

The Dr. John Henry Whyte Trust Fund

This Fund has been established to honour the memory of **John Henry Whyte** who was Professor of Irish Politics at Queen's University Belfast and, until his untimely death in May 1990, Professor of Politics at University College Dublin.

John Whyte was born in 1928 into a well-known Co. Down family. Educated at Ampleforth and Oriel College Oxford, he graduated in Modern History in 1949 and two years later was awarded a BLitt for the research which formed the basis of his first book *The Independent Irish Party 1850-9*. (OUP 1958). After national service and a spell as history master at his old school he was appointed lecturer in Modern History in Makerere University, Uganda. In 1962 he was appointed as the first lecturer in empirical Politics at University College Dublin. In 1966, he married Dr. Jean Murray, then lecturer in Italian at UCD, and moved to Queen's University Belfast where he spent seventeen years as lecturer and reader, and in 1982 was awarded a personal chair as Professor of Irish Politics.

During this period he did much to bring together political scientists from the Republic and the North, his patience and general popularity contributing much to the development of an all-Ireland academic community in political science which had not previously existed. In 1975 he was invited to convene the Conflict sub-committee of the Committee for Social Science Research in Ireland and he was responsible for developing a programme of research into the Northern Ireland conflict with a varied team of collaborators. He was also research fellow at the Center for International Affairs at Harvard (1973-74) and research fellow at the Netherlands Institute for Advanced Studies (1979-80). He was elected member of the Royal Irish Academy in 1977 and served on a number of its committees as well as being Vice-President in 1989-90.

While at Queen's he wrote two major books: the pioneering *Church and State in Modern Ireland* (Gill & Macmillan 1971, 2nd Ed. 1980) and *Catholics in Western Democracies* (Gill & Macmillan, 1981) which was described at the time as 'one of the outstanding academic books of 1982'. In 1984 he returned to University College Dublin as Professor of Government and Politics and Head of Department. He piloted the department through a troubled period of financial cuts and supervised successfully the general reorganisation of the undergraduate curriculum. He succeeded in completing a major work - *Interpreting Northern Ireland* (OUP 1990) and had finished correcting the proofs and compiling the index a week before his death.

A kind, sensitive and modest person of gentle integrity, quiet good sense and scrupulous objectivity, John Whyte was grieved by the troubles of Northern Ireland. His last book provides a guide which surveys and appraises two decades of research with fairmindedness and systematic attention to detail. In it we can see his concern that the reader should be able to appreciate what is valuable in the different national identities and traditions of the island. He felt too that any solutions offered to the 'troubles' should be on the basis of rigorous and unemotional investigation rather than wishful thinking. In his participation in a range of groups dedicated to reconciliation

he was noteworthy for his deliberate avoidance of emotional posturing and his support for efforts to bring the two sides together for calm debate.

Many of John's colleagues wrote to his family in praise of his gifts as a scholar, his love of his subject and his commitment to helping the process of finding a solution through objective analysis. Since John is no longer with us to give his guidance and support, we have instituted this Fund in order to assist young scholars to develop skills which would contribute to the process of achieving a lasting peace in Northern Ireland.

1. Rationale

The stalemate in Northern Ireland is a hindrance to progress for the whole island. It is possible that part of the reason for the stalemate is a lack of knowledge, openness and trust. The John Whyte Trust Fund would seek to remedy this by encouraging informed dialogue and interaction at graduate level among people who are likely to be leaders and opinion-shapers.

2. Aims of the John Whyte Fund

- a) **To promote the development of scholarship and objectivity** in research on the problems of Ireland north and south.
- b) **To help promote the formation of informed opinion** among people who are likely to be community leaders or at least in positions where they themselves may be influencing the opinions of others.
- c) **To encourage young people to consider living for a while on the other side of the border** in an environment which will encourage them to develop their knowledge of the problems and how they may be analysed.

2. Means:

- a) **Subsidising the publication** of the results of research which would be relevant to the politics of Ireland north or south.
 - b) **Provision of financial assistance** for one graduate each year alternately from the Republic of Ireland and Northern Ireland to register in the Department of Politics at UCD (if from Northern Ireland) or at QUB (if from the Republic) for a Master's degree by research or by a taught course related to the government and politics of Ireland. (This award is currently suspended (2011)).
 - c) **Offering awards to subsidise short study visits or conference participation** by postgraduate students of Politics from QUB to UCD and vice versa.
 - d) **Subsidising such other activities**, consistent with the objectives of the Trust, as the Trustees shall consider appropriate.
- *Applications for grants should be addressed to the Professors of Politics at QUB and UCD from whom more details may be obtained.*

- The affairs of the Fund are managed by the following **Trustees**.

Professor David Farrell, *UCD*
Professor David Phinnemore *QUB*
Mr. Paul McErlean *Belfast*
Ms. Barbara Sweetman FitzGerald *Dublin*
Ms. Justice Catherine Mc Guinness *Dublin*
Dr. William Whyte
Dr. Jean Whyte

The Trust has been granted charitable status by the Revenue Commissioners.
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