

DUP Submission

1. The DUP submission has at least the merit of endeavouring to link proposals to the agreed list of principles and provides some arguments to show that an attempt has been made to address SDLP concerns.
2. If the task before us was that of drawing up recommendations for the conduct of affairs for District Councils we might be happy to view the submission as a serious attempt to meet minority party needs for recognition and representation.
3. We are not dealing with District Council reform, nor are we just dealing with mechanisms for minority party participation in an administration. This may be an element of our business, but by no means the most important element. We are addressing the problems of a deeply divided society with different political allegiances linked to how the different sections of that society perceive their identity.
4. After all the talk and listening we had hoped for fresh thinking on the part of all of the parties around this table. Indeed following the tabling of the DUP paper of the 4 May, 'Underlying Principles', we had expected a lot of fresh thinking. That paper emphasised the need for 'innovation', 'acceptance by both sides of the community', no '1992 models of a past failed system', 'maximum delegation of authority' etc..
5. The expectations created by such statements have, regrettably, not been realised because we do not regard the submission before us as living up to the expectations created by the DUP's own paper, much less to the agreed Common Themes and Common Principles to which we all subscribe.
6. Significantly the DUP submission contains no proposals as to how all of the wider relationships impinging on the people of NI might be accommodated, not just in their external manifestation but in terms of their local NI manifestation.
7. The British relationship is acknowledged and we would not have expected otherwise in a unionist submission. However, no reference is made to accommodating the wider relationships on this island. Indeed there is studied avoidance of any mention of the fact that NI is part of the island of Ireland and that relationships with the rest of the island are essentially a two-way process. It is difficult to avoid asking if this avoidance of any reference to relationships with the rest of the island is not, in itself, highlighting the very fundamental problem that has to be

addressed in the course of our Talks, ie the failure of Unionists and Nationalists in Ireland to accommodate themselves to each other

*in
N* all previous efforts to resolve our problems.

8. With respect to ^{the} main proposals ~~themselves~~, the best that can be said for them is that they contain a set of safeguards which however useful in themselves are no more than that, a set of safeguards. They represent what can be described as a slide-rule approach to the politics of a divided society. They also amount to a not very hidden form of majority rule in which any representatives of minority parties would be no more than couriers for their committees, able to voice dissent, as the submission indicates, but achieve little else. This is not the kind of approach necessary at the highest level of politics to allow for a more free and more open cooperation and interaction between the representatives of our communities.

9. On the other main feature of the DUP proposals, the avoidance of an Executive, it is difficult to see how in a situation in which there would be 'maximum delegated authority' that the proper coordination of business, the determination of general policy, the allocation of resources etc. etc. could be managed efficiently and effectively in the absence of some executive like body.