
THE ALLIANCE PARTY OF NORTHERN IRELAND

DECLARATION OF INTENT -
A NEW POLITICAL CHARTER
21st April, 1970.

Citizens of Northern Ireland,

Our province is languishing in despair - our industries are becoming stagnant; our name in the world at large is tarnished; our society is in mortal peril. This general sickness is reflected and exacerbated by the political system we have created, for we have stifled our community with the politics of the past, democratic in form but not in spirit. The result is a shapeless community, riven by sectarian fear. For fifty years too many of us have accepted the narrow strictures of the 1920's turning the proud men who gave us our cultural and industrial heritage into warring factions wallowing in a hatred and distrust which has brought us to the very brink of civil war.

Let us begin again. We cannot and will not allow our present ills to continue any longer. The survival of our land, our people and our children is at stake. The political parties which have brought us to this present state must now be repudiated. We repudiate not only the Unionist and Nationalist parties, for whom the clock stopped in 1920, but also the Labour and Liberal parties who have palpably failed to restart that clock.

The ruling Unionist Party stands convicted of sectarianism by the Cameron Commission. With its divisive and undemocratic link with the Orange Order it could not and cannot create a united and harmonious community. We to-day charge the Unionist Party with continuous political neglect of our society, and in the words of Lord Cameron ask "How can unity be promoted by a party in which divisive influences can still operate to such effect as the evidence we have heard so amply demonstrates?"

The Nationalist Party has merely served to perpetuate existing community divisions. It has failed to play its role as a responsible opposition within the legally constituted framework of the state. With its sectarian affiliations and archaic philosophy it too must bear responsibility for the sea of troubles that has overwhelmed us.

The Labour and Liberal parties have made some attempt to cut across religious divisions but, with doctrinaire policies geared to the general British Political scene, they have failed to solve the fundamental problems on their doorstep. They have tended to divide moderate and liberal people on economic issues rather than uniting them to fight against sectarianism and the past.

We say to all these parties - 'A plague on all your houses'. The people of Northern Ireland will tolerate your blindness no longer; they will not stand by and see you despoil the next fifty years as you have wasted the first fifty. For it is our intention to create in Northern Ireland a community of excellence in which no man is persecuted for his beliefs, in which all shall stand equal before the law in which each shall be able to develop his personality to the full.

We therefore, strong in our democratic faith and in our conviction that only effective political organisation can end the bitterness of the past, declare that we have this day formed "THE ALLIANCE PARTY OF NORTHERN IRELAND", and do hereby call upon our people to pledge themselves, as we now do, to the principles on which our party is founded, namely:-

1. We support the constitutional position of Northern Ireland as an integral part of the United Kingdom. We know that this belief is shared by the overwhelming majority of our people, and that provocative debate about it has been the primary cause of all our most fundamental troubles. The Union is in the best economical and social interest of all citizens of the state. It also implies British standards of democracy and social justice,

which will be energetically secured and steadfastly upheld. We are firmly committed to the principle of devolved government and would not support any attempt to suspend or dissolve the Northern Ireland Parliament.

2. Our primary objective is to heal the bitter divisions in our community by ensuring:-
 - (a) Equality of citizenship and of human dignity;
 - (b) The rooting out of discrimination and injustice;
 - (c) The elimination of prejudice by a just and liberal appreciation of the beliefs and fears of different members of the community;
 - (d) Equality of social, economic and educational opportunities;
 - (e) Highest standards of democracy at both parliamentary and local government level;
 - (f) Complete and effective participation in our political, governmental and public life at all levels by people drawn from both sides of our present religious divide.
3. Our economic policies will not be shackled by any economic dogma, whether socialist or conservative. The Alliance Party will never accept any such socio-economic allegiance. Nor is there any intention or desire whatever to affiliate with any other party.
4. We firmly believe that without universal respect for the law of the land and the authorities appointed to enforce it, there can be no measurable progress. We therefore intend to secure the the rapid achievement of such respect and the absolutely equal enforcement of the law, without fear or favour, in every part of the state.
Equal justice will be guaranteed to all citizens regardless of their political or religious persuasion.

Every generation has its opportunity to leave a legacy to posterity; our time has come; our people must stand up and be counted; they must state clearly and unequivocally the kind of society they want. With unity of purpose and the determination and courage which are the hallmarks of our character we can go forward. It is dangerous to dally any longer at the crossroads and the way ahead lies straight and true. Our generation has the opportunity for greatness; we must seize that opportunity so that our children and heirs will look back with gratitude and affection to the men and women who did indeed lay the foundations of a just and progressive society in our land.

It has been the primary cause of all our most fundamental troubles. The Union is in the best economical and social interest of all citizens of the state. It also upholds British standards of democracy and social justice.