

# The Northern Star

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### Labour Candidate Elected On First Count

## Labour Takes A Small Step Forward

In the Local Government Elections on May 19th, the recently-formed *Council for Labour Representation* put up a slate of 13 candidates—Belfast, Derry, and Newtownabbey—all dedicated to building not just a non-sectarian Labour movement in Northern Ireland, but a Labour movement based on the opportunities for real politics provided by a party of state.

There were encouraging performances from many of the candidates. Where they were in direct contest with the Workers' Party, and/or the breakaway Democratic Left, they bested them. The future for both wings of the Official Republican movement can be summed up in the words of the Chuck Berry song, "no particular place to go".

In Newtownabbey, in the electoral district of Macedon, Mark Langhammer was elected on the first count. This is significant in a number of ways. He now represents an electoral district which includes large working class Catholic and Protestant housing estates. He put in a lot of work in the area, not just in the weeks, but also the years before the Election. All this would be of little significance if he were just another 'community' candidate. The difference is that he and the other candidates are clearly associated with the issue of Labour Representation.

Mr. Langhammer himself commented:

*"We described ourselves as an advance party for Labour organisation in the province, preparing the ground for Labour politics.*

*"While I was the only Labour candidate elected, there were a number of other very respectable showings. More importantly, we all put a marker down for the future and put*

*Labour issues on the agenda.*

*"There is nothing unique about the Newtownabbey area. Protestants and Catholics will unite to vote Labour in other areas too. Once the Labour Party organises in Northern Ireland the possibilities will be endless. We will be able to make a real difference to the situation here."*

Opponents of Labour Party organisation will argue that it was a 'Unionist' vote by other means. Returns from the two Newtownabbey wards where Labour ran candidates proved the opposite. In what was essentially a three-cornered contest between Labour, Alliance, and the Unionists, Unionist second preferences did not transfer to Labour. The Council for Labour Representation is not in the business of Unionist politics and those second preferences, or lack of them, reflects that fact. Had it been otherwise, Macedon might have re-elected Bob Kidd, a long-serving Councillor, and an honest and forthright socialist, unlike the middle-class smart Alocs who dragged down the old Northern Ireland Labour Party.

In Derry, on the other hand, Labour candidates received transfers across the board, from all parties. Thus, in the Shan-

Cardinal Cahal Daly had a slight car accident in Belfast this month. Strange to relate, the Hospital to which he was admitted was not the *Mater Infirmorum*, his own hospital, founded by Mercy nuns, even though the accident happened conveniently to it, but to the City Hospital. We wonder why!

tallow district Robert Lindsay (a former SDLP Mayor of Derry), having started with 295 first preference votes, got 35 votes from the surplus of two SDLP candidates, and then 111 votes from the exclusion of a DUP and a Workers' Party candidate, ending up with 442 votes.

Another candidate, R. Muldowney, contesting Northlands, having started with 187 first preferences, picked up votes across the board, ended up with 374 votes. When he went out, his votes in turn were distributed across the parties: 75 to T. Carlin (Ind.); 19 to D. Davis (Ind. U.); 54 to J. Kerr (SDLP); 69 to K. McCloskey (SDLP); and 18 to M. Nelis (SF).

For the record, the votes of the Labour candidates were (with the first preferences in brackets)

#### Belfast

N. Cusack (Balmoral)	207 (113)
M. Ballentine (Pottinger)	305 (271)

#### Derry City

W. Anderson (Waterside)	139 (139)
R. Foster (Northland)	212 (175)
R. Muldowney (N'land)	374 (187)
A. Martin (Cityside)	248 (189)
R. Lindsay (Shantallow)	442 (295)

#### Newtownabbey

M. Langhammer (Mac'n)	813 (813)
R. Kidd (Macedon)	707 (607)
T. Davidson (Macedon)	56 (56)
D. Hayes (University)	115 (112)
W. McClinton (Univ.)	46 (44)
S. Ward (University)	60 (59)

The comparable performances of the Democratic Left and Workers' Party were as follows:

#### Belfast

Balmoral (Dem. Left)	(97)
Balmoral (WP)	(48)
Pottinger (WP)	(227)

#### Derry City

Northland (WP)	38 (36)
Northland (WP)	44 (42)
Cityside (WP)	135 (144)

## Strangers On The Right

The universal view from the pundits was that the main losers from the Local Council elections were the Northern Ireland Tories. The local Tories blame the Northern Ireland Office and the fact of the Government's unpopularity nationally, allied to the lack of support from the Northern Ireland Ministers. In reality they must share the blame amongst themselves.

Last year, in the 1992 General Election, they had the NIO factor to contend with; and a desultory bit of canvassing by Peter Brooke a stone's throw from police headquarters was hardly a ringing endorsement. Also, at the local polls in 1989 they performed far better without the endorsement of the party machine. It is also too glib to refer to the recession. Where the recession is really really hurting is in the South of England, as evidenced by the results of the recent English and Welsh County Council elections.

Compared to the 1992 General Election, the Tories here did have one inherent disadvantage. The exposure of Northern Ireland people to the national electoral struggle gave a lot of free publicity to the local Tories by association. In a purely Northern Ireland election they were still minor players. In a local election it is also more difficult to mask the absence of a mass party. In 1992 they contested 11 of the 17 seats. This year it was only 25 of the 90+ electoral districts (fewer than the Workers' Party and the Democratic Left combined).

The main problem is one of ideology. Earlier this year, John Major visited Northern Ireland. During the visit he met local Conservatives. Afterwards, one of them, James O'Fee, a North Down Councillor, assured reporters of Major's wholehearted endorsement, and disclosed that they were "the Conservative and Unionist Party".

This begs the question, why have a Conservative Party? To be a Unionist in Northern Ireland is to be a defender of "Protestant interests". The slogan, Vote Conservative for a nicer class of Prod, is not going to transform politics and political debate. The backing of a national party machine is irrelevant. It's like trying to fill the average family car with diesel as opposed to petrol.

A perusal of the Belfast Telegraph guide revealed that candidates in Craigavon, Coleraine and Belfast (Laganbank) described themselves as "Conservative Unionist", and that the sole Conservative in Larne was a "British Conservative". Other candidates, such as Billy Dickson (Balmoral) and Ann Blake (Lisburn) used artwork and posters which had 'Unionist' written all over them. Mr. Dickson in particular was the object of much derision from his former comrades in the DUP for failing to be Unionist, even though his election posters prominently displayed the Union Jack, and contained the Conservative tag in minute letters.

### Tory Decline And North Down

For the record, this Table sums up the extent of Tory decline in their 'heartland' of North Down Borough Council. In all the three wards selected, their votes and share of the poll slumped by over half compared to 1989:

Ward	Votes, 1989	Votes, 1993	Share of Vote, 1989	Share of Vote, 1993
Hollywood	1,179	527	24.6%	14.3%
Ballyholme	1,503	711	26.8%	12.0%
Abbey	786	368	19.2%	9.3%

## Is The Conservative And Unionist Party Over?

The recent local government election results confirmed that local Tory politics had run into a cul-de-sac. The Northern Ireland Conservatives—standing as plain "Conservatives", rather than Conservative and Union (as they became in 1993) had done well electorally in 1989. And in the same year, Laurence Kennedy polled on a par with John Alderdice in the Euro-election.

The Northern Star had argued that Kennedy and Co. had rushed naively into acceptance of party membership. It had sided with those elements of the Campaign for Equal Citizenship who wanted to hold out for joint Tory and Labour

organisation. However, when that viewpoint lost out, it was suggested that Tory membership should only be accepted on strict conditions. These were that the party leadership must commit itself to a high profile launch of the extension of the Party into Northern Ireland, and that a tenable working relationship be forged between local Tories and NIO Ministers. It was not heeded.

The fact was that Tory grassroots enthusiasm for N. Ireland organisation was not matched by a Tory hierarchy, grown accustomed to an arms'-length relationship with the province. Peter Brooke was typical. As Party Chairman,

he had strongly opposed ending the ban on N. Ireland membership. Then, as Secretary of State, he much preferred to play the colonialist role of neutral arbiter between the tribal parties, rather than actively seeking to advance Tory politics in the province.

Mayhew carried on in the same mould, and while John Major did speak of "looking forward to a Northern Ireland Tory Secretary of State", in practical terms, high-ranking party support for local Tories amounted to so much tokenist rhetoric.

The Northern Star had also warned that local Tories would go nowhere fast if

they tried to out-Unionist the Unionists. Rather, they should seek the widest possible constituency, making the case for non-sectarian politics, and sensible Tory social and economic policies (such as there are). Instead, there developed a running battle with NIO Ministers over alleged commitment to the Union. Lisburn Councillor, David Greene (who should never have left the Unionists in the first place) returned to communal politics when the Tory Party refused to get rid of the Anglo Irish Agreement, just because he had joined the Party!

In other words, local Tories were party rebels where it did them least good—the Anglo-Irish Agreement and the Inter-Party Talks. On the other hand, there was often a slavish commitment to unpopular social policy. High profile East Belfast Tory, Jim McCormick, endeared himself to the electorate by calling for the importation of the Poll Tax!

Laurence Kennedy was in many ways the best of the bunch—but it is quite probable that he has come to regret having accepted Tory organisation, without a parallel Labour development. Incredibly, some of his dafter colleagues urged people to vote Tory, so as to keep out Labour, *“the party of a United Ireland”!*

Come 1993, local “Conservative and Unionist” candidates suffered, by association, from the national unpopularity of the Major Government. They also provided handy whipping boys for the provincialists who were able to make Labourist noises in the absence of Labour. Unionists, whose parliamentary colleagues had recently supported Tory pit closures, lined up to put the boot into Kennedy and co. Nevertheless, the local Conservatives went to Glengall Street for a cosy exchange of positions.

There is a strong streak of political elitism in local Toryism. It is not good enough to play the national party card in local government. People expect councillors to dirty their hands with important practical things (Bins, bogs and burials!—Ed.) As newcomers, local Tories needed to work doubly hard at local issues and put down firm constituency and war roots. But too many of them appeared to be above such matters.

The North Down Tories probably did well to lose only two of their six seats. They had lost credibility and momentum when two of their councillors (ex-Unionist, allsorts mavericks) refused to support a fellow Conservative mayoral candidate in 1992, opting instead for a Unionist! Instead of expelling these backstabbers

(as any other party would reasonably have done), the North Down Association kept them on board, thereby causing one of their better colleagues (an ex-Mayor) to break ranks and stand as an “Independent Conservative”. Indeed, North Down has more Independent councillors than anywhere else. This partially reflects the apolitical nature of the place. However, most of these are at heart Tories, and would be in the Party, if it made itself more appealing to them.

The extension of the Tory Party to N. Ireland brought into “active” politics a number of middle class folk who had previously stuck to private life. This should have been seen as a healthy development by the Party establishment, and given every possible support. On the other hand, many local Tories expected instant success and an easy ride on the back of the “national party” bandwagon.

It is probable that Tory Party bigwigs are now watching to see whether the end of Northern Ireland Toryism is at hand, and whether Kennedy and co. will collapse into Ulster Unionism. Northern Ireland needs Tory and Labour politics and it will soon be clear whether the vanguard of local Toryism has the wit and the will to reconstruct itself along the principled lines that are needed.

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## Alliance In South Belfast

### *Don't Mention The War!*

These elections reminded us of the story of the newly-elected Conservative MP to the House of Commons who one day pointed to the Labour benches and referred *“the enemy”*. One of his senior colleagues reminded him, *they're not your enemies, they're your opponents; your enemies are on your own side!*

So it was with the Alliance Party of Northern Ireland in the Balmoral district of Belfast. They had two candidates running—Mark Long, an incumbent Councillor, and Philip McGarry, a member of the Party Executive. Prior to the start of campaigning, relations could be described as professional. However, there was very little professionalism during the campaign.

The original strategy was that certain parts of Balmoral would get Alliance leaflets, saying **Long No. 1; McGarry No. 2**, and vice-versa for other parts. On election day, an equal number of polling stations would be designated to Messrs. Long and McGarry, with one which would be neutral, i.e., an Alliance-Free Zone.

Our spies tell us that, during the campaign, Alliance leaflets started appearing in ‘Long’ districts, advising Alliance supporters to vote for McGarry, and not mentioning Long. Long tried various strategies. One was a counter-leaflet, informing the electors of Balmoral as to his running mate’s background, which was on the other side of the communal

fence. Another was to appeal to the Party Leader. In the absence of Cyrus Vance and Lord Owen, the word is that Dr. Alderdice said this was a matter for the Party Chairman to sort out. And who is the Chairman of the great cross-community movement? Philip McGarry! To cap it all, on election day, the Alliance-free polling station attracted both sets of supporters, gutting each other in front of bemused (or possibly amused) RUC officers.

Not surprisingly in view of his greater single-mindedness, Mr. McGarry was elected and Mr. Long was not. The punchline of this story is not that the Party which exhorts Prods and Micks to live in harmony can’t get its own members to do so, interesting though that is.

The consequences of all this turmoil is that it gave the Unionist Parties an extra seat in Belfast Council. The Table at the bottom shows a comparison of the respective political ‘blocs’ in 1989 and 1993. Because of population movements, the

number of seats in the Balmoral District increased from 5 to 6.

Under the STV (Single Transferable Vote) system of Proportional Representation, election is by means of obtaining a quota. The quota is calculated by dividing the valid vote by the number of seats, plus one, and adding one vote to the result. Thus, if 100 votes were cast to elect 9 candidates, the quote would be 11, i.e.

$$\frac{(100)}{(9+1)} + 1 = 11$$

In 1989, Unionists (including independents) won 64.5% of the votes cast. The quote was 16.7%. the Unionists had three full quotas and got 3 candidates elected. the other parties had the equivalent of 2 full quotas and got 2 candidates returned. This year, the Unionist parties

	<u>1989</u>		<u>1993</u>	
	%	Seats	%	Seats
Unionists	64.5	3	54.1	4
Alliance	19.0	1	18.6	1
Others	16.5	1	27.3	1
<i>Quota for 1 seat</i>		<u>16.7</u>		<u>14.3</u>

got 3 full quotas. The others got 45.9% of the vote, which is also equivalent to 3 full quotas, with 3% to spare, or some 363 votes.

This is dependent on supporters of other non-Unionist parties transferring their minor preferences to the Alliance

Party. In the end, the shenanigans within the Alliance camp deprived them of a second seat in Balmoral by 35 votes, or 0.3%, and the Unionists won the extra seat, despite a fall of 10% in the total vote. That extra seat gave them 27 seats, and an absolute majority of 3, as opposed to 1.

## Kate Hoey's Stand Of Principle

In one of those little ironies that happen, on the day that Mark Langhammer was the first candidate to be elected on the basis of a demand for proper non-sectarian Labour representation, the Belfast Telegraph reported the first sacking by John Smith from his frontbench team. It was someone who has done everything to block Labour politics in Northern Ireland. Was it Clare Short? Peter Hain? Kevin McNamara? No; it was Kate Hoey.

But what caused this fateful dismissal? It was Kate Hoey's decision to vote against the Maastricht Treaty in the Commons, when the Party Whip was for an abstention. The curious thing about the dismissal was the fact that this MP had never given any indication of having any views on Europe, let alone deeply-seated insular beliefs. However, Kate Hoey had the opportunity to make all clear when she appeared on Radio 4's *Any Questions* on 2nd May, 1993. She had been invited onto the programme before she lost her Shadow seat; it was her big opportunity to show the world the reasoning behind her vote, but she seemed strangely reluctant to do so. We will let readers judge for themselves by reproducing a transcript of her words.

### Any Questions

*Question: Will Maastricht, without the social chapter make Britain the sweatshop of Europe?* [Ed Pearce spoke first.]

*J. Dimpleby: Kate Hoey. It was over this*

matter itself that you decided to opt out of—

*Hoey [cuts off Dimpleby]:* —Edward's point about 200 hours' debate. There were 200 hours debate and some 28 days in Committee on Maastricht, on Maastricht—whatever way you want to call it; most people just know it as that old Europe Bill—in the House. I think it is a very sad reflection really on our democracy that in the end the most crucial decision, which I believe was not in the Maastricht Bill, was the question of the Social Chapter, and we did not get a proper debate on that in the sense of having a vote that would have mattered, and that, in a sense, there was a—I use my words very carefully—a kind of stitch-up between all three of the major parties from the beginning to actually ensure that at the end of the day the Bill would go through. Now I still think there are many things that could happen before we finally ratify the Treaty. And I think that there is still an opportunity, both in the House of Lords and at a legal stage, and it is very sad that at the end of the day we've got a parliamentary democracy, and yet the courts may well end up with lawyers again making vast amounts of money deciding how this country is able to govern itself or not govern itself.

*Dimpleby: Kate, was it because of the*

stitch-up to which you assert, by implication, that your leader was party to, that you voted against rather than abstained or was it—

*Hoey:* —No—

*Dimpleby:* —because you believed that Britain would be a sweatshop without the Social Chapter?

*Hoey:* I personally feel that, having spent all that time on a debate, that at the end of the day you are either for the Bill, with or without the Social chapter, or you are against the Bill, with or without the Social Chapter. And I am afraid that I could not justify, in all conscience, abstaining on something that we had actually decided that Parliament was going to make the decision. After all, we did not allow the people of this country a referendum; we in a sense allowed Denmark to make our decision for us; and I do think it is wrong that those people who have opposed Maastricht—there are some of them I have very very grave difficulties in politics with, and I have different arguments against Maastricht, but there are a lot of people who voted against Maastricht last night precisely because they are pro-Europe. But they actually don't think this Bill, without the Social Chapter, is going to do anything to actually help working people in this country.

*Dimpleby:* Just a small thought, Kate, because people will be curious, and

you will long to pass on the information, was John understanding on the phone when you rang you up?

*Hoey:* John Smith is a very understanding Scotsman.

*David Steel:* Well, I am very understanding of John Smith, but I must say that Kate Hoey's sacking from the Front Bench must be the first time in political history that someone has lost their place on the Front Bench for failing to be indecisive. I think the Labour Party has got itself into an extraordinary twist by demanding that everybody should abstain on this issue, then finding a substantial chunk of the party voting against it, and a small section voting for. They ended up splitting three ways...

*Michael Howard:* ...

*Edward Pearce:* I want to get back to Kate Hoey and the Labour Party—a much more interesting subject than Maastricht. Kate was sacked for making her mind up, which is practically a breach of party orders. The trouble with the Labour Party is that over Europe since 1950 it has been anti- and pro-, more or less like a layer cake. When it came to the vote yesterday, at the beginning we did not exactly know which way they were going to go, though we had a pretty shrewd idea, and they saved it till later to announce this important party decision as to what they were going to do, and what they were going to do was to abstain. If the Labour Party was a girl, she would be washing her hair.

*Question:* How would the panel deal with MPs who defy Party Whips, and what prospects should they have in the future?

[Howard, Steel and Pearce gave their views, then:]

*Hoey:* The leader of any party has a right to—that is why he is elected leader—to make decisions, difficult decisions, perhaps easy decisions, like he made on this issue. There does have to be discipline within a party, and there has to be an attempt to try and interpret in Parliament what the party's wish in the country is. But, ultimately, the answer is obviously as an MP you are ultimately responsible to your electorate, and you have to bear that in mind as well. And occasionally—I know the public have got a very, most of the public think that politicians don't have many principles—occasionally there are principles that

you feel are strong enough to break the diktat that has been put down by the party leadership, and that has to be dealt with. I would like to see much more listening to debates in our House of Commons and much more feeling that debates are not always decided in advance, because quite honestly it sometimes means that there is not much point being there because you know that no one is going to listen to what anyone says and at the end of the day the majority party will win. But perhaps I am too much of an idealist, and not hard-nosed enough.

#### Comment

Two points immediately strike the reader when reading the transcript First of all, Kate Hoey failed to reveal her sacking from the Front Bench. It was left to David Steel to do so. Secondly, if Kate Hoey voted against Maastricht on principled grounds, she failed to take this golden opportunity to explain what they were. One cannot help comparing her performance with that of Michael Mates, who has left everyone absolutely clear about the deep beliefs which led to him losing his ministerial job.

The lack of political content in Hoey's remarks, makes more credible the following item which we find in *Private Eye*, 4th June, 1993. If it is true, it should put into context for us, Hoey's remarks about the need for principles amongst MPs:

*"There was bafflement in Labour circles when Kate Hoey voted against the government over Maastricht, the only Labour frontbencher to defy her whips' instruction to abstain. She was promptly sacked as citizens' charter spokesperson.*

*"What puzzled colleagues was that Hoey has been the most obedient conformist ever since Neil Kinnock and Roy Hattersley parachuted her into Vauxhall where the local party had chosen someone they disapproved of. So what has come over her?*

*"It is very likely that in the forthcoming boundary revisions the number of parliamentary seats in the Lambeth-Southwark area will be cut. Kate, having been wished on the Vauxhall voters, would be a strong candidate for the push. In anticipation, she has sold her south London home, only 10 minutes from the constituency, and moved—to the annoyance of some of her constituents—to distant Wap-*

*ping on the other side of the Thames.*

*"Her home falls within the constituency of Bethnal Green and Stepney, which is represented by the veteran Peter Shore, aged 69 and likely to stand down at the next election. Kate would probably not mind succeeding him, and has made her presence known to the local party. But whoever wants Shore's seat needs immaculate anti-EC credentials to win his approval. Kate has now achieved eminence by becoming an anti-EC martyr—purely out of conviction, of course."*

#### Labour Ban Discussed In Commons

In a debate on the Funding Of Political Parties (22.6.93), Ulster Unionist MP, David Trimble, raised the exclusion of Northern Ireland residents from Labour Party membership. He said:

*"I cannot mention the political levy without mentioning what strikes me, as a Member representing a Northern Ireland constituency, as a serious anomaly. There are trade unionists in Northern Ireland, some of whom opt to pay the political levy and thereby help to finance the Labour party. Yet what does the Labour party do to those trade unionists who fund it? It bars them from membership. Is that creditable? I believe that by now the Labour party headquarters computers are programmed to eject immediately from the system any correspondence with the postcode BT, or automatically to generate a refusal if any such correspondence gets in. The Labour party takes people's money but refuses them membership. That is not creditable.*

*"I notice that the Labour motion refers to contributions from persons overseas. The principle behind the reference is healthy, but I understand—I hope that hon. Members will correct me if I am wrong—that the Labour party maintains an organisation which people who live outside the United Kingdom can join to show their support for the principles of the party. ... anyone may join. That creates the anomaly whereby anybody in the world can support the Labour party—except 1.5 million citizens of the United Kingdom... Who live in Northern Ireland..." (Col 234-5, Hansard.)*

*Mr. Alan Meale (Mansfield): "... I pay tribute to the hon. Member for Upper Bann (Mr. Trimble), who spoke about the funds collected by trade unions in Northern Ireland and the restrictions that are placed on union members. I hope that that system is examined by the Labour party..." (Col 239.)*

# WESTMINSTER TO BLAME

*THE SUNDAYTIMES* of April 18 1993 carried an article by Graham Gudgin, who is billed as director of the Northern Ireland Economic Research Centre and a member of "the Cadogan group of academics and former public servants". The blurb summarising the article says: "The aim of a United Ireland is the cause of the problem, not the solution".

The gist of his argument is as follows:

"British policy has increasingly stressed its neutrality, recognising the two political traditions as being of 'equal validity'. This approach has become destabilising. The talks that flowed from this analysis have led nowhere...

"Mayhew's attempts to rebut Unionist fears in his recent 'we are not neutral' speech cut little ice. The government is clearly not neutral with its huge commitment of troops and cash, support of majority preferences and increasingly vocal opposition to Articles 2 and 3 of the Irish Constitution. But its analysis of the problem remains suspect.

"The error in the British government position has revolved around the failure to recognise the Northern Ireland problem as a straightforward territorial dispute. Two groups, owing loyalty to different states, contest the same narrow territory.

"British public and government has [sic] too often preferred to see the problem in other terms. The British have been encouraged in their views by Irish nationalists.

"Recognition of the desire for unification among many in the minority community is essential to clear thought...

"With a clear recognition of the importance of unity to nationalists we can see that the British government project to accord parity of esteem to both nationalist and unionist aims has been a recipe for prolonged disaster. With mutually contradictory goals both sides could not win.

"Unfortunately, the British strategy made an accommodation less, not more, likely. Each attempt to deliver part of the nationalist agenda led to a raising of the stakes...

"At one stage the 1985 Anglo-Irish Agreement looked like the final settlement... Tom King... said the agreement meant that Irish unity would now never occur. The subsequent clamour from nationalists ensured no repetition of such sentiments.

"Predictably, the Anglo-Irish Agreement has led to SDLP demands for a new agreement...

"To unionists this is depressingly familiar. Unlike the mainland British, they have always understood the seriousness of the nationalist aspiration. Unionist intransigence in the face of constitutional reform is a rational tactic... In reality, the government has two long-term choices: to stay or to go. Since leaving invites a Bosnian solution, even this illusion of choice dissolves into the single imperative of staying.

"Mayhew's frequent assertions that majority wishes will prevail are not sufficiently widely believed...

"The government needs to assert

its support for the union more strongly in line with its views on Scotland. The policy of even-handedness has been pressed as far as it can go.

"With unity out of the frame, other demands of the minority community should be energetically pursued. On the unionist side the initiative can then pass from the hardliners... to the liberals keen on reaching internal accommodation. Progress towards coalition government should be accelerated...

"More effort should be expended on achieving fair employment. With unity off the agenda the government would be in a position to put more pressure on unionists to help eradicate the evil of an unemployment differential between Catholics and Protestants.

"This, of course, leaves the IRA... The government should now recognise that the idea of unity generates the recruits who fill the gaps created by the government's occasional military successes.

"In condemning the means employed by the IRA, but legitimising its ends, the government has only done its job. Ministers should not share the surprise of constitutional nationalists that extremists view such an important aim as worth fighting for.

"The IRA may remain with us for a long time, but deprived of the invigorating approval of its aims, its case will become increasingly hopeless. In the end its demoralisation is our best hope."

This is an entirely Unionist analysis, i.e., an analysis from the communal Protestant viewpoint. We do not make this point because we think the Unionist viewpoint is invalid, but because the Cadogan Group has been indignantly denying that it is Unionist.

Mr. Gudgin used not to be a Unionist. He was for some time a member of the Campaign for Labour Representation, and was even a member of the CLR Executive Committee. It was not, and is not, the position of the CLR that "the aim of a united Ireland is the cause of the problem".

The CLR was founded on the view that the exclusion of the people of Northern Ireland from the party-political life of the state made the development of normal politics in the province impossible, and ensured that all political movement would centre on the issue of which state the province should belong to, and that the issue of how the state it actually belongs to should be governed would play no part in

public affairs here.

Mr. Gudgin can hardly have failed to notice the programme and propaganda of the CLR when he was a member of its leadership. And it can hardly be due to oversight that the exclusion of the province from the party-politics of the state is not even mentioned in his article.

We do not know when he left the CLR. We only know that he attended its AGM in November 1991 and was not there at the AGM of November 1992.

At the 1991 AGM it was revealed that he was a member of a private and select "Labour Party" in South Belfast which had resolved to sue the British Labour Party in the court of Chancery if its application to be affiliated as its South Belfast Constituency Party was not granted, and had set up a fund of £10,000 for that purpose. With him on that occasion was Derek Peters, who was not a member of the CLR, but was nevertheless allowed to dominate the AGM. One of Peters' memorable utterances on that occasion was: "I put my country before my party".

It was put to Gudgin that legal action against the Labour Party would undermine the work of the CLR, and he was asked to stop it. He adopted a highly arrogant attitude towards the CLR, of which he was an elected leader. He said that his private Labour coterie would do exactly as it pleased. It was an independent organisation and had made its own judgement that legal action was appropriate.

It was obvious from Gudgin and Peters' conduct at that meeting that they were in fundamental disagreement with the aims of the CLR. But the CLR refused to do anything about it. A motion condemning the conduct of Gudgin's private Labour group was proposed by B Clifford. Ken Adams of the Foyle Labour Group spoke in support of it, but no one else supported it. The great majority preferred to see it all as an unfortunate misunderstanding that would clear itself up if only people were nice to each other. CLR refused to face obvious facts, and was almost destroyed in the course of the following year by the people whom it was conciliating, despite their hostility to its purposes.

*The Northern Star* kept silent about this while the damage was being done. It did so because it knew that, if it reported what was happening, the failure to conciliate

Gudgin and his colleagues would be blamed on it. We take Gudgin's *Sunday Times* article as conclusive proof that there was no misunderstanding about his rift with the CLR. There can now be no doubt that he came to disagree fundamentally with its position, since he did not mention the party issue even in the diluted and distorted form given to it by Kate Hoey's *Consensus Now: or is it New Democracy?*

As to the content of his *Sunday Times* article—It was the business of the Westminster, not the Dublin Government, to establish the preconditions of good government in Northern Ireland. The primary condition of good government in the situation established by Partition was to provide the defeated minority in the province with political opportunities to do something other than brood on their defeat and prepare for a future war to reverse it.

The British party-political system was entering a new phase at that juncture, with Labour displacing the Liberals as the second party in the state. Over the next half-century there was intense party-political conflict on a class basis over the issue of socialist reconstruction of many of the basic conditions of life for the mass of the people. It is probable that, if the Six Counties had not been excluded from that conflict, a progressively increasing proportion of the people here would have been drawn into it. But they were excluded. And that exclusion made it inevitable that the national blocs in the province would remain intact, and that 'polit-

ics' would be mere communal conflict, unrelated to the issue of how the state should be governed.

The essential difference between Scotland and Northern Ireland with relation to the Union is that the Scots have maintained the Union merely by participating in the party-politics of the state—spitting on the Crown in the process if they felt inclined to, as millions of them did—while in Northern Ireland it is not possible to participate in the politics of the state, and it is possible to express political consent to continuing within the United Kingdom only by the ceremonial Jingoism of aristocracy and royalty.

We assume that Gudgin is familiar with this argument—it has been set out often enough this past ten years and more—and that he rejects it, and prefers that in Northern Ireland "*the Union*" should have the exclusive political form of Jingoistic imperial symbolism which, on sufficient historical grounds, repels the Catholic community *en masse*. And we suggest therefore that his demand that the Government should become assertively Unionist is highly unreasonable. Because Westminster has denied the possibility of normal politics to the people of Northern Ireland, it is therefore under moral obligation to be even-handed as between the two communities and their aspirations. Having set up an arrangement which fastens the Catholic community to anti-Partitionism, and persisted with it for three quarters of a century, it would be sheer sadism

to rule out anti-Partitionism as a legitimate form of politics.

The Catholic community will not be fobbed off with some make-believe substitute for politics. But, cut off from any organic connection with the politics by which this state is governed, they will persist in their efforts to establish an organic connection with the state which was their first preference anyway.

And this Government can "assert its support for the union" as strongly as it pleases: its assertions will have no effect, because it has placed society here outside its body politic.

As to Articles 2 & 3 of the Irish Constitution: they were not adopted until sixteen years after the establishment of Northern Ireland. In 1925 the Dublin Government made a formal agreement recognising the legitimacy of Partition. Articles 2 & 3 were adopted in 1937.

Westminster had 16 years after Partition to provide for a realistic framework for good government in Northern Ireland. The 1925 agreement made it easier for it to do so. But it chose to do nothing. Articles 2 & 3 were adopted in the context of systematic misgovernment in Northern Ireland—a mode of government under which the defeated minority of 1921 was denied the possibility of an outlet for its political energy within the politics by which the state was governed. And it is that system of misgovernment, rather than Articles 2 & 3, which has kept Northern Ireland an unstable region of the UK.

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the fact it remains a monopoly.

It is in these elementary areas that NIPSA falls down badly. The union has become so accustomed to garnering in the members subs and avoiding politics that it appears to all the world as a Building Society rather than a union.

Two guest speakers addressed the Conference the General Secretary of NALGO (National and Local Government Officers association) who are to merge into UNISON this year and the General Secretary of NUCPS (National Union of Civil and Public Servants) which itself is the product of a merger. Both speakers extolled the virtues of the increased power and influence their greater size had given them.

The NALGO speaker first paid tribute to the work of NIPSA through the Council of Civil Service Unions and to the unique relationship that had existed between the two, but concluded, to the visible embarrassment of the NIPSA leadership that that relationship had now ended with the crea-

tion of UNISON.

The message was clear — the gloves were off and NIPSA members were to be attracted into the competing union. Given the greater profile of the unions that will make up UNISON and their unashamed involvement in overt politics the omens for NIPSA are not good.

It is no secret that Inez M'Cormick's NUPE (National Union of Public Employees — also to join UNISON) has coveted NIPSA's membership in the Health sector and thus no surprise that she was invited to Conference on the last day in a gesture of friendship. She cannot have been impressed with NIPSA's defence against all-comers that "size isn't everything".

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# THE McMAHON FAMILY MURDERS

## Belfast 1922

### Glenravel Local History Project

Joe Baker

£3.00

THIS VERY well-produced booklet of fifty-six glossy (but unnumbered) pages recounts one of the most notorious incidents in the birth of the Northern Ireland state, the killing of five male members of the publican Owen McMahon's family, and also his manager Edward McKinney, the youngest male in the house, Michael McMahon, eleven years old at the time, escaped. This incident still lives in the folk-memory of Catholic Belfast. Joe Baker brings forward evidence that the killers were members of the RIC/RUC operating out of Brown Square barracks, were organised in a 'Cromwell Club' and that they were led by District Inspector John W Nixon.

The evidence for this and a number of other atrocities is pretty convincing (but it has to be said it is all circumstantial and a fair amount of it is hearsay). For example, the Dublin Ministry of Defence is reported as describing Nixon as being "an arrant coward who never ventures abroad". While one would tend to believe Collins' intelligence officers, this actually means nothing — there was a war situation in Belfast and it would have been the height of stupidity for a serving police officer to "venture abroad". Nixon is described as a coward in other parts of the text, but the text contradicts itself by claiming that he served in various parts of the island, including against Liam Mellows in Galway in 1916.

Nixon, who came from Cavan, was clearly a Unionist extremist; he was elected to the Northern Ireland parliament on an ultra-loyalist ticket in 1929. He was dismissed from the RUC on February 28 1924, fundamentally for his 'ultra' politics. Nixon remained in Stormont until his death in 1949. One of his greatest supporters was William Wilton the wealthy undertaker, so many of Nixon's election processions started and ended on Wilton's premises — it must have been a very odd experience for his supporters. Joe

Baker mentions that a member of the Ulster Unionist Labour Association supported Nixon in 1924, Sam McGuffin offered to stand down and allow Nixon to contest his own seat. In 1945 Samuel Magrew of the UULA stood against him, but was defeated (the constituency was Woodvale, north-west Belfast).

These small facts indicate that Joe Baker is seriously attempting to be even-handed, his attitude towards the behaviour of the Free State and London governments are not "ideological" in any sense, they simply take the line that if papers have been allowed to remain in the archives then what is in them is probably accurate.

This contrasts with the introduction by a Brendan McMahon, who writes that the McMahon family were killed because they were getting above their "station", and that atrocities have been perpetrated against Catholics since the Plantation. And "The IRA were busy shooting RIC men and soldiers, and bombing businesses throughout Ireland, [is this latter accurate? - NS] this led to a great deal of fear among northern Unionists, and they encouraged their supporters to take revenge against the easiest of targets, their Catholic neighbours."

This encapsulates the current Parker-Knoll Provi line on Northern Ireland history; it is a kind of class struggle, all the Papes are "persons of no property", so are most of the Prods, but being stupid, they think they're a cut above the Papes.

The booklet also contains a list of the victims, the seventh, and first Protestant, is "Alexander McGoran, Protestant, Aged 25, 5 Tralee Street. Shot dead by military and buried in Milltown by Catholics." It would be very interesting to know what exactly is the story behind that short item. (another Protestant victim of the military is reported as having been buried by Catholics — but this time in the City Cemetery) The complier (presumably Joe Baker) is as even-handed in his descriptions of how people died as can be expected. A straightforward anti-Protestant atrocity by the IRA (May 19 1922) is recounted. The descriptions are written in pure Belfast: a number of people are said to have been "Took from his home...", "...threw a bomb at Catholics in the Short Strand, the bomb was threw back killing...", "this attack was watched by RIC, the Specials and the military who were standing on the other side of the bridge and who done nothing to help."

It is hard to understand why this booklet was written, it might have been a better idea to concentrate on the housing or industry in north Belfast (the Glenravel in the title refers to an area of to the New Lodge not the County Antrim village. It's an odd name for what must be an overwhelmingly Catholic group. Glenravel Street used to be RUC headquarters, and the street led directly to the only British Army barracks in Belfast proper.

It is difficult to avoid writing of violence in telling the tale of Belfast, but if the story of the McMahon tragedy had to be told it is as well it was told by Joe Baker and not someone with an axe to grind.

# "Size isn't everything..."

THE ANNUAL Conference of the Northern Ireland Public Service Alliance (NIPSA) was held in the first week of June. As ever it was to have all the appearance of a gathering of dedicated radicals out to secure the downfall of the Tories and Capitalism itself. To the seasoned observer however the lack of substance is obvious.

The Union is governed by an Alliance Council elected from the membership who in turn appoint the General Secretary and its staff. In cold reality the General Secretary and his deputies wield considerable power over the determination of the composition of that Council. Branches of the union known to be biddable are routinely approached before Conference with lists of approved candidates and of course a blacklist of Broad Left candidates who are to be avoided like the plague — for the good of the movement of course.

In one branch indeed a debate ran for some time to determine whether or not the branches Ad Hoc policy of not voting for Broad Left candidates applied also to the wife of a known leftie!

Once at Conference everyone of

course is a raging opponent of the Tories, despite the Union's consistent refusal to even allow debate on the demand that the Labour Party organise here.

It is the Civil and Public service that faces the greatest ideological attacks from this Government. The reticence of NIPSA to become involved in political debate is thus self defeating.

Some very cogent speeches were made at the Conference particularly in respect of the Privatisation of our Water Service and of the NIE (Northern Ireland Electricity). In this respect the trade unions provide the only local forum for rational debate on the far-reaching consequences of Tory dogma. In this instance the perceived selfish interests of the unions actually coincides with the interests and well-

being of the general public.

But it is an indictment of NIPSA that the general public do not know that their money is squandered daily in the Public Sector. Astonishing amounts are paid to consultants hired by Under Secretaries who earn the equivalent of a Cabinet Minister's salary, but refuse to make decisions.

It is an indictment of NIPSA that the public do not know the real cost of Agencies set up under the Tories *Next Steps* initiative. The expenditure for some of these is beyond belief with the Driver and Vehicle Testing Agency even spending money on headscarves and ties for its staff and totem poles outside to reflect their new corporate image, (an image designed by the consultants of course) and despite

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