

NATIONAL ARCHIVES

IRELAND



Reference Code: 2002/8/483

Title: Letter from Hugh J McCann, Secretary in the Department of Foreign Affairs, to Kathleen Gannon, Personal Secretary to the Taoiseach, attaching notes of a conversation he had with the Papal Nuncio regarding Northern Ireland.

Creation Date(s): 19 October, 1971

Level of description: Item

Extent and medium: 2 pages

Creator(s): Department of the Taoiseach

Access Conditions: Open

Copyright: National Archives, Ireland. May only be reproduced with the written permission of the Director of the National Archives.

Cóip de S. 18650^c

TSCH/3: Central registry records



An t-ádhm-choip ar S. 16057

Department of the Taoiseach

ROINN GNÓTHAÍ EACHTRACHA

DEPARTMENT OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS

Foreign

BAILE ÁTHA CLIATH 2

DUBLIN 2

RC

Rinnáil Ánta 5/11/71

19 Deireadh Fómhair 1971

Dear Miss Gannon

Further to your telephone conversation this morning I send herewith two notes of my discussion with the Nuncio this morning in which he dealt with the China question and the question of the North of Ireland.

I should mention that, as he was leaving, the Nuncio made a reference to the fact that he had hoped to have the Taoiseach to dinner in the Nunciature and to invite me for the occasion but that he understood that the Taoiseach was exceptionally busy at the present time.

Yours sincerely

Ádhm-choip

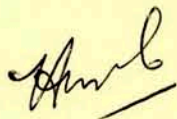
Miss Kathleen Gannon
Personal Secretary to the Taoiseach
Department of the Taoiseach

NOTE

In the course of a call on me about another matter the Nuncio brought up the question of the North of Ireland. He referred to the public references to the unity of the country without violence and urged that this aspect be emphasised less for the time being and that we should concentrate on the implementation of necessary reforms including proportional representation.

The Nuncio stressed that unity will come - it is inevitable. And as for violence this is coming as much from the British Army and the RUC at the present time as it is from those on the minority side. The Nuncio said that 52% of the children in the North are at present Catholic and if these are not forced to emigrate when they grow up at least three Counties would be controlled by Catholics with proportional representation. The way to ensure that this growing Catholic population will not have to emigrate is to concentrate on securing their rights. This is an aspect of the Northern situation on which we would have the sympathy of the entire outside world. The Nuncio spoke bitterly of the recent attitude of the British Government in relation to the North. He described their attitude as cynical and perfidious. They had in recent months made no single helpful political gesture. Cardinal Conway had had lunch with Mr. Heath and had produced to him a dossier giving evidence of the maltreatment of prisoners and yet nothing positive had been done.

The Nuncio repeated his advice of not speaking of unity or or violence but to concentrate on securing the rights of the minority. As I was accompanying him to the door he commented that the Holy See is in frequent contact with British Ministers about the North following on reports which he sends regularly to the Holy See.



19 Deireadh Fómhair 1971