

PROPOSALS FOR A COUNCIL OF IRELAND

by THE SOCIAL DEMOCRATIC AND LABOUR PARTY

1. PLACE

The Council of Ireland should have a permanent meeting place. We would recommend that this meeting place should be in Armagh and that there should be a permanent Headquarters which would house the Secretariat of the Council of Ireland.

2. INSTITUTIONS

1. Council of Ministers

A Council of Ministers should be the Chief decision making body of the Council of Ireland. Its membership should be drawn equally from the Northern Ireland Executive and from the Irish Government and there should be five representatives from each side. The Council should meet regularly and the Chairmanship should rotate.

2. An Assembly

The Assembly of the Council of Ireland should also be drawn equally from the Northern Ireland Assembly and from Dail Eireann. There should be 25 representatives from each side to constitute the Assembly. The Assembly should have powers to debate all reports placed before it from the Council of Ministers and to pass resolutions. It should also have the power to ask questions and to debate and resolve upon any issue that comes under the powers of the Council. It should have the power to form consultative Committee and to propose an increase in the powers of the Council of Ireland. Its members should be paid.

3. Secretariat

The Secretariat should be in essence the Civil Service of the Council of Ireland and it should be independent of the Civil Services North and South. Its Chief Officer should be a Secretary General and the powers of the Secretariat should be largely those of a Civil Service to initiate and formulate policy for presentation and decision to a Council of Ministers. It should also be the Body which implements the decisions of the Council of Ministers.

4. An All-Ireland Court

One of the institutions of the Council of Ireland should be a Court with Judges drawn in equal numbers from North and South and with a President appointed by the European Court of Humane rights. The functions of this Court should be initially to interpret the Laws and



Orders passed and made by the Council. It should also be the Court of Human Rights for the whole Country to which any citizen could appeal against any alleged infringement of Human Rights in any part of Ireland.

✓ 5. There should be an Economic Affairs Committee.

✓ 6. There should also be a Committee of Culture and the Arts.

### 3. FUNCTIONS

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? The Council of Ireland should have exclusive Executive Functions in certain fields. It should also have the power to harmonise structure laws and services in both parts of Ireland as well as a consultative and advisory role. The power for the Council of Ireland to evolve and add to its powers by agreement should be specifically built into it and the British Government should make it clear in a Declaration that it would place no obstacles in the way of such evolution provided agreement is reached by the Council Members. The Council should exercise exclusive Executive Functions for the whole of Ireland in such matters as are of immediate common concern to both parts of the island. Some of these functions would include matters like Tourism, Electricity, Regional Development, Telecommunications as well as having a major role in the control of Police in both parts of the Island. A detailed list of the exclusive Executive functions of the Council and the services that it would harmonise can be supplied later.

### 4. FINANCE

X It is imperative that the Council of Ireland should be independently financed and have its own sources of finance in addition to Grants that it would receive from time to time from the Government in Dublin and the Northern Executive.

This is an outline of our basic proposals in relation to the creation of a Council of Ireland. This outline can be supplemented in detail at discussions.