



Ollscoil na hÉireann
National University of Ireland

Dr Garret FitzGerald Memorial Lecture 2018



Brexit and the Belfast Agreement:

Mitigating the Return to Disturbance
in our Historic Relationships

John Alderdice



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College Hall, Royal College of Surgeons in Ireland
St Stephen's Green, Dublin 2
31 October 2018

ISBN: 978-0-901510-86-0 ISSN: 2009-4647

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Edited by: Djamel White and Emer Purcell

CHANCELLOR: OPENING REMARKS

Dr Maurice Manning



Nothing delighted Dr Garret FitzGerald more than public discourse and the articulation and defence of ideas. In seeking to honour him, the Senate of the National University of Ireland thought it appropriate to initiate a series of lectures in his memory on topics of national or international importance.

The inaugural lecture was given in 2011 by Professor Ronan Fanning on the theme *Garret FitzGerald and the Quest for a New Ireland*. That lecture was intended as a first assessment of Garret's legacy. Ronan Fanning's conclusion: 'That he left Ireland a better place than he found it, is a verdict for which I am confident I can command your assent'.

The second and third lectures, by Seán Donlon and Peter Sutherland respectively, were externally focused, Seán Donlon in UCC explored *Garret FitzGerald and Irish Foreign Policy*, while Peter Sutherland's topic in NUI Galway was *European Integration and the Taming of Nationalism*. The fourth lecture, held in Maynooth University, by John MacMenamin, examined the realities of the new Europe, specifically in its legal context. In 2016, Brigid Laffan addressed the theme of *In Defence of the State: Fractious Politics in Hard Times*. Over the course of these lectures, areas were explored which were of considerable interest to Garret and where his public contribution is apparent: social and political progress in Ireland, the resolution of conflict in Northern Ireland, Ireland's relationship with the wider world and the great European project.

This evening we are very pleased to welcome Lord John Alderdice to deliver the sixth Garret FitzGerald Memorial Lecture. His paper is entitled 'Brexit and the Belfast Agreement: Mitigating the Return to Disturbance in our Historic Relationships'. There is no doubt that John's long service to Northern Ireland and his participation in the negotiations of the Good Friday Agreement mean that he is particularly well placed to position Northern Ireland within the context of most pressing European political issue of the day: Brexit and its implications for the whole of this island. Senator Michael McDowell will respond to the paper.

Dr Maurice Manning

Chancellor



*Dr Maurice Manning
Mary FitzGerald, John Alderdice,
Michael McDowell, Mark FitzGerald
and John FitzGerald*

*Chancellor NUI, Maurice
Manning, John Alderdice and
Michael McDowell*



*NUI Chancellor Dr Maurice
Manning introducing the speakers
for the 2018 Dr Garret FitzGerald
Memorial Lecture*



BREXIT AND THE BELFAST AGREEMENT: Mitigating the Return to Disturbance in our Historic Relationships

Lord John Alderdice FRCPsych



It is a delight for my wife, Joan, and I to join you here this evening in such august surroundings, redolent as they are of the history of medicine in Ireland, and I am most grateful, Chancellor Maurice Manning, for the honour that you and National University of Ireland do me by your invitation to deliver the 2018 Dr Garret FitzGerald Lecture in the presence of such distinguished guests and, especially, members of the FitzGerald family. I am also grateful to my old friend Senator Michael McDowell for agreeing to give a response to my lecture afterwards.

In the mid-1980s, Mary Pyle, whose husband Fergus was sometimes Northern Editor of the *Irish Times*, myself, and others including Michael FitzGerald, Kate Nowlan, Ellen O'Malley-Dunlop and Ross Skelton, set up the Irish Forum for Psychoanalytic Psychotherapy. We met regularly at Mary and Fergus's home on Palmerston Road, just next door to Garret and Joan FitzGerald. It was around 1986/87, when he was Taoiseach, and I was astonished to find that outside his house stood one single, very relaxed looking, member of the Garda Síochána, who seemed quite unconcerned that I was parking my Northern registered car just across the road from the Taoiseach's home. It was a striking contrast with the security measures we were used to in Belfast. Every significant public figure had substantial protection arrangements in place – my wife, Joan, and I lived next door to RUC HQ in East Belfast and so were used to a rather more substantial police presence than was apparent outside of the FitzGerald's home on Palmerston Road in Dublin.

However, despite living in another part of the island of Ireland which was worlds away in its atmosphere and politics, Garret FitzGerald was persistently concerned about the North, describing his great aim as being the creation

of a pluralist Ireland where the Northern Protestants of his mother Mabel's family tradition, as well as the Southern Catholics of his father Desmond FitzGerald's family, would feel equally at home. It was not only that fervent commitment to a tolerant future, but also his thorough-going liberalism and his preparedness to confront traditional conservatism that attracted people like me in the North, as well as so many young people here in the South, to him and his politics. It was during those years that the relationship between Fine Gael and the Alliance Party became very strong indeed. He was in addition a deeply committed European, fluent in French, and acquainted with continental thinking. Roy Jenkins, later President of the European Commission, the best Prime Minister the UK never had, and the Leader of the Liberal Democrats when I went to the Lords in 1996, paid Garret FitzGerald what was, in his terms, one of the highest compliments possible. After hearing Garret speak at the opening of the European Parliament, he said of him: 'There, I thought, spoke the Ireland of Joyce and Synge and the Countess Markievicz. It was he who made me feel provincial'. How could I not be attracted to this great Irish leader, committed as I was to reaching across the community divisions and building a genuinely liberal and pluralist Ireland, with close relations with Britain, and in the wider European context?

I have always been a fervent European. It is an emotional thing as much as an intellectual one. My parents took our family travelling in every country this side of the Iron Curtain as youngsters, and from an early stage I was involved in European networks in personal, religious and political life. Both of our daughters-in-law are from outside of the UK and most of our grandchildren are growing up bilingual, some in English and German; others in English and Portuguese. My wife and I make our home not just in the United Kingdom, but also in France. As a former vice-president of the European Liberal Democrat and Reform Party and someone always committed to Europe, it is not just personal, but political. Intellectually too, the principles behind the European project have been a driving force in my understanding of a better way of doing politics, particularly, of course, in my own part of the world, in Northern Ireland.

The border between the North and South in Ireland is currently, as it always has been, something of a problem, but it is not itself the cause of our problems. It reflected problems that were there long before, though it did exacerbate them. However, the way that the European project worked in its

earlier years provided my generation with inspiration and with a model that enabled us to work to change community relationships within Northern Ireland, between North and South, and between Britain and Ireland.

Indeed, the three-stranded talks process that emerged from the consideration of these three sets of relationships was the most important discovery of the Irish Peace Process – a realisation that is applicable to other areas of conflict – that our problems were a result of disturbed, historic relationships, and their resolution was to be found, not only in better institutions, but changed constitutions, recognising everyone’s human rights, improving the economy, and the transformation of policing and the administration of justice, but, fundamentally, in addressing intercommunal relationships. It was not just about the linearity of better regulation, but about engaging with the complexity of better relationships between, and among, the various large groups or communities of which we are members. We came to appreciate the importance of process in achieving understanding, of inclusivity in reaching sustainable agreements, of the slow evolution of new forms of self-governance, and of the building of a structured network of relations.

All of this emerged not only from the history of previous failed attempts at bringing peace to Ireland, but from the success of the post-war European project in which France, Germany and the others first began to cooperate over coal and steel, rather than using them to make the weapons of war with which they had wreaked such havoc on each other twice in a generation. The way they had worked creatively and flexibly in those early days to share sovereignty and invent new ways of governing was a model to us for how things could be – new structures, new laws, new levels of cross-border cooperation but, most importantly, new relationships resulting in new levels of prosperity and a better life for all. The progress being made in South Africa and the Middle East in the 1990s helped us see that political conflict and violence did not have to remain intractable. Europe at the same time helped us to see how that could be done.

However, for me, sadly, it was neither entirely a shock nor a surprise when the UK’s Brexit Referendum went the way it did. For some years I had been warning friends and colleagues that the project was not going well and, unless those of us who are pro-European were able to persuade our colleagues in Brussels to change the way that the European Union was developing, we would find those opposed to the Union increasing in number and in fervour, and it would not

be good for the project – indeed, it would be destined for disaster if there was no change. I said so in speeches in Westminster on a number of occasions but there was not a preparedness to listen.

It was a common trajectory. What starts with inspiration, novelty, creativity and flexibility in one generation, hardens down to legalism, regulation and conservatism a generation or two later – and so it has been with the European Project. It started as a peace project with the determination of Jean Monnet, Konrad Adenauer, Robert Schuman and others to use coal and steel as the foundation for the subsequent political cooperation that would make war unthinkable. It was not about the euro or the single market, and it was not about providing a space at the top table of global affairs for Presidents and Prime Ministers of small European countries. It was a peace project to try to make sure that Germany and France and the rest of us in Europe did not go to war again. Now, tragically, the project itself has become the focus of division, not only within the United Kingdom, but right across Europe.

Pro-EU Europeans should have been looking for a long time at why things were going wrong. If a couple get divorced after 40 or more years together, and the one who leaves does not do so in order to go to another partner, the one who is left needs to ask themselves some serious questions about the motivation for the divorce after such a long time. There was clearly a problem of a serious order in the relationship. What went wrong in Europe? I believe that the answer is that the European Union was not built on liberal principles of freedom, flexibility, organic growth and development, with appropriate and meaningful sensitivity to differences of identity and culture right across Europe, not only between Northern and Southern Europe, but between East and West too. Instead, it was centralising and focused on itself and on the interests, concerns, preoccupations and beliefs of the elite, with the result that many ordinary people found themselves becoming disenchanted. This is a disaster. We know what happens when Europe becomes divided, but divided it has become, and our job now is to try to find a way of bringing it together.

The move to Brexit has made this an immediate problem for all of us in Ireland. But, before turning to what can be done, it may be useful to say a few more things about why Brexit is coming about. There has been a lot of foolish chatter about Britain seeking to turn the clock back to the glory days of empire, but those who voted for Brexit are no more eager to have immigrants come

from the countries of the former empire than from the rest of Europe. There is indeed good reason to look to history, but we need to go further back. Brexit has been with us before. Almost 500 hundred years ago Henry VIII took the church in England out of the centralised community of Western Christendom, risking not just economic disaster, but hell fire forever. There were many more things involved in that breach than ending his marriage to Catherine of Aragon. In addition to the general religious foment of the time, and people bristling at being subject to rules and regulations imposed by religious authorities seen as corrupt and distant, there was something of the wish for independence common in many an island nation – a sense and sentiment not unknown on this island. Britain joined the European Economic Community on 1 January 1973 (on the same day as Ireland) for economic reasons and never entirely subscribed to the political dynamic of the EU. When those political ambitions seemed to be jeopardising the capacity of British people to decide about their own future and identity as a nation state, they were into territory that some of my colleagues would call ‘sacred values’. All of these emotional issues – the sense of independence, the concern about national identity and integrity, the wish to be accorded respect and be treated fairly – were all felt to be under threat, a view that was profoundly confirmed when just after the referendum, the President of the European Commission, Mr Jean-Claude Juncker, demanded that Britain implement Article 50 straightaway, saying that it was a requirement. It was not a requirement, but it was an extremely unhelpful intervention because it gave precisely the impression, one of an arrogant and insensitive Brussels talking down to everybody, that had produced the problems in the first place.

It is important to note at this point that, as in any situation of conflict, we ought not to try to justify one side or the other, but instead try to understand why we have such a deterioration in relationships and figure out what to do about it. Relationships are more than even a two-way affair; they are complex and involve a whole network. In addition to structure and boundaries, we must be prepared for flexibility if relationships are to evolve, and even survive. It may be too late to do other than have a relationship where the United Kingdom is outside the European Union, but it is not yet too late for some of the other countries, because this is not just a question of Britain. Many other countries are asking themselves similar questions and have deeply dissatisfied populations, and this year we have seen some developments of a thoroughly

untoward order, for example in Italy and Spain in the south, and in Hungary and Poland in the east of Europe.

When it comes to the border in Ireland, I had hoped that leaders in London, Dublin, and Brussels would come to understand that it is in all our interests to be flexible and creative and not simply say, 'Well, take it or leave it. If you want to do Brexit, here are the consequences'. I sometimes feel that if those engaged in the current negotiations in London, Dublin, and especially Brussels had been in Belfast 20 years ago, we would never have had the Good Friday Agreement, because it required us to go way beyond the normal rules and procedures.

What then, should be done?

Instead of immediately rushing to find practical solutions, we should focus on the question of relationships. Those three sets of relationships that I mentioned – between the two main communities in Northern Ireland, between North and South in Ireland, and between Britain and Ireland, were held and supported by the external relationships within the EU and with the USA, which have special relationships with both Britain and Ireland. Now all five sets of relationships are in difficulty. The USA is enmeshed in problems of internal and external relationships and the EU is experiencing its own difficulties. More immediately for us the British and Irish Governments have not been focussing sufficiently on their important relationship with each other. The leaders of both countries need to realise that Ireland is not merely 'one of the 27'. There is a very special relationship, with the common travel area and the acceptance of citizenship and the right to vote being only a few of the examples of that special relationship. In all of history, when Britain has disregarded the importance of Ireland, or Ireland has sought out relationships with other parts of Europe in preference, it has never ended well for either.

In the Westminster Parliament I have repeatedly warned the British Government that they need to pay more attention to the relationship with Ireland. I remember in 2013 when the then Crime and Courts Bill was being debated, I realised that problems were emerging in Northern Ireland over the question of whether there would be a legislative consent motion in the Assembly. I therefore met with Lord Taylor of Holbeach, who was responsible for the Bill in the House of Lords. I asked him:

Has the Right Honourable Theresa May – who at that stage was Home Secretary – had a consultation with the Minister for Justice in the Republic of Ireland, because the NCA, which is going to be created by this Bill, has border security as one of its fundamental requirements? That is one of the things it is about. The only land border we have in the United Kingdom is with the Republic of Ireland. We have a British-Irish Council. We have a whole series of international agreements. We have meetings of ministers in every context. Has the Home Secretary consulted the Minister for Justice in the Republic of Ireland about this question?

The Lord Taylor of Holbeach, who is a very honest and open man, was clear. It had not even entered their minds to have such a conversation. It had not even entered their minds! It was not nastiness. It was not malevolence. It was not meant as a snub or a dismissal. It just had not even entered their minds. It reminded me of the response I received from an old friend who used to run the CIA. I asked him if the USA had consulted with India prior to invading Afghanistan, after all, India has always been just next door to Afghanistan, it has a million men under arms, and is an ally of the West. 'We never thought of it', he said. What a disaster, that they never thought of it.

My fear is that Theresa May has brought to the office of the Prime Minister many of the attitudes, the people and the approaches of the Home Office, and in the case of relationships with Ireland, North and South, that creates endless problems for her and for all of us. That is why I appealed publicly for her to understand that being Prime Minister of the United Kingdom is not just about being Prime Minister of England and a few add-on bits. It is about Scotland; it is about Wales; it is about Northern Ireland; and it is about many parts of England that do not necessarily feel entirely at home with the approaches that are taken in London. That entails a stretching of imagination and political creativity, it means engaging with people and while not entirely easy, it is essential in creating the right kind of environment within the United Kingdom and in relationships within and beyond the EU, but especially with Ireland.

But I must also say, here in Dublin, that to be seen siding with the rest of the EU against Britain is not a recipe for success. England's difficulty is likely to be Ireland's difficulty rather than Ireland's opportunity. This is especially true of economic relationships. A great deal has been said about the economic consequences of Brexit given the border between North and South, and

this is indeed significant, but it is paltry in comparison with the amount of trade between Dun Laoghaire and Holyhead. Even after a hundred years of independence there is a huge linkage between the two islands and it has received a great deal less public attention than it needs and deserves. Indeed, as I told the committee of the Seanad addressing Brexit, if agriculture and the agri-food business, along with energy (especially electricity) were removed from the equation through a bilateral arrangement that London and Dublin agreed and took together to Brussels, much of the border problem, such as it is, would be addressed. The east-west trade issue is a much more complex and difficult one and I hope that it is receiving more attention behind closed doors than is evident to date in the public space. Whether or not that is the case, of one thing I am certain: a great deal needs to be done by both sides to rebuild the relationship between London and Dublin. Ireland has a long history of looking in vain to Europe to help them against England. It would be much better to act as a bridge between the UK and Europe, than as a bulwark for Europe against Brexit Britain.

Garret FitzGerald realised this. You will recall that after his work with the New Ireland Forum elicited the notorious *Out! Out! Out!* response from Margaret Thatcher in 1983, he and the Irish diplomatic service did not attack back, but instead persisted in a positive engagement with London and the result was the 1985 Anglo-Irish Agreement – a watershed in British-Irish relations and a testament to Garret FitzGerald's steady work of relationship-building with Britain. Unfortunately, while he kept the SDLP informed, the British Government not only failed to keep Unionists and Alliance informed, but purposely misled them, with disastrous consequences.

In addition to the East-West relationship, the two other important sets of relationships – within Northern Ireland and between North and South – have also suffered much in recent times. There have been various reasons for this, not the least being the divergence in view about the Good Friday Agreement. For Unionists it was a settlement – an end of violence in return for fundamental changes in political structures, policing and the administration of justice, and inclusivity of Irish culture. For Republicans, however, it was regarded as a vehicle that would facilitate moves towards a United Ireland. While Ian Paisley and Martin McGuinness understood what had to be done and gave leadership during their time as First Minister and Deputy First Minister, the divergence

between the perspectives of their party members and especially the generation that followed them, ensured that the Assembly and Executive in the North never truly settled into a solid working relationship. In addition, the various recent problems over accusations of corruption, as well as the disrespectful behaviour of some senior members of the DUP, led to Sinn Féin walking out and bringing down the Executive. Attempts to repair that relationship will require more focus and sense of responsibility from the leadership of the two parties than we have seen to date. Sinn Féin currently seems more focussed on its prospects south of the border and the DUP remain new-fangled with their significance at Westminster. These preoccupations will pass, but the need to find a way of living together in the North will not.

The North/South relationship too will only work when Unionists feel that the Dublin Government is not going to use Brexit to press towards Irish unity, and at the moment that is how the position of siding with the rest of the 27 against the UK is perceived – again a problem of relationships returning us to the suspicions of the past rather than building on the principles of the Irish Peace Process.

Garret FitzGerald understood this very well. For many years after his time as Taoiseach, he wrote a weekly column in the *Irish Times*, and in his contribution to Ireland's newspaper of record on 25 February 2006 he wrote about how history would judge those who mismanaged relationships in these islands. He said that he doubted that any of the players would emerge unscathed. Unionist Governments in the North had alienated what was then a 35 percent Nationalist minority; the British Government had abandoned their responsibilities; and successive Irish Governments had actually heightened tensions within the North. He saved his fiercest criticism for the IRA, whose campaign of violence he regarded as morally reprehensible. They had, he said, actually wrecked the prospect of Irish unity by creating a massive divergence, economic as well as political, between North and South. But let me quote from a section near the end of the column:

Simultaneously with the demise of the Cold War having finally eliminated any strategic British interest in Northern Ireland, Britain's primary concern was now also the restoration of peace and stability in the North.

During the 1980s, and even more so in the 1990s, this new identity of interest of the two states (the United Kingdom and Ireland) in relation to Northern Ireland came to transcend all other differences, and has since led to the emergence of a closer relationship between them than exists between neighbouring states elsewhere in Europe – and this in turn has been increasingly reflected at the popular level.

We are of course part of a wider world where relationships are uncertain, and anxiety is high, as a consequence of globalisation, new disruptive technologies, the financial crisis, the dizzying pace of societal change and the collapse of the old post-war structures and alliances. However as was the case many centuries ago when Europe was in dark times and Ireland sent out the message of hope to the rest of Europe, we have a chance, given our experience of the Irish Peace Process, to contribute something really important to wider political understandings, but only if we are able to return to implementing what we said we had agreed in the Good Friday Agreement twenty years ago. The origin of our problems and the healing of our divisions is to be found, as Garret FitzGerald pointed out, in addressing our historic community relationships. I believe that we can do that, and for the sake of all our children and grandchildren, I believe that we must.

REPOSE

Senator Michael McDowell



Chancellor, Lord Alderdice, Lady Alderdice, members of the FitzGerald family, ladies and gentlemen. We have just heard something unusual; a contribution to public discourse by someone who states that he is a passionate European, and yet, there were things in it that some would wonder if this is what we hear from 'passionate Europeans' among us here in Dublin, or in Brussels? A number of thoughts occurred to me as John spoke. Firstly, it occurred to me that he was underlining the need to understand what brought about Brexit. Most people in the public regard Brexit as an unqualified disaster, and indeed, it is for the Republic in many ways. Most Irish people consider it as something which should never have happened, and they ascribe it to internal Tory politics, the need to see off UKIP, and the need to win a general election, with the careless promising of a referendum on EU membership from a party that was, in its great majority, committed to membership of the European Union. The old joke about what a referendum is immediately comes to mind. We are told it is a process whereby you get an answer you didn't expect to a question you didn't ask. This is the shock factor, which perhaps best describes how many of us on this side of the Irish Sea, greeted the outcome of the Brexit referendum.

However, John has asked us to consider one other point, and that is that there was an anterior divergence of ambition, feeling, and emotion which brought about the referendum in the first place, which led to the rise of UKIP in its own way, and which, on top of all of that, brought about the protest vote from many people in various parts of Britain who were unhappy with their

lot for one reason or another. They felt detached from an establishment that told them that the European Union was good for them, despite not seeming to affect their lives in a positive way. Coupled with the Tory press, which was so antagonistic to the European Union, all of the ingredients for Brexit to be successfully sold to the British population came into place.

John is correct in saying one thing, in my view, that is not often enough said, particularly in this state, and that is that the elite – to which he referred – in Brussels, who pursued their ideal of a federal Europe, were not listening to the message that was coming back. This small elite, which was unrepresentative, kept going, and kept on speaking in terms of the necessity to increase political integration when there was not a consensus across the European Union that political integration was what people actually wanted. I have often been of the view that – when you look at somebody like Daniel Cohn-Bendit, who wrote a very interesting book where he likened the European Union to an empire and said ‘We need a good empire’,¹ echoing for instance perhaps the Roman Empire, or even the Austro-Hungarian empire – the lessons were not learned. That is, in reality Europe was, post the collapse of the Warsaw Pact, a very different thing from that which existed at the time of the foundation of the European Union. There is not a single European policy, there is not a single European people, there are no ingredients for a single European democracy or a single European state because of the diversity in Europe. The ambitions of some seem to have ignored the reality of the diversity of Europe.

But it didn’t stop some people from ploughing on regardless and demanding a European constitution. Even this very year we have had President Macron saying ‘we must have European sovereignty’, which means that member states must now share their ultimate sovereignty and surrender it to a centre so that Europe can be greater. That is the language we are hearing from some people in Europe. All of that was alienating many people, and will alienate many people. Not simply in Scandinavia, but also in the Visegrád countries, and in the Baltic states, and in Britain, and in the Netherlands, and Ireland, and in Italy. It is an articulation of a project whose time has not yet come, if it should come.

¹ Daniel Cohn-Bendit and Guy Verhofstadt, *For Europe: Manifesto for a Post-national Revolution in Europe* (Createspace: Scotts Valley, US, 2012).

John describes himself as a 'passionate European', I would describe myself as a 'dispassionate European'. I believe in the European Union. I believe in its present form it has probably arrived at the stage where most people among the 27 member states are comfortable and can live with it in terms of integration, in terms of effect on their lives, in terms of its relationship with the diversity of Europe. But it really is crying over spilled milk to consider the outcome of the Brexit referendum and spend too much time thinking about its causes. Even if you take the view that the headlong rush towards ever-closer union and the rhetoric that went with it was insensitive, there were other reasons why Brexit succeeded and was sold to the British electorate.

Looking to Ireland now, and looking to John, the man, for a second, I would like to pay tribute to the fact that he spent a portion of a lifetime in Northern Ireland trying to establish reason, liberal values, and reconciliation in the hearts of people in Northern Ireland. A very difficult thing to do in all of the circumstances. His stance, and the stance of the Alliance Party, and the stance of 'moderate unionists', with a small 'u', was a very difficult and lonely stance on many occasions. It seems to me that he is now looking at the hugely important task of keeping the Good Friday Agreement in existence, in circumstances which are not favourable at all. They are not favourable because, as John said, the EU dimension will be fractured by Brexit. They are not favourable because Donald Trump does not care about Northern Ireland, or the peace process, or the Good Friday Agreement at all. They are not favourable because the two largest parties in Northern Ireland were brought in by the governments in London and Dublin, into the centre and given a central role in the politics of Northern Ireland, to the exclusion of the liberal, sensible centre and those people who were on the centre-ground of Northern Ireland to some extent. They have no interest really, at heart, in the Good Friday Agreement. I think it is true to say that Sinn Féin really regards the failure of the Good Friday Agreement as something they can live with. Looking at the DUP, I don't see any of their public spokesmen or women saying very much about their enthusiasm to restore the functioning executive in Belfast or to restore the power sharing. Looking at the Tory party in England, one only has to look at remarks made by Rees-Mogg about bankrupting Ireland, or Boris Johnson's very superficial knowledge of Irish affairs. Michael Gove attacked the Belfast agreement, almost as soon as it was written, as a betrayal of Britishness.

There isn't any indication that the Tory party is out to save the Good Friday Agreement.

John talked about the relationship between Ireland and Britain, and I wholly agree with what he said about the fact that Ireland and Britain should be natural allies, we have so much in common with each other, and should have excellent and warm political relations. But it doesn't appear that that exists at the moment. I don't get the impression that Theresa May really is in any way willing to put the same investment, political investment, into Ireland as an issue as, say, Tony Blair was willing to do. Tony Blair has his critics, and so does Bertie Ahern, but I was privileged to witness at close quarters, not merely the warmth of their interpersonal relationship, but the depth of their shared commitment to getting Northern Ireland on its feet and setting up the means whereby a partnership society would exist in Northern Ireland. Day in and day out when I was a minister, I saw, at European level, the closest of co-operation between the Department of Justice and Home affairs, with my British counterparts. It was a warm and trusting relationship and it could be frank, and it could be completely at idem on most issues and when we had differences there was an acceptance of those differences without any sense of mutual suspicion or recrimination. I don't see that relationship there now.

So, it is easy to be pessimistic in all these circumstances about the political commitment which sustained and created the Good Friday Agreement reappearing any time soon.

Looking to the consequences of Brexit, if the United Kingdom is going to move in the way Johnson and Rees-Mogg and Gove and the rest of them set out as their rhetorical direction for Britain to go, and becomes this sort of buccaneering trading state across the world which has a different relationship with Europe, there are very significant consequences for this state, and particularly for Northern Ireland, and particularly for the economy on both sides of the border. I don't think we can, in any sense, minimise those consequences, or even the political consequences, of the border being the tectonic plate between Britain going in one direction and Ireland remaining in the European Union, and going in the other direction.

You have probably gathered that I am not a keen European federalist. It seems to me that everybody had better accept one thing, and that is that with the maintenance of the common travel area, the maintenance of an open border, the maintenance of a good working relationship between Ireland and Britain, and issues such as the Schengen Area arrangements, Ireland is going to be, if it is loyal to the people of Northern Ireland and loyal to our relationship with Britain, to some extent a more semi-detached member of the European Union than many would like it to be. It is not easy to be, on the one hand, at the very centre of the European integrationist drive, and at the same time to keep an open border, to keep the common travel area, to keep immigration arrangements designed to ensure that these islands can have an open border in existence. We do have very significant problems coming down the line.

We also have the reality that the North is changing. I don't for one minute believe that any plebiscite held any time soon would produce a majority of people in Northern Ireland who would vote for a United Ireland. I take completely what John says about how there is a small group of Unionists, and they speak to me on occasion, who are beginning to see that their interests may not lie in the United Kingdom and that they may lie in some kind of arrangement with the South. But I would say that the reality is that Northern Ireland is probably going to suffer more than anywhere else in the United Kingdom if a hard Brexit emerges, and yet, on the other hand, will probably do very well in the United Kingdom if there is a reasonably soft Brexit with an All-Ireland economy, with all the benefits that can go with that.

It's sad that the institutions in Northern Ireland aren't functioning. I remember one stage when the International Monitoring Commission on which John served and did hugely important work was being established, it was done by a treaty between Ireland and Britain. For some reason I ended up being the Irish signatory and the British ambassador in Dublin, Mr Eldon was the other signatory. Caoimhghín Ó Caoláin derided it in Dáil Éireann as the McDowell-Eldon pact. I began to think, had I signed a Molotov-Ribbentrop Pact, which was going to subvert the whole basis of the Belfast Agreement? But it has to be said that it was necessary on many, many occasions, to engage in steps, to build confidence among the Unionists which the IMC represented, to bring them along the line of participating in the institutions so that the St Andrews Agreement could come into effect.

When John says that we now must revisit the relationship between Dublin and London, I wholly agree with him. I think the relationship has gone cold and I see no sight of warmth. I believe that until the next few weeks and months have passed it's highly unlikely that the Dublin and London governments are going to do anything dramatic or set out on some new and warm path of dealings between them. But I do believe that as soon as possible, after whatever emerges, and I remain hopeful that there will be a customs partnership equivalent to the Customs Union – however described, that there won't be a more intense economic relationship in the form of the single market between the European Union and the United Kingdom. I believe that there will be some kind of deal put together because I believe that the alternative is impossible to conceive or imagine, and it's impossible to imagine that the interlocutors in the process will bring us over the edge.

When all of that is done, I think John's point is one hundred percent correct. That Ireland, its government, its political actors, its media discussion has to come in from what is being perceived in London as a distant relationship, and one where some of our friends think we are exploiting Britain's difficulty because we see it as Ireland's opportunity.

I say this, Ireland has no opportunity in Brexit, there are no opportunities for us. It is not going to bring a United Ireland any closer at all. I speak as somebody who is a republican, who believes in reconciliation, and who would of course welcome some sort of arrangement on this island that both communities in Northern Ireland would be comfortable with and whereby could get on with the business of building partnership and building reconciliation between them, free of threat. But we have to realise as a society that when the dust settles and when whatever may come out of these negotiations becomes clear, that our immediate imperative both on the North-South basis and on the East-West basis, and on Ireland and Europe, is to regard the UK as our friends. And our immediate imperative is to sustain the process in Northern Ireland which I think is beginning to have a transformative effect even on the attitudes between the two communities in Northern Ireland.

I finish on this point: the demographics in Northern Ireland are remarkable. I know that Garret FitzGerald in particular said it would take fifty years for the demographics to arrive at where they now have. The Protestant community and the Catholic community are now hovering in the early to mid-forties and the rest hold a balance of power, potentially. This should not be the basis on which those who want a unitary Irish state should hold any confidence that it is coming their way. It is not coming their way. What is essential now is for the ill-will which inevitably attends the stand-off between Dublin and the DUP on Brexit, and the stand-off between Dublin and London on Brexit, to be countered as quickly as possible. And that we should, as John put it to us, examine the underlying attitudes that exist and examine the prospects for progress in a manner that listens to the different ambitions and the different concerns of the two communities in Northern Ireland, and which does justice to the intense relationship between Ireland and the United Kingdom, which I believe is in one way or the other going to endure and strengthen over the next ten, twenty and thirty years. Thank you very much.



Senator Michael McDowell responding to Lord Alderdice's lecture to College Hall, Royal College of Surgeons in Ireland



Lord Alderdice delivers his lecture to College Hall, Royal College of Surgeons in Ireland



The audience at College Hall as Chancellor Maurice Manning introduces the speakers

AGREEMENT BETWEEN THE GOVERNMENT OF THE UNITED KINGDOM OF GREAT BRITAIN AND NORTHERN IRELAND AND THE GOVERNMENT OF IRELAND

The British and Irish Governments:

Welcoming the strong commitment to the Agreement reached on 10th April 1998 by themselves and other participants in the multi-party talks and set out in Annex 1 to this Agreement (hereinafter “the Multi-Party Agreement”);

Considering that the Multi-Party Agreement offers an opportunity for a new beginning in relationships within Northern Ireland, within the island of Ireland and between the peoples of these islands;

Wishing to develop still further the unique relationship between their peoples and the close co-operation between their countries as friendly neighbours and as partners in the European Union;

Reaffirming their total commitment to the principles of democracy and non-violence which have been fundamental to the multi-party talks;

Reaffirming their commitment to the principles of partnership, equality and mutual respect and to the protection of civil, political, social, economic and cultural rights in their respective jurisdictions;

Have agreed as follows:

ARTICLE 1

The two Governments:

- (i) recognise the legitimacy of whatever choice is freely exercised by a majority of the people of Northern Ireland with regard to its status, whether they prefer to continue to support the Union with Great Britain or a sovereign united Ireland;

- (ii) recognise that it is for the people of the island of Ireland alone, by agreement between the two parts respectively and without external impediment, to exercise their right of self-determination on the basis of consent, freely and concurrently given, North and South, to bring about a united Ireland, if that is their wish, accepting that this right must be achieved and exercised with and subject to the agreement and consent of a majority of the people of Northern Ireland;
- (iii) acknowledge that while a substantial section of the people in Northern Ireland share the legitimate wish of a majority of the people of the island of Ireland for a united Ireland, the present wish of a majority of the people of Northern Ireland, freely exercised and legitimate, is to maintain the Union and accordingly, that Northern Ireland's status as part of the United Kingdom reflects and relies upon that wish; and that it would be wrong to make any change in the status of Northern Ireland save with the consent of a majority of its people;
- (iv) affirm that, if in the future, the people of the island of Ireland exercise their right of self-determination on the basis set out in sections (i) and (ii) above to bring about a united Ireland, it will be a binding obligation on both Governments to introduce and support in their respective Parliaments legislation to give effect to that wish;
- (v) affirm that whatever choice is freely exercised by a majority of the people of Northern Ireland, the power of the sovereign government with jurisdiction there shall be exercised with rigorous impartiality on behalf of all the people in the diversity of their identities and traditions and shall be founded on the principles of full respect for, and equality of, civil, political, social and cultural rights, of freedom from discrimination for all citizens, and of parity of esteem and of just and equal treatment for the identity, ethos and aspirations of both communities;
- (vi) recognise the birthright of all the people of Northern Ireland to identify themselves and be accepted as Irish or British, or both, as they may so choose, and accordingly confirm that their right to hold both British and Irish citizenship is accepted by both Governments and would not be affected by any future change in the status of Northern Ireland.

ARTICLE 2

The two Governments affirm their solemn commitment to support, and where appropriate implement, the provisions of the Multi-Party Agreement. In particular there shall be established in accordance with the provisions of the Multi-Party Agreement immediately on the entry into force of this Agreement, the following institutions:

- (i) a North/South Ministerial Council;
- (ii) the implementation bodies referred to in paragraph 9 (ii) of the section entitled "Strand Two" of the Multi-Party Agreement;
- (iii) a British-Irish Council;
- (iv) a British-Irish Intergovernmental Conference.

ARTICLE 3

- (1) This Agreement shall replace the Agreement between the British and Irish Governments done at Hillsborough on 15th November 1985 which shall cease to have effect on entry into force of this Agreement.
- (2) The Intergovernmental Conference established by Article 2 of the aforementioned Agreement done on 15th November 1985 shall cease to exist on entry into force of this Agreement.

ARTICLE 4

- (1) It shall be a requirement for entry into force of this Agreement that:
 - (a) British legislation shall have been enacted for the purpose of implementing the provisions of Annex A to the section entitled "Constitutional Issues" of the Multi-Party Agreement;
 - (b) the amendments to the Constitution of Ireland set out in Annex B to the section entitled "Constitutional Issues" of the Multi-Party Agreement shall have been approved by Referendum;
 - (c) such legislation shall have been enacted as may be required to establish the institutions referred to in Article 2 of this Agreement.

- (2) Each Government shall notify the other in writing of the completion, so far as it is concerned, of the requirements for entry into force of this Agreement. This Agreement shall enter into force on the date of the receipt of the later of the two notifications.
- (3) Immediately on entry into force of this Agreement, the Irish Government shall ensure that the amendments to the Constitution of Ireland set out in Annex B to the section entitled “Constitutional Issues” of the Multi-Party Agreement take effect.

In witness thereof the undersigned, being duly authorised thereto by the respective Governments, have signed this Agreement.

Done in two originals at Belfast on the 10th day of April 1998.

20th Anniversary of the Good Friday Agreement, Belfast, 10th April 2018. (L-R) Bertie Ahern, Tony Blair, Bill Clinton and Senator George J. Mitchell. (© Alamy)



20th Anniversary of the Good Friday Agreement, Belfast, 10th April 2018. (L-R) Jonathan Powell, Monica McWilliams, Lord John Alderdice, Seamus Mallon, Lord David Trimble, Bertie Ahern, Sir Reg Empey, Senator George J. Mitchell, Paul Murphy and Gerry Adams. (© Alamy)

*Réachbha FitzGerald
and Noel Dorr*



*Lord Alderice,
Seán Donlon, and
David Davin-Power*

Garret FitzGerald



Dr Garret FitzGerald PhD MRIA had careers in air transport, economic consultancy, university lecturing, journalism, politics, and business. After graduating with a first-class honours degree in history and modern languages from University College Dublin and being called to the Irish Bar, he spent the first twelve years of his working life in Aer Lingus.



Portrait by Carey Clarke PPRHA of Dr Garret FitzGerald in his Chancellor's robe. This painting is on display in the NUI offices on Merrion Square

In 1959, he was appointed a lecturer in Economics in University College Dublin. His political career began in 1965 when he was elected to Seanad Éireann. Four years later, he was elected to the Dáil. From 1973 to 1977 he was Minister for Foreign Affairs, following in the footsteps of his father, Desmond FitzGerald, who had served as first Minister for External Affairs in the new Irish State from 1922 to 1927. Garret became leader of Fine Gael in 1977, and held the position of Taoiseach between June 1981 and March 1982, and again between December 1982 and March 1987. As Taoiseach, he was President of the European Council in the second half of 1984.

In 1983, he established the New Ireland Forum as a preliminary to the negotiation of the 1985 Anglo-Irish Agreement.

Dr FitzGerald was the author of nine books. *Towards a New Ireland* was published in hardback in 1972 and in paperback in 1973. His autobiography *All in a Life* was published in 1991, followed by *Reflections on the Irish State* in 2002 and *Ireland in the World: Further Reflections* in 2005. He was a weekly columnist for the *Irish Times* for over 50 years.

Conferred with an honorary degree of the National University of Ireland in 1991, Dr FitzGerald was similarly honoured by other universities in Britain, the United States, Canada and South Africa.

Dr FitzGerald was elected Chancellor of the National University of Ireland in 1997, having been a member of the Senate of the University since 1972. He continued as Chancellor until 2009, and in 2008 he presided over the University's centenary celebrations. As Chancellor, his major preoccupation was with the continued high standard and standing of NUI degrees. He was particularly interested in the transition of students from second-level to third level and in the mentoring of students in their first year at college. Statistical studies he had undertaken in NUI pointed to the reliability of the Leaving Certificate examination as a predictor of success at university. He was an early champion of wider social participation in higher education. In January 1999, the Senate made a pre-budget submission to the Minister for Education and Science, seeking increased support for disadvantaged students. In 2001, a document prepared by Dr FitzGerald 'The Issue of Access' calling for the NUI constituent universities to address urgently the issue of access for young people from disadvantaged backgrounds was circulated. He was a staunch defender of university autonomy. Under Dr FitzGerald's Chancellorship, the range and value of NUI awards was enhanced significantly. He delighted in the opportunity afforded by the annual Presentation of NUI Awards ceremony of meeting outstanding students and graduates from across the federal university. In spite of its considerable weight, he continued to wear the Chancellor's robe commissioned by NUI in 1922 for Dr Éamon de Valera.

Garret FitzGerald died on 19 May 2011 at the age of eighty-five.

ON NORTHERN IRELAND, BRITAIN AND EU RELATIONS

At the same time the interests of Great Britain and Northern Ireland in matters to be decided by the Community do not necessarily coincide, and in certain areas such as agriculture and regional policy may, in fact, as is the case of the Irish State, even be inversely related. What suits Britain's interests may be precisely what does not suit the interests of Northern Ireland. In these circumstances the fact that Northern Ireland's interests in the EU are represented exclusively through London, and that there is no prospect of any direct input to the Council of Ministers or the Commission from Northern Ireland, could become a matter of considerable concern...

...Northern Ireland therefore has a strong and growing interest in direct representation within the institutions of the Community and may be uniquely disadvantaged if over time it fails to secure such a position. The concentration on the, still very important, line with Britain, to the exclusion of the establishment of a direct link with the European Community, could, I feel, work to its long-term disadvantage.

Just as the Irish State rethought at a fundamental level its stance in relation to Europe in the early 1970s, so also Northern Ireland may in time need to reconsider its position with respect to the European Community. I do not think that any simple solution can be found to the problem thus posed. Objectively, Northern Ireland has two parallel – and in magnitude not hugely different – interests to pursue in its economic relationships with Great Britain and with the European Community, a dichotomy which cannot readily be resolved within traditional political structures.

Garret FitzGerald, *Reflections on the Irish State* (Irish Academic Press, 2003) pp 188-189.

John Alderdice



Professor, the Lord Alderdice FRCPsych is a Liberal Democrat member of the House of Lords and was the Chairman of the Liberal Democrats in the House of Lords during the Liberal/Conservative Coalition Government. As Leader of the Alliance Party of Northern Ireland he played a significant role in negotiating the 1998 Good Friday Agreement, and when the Northern Ireland Assembly was elected, he became the first Speaker of the new Assembly.

In 2004 he retired as Speaker on being appointed by the British and Irish Governments to be one of the four members of the international Independent Monitoring Commission (IMC), put in place to close down the paramilitary organisations and monitor security normalisation. He has long been active in international liberal politics and was a Vice-President of the European Liberal Democrat and Reform Party and then President of Liberal International (the global federation of more than one hundred liberal political parties). He is now *Presidente d'Honneur* of Liberal International. Previously a consultant psychiatrist at the Centre for Psychotherapy he established in Belfast, he is currently a Clinical Professor in Psychiatry at the University of Maryland (Baltimore), Director of the Centre for the Resolution of Intractable Conflict at Harris Manchester College (University of Oxford) and Chairman of the Centre for Democracy and Peace Building (Belfast).

Lord Alderdice has spent a life-time working on understanding and addressing religious fundamentalism, radicalisation, terrorism and violent political conflict in various parts of the world. More recently he has also been working on the problems of indigenous peoples and their conflicts with the incomers. He consults, lectures and writes on these issues, and has been recognised with many honorary degrees and prizes, including the International Psychoanalytic Association Award for Extraordinarily Meritorious Service to Psychoanalysis, the World Federation of Scientists Prize for the application of Science to the Cause of Peace and Liberal International's Prize for Freedom.

Michael McDowell




Michael McDowell was elected to Dáil Éireann on three occasions to represent the constituency of Dublin South East. He was appointed Minister for Justice, Equality and Law Reform in the Fianna Fáil-Progressive Democrats Coalition Government formed in June 2002. He served as Minister for Justice, Equality and Law Reform until June 2007, and as Tánaiste from September 2006 to June 2007. He was elected to the 25th Seanad in 2016 on the National University of Ireland panel and currently chairs the Seanad Reform Implementation Group.

He is a member of the Joint Committee on Communications, Climate Action and Environment. He has served as a member of the Special Seanad Committee on the Decision of the United Kingdom to leave the European Union (Brexit Committee). In July 1999 he was appointed Attorney General of Ireland and served in that post until June 2002, when he was appointed Minister for Justice, Equality and Law Reform. He was educated at Gonzaga College, Dublin, from 1959-1968. He graduated in Economics and Politics from the National University of Ireland at University College Dublin, qualified as a barrister in 1974 and was called to the Inner Bar in 1987.

He practices as a Senior Counsel in the Law Library, Dublin.

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Dr Garret FitzGerald PhD MRIA, 1926-2011

Political leader, international statesman, scholar, writer, and public intellectual, was Chancellor of the National University of Ireland from 15 October 1997 until 12 March 2009 and a member of the Senate of the University from 1972 until 1997.



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ISBN 978-0-901510-86-0



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