

NATIONAL ARCHIVES

IRELAND



Reference Code: 2005/151/664

Title: Letter received by Paddy Harte, TD, from the Assistant Editor of the Derry Journal in relation to concern felt by the Catholic nationalist minority in Northern Ireland at the attitude of the Irish Government to the Northern Ireland question, referring to the victory of the United Ulster Unionist Council [in the 1974 general election to Parliament in Westminster] and fears of discrimination if Unionists are 'given a free hand'. Also refers to a speech by CC O'Brien [Dr Conor Cruise O'Brien, TD, Minister for Posts and Telegraphs] that will 'reinforce the worst Catholic fears'.

Creation Date(s): May 1975

Level of description: Item

Extent and medium: 2 pages

Creator(s): Department of the Taoiseach

Access Conditions: Open

Copyright:

National Archives, Ireland. May only be reproduced with the written permission of the Director of the National Archives.



26, Shendon Park, — **DERRY**.
Monday.

Dear Paddy,

As you doubtless know, the general attitude of the Coalition Government to the Northern Ireland question has been causing concern among the northern minority. With the victory of the UUUC (which you may remember I confidently predicted to you in a fairly recent phone talk) the resolution of the Dublin government not to abandon the minority in the north may well mean the difference between life and death for many. It is as grave as that.

Unfortunately the election showed what we had feared--that there is little will among the Protestant majority for conciliation, but an overwhelming will and determination to achieve the complete domination that led to the outburst of violence in 1969. They have learned nothing from six years of trouble!

The SDLP well realise that they cannot depend one hundred per cent on the British standing up to the victorious UUUC, and that there is quite a possibility of the British going back on their stand on power-sharing.

The question for the Dublin Government, and the Twenty-six Counties people is-- in the event of the minority being abandoned by the British to the re-establishment of a Protestant Parliament for a Protestant people, with extremists like Paisley, West, and Craig in power, what will the Irish Government, and what will the people of the Republic, do?

It is, perhaps, the most devastating criticism of both Government and people, that the minority in the north now feel that nothing will be done to defend them from a new regime of pogrom and discrimination.

2.

That belief is shared by the extremist Unionist leaders, particularly by William Craig, who has expressed that opinion in private talks with certain people. He believes that the Unionists, given a free hand, can "deal" with the Catholic "rebellious" minority, and that they can build up northern security forces strong enough to frighten the Republic from any attempt to interfere.

In other words, the UUUC believe that there is no such thing as a "Dublin deterrent" and that they can literally get ~~any~~ away with anything against the Catholic minority, once they have called the British bluff and wrung from a Britain unwilling to get more involved here, a reluctant but nevertheless real agreement to Protestant rule.

In this grim context the speech at the week-end of C.C.O'Brien will only reinforce the worst Catholic fears, further encourage the Protestant belief in the "no intervention in any circumstances from the South" theory of Craig.

I hope that Mr. O'Brien can sleep easily with his conscience after this latest ludicrous intervention into the situation.

Yours sincerely,

Stewart

P S. The Government in Dublin should realise that a British climb-down to the Protestant extremists will inevitably and tragically lead to a swing towards the Provos by large sections of the Catholic population, with violence of a far greater scale than has been seen yet. Yes, Dublin bears a big responsibility.