



INC NEWS

Freedom
Unity
Peace

Nuacht Comhdháil Náisiúnta na hÉireann



Saoirse

Aontacht

Síocháin

A NEW APPROACH?

As we look ahead to the coming year of 2007 there are a number of issues on the horizon which will have a dramatic influence on shaping events, notwithstanding any possible political agreement.

In the coming year we shall see the departure of Tony Blair as British Prime-Minister and his almost certain replacement by Gordon Brown. Since 2001 the new Labour project of devolution and constitutional reform was sidetracked by illegal imperialist adventures abroad (adventures which have led to the first ever conviction of a British soldier for war crimes). Whether this change of leadership will put this reformist agenda back on track and whether Gordon Brown will give as much time to the Irish peace process as his predecessor remains uncertain. It should be borne in mind that in British politics past track-record counts for little, it was the firebrand Welsh Nationalist and friend of the Fenians David Lloyd George who colluded with Loyalists and Conservatives to partition Ireland to remain in office.

This summer the Republic of Ireland will hold a general election, which if nothing else, will distract attention and energies away from the national question. It is quite possible that the national interest will be trampled under foot by political parties of all hues stampeding towards the trough of electoral office. It will be the role of the INC to try and build a cross party consensus regarding Ireland's national interest in the north of Ireland.

2007 will also see the creation of seven new local councils in the north of Ireland with new powers. It is vital that we ensure that the past practices of sectarian gerrymandering and discrimination are not allowed to re-emerge.

It is also highly likely that our government may try to sneak in an official state visit by the Queen of England to our shores regardless of its potential suicidal electoral consequences in any general election. The INC oppose and will protest against any such visit, we urge our members to be vigilant as such a visit may only be announced at short notice or even retrospectively.

The enhanced intelligence role for MI5 in the North and the completion of their new gigantic HQ in Hollywood next year are very sinister developments in view of their integral involvement in directing a campaign of sectarian mass murder by Loyalist paramilitaries, and destabilising the political process north and south over the last 30 years. The redeployment of former RUC special branch officers to new roles in MI5 under the St Andrew's Agreement is a matter of acute concern.

...continued overleaf



Above: DUP deputy leader, Peter Robinson MP / MLA, poses with an AK 47 (inset) and parades with *Ulster Resistance*, a paramilitary group he helped to found with DUP leader, Ian Paisley.

In August 1986 he led 500 loyalists in a cross border incursion to take over the village of Clontibret Co. Monaghan, which led to the injury of two Gardaí and his arrest. In a subsequent court appearance in Dundalk he again led a large loyalist mob into the town, which led to a riot. At his trial the Judge described him as "a senior extremist politician". In 1988 both he and his wife Iris (now also a DUP MP) were imprisoned at the same time.

In 1985 many leading DUP politicians became members of the 20,000 strong paramilitary *Ulster Clubs*, which had on its ruling committee the UDA Brigadier, John McMichael and the Mid Ulster UVF commander. These clubs were a forerunner to *Ulster Resistance*, which was launched in the Ulster Hall on the 10th November 1986. This meeting was chaired by the future DUP MP, Sammy Wilson and attended by Ian Paisley, Peter Robinson, Gregory Campbell (who was involved with the loyalist rioters in Derry in August 1969, which attacked Civil Rights marchers) and other DUP politicians. In 1988 members of UR were involved in a plot to smuggle arms from South Africa to be used by loyalist paramilitaries to murder innocent Catholics.

The main characteristic of DUP politics is spiteful anti-Catholic sectarianism; on the 29th May 1984 Belfast DUP councillor George Seawright said of Catholics "Taxpayers money would be better spent on an incinerator and burning the whole lot of them. The priests should be thrown in and burned as well". There is no evidence to suggest that such views have been decommissioned by the DUP.

Paisley and many of his followers have lengthy criminal records and been arrested, fined and imprisoned on scores of occasions since August 1957.

Given that these people brought down the North's institutions in 1969 and again in 1974 because of their opposition to Civil Rights and Power Sharing, Paisley's recent declaration that they are now ready to share power can only be viewed with scepticism.

The two governments seem intent on pressing ahead with their 'St Andrew's' proposals regardless of the lack of any evidence that the DUP are "Wholeheartedly and publicly committed, in good faith and in a spirit of genuine partnership to the full operation of stable power sharing government and the north south and east west arrangements".

Regardless of their public pronouncements the DUP are fundamentally a sectarian party of protest. For Ian Paisley to share government with Republicans after 40 years of saying NO defies any objective logical analysis, to do so would discredit his life's work, jeopardise his leadership and split his party. Time and again the DUP are allowed to ignore 'deadlines written in stone', refuse to engage in dialogue with potential partners in government and attempt to unilaterally rewrite a solemnly recognised international agreement to suit themselves. To a degree this is just a continuation of the policy successfully pursued by the UUP who had stymied the political process since 1995. Ideologically, Unionism can only move forward at the speed of its slowest member and the inherent fear of being branded a 'Lundy' means that such progress is glacial.

Since the late 1990's the INC has remained silent over our reservations about the inter-party as opposed to the inter-governmental approach in deference to the belief that those at the 'coal face' had a better perspective as to the correct strategy to pursue. However, we now believe that this is the right time to contribute to the debate as to what is the most effective strategy to employ.

The inter-governmental approach has certain advantages: as in 1985 it could prove to be 'Unionist

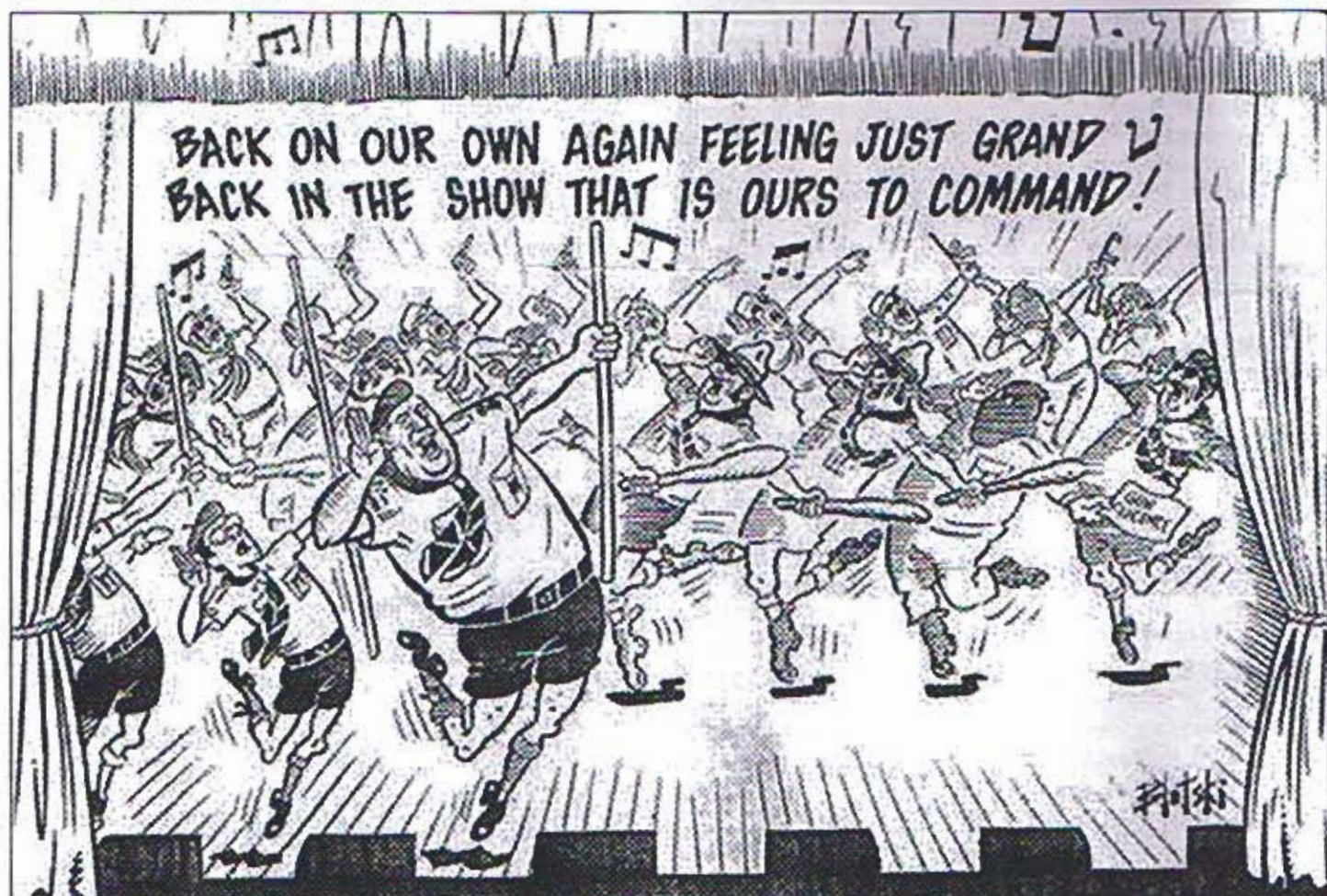
proof' by denying them an opportunity to bring any institutions down as in 1974 or obstruct their operation as at present.

Secondly, by forcing Britain to act as the advocate of the Unionist cause it would effectively expose the true nature of the British state to an international audience by accurately portraying the British state as 'captain of the Unionist team' not in its preferred role of 'neutral umpire' in a sectarian petty party political wrangle.

Thirdly, an intergovernmental approach could act as an effective carrot and stick to encourage genuine cross community power sharing. The prospect that Sinn Féin, as part of a southern coalition government, could play a significant role in governing the north while Unionists were excluded would be a powerful incentive.

The current process has only allowed Unionism to get rid of the 1985 Anglo-Irish Agreement and Articles 2 & 3 of the southern Constitution while Nationalists have got neither effective power sharing nor cross-border bodies in return.

However, there is a glimmer of hope on the horizon. This November the Democrats took control of both houses of the US Congress. Since then fundamentalist 'neocons', who are unrepresentative of western culture, the American people and indeed the broad mass of the Republican Party have been falling like nine pins. President Bush has promised a new approach to Iraq, perhaps a new approach to the northern deadlock is also possible? Now is the time for Irish Americans of all parties to lobby their representatives for a new approach to Ireland, which will seek to realise the desire of the vast majority of Irish people for Freedom, Unity and Peace.



WHO'S AFRAID OF DEVOLVING POWER?

London has a golden rule for governing Ireland's northeast. It is, that in any discussion about future government or any arrangement for it, if any republican or nationalist party refuses to cooperate the arrangement goes on regardless.

If however, any British unionist party refuses to cooperate the arrangement collapses. Through the past nearly forty years the London administration has made one new plan for every two and a half years. These plans always failed. Most of them were probably meant to fail, but in any case if unionists refused discussion or participation the plans collapsed, if nationalists or republicans did so they went ahead. And failed anyway.

Part of London's strategy was to re-assert the racist principle that non-unionists did not greatly matter, a principle on which government of the northeast was originally based. The nationalists or republicans were never to be allowed to rule; the best they could expect was to be treated decently by those who were. That was the ideal of liberal unionism. Other unionists just left out the bit about being decently treated. Now in 2006 when London has been forced to acknowledge some right of republicans and nationalists to take part in ruling, the strategy is to prevent republicans altogether from obtaining power, and to delay as long as possible any involvement in rule by nationalists, finally settling if necessary for some minority involvement of nationalists. There is little evidence - apart from words - that either

Mr Ahern or Mr. Blair are committed to anything more democratic than this. Keeping Sinn Féin out and keeping London in are key points of Mr Ahern's strategy. Keeping Mr Blair in office and avoiding an unseemly conflict with the old imperialists especially in the south of England is still important for Mr. Blair.

Faced with consistent failures to achieve democratic government in Ireland, Britain and the USA, and with big power opposition to it in so many other places, it seems the very structures of government need to be rethought now. In 1980 some of us, being impatient, said that the next logical step in democratic representation was to create governments in which all parties shared. Some, including Dr. Garret Fitzgerald, were appalled. For them there was no other pattern of democratic government than that of ruling party and opposition.

Unfortunately we were neither strong enough nor numerous enough to insist that no voter goes out on polling day to elect his or her party into opposition, so the next logical step in representative government has to have all parties in government. Maybe we were wrong to give in so easily because in course of time that form of government was imposed upon us in Ireland's northeast, and those who had opposed it in 1980 suddenly approved of it. It seemed that what was suggested by beleaguered people in the northeast was wrong, but if imposed by London was tolerable. One could almost feel and hear the forelocks being reverently touched.

However, not everyone agreed with such a form of government in any circumstances. Too dangerous. What would Mr Blair do if people in Britain asked for the same? Or Mr Ahern in the south of Ireland? Shared government with a fixed term for parliament, with all the changes that implies? It seemed influential politicians and others in Britain and Ireland had their choice - either get rid of this idea or accept it and face the possibility of major changes in their own domain.

There was however a third choice, namely to seem to act democratically by announcing support for such a form of shared government in Ireland's northeast while undermining it at the same time. That is what Mr Trimble did. He spoke in favour of shared new government but did everything he could to make sure it did not happen. And Mr Ahern and Mr Blair while giving public verbal support condoned and allowed and even encouraged those who undermined it.

Strangely, none of the politicians doing this were ever seriously challenged. People seemed content with the untruth that the Ahern/Blair/ Bush axis was in favour of shared self-government in the northeast and of this step towards modern democratic representation. But for them it would be more comfortable if the "governing party versus opposition model" were not questioned and if new forms were not experimented with, at least not until after the political lifetime of such people. Having a new government model in Ireland's northeast, which really worked, would be a heavy argument for them to counter. Where would the old patronising party system go?

There is always a feeling among people that different shapes of government are all right for other people who may need them, but we are satisfied with the old systems which we insist on believing have worked.

Whether they work now may be questioned when one considers the time wasted in Dáil Éireann and Westminster by politicians whose energy and time are wasted trying to get each other out of office, rather than getting the people into power. An opposition, which opposes even those measures that it would introduce itself, is neither honest nor logical.

Some of us had looked forward to encouraging the new form of shared government to flourish in the northeast because of its implications for future democratic development in Europe. It was after all one of the few interesting things produced under a sterile British regime.

We thought the idea might spread.

Obviously some important people thought so too. So is this the reason for their declaring support for shared government and undermining it at the same time?

- Des Wilson

(Des Wilson is a Catholic priest working in West Belfast.. He is a founding member of the INC)

CRITIQUE OF THE ST. ANDREW'S 'AGREEMENT'

The first thing to say about the document, which emerged from the inter-party talks in St Andrews in Scotland on Friday 13th October 2006, is that it was not an "Agreement".

It could more truthfully be described as a 'proposal'. However, both governments for various reasons needed a feel good PR stunt and the media dutifully obliged. The proposal itself can be divided into two parts. Firstly, a sequenced timetable to facilitate the return of devolution. This timetable effectively displaces the previous timetable which was 'set in stone', that unless devolution was restored, the assembly would be prorogued and greater Anglo Irish cooperation introduced. This would suggest that this timetable shouldn't be taken too seriously, and that the DUP continues to out stare both governments in any game of political brinkmanship.

The second part of the proposal is more substantial. In effect it is a proposal to rewrite a solemnly ratified international agreement at the behest of a party which not only never signed up to it but who vehemently opposed it. Symbolically and as a precedent for the future this is a very ominous development. However, as to the proposed changes themselves, some of them we welcome, some of them are common sense administrative changes while others we are very suspicious of.

However, the fundamental point to remember is that regardless of whatever timetables or changes are adopted or not as the document itself points out: *'All parties to this agreement need to be wholeheartedly and publicly committed in good faith and in a spirit of genuine partnership, to the full operation of stable power sharing government and the north south and east west arrangements (Para 3)'*. This is the bottom line. The INC is convinced now, as in the past, that such a genuine commitment is not present within contemporary unionism, that both governments lack the will to seriously facilitate, encourage or compel such a commitment and therefore the inter-party power-sharing approach is fruitless at this time. The fact that the DUP still refuses to talk to Sinn Féin also does not auger well.

The proposal is jammed full with 'carrots' such as a joint British Irish financial investment package and a cap on domestic rates (Annex C). The two governments' threat that *'default by any one of the parties following restoration of the executive should not be allowed to delay or hinder political progress in Northern Ireland (para. 11)'* ring hollow in view of the political suspended animation of the past four years. Once

again the governments fail to clearly specify exactly what they mean by *'in the event of failure to reach agreement by November 24 we will proceed on the basis of the new British Irish partnership arrangements to implement the Belfast agreement'* (para. 12).

Annex B proposes to establish an anti-poverty and social exclusion strategy, a victims' commissioner, a forum and a Bill of Rights by December 2006 (i.e. more than 8 years after it was promised in the Belfast Agreement), a single Equality Bill, an Irish Language Act, aid for Ulster Scots, a parading review, guidelines to reintroduce ex-prisoners into the workforce, additional power to compel evidence for the Human Rights Commissioner, a meeting of the Northern Ireland Grand Committee and legislation to reform EU entry for EU nationals into the civil service. None of these proposals we are seriously opposed to. However, we are suspicious that the proposal to end 50/50 recruitment into the PSNI when the Patten target is reached may signal the gradual decline in communally balanced policing and a return to the mistakes of the past.

Changes to Strand 1:

Annex A contains most of the proposed changes to the Belfast Agreement. Paragraph 2 proposes a Statutory Ministerial Code, which would place a duty on all Ministers to *'act in accordance with the provisions on ministerial accountability of the code'*. The specifics of the code are not in the document, however, they would incorporate paragraphs 19 and 20 of the Belfast Agreement which agree that the executive is the forum to agree on issues which cut across two or more departments, the budget and programme for government, the prioritising of legislative and executive proposals and common position of the Northern administration to external relationships (para. 3).

Paragraph 4 provides that the executive must discuss and agree on any issue which is significant or controversial and is clearly outside the programme for government or which the First and Deputy First Minister agree should be brought to the executive. We believe that as the terms *'significant'* or *'controversial'* are subjective and not clearly defined, virtually every and any issue imaginable could be bogged down in wrangling preventing ministers from performing their executive functions. If a consensus could not be agreed within the executive and a vote was required any three ministers could require that it be taken on a cross community basis (para. 2). We fear that this proposal may be a recipe for executive paralysis and may introduce a 'unionist veto' on all proposals.

Paragraph 6 relates to a proposed amendment which would allow 30 members of the Assembly to refer a ministerial decision covered by the ministerial code to the executive for a collective decision if the presiding officer of the Assembly certified is an issue of public importance. A second referral could not be made about the matter. Again we believe that this change may be an attempt by unionism to stymie reform and disable effective devolved government.

Paragraph 8 would require a pledge of office for ministers to participate fully in the Executive, North South Ministerial Council and British Irish Council and ministers would be required to act in accordance with relevant decisions of the Executive or Assembly (para. 7). While we welcome this attempt to prevent Unionism boycotting North South meetings it should be noted that a similar requirement existed under the 1998 Agreement and yet unionist ministers were allowed to boycott whatever meetings they wished and if this change is to work, specific penalties must exist. While not in the document, unionists have claimed that a side letter states that this pledge will also contain an oath to support the police. We would be concerned that any such 'oath' would be used as in the 1922 Treaty as a tool to exclude and humiliate Republicans.

Paragraph 9 allows the largest party to nominate the First Minister and the second largest party to nominate the Deputy First Minister. This change apparently seems designed to prevent embarrassment of Ian Paisley being voted into office by Sinn Féin. While this change would seem to erode the cross community ethos of the original agreement, it may prove tolerable as part of an overall settlement. The proposal in paragraph 10 to review the transfer of some functions of the First and Deputy First Minister to other ministers seems sensible.

We have no opposition to the formation of a committee of the centre (para. 11). The creation of a Standing Institutional Review Committee to review the method of appointment of ministers to the Executive (para. 9) and other Strand One institutions would appear to be acceptable as long as it is not used to further rewrite the Agreement (para. 12). The appointment of an efficiency review panel to examine the size of the Assembly and departmental structure would appear to be sensible (para. 13). The proposal that *'an assembly member would not be able to change community designation for the whole of the assembly term except in the case of a change of membership of political party'*. This would appear to be an attempt to prevent the redesignation of the Alliance party as unionists as happened in the last Assembly and seems reasonable.

Strand 2 & 3 Amendments

The proposed ministerial code (para. 2) would also require all North South and British Irish Ministerial Council decision papers to be circulated to all executive members. Any executive member could seek the executive's agreement to such proposals (para. 17) if they cut across two or more ministries or were deemed significant or controversial and outside the programme for government (paras. 3,4,5). This will potentially slow down if not grind to a halt the work of the North South Ministerial Council if every issue had to be ratified by the full Executive.

Paragraph 18 allows a lead minister to arrange for another minister to take their place at North South or British Irish Ministerial meetings. The First and Deputy First Ministers can decide who is the lead minister if this is disputed. If the lead minister did not arrange

a replacement there would be a statutory obligation on the First and Deputy First Ministers to nominate a replacement and require any relevant information necessary from the department concerned. The replacement Minister would also have to fulfil the necessary cross community requirement (para. 18).

We are concerned with this proposal as it in effect gives any minister a right to opt out of attending North South or British Irish meetings they do not wish to attend. It does not detail what will happen to the First and Deputy First Minister should all other potential cross community replacement ministers refuse to attend. These proposals do not contain enough penalties for ministers who refuse to participate in the North South elements of the Agreement and in effect will only institutionalise the bad faith demonstrated by unionist ministers in the last Executive.

The proposal for an objective review group to study the efficiency, value for money and case for additional cross border bodies including a substitute for the Lights Commission (begun over four years ago) contained in paragraph 19 is to be welcomed. The proposals that Chairs and Chief Executives should be scrutinised annually by committees North and South (para. 20) is also to be welcomed.

The proposal to encourage the establishment of a North South parliamentary forum (para. 21) and independent consultative forum from civil society (para. 22) is also to be welcomed.

However, in view of our already established scepticism towards these bodies the necessity for the creation of a standing secretariat for the British Irish Council (para. 23) and the creation of an East West interparliamentary framework (para. 24) is questionable. What role will they perform and specifically why are they needed?

Annex E

This is a paper by the British government on the future role of the security service (MI5) in Northern Ireland after 2007 and it is the most duplicitous and unsatisfactory part of the entire proposal. It states that giving an enhanced role to MI5 will bring 'Northern Ireland into line with the rest of the UK.' However, the entire point at issue is that Northern

Ireland is not like the rest of the UK. MI5 is viewed by the second largest party as being totally opposed to their policies and aims and is accused of operating a sustained dirty tricks campaign of subversion against them. The proposal claims that the 'security service is fully accountable through existing statutory arrangements and due process of parliament' i.e. the parliamentary intelligence and security committee who examine the expenditure, administration and policy of the intelligence agencies. There are also bodies such as the Intelligence Services Commissioner, Interception of Communications Commissioner, Surveillance Commissioner and Investigatory Powers Tribunal.

This proposal claims that these safeguards are 'comprehensive and as transparent as the sensitivity of the issue allows' (i.e. veiled in impenetrable secrecy). In view of the controversial history of MI5's dirty war and campaign of collusion over the last 40 years, this claim is blatantly absurd. MI5 has absolutely no confidence among the nationalist population and the wisdom of enhancing its role in Northern Ireland is seriously suspect. Clearly this Organisation will have no accountability to local elected politicians or ministers or bodies set up to safeguard civil liberties and human rights. What is needed is a new locally recruited intelligence service, which will give its loyalty to and be accountable to the people of the North of Ireland. At the very least a new Intelligence Ombudsman should be created to monitor MI5 activities or preferably an Assembly Intelligence Committee on the American model with strong powers to compel witnesses and evidence.

The proposal claims that 'Police officers working with the security services in whatever capacity will remain accountable to the Chief Constable and under the oversight of the Police Ombudsman.' Although 'all security service intelligence relating to terrorism in Northern Ireland will be visible to the PSNI. PSNI will be informed of all security service counter intelligence investigations and operations relating to Northern Ireland and security service intelligence will be disseminated within the PSNI according to current policy'. Because the PSNI Chief Constable's main accountability on national security issues will be to the Northern Ireland Secretary of State and not to his

minister, the Policing Board, Ombudsman, Assembly or Executive this information may not be available to them.

The proposal claims that MI5 has disclosed sensitive information to the Ombudsman's Office in a number of cases but neglects to mention the larger number of cases where it has been obstructive and uncooperative. It claims that the 'Security service will participate in briefings to closed sessions of the Policing Board to provide appropriate intelligence background about national security related policing operations.' Clearly, what is needed is the power for the Ombudsman to compel disclosure of information by MI5 and the cooperation of its members in its investigations.

With regard to policing, the proposal claims that a whole range of safeguards will continue in place such as the Ombudsman and Policing Board and that the co-option of serving and former police officers to intelligence work is designed to ensure that intelligence will be 'visible' to the PSNI. Yet obviously MI5 will be the tail that wags the PSNI dog. It states that 'intelligence will be shared and properly directed' by MI5 because 'PSNI officers will be co-located with security service personnel and will work in a variety of roles including as intelligence analysts/advisors and for the purpose of translating intelligence into executive action.'

It states that MI5 have no executive or policing responsibilities but will provide the 'strategic direction' i.e. they will call the shots. The proposal also states that 'the great majority of national security agents will be run by the PSNI under the strategic direction of the service' but that 'The security service will continue to run directly a small number of agents who are authorised to obtain information in the interests of national security as distinct from countering criminality.'

There also appears to be a plan to transfer the existing 'rotten apples' within the PSNI special branch into the 'poisoned orchard' of MI5. The proposal states 'there will be no bar on former officers serving in the new organisation' but these former police officers will need to have 'working experience of the arrangements under which the PSNI currently operate.'

Clearly this proposal offers nothing for the nationalist community in relation to greater accountability of the security services for their actions. Indeed, their enhanced role may give them further opportunities to undermine and destabilise devolved government and communal reconciliation in the North of Ireland.

— Paul McGuill
Runai

Revising Racism

In recent years, revisionist historians and columnists, lamenting our departure from the British Empire, have claimed that Irish patriots such as Patrick Pearse and Wolfe Tone were motivated by hatred and racism.

It is conveniently forgotten by these revisionists that one of the many gifts the British gave to mankind was racism. By the mid 19th century the British Empire was estimated to control a quarter of the world's land mass and one fifth of its population. This empire was built on plunder, rape and pillage, with the tried and tested "divide and rule" strategy to maintain it.

They attributed their success to 'Anglo-Saxon superiority' and since the time of the 'crusades' they were content with the belief that this superiority was a divine gift from God. But with the advent of the industrial age they sought more grounded reasons. Their scientists began to divide humanity into "races". These "races" were defined by obvious physical differences, assigned characteristics and placed in a hierarchy.

Needless to say, the "Tuetons", (which included the Anglo-Saxons) were placed at the top, the "Hottentots" (blacks) at the bottom and the Celts and Jews somewhere in-between. British anthropologists began to travel the empire, measuring people's skulls and placing them in different "races". Dr. John Beddoe drew up the "Index of Nigrescence", which concluded that the Irish were darker than the people of eastern and central England and were closer to the aborigines of the "British Isles", who in turn had Negro ancestry in their appearance.

This new 'science' soon infected the rest of Europe and many "Tuetons" in America readily bought into it, as it gave them scientific justification for slavery. Even the

British left and liberals were not immune. In 1892, the Fabians Beatrice and Sidney Webb wrote to a friend: "We will tell you about Ireland when get back. The people are charming but we detest them, as we should the Hottentots, for their virtues. Home Rule is an absolute necessity in order to depopulate the country of this detestable race."

"The Famine" of 1846-47 had considerably depopulated Ireland already. The air-borne fungus that caused the potato crop to fail here also caused crops to fail in England, France and Belgium. Only in Ireland were a million people allowed to die and a million more forced to emigrate. Three quarters of Ireland's arable land was used to grow wheat, oats and barley while this Holocaust was in progress. Britain exported all these crops from Ireland along with the cattle, sheep and pigs, to be consumed by the British and to sustain the "Tuetons" maintaining her colonies. Even potatoes that survived the Blight were exported. 3,000 extra troops were sent to Ireland to protect the harbours as ships laden with food left the country. While the Irish died of starvation and related diseases, the British feasted on the produce of our country. The real blight that caused our Holocaust was British rule and its insidious racist ideology.

When Britain ceded power to Australia, New Zealand, Canada and South Africa it was not to the Aborigines, Maoris, native Canadians and Africans, but to the descendants of the white "Tuetonic" settlers who had stolen their land. The indigenous people of these countries continued to be abused and exploited.

Placing themselves at the top and defining themselves as a homogenous "race", the English believed that they were the only "race" fit to rule themselves and others. With such beliefs it is easy to invade other countries, destroy their independence and exploit their people and resources. For the

English ruling class, the Irish were an expendable "race" and whether we died starving in the fields with mouthfuls of grass or as cannon fodder in British wars, mattered little to them.

When Wolfe Tone spoke of his hatred for England he was referring to its establishment and the ideology of its ruling class, which believed in a God given right to rule others. Tone, a Protestant with links to the ascendancy class, rejected such notions. His aim was to unite native and settler and build a nation of equals. Pearse, whose father was English, used similar language in the same context.

It is not uncommon for a vanquished people to believe the claims of their oppressors, especially when they are forced to live in a system that is designed to exploit and debase them. Pearse and Tone sought to inspire the Irish people by ridiculing English notions of supremacy and countering their claim that God was on their side.

I will never understand how some Irish people, like those revisionists and the poppy-wearing brigade, can deny our history, insist that British rule was beneficial and portray our patriots as hate mongers. Hate is a human emotion and the hatred of an oppressed people for their oppressor is understandable.

The challenge before us today is to rise above it and forgive (not forget). Such reconciliation will only be possible when equality and mutual respect have been established throughout this Island. But alas, those British notions of superiority, they haven't gone away you know.

— Cathal Óg McCarthy
PRO / Editor

Below: 'Scientific' racism of the 19th century as portrayed by the American magazine *Harpers Weekly*.



IRISH IBERIAN.



ANGLO-TEUTONIC.



NEGRO.

The Iberians are believed to have been originally an African race, who thousands of years ago spread themselves through Spain over Western Europe. Their remains are found in the barrows, or burying places, in sundry parts of these countries. The skulls are of low, prognathous type. They came to Ireland, and mixed with the natives of the South and West, who themselves are supposed to have been of low type and descendants of savages of the Stone Age, who, in consequence of isolation from the rest of the world, had never been out-competed in the healthy struggle of life, and thus made way, according to the laws of nature, for superior races.

SHONEENS, SYCOPHANTS & SQUIRENS

Nobility is a most desirable trait of character. Those fortunate enough to be born with it may develop it even further as their lives progress. It is not, however, always noticed by those who benefit from it; this magnanimity of soul is almost always recognized by others within the ambit of that person who is committed to the common good. It is most certainly NOT an accolade that can be conferred by decree or "dubbed" by sword!

For example, those who have been "ennobled" by the kings and queens of England in history include the marauder and mass-murderer Francis Drake (elements of "society" in Cork, in a frighteningly extreme example of snobbery seem not to be repulsed by this butcher). The present day lists include notorious arms dealer Mark Thatcher and his rancorous mother; convicted criminal and novelist Jeffrey Archer and a host of armed services personnel who are remembered with contempt and loathing in various parts of the world - not least in our own country. In recent times we've seen the "rise" of the "dunderheid" dialectologist Norman "Muckle-Bawbees" Laird. Is it possible that Elizabeth Windsor has a sense of humour? One would be forgiven for so thinking, especially when the more pulchritudinous member of the Paisley family, Eileen (the silent partner *en-ménage*) has been "elevated" also. How risible can one get? Are Edward Haughey, Tony O'Reilly, etc. well placed among their peers (ouch!)? As regards Mr. O'Reilly, strange parallels can be drawn between him and a predecessor of a Century ago - William Martin Murphy. Murphy owned *The Freeman's Journal*, which O'Reilly now owns, having been incorporated into the Irish Independent. Like Murphy before him, O'Reilly is emphatically anti Trade Union and solidly pro political union with Britain. The major difference is that Murphy *refused* to be "knighted"!

In order to preserve a pyramided caste system, such is necessary to preserve the position of the suzerain, so that "lesser mortals" will know their standing in a well defined pecking order and to maintain the fiction that England is the centre of the Universe, there have to be others of lower status, which explains the various "Gofer Gongs" (I offer this neologism to the aforementioned Laird as an addition to the miniscule "Ulster Scots" glossary).

These imperial decorations (M.B.E. etc.etc.), as pointed out in our last issue, carry the slogan "For God and Empire". Did this strange "god" have no problem at all with the subjugation, slavery and slaughter that went with the creation of this barbarous imperial atrocity? These anachronistic "Orders" are, it appears, much prized by the Uriah Heeps, lickspittles, and, to be charitable, the deluded, in Britain and unfortunately, Ireland. Among the Irish recipients of these baubles are Julitia Clancy (the unionists very own, exclusive and dedicated Oprah Winfrey) and Chris Hudson, who used to run cheap train trips to and from Belfast, which are much missed by bargain-hunters on both sides of the Border. A more recent addition has been Paddy Harte, co-sponsor with Glen Barr of trips of commemoration and "reconciliation" to various British war memorials. One wonders how many families could have been spared hardship and anguish had Mr. Barr kept his mouth shut in the nineteen seventies and

further wonders if Mr. Harte has ever raised this matter with him. Given the oft-claimed genesis of Mr. Harte's party (Fine Gael, for whom he held a seat in Donegal) perhaps he should, some day, organize a trip of healing, not to Belgium, but Ballyseedy? Have any of these people ever heard the old saw "Britain has no friends, only interests"? Unfortunately it must be assumed that most of them have and are driven by their own vanity and venality, or both. The Government of Canada is certainly aware of the realities of the situation, as it insists on any of its people who are offered a British title making the choice between their citizenship status as a Canadian and the acceptance of one of these ersatz awards. Given that Canada is a "Commonwealth" country, it certainly makes our Government look pusillanimous in comparison.

So where are the people of real worth? Everywhere you look; helping their friends and neighbours; actively involved in community activities; doing what they can to ease the burdens of the oppressed and the less fortunate in society, etc. etc. Remember Margaret Thatcher's awful pronouncement "There is no such thing as society"? Wrong AGAIN, Maggie! There are not many super-rich people, and no tax exiles, among those endowed with true humanity. The vast majority of the truly honourable have a touch of humility, seek neither recompense nor recognition and go their way in anonymity, when possible.

Several residents of this Island are rumoured to have rejected attempts to have them accept these "Honours" - among them at least two Nobel Laureates. Such persons are entitled to be proud, for nothing can surpass the esteem of your fellow citizens; Republicanism neither recognizes nor deems anybody as subject.

- Fergus Fleming
(INC National Executive)

DONATIONS NEEDED

We have no big financial backer to pay our bills.
We only survive on the voluntary contributions of
our supporters. Please send what you can to:
Irish National Congress, P.O. Box 2814, Dublin 7.
All contributions will be acknowledged.

Irish National Congress
Comhdháil Náisiúnta na hÉireann
We would like to extend seasons
greetings to all our members and
supporters in Ireland and overseas

nollaig faoi
shéan is faoi
mbaíse

Reclaim the Republic

As part of its "Reclaim the Republic / Athshealbhail an Phoblacht" campaign, éirigi has asked the INC to contribute to a collection of writings on the theme of "What The Proclamation Means To Me". Other contributors come from a variety of backgrounds including the Arts, Journalism, Trade Unionism, Political and Community Activism.

Éirigi hopes that this element of the campaign will add further to the debate on how the Ireland of today compares to the Ireland envisioned in 1916 and encourage individuals to become active in demanding an Ireland that truly cherishes all the children of the nation equally.

Individuals are also invited to submit their views on what The 1916 Proclamation means to them by emailing a short written piece (preferably no more than 500 words) to whattheproclamationmeanstome@eirigi.org.

Éirigi has already published several contributions on its website www.eirigi.org, which include PANA's Roger Cole, journalist and activist Nell McCafferty, and musicians Damian Dempsey and Rossa Ó Snodaigh. Tom Cooper's contribution on behalf of the INC is printed below.

WHAT THE PROCLAMATION MEANS TO ME

The revolutionary assertion of the Irish people in 1916 to break the connection between Ireland and the British Empire, led by the signatories of the 1916 Proclamation, took on not just national but global significance. Not alone did the Easter Rising change the course of Irish history, but the echo of resistance, which resonated around the world, gave hope and inspiration to colonised peoples everywhere. In subsequent generations, subjugated peoples worldwide found the inspiration to challenge empires, which in turn hastened the end of the imperial and colonial era, which caused misery and kept people in hopeless poverty and hardship.

The Proclamation would be regarded as both noble and generous. In claiming the allegiance of every Irish man and Irish woman, the Proclamation in return guaranteed religious and civil liberty, equal rights and equal opportunities to all its citizens and a promise to cherish all the children of the nation equally. Not alone did the 1916 Rising knock the first brick out of the colonial walls of world empires, which would eventually disintegrate, it sounded the death knell of Redmondism, conscription, Home Rule, and imbued a sense of national pride in a population, which was confused as to its identity. No more

would we be subject to a monarch, we would be citizens of a free state whose values of egalitarianism and equality would be enshrined in our constitution.

Unfortunately, not all in this state feel as I do regarding the Proclamation. During the 90th anniversary of the Easter Rebellion, some members of Dun Laoghaire/Rathdown Council voted against the 1916 Proclamation being displayed in their building. After many decades of denying our revolutionary past, there are indications that the Irish state is beginning to embrace the revolutionaries of 1916. The re-interment of Kevin Barry and his brave comrades into the republican plot in Glasnevin Cemetery from Mountjoy jail, and the possible return of the Manchester Martyrs is a positive sign. Also, 2006 was the first year since 1971 that the Irish state officially commemorated the most seminal event in the foundation of this state and for 20th century separatist Irish republicanism. Without the 1916 Rising, and Proclamation, there would have been no landslide Sinn Féin victory in 1918, no declaration of independence by the first Dáil in 1919, no defence of that independence in the War of Independence from 1919-21 and no incomplete British recognition of that independence in the Treaty of 1921.

For nationalists and republicans the fact that victory was not total and that the great national struggle was followed by partition, betrayal, and civil war, tarnished our sense of achievement and pride. However, these events should not detract from the historic and unique achievements of the revolutionaries of 1916 and the hope that they inspired, not only in generations of Irish people but for oppressed people all around the world.

—Tom Cooper,
Cathaoirleach.

Easter Raffle Results

The winners of the Easter 2006 raffle were:

- 1st Prize (An Easter Hamper): Robert Ballagh, Dublin 7.
- 2nd Prize, (A Case of Wine.): Anthony Coughlan, Dublin 9.
- 3rd Prize, (€100 Book Token): M. O'Connor, Ballybrack, Co. Dublin

Congratulations to the winners and many thanks to all our members and supporters who subscribed and without whose help our work would be impossible.

Christmas Raffle

The prizes for this years Christmas raffle are:

- 1st: A Christmas Hamper
- 2nd: A Bottle of Spirits
- 3rd: A Book Token

With this newsletter you will receive a booklet of (6) raffle tickets. Tickets are €2 each or €10 per booklet. If you would like to participate in this draw, please send your completed stubs and money to I.N.C. P.O. Box 2814, Dublin 7 before the 15th December. The draw will take place on Saturday 16th December. As ever your support is invaluable and greatly appreciated.

IF YOU WOULD LIKE TO JOIN THE INC THEN
FILL IN THE FORM BELOW AND RETURN IT TO:
Irish National Congress, PO Box 2814, Dublin 7.
Membership Fee: waged €10 / unwaged €5

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