



The University of Birmingham

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Dear Mr Mullis,

STORMONT NEGOTIATIONS

May I make a suggestion. Difficulties about where discussions take place could be avoided if you followed the procedure by means of which the Austrians and Italians extricated themselves from deadlock when negotiating the South Tyrol settlement. They concentrated on constructing what they called a 'Kalendar' of 'Operations', that is, a List of political events, which ranged from pronouncements in the Austrian and Italian Parliaments to a vote on changes in the Italian Constitution, and making provision for resolving difficulties while the Agreement was being implemented. It was a List of political steps, the underlying principle of which was that each step made possible the taking of the next succeeding ones. 'Kalendar' has its legal sense as in a List of cases, but a list fixing the order in which the events must take place: yet not a time-table, because several steps might be implemented in a few days, whereas any two might have a specified time interval between them.

The great advantage of this method is that any group of political leaders of whatever party or mix of parties could work on constructing the parts of the 'Kalendar' which specially concern them. The complete 'Kalendar' could be pieced together by inserting the agreed portions into the time sequence, and then reviewing it as a whole. With this method nothing is finally agreed until the 'Kalendar' is in its final form and ready for public announcement prior to submission to Parliament/the Dail, or on some other agreed earlier occasion. And no practical step is implemented until the 'Kalendar' is set in motion by joint pronouncements of both governments. May I try to make the principle of a 'Kalendar' clear by considering examples?

I assume that proposals now under discussion for devolution of government mean that prior decisions have been made that government from London, as at present, or from Dublin, as has been proposed, are incompatible with peace in Ulster. Devolved government in the North also implies prior decisions on how the Departments of the provincial administration will be organised. For example, to take a common rule in such circumstances, is it, or would it be agreed that the chairmen of departments should have deputies who belong to the other community? The calling of the first provincial elections would be a later step, made possible by all the earlier ones. The decision on devolution is a very far-reaching one and arrived at after years of suffering; the administrative rule I have referred to seems minor in comparison, but it involves a principle essential to maintaining peaceful relations.

I trust those brief illustrations will explain the idea of the 'Kalendar' sufficiently. I should be willing to discuss it further in Stormont, London or Dublin with anyone. I have been waiting for 20 years for the present negotiations to take place. Millions of people, quite literally, are hoping and praying for your success.

Sincerely, Yours
T. Joseph Pickvance