



An Chartlann Náisiúnta
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Section 1.2

Commentary on statements since Declaration was published

Introduction

On 15 December Albert Reynolds and John Major announced the completion of months of negotiations between the two governments. The resulting Downing Street Declaration was accompanied by brief statements on the Declaration from the two leaders. Within hours of the launch they had returned to their respective legislatures to seek endorsement of the document. The public statements by Major, Reynolds and the broader cabinet members of both governments has since then seen growing differences between both governments on not only the actual meaning of significant and substantial parts of the Declaration but in its stated objectives.

The Secretariat of the Peace Commission believed that some comment on this process was necessary because one, many of the submissions made reference to not only the Declaration but the public statements on it and secondly the announcement by British Secretary of State Patrick Mayhew that he and other ministers would clarify through their public speeches the British cabinet's interpretation of the meaning of the Declaration.

Commentary December 1993 to end January 1994

Launching the Declaration John Major stated that it "closes no door except the door of violence and illegality". The same day while addressing the House of Commons, Major said on the Declaration that "What is not in the Declaration is: Any suggestion that the British government should join the ranks of the persuaders of the value or legitimacy of a united Ireland; that is not there;

"Nor is there any suggestion that the future status of Northern Ireland should be decided by a single act of self determination by the people of Ireland as a whole; that is not there either;

"Nor is there any timetable for constitutional change;

"Or any arrangements for joint authority over Northern Ireland.

"In sum, the Declaration provides that it is – and must be for the people of Northern Ireland to determine their own future."

Albert Reynolds address to the Leinster House deputies contained no such constraints. Reynolds asserted that "for the first time ever, the right to self-determination of the people of Ireland is acknowledged subject only to the question of consent". He said "there is no unionist veto, only the requirement for the consent of a majority".

Reynolds also said that "the road is open on one hand to a united Ireland if it can be achieved by unity and consent". Reynolds maintained that we should not "set rigid preconditions". In the Six-County Sunday Life Newspaper, 19 December 1993, Major, in an article he wrote, reaffirmed his "personal commitment to the union". He also wrote that the Declaration did "not undermine Northern Ireland" but "reaffirms the constitutional guarantee". On the same day Reynolds while being interviewed on RTE's Farrell programme said that "there was a constitutional onus on him to pursue unity".

On 26 December 1993, Reynolds in a statement said that the Declaration did "not attempt to provide a comprehensive political settlement. On 2 January, Reynolds followed this with his statement calling for a demilitarisation of the conflict. This was a potentially significant statement given his December 13 assertion that "violence comes from both communities in Northern Ireland and indeed from the security forces in Northern Ireland". Reynolds also said that the Declaration made both governments "persuaders" for a new agreement on the future of Ireland.

Writing in the *Belfast Newsletter* on 4 January 1994 Major stated that those who read the Declaration will find "that the interests of all communities are fully recognised and protected". On the same day Patrick Mayhew said that the British government was committed to encouraging agreement among "all those involved. That is why we shall continue urgently to pursue the talks process which seeks such agreement, but we have made it clear we will not join the ranks of the persuaders for a particular

outcome". However the following day Dick Spring insisted that the Declaration did address the issue of Britain's recognition of the right to self determination "based on consent and persuasion".

Sinn Féin president, Gerry Adams announced on the same day his intention to write to John Major to seek clarification on the Declaration. Four days later, 9 January speaking on the BBC's Breakfast with Frost television programme, John Major again rejected Sinn Féin's call for clarification, repeating his claim of a week earlier in another BBC interview that "there was nothing more to tell". He told Frost that Republicans were trying to muddy the waters and were seeking to effectively enter negotiations without ending violence.

On 10 January, while addressing the Irish Association in Dublin, Albert Reynolds stated that his government would give "continuing clarification" of the Declaration. Mr Reynolds also emphasised that "there will be no surrender on any side, loyalist, republican or by the British and Irish governments and surrender terms are not acceptable to any side".

This seems to be in conflict with Patrick Mayhew's January 8 assertion that "there was no need for further clarification of the document" He said "If you get into the country of interpreting, putting qualifications on, putting glosses on, and so on....then that inevitably becomes a continuing process".

Both: Patrick Mayhew and Albert Reynolds made keynote speeches on 20 January.

Mayhew speaking in London seemed to directly contradict John Major's Commons statement on the day of the signing on the Declaration. Mayhew said that "No outcome is ruled out. We accept a binding obligation to introduce the necessary legislation to give effect to any measure of agreement on future relationships in Ireland". Even though Mayhew said that "the outcome cannot be predetermined" He also reiterated the promise of a constitutional guarantee and said that all this depended on "the democratic wish of a greater number of people of Northern Ireland".

Parallel to this Mayhew then said "Another golden thread is self determination. In any territory containing a mix of different traditions and national

aspirations this is a difficult and complex concept". He said "we believe the Declaration gets it right. A huge range of submissions felt that this was not the case and that the Declaration had fudged the issue of self determination. Mayhew then quoted a section from paragraph four of the Declaration. He said

"The British government agrees that it is for the people of the island alone, by agreement between the two parts respectively, to exercise their right of self determination on the basis of consent freely and concurrently given, North and South, to bring about a united Ireland if that is their wish".

Mayhew's next assertion that "this is not about coercion, nor any power to impose a veto. It is about founding a resolution of our troubles upon the principles of agreement, consent and democracy" seems to conflict with his earlier statement in the same speech that any outcome depended only on the "democratic wish of a greater number of people of Northern Ireland". This apparent conflict of meaning was highlighted by many submissions to the Commission and remains unresolved.

Reynolds speech given the same day also addressed the question of national self determination and the question of the unionist veto. Reynolds claimed that "The Irish peace initiative from its inception has been based on a balance between Britain's recognition of the Irish people's right of self determination and my acceptance, on behalf of the Irish government that the democratic right of self determination by the people of Ireland as a whole must be achieved and exercised with the agreement and consent of the people of Northern Ireland". Reynolds went on to say that "we should recognise that the people of Northern Ireland have the right to determine by a majority whether they wish to stay with Britain or join a sovereign united or agreed Ireland".

Here the two governments seem to have an agreed interpretation with a tacit recognition by Reynolds of the unionist veto. There was little mention of the democratic rights of the minority nationalist community in either speech. This again was stressed in many submissions.

Speaking the following day in a Commons debate Mayhew returned to the three public themes

which the British government had consistently stated since the Declaration was launched. These were first, the refusal to give clarification to Sinn Féin, (many submissions thought that Sinn Féin should get the clarification they requested". Secondly Mayhew reaffirmed that the Declaration offered "real assurance to unionists and told nationalists that Britain no longer had any colonial or strategic ambitions in the Six Counties and that the peaceful aspiration to a sovereign and united Ireland was now a fully legitimate one".

Commentary on February 1994

The beginning of February was dominated by the visit of Sinn Féin President Gerry Adams to the United States. However a claim by Ulster Unionist leader Jim Molyneux that he had "neutralised" proposals by Dublin in the formulation of the Declaration was denied by both Governments. Molyneux's comments were in an interview in the Scotsman newspaper on Monday 1 February. A Dublin Government spokesperson stated the paragraphs addressing unionist fears and concerns were "added at the behest of the Taoiseach, Mr Reynolds as a result of his own soundings in the Northern Protestant and unionist community".

The day after the Scotsman interview Patrick Mayhew announced in a Financial Times interview that he was to bring forward new proposals for a political settlement within the next two weeks. Mayhew said he would bring forward fresh ideas for devolved government in Northern Ireland and formal mechanisms for enhancing cross border co-operation.

In a Sunday Times interview at the end of the first week of February, John Major while being questioned about the Declaration said "The Declaration wasn't just a peace offer slapped on the table and left there for a few weeks. It is a foundation stone upon which we will build for as long as it takes to remove the violence".

On the 7 February Reynolds responding to Mayhew's plan to restart the failed talks process said his proposals should not be allowed to interfere with the peace aim of the Declaration. Reynolds said "If we do not stick firmly to the central issue of the declaration, all hope of peace will sink into a morass of side-issues that can only be properly resolved in all round negotiation, after violence has ended".

Reynolds set out the following steps that would follow a cessation of violence. He said that they were the setting up of the Forum for Peace and Reconciliation as soon as possible; the British offer of exploratory dialogue within three months to cover both security questions and full participation in bilateral negotiations; and the beginning of the process of demilitarisation. Mr Reynolds also made reference to the 1985 Hillsborough Agreement which he said "provides important protections for Northern nationalists" and it will "clearly not be abandoned by either government, though it may be eventually transcended".

In mid February Patrick Mayhew gave a major speech to the Association of American Correspondents in London. Mayhew said that there was "no daylight" between the two governments on their commitment to what is contained in the Declaration. In what seemed to a shift in the British position, Mayhew said that the British and Irish Governments "commit themselves to be persuaders for peace and persuaders to agreement on the divided island of Ireland". Significantly he said, "nothing is ruled out", "Only the people of Ireland can decide the form of the agreement". Also in the speech Mayhew said that "We do not have a blueprint or a masterplan to impose. We do not have some private interest that would lead us that would lead us to seek to frustrate any particular outcome". The speech was welcomed by John Hume as a "significant piece of clarification".

Two days later in an Irish Times article, Monday 14 February, Mayhew wrote that self determination "can lead to a range of possible outcomes, one of which could be a united Ireland". On the Declaration itself Mayhew said "To those who are uneasy about certain aspects of the joint Declaration, I would emphasise that it is a balanced document. The interests and aspirations of both main traditions are promoted by it. Inevitably it will contain some expressions with which nationalists on the one hand and unionists on the other, would not easily associate themselves. It does not include everything that each or either tradition would want. That is what accommodating different traditions is all about".

The second half of February was dominated by the Sinn Féin ard fheis and the moves at Westminster

to establish a select committee on Northern Ireland.

On February 23 speaking to the Birmingham University Debating Society. Patrick Mayhew provided another keynote speech on the Declaration. He said that he believed the Declaration was "a balanced and fair statement of constitutional principles and political realities. It acknowledges and safeguards the vital interests of both sides of the community in Northern Ireland".

He also said "The British Government will not seek to coerce the people of Northern Ireland – either directly or, more insidiously, by becoming a persuader for one outcome or another". Mayhew said that the British Government could only be persuaders for agreement.

On local democratic institutions Mayhew said "Too much power is currently concentrated in my hands. I want to see it transferred to local politicians elected by the people of Northern Ireland. But such institutions must command the widespread support of the people of Northern Ireland". He gave no indication of why this was not the case up until now.

In the week just before the Sinn Féin ard fheis, an article by John Major appeared in the *Irish News* of 24 February and was later republished in other papers. He wrote that "Albert Reynolds and I are at one in seeking peace in Northern Ireland. That was why we negotiated the Joint Declaration. It is, for us, a foundation stone, a set of principles which will stand the test of time".

On self determination and Britain's declaration of neutrality, Major said "Let me repeat what it says about self determination, because this has been misrepresented. First the British government had no... 'selfish strategic or economic interest in Northern Ireland'. That doesn't mean that we don't care about it, nor that we don't share the interest of its people in a secure and peaceful future".

He also wrote that "Sinn Féin claims not to understand the place of the Declaration in a peace process. There is nothing obscure about this either, The Declaration is not a peace plan. It certainly isn't a solution on its own. It is simply the view of the two governments about the principles involved in a process leading to an agreed outcome.

"Those central principles are democracy, and an absence of coercion – in other words consent, no outside interference and an end to violence.

"As a first step those principles have to be publicly accepted and acted upon.

Major also wrote on the possible outcome of the talks process which Sinn Féin could get involved in after the three month period. Major said that it would be wrong of him to predict the outcome but but "certain things are plain".

He said that "civil rights must and will be carefully protected. Power must be exercised fairly". He wrote "I expect to see institutions and new relationships reflecting the common interests in the island.....The character and depth of these is very much for discussion". The final input of Major on the proposed talks was to say "the two governments will be building on the close partnership we already have as members of the European Union and as good neighbours in these islands".

Commentary on March and early April 1994

The end of February and the beginning of March saw Major himself travel to the United States, the Ulster Unionists launched their *Blueprint For Stability*. On Friday 4 March 1994, Mayhew reaffirmed the Declaration's statement on the unionist veto. He also addressed the issue of the unionist veto raised by Martin McGuinness in his ard fheis speech. Mayhew said "The two governments agree, and are determined, that it is self determination, in other words democracy, that shall prevail. It is in democracy that we find the supreme concept in which the ideas of national identity can be accommodated. No one should claim a veto to override that". Mayhew described this statement as a vital reassurance to both unionists and nationalists.

In mid March Major and Reynolds issued a joint statement which said "We shall maintain the course we set in the Joint Declaration because it is the right course. It is the course that the people of both our communities support; and there is nothing the men of violence can do to deflect us from it". They also said that "We shall continue, with reinforced vigour and determination our efforts to make peaceful political progress, in consultation with the constitutional political parties in Northern Ireland".

During Albert Reynolds trip to the USA in March, he told journalists that he understood that it was the principle of consent that was causing the biggest problem in the debate within the IRA. He then said "But if it is one of the problems, then I say that that dispute is not with the British government but with the Irish people because over 90% have endorsed the Peace Declaration and have said clearly to everybody that this is the way forward".

The last weeks of March were dominated by the announcement that the IRA were to call a cessation of military operations which they did on 29 March. The cessation generated considerable media coverage.

Two other events in early April deserve comment here. They are John Major's response to a 30 March letter from Gerry Adams and Dick Spring's address to the Local Authorities Members' Association conference in Tralee, Co Kerry on 7 April.

Major's letter said that the issues Adams raised in his letter were fully addressed in the Declaration.

He pointed towards Sinn Féin's failure to renounce violence and said that dialogue with Sinn Féin in the event of a renunciation of violence would have the following purposes.

They were "to explore the basis upon which Sinn Féin would come to be admitted to an inclusive talks process"; "to exchange views on how Sinn Féin would be able over a period to play the same part as the current constitutional parties in the public life of Northern Ireland"; "to examine the practical consequences of the ending of violence".

Dick Spring said that the Declaration "poses a challenge to all sides". He said significantly that "The British connection is unlikely to be ever again available as a contrivance to be used against nationalist neighbours or as a substitute for a just accommodation with them. The Declaration is a guarantee of certain basic rights and principles, but it is also an insistent invitation to the unionist community to direct their political energies to the long overdue task of developing the politics of accommodation rather than denial in terms of their role on the island of Ireland".

Section 2

References to Paragraphs of Declaration

Section 2.1

Introductions

DERRY

There were 39 Submissions in all from Derry, just under 30 of whom presented on the day. The issues that dominated the Derry submissions were the role of national self determination in the Declaration, Sinn Féin's demand for clarification and would the Declaration be a step forward in the peace process.

There was a wide range of community based groups who made submissions. There was within the submissions considerable hope that the Declaration could be a positive step. Most seemed to think that the British had moved significantly, however many submissions questioned the nature of their intentions and wondered would the Declaration lead to future flexibility on their part.

DUBLIN

The Dublin Peace Commission was the second to be held and the tone of the submissions differed substantially from those received in Derry. There were few submissions from community groups community workers or activists. The mix of submissions was hugely diverse. They ranged from ordinary individuals including some INC members making private submissions, trade union members, political groups, well known authors and commentators.

Most of the submissions concentrated on two issues. First was the meaning and possibilities arising out of paragraph 4 and second was a general discussion about the real long term intentions of the British government.

GALWAY

Thirty five submissions were received from Galway, most of them Connacht based. Like other hearings held in the 26 Counties much of the submissions considered paragraph four of the Declaration and the meaning of the different issues raised in it. Again there was much time given to the meaning

of British intent in the Declaration. Submissions raised issues such as the commitment to ending the conflict given by both governments and how this corresponded with other aspects in the Declaration such as the constitutional guarantee and the support for the unionist veto in paragraph four. In many submissions there were questions raised as to the overall balance of the document.

CORK

Only the submissions received into Sinn Féin Head Office had a more diverse nature than the 40 Cork submissions. Despite this, issues raised at other hearings were to the fore in the Cork Submissions. Many people centred on the lack of democracy in the Six County state, the illegitimacy of British claims to sovereignty. Others simply addressed the question of whether the Declaration in itself was a basis for moving forward in a peace process. It was one of the few hearings where submissions disagreed as to the interpretation of self determination and the unionist veto.

BELFAST

32 Submissions in all came to the Belfast peace commission. The submissions covered considerable ground and a range of significant points were raised.

Many of the submissions focused on the role that the constitutional guarantee itself and other assurances to unionists play in the Declaration. There are references to the unionist community in paragraphs 2, 4, 5, 6, 7 and 9 while no assurances are made to the nationalist community. Some submissions felt that the unionist veto specifically mentioned in paragraphs 2 and 4 was an impediment to progress as it prevented the unionist community from engaging in the frank and open discussion stated as necessary in paragraph 8.

There was also as in the Derry submissions considerable comment made on the causes of the conflict. Many of the submissions which addressed this point felt that the British government was responsible for creating the root causes of the conflict but this was not acknowledged in the Declaration. Some submissions felt that this detracted from the Declaration as a whole.

Across the political and social spectrum in the submissions was the emphasis on the need for all embracing dialogue. Some submissions believed that Sinn Féin as of right should be included in any

talks. Some believed that it ultimately depended on a process of demilitarisation that would involve an IRA cessation.

CENTRAL

Some of the most detailed and considered submissions came in the Central category. People had not only addressed the Declaration and the Irish peace initiative but the whole question of structures and detailed assessments of what future arrangements could be. Fifty two submissions were received in all from diverse sources. There were also many submissions from Britain in this group.

Many of the submissions while analysing the Declaration's statements on self determination, the causes of the conflict, the unionist veto etc also took considerable time to address the perceived long-term intentions of the British Government. There was a view expressed in many submissions in this group that the British Government was in fact signalling its long term intention to withdraw. It seemed that in this group many submissions judged the Declaration on not just not the actual text but also on its perceived intent. The Secretariat considered this to be a significant factor.

Section 2.2

Paragraph 1

Declaration text, Paragraph 1

1. The Taoiseach, Mr. Albert Reynolds, TD, and the Prime Minister, the Rt. Hon. John Major, MP, acknowledge that the most urgent and important issue facing the people of Ireland, North and South, and the British and Irish Governments together, is to remove the causes of conflict, to overcome the legacy of history and to heal the divisions which have resulted, recognising that the absence of a lasting and satisfactory settlement of relationships between the peoples of both islands has contributed to continuing tragedy and suffering. They believe that the development of an agreed framework for peace, which has been discussed between them since early last year, and which is based on a number of key principles articulated by

the two Governments over the past 20 years, together with the adaptation of other widely accepted principles, provides the starting point of a peace process designed to culminate in a political settlement.

DERRY SUBMISSIONS

The Lynx project focused on the Declaration's recognition in paragraph 1 that "the most urgent and important issue facing the people of Ireland, North and South, and the British and Irish Governments together, is to remove the causes of conflict, to overcome the legacy of history and to heal the divisions which have resulted".

They asked "does the Declaration recognise the experiences of injustice and that discrimination that the Twinbrook community have suffered over the last twenty five years". Their submission states that the British government is central to the problem. This they believe is not honestly recognised in the Declaration.

Derry Equality in their submission maintained that the root causes of the conflict have been the denial of civil rights and social inequality. They argued that the British government has failed to address these fundamental injustices except with the illusion of activity and cover up.

Seamus Heaney a community worker said in his submission that the Declaration was significant as Britain has effectively recognised that it's failure to agree "a lasting and satisfactory settlement" has been the cause of the ongoing conflict".

Pól O Lochlainn addressed the causes of the conflict mentioned in paragraph one of the Declaration. O Lochlainn believes that the "enforced creation" of the Six-County state is the "well spring of the conflict". He writes "Northern Ireland is an artificial state whose boundaries have no basis in any political cultural, historical or geographical legitimacy".

Creggan Community Care writing on the need for "development of an agreed framework for peace" said that from a Community Care/Social Welfare point of view this is an imperative. They believed that structural violence such as poverty, unemployment etc has caused just as much

devastation as direct violence. They believed that a peace dividend would mean that money now being spent on security could be channelled to health and social services".

DUBLIN SUBMISSIONS

D7, a private submission believed that the paragraph 1 phrase "remove the causes of the conflict" could be "interpreted in several ways". D9, also a private submission believes that the Declaration aims to shift responsibility for the conflict away from the British government onto republicans. D10, another a private submission echoed this point. Matt Merrigan felt in his submission that the British Government should apologise to the Irish people for their wrongs against them.

Cormac Breathnach felt that the Declaration could be a stepping stone towards a just and lasting peace. He wrote in his submission that he felt this Dublin government was more sincere in its approach than any other.

The Trade Unionists for Irish Unity and Independence (TUIUI) welcomed the commitments in paragraph 1 by the two governments.

Kevin Boland writes in his submission that the Declaration "starts brilliantly by proclaiming that the most urgent and important issue is to remove the causes of the conflict". However he points out that "there is no further reference to and no consideration of what these causes are". He believes that no critical comment will be allowed. He believes that the responsibility of the British government in the conflict is not to be raised and that the Irish case "for Justice and Democracy" is "ruled out of any consideration whatsoever.

GALWAY SUBMISSIONS

The Galway Women's right to Choose Group said that the Declaration acknowledges the conflict as the crucial issue, but points out that there is no consensus in the paragraph or in the Declaration as to what the causes of the conflict are.

The Galway Combined Residents Association (GCRA) highlighted causes of the conflict such as human rights abuses, and security force harassment and economic discrimination were "not mentioned or addressed".

Galway INC wrote that "the enormous legitimate grievance felt by Northern nationalists are not addressed". They also felt that the Declaration does not address the causes of the conflict and that this imbalance has to be addressed by both governments.

Women in the Media & Entertainment point out military occupation, British backed unionist domination, the consequent denial of the nationalist ethos, and discrimination and prejudice against nationalists' right to be Irish as the causes of the conflict.

Murty Qualter singled out the phrase in paragraph 1 which mentions the absence of a lasting settlement of relationships between the peoples of both islands". He suspects that this means that the British would bring forward the proposal of a united Ireland within the Commonwealth, a scenario he did not favour.

Brendan Murray singled out partition in his submission as the cause of the conflict. He felt that this was not addressed in the Declaration.

CORK SUBMISSIONS

The Meath Peace group took a different view from the many other submissions which felt that paragraph 1 should have directly addressed the causes of the conflict. They write "This Declaration does not purport to solve the problems of the conflict in Northern Ireland". They believe that "no document could do that".

Councillor Joe Harrington and Pat O'Connor put forward the view in their submission that proponents of the Declaration have centred on the IRA as the cause of the conflict. They argue that an IRA ceasefire will not guarantee peace.

Seán O Ceilleachair felt that there was a conflict between the commitments in paragraph 1 to remove the causes of the conflict and the commitment to the constitutional guarantee in paragraph 2. He writes that "the document continually refers to peace, with little reference to justice". Professor John Maguire in his submission argues that we need to explore our deepest differences as the path to radical change to bring peace and justice. Like many other submissions he feels the solution must involve all of the traditions on the island to define the new Ireland.

Seán Gallagher addressing the causes of the conflict in his submission says that the conflict has an all Ireland dimension and therefore so must the solution. A joint submission from Frank Allen and Peadar Beecher felt that diluting the requirements for a resolution of the conflict will only prolong it. Pat Maloney of Labour Comment says that basic conditions and responsibility for the conflict rests with Britain. He felt that in the absence of a public commitment by Britain to a united Ireland the Declaration was meaningless.

BELFAST SUBMISSIONS

Paddy Doherty said that if paragraph 1 is a demand for an unconditional surrender from the Republican Movement it should be rejected. However he counters this with his belief that Major and Reynolds see the Declaration as stated in paragraph 1 as "the starting point of a peace process designed to culminate in a political settlement". He believes that because Sinn Féin initiated the present peace process Paragraph 1 is then consistent with their policy on peace.

On recognition of the causes of the conflict, an anonymous submission, B7 believed that "the first principle of any analysis on the contemporary situation in Northern Ireland is that it is a colonial conflict" and that the current stand off is a direct consequence of this.

Community worker Frank Dempsey also highlights the causes of the conflict. He believes that the British government does not address the root causes of the conflict – partition. He believes that the Declaration copperfastens partition through the unionist veto.

William Rutherford took a different view in his submission. He argued that both communities shared a responsibility for injustices suffered by both.

Gerry Campbell, a trade unionist, writes in his submission that "the recurring theme throughout the document is that change will only take place with the consent of a majority of people in the state, in other words the Unionist/Protestant majority. In reality this means returning to and supporting the system which created the conflict".

CENTRAL SUBMISSIONS

A detailed submission by Patrick Donnelly believed that the Declaration is an admission by Britain of

their colonial past and that they must as a result now share a responsibility for persuading those who were their colonialists to now join with the Irish people to resolve the remaining issues. However he countenances this with the assertion that the actual causes of the conflict alluded to in paragraph 1 are not defined or discussed.

Rosaleen Murphy writes in her submission that she considers the phrase 'development of an agreed framework for peace' to be "waffle". She writes that "the only authentic framework for peace in this country is a time specified British withdrawal of armed forces and of political control"

The Irish National Congress (INC) submission wrote that the British Government must recognise the legitimate grievances of nationalists and make new arrangements supplementary to the Declaration if necessary.

They said they felt that the fundamental cause of the ongoing conflict is the British government's claim to sovereignty in Ireland

PARAGRAPH 1; SUMMARY

Many submissions highlighted this paragraph of the Declaration, which opens with an acknowledgement from both governments that the "most urgent and important issueis to remove the causes of the conflict". Submissions pointed out that there is no definition or comment on what the actual causes are. They asked do the two governments agree on what actually are the causes of the conflict?

Many submissions felt that there should have more on this issue. Two general concerns were raised that merit consideration. The first was that the cause of the conflict stemmed from partition and the undemocratic Six-County state. Many submissions felt that this should have been recognised in the Declaration. The second concern was that in the context of a peace process, Sinn Féin were initially being asked to either accept or reject the Declaration. Many submissions felt that given a rejection the republicans would then collectively be deemed the sole protagonists of the conflict and felt that this was clearly untrue.

The second element of paragraph 1 that was questioned is the phrase "development of an agreed framework for peace". Submissions said

that nowhere in this paragraph or in the Declaration itself is there any clear statement of what that framework is except to say that it is "based on a number of key principles articulated by the government over the past years".

However many submissions saw paragraph 1 as a hopeful and positive statement, and the Declaration a starting point of the next stage in the peace process.

Section 2.3

Paragraph 2

Declaration text, Paragraph 2

2. The Taoiseach and the Prime Minister are convinced of the inestimable value to both their peoples, and particularly for the next generation, of healing divisions in Ireland and of ending a conflict which has been so manifestly to the detriment of all. Both recognise that the ending of divisions can come about only through the agreement and co-operation of the people, North and South, representing both traditions in Ireland. They therefore make a solemn commitment to promote co-operation at all levels on the basis of the fundamental principles, undertakings, obligations under international agreements, to which they have jointly committed themselves, and the guarantees which each Government has given and now reaffirms, including Northern Ireland's statutory constitutional guarantee. It is their aim to foster agreement and reconciliation, leading to a new political framework founded on consent and encompassing arrangements within Northern Ireland, for the whole island, and between these islands.

DERRY SUBMISSIONS

Many submissions focused on the constitutional guarantees underpinned in paragraphs two and four. The Pat Finucane centre in their submission said that they believed that the Declaration could be a step forward "in starting a genuine and successful

peace process". They cautioned this with the belief that the Declaration itself does not lay the foundations for a lasting peace. One reason for this was the constitutional guarantee, (mentioned in paragraph 2) which they say lies at the heart of the Declaration). This seventy year guarantee, the Pat Finucane centre believes has not brought peace to Ireland. The guarantee is undemocratic as it predetermines "ahead of any peace negotiations, the desired outcome for one section of the community as against another".

Seamus Heaney highlighted the section in Paragraph two which says that ending divisions can only come about through agreement and co-operation. Including this, and other parts of paragraph two which refers to new political frameworks means, according to Heaney, a step forward, as an internal solution is ruled out.

Fr Joe McVeigh referring to the constitutional guarantee wrote in his submission that the Declaration is fundamentally undemocratic as supports the unionist veto. However he did believe that the British government was trying to move towards a more comprehensive settlement.

The Creggan Community Care submission highlighted the section in paragraph 2 which said "the ending of divisions can come about only through the agreement and co-operation of the people" They believed that such agreement would be more effective if it developed from a bottom up grass roots level.

DUBLIN SUBMISSIONS

Kevin Boland described the section on healing divisions and ending the conflict to be "meaningless drivel" as the causes of the conflict are to be ignored.

GALWAY SUBMISSIONS

Joe Neylon wrote that paragraph 2 "basically reiterates the Taoiseach's adherence to Article 1 of the Anglo-Irish Agreement". He felt that even though the paragraph gives a commitment to a new political framework, it essentially "underlines joint support for the Status Quo".

Brendan Murray wrote on Paragraph 2 that "the reaffirmation of N. Ireland's statutory constitutional guarantee is unacceptable". He asks why was the Irish government's

constitutional claim to the island of Ireland as a whole also not reaffirmed.

CORK SUBMISSIONS

J McLaughlin emphasised that the Six Counties is undemocratic in its origins and still is in that the context in which it exists, only represents one tradition.

BELFAST SUBMISSIONS

Paddy Doherty believes that constitutional guarantee in paragraph two is unacceptable to not only republicans but "to all the nationalist people of Ireland".

CENTRAL SUBMISSIONS

Patrick Donnelly asks in his submission "Does the Joint Statement go even further than the Anglo Irish Agreement of 1985 in re-affirming the Unionist Veto?". He also asks "Is the Taoiseach party to this guarantee?". He says the re-affirmation of the statutory constitutional guarantee "tends to make a mockery of the talk of self determination and agreement". He believes that the implications of this agreement must be spelled out in precise detail.

Rosaleen Murphy argues that the Taoiseach "cannot legally affirm the right of the Six Counties to exclude itself from the geographical and political entity of Ireland". She believes that paragraph 2 of the Declaration "gives credence to the artificial make up of the Six Counties".

PARAGRAPH 2; SUMMARY

Many submissions highlighted the conflict in this paragraph between the solemn commitment given by the two governments to "ending a conflict which has been so manifestly to the detriment of all" and the commitment given by both governments to "Northern Ireland's statutory guarantee".

Submissions linked this to paragraph one as this returns to determining the causes of the conflict. Many submissions which addressed this question believed that the positive commitment of the two governments had been constrained by acceptance of partition, which they deemed to be a significant cause of the conflict. Some pointed out that the paragraph seems to reaffirm Britain's claim to sovereignty as in terms of Section 75 of the

Government of Ireland Act and is a restatement of elements of the 1985 Anglo Irish Agreement.

On the whole the majority of submissions felt that the very positive commitments in this paragraph are overshadowed by the reaffirmation of the constitutional guarantee to unionism by both governments.

Section 2.4

Paragraph 3

Declaration text, Paragraph 3

3. They also consider that the development of Europe will, of itself, require new approaches to serve interests common to both parts of the island of Ireland, and to Ireland and the United Kingdom as partners in the European Union.

DERRY SUBMISSIONS

Creggan Community care believed that participation in the European Union could have positive effects.

DUBLIN SUBMISSIONS

A private submission (D6) believed that the international community have a significant role to play in resolving the conflict.

Another private submission (D7) felt that the Declaration admits that the conflict is an international one and not an internal domestic situation.

Seán O Donaile felt in his submission that the assertions in paragraph 3 need to be elaborated on. Kevin Boland felt that this part of the Declaration was an "irrelevant platitude".

BELFAST SUBMISSIONS

The Divis Joint Development Committee believed that even before a settlement is reached "it is imperative that the involvement of international bodies is essential". They saw roles such as brokerage of a peace process and implementation and supervision of an agreed settlement. They also believed that the EU had a role to play in the form of economic assistance.

This paragraph was viewed as neutral statement by Paddy Doherty which outlined the "joint

dependency of Ireland and England in a European context”.

CENTRAL SUBMISSIONS

A private submission from a Fianna Fáil cumann believed that the allusion to the European dimension is of fundamental importance in that the British Government is accepting that its claim to sovereignty over the Six Counties is fundamentally weakened.

PARAGRAPH 3; SUMMARY

Reaction to this paragraph varied from submissions which considered it as a mere filler to those who believed it to be an admission by Britain that the conflict in Ireland had an international context and a purely internal solution was not feasible. Others saw it as a simple recognition that the process of economic, monetary and political union in the EU could have positive impact on the economic and social structures on the island.

However many felt that the paragraph creates the question as to what role would the EU play in a peace process. They asked would it be as arbitrator, or as a monitor of a demilitarisation process? To what extent would the EU financially support new structures that would transcend the current constitutional position in the Six Counties. In general submissions welcomed this paragraph is saying that it creates a positive role for the whole international community to help resolve the conflict.

Section 2.5

Paragraph 4

Declaration text, Paragraph 4

4. The Prime Minister, on behalf of the British Government, reaffirms that they will uphold the democratic wish to a greater number of the people of Northern Ireland on the issue of whether they prefer to support the Union or a sovereign united Ireland. On this basis, he reiterates, on behalf of the British Government, that they have no selfish strategic or economic interest in Northern Ireland. Their primary interest is to see peace, stability and reconciliation established by agreement

among all the people who inhabit the island, and they will work together with the Irish Government to achieve such an agreement, which will embrace the totality of relationships. The role of the British Government will be to encourage, facilitate and enable the achievement of such agreement over a period through a process of dialogue and co-operation based on full respect for the rights and identities of both traditions in Ireland. They accept that such agreement may, as of right, take the form of agreed structures for the island as a whole, including a united Ireland achieved by peaceful means on the following basis. The British Government agreed that it is for the people of the island of Ireland alone, by agreement between the two parts respectively, to exercise their right of self-determination on the basis of consent, freely and concurrently given, North and South, to bring about a united Ireland, if that is their wish. They reaffirm as a binding obligation that they will, for their part, introduce the necessary legislation to give effect to this, or equally to any measure of agreement on future relationships in Ireland which the people living in Ireland may themselves freely so determine without external impediment. They believe that the people of Britain would wish, in friendship to all sides, to enable the people of Ireland to reach agreement on how they may live together in harmony and in partnership, with respect for their diverse traditions, and with full recognition of the special links and the unique relationship which exist between the peoples of Britain and Ireland.

DERRY SUBMISSIONS

On paragraph four of the Declaration the Pat Finucane centre also highlight the point that there is no constitutional guarantee to Six County nationalists. They believe that the principle of national self determination and the unionist veto

cannot co-exist. They said that the British government need to become pro-active on the right of the Irish people to self determination and consent rather than defence of the union. This point was also highlighted in a personal submission from community worker Marie Mulholland who was opposed to the Declaration and believed that it did not "proffer unionists any encouragement to seek new means of addressing their situation.

John Robb in his submission took a different point of view. In common with many other submissions he believes that national self determination is a central issue. He believes that competing claims to national self determination could create a problem. He emphasises that claims to self determination should not be a recipe for majoritarianism, instead emphasising the need for consensus and proposes that the Swiss and US constitutions are worth considering.

Seamus Heaney believes that the British declaration of having no strategic interest etc is "a powerful statement and represents a major shift in the British position". However in regard to the debate on self determination he writes that "The concept of self determination has been redefined to fit the artificial democracy of the Six Counties. He points out that "On the one hand self determination is conceded but is to be determined separately North and South. Just how this is supposed to work is not explained". He believes that this is "curious and contradictory and is an indication of the kind of literary gymnastics required to meet and placate the unionist position".

Terry Robson in his submission echoes this when he writes "At the end of the day, the suggestion that there is the possibility of a reunification of the nation, is superseded by the introduction written by Patrick Mayhew in the publicly distributed version of the Joint-Declaration, when he insists that 'In short, the consent of a majority of the people in Northern Ireland is required before any constitutional change could come about'."

A joint submission from Conal McFeeley and Bert Gallagher also raised the question of national self determination. They ask whether the text in the declaration actually constitutes national self

determination. They say that "if it is for the people of Ireland alone to decided their future, then there is no need for British involvement at all." They said that the challenge for republicans is 'are they happy that self determination has been acknowledged'.

The Lynx project mentioned earlier felt that sections of paragraph 4 are significant, particularly where the British primeminister speaks of a process of dialogue and co-operation based on "full respect for the rights and identities of both traditions in Ireland". They believe that the Declaration portrays this as a conflict "stemming between unionist and nationalist identities". The project felt that lack of respect for their identity has come not primarily from the unionist community but rather from "the British Government itself, its institutions and its armed forces".

It points out that it is the British government who are directly responsible for the malicious and destructive raids, for the harassment, arrest, abuse and threats of violence against the people of the area.

This issue was also highlighted in the submission from Derry Equality who questioned Britain's claimed neutrality. They highlighted both the role of the British security forces in the Six Counties and the system of economic apartheid used against the Irish people. They also stressed the right to economic self determination which has been denied. This they say is "central to achieving a lasting peace".

Des Boyle makes reference to this and says that central to the Declaration "is the idea that Britain has 'no selfish strategic or economic interest in Northern Ireland' He believes that Britain's agenda in Ireland is to ensure that the nation does not achieve economic sovereignty.

The lack of any reference to the "dire economic situation which prevails in both parts of Ireland" was a concern to The Campaign For Decent Wages. They were concerned about the economic strategy of the peace process..

The Campaign For Decent Wages also raised the question of policing. They said that policing is a divisive issue among working class people at the best of times and is potentially explosive at a time of community tension or industrial action. "To

recruit and arm a police force from one section of the community to police another section of the community is nothing short of a calculated insult to the intelligence". They say that "policing did not even get a mention in the Declaration".

Creggan Community Care took an individual point of view on paragraph 4 of the Declaration. They said that they believe "this is the rhetoric of the past and is spurious". They wrote that "preservation of life and peoples standard of living are more important".

DUBLIN SUBMISSIONS

D7, believed that the British neutrality statement outlined in paragraph 4 was a novel position for the British up until the idea of concurrent self determination is proposed at the end of the paragraph. He felt that this raised all sorts of possibilities for future British administrations and that there was a wide amount of interpretation possible of the meaning of this paragraph. Capt James Kelly, chairperson of the United Ireland Forum argued in their submission that if the British statement on neutrality is to have any meaning the British Government must display that it has no interest in remaining in Ireland.

Eamon O Dubhain writes in his submission that the Declaration recognises the right of the Irish people to self determination but it handcuffs that right by asserting that it must be exercised by the people separately. He believes that there can be no consent in such a situation until the British Government joins the ranks of the persuaders.

However Finian McGrath felt that in his submission that the British had moved on the issue of self determination and that the Union had been weakened. He felt that the Declaration was a step in the right direction.

Michael Farrell echoes this belief that the Declaration does mean that the British have moved on the issue of self determination when he says "the Declaration does go further than any previous British government statement". He countenances this by saying that the Declarations' interpretation of this right "effectively postpones it until some time in the future".

D10 asks does the declaration of neutrality in paragraph 4 mean that the British government

intends to disengage. This submission also felt that the "most positive aspect of the Declaration is that it deals with only one possible scenario – national self determination". The submission believes that this "should be confirmed as the only scenario of interest to nationalists and all political discussion should be directed towards that single objective".

Desmond Fennell argued in his submission that the Declaration "does not provide the required recognition of the Irish national right to self determination". He sees the unionist veto as "an extra disabling condition". It is a condition which Fennell says "means that the Northern Nationalists, for the foreseeable future, will continue to be coerced – without right of determining otherwise – into the British state in Ireland".

This is echoed in Ulick O'Connors submission where he addresses the phrase "the people of Northern Ireland" in paragraph 4. He believes that this as used by unionists "implies that they only are the people of Northern Ireland".

Michael Farrell addressed this point in his submission when he writes that the Declaration "says nothing about the position of the nationalist minority in the Northern Ireland area".

Also addressing the unionist veto, Roger Cole of Labour Left said in his submission that there is nothing to encourage unionists who have a veto over any constitutional change to enter into serious negotiations that will address the causes of the conflict and the sectarian privilege that underpins the unionist ideology".

Also on Neutrality, Seán O Donaile writes in his submission that the British commitment is questionable. He asks will the British Government now begin to persuade unionists of the necessity of the dismantling of the Northern State?

On the Unionist veto, O Donaile says it is both illegitimate and undemocratic. The TUIUI submission also felt that the unionist veto is undemocratic and arises from partition. They ask how can the Irish people as a whole possess a right if a minority within that majority are guaranteed a superior right which prevents the majority right from being expressed or realised. They say that the reality of the Declaration is that the right to self determination is being denied without the consent of the majority.

They write that the unionist refusal to consider any

new political arrangements is the main stumbling block to peace and they believe that the British government have a responsibility to play an active role in dealing with unionist opposition to change.

Another private submission D8, points out what it sees as a contradiction in paragraph 4 when it says "we cannot have a united Ireland and partition".

Kevin Boland believes like many other submissions that paragraph 4 is the key item in the Declaration. He holds that it is in this paragraph that the only commitment not in the 1985 Anglo Irish Agreement is contained. That is the British acceptance of the concept of a united Ireland.

GALWAY SUBMISSIONS

"Clearly the most important article from a Republican/Nationalist viewpoint" is how Joe Neylon describes Paragraph 4. He believes that the article means that "the British accept the legitimacy of a united Ireland", even though they studiously avoid favouring such an outcome. He says the important point is that they are not prepared to accept the value of Irish unity.

Clergy For Justice describe paragraph 4 as reinforcing the unionist veto against change. The Galway Women's Right To Choose Group feels that Britain's declaration of neutrality is flawed as all parties do not have equal power in moving the process forward. The basic power rests with Britain they say.

They also felt that the unionist veto does not create the conditions they regard as essential to move the process forward.

The role of Britain was also highlighted by Micheál O Tuairisc in his submission. He believes that the Declaration only offers an opportunity to participate in a process with the agenda set by the British Government and run on their terms.

He also felt that there was a contradiction in the British recognition of self determination that was "subject to the agreement of the majority of Northern Ireland" not of all Ireland.

The submission from the GCRA also found the Declaration contradictory. They welcomed the recognition of the right to self determination but found the unionist veto element of paragraph 4 contradictory.

The contradictory elements of the Declaration was also highlighted by the submission from the Galway branch of the INC. They described it as "profoundly contradictory".

They described the veto as anti-democratic and an insurmountable obstacle to the process of reaching and agreed Ireland. Andy Johnston echoed this in his submission. He feels that the only reason that the British government has conceded to the right of self determination is because self determination is constrained by its support for the unionist veto.

J Mitchell in his submission singled out the phrase "the greatest number" saying that it needs absolute clarification.

Joe McVeigh wrote in his submission that the acceptance of the right of the Irish people to self determination is a step in the right direction. However he also points out that British policy remains the same in that Britain still supports and offers to protect the union.

He felt that the only way the British government can gain credibility is to declare that it is their intention to disengage from Ireland in all shapes and manner. He also felt that the British government had failed to address the issue of its human rights abuses against Ireland.

CORK SUBMISSIONS

Arthur McHugh of Peace '93 recognises in his submission that the right to self determination is qualified. But he argues that "the great majority of the people on this island accept and support this qualification". Mícheál O Loinsigh writes in his submission that Reynolds' actions show that he has moved and what is in the Declaration is as much as you are going to get publicly from the British.

Niall O Cearbhaill argues in his submission that the Declaration asks the national majority to accept the unionist veto as being redefined to take precedence over Irish self determination and the authority of the British parliament.

A joint submission from councillor Joe Harrington and Pat O'Connor puts forward the view that the Declaration legitimises the Northern State which they describe as being intrinsically sectarian, oppressive and undemocratic. They believe that the Declaration gives legitimacy to the position of having two states in Ireland.

This is taken a step further in Richard Behal's submission where he argues that the Declaration is fundamentally flawed because it bases referenda on the artificially contrived 6 and 26 County-states.

John Redington, a Fianna Fáil member argues that the Declaration "by maintaining the unionist veto over change in the constitutional status, cannot on its own lead to a permanent cessation of violence". Seán O Ceillachair in his submission calls on the Irish government to try to persuade the British Government to remove the unionist veto.

The Communist Party (Marxist Leninist) took this a step further when they write that the British Government have no right to determine the affairs of the Irish people. They felt that the recognition of the right to self determination was significant but the British have been backsliding since then.

Seán Gallagher wrote in his submission that the British position has changed as a result of the commitments in paragraph 4. He feels that the British Government has admitted in the Declaration that the Six Counties is not the same as any other part of Britain.

BELFAST SUBMISSIONS

Paddy Doherty believed that paragraph 4 is the critical part of the document. He says that "If it had contained an acceptance of responsibility by Britain" it would have been "an exceptional document". However he believed it was the nearest to a statement of an intention to withdraw that the British government would make.

Liz Groves, a community worker believed the Declaration was flawed, particularly in the case of Britain's claim to be neutral in paragraph 4. This she wrote doesn't fit in with their decision to set up a select committee.

Seamus McAloran, a community activist, says in his submission that unionists are given rights throughout the Declaration while Six-County nationalists are not mentioned even once.

Paragraph 4 is so heavily qualified according to McAloran that it is meaningless. The British government has absolved itself of all responsibility for the conflict.

The Divis Joint Development Committee believes that the central problem is partition and the unionist veto. They argue that the Declaration does not deal with the unionist veto. They said that "we

believe that for any true and sincere attempts to resolve the problems ...the British Government must immediately and publicly remove the existing veto to allow full and frank discussion.

The Falls Community Council argued that Declaration presets the denial of self determination. They write that "The right of the Irish people to national self determination is denied and the unionist veto over the future of the people is further cemented". The Council believed that as long as the veto remains, "the unionist minority will continue to refuse to contemplate new structures for a new society in which everyone will have equal citizenship".

On this issue, the Lower Ormeau Residents Action Group believe that "history and bitter experience have shown nationalists that unionists do not understand the concept of democracy, except in their own narrow terms". They believe that "the only real safeguard is to become part of a greater Irish democracy". Michael Doherty a Belfast community worker making a submission in a private capacity felt on the issue of the unionist veto that "for as long as unionists are guaranteed that veto (unionist) there is no obligation on them to change their policies or for any political progress to be made in the Six Counties and in Ireland as a whole". Gerry Campbell's submission seems to support this view when he writes that the Declaration puts the clock back 20 years, because it removes from the unionists any incentive to find an accommodation with the nationalist community.

Initiative '92 take a different angle and propose that instead of seeking the rejection of the unionist veto Sinn Féin should seek the recognition of a nationalist one, "recognition that both northern communities can reject unacceptable imposed arrangements".

Fr Des Wilson in his submission states that "everyone has a right to be ruled democratically but this has never been conceded by the British to the Irish. He believes that any settlement "which fails to recognise at the outset the right of the people to be ruled democratically will fail". He believes that the British government must explain what they mean by the phrase at the start of paragraph 4 which reaffirms that the British government will uphold the democratic wish of the greater number.

Fr Wilson writes that the British government should state that they would facilitate any substantial political change agreed by a majority. He believes that putting "all the choices" on the table. From this range of options including anything from UDI, a federal Ireland, a united Ireland etc there would be "some hope of compromise and consensus".

A private submission from Belfast (B10), maintained that there is a need for a new transitional arrangement. It maintained that British policy is confused in that one breath they are saying they are supporting the union and in the next they are saying that they are neutral.

The submission makes the point that Britain's two claimed roles of being both an impartial umpire while supporting one side's claim to British sovereignty are incompatible.

CENTRAL SUBMISSIONS

A submission from British Labour Party members (CEN 3) felt that the Declaration was a shift by the British Government towards disengagement and that they have recognised the right of the Irish people to self determination. They highlight the point that there is no explicit reference to the Six Counties in itself having a right to self determination.

They believe that the central question is "how is the right of self determination to be exercised?" They write "Are the British prepared in practice to recognise that the exercise of self determination is a matter for agreement between the people of Ireland?". Michael Parks believes that Major has no interest in Ireland other than in those who favour the union.

Peter Hain MP, believes that though the Declaration had shortcomings it still provided an historic opportunity and "is an undoubted move forward". He says the section on self determination "represents and implicit shift by the British that in the long term at least Unionism has no future".

Arthur Cullen is not so positive in his submission as he feels that within the context of the Declaration only a solution based on the union is possible. He writes "Only on a 32 County basis can the self determination of the entire Irish nation in all its diversity be expressed.

The private submission from CEN 4 felt that paragraph 4 involved a major concession by the British Government. The recognition of the right to national self determination was also a recognition by the British that partition had failed.

An anonymous submission CEN 15, believed that Paragraph 4 means that the Dublin Government has formally recognised the unionist veto and if the British government intends to stay in Ireland, then the Declaration has strengthened their hand.

An extensive submission by Cormac O Dulachain felt that the recognition of self determination was being constrained by the British Government's desire to "set the rules". He felt that the unionist veto was oppressive to Northern nationalists.

However he also writes that the "Joint Declaration does not confer on Northern Ireland the capacity or legitimacy to be a nation on itself". He says that "The Joint Declaration effectively recognises that Northern Ireland is in nation limbo capable of being incorporated in a British or Irish state".

Anthony Coughlan maintains in his submission that if unionists are given a veto then nationalists should also as they are a majority in almost four counties. He also felt in common with many other submissions that the Union had been weakened and that the Declaration was another slow step "in the process of British disengagement from Ireland". This was also echoed by Michael O'Flanagan, who writes in his submission that he thinks that the British Government's will to remain in Ireland has weakened.

Patrick Donnelly describes parts of Paragraph 4 as "Major's nod to Hume-Adams". He believes that clarification is required on whether the Declaration excludes any choices such as joint sovereignty, total integration, a UN or an EU protectorate, a federal Ireland or an independent Northern Ireland. This point is also taken up by submission CEN 15 which argues that clarification is needed to ascertain if the British Government proposes a new constitutional arrangement outside the union. The submission asks, what models are being considered?

Patrick Donnelly also writes that the good points of

Declaration are it "lays down the conditions under which Northern Ireland may leave the Union and become part of the Irish State". He says that "The clear import of this is that London does not regard the Six Counties as an integral part of the British state". He believes that the debate has moved from internal arrangements and security measures to self determination and a sovereign united Ireland.

Patricia Ryan is even more positive and asserts in her submission that the British Government will eventually withdraw as the costs of occupation are too high.

Alan O'Clérigh highlighted in his submission that there were conflicting messages in the Declaration. He felt that conflicting claims to both the unionist veto and national self determination in the Declaration contradicts the Declaration's commitment to a democratic solution. He wrote that it is wrong for the two governments to allude to self determination and then to restrict the exercise of it.

John Crilly's submission also seems to support this view. He felt it was not possible to reconcile the Unionist veto with the balance of paragraph 4. He believes that the Dublin government have now clearly expressed their vested interest in maintaining partition. Aidan McCourt says in his submission that the right of the Irish people as a whole has been "relegated to a partitionist headcount".

Noel Martin, a trade union activist, seems to echo the above point writes in his submission that the Declaration is a "sell-out of the legitimate aspirations of a united Ireland" and that the Declaration is a move to institutionalise the division of our people permanently.

Submission CEN 27 believes that acknowledgment of the right to national self determination is the "pre-eminent principle" of the Declaration. However they argue that it "is a right that is not granted by the British. It is a right that always existed and indeed pre-existed the partition of the island". They point out that the Irish government have agreed that national self determination is to be exercised in a qualified and limited way, ie the unionist veto.

New Consensus write in their submission that the

Declaration "does not give a veto to unionists. It gives a veto to the numerical majority of the people of Northern Ireland". They argue that "the history of Northern Ireland has shown, both traditions have a practical veto on any form of government to which they do not freely agree to give allegiance".

Tom Cullen asks in his submission as to why did both governments not sign paragraphs 4 and 5. He believes that this is contradictory and that the rights outlined by the Taoiseach in paragraph 5 are in conflict with the constraints put on the exercise of national self determination in paragraph 4. This is proof that the Declaration is in fact two documents rolled into one.

He outlined a range of phrases in paragraph 4 on which he said clarification was needed. These included "two parts respectively", "freely and concurrently", "on the basis of consent", "greater number of people", "totality of relationships", "facilitate and enable" and "without external impediment". He argues that these are crucial issues as to whether both governments are reinforcing the unionist veto or is it really an acknowledgment of the right of all the Irish people to determine their own future. He believes that the British Government should be challenged as to what their long term intentions actually are.

The INC Submission echoed similar feelings in their submission. They said that it was positive that the British Government have recognised the right of the Irish people alone to determine their own future. However they felt that the subsequent contradictions are confusing.

They made the point that the aspects of the Declaration which are most favourable to nationalists are couched in terms that are largely rhetorical and consequently fail to translate into concrete proposals.

PARAGRAPH 4; SUMMARY

The amount of submissions which addressed this paragraph showed that this is the most crucial part of the whole document and many submissions believed that it had been carefully crafted to be open to various interpretations.

Most submissions believed that here was evidence of a shift in position by the British government in that they had finally agreed that "it

is for the people of the island of Ireland alone, by agreement between the two parts respectively to exercise their right to self determination". Also singled out as of importance was the declaration by the British government that they "have no selfish strategic or economic interest in Northern Ireland".

Against this many submissions had a problem with the opening statement from the British Government where they reaffirm that they "will uphold the democratic wish of the people of Northern Ireland on whether they prefer to support the Union or a sovereign united Ireland".

The view of many submissions was that the paragraph again contained two conflicting strains. They were the reaffirmation of a veto for the unionist community and the acceptance of the right to national self determination for the people of Ireland.

The submissions raised a number of questions about this paragraph.

(1) How would the British government actually define "a greater number of the people of Northern Ireland"? The reference to a "greater number" could undermine a majority vote for constitutional change if this phrase means an absolute majority of the electorate as against votes cast. How when and under what circumstances is this "greater number" to be determined? This has since been dealt with in the response form the British Government to Sinn Féin's request for clarification.

(2) How far does the constitutional guarantee stretch? In the Declaration the British Primeminister says they seem to mark it out as being solely "on the issue of whether they support the Union or a sovereign United Ireland. Submissions asked where this was the sole extent of the unionist veto or does it cover issues outside what the Declaration describes as the "constitutional guarantee"?

(3) How does the claim of having no selfish strategic or economic interest square with Britain's claim, as reaffirmed in paragraph 2 of sovereignty over the Six Counties. Submissions asked that if Britain has no remaining interests, can it not give legislative effect to this position and repeal the relevant sections of the Government of Ireland Act? Is it possible to for Britain to retain a political interest in the Six Counties? If so what is the nature of that political interest? Britain's constitutional guarantee to the union seems to at variance with

its statement of disinterest.

Many of the submissions welcomed the commitments by Britain to neutrality and self determination for the Irish people contained in paragraph 4. However the text of other parts of the paragraph created considerable confusion as to the actual meaning and intent of paragraph 4 as a whole. Many submissions stated that this confusion detracts from the general positive nature of the paragraph. The fact that the British government makes the exercise of self determination dependent on the wish of the greater number of people in the Six Counties gave people considerable cause for concern. Many submissions believed this was as far as the British Government could state publicly on the subject.

Section 2.6

Paragraph 5

Declaration text, Paragraph 5

5. The Taoiseach, on behalf of the Irish Government, considers that the lessons of Irish history, and especially of Northern Ireland, show that stability and well-being will not be found under any political system which is refused allegiance or rejected on grounds of identity by a significant minority of those governed by it. For this reason, it would be wrong to attempt to impose a united Ireland, in the absence of the freely given consent of a majority of the people of Northern Ireland. He accepts, on behalf of the Irish Government, that the democratic right of self-determination by the people of Ireland as a whole must be achieved and exercised with the subject to the agreement and consent of a majority of the people of Northern Ireland and must, consistent with justice and equity, respect the democratic dignity and the civil rights and religious liberties of both communities, including:

- the right of free political thought;
- the right of freedom and expression of religion;
- the right to pursue democratically

national and political aspirations;

- the right to seek constitutional change by peaceful and legitimate means;
- the right to live wherever one chooses without hindrance;
- the right to equal opportunity in all social and economic activity, regardless of class, creed, sex or colour.

These would be reflected in any future political and constitutional arrangements emerging from a new and more broadly based agreement.

DERRY SUBMISSIONS

Mary Reid, a community activist, points out that the only reference to Six County nationalists in this paragraph. She argues that neither government is prepared to recognise unionist hegemony.

Ainemháire Ni Sheoighe counted 12 references to the reinforcement of the unionist veto in the Declaration. She believes that the Declaration lacks the reassurances sought by the Nationalist community.

DUBLIN SUBMISSIONS

Cormac Breathnach felt that peace process must address the many injustices of the last 25 years.

D6, a private submission emphasised that the Republican Movement should emphasise "its belief in the fundamental and inalienable rights of man and the removal of inbuilt barriers in social and political structures which prevent free expression of those rights".

Seán O Donaille asks how can nationalists take the rights listed in paragraph 5 seriously after all the years of state sponsored discrimination.

GALWAY SUBMISSIONS

Joe Neylon sees this as a positive progressive statement, but emphasises that the paragraph "gives little idea how this negotiation process might be got underway". Clergy for Justice write that "while paragraph 5 of the recognises the right to free political thought it does not guarantee the right to freedom of expression. It offers equal opportunity...but omits freedom of political belief. Thus the way is left open for censorship, political vetting and internment without trial". They believe that the Dublin government should immediately

draft a Bill of Rights guaranteeing civil and religious liberty for all.

The Womens Right To Choose Group asked about paragraph 5, they wondered why is there not a similar assertion from the British government as given by the Irish government?

Brendan Murray makes the point in his submissions that "If this paragraph were applied to the Nationalist community within N.Ireland there would be no need for the Declaration at all as there would probably be no armed conflict".

CORK SUBMISSIONS

Enda O'Riordain feels the commitments by Reynolds in both this paragraph and paragraph 6 is in fact an acceptance by the Irish government of the unionist veto outlined by Major in paragraphs 2 and 4.

BELFAST SUBMISSIONS

The Falls Community Council gave a clear outline of what rights and guarantees they wanted included in a new Ireland. The chief aim of these should be to create institutions "to which everyone can give their allegiance and which guarantees equal treatment to all citizens".

Paragraph 5 according to Paddy Doherty shows how far the Dublin government is prepared to go to "convince unionists of their sincerity". He felt that that unionists would not be able to respond in a positive way while Britain upholds unionist veto.

The Divis Joint Development Committee believed that there must be a bill of rights in the event of an agreement and the principle of secularism must be built into any such agreement.

The Lower Ormeau Residents Association proposed that citizenship can only be "based on equality and only on this basis can a truly pluralist society, which respects the religious and cultural needs of all its citizens be built". They propose that there would have to be equal funding in all areas.

Fr Des Wilson echoed this in his submission when he argued for "total and absolute equality for all citizens; this equality and freedom will not be guaranteed by a bill of rights and a constitution". He argues that "the only way of ensuring that governmental abuse is curbed is by giving citizen's power". He states that this has never existed in the north of Ireland. Britain has to be committed to the creation of a democracy.

However the Ulster Quaker Peace Committee

believed that within the Declaration there is a good basis "for guaranteeing the civil rights and liberties of both communities. Ensuring parity of esteem must be enshrined in any future agreement".

Belfast Equality like Derry Equality highlight in their submission the system of economic apartheid constructed in the Six Counties by the unionists and successive British governments. They believe this affects the credibility of the whole document. They point out that Britain has failed to address the issues of equality. They say that nowhere in the Declaration are the issues of economic inequality that still persist mentioned.

PARAGRAPH 5; SUMMARY

Submissions highlighted the phrase in this paragraph where the Taoiseach accepts that "the democratic right of self determination by the people of Ireland as a whole must be achieved and exercised with and subject to the agreement and consent of a majority of the people of Northern Ireland". Many submissions saw this as an acceptance by the Dublin Government of the unionist veto and partition as a legitimate framework.

The list of civil and human rights also in paragraph five raised considerable comment in the submissions. A range of submissions wondered why this part of the Declaration was not subscribed to by both governments.

The second issue raised about paragraph 5 was as to why there was no mention of rights of the nationalist community in the Six Counties. They asked if it is wrong as is stated in paragraph 5 to impose a united Ireland in the absence of "freely given consent", where does this leave the nationalists of the Six Counties. The submissions which addressed this point also stated the nationalists living in the Six Counties had their democratic rights denied to them solely because their homes lay within a geographical boundary drawn only to create an artificial regional majority – in fact a national minority. A minority whose votes now supersede all others.

These submissions asked, were the rights outlined in paragraph 5 a recognition that "democratic dignity and civil rights" were systematically denied to the nationalist community? They asked, that if that is the case, why does the Declaration not state so plainly?

Section 2.7

Paragraph 7

Declaration text, Paragraph 7

7. Both Governments accept that Irish unity would be achieved only by those who favour this outcome persuading those who do not, peacefully and without coercion or violence, and that, if in the future a majority of the people of Northern Ireland are so persuaded, both Governments will support and give legislative effect to this wish. But, notwithstanding the solemn affirmation by both Governments in the Anglo-Irish Agreement that any change in the status of Northern Ireland would only come about with the consent of a majority of the people of Northern Ireland, the Taoiseach also recognises the continuing uncertainties and misgivings which dominate so much of Northern Unionist attitudes towards the rest of Ireland. He believes that we stand at a stage of our history when the genuine feelings of all traditions in the North must be recognised and acknowledged. He appeals to both traditions at this time to grasp the opportunity for a fresh start and a new beginning, which could hold such promise for all our lies and the generations to come. He asks the people of Northern Ireland to look on the people of the Republic as friends, who share their grief and shame over all the suffering of the last quarter of a century, and who want to develop the best possible relationship with them, a relationship in which trust and new understanding can flourish and grow. The Taoiseach also acknowledges the presence in the Constitution of the Republic of elements which are deeply resented by Northern Unionists, but which at the same time reflect hopes and ideals which lie deep in the hearts of many Irish men and women North and South. But as we move towards a new era of understanding in which new

relationships of trust may grow and bring peace to the island of Ireland, the Taoiseach believes that the time has come to consider together how best the hopes and identities of all can be expressed in more balanced ways, which no longer engender division and the lack of trust to which he has referred. He confirms that, in the event of an overall settlement, the Irish Government will, as part of a balanced constitutional accommodation, put forward and support proposals for change in the Irish Constitution which would fully reflect the principle of consent in Northern Ireland.

DERRY SUBMISSIONS

Forum 2&3 were concerned at the promise by Albert Reynolds in paragraph 7 of the Declaration that the Irish Government would "put forward and support proposals for change in the Irish constitution which would fully reflect the principle of consent in Northern Ireland". They say "Does it not seem ironic that when, for the first time in Anglo-Irish relations, Britain acknowledges the Irish people's right to national self determination, it seem Ireland might seek to relinquish such a claim".

GALWAY SUBMISSIONS

Brendan Murray asks "will Britain be a persuader for Irish unity and will it bring about balanced constitutional accommodation for Nationalists in the meantime as An Taoiseach states the Republic will for Unionists?".

PARAGRAPH 7; SUMMARY

In paragraph 7, the Taoiseach again returns to allaying unionist fears. He acknowledges the "presence in the Constitution of the Republic of elements which are deeply resented by Northern Unionists". Later in the paragraph the Taoiseach confirms that "in the event of an overall settlement, the Irish Government will, as part of a balanced constitutional accommodation, put forward and support proposals for change in the Irish constitution which would fully reflect the principle of consent in Northern Ireland".

The Submissions picked out three issues arising here.

Firstly they asked, why is there no mention again of the fears of Six-County nationalists? In the event of a constitutional accommodation not being reached what guarantees do they have in the Declaration from the British government? None.

Secondly, if there was a "constitutional accommodation" would this involve changes to the Government of Ireland Act. Why is there not a similar commitment from the British government in this paragraph? It detracts from the whole document that this balance is missing.

Thirdly submissions which addressed this paragraph felt that, a change in the Irish constitution to replace or supplement the British guarantee to the union will only ferment the conflict and cause nationalists to feel betrayed and isolated from the rest of Ireland. They believed that it could be the acceptance of partition as a political solution.

Section 2.8

Paragraph 9

Declaration text, Paragraph 9

9. The British and Irish Government will seek, along with the Northern Ireland constitutional parties through a process of political dialogue, to create institutions and structures which, while respecting the diversity of the people of Ireland, would enable them to work together in all areas of common interest. This will help over a period to build the trust necessary to end past divisions, leading to an agreed and peaceful future. Such structures would, of course, include institutional recognition of the special links that exist between the peoples of Britain and Ireland as part of the totality of relationships, while taking account of newly forged links with the rest of Europe.

DERRY SUBMISSIONS

John Neil proposed a parliament or a forum open to all the people of Ireland and local autonomy for the regions as possible new structures.

DUBLIN SUBMISSIONS

Seán O Donaile asks will the new structures promised in paragraph 9 mean the dismantlement

the RUC and RIR. He asks will the local government be expanded and given more powers, and could nationalists trust these institutions. He argues that this is all unclear.

Rita Ui Raghail points out that many nationalists in the North do not want a mere extension of the 26-County state and that this is a false understanding of an agreed united Ireland.

Michael Farrell also thought that issues such as the RUC, RIR and British Army need to be grappled with.

CORK SUBMISSIONS

John Redington writes in his submission that within the current status quo "the British Government must provide sufficient incentives through legislation for the Nationalist community". He believes that these must include "guarantees of participation in the structures of government", "official recognition of distinctive expressions of culture" and safeguarding their rights in all spheres of legislation

CENTRAL SUBMISSIONS

CEN 27 made a very detailed analysis of the role of local democracy. They made a range of detailed suggestions as to what measures could be taken so as to ensure democratic rights both now and in the future. They argue that if the Declaration is about a democratic solution, then powers currently exercised at an executive level should be returned to local statutory bodies.

Moya Frenz St. Leger proposed a range of new structures including an Anglo-Irish Commission to rewrite the Irish constitution to accommodate the aspirations and requirements of the people of Northern Ireland. Other proposals include the setting of a date for withdrawal and a provisional date for relinquishing sovereignty.

Paragraph 9; Summary

Many of the submissions saw this paragraph as signalling the intent of both governments to create new democratic structures for the island. Many submissions believed that the criteria for such talks should be the mandate of public representatives without preconditions as to their political affiliations. One view of the paragraph from the submissions was that it includes a specific pre-condition aimed at Sinn Féin and we believe that

this fundamentally undemocratic, unacceptable and out of step with other elements of the Declaration. The Declaration claims to be a set of principles but here in this paragraph submissions pointed out the inclusion of a pre-condition which is not a principle.

The second issue submissions raised about this paragraph are the proposals for new institutions and structures. They asked what present structures are an impediment to peace and why? Some submissions had a very simple answer to this. They believed that it is the undemocratic structure of the Six-County state that was at fault. Submissions believed that there is a need to elaborate on the scope of such change.

Section 2.9

Paragraph 10

Declaration text, Paragraph 10

10. The British and Irish Governments reiterate that the achievement of peace must involve a permanent end to the use of, or support for, paramilitary violence. They confirm that, in these circumstances, democratically mandate parties which establish a commitment to exclusively peaceful methods and which have shown that they abide by the democratic process, are free to participate fully in democratic politics and to join in dialogue in due course between the Governments and the political parties on the way ahead.

DERRY SUBMISSIONS

JJ Mc Shane asks in his submission how would nationalist areas be policed during the three month period. "Would the RUC be disbanded he asks and be replaced by an unarmed and 50% Catholic police force. He also asks what role would the RIR have.

Ainmháire Ní Sheoighe points out that in point 10 "Both governments talk of an end to 'the use and support of paramilitary violence'". She believes that this point must be clarified "Does it mean an end to loyalist and British violence also. She believes that there must be demilitarisation by all to make the political process viable.

DUBLIN SUBMISSIONS

Seán O Donaile points out that paragraph 10 makes no reference to British or loyalist violence. He asks will the call for an end to "the use of, or support of paramilitary violence", include the termination of the RUC leaking documents to loyalists death squads and other forms of collusion. He asks "will it involve the ending of physical harassment by the security forces, the use of plastic bullets and regular torture in Castlereagh". Finian McGrath also felt that discrimination against nationalists needs to be highlighted. He felt there was a need a new social and economic framework. John Montgomery PRO for Ballyfermot Community Association says in his submission that it is wrong to expect demilitarisation on one side only. He writes that "Some system of joint monitoring of the administration of trial, sentencing and policing would have to be developed".

GALWAY SUBMISSIONS

In his submission Joe Neylon describes this as a carrot, article for the Republican Movement and Sinn Féin. He also points out that the "State security forces" are never mentioned in the Declaration.

Brendan Murray believed that the achievement of peace, must include the withdrawal of the British army from Ireland.

An anonymous submission G29 believed that the meaning of paragraph 10 was that "the British reserve the right to use violence in Ireland".

A submission from Dermot Connolly felt that peace can only be achieved by removal of injustices.

BELFAST SUBMISSIONS

The Divis Joint Development Committee believed that if there is a total cessation of hostilities it must be inclusive and simultaneous for all parties. There would have to be disbandment and replacement of the RUC and RIR.

An anonymous submission (B7) believed that the Declaration itself "does offer a structured movement towards demilitarisation". However the submission believed there was a "whole series of unanswered questions". In particular the submission highlighted the issue of loyalist violence and British harassment of nationalists. Would there be a "defacto return to barracks".

Fr Gerry Reynolds, Clonard Monastery Belfast,

sees the Declaration as "the end of the present form of British involvement in Ireland".

PARAGRAPH 10; SUMMARY

This paragraph raised considerable comment in the submissions. Most who did address this paragraph asked why does the paragraph only specify "paramilitary" violence. They said that the Declaration makes no mention of the the British army and its garrison, the largest armed force engaged in the conflict. The submissions on this paragraph believed that the implication of the Declaration is that non-state violence is the cause of the problem rather than a political conflict. They pointed out that there is no commitment on the British Government's behalf to demilitarise the conflict.

Many submissions made reference to Albert Reynolds' statements on demilitarisation as being the focus that should be taken. Finally submissions which addressed this paragraph pointed out that the paragraph makes two references to democratically mandated parties and the democratic process. They believed that Sinn Féin should be included in any talks process as it is a democratically mandated party

Section 2.10

Paragraph 11

Declaration text, Paragraph 11

11. The Irish Government would make their own arrangements within their jurisdiction to enable democratic parties to consult together and share in dialogue about the political future. The Taoiseach's intention is that these arrangements could include the establishment, in consultation with other parties, of a Forum for Peace and Reconciliation to make recommendations on ways in which agreement and trust between both traditions in Ireland can be promoted and established.

DERRY SUBMISSIONS

John Robb welcomed the proposed Forum in his

Submission and believed it could lead to new institutions and structures.

DUBLIN SUBMISSIONS

Roger Cole in his submission writes that the Forum proposed in paragraph 11 represents a framework where democratic national forces could develop a common approach.

PARAGRAPH 11; SUMMARY

The Forum for Peace and Reconciliation was a welcome proposal by the submissions which addressed the issue.

Section 2.11

General

DERRY

The Peace and Reconciliation Group were encouraged by the fact that the Declaration was actually written. They believed that despite its "shortcomings and ambiguities, it does contain some positive features for all the people of the island". They also argued that the Declaration does need to be "clarified to everyone's satisfaction".

The Springfield Inter Community Development Project believed that distrust was the biggest obstacle to any solution and that any dialogue that excludes any party to the conflict is meaningless and must not be dictated by preconditions. They welcomed the Declaration as a step in the process. An anonymous resident from Carnhill (Derry 27) believed that the Declaration is full of contradictions and attempts to be all things to all people but is a good opportunity to bring the conflict to an end. Another anonymous submission (Derry 28) believed that the union is as good as dead and that there is no real affection between the British government and the unionist people. The person believed that "peace would transform the situation".

DUBLIN SUBMISSIONS

The Peace Train submission believed that the Declaration provides a basis for upon which a just peaceful and mutually respectful future can be built.

However Ulick O'Connor took an opposing view to the Declaration as a whole when he says that in previous agreements such as Sunningdale "the British Government failed to fulfill its

obligations". This was echoed in Rita Ui Raghail, who says in her submission that the British government has given no indication that it is worthy of trust. She felt that Britain must give more assurances to nationalists. Michael Farrell also made this point when he says that the British Government must be pressurised to balance the Declaration with equivalent guarantees to nationalists in North.

Matt Merrigan took this a step further and said in his submission that the British Government must state what the next step is after the Declaration.

Eoin O Mhúrchu proposed in his submission that one of the next steps should be the formation of a nationalist consensus. He believed that the Declaration did signify a shift by Britain. He argued that a mass national movement was the logical step in the desire for creating a lasting peace.

CORK SUBMISSIONS

J Mclaughlin stresses in his submission that "any political settlement in N. Ireland should acknowledge formally that there are two ethnic groups in Northern Ireland".

Green Party member Vincent MacDowell describes the Declaration in his submission as "inadequate". He believes that "the Northern Irish people should not be required to submit to an arrogant Diktat, whose terms they had no hand in composing".

Labhras O Donnghaile argued for clarification in his submission. However he also believed that clarification should not only be sought from the two governments but from all groups who have been loud in support of the Declaration.

Brendan Ryan said in his submission that the Declaration was a viable alternative. He believed that it had changed the political climate and was a unique opportunity to make silenced people heard. Jim Corcoran also felt that conditions now exist for opportunities to advance. Green party councillor Dan Boyle articulated this in a different way when he says the Declaration is a political fudge, but this necessary as it could bring everyone to the table.

John Redington wrote in his submission wrote that "The Six Counties is an unstable constitutional entity in which normal participatory democracy cannot develop".

Professor John Maguire in his submission argues that the prospect of an Irish democracy poses a

ep challenge to the British establishment in that it would be a crucial blow to their own polity.

The submission from the Cork Council of trade unions emphasised the need for negotiation. They said that settlements which fail to get to the root of a problem tend only to be of a temporary nature. They felt that "a door is open for negotiation".

BELFAST SUBMISSIONS

Liz Groves in her Submission felt that the document as a whole was little different from the 1985 Anglo-Irish Agreement which she writes "didn't make any difference to our lives, nor did it redress the imbalance of equality and injustice". She supported clarification being given to Sinn Féin.

The Falls Community council believed that "interpretation of the document differed between the two governments".

An anonymous submission (B7) believed that the Declaration "is the last and best hope for the Republican Movement to come in from the cold.

Former leader of the Corrymeela Community, economics lecturer, John W Morrow said in his submission that though the Declaration "is no panacea for all our ills" it is a statement by both Governments "that they have no desire, on either side to impose their will on us". He does not specify whether this "us" is the people of all Ireland or just the Six Counties.

An anonymous submission from the a protestant cleric (B 15) argued that if the Republican Movement accept the Declaration "there is everything to negotiate for, everything to lobby for, and everything to legislate for".

Féile an Phobail in their submission argue that "a new approach must be adopted". They write that this new approach must be "one that includes all opinion and thought, looks at all ideas and excludes none".

Initiative '92 believed that Protestants do not want to become part of an all Ireland state and that the Republic cannot absorb the north in the foreseeable future. They do not rule out Irish unity as a long term objective but believe that what is required in the short term is parity of esteem and equality.

The Springfield Inter Community Development Project wrote in their submission that "The main issue now for the Republican Movement is not getting the Brits out of Ireland but convincing those who look upon themselves as British that their true destiny lies in an Irish Socialist Republic". William Rutherford took this another way in his submission when he said "Your real task is to persuade and convince the Unionist community that a united Ireland is in their best interest".

The Corrymeela Current Affairs Group believed that the Declaration "offers a possible opportunity for us all to begin to rebuild".

CENTRAL SUBMISSIONS

Dr R M Temple felt that the Declaration was a window of opportunity for nationalist inclusion in the Six Counties and that nationalist aspirations were recognised in the Declaration.

The submission CEN 3 felt that "the declaration is deliberately a studied ambiguity". However they still felt it was a progressive document in that the British government now sought the inclusion of republicanism rather than a policy which entailed smashing the Republican Movement.

Tom Lyne wrote in his submission that the Declaration "goes much further in recognising the legitimacy of nationalist aims than could have been expected of a government dependent on Ulster Unionist votes". He believes that the Declaration "concedes that the continued partition of Ireland is not in the interests of the British state".

Aidan McCourt states in his submission that "the documents contents and subsequent qualifying statements by both government leaders would appear to put the prospect of a united Ireland on the long finger". He says that in this context "one could expect there to be some assurances given directly to Nationalists in the Six Counties". He says that "not once in the document are Northern Nationalists even mentioned and no recognition is given to the historic and ongoing discrimination that they have suffered in a state that they are told they must accept for the foreseeable future".

Pax Christi interpret the Declaration as providing an unprecedented opportunity. They say that it recognises the aspirations of republicans as being legitimate