

FROM: ANGELA DULLAGHAN
PS/MICHAEL ANCRAM
27 FEBRUARY 1996

ASST/
SEC
29/2/96
23 FEB 1996
C.C.R.U.

x
cc: PS/Michael Ancram (DENI, B&L) - B/T
PS/PUS (B&L) - B
PS/Sir David Fell - B
Mr Thomas - B
Mr Bell - B
Mr Leach - B
Mrs Brown - B
Mr Watkins - B
Mr Maccabe - B
Mr Caravan 29.7
Mr Stephens - B
Ms Checksfield - B
Mr Lamont, RID - B
HMA, Dublin - B

~~Mr. Carson..~~
~~Mr. Jones..~~
S. 1
3..

PS/Secretary of State (B&L) - B

Mr Jones 2. 1/3..

THE IRISH FAMINE: ECUMENICAL SERVICE

The Minister was grateful for a copy of Mr Watkins' note of 27 February. He is content with the draft reply attached to that minute.

SIGNED

ANGELA DULLAGHAN
PS/Michael Ancram
OAB Ext 6488
27 February 1996

ANCRAM/DEH/1205

DJW/28/2

FROM: D J WATKINS
D/CENT SEC
DATE: 27 FEBRUARY 1996

ASST/ SEC 28/12
27 FEB 1996
C.C.R.U.

CC: PS/Michael Ancram (DENI, B&L) - B
PS/PUS (B&L) - B
PS/Sir David Fell - B
Mr Thomas - B
Mr Bell - B
Mr Leach - B
Mrs Brown - B
Mr Maccabe - B
Mr Canavan 19.2
Mr Stephens - B
Ms Checksfield - B
Mr Lamont, RID - B
HMA, Dublin - B

PA
Mr Carson
29
2..

PS/Secretary of State (B&L) - B

THE IRISH FAMINE : ECUMENICAL SERVICE

1. Your note of 22 February asked for a draft letter to the FCO with the recommendation that we should not now support the proposal for an ecumenical service in Liverpool to commemorate the Irish Famine.
2. A draft letter is attached.

Mr Carson..
For "Famine" file..
29
2..

DJW

D J WATKINS
SC 28151

DJW/RJ/38452

FOR SIGNATURE BY PS/SECRETARY OF STATE

Dominick Chilcott Esq
Private Secretary to the
Foreign Secretary
Foreign & Commonwealth Office
Downing Street
LONDON
SW1A 2AL

February 1996

THE IRISH FAMINE : ECUMENICAL SERVICE

I wrote to you on 14 February regarding the case for an ecumenical service to be held in Liverpool to commemorate the Irish Famine. At that stage, we believed that there would be advantage in pursuing the proposal. We have now, however, been re-considering the idea in the light of changing circumstances.

We have taken soundings from Church leaders in Northern Ireland. Archbishop Eames of the Church of Ireland would be very reluctant to take part in such an event. He recalls that his participation in an ecumenical Famine service in the Republic some months ago was strongly criticised by some local Anglicans. Eames fears that Canon Nicholas Frayling, the Rector of Liverpool who first floated a similar idea 2 years ago, and Bishop David Sheppard would favour a highly "penitential" service, with HMG taking the role of penitent. Dr Ross of the Presbyterian Church has also expressed strong doubts, his view being that a service would be divisive.

Given the breakdown of the IRA's ceasefire, and especially their second bomb in London last week, Sir Patrick believes that we need to have particular regard to these concerns. In the present climate, especially if the IRA's bombing campaign on the mainland were to continue (and we cannot yet have any confidence that it will end soon), the holding of an ecumenical service in connection with

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the Irish Famine would be virtually certain to do more harm than good. In view of this, the recommendation of my Secretary of State is that we should not now support the proposal.

C D KYLE

DJW/RJ/38452

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FROM: C G MACCABE
POLITICAL AFFAIRS DIVISION
21 February 1996

Mr. Casos..
Mr. James
file..
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23/2
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22 FEB 1996
C.C.R.U.

- cc PS/Michael Ancram (DENI, B&L) - B
- PS/PUS (B&L) - B
- PS/Sir David Fell - B
- Mr Thomas - B
- Mr Bell - B
- Mr Watkins - B
- Mr Leach - B
- Mrs Brown - B
- Mr ~~Canavan~~ *23.2* - B
- Mr Stephens - B
- Ms Checksfield - B
- Mr Lamont, RID - B
- HMA, Dublin - B

PS/Secretary of State (B&L) - B

McCoy
23/2..

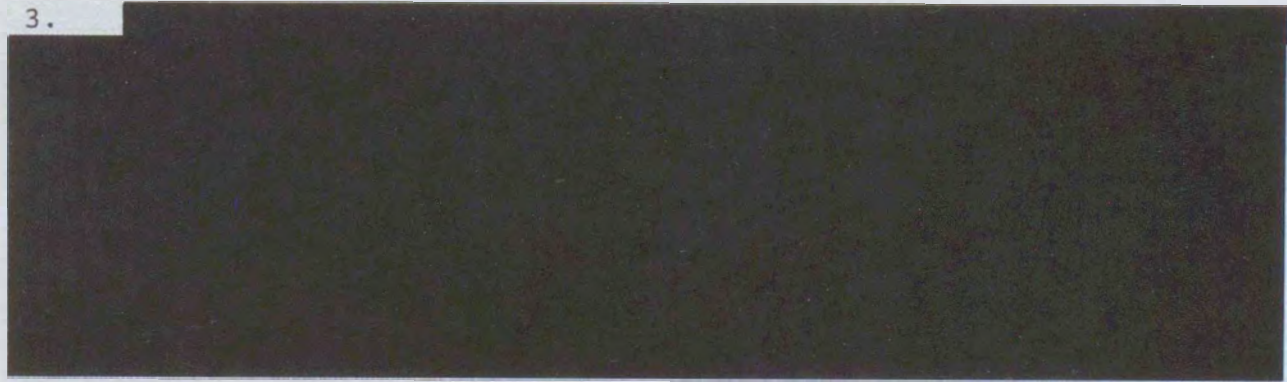
THE IRISH FAMINE: ECUMENICAL SERVICE

As Mr Kyle asked in his minute of 14 February, I have sounded out Archbishop Eames and Dr Ross about the proposal for an ecumenical service in Liverpool. Neither is enthusiastic.

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2. Archbishop Eames had heard a rumour about what was afoot following his participation in an ecumenical Famine service at Tuam some months ago. His involvement on that occasion had been criticised by some local Anglicans and, chastened by this experience, he would be very reluctant to participate in a similar event in Liverpool.

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4. If anything, Dr Ross is even more dubious. He thinks a service would be divisive and, like Archbishop Eames, he would be reluctant to take part should it be arranged before his Moderatorship ends in June. His successor, the Reverend David Allen of New Row Church Coleraine, who has already put his reservations about ecumenical services on the record, is likely to take an even tougher line.

5. I have already conveyed the gist of this minute to the Secretary of State. Would he like to have the views of these two leading churchmen conveyed to the Foreign Secretary, with a recommendation that we should not now support the proposal? If so, Mr Watkins stands ready to provide a further draft letter.

CA

C G MACCABE
SH EXT 27085

C O N F I D E N T I A L

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