

# NATIONAL ARCHIVES

## IRELAND



<b>Reference Code:</b>	2013/100/1054
<b>Creation Date(s):</b>	6 December 1983
<b>Extent and medium:</b>	5 pages
<b>Creator(s):</b>	Department of the Taoiseach
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*Mr. Waddy* *D. McCarthy* *Ken. Thorne*  
*These are some interesting points*  
*at present* *8/12/83*  
Visit to Northern Ireland, 29-30 November 1983

I accompanied Mr. Sean Gaynor, Ambassador designate to Canada, on a visit to Northern Ireland on 29 and 30 November. The following are some of the main points made by those we met.

Cardinal Tomas Ó Fiaich

Cardinal Ó Fiaich expressed the view, which was also expressed to us by others, that the killing of the three Pentecostals won't necessarily reduce support in the community for Provisional Sinn Fein. He repeated the view which he has made public on occasions that a vote for Provisional Sinn Fein at the Westminster election was not necessarily a vote in support of violence. Provisional Sinn Fein attracted support from a large number of people within the minority community who are frustrated at the failure of the SDLP to deliver. It is also supported by those who believe that a more nationalist approach than that of the SDLP is required.

The Cardinal described the present situation as "very dark". In some ways an event like the killings at Darkley brings about restraint for a while because people are horrified by what has happened. He hoped that restraint would follow on this occasion particularly as a large number of people seemed to realise that the communities in Northern Ireland are at the brink. In some senses the killings have brought the Churches closer together and he thought the visit of the four Church leaders to the relatives of those killed at Darkley was something which had not occurred in the past and which has had a very positive effect within the community. He claimed (and his claim is shared by some Presbyterians) that he in particular got a very good welcome from the relatives. He explained this by stating that the three Pentecostals were lapsed Presbyterians and that their relationship to the Presbyterian Church is not dissimilar from that of lapsed Catholics to the Catholic Church. The Cardinal said that the initiative for the visit came from himself and he thought it appropriate that it should be those who carried out the killings claimed to be Catholics. He said he had no difficulty convincing the Church of Ireland Archbishop of Armagh, Dr. Armstrong, to join him. Both the Presbyterian Moderator and the President of the Methodist Church were a little more hesitant but agreed to join in. The Cardinal was well aware that because of the structure of the Presbyterian Church and of the dependence of the individual Presbyterian Minister on the goodwill of his congregation it was more difficult for a Presbyterian to join in on such an occasion. He added that had either Mr. Craig or Mr. Girvan, both of whom were Moderators within recent years, been Moderator on this occasion, the joint visit would not have taken place. There are similar constrictions in some instances on Methodist clergy and the Cardinal mentioned that the Methodists in Portadown were particularly hard and that the Methodist Minister in Portadown occupied high office in the Orange Order.

The Cardinal spoke very highly of Seamus Mallon, who has condemned murder from whatever quarter it has come. He also thought highly of Mr. Mallon as a politician, and of his political views. He was pleased that Ken Magennis and

Jim Nicholson, both OUP MPs at Westminster, had made a call for Loyalists not to take revenge for the Darkley killings.

Mr. Seamus Mallon

Mr. Mallon was very depressed about the situation following the Darkley killings. He did not think that Provisional Sinn Fein would be damaged in any way by these killings and he saw the prospects of unification fading rather than getting better. He referred on a number of occasions to the speeches made by Adams in recent times which he thought were very well written. He claimed that Adams could not himself write such speeches and said it was his guess that they were being drafted by Fr. Des Wilson.

He very much welcomed the condemnation by Ken Magennis and Jim Nicholson of the sectarian murder of a Catholic and said that such a condemnation was new and had not occurred in the past. He did not think that the OUP would find it possible to go back into the Assembly given the reasons they gave for abandoning it. To go back in would be an admission that the Government's security policy is working and they would find it almost impossible to make such an admission. He thought Taylor rather than McCusker would get the OUP nomination for the European elections.

He was clearly horrified by the murder of Councillor Armstrong in Armagh. He had approached the OUP since the murder and said that he would ensure that they would get SDLP support for either of the candidates they had in mind to replace Councillor Armstrong as council chairman provided they met two conditions. These were that he would have an opportunity to see the minutes of council meetings before they were submitted to the council and that they would agree that if a contentious issue were to be raised they would mention it to him beforehand. The leader of the OUP on the council said that he thought these conditions would be acceptable to the OUP and would come back to him when he had discussed the matter with his colleagues.

Mr. Mallon was very critical of John Hume for visiting the United States at this time. It was the wrong time to be away given the debate on 1 December in the House of Commons on an OUP motion which would alter the basis of the Assembly effectively to dispense with the required cross community support. A further factor was the security situation at the moment. He thought that Hume would have no difficulty retaining his European seat. He would probably get in on the first count but if not would no doubt get a large number of Provisional Sinn Fein transfers. Mallon said that he would continue to speak out on security matters despite his worries about his own safety and that of his family. He was clearly very preoccupied about his future.

Mr. Mallon had seen the various references in the Press to possible differences between the police forces on both sides of the border. He said that he had a high regard for Sir John Hermon, the RUC Chief Constable. It was he who had brought to an end the ill treatment of suspects in Castlereagh and who is trying to ensure that those sectarian elements in the security forces are neutralised to the greatest possible extent. Mr. Mallon thought that if he were to resign his replacement would be unlikely to be as fair a man.

Joe Hendron

We met Dr. Joe Hendron, Mr. Pascal O'Hare, and Jim O'Callaghan in Belfast. Mr. Hendron agreed with what others told us that the Darkley killings had not damaged Provisional Sinn Fein. Those killings were not the first commission of sacrilege. A number of Catholics had been killed coming out of Mass and Catholic churches had been bombed.

Mr. Hendron stressed that there is now no solution within Northern Ireland. He spoke at length about what he would like to see emerge from the Forum. There should be but one report and no more than one proposed solution within that report. It would be a disaster if there was more than one report and he saw no purpose in having more than one option. The agreed way forward should be for Irish unity in broad terms. He said he had grave doubts about the usefulness of proposing joint sovereignty/joint administration. The Unionists would respond no more positively to proposals on joint sovereignty than they would to proposals for Irish unity. It would be best in these circumstances if the solution proposed by the Forum was some form of Irish unity. There is no hope for the Northern Ireland Assembly nor does he have any real hope that Jim Prior can produce anything which would be acceptable to the minority community. It is up to the South to make the necessary breakthrough and in making proposals more consideration should be given to the Nationalist community and less to the Unionists.

Pascal O'Hare said that they had met Peter Archer, the new British Labour spokesman on Northern Ireland and had repeated to him the reasons why they could not go into the Assembly. Northern Ireland is a failed political entity. There is no solution within Northern Ireland which would satisfy Irish nationalism. The question of consent was exaggerated. Nationalists had never been asked if they wanted to give their consent to Northern Ireland. Mr. O'Hare said that the Chief Justice Lowry had some weeks ago "bent the law". Mr. O'Hare said he had withdrawn from the Diplock Courts as a result and will no longer participate in cases before those Courts. (He was not prepared to give me the details of why he had withdrawn but the issue must have been a very serious one given Mr. O'Hare's large practice heretofore in the Diplock courts). Both Pascal O'Hare and Mr. O'Callaghan referred to a number of recent cases where Catholics in the Northern Ireland Civil Service were either refused promotion or were harrassed by their fellow Protestant Civil Servants because they were Catholics. Mr. O'Callaghan mentioned in particular that eight Catholics had within recent weeks resigned from the Civil Service in Banbridge because of such harrassment.

Rev. Sidney Callaghan

Mr. Callaghan was more pessimistic than usual about the possibilities for reconciliation within the island. He seemed to be particularly depressed by the Darkley killings and by the results of the recent referendum. He saw no hope at present that the Catholic community in Ireland could make the changes necessary to attract an increasing number of Protestants towards positions of reconciliation.

Alliance Party

Oliver Napier and John Cushnahan of the Alliance party met us on the second day. They had met with Mr. Archer the previous day. They said that the leader of the Labour Party, Neil Kinnock had appointed Archer as opposition spokesman on Northern Ireland because he doesn't want to do anything about Northern Ireland. They thought that Archer was slightly right of centre in Labour party terms, well intentioned but naive and impressionable. They thought it possible that he would eventually speak with Provisional Sinn Fein. A clear message from the Dublin Government that they would not take kindly to a meeting between the Labour party spokesman and Provisional Sinn Fein would, in their view, have an effect and would probably result in no such meeting.

They could see no logical reason, given the reasons for the OUP withdrawal from the Assembly, why the OUP should return to that Assembly. However, politics in Northern Ireland did not always follow a logical course and in practice the OUP might re-enter. However, they would give it no more than a 50-50 chance. They said that ten of the twenty four OUP members of the Assembly wanted to rejoin the Assembly. The four who had organised the withdrawal of the OUP were Molyneaux, McCusker, Smyth and McCartney. The OUP are in a triumphalist mood at present but in time the Falklands factor will disappear and if a retrenchment of British nationalism comes about then the OUP, which lays stress on the connection with Westminster, could be in serious difficulties.

The mood in the Protestant community is very dark. A large number of RUC men, many of them in very exposed positions, have been killed. This series of killings culminated in the killing of Councillor Armstrong and of the Penticostalists at Darkley. The OUP missed its chance when Councillor Armstrong was killed to withdraw from the Assembly. They were provided with another opportunity after the Darkley killings and took it.

Mr. Napier said that movement in Britain is towards withdrawal and he feels it is continuing that way. In his view there is a declining commitment in Britain to Northern Ireland. He is not worried about the influence of the young liberals within the Liberal party and claimed that he had an agreement with the leader of that party, David Steel, which would ensure that young liberals on future delegations to Northern Ireland would be of a type more amenable to the Alliance party and less amenable to Provisional Sinn Fein.

Mr. Napier claimed that Mr. Prior must have known that three of the four political parties in Northern Ireland would have refused his invitation to meet him on security. He did it out of frustration and out of a need to protect his flank in Britain. Mr. Napier's main worry was not that the Provisionals had attracted the traditional abstentionist vote in Northern Ireland but that they are now attracting a large number of the young and that they have built up an organisation which will enable them to maximise this attraction.

Mr. Napier repeated Mr. Cushnahan's views (as reported previously by Mr. Burke) on the differences between himself and David Cook. He said that the visit to Dublin, by Cook and Glendenning, and the latter's submission to the Forum, should be seen more in the way of a takeover bid than of a sincere effort to assist the Forum.

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Daithi O'Ceallaigh  
6 December, 1983

cc. P&M

PS

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