

## "COMMON SENSE"

(Northern Ireland - An Agreed Process)

1. "Common Sense" (Northern Ireland - An Agreed Process) is, in our view, a very encouraging document because it represents a significant contribution to the dialogue of peace. We say this because, in studying its proposals, we have noted and been impressed by the sincerity, the progressive thinking, the concern in face of ongoing tragedy, the courage to take risks, the willingness to give and take and the general spirit of justice, reconciliation and democracy which characterise it.
2. In approaching these proposals, which represent the peace policy of the Ulster Democratic Party, our first aim has been to identify the spirit which inspires them because, in any dialogue of peace, what really counts is the spirit of those who engage in it.

As we see it, the spirit which shines out most of all from the peace policy of the Ulster Democrats is the spirit of reconciliation - the only spirit which can give life to the dialogue of peace.

We may put this in another way by saying that the acid test of the sincerity and, therefore, of the effective value of any peace policy is the extent to which it embodies and expresses the spirit of reconciliation. By this test, the peace policy of the Ulster Democratic Party as set out in their "Common Sense" document comes out, we believe, with full marks.

3. The fact that the Ulster Democratic Party is rooted among the ordinary people of the Ulster Protestant-Loyalist-Unionist Community indicates that the spirit of reconciliation which characterises the peace proposals of "Common Sense" reflects the spirit of reconciliation which exists among those who, for the Ulster Catholic-Irish Nationalist-Republican Community, are the common folk "on the other side of the hill". This relationship between grass-root feeling and the peace policy of the Ulster Democrats should be carefully noted because it has a special significance for the whole dialogue of peace.

4. In studying "Common Sense", our second aim has been to identify the new principles of peace which underlie its proposals with a view to discerning how they could facilitate the process of finding the common ground where Unionists and Nationalists, the Irish and the British, could meet to establish the agreement which would enable them, in their diversities, to move forward together along the same democratic road to reconciliation, friendship and final peace, however long or short the stages of that journey might be.

5. As we discern them, the new principles of peace which underlie the policy proposed by "Common Sense" and which could facilitate the process of finding common ground may be summed up as follows:-

- (1) Political life in Northern Ireland needs to be re-organised in a way that will lead to reconciliation between Unionists and Nationalists.
- (2) This re-organisation of political life must be based on a political consensus that would have the democratic support of Unionists and Nationalists.
- (3) Political life in Northern Ireland needs, therefore, to be re-structured in a way that will enable Unionists and Nationalists to share responsibility for the common good of both communities through partnership in the development of their political, social and economic welfare.
- (4) This re-structuring of political life in Northern Ireland must respect and guarantee the human, democratic and civil rights of both Unionists and Nationalists.

We trust that this is a fair and accurate assessment of the new, peace principles of the Ulster Democratic Party as they are embodied in their document "Common Sense" (Northern Ireland - An Agreed Process).