



Northern Ireland

What the Papers say

Issued by

**THE CAMPAIGN FOR SOCIAL JUSTICE IN
NORTHERN IRELAND**

Castlefields. Dungannon.

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In the Northern Ireland town of Dungannon, a doctor's wife, Mrs. Patricia McCluskey, appalled by the plight of the homeless of her area denied housing by a Unionist local authority, formed The Campaign for Social Justice, in an attempt to awaken men's consciences and bring to the light of day the sordid party politics of a group of people elected undemocratically and whose sole aim would seem to be the denial of fundamental human rights to the majority of the citizens of the area they control. Nationalists make up 53% of the population, but elect seven out of the twenty-one members to the local council. This is achieved by a denial of the principal of "**one man one vote**" which is enjoyed by all the people of Britain and the remainder of Ireland. The denial of this principle can stultify political growth : because by continuing to deny some citizens housing, the necessary "property qualification" automatically disfranchises the people in question and keeps them in a political vacuum, without voice. If the case of Dungannon seems to merit attention, consider the City of Londonderry, which has a 67% Nationalist majority but still returns a Unionist Council. Need we say more !

Recently two well-known Catholic figures in our community — who are not directly associated with us — made a futile attempt to break through the barrier of injustice which is so chronic that even the local, very powerful Unionist newspaper "The Belfast Telegraph" felt compelled to highlight the state of affairs. They felt that concessions should be made to the minority, if not on humanitarian grounds, then on the basis that the failure to do so would tarnish Northern Ireland's reputation abroad. Recently Nationalist representatives crossed over to Westminster in the hope of persuading the British Government to bring some pressure to bear on the Northern Ireland authorities. The British Prime Minister, Sir Alec Douglas-Home, refused to receive them. If it had not been for the interest of the Labour and Liberal parties and their representatives in Parliament, the Nationalists' case for justice would not have been heard. However, a number of influential people in political circles did hear a statement of the case, and we believe this has done a great amount of good by focusing some attention on Northern Ireland and its affairs.

The minority in Northern Ireland believe they have a substantial body of moderate Protestant opinion behind them in their appeal for justice. Indeed the Catholics and nationally-minded people have as one of their most ardent supporters in their plea for justice, the stout-hearted and liberal-minded Protestant clergyman, the Rev. McElroy.

We feel that if our cause is to succeed, and it must succeed, we must draw the attention of all men of goodwill to the existing state of affairs in Northern Ireland.

We trust you will bring your indignation to the notice of the British and Northern Ireland Governments and public opinion in the hope that the force of your opinion may change the current state of affairs.

The reason we seek to involve the British people in our problems is this:

When Ireland was divided in 1920 the Parliament of Westminster, by the various provisions of "The Government of Ireland Act", retained supreme authority over the Northern Ireland Government in Belfast. All power vested in this latter Government was delegated to it from Westminster, which retains to this day the power to intervene at any time on any matter.

If through publicity we could procure what must surely be the very reasonable achievement of universal adult suffrage **in local or regional government** then our position would be immeasurably enhanced. Our people could then begin to have allocated to them their fair share of housing built with public funds. As the law now stands deprivation of housing offends not alone against basic human rights but also limits the voting and therefore the political power of our people in their own community.

Similarly pressure of British opinion, properly directed, could force the Government here to ensure that the minority get public employment at least in fair proportion ; and could ensure the removal of any bias against Nationalists and Catholics because of their political or religious convictions, a fundamental human right enshrined in the Declaration of Human Rights of the United Nations.

THE FOLLOWING ARE A NUMBER OF PRESS COMMENTS

“The political regime in this part of the United Kingdom is far from guiltless in the matter of religious discrimination. By a shrewd manipulation of electoral boundaries, the Unionist regime retains a strong majority in the autonomous Parliament in Belfast”.

(*Le Monde* — Paris — February, 1964)

“Unless the discrimination issue is faced honestly there can be no worthwhile future either for Protestant or Catholic in Northern Ireland. There is a clear and conclusive evidence that some Unionist controlled local authorities allot houses on a religious basis”.

(*Manchester Guardian* — Mr. C. E. B. Brett, former chairman Northern Ireland Labour Party — March, 1964)

“All the evidence goes to show that the allegation of discrimination on Government appointed bodies is justified up to the hilt.

<i>Body</i>	<i>Present Total Membership</i>	<i>No. of Catholic Members</i>
Northern Ireland Housing Trust	7	0
National Assistance Board	5	0
Northern Ireland Hospitals Authority	23	3
Northern Ireland General Health Services Board	24	0
Northern Ireland Economic Council	16	0

(*Manchester Guardian* — Mr. C. E. B. Brett)

“The crisis is that the Government, for all its brave new ideals, carries a millstone of old prejudices and fears and makes hardly an attempt to gain its intellectual freedom.

“The Unionist party in turn stands in increasing danger of presenting a face more anti-Catholic than pro-British”.

(*Belfast Telegraph* Editorial — April 3rd, 1964, a Unionist Evening Paper)

“After nearly half-a-century of partition, Ulster boundaries are still gerrymandered, housing is still allocated on a political basis, and religious prejudice still influences public appointments. The tone is set from the very top members of the Ulster Government”.

a British Paper)

(*The New Statesman and Nation* — January 3rd, 1964,

“If Unionists are not determined to eradicate discrimination on Christian and humanitarian grounds, they should at least accept the narrower argument that an intensification of the Nationalists campaign could gravely tarnish Ulster’s reputation”.

(*Belfast Telegraph* — 17th January, 1964, a Unionist evening paper)

“No country deserves the Government you have here. This is the only place in the world you cannot report honestly without silly people kicking up about what is only the truth”.

(Alan Whicker — International reporter of The British Broadcasting Corporation — 25th January, 1964, reported in *Belfast Telegraph* that date)

“If we are going to employ people we should give the preference to Unionists. I am not saying we should sack Nationalist employees, but if we are going to employ new men, we should give preference to Unionists”.

(Senator Barnhill — January 6th, 1964)

“Our ignorance about Northern Ireland is astonishing. Some of us have been there and experienced this atmosphere of distrust, discrimination, plotting and hate. The silence in England about conditions in Ulster almost amounts to criminal negligence. Events in recent weeks have shown there is something radically wrong in Northern Ireland, and it is time something was done about it”.

(Martin Ennals — *Tribune*, Official Labour Organ — February 7th, 1964)

“In most parts of Britain people are awarded the keys of a council house for very good reasons.

“They have been living in a slum in over-crowded conditions, they have large families, they have been waiting a long time, or they have medical recommendations.

“All sound reasons, based on NEED.

“But I found a town last week where another factor is put away ahead of those reasons — RELIGION.

“I regret to report that, if you want a house in the town of Dungannon, Co. Tyrone, your chances will depend to a great extent on what church you belong to”.

(Ken Graham, *The People*, London — 20th October, 1963)

“We criticise South Africa, but are we sufficiently without sin ourselves to cast stones ?

“Two Nationalist members of Enniskillen Council walked out of a committee meeting because every one of the eighteen houses in a ward was allocated to a Unionist on party vote.

Mr. Cahir Healy, M. P., telling me of the happening, adds : 'We have public housing estates in which the tenants are segregated into Catholic and Protestant communities. Doesn't criticism of South Africa sound a little hypocritical in face of that ?'

“It does”.

(John Gordon — *Sunday Express* — 20th October, 1963)

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None of the above quotations are from sources that could be described as biased in our favour : indeed in many instances the opposite point of view could be held. We think this fact adds point to our argument, and lends support to our case,

May we conclude the statement by reference to a further illustration from a similar source — “The Northern Ireland Problem”- (Barritt and Carter, Oxford University Press, 1962).. After analysing population statistics in detail, and producing figures in support of this analysis about the chronic emigration of Catholics from Northern Ireland, the author concludes : —

“that emigration is just about sufficient to drain off the excess births in the Catholic community, and keep the population of Protestants and Catholics almost stable ; they are in fact very close to the levels at which they stood at the foundation of the state forty years ago. Thus the difference in economic opportunity is a regulator maintaining the status quo”.

Note : The Catholic minority to-day in Northern Ireland numbers about one-third of the total population, but has 48% of the children.

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This then is a statement of the Northern Ireland position to-day. You appreciate our needs. Possibly you can help, perhaps in ways not even considered by us. We trust you will try. You may influence some business projects to move into our community, especially to the most needy sections — inevitably populated by Catholics and Nationalists. Whatever way you use your influence, whether it be in some direct way, or indirectly by bringing the light of publicity to bear on our case, it will benefit our whole community.

SUBSCRIPTIONS TO HELP OUR CAUSE GRATEFULLY RECEIVED