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Note:

Mr. John Hume M.P. informed me in strict confidence yesterday that plans are going ahead for the creation of a new Opposition party in the Six Counties. The founding members are the three Independent M.P's (Hume, Cooper and O'Hanlon), Mr. Gerry Fitt (Republican Labour), Mr. Austin Currie (Nationalist) and Mr. Paddy Devlin (Northern Ireland Labour Party). If this succeeds it will be a most important political development as a "coalition" including Hume, Fitt and Currie will be very strong indeed and should eventually attract other Opposition M.P's.

The general ~~composition~~ ^{orientation} of the new party is left of centre. It will be called the Social Democrat and Labour Party - the latter word in deference to Fitt and Devlin.

Hume asked me to convey to the Taoiseach and the Minister his assurance that, notwithstanding the necessary inclusion of the word Labour in the name of the party, there will be no connection between it and the British, Irish and Northern Ireland Labour parties. He is anxious that the Taoiseach and the Minister should know this in advance of any announcement of the formation of the new party but he is very anxious that no word of its creation should leak out in advance.

In regard to the ^{N.I. Civil Rights Assocn} (NICRA), Hume informed me that an attempt was made by the moderates lead by Dr. Con McCluskey to have a resolution passed last Saturday night cutting the connection with the National Association for Irish Justice (Brian Heron's group) but the attempt failed.

Generally speaking Hume is satisfied ^{that} with the situation in the North ~~and it~~ is considerably less tense now than it was ten days ago.

A.G.
16 Feabhra 1970