

PROGRESSIVE UNIONIST GROUP

**PROPOSED
DEMOCRATIC
DEVOLVED
ADMINISTRATION
FOR
NORTHERN
IRELAND**

FOREWORD

THE PROGRESSIVE UNIONIST GROUP IS A POLITICAL GROUP NOT ALIGNED TO ANY OTHER POLITICAL PARTY OR GROUP.

ORIGINALLY FORMED IN APRIL 1978 AS THE INDEPENDENT UNIONIST GROUP IT WAS RENAMED BY AN EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE DECISION OF THE 1st OF MAY 1979 AFTER SOME MISREPRESENTATION AND CONFUSION OVER THE 'INDEPENDENT' TITLE'

THE EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE ACCEPTS THAT THE ORIGINAL TITLE MAY MISLEAD THE ELECTORATE INTO BELIEVING THAT THE GROUP MAY BE PRESSING FOR AN INDEPENDENT NORTHERN IRELAND STATE.

THIS IS NOT SO AND IT IS HOPED THAT THE NEW TITLE WILL EMPHASISE THE POLICIES OF A PROGRESSIVE UNIONIST GROUP ATTEMPTING TO OBTAIN A DEMOCRATIC DEVOLVED ADMINISTRATION WITHIN THE FRAMEWORK OF THE UNITED KINGDOM.

A UNIONIST IS A PERSON WHO IRRESPECTIVE OF POLITICAL OR RELIGIOUS PERSUASION BELIEVES THAT THE ECONOMIC LINK WITH THE UNITED KINGDOM IS MORE VIABLE AND BENEFICIAL THAN ANY OTHER SYSTEM YET PROPOSED. AS PROGRESSIVES WE HAVE RECOGNISED THE FACT THAT SLAVISH ALLEGIENCE TO ONE POLITICAL PARTY AT WESTMINSTER HAS NOT BEEN IN THE BEST INTERESTS OF N. IRELAND. OUR MAIN AIMS AND OBJECTIVES HAVE BEEN AGREED UNANIMOUSLY AND ARE PRESENTED WITH THE INTENTION OF BUILDING A BETTER FUTURE FOR ALL THE PEOPLE OF NORTHERN IRELAND.

MAIN AIMS AND OBJECTIVES

- 1. TO FORM A GROUP TO DEAL WITH POLITICAL ISSUES AND TO ATTEMPT TO FORMULATE A POLITICAL SENSE OF PURPOSE.**
- 2. TO PURSUE THE OBJECTIVES OF THE GROUP THROUGHOUT ALL PARTS OF N. IRELAND.**
- 3. TO PURSUE POLICIES FAVOURABLE TO WORKING PEOPLE THROUGHOUT N. IRELAND INDEPENDENT OF ANY OTHER POLITICAL PARTY OR GROUP.**

The fall of the Power-Sharing Executive was inevitable, simply because it was an imposed undemocratic structure. The resultant violence surrounding this event was distasteful and caused great hardship throughout the whole community, including tragic loss of life and all the distress that occurred. It should be remembered that the Paramilitary Movements and their supporting masses at the time made the Executive unworkable and it was only when the very fabric of Society began to crumble that Brian Faulkner quit. Whether he received his orders from Whitehall or not is purely academic. What is certain, is that the aces were held by the Paramilitaries. The British Governments Power-Sharing ideas, which had in effect Institutionalised sectarianism, lay in ruins. Ironically the N. Ireland Paramilitary forces found themselves fighting against a sectarian Administration. Westminster and Dublin were in disarray and Direct Rule became the only alternative if some stability was to be recovered.

The British Government and Opposition spurred on by the S.D.L.P. and Dublin had been wooed into a crisis of their own making. The dreams of Sunningdale delegations had (as predicted by some) turned into a nightmare. British reliance on Power-Sharing and an Irish dimension with legislative powers to solve our problems proved to be a mistake that they have not, as yet admitted. To our knowledge it is still the policy of the British Government and Opposition to work towards a Devolved Administration for N. Ireland. Unfortunately, both Labour and Conservative Parties are dragging their heels and declaring continually that the problems must be worked out by the people of Northern Ireland themselves.

The present situation in Rhodesia is comparable. Both British and American Governments have declared that

a peaceful settlement cannot be achieved without all the conflicting Parties being involved. In particular they refer to the combatant leaders Mr. Mugabwe and Mr. Nkomo, without whose armies there would be no conflict to resolve. At this point one has to refer back to N. Ireland where the British Government and Opposition Policies exclude any talks with Paramilitary sources or mediators. One can see therefore, that in an International Political area Britain appears to be labouring intensely for a Rhodesian Political settlement whilst at the same time, in the top left hand corner of the United Kingdom they are opting for a Military Solution. Anyone who has lived long enough in Ireland and taken some years to study the problem can tell you that there is little likelihood of a British Military Solution. Surely History has taught them that much.

The alternative to political inaction and escalating violence must be a new determination to secure a Democratic Devolved Administration. We would accept that the problem must be worked out by the people of Northern Ireland. That of course is supposed to be the British Government intention. The whole of the British Parliament must therefore answer two questions.

1. Do they still stand by a Democratic administration formed by the people of N. Ireland ?
2. When are they going to commence negotiating to achieve those aims ?

Our objectives are honourable and are intended to secure for the People of Northern Ireland better representation at a local level and ultimately a better future. There may be Groups that do not accept our Proposals . . . indeed there are people who still think that the earth is flat! It is virtually impossible to convince them that it is not so. Equally there will be Groups who may adopt a similar stance when looking at our Proposals. We cannot produce a political idea acceptable to all men. But we believe that a very large majority would view our proposals favourably.

In order to explore the Community feelings for our ideas we have indeed become far more Democratic than some of the Major Political Parties in N. Ireland who even embody the word Democratic on their cap-ribbons! They to have been asked to comment. Our proposed administration, therefore, is not finalised in so far that other parties and groups have not yet replied to our proposals. We would welcome comments of a constructive nature from any Political source if their suggestions may improve upon the Basis that we have created. It must not be assumed however, that we should accept any amendments to the Principle of Democratic Devolved Administration outlined, rather we would prefer to look at proposals from any source that could offer improvements to the Committee Structures, e.g. Some Groups may wish to suggest fifteen Committees of ten persons instead of our outline. The idea of electing a leader of an administration elected by public poll has been suggested and we would consider that point constructively. If local, National and International Politicians need guidance as to the form of Devolved Administration that may be acceptable to a very large Majority of the N. Ireland Electorate, irrespective of Religious beliefs then we offer the following proposals for discussion by all Political Parties and Groups and eventual presentation by the British Government as a guideline for a Devolved Administration.

Committees (See app 1.)

The make-up of the Committees and even the Initial number of elected members throughout our Proposed Administration is open for Amendment e.g. It may be advantageous to change the number of committees or the number of persons serving on each committee.

CO-OPTION OF NON-VOTERS AND TRADES UNION MEMBERS

Provisions could be made for the Co-opting of non-voting advisory category persons onto each Committee. Specialists in the fields of the Administration outlined could play their part. A good example would be the Co-opting of Trades Union Representatives nominated initially by their respective Unions to serve on various Committees dealing with the crucial areas of Employment, Housing, Education, Training and other matters. There are able local economists who could be Co-opted. All Co-opted members would serve in an advisory capacity only with no voting rights.

Any member of such an Administration could declare any Specialist interests likely to assist in serving the community prior to the Proportional vote for the Committee seats. Equally important is our radical idea that every single member of our Community should be encouraged to put forward ideas to their elected representatives who could then place any relevant suggestions in the name of the individual constituent. This could bring out the latent expertise that is dormant in our society. Simply, we would hope that this would stimulate community involvement in the sharing of Responsibility and advancement.

The Border Poll

The Border Poll showed that a massive majority of the Electorate in Northern Ireland favour the maintenance of the link with the rest of the United Kingdom. The British Parliament in recognising the resultant Political consequences of their Poll have committed Westminster to a continuation of that Policy. We are convinced that any attempt to reverse that policy by any British Government will have grave consequences leading to certain Civil War in Ireland with severe repercussions throughout the United Kingdom

We believe that there is no other more satisfactory method of establishing Northern Ireland Public Opinion on this crucial matter. This policy has been established by successive British Governments when dealing with the constitutional position of Gibraltar. When faced with a similar Fascist attack upon the constitution by Spain to take over Gibraltar. The Westminster Government must show the same determination when considering the views of the majority of people (Catholic and Protestant) in this part of the United Kingdom.

ASPIRATIONS

No person can be denied Political Aspirations. Our attitude on that matter is quite clear. Equally, no minority group should feel entitled to violently change the political aspirations of a Majority in N. Ireland and in so doing plunge the Community into civil strife.

When we support the Political, Economic and Social link with the United Kingdom we do so in the full knowledge that we have Majority support. THE BORDER POLL GAVE US THAT MANDATE

Our further Constitutional Political thinking would undoubtedly be influenced by a reversal of that Poll decision. We do not however, see a change in the near future. There are people who may feel that historic events have denied them a different Constitution surrounding the Unification of Ireland. Most people will agree that this point of view only leads us further into the past to a point where the American Indian Nations would have a valid Constitutional claim to the Americas and all therein. Some American observers and commentators should consider that point. However, we wish to learn from History and not fall back into it.

A BILL OF RIGHTS

A BILL OF RIGHTS FOR ALL UNITED KINGDOM CITIZENS SHOULD BE DRAWN AND RATIFIED BY THE WESTMINSTER PARLIAMENT, GUARANTEED BY THE EUROPEAN COURT OF HUMAN RIGHTS AND THE UNITED NATIONS COMMISSION FOR HUMAN RIGHTS.

As a Progressive Group we demand more Democracy in N. Ireland hence our total opposition to Sectarian Powersharing. The Progressive Unionist Group believes that N. Ireland Politics should follow our Proposals for a Devolved Administration and an end to most Direct Rule procedures. We shall therefore work for the establishment of a voting partnership with all those who wish to pursue a common Programme of Social and Economic Advancement for the broad mass of the N. Ireland people whilst challenging in a Progressive way all those who would pursue the sterile Politics of the past.

It is not possible to enforce an ideal way of Progressive thinking. It is equally difficult to legislate effectively against those who would discriminate against their fellow man whatever the basis of their discrimination. There are areas that can be covered reasonably effectively by legislation, namely in dealing with discriminatory practices in the allocation of jobs, housing, Education etc.,

We believe that it is in the area of Junior Education that the best medium to a better future can be found. A bill of rights can only be a pacesetter for Progressive Government thinking. It is for the average man-in-the-street to help create the wind of change and it is for our Politicians by their words and actions to commit themselves now to the Politics of the Mind and reject the Politics of Emotions.

SECURITY

There is always the unavoidable issue of Security and it should be noted that we have left this matter to the Administration via Ways and Means to liaise with the Central Council, the Speaker, the Deputy Leader and Leader of the Administration to formulate in conjunction with the Security forces a Security Policy that will be acceptable to a large Majority of the Administration. It is expected that any ministers responsible must be answerable to Administration members questions at the despatch box.

Of all the factors, Political, Social and Economic there are two major ones continually pressing upon the Political scene in Ireland and leading to recurring strife. The first is manifest in hollow Irish Nationalism. The second factor inevitable stems from the first . . . namely the Border Politic that has been an inevitable cause of strife. Ironically it is the very 'lack of a border' that creates the Border Problem.

We support the link with United Kingdom and therefore accept the establishment of a Border. The lack of a visible boundary creates a major problem. We are surrounded by a mere line on a map, twisting and winding through all forms of land . . . urban and suburban, pastoral and lakeland it appears only on maps as a contentious reminder to untidy forefathers in successive British Parliaments.

PROGRESSIVE UNIONIST CANDIDATES WILL CAMPAIGN FOR THE BUILDING OF AN ISRAELI - TYPE BORDER AND ALL THAT IT ENTAILS.

No British Government except one gifted with hypocrisy can put up any reasonable argument against this Proposal. They have the finances and they have the manpower. There is nothing other than outside dictation to stop them securing the State. We have been subjected to the fanatical outbursts of political paper tigers for ten years, we have had enough. When the Westminster Parliament blasted cross-border roads it was done with the intention of 'sealing the border from Terrorists'. It was a miserable attempt and an abject failure. Eighteen paratroopers and countless others in the security and indeed civilian sector bear witness to this anomaly. When a British Government can openly declare that it is prepared to regard £100 million pounds per annum as an acceptable level of public expenditure loss in the R.A.F. sector of the Armed Forces alone, then we say to them . . . Defence like Charity begins at home. They have no acceptable reasons for refusing to implement this proposal unless of course they are working on a distant Strategy for the Unification of Ireland via Europe and the United Nations.

Political Prisoners

It is essential that the British Government takes courage and opens discussions on the question of a Phased Amnesty for persons convicted or detained for CLEAR POLITICAL OFFENCES. It is difficult to see how this issue can be avoided. One has only to look at the situation in N. Ireland Pre-1968 to see that the State was plunged into Political chaos with all the resultant violence. It was sad and tragic, but it was little evident before 1968. Even when the Social and Economic problems in Ulster were critical in comparison to the rest of the United Kingdom there remained the lowest crime rate in comparison with other seriously depressed areas.

The view of the British Parliament including our own Members of Parliament is that all persons convicted are purely ordinary gangsters and criminals. If that is the case how do they reconcile the fact that they have introduced the most extraordinary measures of detention, arrest and trial to deal with ordinary crime. One thing is sure. If the Government carry on, purely taking a chance that the violence will somehow go away then they are deluding themselves and they must therefore by their incompetence and inaction accept responsibility for an escalation in the violence.

The vast majority of N.Ireland people wish to see a responsible settlement to the conflict but it is up to the British Government to lead the way. After all, we are part of their United Kingdom! We are more than certain that given the proper and fair opportunities the people of N.Ireland will accept our Proposals as a genuine attempt at reconciliation and Progress. One has only to recall the massive Genocidal conflicts of Beirut and Cyprus to be convinced that our people are capable of forging a much better future for our families and future generations.

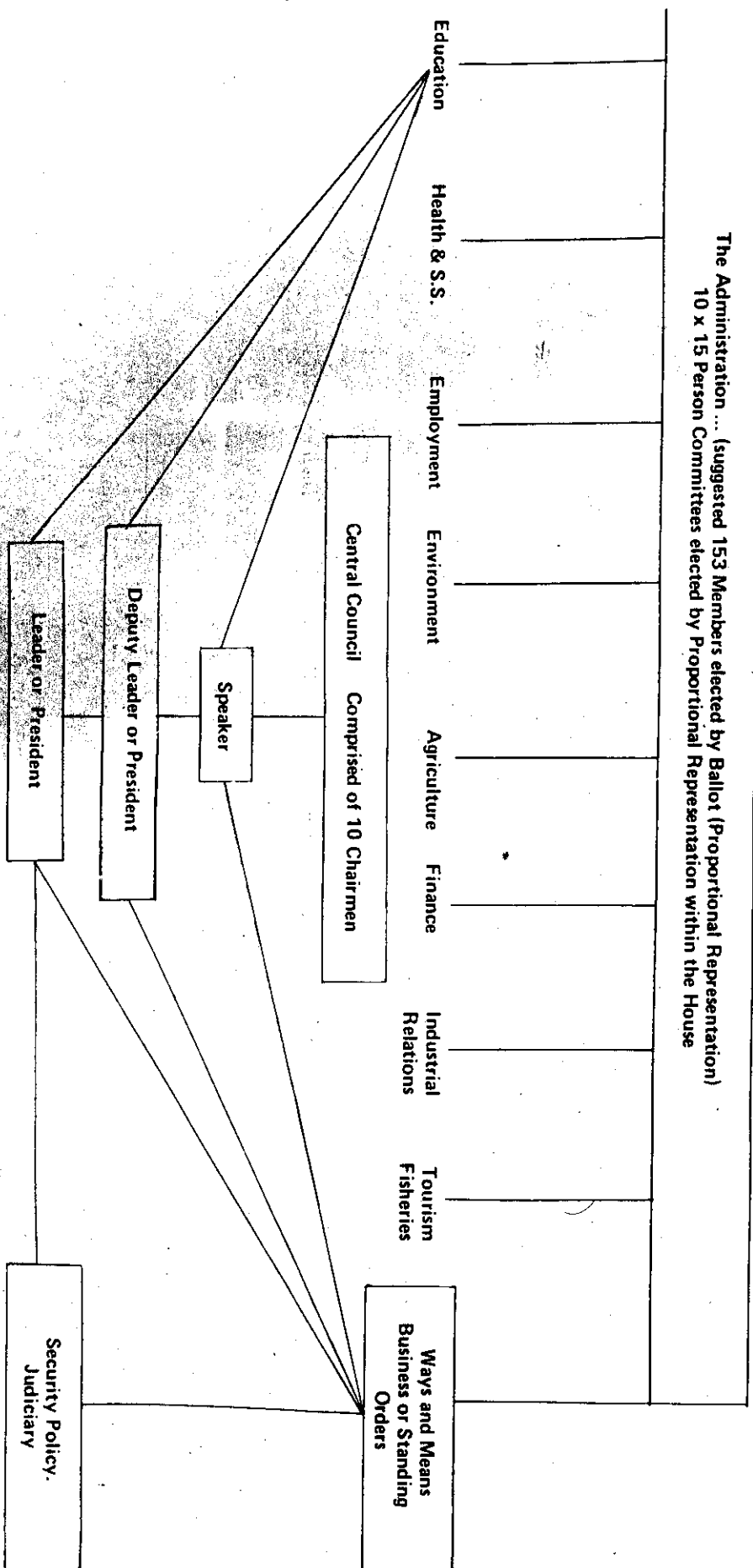
**IF YOU HAVE A SINCERE AND
GENUINE INTEREST IN FINDING
A PEACEFUL SOLUTION TO NOR-
THERN IRELAND'S PROBLEMS
AND WOULD LIKE TO DISCUSS
THIS DOCUMENT IN GREATER
DEPTH PLEASE CONTACT :**

**Progressive Unionist Group,
c/o Hugh Smyth (Councillor)
214-216 Shankill Road,
Telephone: 26233
(Mon-Fri) Between Hours :
10.30 am - 5.00 pm.**

PROPOSED DEMOCRATIC DEVOLVED ADMINISTRATION FOR NORTHERN IRELAND

The Northern Ireland Electorate will elect by Proportional Representation

The Administration ... (suggested 153 Members elected by Ballot (Proportional Representation) 10 x 15 Person Committees elected by Proportional Representation within the House)



153 Elected Representatives will elect 15 persons per Committee (by Proportional Representation) (CO-OPTED members, Trade Unionists, Educationalists, etc. shall be invited by Committees).

CO-OPTED MEMBERS HAVE NO VOTING RIGHTS AND WOULD NOT BE PRESENT DURING COMMITTEE VOTING STAGES