2005

44. Martin Mc Guinness, Republicanism and the implementation of the agreement—a political perspective

Paul Arthur, Republicanism and the implementation of the agreement—an academic perspective

REPUBLICANISM AND THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE AGREEMENT -A POLITICAL PERSPECTIVE

The current difficulties in the peace process need to be addressed as a matter of urgency. Although the two governments claim that the IRA is the only obstacle to a lasting settlement, the reality is otherwise. In December 2004 the DUP walked away from a comprehensive agreement because of their opposition to power sharing and the Good Friday agreement. The answer does not lie in attempts to project republicans as criminals, a failed tactic that has often been attempted in the past. Instead, the causes of political conflict must be tackled, by returning to the core principles of the Good Friday agreement: inclusivity, equality and mutual respect.

REPUBLICANISM AND THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE AGREEMENT -AN ACADEMIC PERSPECTIVE

The politicisation of the republican movement was associated with a shift in emphasis from ideological rectitude to the electoral imperative. The movement’s growing political power facilitated it in signing up to the Good Friday agreement in 1998, and this, in turn, allowed Sinn Féin to develop its electoral strength further, to reach a plateau by the end of 2004. Post-agreement republican emphasis on equality and human rights created a new political space, but another stumbling block appeared: the absence of transparency regarding the decommissioning of weapons, followed by allegations of IRA involvement in criminality. These issues, and the perceived link between the IRA and Sinn Féin, have the capacity to destroy the republican political project.

45. John Doyle, Republican policies in practical politics: placing contemporary Sinn Féin in a European context

Sinn Féin, the party most associated in public discourse with the term “republican” in Ireland, is a party undergoing a process of development. It has been suggested that its recent electoral success would result in Sinn Féin moving to the centre and abandoning the civic republican focus on equality, political participation or activism, and a national political project with a strong internationalist context with which it has identified. However, while aspects of Sinn Féin policy remain fluid and can lack clarity the evidence surveyed for this paper suggests that the party is not moving to the political centre on issues of social and economic equality, but is retaining a strong leftist, pro-equality agenda. Post-Good Friday agreement Sinn Féin is in its rhetoric keeping the issue of Irish unity strongly to the fore, in its manifestos both North and South. In an era of globalisation it has placed itself with the anti-corporate globalisation groupings and against right-wing nationalist parties with an anti-immigration platform. Finally, in an era of media politics it is retaining its traditional focus on high levels of activism and participation among party members.
THE IRISH GOVERNMENT AND THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE AGREEMENT
-A POLITICAL PERSPECTIVE

The Good Friday Agreement continues to play a central role in providing a level playing pitch for the future governance of Northern Ireland. The Agreement itself was unique in being endorsed by the people of the whole island. Following the Northern Bank raid in December 2004, though, the Irish government has taken the view that the continuing existence of IRA paramilitarism constitutes the greatest obstacle to full implementation of the agreement. The debate within the Provisional movement on this subject is to be welcomed, but paramilitarism must be ended definitively. One remarkable sign of progress has been the increasing acceptance of the Police Service of Northern Ireland by nationalists, marked at an early stage by a courageous decision by the SDLP to serve on the Policing Board, a lead that should be followed by Sinn Féin as soon as possible. It will then be appropriate for the DUP, which now holds the political leadership of unionism, to reciprocate by embracing partnership politics and the reinstallation of devolution. Only the definitive end of paramilitarism and stable and inclusive politics in Northern Ireland will provide a conclusive outcome.

THE IRISH GOVERNMENT AND THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE AGREEMENT
-AN ACADEMIC PERSPECTIVE

The May general election showed a shift in Northern Ireland in the direction of a movement that remains wedded to paramilitarism and criminality (Sinn Féin) and one which is still deeply sectarian and bigoted (the DUP). Much of the enhanced status of Sinn Féin arises from the fact that the Irish and British governments have, until recently, been prepared to overlook the criminal activities of the IRA, in the interest of keeping that movement involved in the political process. Following the Northern Bank robbery and the murder of Robert McCartney, though, the Irish government adopted a tougher attitude, paying much greater attention to the criminal activities on which the IRA has been engaged and insisting that they must cease. Because of recent events, though, the prospects for the restoration of devolved government are slim, and further development of the North-South axis may provide the most promising way forward.

47. John Coakley and Liam O’Dowd, The Irish border and North-South cooperation: an overview

The partition of Ireland in 1921-22 had many obvious intended consequences, but also not a few unintended ones. This paper begins by reviewing potential approaches to the analysis of the border and challenging some of the myths whose influence has been so pervasive. It continues by examining in outline the changing character of the Irish border since its creation: its creation, up to its physical appearance in 1921; its consolidation in the five decades that followed; and its steady transformation from about 1972 onwards. The paper concludes by suggesting an agenda for research in this area—one which is at once of great academic significance, but of even more vital public policy importance.

48. KJ Rankin, The creation and consolidation of the Irish border

This paper helps explain how the Irish border came to be delimited and why it was confirmed in position. It constitutes an empirical survey and analysis of the origins of partition proposals and a review of contemporaneous policies and philosophies of both individual and collective bodies within a geographical context. The core of the paper focuses on the 1911–26 period, and specifically examines the process and the initial results of dividing Ireland into two distinct political entities. Two broad phases are identified in what amounts to a unique example of boundary making. First, there is an evolutionary phase concerning the creation the Irish border, charting the troubled passage of the third home rule bill until the final passage of the Government of Ireland Act in December 1920. The second phase concerns how the Irish
border was entrenched and consolidated, and charts the formative stages of the government of Northern Ireland referring to the 1921 elections and its devolved administration until the suppression of the Irish Boundary Commission in 1925, which left the boundary unaltered in position and entrenched in function. The paper concludes that drawing a line was necessary but this did not absolve responsibility for originally drawing it fairly, however this may be judged.

49. James Anderson and Liam O’Dowd, *Imperial disintegration and the creation of the Irish border: imperialism and nationalism 1885-1925*

This paper outlines the complex interactions of imperialism and nationalism during the 40-year period leading to the creation of the Irish border. It seeks to relocate partition in a historical and comparative context characterised by the wider struggle between the two frequently antagonistic but sometimes interwoven ideologies. In distinguishing the contrasting principles of border creation implicit in imperialism and nationalism, it challenges explanations which see the creation of the border solely in terms of divisions internal to Ireland or in terms of a simplified narrative about Irish Protestants and Catholics, unionists and nationalists or the geographical distribution of different religions and cultures in Ireland.

50. Bertie Ahern, *the future of North/South cooperation*

This paper emphasises the central role of the Good Friday Agreement as the continuing blueprint for future political developments. The North-South bodies established under its auspices have worked quietly but efficiently for the good of all, North and South. Both parts of the island contribute to the work of the bodies, and both parts gain from it. The work of the bodies is complemented by other initiatives in North-South cooperation. Indeed, long-term economic planning implies the need to consider the whole island for purposes of infrastructural planning. There have been difficulties in the political process, but the common ground achieved by parties as diverse as the Democratic Unionist Party and Sinn Féin is more remarkable than the set of issues that divides them, and suggests a potential for positive political development in the longer term.

51. Tim O’Connor, *The establishment of the North/South Ministerial Council and the North/South bodies*

This paper sets out the background to the new North-South institutional architecture contained in the Belfast/Good Friday Agreement—the negotiations themselves and the outcome. Given that much of the detail remained to be further worked out after Good Friday, it recounts the talks held in the Autumn of 1998 and in early 1999, culminating in the agreement between the two governments establishing the implementation bodies, signed in Dublin Castle on 8 March 1999. The paper outlines the main elements of that agreement, including the nature of the functions and structure of each of the implementation bodies, together with the common arrangements that were to apply all of them.

52. Peter Smyth, *North/South cooperation since the agreement*

This paper reviews the story of North-South cooperation after 1999. Because of the sensitivities associated with North-South cooperation, the initial meetings of the North/South Ministerial Council were important as much for symbolism as for practical outcomes. But as the implementation bodies established themselves, and government departments engaged in the areas of cooperation, the possibilities offered by cooperation for mutual benefit became more apparent, and NSMC meetings assumed a different and much more meaningful character. The paper looks at the impact of the Northern Ireland Assembly’s suspension in 2002, and offers a brief look at the wider dimensions of cross-border cooperation.

53. John Coakley, *The future of the North-South bodies*

The North-South bodies established in 1999 represent the third attempt since partition to establish a structured, formal basis for cooperation between the two parts of the island. This paper looks at the bodies from three perspectives. First, it examines the general historical background: the prehistory of Irish partition, the development of partition up to 1998, and the new system agreed at that point. Second, it provides a brief overview of the present arrangements for the North-South bodies. Third it seeks to generalise about the future
prospects of the bodies by examining the presumed long-term goals and priority of the British and Irish governments and of the Northern Irish parties.

54. Joan Henderson and Paul Teague, *The Belfast agreement and cross-border economic cooperation in the tourism industry*
This paper examines the impact of the Belfast Agreement on north-south economic cooperation in Ireland, using the tourism industry as a case study. The first part of the paper sets out the suggested benefits that may arise from greater economic and business connections between both parts of the island. It also develops a policy framework which the authors believe is established by the Agreement to achieve these benefits from greater cooperation will actually materialise. The second part of the paper explores the case-study evidence. The paper concludes by arguing that although advances have been made towards greater cooperation, these new initiatives, for the most part, have not been of a deep or strategic kind. The “minimalist” character of strand two of the agreement suggests that no big “institutional push” is likely to emerge to change this situation.

55. Liam O’Dowd and Cathal McCall, *The significance of the cross-border dimension for promoting peace and reconciliation*
This paper focuses on the significance of the cross-border dimension in promoting peace and reconciliation. Its central argument is that cross-border co-operation can help undermine the territorial “caging” which has been so central to the conflict in Northern Ireland. The paper begins by making the case that borders and border change are integral to conflict and its resolution. Secondly, it traces how the recent re-configuration of cross-border relations has challenged the architecture of “containment” which has both limited and intensified communal conflict in Ireland. Thirdly, it reports on some empirical research into the cross-border cooperation promoted by voluntary sector organisations funded under Peace II. Finally, it draws some tentative conclusions about the importance of transnational cross-border cooperation across the external and internal borders in undermining the territorialist zero-sum conflict which has long characterised Northern Ireland and which now assumes its most visible and antagonistic form at the interfaces bordering the two communities within the province.

56. John Coakley, Brian Ó Caoindealbháin and Robin Wilson, *The operation of the North-South implementation bodies.*
This paper examines the functioning of the North-South implementation bodies formally created in 1999 over the first five years of their existence. It reviews the political and administrative difficulties that delayed their establishment as a functioning institutions, and notes the difference pace at which they have consequently evolved. It reviews the performance of each body to date and assesses the extent to which the body has responded to the issue it was designed to resolve.