

CAIN: John Hume: Speeches, Statements, and Articles — Some background information about the project

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Introduction

The following is a note about the section on CAIN (compiled during 2020) which contains information on a selection of John Hume's speeches, statements, articles, etc. This note also provides some brief details about how the work on this section was carried out.

How the project began

The idea for this project began with a donation from **Professor Sean Farren** of source materials that he had collected during the research on his book (**John Hume: In his own words**. Four Courts Press; 2017). During his time as a senior member of the SDLP, Professor Farren had built up a personal collection of documents produced by members of the party, including copies of statement and speeches. Sean Farren donated the most relevant materials to CAIN in the hope that staff might find the time to digitise the materials and make the documents available in the Archive. Dr Melaugh thanks Professor Farren for his assistance with this project.

It was felt that, given the important role John Hume had played during his political career, the full text of his speeches, statements, articles, etc., would be of use to users of the CAIN Archive. It is also hoped that by doing this work it might assist in the preservation of the source documents.

An application was made to the Reconciliation Fund, Department of Foreign Affairs, Dublin in September 2019. An award of funding was made in December 2019 and work on the project began in 2020. The funding covered an element of staff time, spread over the year 2020. Thus, the work on the project was carried out on a part-time basis.



The limitations of the project

The project was intended to make a selection of John Hume's speeches, etc., available via CAIN. The selection was to be based on the files donated by Sean Farren, and some materials that CAIN held. During the project, staff within Special Collections, Ulster University Library, Magee campus, provided permission to CAIN to access part of the John Hume Archive. Some additional materials were also identified at various websites.

So, the project was limited in the number of speeches, etc., that could be located and the amount of time that was available to do the work. While this is not a comprehensive collection, it is envisaged that the collection could be expanded in the future as more information is uncovered.

Obviously, it would have been advantageous if there had been a contemporaneous collection of relevant materials. In trying to catalogue the output of John Hume, the project was faced with incomplete information and problems accessing relevant materials.

As is the case with many leaders of political parties, John Hume did have colleagues who assisted with the writing of speeches and statements. However, it was not possible in the time available to find out who might have produced early drafts of particular speeches and statements. Given that John Hume would have made changes to the draft text, and given he was the one who delivered the speech, he is acknowledged as the principal author for most of the items listed.

The project was also carried out during the global Covid-19 pandemic, which reduced physical access to potential materials.

The nature of the content

John Hume's views on the conflict and political matters, were delivered in many different ways. At one end of the spectrum were the important, set-piece speeches based on a prepared script. At the other end were unscripted comments made in response to questions from journalists in informal settings. Some of Hume's speeches were very detailed covering several topics, some of the statements issued in his name, in response to breaking news, were very short (sometimes only a few sentences). Hume's words were also delivered in a wide range of forums, from parliaments, to party conferences, to summer schools, to outdoor public meetings, to television studios, etc.

The actual content on CAIN is text-based and stored in PDF. There are links to external recordings of John Hume making speeches or being interviewed for television news programmes.

Permissions

The items on the CAIN Archive are being made available for personal study / private research only. Anyone requiring commercial use of the materials would need to contact the current copyright holder(s) for additional permission.

Dr Melaugh thanks the **SDLP** and **Pat Hume** for permission to use the speeches and statements of John Hume in the CAIN Archive.

The nature of the work

The first step was to try to catalogue the items that were available and those that were of potential interest. The materials that could be identified were listed in the existing CAIN Bibliography. The precise date of publication was added (rather than just the year) so that items could be sorted on exact date. The precise date, and even the time of day, that a statement is made can be important in terms of being a response to inter-related events. The items of interest were tagged with the keyword '[John-Hume-Speeches](#)' to make it easier to produce a listing. The main listing is in reverse chronological order.

The next step was to locate existing digital versions of relevant materials. Where items were available at 'permanent' websites, then a link was added to the item but a copy was also made for future reference. Permanent or robust websites include those produced by governments (e.g., the Hansard record of debates at the House of Commons, Westminster, London). Due to the tendency of linked items to disappear, or be moved (thus breaking the link), over time, it was decided to obtain a copy of any items that appeared on sites that were considered to be at risk of disappearing. Some items were available within archives / websites that were located behind paywalls. Where Dr Melaugh had access to the sites, a catalogue entry was made but no link was added to the items because they are not available to most Internet users.

The next step was to scan and digitise the paper copies that were available to CAIN. The paper copies of speeches, etc., ranged in quality from pristine printed copies of speeches with specially produced covers,

to very poor photocopies of speeches which were extremely dark and difficult to read and may also have had part of the text missing. The quality of most items fell within this range. Many of the worst quality items were not used (some of these may have been produced from microfilm copies of newspapers held by libraries). It is hoped that better quality versions might be found and digitised in the future. The decision was taken to scan and use items even if they were somewhat damaged or have very faint text. This was done because it is better to have a poor copy of an item rather than none be available.

Pages were scanned at 600 dpi and stored as TIFF files (for preservation purposes). The TIFF files were then combined as PDF documents. The OCR option was used to make the text visible to search engines. The title and author of the text was added to the (hidden) properties of each PDF file. If the resulting file was large (over 5MB) then a reduced size version was produced. Copies of the PDF files were added to the CAIN Archive. The name and location of the files were recorded in the CAIN Bibliography.

A new section was produced in the CAIN Archive to hold the selection of John Hume's speeches, statements and published articles that he produced during his political career (1969-2004):

https://cain.ulster.ac.uk/john_hume/

This section provides links to the listings of the items, and there is also a search facility. Other relevant information held by CAIN is highlighted.

This section also provides links to relevant materials on other (external) websites. For example, there is a link to the spoken contributions by John Hume at the House of Commons, Westminster, and a link to the video recordings of John Hume held by the RTÉ Archives and which have recently been made available. At the bottom of the section is a listing of the books that have been written about John Hume.

During the development of the resources related to John Hume, CAIN staff were also working on a new design for the CAIN Web site. It was decided to produce a second (draft) version of the John Hume section using the new design:

https://cain.ulster.ac.uk/cain/john_hume/

This draft version is likely to change when the new design is more fully developed for the main CAIN site.

