

Northern Ireland Region

30 Floral Gardens, Belfast, BT 36 7SE
Tel / Fax: (01232) 772436



Dr John Alderdice
Castle Buildings
Stormont

13 March 1996

Dear Mr Alderdice

As we have now reached the end of this part of the process, I take the opportunity of forwarding for your information, a copy of Democratic Left's submission to the Secretary of State.

My party members also wish to say how much they appreciated and benefited from our exchange of views on the occasion of our visit to your offices.

On my own behalf, I want to thank Eileen, David and Steven for finding time at such short notice to meet our delegation.

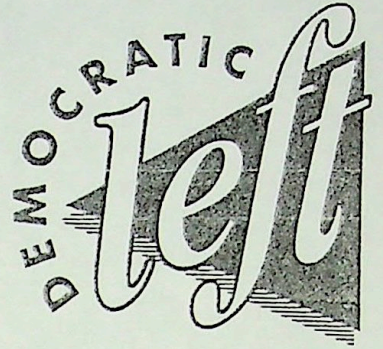
I remain

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "PJ McClean".

PJ McClean
Chairperson Democratic Left (Northern Ireland)

Northern Ireland Region
30 Floral Gardens, Belfast, BT 36 7SE
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*PROPOSALS FOR THE ELECTIVE
PROCESS*

Submitted to the Secretary of State

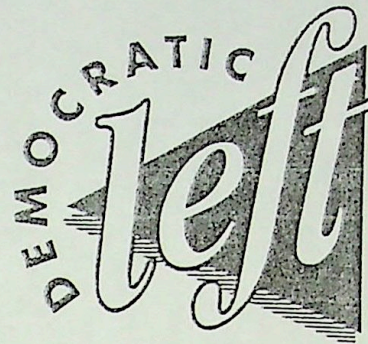
on

Wednesday, 13 March 1996

at

Castle Buildings, Stormont

Northern Ireland Region
30 Floral Gardens, Belfast, BT 36 7SE
Tel / Fax: (01232) 772436



DEMOCRATIC LEFT'S PROPOSALS FOR THE ELECTIVE PROCESS

Democratic Left recognises that this Elective Process presents the people of Northern Ireland with a new and unique opportunity of replacing the tribal politics of the past. The raw, male dominated, tribal head-counts of past elections helped to consolidate the rigid "them and us" sectarian entrenchment out of which came the last 25 years of murder and mayhem.

Democratic Left believes that the people of Northern Ireland are ready to help change that political culture and replace the politics of sectarian division with a more modern approach towards the politics of accommodation and conciliation.

It was against this hopeful background that in 1995 Democratic Left proposed the idea of an Elected Conciliation Conference as a means of bringing the political culture of Northern Ireland into line with the more progressive politics of a modern European country in the 21st Century. In the belief that this Elective Process will lead to the same desired result, Democratic Left is pleased to put forward these elective proposals.

THE ELECTIVE PROCESS

Democratic Left envisages:

- a 100-member body to be elected under a list system using Northern Ireland as one single constituency;
- the lower threshold of election should be that 1% of the vote is equal to one elected member;
- in such an election, the names of the parties only should appear on the ballot sheet;
- successfully elected members in that election must be chosen in order from a list submitted to the returning officer prior to voting. This list must conform to a 60 / 40 gender quota.

THE ROLE OF ELECTED CONFERENCE

Democratic Left sees the elected conference as being able to:

- determine the lifespan of the conference itself. We suggest a minimum of 12 months with a 2 year maximum. Whatever the time limit, cross party endorsement at both London and Dublin is required so that the conference will not terminate should a change of government occur in either jurisdiction;
- act as a conciliatory body between polarised political positions in its plenary session;
- serve as a vehicle for transmission of ideas between public participation and political elites;
- act as a political resource by commissioning studies in an investigative process. By way of example, it might commission studies on the working of local government, policing, the economy, job creation or any other agreed subject;
- be a testing board for approval or rejection of aspects of the negotiation process referred to it before public approval is sought via referendum;
- agree on methods and procedures of arriving at decisions. We suggest weighted majority decision making at all levels which are negotiable between 65 - 75%;
- determine the relationship between the negotiating body and the full elected body. We would suggest that decisions arrived at by negotiations must go back to the plenary session to be approved by weighted majority voting;

- address political relationships across a four stranded approach, namely internal relationships within Northern Ireland, relationships between North and South, relationships between Dublin and London and relationships between Belfast and London;
- submit a finalised report to the Secretary of State.

COMPOSITION AND SIZE OF NEGOTIATION TEAMS

- 1 Democratic Left favours the composition of negotiation teams from among each parties' elected representatives but with the provision that such teams include, or be assisted by, researchers. All views must be treated equitably (parity of esteem).
- 2 The size of negotiation teams could be unlimited, for example, 1, 2 or 3 people but with a maximum limit, - perhaps 3 negotiators and 3 researchers - on the size of teams fielded for any 1 meeting.
- 3 To suit smaller parties, that is, those with 1 or 2 representatives, the negotiation timetable should be arranged to facilitate their participation in all negotiations.
- 4 All Party Negotiations must be set in motion by 10 June 1996.
- 5 The procedural steps towards negotiations should be as contained in the communique of February 28:

“As the Communique of 28 February explained, both Governments agree that “ ... negotiations should include all relevant parties which establish a commitment to exclusively peaceful methods and which have shown that they abide by the democratic process” and accordingly hope that all parties with an electoral mandate will be able to participate in All Party negotiations.”

REFERENDUM

We are not advocates of a Referendum. But if a Referendum is the preferred majority option, Democratic Left would support the notion of a solely one question referendum. That question should mandate support for a process to create a Conciliatory Political Process based upon the repudiation and condemnation of paramilitary violence in pursuit of political objectives.