

17 February 1998,

David Christopher Esq.,
Chairman,
Trinity Independent Young Unionists,
54, Trinity square,
Lombard Street,
DUBLIN 2.

Thank you very much for your kind letter. I enjoyed my visit to Trinity, as I always do. I agree with you that a political settlement is now very possible, but that this is not the same as a peace settlement. I am increasingly optimistic about the former, but not the latter, but we will continue to work, within the bounds of our principles, for the 'healing of the wounds' to which you so rightly refer.

David Christopher,
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Dublin 2,
Southern Ireland
(**confidential**)
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Dear John Alderdice,

I am writing to congratulate you on your excellent speech made to the College Historical Society here in Trinity College last Friday (6th Feb). It was heartening to see such an articulate exploration of the interesting questions raised by Adrian Langan's paper.

I was particularly impressed by your reference back to the Gladstonian debates on the first and second Home Rule bills. Your assertion that, had home rule / devolution been carried back then we might well have both a United Ireland and a United Kingdom today, is one which I, as a Southern unionist, would strongly support. Sentiments such as these would be close to the hearts of many modern-day unionists and Redmondites in Southern Ireland.

Last Tuesday, in a debate at the College Law Society, John Bruton envisaged the development on the British Isles of what he termed "*multipolar, variable geometry federalism*". Whilst the term itself is rather a cumbersome one, I do believe it is a model which can accommodate both the devolution plans on the mainland and the various peace proposals being mooted for both parts of this island.

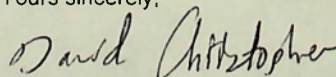
I would be most interested in hearing your views on this idea, and on the recently published "Heads of Agreement" paper. As a unionist I do not pretend to be completely in support of the HoA; however I do view it as having the potential for a cross-community settlement between the moderates of both traditions in NI. From a Southern Unionist perspective the proposal for a Council of the Isles is highly encouraging.

I must confess however to being dismayed by the manner in which both governments appear to have retreated from the HoA in the face of the IRA statement. Similarly I shared the concern expressed by members of your party at the meeting between Mo Mowlam and the UFF in the Maze prison. I am growing increasingly confident that the present process can lead to a settlement, but increasingly pessimistic that such a settlement will be a peaceful one. No matter what is proposed in NI there will always be some group, somewhere, that will oppose it – and, in the context of NI that group will most likely be armed to the teeth. To my mind what is important is to build a settlement on the common ground shared by moderates in both communities. Would you agree?

Finally, might I congratulate you on your courageous call for a "*healing of the wounds*" which were opened up between Southern Ireland and our nearest neighbour in 1922. I believe that a strong neofunctionalist dynamic exists South of the border nowadays that will accommodate such a healing process. Who knows where this might lead?

My apologies for the length of this missive – I look forward to your reply with interest.

Yours sincerely,



DAVID CHRISTOPHER
(Chair, Trinity Independent Young Unionists)

ps I am enclosing a copy of our society newsletter, *An tAontalocht* which I hope you find interesting...

an the unionist Aontaíocht

The Newsletter of Trinity College Young Unionists

Building the Peace

We look back on the visit of Chris Mc Gimpsey to the Young Unionists...

Recently the Young Unionists here in Trinity College Dublin held their first public meeting with Dr Chris McGimpsey, a prominent UUP Councillor from Belfast, as our guest speaker.

Despite what seemed to have been a concerted campaign against the society, which led to our posters getting torn down all over College, around 40 people turned up for the meeting, which all agreed was a fantastic turnout for a political meeting held on a wet and windy Tuesday evening!

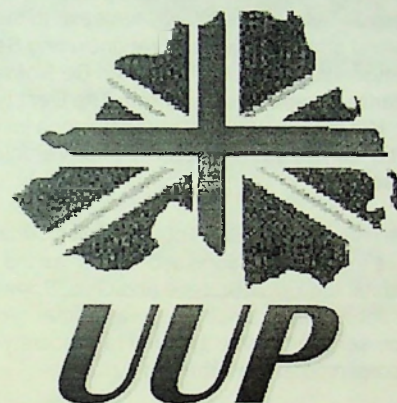
Running just 5 minutes behind schedule, the Vice-Chair Daniel King called the meeting to order and invited the Chair, David Christopher, to speak to the society. Following the brief address, which welcomed members to the society, the main business of the evening began.

The Treasurer read out a brief Treasurer's report, which was followed by a tribute from the Chair to Andrew Craig, who was resigning as Secretary. Following the unopposed election of Ashley Ekins to that post the meeting began in earnest as Cllr McGimpsey was invited to speak on the topic of the "Economic Realities of the Union".

Dr McGimpsey spoke at length to the society, and effectively exploded the nationalist myth that a United Ireland would ever be economically feasible. Using comprehensive sets of facts and figures he pointed out that living standards in Northern Ireland were no less than 40% higher than those in the South, asserting that both the Protestant and Catholic poor of West Belfast would be unable to survive outside of the United Kingdom.

Upon the conclusion of public business the meeting adjourned to dinner at Captain Americas, washed down with a refreshing few pints at O'Neills pub on Suffolk Street, by now something of a traditional watering hole for young unionists.

Southern Unionism? Well, we haven't gone away you know...



*The Ulster Unionist Party -
building a lasting settlement*

For the Fallen - Trinity Remembers

Ashley Ekins, secretary of the Young Unionists, examines Remembrance Day...

Remembrance Sunday is that time of year when the nations of Europe and the world--and no less Ireland--remember their war dead. Many events took place in Dublin to mark the weekend of Remembrance Sunday (7th. to 9th. of November last). The weekend began with Mass at the City Quay Church at 8.30pm on Friday evening; and on Saturday the annual Wreath Laying Ceremony took place at the War Memorial Park at Islandbridge.

On Remembrance Sunday itself, the Annual Service of Remembrance was held at St. Patrick's Cathedral. This was a large event, with a full cathedral, and was attended by many representatives of the various branches of the Royal British Legion throughout the world, and including the Republic of Ireland branch of the RBL.

I saw many Irish veterans who served in British forces during the First and the Second World wars, who were there to pay their respects to their fallen comrades. The Dean of St. Patrick's Cathedral, the Very Reverend Maurice Stewart, and all those present, were happy to welcome the then president-elect, Mrs. Mary McAleese to the occasion. Also, I noticed several other politicians there, including Senator David Norris, Democratic Left leader Proinsias De Rossa, and former Fine Gael defence minister Seán Barrett. The Deputy Lord Mayor of Dublin, Mr. Michael Barrett was present, along with other dignitaries; and the British ambassador to Dublin, Mrs. Veronica Sutherland took the Reading.

I believe that members of the Jewish community were there; and organisations such as the Scouts, the Boys' Brigade and Girls' Brigade, the St. John's Ambulance; and many other groups representing diverse areas of Irish society were represented at the occasion.

Of course, we too, in Trinity College, remembered those members of our university who were killed in the wars. The 10.45am Choral Eucharist in College Chapel included a procession, and a special College Act of Remembrance and wreath laying ceremony, at the Roll of Honour war memorial in the 1937 Reading Room.

Remembrance Sunday is a time when all of us remember those who died in past wars; and a time, too, when we turn our thoughts to those who are presently involved in conflicts around the world. It is no less a time when we remember, particularly--and give the credit that is due--to the defence forces of the Irish State. I have in mind those Irish troops who are involved in UN peace keeping work in the Lebanon, or elsewhere; and also the civilian forces of law and order in Ireland, including the ambulance services, the Fire Brigade, and the Garda Síochána; who are continuously engaged in the "hidden war" against crime, the drugs barons, and the terrorist gunmen within this jurisdiction.

So I would like to think that Remembrance Sunday could be kept by us all--not just by unionists, or Protestants, or those who have a liking for religion or ceremonies. It's a day that can be kept by everyone, and should serve as an annual reminder of the tragedy of war--and most particularly, our never-ending desire for peace.

"Service not Self"

snippets

UK Passports?

Stormont Development Minister Paul Murphy was recently heard commenting on the BBC that he was in favour of granting rights of British citizenship to those in the South who want it.

Such a move is likely to be welcomed by those campaigning for parity of esteem between the two minorities on the island.

Dublin UKUP

Many a prominent Dublin Unionist was spotted at the recent UKUP conference in Bangor. The UKUP is the only NI party which gives people outside NI full membership - a fact reflected in the fact that Dublin-based Dr Conor Cruise O'Brien is Party President.

YUs Online!

Since going online last autumn the Trinity YU website has received more than 3,000 visits - far in excess of any other group in Trinity.

The website can be found at <http://www.csc.tcd.ie/~unionist>

Stormont: *Building the Future ???*

An *tAontaíocht* presents two divergent opinions on the controversial talks process at Stormont

It is perhaps difficult during these emotional times to argue the case for continued UUP participation at the talks in Stormont. The punishment beatings are continuing, various "breakaway" terrorist groups on both sides are up to their old tricks, and it seems barely a day passes without a prominent Sinn Féin reminding us all of the IRAs wish to "go back to what they know best".

Yet continue at the talks we must - the UUP are holding the line - and so long as they do so there is at least the possibility of a lasting settlement arising out of a deal between the constitutional parties in NI. The Heads of Agreement proposals weren't perfect. But they were a start. The manner in which both governments have retreated from them in the face of an IRA threat fills me, as a Unionist, with despair.

At the end of the day the result of the talks process will need to be put to a referendum in NI. I, for one, very much hope that we unionists will be on the yes side when the time comes for that referendum. However, I am a realist, and I recognise that this prospect is unlikely. Many would argue that to defeat any Frameworks-type proposal we Unionists are going to need the support of the vast numbers of "unionists

with a small u"; people who, whilst not particularly interested in politics still constitute the crucial pro-union pro-peace "middle ground" that we're going to need in that referendum.



Flying the Flag for Peace

These are difficult days - but it is now time we all moved forward. If a settlement is to occur it must be between moderate nationalists and moderate unionists. On the verge of a new millenium we surely now need to move beyond history - to move beyond the failures of Stormont, beyond the shortcomings of the Frameworks Document. The UUP have taken a magnanimous risk for peace through entering these talks - it's now time for nationalists and republicans to recognise that and to engage positively with the UUP team - for the sake of all of us on these divided islands. It's time for a revolution of the mind, and Unionists need to play a part in that revolution. For we all have a part to play in helping to resolve our shared problems. It's time for peace.

David Christopher (chair of Trinity Unionists)

Why not talk to terrorists? Why? Because to do so would be to accept punishment beatings, intimidation and murder. Unionists must reject this flawed process, reject ALL terrorists and look to a better future.

The UKUP and DUP participated in talks, and discussed Northern Ireland's future with democrats. They left because the governments allowed parties into talks without demanding weapons decommissioning. Negotiations with terrorist backed groups are talks with a gun to your head. If they don't get their demands, they return to violence.



A Better Future

The basis for talks was the Frameworks Documents. It was founded, like the 'Heads of Agreement' document on three strands: 1 - a devolved, power sharing assembly for NI, 2 - north - south institutions with harmonising powers, while strand 3 proposes a 'council of the Isles'. This is a recipe for disaster.

Devolution has been tried and failed. Power sharing was tried in places like Lebanon and Cyprus and led to gridlock and conflict. North - South institutions would allow areas such as culture, education and the economy to be harmonised between north and south, providing the political and cultural framework for a united Ireland. The council of the isles is worthless. I am a strong supporter of a genuine council, like the Scandinavian model, but this council is just a twice yearly talking shop.

The plan is flawed, but can it bring peace? Should we accept a bad settlement for peace? While Unionists want peace, Republicans do not. SF have rejected the 'Heads of Agreement' document. If SF reject it, then the IRA will start its' murder campaign once more - the only reason worth accepting such a settlement is for peace. If we can't have peace, then why accept it?

In NI, we must look to an agenda of equality, social justice, and legislative and political integration. Legislative, so that people have equal rights throughout the UK, political, so that all have a say in government. This would move us away from sectarian politics, towards real issues - jobs, healthcare, housing, equal citizenship and social justice for ALL our people.

Jason Docherty (UKUP liaison with southern Unionists)

Making a *SPLASH!*

Trinity Young Unionists have been making quite a splash in the media; since launching ourselves publicly last May we've had features about us in or on...

- the "Times" and the "Sunday Times"
- Radio Ireland's "Daybreak"
- The Irish News
- BBC Radio Ulster's "Talkback"
- the "Orange Standard"
- local stations across Ireland

Not bad for a few months work - and who can tell what 1998 will bring?

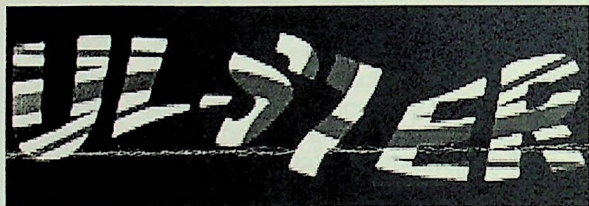
Jeffrey
Donaldson

(MP for Lagan Valley)



will address
the DU Independent Unionist
Society on
February 23rd 1998

Ussher Theatre, Arts Block, 7pm
All Welcome



THE TALKS:
sell out or compromise?

See Page 3

Did You Know...

That this newsletter is making history?

Believe it or not, but the last time a pro-Union newsletter was published South of the border was in 1923 when "Notes from Ireland" ceased publication.

That newsletter was the official organ of the old *Irish Unionist Alliance* - the Southern party which campaigned against Sinn Fein's plans for independence.

The *IUA* had it's headquarters at 109 Grafton Street - which today is occupied by a rather nice newsagents.

Get Active!

As one of the fastest growing societies in Trinity College we're constantly looking for new members - so if you'd like to help us out, or just to be a part of the society do get in touch with us...

- **By email:** unionist@csc.tcd.ie
- **By phone:** 086 8211625 (ask 4 Dave)
- **By the WWW:** www.csc.tcd.ie/~unionist
- **By post to:**

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c/o C.S.C.,
House 6,
Trinity College,
Dublin 2

"Building the Future Together" - DU Ind Unionists