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IRELAND



Reference Code:	2014/105/733
Creation Date(s):	8-14 November 1984
Extent and medium:	4 pages
Creator(s):	Department of the Taoiseach
Access Conditions:	Open
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IRISH ANTI-APARTHEID MOVEMENT

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Tel. 01-895035

14th November, 1984.

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Niall Andrews TD
William Attley
Monica Barnes TD
Rt Hon David Bleakley
Rev R H S Boyd
Professor Kevin Boyle
Dr. Noel Browne
Patrick Cardiff
John F Carroll
Frank Cluskey TD
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Rev. T. McCaughey

CHAIRMAN

Kader Asmal

VICE-CHAIRMAN

L.G. Kilgallen

JOINT SECRETARY

Louise Asmal

JOINT TREASURER

M. Mottiar

Deputy Garret FitzGerald,
An Taoiseach,
Government Buildings,
Dublin 2.

Dear Garret,

Thank you for the letter of 8th November explaining the reasons for your resignation as a sponsor of this Movement. We appreciate the time you have taken to explain your attitude to us, although we feel that perhaps you have not fully appreciated the Movement's views, and we hope that the points we will make in this letter will enable you to see our position in a more positive light.

In your explanation of your own stand on this matter, you state that the Government's embargo on meeting deputations that include members of Sinn Féin would not apply to members of the organisation who publicly dissociate themselves from the IRA campaign of violence. Yet you are imposing more stringent conditions on our own organisation, which has never in any way associated itself with or supported the IRA campaign of violence. The Movement's original statement that was sent to you on 22nd October 1984 made this point quite clear. We explicitly stated that the affiliation of Sinn Féin to our Movement does not imply any endorsement of their policies.

Our position on this issue is unambiguous and is in the best traditions of democratic politics. To compel us to embark on a course of vetting the credentials of affiliated organisations or individuals is to establish the rule of contamination by contact or guilt by association. This is untenable in a democratic society and it is regrettable that demands are being made of this Movement which do not operate in any other State or private institutions.

Our Movement is a broad coalition of individuals and organisations who join together for one specific purpose, and that is working for the eradication of apartheid. The Executive stands by its view that it is prepared to accept any legal body that is not racist. We could not accept that Sinn Féin is "racist" in any accepted meaning of the term; we think it is important that language should not be debased in such a way as to deprive words of their proper meaning. As one of us said at the press conference we gave last week, "The South African government is racist; the Provisional I.R.A. derives its attraction for some and its horror for many more from the fact that it is basically sectarian, not racist in any accepted meaning of that word".

There is no doubt that the situation in which we now find ourselves will give great comfort to the South African regime, at a time when repression and violence in that country are reaching new heights and when our attention should rather be focussed on doing all we can to combat the regime's power. We hope you will accept that it was the same concern for democratic rights and

freedoms in southern Africa which led the members of our Executive to maintain their position that it is not our function to censor a legal organisation which expresses support for our aims. This position has now been discussed and upheld by a group of people holding very disparate views on Irish politics, the vast majority of them belonging either to registered political parties or to no party at all. On the other hand, we do not allow any political party or organisation to influence our policies, and we have been scrupulous in maintaining our independence. As we pointed out in our statement, we have always carefully chosen the members of our delegations to ministries, and this position has remained the same over the 20 years of our existence.

A There is no doubt that your resignation has confused the public about what the Movement stands for. Our purpose is as you know to work for the eradication of apartheid. This we wish to continue doing, and we very much hope that the Government will continue its commitment to this goal, and that your resignation does not mean any lessening of your disapproval of apartheid.

Ireland has always taken a praiseworthy stand against apartheid in the international arena, and we trust that this will remain the case, and indeed that it will develop further. We would therefore urge you to make a public statement explaining this.

Yours sincerely,

Terence P. McCaughey. Kader Asmal

Terence McCaughey
President

Kader Asmal
Chairman

Quoted on ~~5-11-85~~ (Gaelic News - Ireland) 16281

W. Hawley
W. W. E. E. E.
To be read for the



Oifig an Taoisigh
Office of the Taoiseach

8 November, 1984.

Delivered by hand
To Mrs Louise Asmal
at home by A O'Connell

Rev. Terence McCaughey, President and
Mr. Kader Asmal, Chairman,
Irish Anti-Apartheid Movement.

Mr. McLaughlin. Starvello
You might let 8/11/84
Mr. O'Hea, please
re, please
in King
8.11.84

Dear Terence and Kader,

Thank you for sending me a copy of the Executive Committee's statement on the affiliation of Provisional Sinn Fein to the Movement.

I have carefully considered the contents of the statement and regret that the Executive Committee's decision leaves me with no option but to resign as a sponsor of the Movement.

The issue of Provisional Sinn Fein's affiliation is of the utmost importance to me personally and to my Government. As we stated early this year, that organisation has openly, and in a manner that cannot be misunderstood, declared its support for a campaign of murder and intimidation to achieve political ends, carried on in large measure against one section of the Northern Ireland community in a manner that has sinister echoes of what is happening in South Africa. This policy was clearly enunciated by Sinn Fein's President as recently as last weekend at their Annual Conference. Newspaper reports of the Conference also refer to the making of a statement, during a private session, by a member of the Provisional I.R.A. which is, of course, an illegal organisation. The policies of Sinn Fein are a negation of the democratic freedoms which the Movement seeks to establish in South Africa and Namibia.

These issues are a grim reality in Irish life today and an unequivocal stand on them is essential if our democratic way of life is to be preserved. For Irish democrats, this must be the primary consideration but there are wider implications. In particular, I believe that if they are to be true to their nature and purposes and if they are to retain the essential public support, bodies such as the IAAM must take full account of these questions in deciding on affiliation of organisations such as Sinn Fein which in their espousal of the view that bombing and murder are 'democratic' pervert the meaning of language and threaten to corrupt all who are associated with them in any way.

As you know, my Government decided last February that they would not meet deputations that include members of Sinn Fein - this embargo not to apply to any members of the organisation who publicly disassociate themselves from the IRA campaign of violence. Nothing that has happened since February has caused us to alter that decision in any way and it would be wholly inconsistent with this policy were I to continue my sponsorship of the Movement. I assume you will arrange for the deletion of my name from your notepaper as soon as possible.

/.....



Oifig an Taoisigh
Office of the Taoiseach

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I am saddened to have to sever my long association with the Movement but I believe that the issues which I have dealt with are fundamental to the future of this country and need to be faced by all of us living in Ireland.

Yours sincerely

Taoiseach.