cessation of the work of the Maryfield Secretariat which services the Conference. Thus no one would be bargaining under duress. We have sought and will continue to seek a proper basis for talks to that end.

The talks about talks process was an effort embarked upon by Mr. James Molyneaux and myself with the Secretary of State to create the necessary conditions for talks about an alternative to and a replacement of the Accord to begin.

The talks process that eventually came about in May of this year could have been successful if the rules had been adhered to. The fact is, any hope of success was frustrated, not by the Unionists, but by the London and Dublin Governments who insisted upon the reimposition of the Anglo Irish Conference meetings.

History will record what should have been their priorities.

Standing back and looking at the effects the Agreement has had on Northern Ireland over the last six years the legacy is shameful and sad. Ulster has lost out in terms of peace and stability. The security situation has worsened drastically.

There has been an escalation in terrorism and sectarian violence since 1985. From 1981-84 deaths as a result of the security situation had decreased considerably yet in the immediate aftermath of the Agreement violence and deaths rose to equal some of the worst years of the 1970s.

Not only has the Agreement cost lives and destroyed property but it has been responsible for the senseless squandering of millions of pounds of tax payer's money.

The expenditure involved in operating the Agreement runs at approximately £1 million per year. Conference meetings cost almost £1 million to set up, furnish and run. This money is wasted on a process that has failed and is unwanted.

The fact is the Agreement cannot be a solution to Northern Ireland's problems so long as it ignores the wishes of the people of Northern Ireland.

The Agreement does not guarantee Northern Ireland's place in the United Kingdom nor does it give support to democratically devolved government in Northern Ireland.

Today, Unionist opposition is as strong as it was six years ago when Margaret Thatcher and Garrett Fitzgerald signed the Agreement.

Northern Ireland will not wear the iniquitous Agreement nor will it settle for some dilution of it as an alternative or replacement. To do such a thing would be to betray those who have

died for Ulster.

Not content with giving us more and more bloodshed and violence the Agreement has also seen to it that the UDR, much maligned by Dublin and the SDLP is to be disbanded by a merging process. Today my parliamentary colleague Rev. William McCrea MP and myself with the backing of the party have relaunched our 'Hands Off The UDR' campaign.

I warned that this would be one of the fruits of the Accord and now to the shock of the Ulster people it is being done without apology right in front of their eyes by your government.

Increased deaths, shootings, maimings, racketeering, less convictions, less border security, less police and army bases are to be the Agreement's legacy to Ulster.

All right thinking people in Northern Ireland have the right to demand from you immediate intervention so that constitutional democracy will be restored and that this part of the United Kingdom no longer has to submit to what is in reality joint sovereignty under Dublin and London.

The fact that Dublin Government could have as one of its Cabinet members an ally of a convicted IRA man and under the Anglo Irish Agreement that Cabinet minister could have had a place in the joint sovereignty Anglo Irish Conference makes this matter more and more urgent.

Even today the 'extradition farce' has been reenacted as once again Dublin has refused to be a democratic neighbour.

From Ulster to you our Prime Minister comes the heart cry, 'Enough is Enough.'

Sincerely

John R. K. Paisley

