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NORTHERN IRELAND POLITICAL PARTIES, LEADING POLITICIANS AND INFLUENTIAL GROUPSA: POLITICAL PARTIES1. Ulster Unionist Party (UUP)

Often referred to as the Official Unionist Party, the UUP is the lineal descendant of the Unionist Party which held power from the creation of the Northern Ireland Parliament in 1921 to its fall in 1972. Since the mid-1970s, the formal objectives of the UUP have been the maintenance of the Union; the restoration of devolved government on a majority rule basis; and an increase in the powers of local government. Recently, under the influence of Enoch Powell, a growing body of opinion within the party has seen the commitment to devolution as being potentially inconsistent with the maintenance of the union and has laid greater stress on seeking, through the establishment of an 'upper tier' of local government, to ensure that Northern Ireland is governed in the same way as the rest of the UK. Since the formation of the Assembly, this "integrationist" preference has led to some internal dissension. The party leader, Mr James Molyneaux, has sought to defuse the issue by stressing that, while the UUP remains committed to the idea of devolved government, they are not prepared to support the Assembly indefinitely unless there is a real prospect of obtaining devolution on terms acceptable to unionists (ie with no power-sharing elements). At the Assembly elections, the UUP was the largest single party securing 30% of first preference votes and winning 26 of the 78 seats. (They have since taken one more seat in an Assembly by-election.) Before the General Election, they had 5 MPs at Westminster, James Molyneaux (Antrim South), Martin Smyth (Belfast South), Harold McCusker (Armagh), Enoch Powell (Down South) and William Ross (Londonderry); and one of the three Northern Ireland MEPs, John Taylor.

2. Ulster Democratic Unionist Party (DUP)

Formed in 1970, the DUP is dominated by its leader, Mr Ian Paisley and many of its members also belong to Mr Paisley's Free Presbyterian Church. The Party is essentially the hard-line Loyalist alternative to the UUP and brings a more uncompromising and populist style to its politics. The results of the European Elections in June 1979, when Mr Paisley topped the poll with nearly 30% of first preferences, prompted the DUP leader to describe himself as "the true voice of Protestant Ulster". In the 1981 local elections the DUP doubled its seat total and strengthened its claim to be the dominant unionist party, but at the Assembly

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elections last year the DUP was beaten into second place, taking only 23% of first preferences and five less seats than the UUP. Inside the Assembly, rivalry between the two main unionist parties has been intense. The DUP have adopted a far more positive approach to the Assembly and have been particularly active on the various departmental committees. They have successfully blocked moves by the UUP to force the pace on devolution and accused Mr Molyneaux and his advisers of trying to wreck the Assembly before it has got off the ground. Whilst they remain determined to safeguard the union and are bitterly opposed to power-sharing, the DUP regard the Assembly as an important check on what they regard as "unbridled direct rule". In the last Parliament, the DUP had three MPs; Ian Paisley (North Antrim), Johnnie McQuade (North Belfast) and Peter Robinson (East Belfast).

3. Social Democratic and Labour Party (SDLP)

In 1970, following the civil rights campaign in which many of the Party's original members were active, the SDLP was founded in order to bring together the various strands of moderate anti-Unionism. It soon became the main voice of Ulster Catholics and its then leader, Gerry Fitt, quickly rose to prominence as the Party's principal spokesman. Since its formation, the SDLP has been committed to the peaceful attainment of Irish unity with the consent of the people of Northern Ireland; but, under Mr Fitt's leadership, the Party concentrated on securing an internal settlement of Northern Ireland's problems supporting the concept of devolved government based on power-sharing. They played their full part in the short-lived Executive but, following its collapse in 1974, tension arose within the SDLP between the so-called "green wing" of unreconstructed nationalists and more moderate members like Mr Fitt. Eventually this tension led to Mr Fitt's resignation and he was replaced as party leader by John Hume. Quickly, a consensus arose that acceptable devolution (ie with power-sharing as a key element) would not be conceded by the Unionist parties and that the way forward must lie in the all-Ireland direction. This consensus was strengthened by the establishment of the Assembly in 1982 because of what the SDLP saw as the failure of the British Government to insist on power-sharing or to provide any institutionalised Anglo/Irish framework. They announced that the Assembly proposals were unworkable and unacceptable and contested the Assembly elections on the basis that they would not take their seats. For the first time, the SDLP faced a united nationalist challenge at the polls in the shape of Sinn Fein: although they secured over 18% of first preferences and a total of 14 seats their share of the nationalist vote fell to less than two-thirds. Following the elections, the SDLP reaffirmed their determination not to participate in the Assembly and pursued, instead, the idea of a conference of "nationalist people" to consider the future of Ireland which

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led, earlier this year, to the establishment of the New Ireland Forum. Party leader John Hume is a member of the European Parliament. At the 1979 General Election, the SDLP returned one MP to Westminster - their then leader Gerry Fitt - but he subsequently resigned from the party and sat as an independent socialist.

4. Alliance Party of Northern Ireland (APNI)

Formed in 1970 to appeal to moderate opinion in both the Protestant and Catholic communities, the Alliance Party has adopted a consistently non-sectarian approach to Northern Ireland politics. The Alliance Party believes in the maintenance of the union but supports the return of devolved government based on partnership between the representatives of both communities. Support for the Alliance Party has remained fairly steady during the last few years at around 10% of the electorate: they have 10 seats in the Assembly but had no MPs in the last Parliament. They insist that, although six of their Assembly members are Catholics, they should not be regarded as representatives of the minority community and have made it clear that they will not support any proposals for devolution which do not provide a clear role for the SDLP. The party leader is Oliver Napier and his deputy is David Cook.

5. Sinn Fein (SF)

Sinn Fein is the political wing of the Provisional IRA. As a party, Sinn Fein has existed in one form or another since the beginning of the century and was the dominant force in Irish politics at the 1918 General Election. Following partition it disappeared from view fairly rapidly but re-emerged briefly in Northern Ireland during the IRA campaign of the 1950s winning widespread support in the minority community. At the start of the present troubles Sinn Fein, so far as it existed at all in Northern Ireland, had little credibility. But as the IRA itself grew in strength and importance so did its political counterpart: and the split in the IRA into Provisional and Official wings was mirrored in Sinn Fein. In recent years, as the party has sought to harness popular support for causes which complement the terrorism of the Provisional IRA, it has supported candidates running in other colours at both local and Westminster elections. "H Block" candidates with Sinn Fein support won 7.7 per cent of the first preference votes in the 1981 local government elections, and 1981 also saw successive by-election victories for the "H Block" parliamentary candidates, Bobby Sands and Owen Carron, in Fermanagh/South Tyrone. Encouraged by these successes, Sinn Fein decided to run under its own colours in the Assembly elections of 1982 when it won 10.1% of first preferences (just over a third of the nationalist vote) and gained 5 Assembly seats. The aim of Sinn Fein is to force a British withdrawal from Northern Ireland to be followed by the establishment of a socialist all-Ireland state. The party

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supports the use of violence by the Provisional IRA which it regards as part of the "armed struggle" against an "occupation force". Sinn Fein have not taken their seats in the Assembly and do not intend to take any seats they win at Westminster. Their main purpose in fighting elections is to demonstrate to unionists and to HMG the size of their support in the minority community. Prominent members include Gerry Adams (Vice-President), Danny Morrison (national director of publicity) and Owen Carron (MP for Fermanagh/South Tyrone 1981-83)..

6. The Workers' Party (WP)

The Workers' Party is an all-Ireland Marxist party with its roots in Official Sinn Fein the political wing of the now quiescent Official IRA. The long term objective of the Workers' Party is the establishment of a 32-county democratic socialist Republic of Ireland. In Northern Ireland the party seeks a devolved government operating on majority rule principles with the interests of the minority protected by a guaranteed Bill of Rights. They have failed despite great efforts to secure a significant share of the popular vote. It is a principled and hard-working party which lost out in the polarised climate of the May 1981 local elections and failed to win a seat in the Assembly. The leader of the Workers' Party in Northern Ireland is Seamus Lynch. There are two Workers' Party TDs in the Dail.

B: LEADING POLITICIANS

1. Ulster Unionist Party (UUP)

James Molyneaux: UUP Leader since 1979. MP for South Antrim 1970-83. Member of the Northern Ireland Assembly. Leading Orangeman. Like Mr Powell, Mr Molyneaux privately takes the view that the return of devolved government on a majority rule basis is unattainable but has made no headway in persuading his party's rank and file that integration is the best way of safeguarding the union. Despite his fairly ineffective handling of the party inside the Assembly, Mr Molyneaux's position as UUP leader is not seriously threatened and he remains a fairly popular man within the party. A shy man, he is not a gifted speaker, but he has a strong sense of public duty.

Harold McCusker: One of four UUP Vice-Presidents. MP for Armagh 1974-83. Member of the Northern Ireland Assembly. A teacher by training and a relative late-comer to politics, Mr McCusker has remained very much in the centre ground of the UUP. Once thought to be a committed devolutionist, he has adopted a less than enthusiastic approach to the Assembly and has tended to side with the party leadership on most issues. He takes a particularly hard line on security although he is something of a left-winger on socio-economic issues. His health is not good.

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John Taylor; NI Privy Councillor. Member of the European Parliament. Assembly member for North Down. Successful businessman, former member of the Stormont Parliament and Minister for Home Affairs from 1970-72. Mr Taylor is not particularly well-liked or trusted within the UUP and takes care to distance himself from the leadership. In Strasbourg, he sits with the European Democrats but is a frequent critic of HMG's policies in Northern Ireland.

Enoch Powell: Privy Councillor. MP for Wolverhampton from 1950-74. Joined the UUP in 1974 and represented South Down from then until the last election. Although the UUP has gained considerably from Mr Powell's Parliamentary experience and expertise he is still regarded as an outsider and a maverick by many of the Party's rank and file. Mr Powell advocates the integration of Northern Ireland within the UK and is therefore opposed to devolution on any terms. In this context he exercises considerable influence over Mr Molyneaux. Mr Powell is suspicious about HMG's commitment to the Union and frequently attacks both the FCO and the NIO whom he accuses of attempting to secure a United Ireland.

### 2. Democratic Unionist Party (DUP)

Ian Paisley: DUP Party leader. MP for North Antrim 1970-83. Member of the European Parliament. Member of the Northern Ireland Assembly. Moderator of the Free Presbyterian Church. Mr Paisley came to prominence as a fundamentalist preacher in the late 1950s and, a decade later, played a leading part in organising counter-demonstrations to the Civil Rights campaign. In 1970, standing as an independent Unionist, he won a seat at Stormont and was returned to Westminster as an MP for North Antrim. He founded the DUP in 1971 and became leader of the opposition in the Stormont Parliament immediately prior to dissolution. In the Assembly of 1973/74 he led the attack on the power-sharing Executive and helped to organise the Loyalist strike which eventually brought it down. In early 1981, he launched the "Carson trail" - a programme of rallies and paramilitary style parades - in protest at the meeting between Mrs Thatcher and Mr Haughey in December 1980. Mr Paisley is totally committed to the restoration of majority rule in a devolved government but he is prepared to work constructively inside the Assembly for the time being.

Peter Robinson; Deputy Leader of the DUP. MP for East Belfast 1979-83. Member of the Northern Ireland Assembly. Entered politics through local government and, at the time of his election to Westminster, was the youngest ever MP returned from Northern Ireland. Has risen quickly to a prominent position within the party and was responsible for revamping DUP organisation in the late 1970s. He is a dedicated politician, an extremely ambitious man and a polished public speaker. A spokesman for the younger element within the DUP, he has little sympathy for the Party's

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fundamentalist approach on moral issues; nevertheless he remains completely loyal to Mr Paisley.

### 3. Social Democratic and Labour Party (SDLP)

John Hume: Leader of the SDLP. Member of the European Parliament. Member of the Northern Ireland Assembly. Mr Hume entered politics in the late 1960s through his involvement in the Civil Rights campaign and was elected to the Stormont Parliament in 1968 as a member of the old Nationalist Party. A founder member of the SDLP, he became deputy leader in 1973 and was Minister of Commerce in the short-lived Executive of 1974. In 1978 he joined the cabinet of Richard Burke the Irish Commissioner at Brussels. He was elected to the European Parliament in June 1979 with a very large personal vote and became leader of the SDLP in November of that year following the resignation of Gerry Fitt. An academically minded man of great energy and political acumen, he has had to steer the SDLP through the most difficult period in its history. At the party's annual conference earlier this year, he successfully re-united and re-galvanised the SDLP with the concept of a nationalist conference and, although the idea was not his own brainchild, he must take the credit for having brought about the New Ireland Forum. Mr Hume's international standing is high both in Europe and in the USA. A moderate man who has always believed in the value of continuing dialogue with the NIO and the main Unionist parties, he has consistently opposed the use of violence and espoused the cause of reconciliation between the two communities.

Seamus Mallon: Deputy Leader of the SDLP. Elected to the Northern Ireland Assembly but subsequently disqualified because of his membership of the Irish Senate. A teacher by training, Mr Mallon also entered politics as a result of his involvement in the Civil Rights movement of the late 1960s. Personable, fluent and possessed of great charm, he is a leading figure in the rural "green" wing of the party which sees no prospect of an accommodation with the Unionists and looks to Dublin for its salvation.

### 4. Alliance Party

Oliver Napier: Leader of the Alliance Party since 1973. Member of the Northern Ireland Assembly. Belfast City Councillor. Mr Napier is a Catholic and a partner in a leading Belfast firm of solicitors. A moderate in Northern Ireland politics, he does not have a charismatic public image but is capable and sincere. Deeply disappointed by his narrow defeat in the 1979 General Election (he lost to Peter Robinson in East Belfast by less than 1,000 votes) he briefly contemplated leaving politics; but he is, above all, a realistic man and he is once again committed to

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consolidating Alliance's position in the middle-ground of Northern Ireland politics.

### 5. Others

Jim Kilfedder: Leader of the Ulster Popular Unionist Party. MP for North Down 1970/83. Speaker of the Northern Ireland Assembly. A Barrister-at-Law, Mr Kilfedder resigned from the UUP in 1979 to form his own small party the Ulster Popular Unionist Party. A highly individualistic politician, he is a maverick in the Unionist ranks but sides, on most issues, with the DUP. Despite leaving the UUP, he has managed to retain his popularity with the electorate of North Down. He is a committed devolutionist. His term as Speaker has been marked by controversy and, on a number of occasions, he has offended and angered members of the UUP.

### C: OTHER INFLUENTIAL GROUPS

#### 1. The Churches

Although there is some evidence that the churches are declining in importance, religion still plays a significant part in the lives of most people in Northern Ireland. It is estimated that at least three-quarters of the population belong to one of the four main churches, the Roman Catholic Church, the Church of Ireland, the Presbyterian Church and the Methodist Church - and there are scores of other sects of which one of the more important is Mr Paisley's Free Presbyterian Church.

In Northern Ireland, religion and politics are inextricably linked and religious identity is regarded by both sides of the community as a fundamental part of their heritage and tradition. Religious beliefs also affect the attitudes of the main political parties on a wide range of social issues. The fundamentalist approach of the Presbyterian Church influences the policies of the two main unionist parties on issues such as abortion and homosexual law reform and many members of the DUP take a particularly strong moral stance on the question of Sunday opening of public houses, leisure centres etc. The Roman Catholic Church is also involved politically. Its strongest influence is in the field of education retaining control over the schools attended by the majority of Catholic children. From time to time, the Catholic Church has been critical of the RUC and HMG's security policy but has always condemned the use of violence by the Provisional IRA.

#### 2. The Orange Order

The Orange Order is the largest Protestant organisation in Northern Ireland with an estimated 100,000 active members. Its annual twelfth of July demonstrations at more

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R. than 20 centres throughout the Province celebrate the victory of King William III (William of Orange) over King James at the Battle of the Boyne in 1690. The Order played a significant part in the formation of the Unionist Party in the 1880s and it remains close to the UUP although the ties have been loosened a little by the fragmentation of Unionism. Essentially a secret organisation, the Orange Order does seek openly to play a political role and has been particularly active in calling for tougher security measures against the Provisional IRA. Orangemen see themselves as staunch defenders of the union and as a bulwark against a united Ireland.

3. The Trades Unions

Trades Unions in Northern Ireland are, by and large, affiliated to the Irish Congress of Trade Unions (ICTU) an all-Ireland body similar to the TUC which has a separate Northern Ireland Committee (NIC). NIC/ICTU is very careful not to become involved in broad, constitutional issues and is not associated with any of Northern Ireland's political parties: they have, however, consistently opposed violence and sectarianism. The Irish Congress' policy on social and economic issues is broadly similar to that of the TUC.

4. Confederation of British Industry

The local CBI is part of the regional organisation of the CBI and, like NIC/ICTU, is not associated with any of the local political parties.

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