

IBIS NEWSLETTER

**Spring 2002
Issue 4**

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ISSN 1649-0304

LECTURE SERIES

New series for 2002

The Institute has launched its public lecture series for 2002 in association with a new partner, Co-operation Ireland. The umbrella title for the new series is, *The path to peace: negotiating and implementing the Belfast Agreement*.

This title is designed to highlight the role of some of the key contributors to the peace process, and to invite them to reflect on difficulties in implementing the agreement. Several leading politicians have agreed to contribute to the series, which began in May and will continue in the autumn. Full details will be announced closer to the relevant dates.

First lecture in new series

The first event in the new series, on the SDLP and the peace process, took place on 16 May 2002, and was chaired by Mr Tony Kennedy, Chief Executive, Co-operation Ireland.

Dr Éamon Phoenix, Stranmillis University College, Belfast, provided an historical introduction to the topic, reviewing the development of nationalism in Northern Ireland from partition to the Belfast Agreement. He traced the emergence of contemporary nationalism from the early days of Joseph Devlin through the trauma of the civil war, partition and the consolidation of unionist domination. Disappointed by the South, the minority formed a "state within a state", equipped with its own social and political infrastructure.

This picture changed in the 1960s, under the influence of O'Neill in the North, Lemass in the South and a growing Catholic middle class population. A range of groups and individuals combined to form the SDLP. This party made a major contribution to the emergence of the Anglo-Irish Agreement in 1985, and had engaged actively in efforts to end violence, leading to the Downing Street Declaration in 1993, and the launch of talks which led to the Good Friday Agreement.



Tony Kennedy, Co-operation Ireland, and Karin Lang, IBIS, with speakers Séamus Mallon and Éamon Phoenix

The Agreement, Dr Phoenix said, reflected the type of “balanced constitutional change” long desired by the SDLP, but he identified the growing threat from Sinn Féin and the challenge to broaden the SDLP’s base by appealing to younger nationalist voters in a contest for the leadership of northern nationalism.

Mr Seamus Mallon, MLA, MP, former Deputy First Minister, reflected on his experience of the negotiation and implementation of the Agreement. He pointed out that it was essential to highlight the context of the negotiations in order to understand just how difficult the process had been.

Among the factors that made agreement more difficult, he identified, past political experience, the novelty of negotiation for many of the parties, the difficulty in accepting negotiating partners, and the often chaotic and *ad hoc* nature of the negotiation process. Notwithstanding these obstacles, the participants in the talks had persevered, and agreement had finally been attained.

Mr Mallon went on to reflect on some of the difficulties of implementation that he experienced. In particular the tensions that arose over structural resistance to the

establishment of the new Office of First Minister and Deputy First Minister, reflected in the problem of even obtaining adequate office accommodation in Stormont in the early days.

Mr Mallon concluded by highlighting the challenge facing all political parties: the need to create a new political idealism. He suggested that Northern Ireland should now focus on the success of its experience and look to ways of giving something back to the international community, thus creating a new, outward looking political vision.

The draft texts of both speeches will be made available in the IBIS working paper series.

Minister Cowen’s lecture

As our last issue was going to the printer, the final lecture in the 2001 IBIS-CRI lecture series was presented by the Minister for Foreign Affairs, Mr Brian Cowen, TD, on 6 December. The following is a summary of the minister’s lecture; the full text is available from the Institute.

Speaking on the theme *The peace process and equality: towards a transformed society*, Mr Cowen began by noting the challenges and frustrations that implementation of the Good Friday Agreement

had brought—but it had also been an enormously rewarding experience. “For me personally”, he said, “the process has meant coming to terms in my own mind, and sometimes across the negotiating table, with issues that touch sensitive nerves in our collective make-up”.

The Good Friday agreement, the minister said, represented in an important sense the triumph of politics over darker forces in Irish society. Rather than seeking to define the contours of a final settlement, it laid out the ground rules in accordance with which political progress may be achieved. It represented a reversal of many of the more negative perspectives that were characteristic of the different parties to the conflict, such as the tendency to deny the nature of the problem and to attribute blame only to others.

Change had been particularly traumatic for the unionist community, which had seen old certainties challenged. But the principle underlying the agreement, that of equality, offers the most secure prospect for a better life for all. It represents a shift from the old pattern of competition for supremacy between two communities to a new concern to transform the nature of the question in the pursuit of common interests.

The minister saw the Good Friday agreement as resting on one simple insight: “if orange domination of green was wrong and unworkable, green domination of orange would be equally wrong and unworkable. It follows that if you want to create a stable and constructive relationship between the two communities, it is pointless to try to do so except on the basis of equality.”

The minister concluded with a plea that the energies that had been used in the past to defend against our fears be redirected instead towards the service of our hopes, so that the politics of the whole island could be transformed for the better.



IBIS CONFERENCE

The Institute held a major conference on 3 April 2002. Entitled "Renovation or revolution? New territorial politics in Ireland and the United Kingdom", it was opened by Dr Art Cosgrove, President, UCD.

The conference lasted for a full day and brought together nine distinguished speakers and an audience of about 95, drawn from the public service, the diplomatic corps, voluntary and other bodies and the academic community. A full report on the conference will appear in our next issue.

Theme

The object of this conference was to take stock of new forms of territorial politics in Ireland and Great Britain. A fundamental restructuring of territorial political institutions has been taking place since agreement on devolution in Scotland and Wales in 1997 and the Good Friday agreement in 1998. This restructuring has moved at an uneven pace, with delays and crises, some predictable, others unexpected, and the conference explored the circumstances associated with these.

Papers

- Arthur Aughey (University of Ulster): Territory and politics in Ireland and Great Britain after devolution
- Ronan Fanning (University College Dublin): The British-Irish relationship after the Good Friday agreement
- David McCrone (University of Edinburgh): Implementing devolution in the United Kingdom: the Scottish experience
- John Osmond (Institute of Welsh Affairs, Cardiff): Implementing devolution in the United Kingdom: the Welsh experience
- Simon Partridge (Political Analyst and Writer, London): Implications of devolution for England: a comment

- Jennifer Todd (University College Dublin): The changing structure of conflict in Northern Ireland after the Good Friday agreement
- John Coakley (University College Dublin): Implementing the Good Friday agreement: the North-South relationship
- Brigid Laffan (University College Dublin): Ireland, Northern Ireland, Britain and the European dimension
- Adrian Guelke (Queen's University of Belfast): The international system and the Northern Ireland peace process

IBIS NEWS

Cherie Booth visit

The Institute was host on 18 January 2002, jointly with the Faculty of Law, to a visit by Ms Cherie Booth, QC, and a group that included the British ambassador and staff from the Prime Minister's office.

Ms Booth's visit was part of a day-long commitment in Dublin. She heard presentations on the work of the Institute and of the Law Faculty, and spent time discussing current issues with research students and staff.

New working papers

The IBIS pre-publication working paper series is based on work in progress, and the Institute does not accept responsibility for views offered. Individual papers are available free of charge from IBIS (though a small charge applies to orders of several copies). The most recent additions to the series are:

14. John Reid, MP, *The British Government and the peace process*
15. Brian Cowan, TD, *The peace process and equality: towards a transformed society*
16. Yvonne Galligan, *The politics of women's representation in Northern Ireland and the Republic of Ireland*
17. Claire Mitchell, *Pluralist, purified or private: protestant identification and political change in Northern Ireland*
18. Katy Hayward and Kevin Howard, *Europeanisation and Hyphe-nation: renegotiating the identity boundaries of Europe's western isles*



fellow, chat to Cherie Booth during her visit

BRITISH-IRISH DEVELOPMENTS

Web sites

Some useful official web sites have recently become available. The sites dealing with the main institutions established under the 1998 agreement, or related to these, now are:

Department of the Taoiseach

www.irlgov.ie/taoiseach/

Houses of the Oireachtas

www.irlgov.ie/oireachtas/

Department of Foreign Affairs

www.irlgov.ie/iveagh/

Prime Minister's Office

www.pm.gov.uk/

Houses of Parliament

www.parliament.uk/

Northern Ireland Office

www.nio.gov.uk/

British-Irish Inter-Parliamentary

Body: www.biipb.org/

North/South Ministerial Council

www.northsouthministerialcouncil.org/

Office of the First Minister and Deputy First Minister

<http://www.ofmdfmi.gov.uk/>

Northern Ireland Assembly:

<http://www.ni-assembly.gov.uk/>

Chronology

This continues the chronology begun in Issue 2 of the IBIS Newsletter. For a detailed chronology, see the CAIN website at <http://cain.ulst.ac.uk/othelem/chron.htm>

2001

Dec 1 Trimble wins (56%-44%) motion at UUC meeting permitting flexibility on decommissioning deadline

Dec 2-3 23rd meeting of British-Irish Inter-Parliamentary Body, Bournemouth

Dec 6 US Secretary of State Colin Powell designates as "terrorist" three groups based in Northern Ireland (Continuity IRA, Orange Volunteers and Red Hand Defenders)

Dec 12 Nuala O'Loan, Police Ombudsman for Northern Ireland, issues report into the police investigation of the Omagh Bombing of August 1998

Dec 12 Northern Ireland Policing Board agrees new emblem for PSNI

2002

Jan 1 Launch of the Euro in the Republic of Ireland

Jan 21 Four Sinn Féin MPs take their offices at Westminster under a new arrangement, while maintaining policy of abstention

Jan 28 Ulster Political Research Group (new body close to thinking of UDA) calls for formal review of the agreement

Jan 30 Trimble and Durkan officially open NI office in Brussels (established in May 2001)

Feb 4 European Convention on Human Rights is officially incorporated into UK law

Feb 5 Trimble and Durkan open Northern Ireland Bureau in Washington

Feb 11 Welsh First Minister Rhodri Morgan visits Dublin to discuss economic cooperation

Feb 14-15 Second official visit of Prince of Wales to the Republic

Mar 7 Referendum in the Republic on proposal to restrict present system of limited abortion (defeated 50.4%-49.6%)

Mar 9 UUC annual general meeting; Trimble refers to the Republic of Ireland as a "pathetic sectarian, mono-ethnic, mono-cultural state", and calls for referendum on border

Mar 21 Taoiseach endorses recommendation of All-Party Committee on the Constitution regarding establishment of North/South Joint Parliamentary Forum

Mar 25 Blair agrees private deal with Adams to allow thirty IRA fugitives to return to Northern Ireland without fear of arrest

Mar 25-26 24th meeting of British-Irish Inter-Parliamentary Body, Dublin

Apr 3 Opening of first annual PSNI and Garda conference

Apr 5 Graduation of first PSNI recruits

Apr 8 Arms decommissioning body announces second act of IRA decommissioning

Apr 25 Dáil dissolved; campaign begins for election on 17 May

Apr 29 New agreement on extended North-South co-operation in policing

May 13-15 Queen and Duke of Edinburgh undertake three-day Golden Jubilee visit to Northern Ireland

May 17 General election in Republic; final results: Fianna Fáil 41.5% (81 seats), Fine Gael 22.5% (31), Labour 10.8% (21), Sinn Féin 6.5% (5), Progressive Democrats 4.0% (8), Greens 3.8% (6), others 10.9% (14).

NEW MA IN BRITISH-IRISH STUDIES

A new MA programme in British-Irish Studies has been launched by UCD's Politics Department. The first students selected for the course will begin their studies in autumn 2002.

The programme builds on the department's long-established MA in Politics, of which it is a variant. Its objective is to analyse the relationship between the nationalist and unionist traditions in a number of distinctive contexts: the tension between the two communities in Northern Ireland, the North-South relationship and the broader relationship between Ireland and Great Britain. All of these are viewed in a comparative perspective.

Visiting speakers (themselves with personal experience as politicians or civil servants) will be invited to contribute to particular parts of the course, and a field-trip to Belfast is planned.

Further information on the course may be obtained from the MA course co-ordinator, Department of Politics, University College Dublin, Belfield, Dublin 4, tel: 01-716 8182, fax: 01-716 1171, email: politics@ucd.ie

IBIS Newsletter online

The current and back issues of the IBIS Newsletter are now available on our website www.ucd.ie/~ibis.

Mailing list

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