



Department of
**Culture, Arts
and Leisure**

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PRONI

HIGHLIGHTS LIST

**Release of 1987 files at the
Public Record Office of Northern Ireland**



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PRONI ON CAIN

PRONI on CAIN (Conflict Archive on the Internet) is a joint project between the Ulster University and PRONI which has resulted in digitised images of key documents from previous PRONI file releases being made freely available to view online for researchers and students. For further details of the documents available, please visit

<http://cain.ulst.ac.uk/proni/index.html>



Introduction

The files are being released under the 30/20 Year Rule.

The annual release of selected official files continues against a background of greater public access through the Freedom of Information Act balanced against the need to protect personal information. The FOI Act (2000) created a new access to information regime and all records were reviewed in accordance with both that Act and the Data Protection Act.

Annually since 1976, official records held by PRONI which were 30 years old have been reviewed with a view to making them publicly available (“the 30 year rule). In September 2011, the Assembly accepted a Legislative Consent Motion to reduce the time limit for release from 30 years to 20 years (“the 20 year Rule”). This is underpinned by the Freedom of Information Act 2000 and the amendments made to it by the Protection of Freedoms Act 2012.

The 20 Year Rule is being phased in over 10 years, with two years worth of records being reviewed and released each year. This year, the records of NI Departments and the NIO with terminal dates of 1987 are being brought forward for release during August 2015 and the records of 1988 will be brought forward in December 2015.

This process involves the referral of the files to the Responsible Authority for sensitivity review. This entails a page by page examination to ensure that a record contains nothing sensitive as defined by the FOI Act and DP Act.

Records Released

542 files being deemed as suitable for release as “fully open”. A further **150** files are open but subject to blanking out of some content. **108** files remain closed in full, the bulk of which are individual prisoner files.

The main file series being released includes Central Secretariat and Northern Ireland Office files.

Some of the main issues covered by the 1987 release include:

- Anglo Irish Agreement
- Meetings with NI political parties
- Economic cooperation and negotiations (involving Ireland, UK, USA and Europe)
- The MacBride Principles (on discrimination in the workplace)
- High level and operational security matters (including on the border and within the penal system)
- Children and young people in care and the prevention of abuse
- *European Convention on Human Rights* and political prisoners
- Homelessness
- Drug addiction
- Cross border cooperation
- Supergrass arrangements (also known as 'Converted Terrorists')
- Extradition arrangements
- Community Groups
- Loyalist political prisoner protests
- Major investigation into alleged abuse of female political prisoners (whilst undergoing strip search protocols), at HMP Armagh
- Chernobyl

Records may be closed either fully or in part only. Blanking out involves the removal of a limited number of papers from the file that have been deemed as exempt from the right to know under FOI. To facilitate the release of as much information as possible, redaction can be used to blank out sensitive data within individual documents that would otherwise prevent release. All information which is withheld in the manner outlined above, however, must be retained in accordance with the exemptions contained within the FOI Act. In the majority of cases, the reason for extended closure was the application of section 40 – the *personal information* exemption – of the FOI Act. This means that personal information is exempt from the right to know if it would breach the Data Protection principles.

The catalogue of files for 1987 will be publicly available online on PRONI website from Friday 21st August 2015 and files will be available to view at PRONI from Friday 21st August.



1987 Highlighted Files

Central Secretariat

CENT/3/27A	1985-87	SACHR (Standing Advisory Committee on Human Rights) Policy, correspondence and briefing papers for the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland (Douglas Hurd 1984-5 and Tom King 1985-9) on the range of human rights issues affecting Northern Ireland and under consultation by the Government. This included race/nationality/ethnicity relations, <i>Diplock</i> courts, <i>Emergency Powers Act</i> , <i>Prevention of Terrorism Act</i> , the seven day detention of suspects, the legitimate use of firearms by security forces and employment discrimination (the MacBride principles). With regard to the latter, papers reveal the Government's response to SACHR Belfast's Chairman, noting the practical difficulty in running any business when measured against the duty to comply with the onerous burden placed on Northern Ireland employers by the MacBride principles of equality in all workplaces.
CENT/3/47A	1985-87	Disinvestment – The McBride Principles In a similar vein to the file mentioned above, official papers reveal the Government's attempts to tackle the MacBride recommendations, especially given the strength of US political lobbyist influence in the USA and the consequent affect on transatlantic trade / cooperation with Northern Ireland and the UK. Officials in the Foreign and Commonwealth Office (FCO) voiced fears that US investment might be 'frightened away from the Province', and in one telex, the British Embassy stated that (in light of the Anglo Irish Agreement), 'other leading Catholic opinion in Northern Ireland might now be prepared to be more forthcoming in condemning MacBride. A word from John Hume in particular would be invaluable...'

CENT/3/55A	1983-87	Anglo Irish Intergovernmental Conference (A.I.I.C.) Meeting Dublin Documents relating to the Joint Report of the Steering Committee of Anglo Irish Intergovernmental Conference to the Anglo-Irish Summit, covering a wide variety of the key issues which the Anglo-Irish Intergovernmental Conference was to consult upon - education, the Arts, cross border economic cooperation, energy (namely the Kinsale gas field), language, strategic relations, security cooperation on the border and suggested protocols for RUC interviewing suspects whilst in Garda custody.
CENT/3/56A	1985-87	Beneficiaries of the Fund – Projects File sheds light on the consideration given to the <i>International Fund</i> , in the wake of the Anglo-Irish Agreement. <i>Cooperation North</i> and the <i>Irish Peace Institute</i> were the two main bodies most likely to benefit from the Fund and some of the potential major (and minor) projects would include coastal erosion, agricultural initiatives, oil exploration, cross border cooperation, security fences for schools, etc. Dr O'Regan of the International Fund included in his submission a copy of correspondence sent to him from US President Ronald Reagan, who commended the Fund on their efforts to promote peace in Northern Ireland and singled out Cooperation North for their work in breaking down barriers. In their commentary on Dr O'Regan's spending proposals (estimated to be £20 million), hesitant UK Government officials referred to his 'sketchy and grandiose plans' and they sought to 'damp down Dr O'Regan's wilder ambitions'.
CENT/3/60A	1987	Industrial Development Board – 1987 File detailing the Government attempts to counteract the MacBride employment recommendations, including the British Ambassador in Washington stating that the Irish lobby in US sought to link Northern Ireland's employment equality record with that of South Africa (following US companies' withdrawal from SA in protest). The Government was actively seeking to employ a skilled lobbyist for its own 'corner', to advocate the case for rejecting MacBride in its entirety.

CENT/3/83A

1986-87

Anglo Irish Steering Group

File contains briefing papers on political positioning following the signing of the Anglo-Irish Agreement, particularly that of Fianna Fail, the Irish opposition party (shortly thereafter to become the minority party of government in the Dail), and its leader Charles Haughey (subsequently elected Taoiseach). He had been strongly opposed to the Anglo-Irish Agreement in its current form and had made it clear he wished to renegotiate it if he became Taoiseach. The Government were, as one official observed, eager to 'avoid taking sides and show willingness to cooperate with whatever Irish Administration emerges...'. The papers shed light on the NIO officials' predictions and speculation regarding Fianna Fail's election chances, and any potential partnerships in the new Dail. 'Mr Haughey has himself ruled out Sinn Féin as a partner. Unless Fianna Fail secure a majority therefore, there could be considerable problems in stitching together a Government and the position of Mr Haughey could well be challenged...while with Mr Haughey, the ride will be rougher and a number of Anglo Irish issues (not only Northern Ireland) will be treated more toughly, he would be unlikely to do anything so unpopular and retrograde as to denounce the Agreement, at least for the moment...'

CENT/3/84A

1985-87

Harland and Wolff

File relates to the developing predicament of H&W, set in the wider context of a worsening crisis for British Shipbuilders. Contains Ministerial/senior Department of Economic Development and Department of Trade and Industry officials' correspondence and highly detailed assessments, in particular focussing on major contracts for Ministry of Defence warships and BP civilian 'single well oil production' ships. The MOD contract was a key bone of contention between H&W and the Swan Hunter yard, both of which were competing for the lucrative military contract. The depth of the looming crisis for local heavy industry was clear, when Secretary of State for NI Tom King wrote to Prime Minister Thatcher in November:

'As you can imagine I will face similar problems in Northern Ireland from any decision to close H&W and, indeed, the difficulties will be greater. Not only

will I be faced with the need to replace jobs in an area which already suffers from a very high level of unemployment...but I will also have very major problems associated with political developments in Northern Ireland...the scale of the H&W redundancy would be significantly larger than at either of the other two yards individually...'

CENT/3/64A

1985-87

Anglo-Irish Talks

File contains correspondence and detailed briefing papers for Ministers and senior officials, spanning the period from the negotiations during the final drafting of the Anglo-Irish Agreement (late summer 1985), until mid 1987, as the Anglo-Irish Intergovernmental Conference then consulted on various post agreement issues (border security cooperation, Irish language, employment, economic cooperation, etc.). Papers give interesting insights into several 'sticking points', such as security. Nationalist politicians and the Irish Government demanded the demobilisation of the Ulster Defence Regiment but accepted the existence of the Royal Ulster Constabulary (which had recently displayed the willingness to check contentious Loyalist marches in Portadown – this was seen by Dublin as showing a 'degree of even handedness' with both communities).

The briefing papers also cover the exchanges between the Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher and the UUP leader Jim Molyneaux and DUP leader Ian Paisley, revealing insights into the Government's strategy for negotiating with the Unionists, and their assessment of the Unionist 'bargaining' position. 'Mr Molyneaux and Dr Paisley handed over a letter...reaffirmed Unionist concern at the secrecy surrounding the Anglo Irish talks and recording Unionist willingness both to contribute to a new Anglo Irish process under very restrictive conditions and to consider reasonable proposals for the protection of Nationalist interests (but not SDLP membership in a devolved NI government)...the Unionist line is astute but sophisticated and only one of their arguments (that the Irish Government has taken the SDLP into its confidence in a way that HMG has not taken the Unionist) carries weight...Their letter is also interesting in that, like others recently addressed to both the Prime minister and the Secretary of State, it indicates likely Unionist

lines of attack on an Agreement...even were it possible to violate the confidentiality of our present discussions and deal in detail with some of the points raised, there is no advantage for us in conducting the argument on the terms suggested by Mr Molyneaux and Dr Paisley: we will, neither convince them nor those they represent, while we shall lose the advantage afforded by their implicit impugning the good faith of the Prime minister, and their failure to respond to her invitation to put forward acceptable proposals for devolved government...’.

CENT/3/80A

1985-87

Irish Identity

File contains correspondence and briefing / options papers for Government Ministers and senior NIO officials relating to Irish cultural identity and language (one of the key Irish Government requirements under the Anglo Irish Agreement and the Intergovernmental Conference). Includes papers on the issue of Irish identity in prisons, such as the playing of Gaelic football at HMP Maze and the availability of Irish language printed literature to prisoners. Other significant Dublin proposals included parity of esteem for Irish alongside the common (official) use of English language, the use of dual language road signs, setting up an Irish language body to promote the language / culture and an Irish language question to be included in the forthcoming 1991 Census.

With regard to Government adoption of Irish / English dual language for official business, NIO officials were concerned at the practical (and wider political) ramifications of this. They were on the whole reluctant to accede to Dublin’s demands, as is touched upon in one confidential briefing note to fellow officials: ‘...the conventional pluralism of NI public policy will be shattered, and we shall end up with two rabidly ‘British’ and rabidly ‘Irish’ communities...I see no reason to believe that there is any route to internal harmony which does not involve wider, indeed post national, identities. On linguistic and cultural issues, the views of the ROI cannot help but be reactionary. Because Irish nationalism is reactionary, Ulster nationalism is doubly reactionary. It is only the UK which is in a position to take a properly comprehensive view and it really cannot do so if we sentimentalise about the

value of Irish language and culture. The reality – and a very good thing too – is that Ireland and Britain are both sharers in Mid-Atlantic society. It is always possible for the Robin Flowers*¹ (or indeed Peter Bells*²) of this world to love romantic Ireland dead and gone. But it would be disastrous if that spirit played any part in UK public policy making. Happy New Year (as we say in London, Edinburgh, Cardiff, Dublin and Belfast).’

*¹ English Celticist poet who translated poetry from Irish

*² Possibly refers to official by the same name, who served with the Northern Ireland Office, closely involved in the Anglo Irish negotiations

CENT/3/77A	1984-86	<p>Border Matters - General Papers from 29 August 1984 – (7 November 1987*)</p> <p><i>(* Please note that papers actually run to August 1986, and not 1987)</i></p> <p>File deals with cross border issues, and includes Ministerial / senior official correspondence between the two Governments. Border crossing points, bridges and roads (often closed due to the ease with which suspects evaded security forces pursuit), formed the crux of this consultation, which had Anglo Irish strategic implications beyond the obvious operational security concerns.</p>
CENT/3/76A	1985-87	<p>Sinn Féin: "Policy Group on Non-Violence Declarations"</p> <p>File primarily deals with Government consultation over Sinn Féin representation at elections on both sides of the border, and the proposal that all political parties putting forward candidates for election should sign a declaration of non violence. File contains highly detailed briefing papers, Ministerial and senior official correspondence and other papers.</p>
CENT/3/78A	1985-87	<p>Prime Minister's contacts with Party Leaders</p> <p>File contains highly detailed briefing papers and correspondence on the series of high level meetings with the Prime Minister, Mrs Thatcher, in which she hosted key representatives ('opinion formers')</p>

invited from political parties, church, business, education and wider society. This included a series of meetings with Unionist leaders, which the NIO hoped would adequately demonstrate the Government's determination to 'go through with the AI Agreement', but also to show that they understood the Unionist concerns, and to rebut charges 'that the Agreement is inconsistent with previous Government statements'. In accompanying the attached *Prime Minister's Speaking Note for Use With Moderate Unionists* (for her address 15th January to try to bolster wider Unionist support by assuaging their concerns at cross border security, an Irish Government Minister sitting on the Anglo-Irish Conference panel, and the future of the Union), an official writes: 'This seeks to show that the Prime Minister understands why unionists feel so hurt (or worse) about the Agreement; to correct some misunderstandings; but above all to emphasise the benefits of the Agreement from a Unionist standpoint'.

Subsequent reaction in Unionist circles was understandably mixed. By spring 1986, one NIO official noted the mood within DUP ranks: 'In conversation with a DUP Assemblyman, I was told that a party meeting has taken place at which there had been considerable opposition to the idea of talks but Dr Paisley had taken the position that he was in favour and he was going to lead as a leader should. (On the side, my contact told me that if this initiative failed Dr Paisley may not be a leader for very long)...'

CENT/3/82A

1987

Anglo-Irish Agreement – Reactions

This file contains a large number of confidential papers relating to the Unionist protests against the Anglo-Irish Agreement. The topics covered include: a paper on a UDA policy document about devolution, dated 23 February 1987; a paper on the handling of a Unionist petition to The Queen, dated 19 February 1987; draft letter to NI Unionist MPs about the petition, 27 February 1987 and a copy of the final letter issued to MPs, 4 March 1987; correspondence between Jim Molyneaux, UUP Leader and Mrs Thatcher, March 1987, about the impact of the Agreement; and papers relating to the McGimpsey brothers legal challenge to the Agreement, July 1987.

CENT/3/81A	1985-1987	Anglo-Irish Agreement – Presentation and Communication (Presentational Strategy Group) File focuses on efforts to counteract opposition to the Anglo-Irish Agreement following the formation of a group to advise the Secretary of State on public relations aspect of the Anglo-Irish Agreement. There is a note of the first meeting on 8 January 1986 at which they set out the strategy they wish to adopt ‘...which would advance support for the Agreement and counter the declared aim of Unionist politicians to kill the Agreement.’ There is a letter from the British Embassy, Dublin to Sir Robert Andrew, NIO, 16 January 1986, ‘From the point of view of this Embassy, what is most striking is that the Hillsborough Agreement has transformed Anglo-Irish relations, after 60 years during which they have been difficult and sometimes disastrous.’ There are also minutes of the group’s regular meetings.
CENT/3/65A	1985-1987	Anglo-Irish Funds File relates to international aid for Northern Ireland, primarily from the United States. It includes a draft statement prepared by the Irish Government for President Reagan in support of an Anglo-Irish Agreement, dated 16 July 1985. There is also a confidential paper on the International Fund – A US Administration View dated 2 October 1987, prepared by the Department of Finance and Personnel.
CENT/3/67A	1985-1987	Political Developments Group The file contains notes of meetings of the Political Developments Group and copies of papers prepared for the group. Topics covered at meetings include the political situation, the position of the different NI political parties, policy developments, etc. The meeting of the 13 March 1987 included discussion of the Irish language and reveals the NIO attitudes to the position of the Irish Government and Sinn Féin on use of the Irish language. There is also a secret paper assessing the possible Unionist/Loyalist reaction to the introduction of the Public Order Order, dated 26 March 1987, the document reviews the activities of the Unionist Parties, Apprentice Boys/Orange Order, UDA/UVF/Ulster Clubs and Ulster Resistance and the potential actions they may take. There is also a

paper entitled Easing the Political Log-Jam which examined the long term and short term strategic issues on the political and constitutional front, dated 9 March 1987.

CENT/3/68A

1986-1987

Re-Opening Political Dialogue

The file includes papers by Ken Bloomfield setting out proposals for encouraging political dialogue with the aim of achieving a devolution settlement for NI. The papers reveal the use of informal approaches relying on a range of personal contacts such as academics and businessmen to sound out various NI politicians on the prospect of talks. There is also a note of meeting between Sir Robert Andrew, NIO, and Jim Molyneaux and Ian Paisley, which records their views on any prospective political talks, dated 24 February 1987.

CENT/3/57

1984-1987

General Election 1987

The file contains various drafts relating to NI for the Queen's Speech depending on the outcome of the election. There are also papers by NIO officials assessing the likely impact of the election in NI, dated 5 June 1987 and a thorough analysis of the election results of the NI parties, dated 15 June 1987.

CENT/1/13/25

1984-1987

Committee of Inquiry into Children's Homes

The file contains a submission by Maurice Hayes on the Report of the Committee of Inquiry, dated 23 January 1986 and draft submission from Richard Needham, NIO Minister of State to the Secretary of State on the Hughes Report, and also a submission on the progress made in implementing those recommendations of the Hughes Inquiry Report endorsed by the Department of Health and Social Services.



Northern Ireland Office

NIO/12/530A	1983-87	Prisons – Regime – Top and High Risk Category Prisoners File details the introduction of a new ‘Top Risk’ classification for those sentenced or un-sentenced prisoners whose escape from custody would be ‘extremely dangerous to the public, or to the security forces or to the security of the state’. The regime for such individuals (who tended to be politically motivated offenders) was more restrictive than for ‘normal’ prisoners, and included ‘Closed Visits’ , single cell accommodation (with increased frequency searches), additional surveillance and limited granting of home leave.
NIO/12/527A	1983-87	Prisons – Escapes – H.M. Prison Maze Escape on the 25th September 1983 – P.R.(1) Policy Papers File covers the four year period following the 1983 HMP Maze escape, culminating in the escapees’ trial in early 1987 (at which it was feared that a new escape or rescue attempt by PIRA might occur at the vulnerable HMP Belfast on Crumlin Road). Contains a briefing on the current status of the escapees – some remained at large, some had been killed during security force pursuit and some had been recaptured (Gerry Kelly and Brendan McFarlane having been arrested six months earlier in Amsterdam and thereafter extradited for trial).
NIO/12/483A	1986	Prison – Religion – Complaints by Father Raymond Murray The file contains a letter from Father Murray, dated 22 November 1985 to Secretary of State, Tom King, about having a spiritual visit with a parishioner at the Prison, interrupted by a Prison Officer, who told them to stop speaking in Irish. The visiting box was meant to be sound proof and the remainder of the files relates the subsequent investigation into the incident and the remedial action required.

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NIO/10/14/2A	1985-1986	Maze Compound – Search Report <p>File contains reports on routine searches of inmates cells and records what was found, for example '2 pints of poteen', 'small quantity of yeast', '15 gallons hooch', '6 improvised berets' and '1 small pocket size toy telescope'.</p>
NIO/20/5A	1982-1989	Kincora <p>The file primarily dates from 1982-1983 and relates to the setting up of an Inquiry. The documents from 1989 are news cuttings from the <i>Daily Mirror</i> about Kincora.</p>
NIO/28/1/9A	1983-87	Home Defence Planning – Personal Copy Correspondence <p>File details arrangements for sustaining a post nuclear attack Regional Government Headquarters based in 'protected building No. 1' in Ballymena (which would preside above a tier of local government bases). This interim government would be initiated following the expected escalation from 'conventional' to 'nuclear' warfare with the USSR.</p> <p>As noted in one restricted NIO memo, even the terrifying prospect of a massive nuclear first strike by the USSR on all UK cities, industry and infrastructure did not solve the problem local councillors (who were in the midst of political impasse in Northern Ireland), having to coexist in emergency underground bunkers:</p> <p>'The political climate in District Councils means that the progress towards the establishment of the lowest tier of post-strike government is also in effect in cold storage and our interim arrangements must also take account of this situation...'</p> <p>Also, in his reflection on a recent exercise, an official under the paragraph '<i>Behaviour under Stress</i>' noted the problems potentially faced locally for those living in the restricted confines of a bunker in terms of those deemed 'suitable':</p> <p>'...a very important factor as far as designees in Northern Ireland are concerned...'</p>

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He also noted: 'the vegetarian gentleman who attended the course would find some difficulty with bunker food...'

