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The final sell-out of Ulster by Westminster

Below is an article taken from the "Belfast Newsletter" of February 1st, 2020.

It highlights the ineptitude of the DUP's response to Boris Johnston's betrayal of this part of the United Kingdom.

It also highlights the total absence of any spirit of fight or resistance within the DUP. Having linked itself up to rabid republicanism it is not likely that it will show any resistance to the accelerated drift towards a 'united Ireland', so much desired by the DUP's stablemate, Sinn Fein.

Where do all this betrayal and double-dealing and political cowardice spring from?

To answer that we must look for the source of our forefathers' spirit of resistance to betrayal by London in their day.

That source was Bible Protestantism!

The 1912 'Constitutional Crisis' - the third attempt by London to push through a 'Home Rule Bill' for Ireland, came in the wake of the great 1859 Revival, when so many people were converted to true Biblical Christianity.

Such an influx of true believers into the body of Ulster Protestantism that it made for a strong anti-popery resistance to any attempt to place Ulster under a Roman Catholic dominated Irish Free State.

It was, in truth, the gospel of Jesus Christ which made our forefathers reject the Westminster 'Home Rule' betrayal, even to the extent of forming the 'Ulster Volunteer Force', a 100,000 strong Protestant militia dedicated to resisting any attempt to force Ulster out of the United Kingdom by military means.

The devil, who ever seeks the demise of 'Protestant Ulster', sought to bring that about by undermining its allegiance to the Bible. His instrument was the 'Ecumenical Churches'. For some 100 years now the spirit of apostasy has been at work in the three main 'Protestant' denominations here. (See the following articles: **The forerunners of the Free Presbyterian Church, The formation of the Free Presbyterian Church, & The flourishing of the Free Presbyterian Church**)

The result of this undermining process may be seen in the utter abandoning of any allegiance to historic Reformation Truths by the general membership of these denominations.

The First Minister, Mrs Arlene Foster's defence of her attendance at the funeral mass for the IRA's chief organiser of murder, Martin McGuinness, reported in today's "Belfast Newsletter", is but the most recent proof of this fact! (**See here**)

Gospel truth puts backbone into a people. Its abandonment leads to a crippled and paralysed populace. That is the state into which the DUP presently fit!!!

May it please the Lord to stir up a remnant to return to true Biblical paths and so see revived true opposition to this latter-day apostasy.

"Thus saith the LORD, Stand ye in the ways, and see, and ask for the old paths, where is the good way, and walk therein, and ye shall find rest for your souls. But they said, We will not walk therein," Jeremiah 6:16.

The phrase at the end of this verse is, sadly, the response of all too many today, especially those supporters of the DUP!

Ivan Foster.

February 1st, 2020.



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Sam McBride: Brexit has loosened the ties that bind Northern Ireland to Britain

(Saturday 1st February 2020)



Thirty four and a half years ago, the wreck of the Titanic was located beneath the icy waters 370 miles off the Newfoundland coast.

In Belfast, the city which built the liner, unionism was sailing towards a constitutional iceberg – but convinced itself that was not the case.

As the British and Irish governments finalised amid great secrecy what would become the Anglo-Irish Agreement, Ulster Unionist leader Jim Molyneux believed that all was well.

Central in that belief was the counsel of his South Down MP, the veteran parliamentarian Enoch Powell. It was Powell who monumentally overestimated his influence with Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher.

When on 15 November 1985 the treaty was signed in Hillsborough Castle, giving the Republic's government for the first time a say in the internal affairs of Northern Ireland, Powell was stunned and bitter, denouncing Mrs Thatcher in the Commons as a Jezebel.

Almost three and a half decades later, unionism again finds itself betrayed on a constitutional issue by a British Prime Minister who once boasted about his unionism.

But there the comparison stops. This time unionism's response has been radically different from that of Ian Paisley and Jim Molyneux.

The 1980s attempts to boycott government, refuse to pay TV and dog licences and try to make councils ungovernable descended into farce while the street protests and 'third force' paramilitary organisations did more harm to unionism than they did to the Agreement.

This time the DUP, which is far more dominant within unionism than the UUP was in 1985, appears to have few ideas about how to undo damage which stems not only from a decision – Brexit – which it backed, but which comes in a period where Arlene Foster has had more power over the government than any other unionist leader since Edward Carson. While Powell believed he had the ear of the Prime Minister because of his intellect, ideological affinity with Margaret Thatcher and his deep roots in the Conservative Party, Mrs Foster relied on sheer political power for her influence.

The DUP leader and many of her senior colleagues weren't afraid to flaunt that power, humiliating Theresa May by forcing her to fly back from Brussels in December 2017 when she was about to sign up to a deal which would involve Northern Ireland maintaining regulatory alignment with the EU in order to avoid a hard Irish border.

Ultimately, Mrs May secured the insertion of a new paragraph to that key document – but even at the time it appeared to simply introduce ambiguity over whether Northern Ireland would in fact leave the EU on the same terms as the rest of the UK.

But another aspect of that Joint Report was nodded through by the DUP even though its implications were remarkable.

Paragraph 43 contained a commitment from the UK to the avoidance of a hard border and then crucially for the first time defined a 'hard border' as "any physical infrastructure or related checks and control". It was a sweeping definition which went far beyond the images which the phrase 'hard border' would conjure up for



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most people – customs posts, passport control, barbed wire and soldiers.

So sweeping was the definition that it went beyond the dictionary definition of 'hard border' – and also meant that the current arrangements at the border, where cameras are already in place at key locations, is a 'hard border', something most people would regard as absurd.

That lack of attention to detail was reminiscent of Mrs Foster's approach to RHI and on its own would have been deeply problematic.

However, it was accompanied by behaviour from some of her colleagues which undermined the party's interests.

Several months earlier, in February 2017, senior DUP figure Nelson McCausland was dismissive of the implications of his support for Brexit, saying of the post-Brexit border: "I wouldn't care what sort of situation I face as long as I'm out of Europe".

Less than a year later, North Antrim MP Ian Paisley Jr boasted that the Joint Report – which was riddled with ambiguities and bear pits – meant that the DUP had "done over" Taoiseach Leo Varadkar.

In a statement, the arch-Brexiteer accepted that the document was "imperfect", but went on to claim that as a result of what had been agreed Northern Ireland "has not been designated some purgatorial relationship of neither being in our outside the EU but will be treated completely the same as every other component part of the UK".

With what even at the time appeared unwise bragging, he said: "Frankly, whatever efforts are made to characterise this week Leo Varadkar was done over by the EU, the UK and the DUP."

Talking bullishly about the possibility of the UK quitting the EU without a deal, the North Antrim MP said that should "put the fear of the almighty into the Republic" which would see its economy "crippled".

The absence of any humility in what Mr Paisley mistakenly believed was his moment of triumph was typical of how many in the DUP have a tendency to swagger when they think they are on top. Not all in the party exhibit this characteristic and Sir Jeffrey Donaldson was among those who overwhelmingly adopted a more measured tone, perhaps realising that the hubris of some of his colleagues had become – and remains – a strategic liability.

A lack of sympathy at the DUP's plight, extended to schadenfreude in some cases, meant that when the party had a valid concern it found few open ears. Ultimately Boris Johnson, who they enabled to become Prime Minister, came to support the UK leaving in a way which creates a trade border – the extent of which is still unclear – in the Irish Sea.

He proposed that Stormont would approve that arrangement by a simple majority vote, rather than allowing both unionism and nationalism to each have a veto, as envisaged in the Good Friday Agreement.

That gave the DUP the chance to argue that this was a profoundly problematic abandonment of the principle that Northern Ireland cannot operate as a majoritarian society. But, having thrown about its weight for more than two years, the party found few willing to listen to its concerns.

There has been some evidence in recent weeks of the DUP softening its rhetoric and last night Arlene Foster attempted to make a conciliatory gesture by travelling to Dublin to be interviewed on The Late Late Show. But while tone can be changed to suit circumstances, the more alarming issue for some unionists will be the lack of attention to detail which has consistently marked Mrs Foster's approach to Brexit.

Having backed Brexit on a whim without even the pretence of having considered its practical implications, and in the face of warnings from other unionists that it could tear apart the Union, there is still no evidence of humility, still less contrition, from the DUP leader.



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But regardless of Mrs Foster's future, the events of the last four years have wrought a legacy which will linger. The Union has been, perhaps irreversibly, undermined.

And not only have soft nationalists and many centrist voters been enraged, pushing them towards Irish unity, but there has been a deep imprint left on many unionists. Overwhelmingly, they do not support Irish unity, something which shows how great the task of nationalism will be to persuade them in a future border poll.

But, yet again, they have had their faith in a British government shattered. Even within the DUP, some were so stunned by Boris Johnson's betrayal that it caused them to question the value of the Union itself.

In myriad senses, Brexit has loosened the ties that bind Northern Ireland to Great Britain – and none of those responsible are yet prepared to accept their role in that.