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2014

Council

MANIFESTO 2014



**Principled
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Foreword by TUV President

On 22nd May 2014 you will be afforded the opportunity to exercise your civic duty and vote in the European and Local Government elections. TUV will give you the chance to vote for a party that has proved its worth. By taking up that offer you can empower us to achieve even more. Strengthen our hand.

The TUV message is a simple one. On the European Union we demand that the UK be granted an early In/Out Referendum, which would enable the UK to liberate itself from the shackles of Brussels. In councils across the country we are there to act as a brake on the squander of public money and hold those to account who have shown scant regard for the hard-pressed ratepayer.

Our Party Leader, Jim Allister MLA, has demonstrated what one determined voice can achieve in the Northern Ireland Assembly. Likewise, as he did before, he can achieve for Northern Ireland in Brussels. Our council candidates are not encumbered by being from a party in government with Sinn Fein, therefore they can put principle and people first, not political expediency.

TUV is the insurance policy for the people of Northern Ireland: we are the brake on Sinn Fein/DUP misrule. A vote for TUV is a vote you will not regret.

William Ross

What they can't take from you - your vote

Whereas in the perverse 'peace process' we've seen endless pandering to IRA/Sinn Fein and corresponding diminution of our Britishness, one thing you have left is your vote. Only by using it can you be heard.

The elections on 22nd May are your opportunity not only to elect councillors and MEPs, but to pass your verdict on what is happening in your country.

TUV gives you the chance to be heard loud and clear on:

- the shameful OTR scandal
- the dismal failure of Stormont
- the tearing down of the Union flag
- the Stormont induced state of health and education
- the subjugation of our nation to the EU.

TUV stands firm. Strong on the Union, forthright in resisting the Sinn Fein agenda, but equally determined to give you the effective representation you deserve. We are conviction politicians who care about principle and stand up for the core values of Unionism, decency and family life. We will not let you down.

TUV delivering for Unionism

With Ann's Law - the first victory for innocent victims in years - whereby convicted terrorists were barred from £90,000 per year Special Adviser posts, defeat of the odious Maze shrine project and pension justice for RUC widows, TUV has been delivering for unionism. If TUV has achieved this with just one MLA and a handful of councillors, think what we could do with multiple representation across the Province. Be part of the fight back. Vote TUV.

Rejecting Haass insults

We now know the Haass process was built on deception. In supposedly even-handed negotiations about the treatment of victims, the victim-makers were sitting smug with secret OTR letters to protect their own.

Haass himself in his report couldn't even mention the wicked terrorist campaigns. Instead he sought to sanitise and excuse by speaking of a 'conflict'. The focus was on shuffling victims away from pursuit of justice to settle for the self-justifying Provo version of the truth. Little wonder innocent victims recoiled in horror and in that they had TUV's full support.

Likewise, on parading, the proposals were perverse: more bureaucracy to make parading even more difficult and mandatory negotiations with every jumped up objector.

As for the restoration of the Union flag, it was treated with contempt by side-lining it to a future discussion in which enhancement of 'Irishness' was of equal importance.

Little wonder TUV and others rejected Haass.

How TUV performs in these elections will determine if any serious attempt is made to resurrect Haass. TUV is your insurance policy. A strong vote for TUV will ensure others with an inclination to roll over after the election, won't dare to do so!

Seeking devolution that works - the essentials of good government

We need not even argue that the present system at Stormont is not working. It is a self-evident shambles, providing good government for no one.

Good government comes from common purpose and stable structures, with deference to democracy at its heart. The right to change your government and vote a party out of office is the essence of democracy. Yet the quintessential dogma of mandatory coalition is the denial of that basic right. Hence it can never be the basis for good and durable government. Its removal is a prerequisite. Likewise at the top of government workable authority is indispensable. The office of Joint First Ministers is an unworkable farce. So it too must go and be replaced by separate, free-standing offices of a First Minister and a genuine deputy.

The route to good government

TUV is certainly opposed to terrorists in government, but as we've often said we are not opposed to shared government. The proper route to shared government, with no party in Northern Ireland capable of forming a government on its own, is voluntary coalition.

So, within the framework of devolution, how is good government attained? By the practice of normal politics and negotiation after every election. Those who can agree a platform and collectively command the requisite majority (which could even be a qualified majority of 60% so as to guarantee cross-community government) form the government; those who cannot, form the Opposition, challenging and affording voters an alternative at the next election.

Democracy at work

TUV would not be entering government with Sinn Fein under any system. If others choose to partner them in a voluntary deal, then our role would be in Opposition. We can accept the rules of democracy; why should others not do the same? If the answer is because of fear that the supposedly now democratic IRA/Sinn Fein would take us back to “the bad old days”, then we are being blackmailed as well as conned. If Sinn Fein are only democrats so long as they are in government, then they are not democrats at all!

Why should Northern Ireland be the only place in the democratic world where by law you cannot vote a party out of government and by law you cannot have an Opposition? It shouldn't be, but alas TUV is the only party prepared to say so and to act to insist on the end of this insult to democracy. Others pretend they dislike mandatory coalition but happily operate it every day as their ticket to office. They could end it now but the shackles and lure of office bind them.

On 22nd May 2014 you have the perfect opportunity to give your verdict on Sinn Fein/DUP misrule. Your disapproval will be heard and understood best by voting TUV, the party which is the only effective Opposition in Stormont.

EUROPEAN ELECTION

Better off out

This election presents not only the opportunity to better your representation in Brussels, but to have your say on a key national issue: our future relationship with the EU.

It is shameful that after over 40 years of the EU being a huge drain on our national resources, the people of the United Kingdom are being denied a referendum on our membership. TUV demands an in/out referendum.

As UK taxpayers we pour £17 billion pa into Brussels and even with the rebate and grants we get back barely half. This has how it has been for 40 years. Here are the figures for 2013 from the Treasury (Cm 8740):

IN

UK contribution £17,184 billion

OUT

UK rebate £3,324 billion

EU grants £5,237 billion

Net cost: £8,624,000,000.00

This translates into a **staggering daily cost of £23.6 million or £1 million every hour!** In addition, EU membership is robbing us of the right to make our own decisions on such vital matters as immigration, trade agreements and social policy.

TUV believes in the political unity, prosperity and independence of the United Kingdom, not in Brussels diktats. Thus we strongly believe the UK would be **BETTER OFF OUT!** And so we repudiate the relentless push for 'ever closer union' within the EU. TUV believes in the defence of national sovereignty, not its destruction.

EURO - No thank you!

How foolish those, like the SDLP and Alliance, who campaigned for us to join the Euro, now look. The economic situation in the UK has been tough, but in the Eurozone it has been catastrophic. Bail outs, massive debt and runaway unemployment, as in the Irish Republic, denote the abject failure of the Euro.

Thus TUV remains implacably opposed to the UK joining the Euro. Surrender of essential fiscal and monetary management powers to the EU, including letting the European Central Bank set and change our interest rates, would be disastrous. The next step in such monetary harmonisation would be European taxation. No thanks!

Protecting our borders and local jobs

Unrestricted free movement of labour within an enlarged EU and Brussels' procurement requirements in regard to major works contracts, leading to an uncontrolled influx of foreign labour, have stirred instances of resentment from local workers in the UK and the exploitation of our benefits system. Frequently, locals feel disadvantaged in their own country.

The compulsion to subject our labour market and laws to the supremacy of EU law is part of the price being paid for EU membership. Procurement policy which prohibits preference for local contractors and workers is stoking up more and more resentment of the EU and its inflexible dogma. TUV will work to loosen these shackles until we are liberated from the EU. Then, the UK could again control its own borders and shape its immigration policy to suit its needs.

Brussels blight on business

Year on year the EU promises to cut back on bureaucracy. It never does so. Instead the red tape stranglehold on business tightens its grip.

TUV believes in the principles of economic freedom, allowing initiative, new technology and innovation-driven prosperity to flourish. Jim Allister's voting record in the European Parliament (2004-09) was unashamedly pro-business and anti-restraint. A low taxation economy with optimum business freedom will maximise growth. The dead hand of excessive EU regulation holds back the growth of such an economic culture.

The Commission has admitted that its regulations cost business €600 billion pa. With small business as the backbone of our economy, TUV will fight hard to ease the load of Brussels bureaucracy on business.

Fighting for funding

Such funding as we get back from the EU must be wisely spent. Research and development funding is worth chasing and in the upcoming financial perspective we must do much better. Employment and training grants can help, but transparent additionality must be demonstrated.

PEACE funding has been a considerable disappointment, largely because so much was squandered on froth and politically-driven, rather than economically-driven, ventures. Hence the legacy is poor.

The waste in PEACE III, such as over £14 million spent on ex-prisoners' groups, while their victims went short, was shocking. Happily the DUP/Sinn Fein project to waste a further £20 million on the odious **Maze Shrine Project** was scuppered by the vigorous victims' campaign

which forced the DUP U-turn. TUV is proud to have played a significant part in this successful campaign. Even before Jim Allister left Brussels in 2009 the record shows him persistently speaking out against the Maze scheme. While Jim Nicholson declared against it, in the last 5 years **Mrs Dodds did nothing to oppose it**, choosing rather to toe the party line, than stand on the side of the innocent victims.

Jim Allister will be vigilant in regard to any attempt to resurrect the Maze Shrine Project.

Any PEACE IV must shake off the political shackles and address real economic need. The continuing imbalance in distribution must be corrected with the unionist community getting its fair share.

Caring for victims

In Stormont TUV has greatly raised the profile in favour of innocent victims. **Ann's Law** was a stunning success for this sector, giving them, for the first time an enhanced say in legislation over who could serve as a Special Adviser. Also, it was Jim Allister who introduced to Stormont the marking of European Day for the Innocent Victims of Terrorism, something which is now cherished by all affected. In helping defeat the Maze Shrine Project another famous victory was obtained for innocent victims.

Much remains to be done, like correcting the perverse definition of 'victim' and redressing the balance in terms of necessary inquiries into terrorist atrocities and the skulduggery which shaped 'the peace process'.

In Europe, too, the victims' voice must be heard, challenging and rebutting Sinn Fein's propaganda. While an MEP Jim Allister secured substantial direct funding from a specific anti-terrorism fund for two of the largest victim groups in Northern Ireland.

Having Jim Allister, a proven friend of innocent victims, back in Brussels can only help the sector, as he seeks to raise its profile there as he has in Stormont.

Delivering for farmers

TUV recognises the centrality of our agri-food industry. A prosperous agricultural base provides for vibrant rural communities. With a fast growing world population the growth opportunities in the agri-food industry are immense, not least in respect of exports. Thus the Stormont Executive's tardiness in advancing 'Going for Growth' is disappointing.

Farming could readily flourish outside the EU, as the money wasted in the UK's massive net contribution would be available to help our own farmers. But so long as we are in the EU, TUV is determined that policy should be shaped to assist this vital sector. Too often the EU has been swept along by the latest fad, be it food into fuel or climate change 'correctness', and in consequence has lost sight of the primary goal of delivering an adequate supply of safe and affordable food, with sufficient producer returns.

While TUV supports policies ensuring high European production standards, we do object to their imposition on indigenous producers only, and not on foreign imports. Likewise country of origin labelling must be full proof and authentic.

The Commission's over-zealous regulation of agriculture, driven in large part from a hyper-environmental fixation, imposes much red tape frustration on farmers. Jim Allister is very clear: **farmers must have freedom to farm.**

Holding DARD to account

Northern Ireland has not been well served by Sinn Fein DARD ministers. Their obsession with the narrow pursuit of an all-Ireland ideology seems more important to them than championing the real interests of agriculture. Feet-dragging on effectively dealing with bovine tuberculosis is but one example of lack of attention to a pressing issue.

Even in the distribution of Rural Development Funding there has been partisanship. First, in diverting too much out of Axis 1 and then, in abuse of Axis 3 funding, with **£844,000 of rural funding going to the asset rich County Tyrone GAA club in 2012/13!**

With no Opposition allowed in Stormont and with all three sitting MEPs coming from parties in government with Sinn Fein, **the strong independent voice which Jim Allister provides is essential.**

CAP reform - getting it right

There is no more pressing issue at present than the outworking of CAP reform. TUV is disappointed more success was not secured in diminishing the emphasis on the 'greening' dimension. Restoration of the original vision of delivering affordable food with reward for production would have served us better.

Now, the big focus is on how the Single Farm Payment should be allocated. With SFP now amounting to 87% of the average farm income, the allocation must be got right. TUV's starting points are that we need to **maximise the transition period** and we need to remember that, historically, agricultural productivity is linked to CAP support.

There will be losers no matter which option is selected but, on balance, whereas our choice would have been for three regions – DARD's inadequate mapping rules that out - we feel two regions, with a suckler and dairy cow support scheme in SDAs, is probably best. A real danger for Northern Ireland is that the dysfunctional Stormont system could in fact drive us into the default position of a single area and full implementation in 2015. If there is no political agreement – as is the way in Stormont – by 1st August 2014, then this default position prevails. That would not be good news for Northern Ireland.

In 2017 there will be a further, though limited, review and internally in the UK an opportunity for redistribution, with Scotland very anxious

for a bigger slice of the cake. Northern Ireland will need the strongest voices to protect its interests. An MEP from a small region on the periphery of Europe has to be especially persistent and skilled in order to secure the desired result for Northern Ireland and its farmers – **in Jim Allister you have those qualities.**

Standing up for our fishermen

Fishermen are not the enemies of sustainability. On the contrary, they have the greatest interest in maintaining sustainable fisheries. Yet Brussels treats them abominably. Even the supposed relaxation in micromanagement from Brussels has been a disappointment.

The Common Fisheries Policy, dictating where, when and how we can fish in our own waters epitomises everything that is offensive about the EU. For all its dictatorial quota settings, restrictions on days at sea and grandiose diktats, it is a failed policy. After 5 years on the Fisheries Committee of the European Parliament, Jim Allister is under no illusions about the CFP and looks forward to the day when the UK and its fishermen will be liberated from its tentacles.

Back in Brussels Jim Allister will resume battle on behalf of local fishermen.

No ducking of moral issues

With the European Parliament ever eager to foist its social and rights agendas on every region, Jim Allister will stand tall in defence of traditional family values. These are matters for local decision-making, not Brussels coercion. Thus the agenda for abortion on demand and same sex marriage will be resisted.

As an international parliament, worldwide issues are often discussed in Strasbourg. When last a member Jim Allister regularly raised cases of persecution of faith groups across the world. He is pledged to continue this special interest.

Quality representation

So long as the UK is in the EU Northern Ireland needs quality representation. With 70 per cent of our laws originating in Brussels we can't afford to be complacent. The infrequency, between elections, with which the electorate even hear of the three sitting MEPs confirms the need to take this opportunity to better our representation. Experience, commitment and skill combine to make Jim Allister the obvious first choice.

Keeping two seats Unionist

This is a key priority. Some, who keep Sinn Fein in power, like to pretend at election time that only a first preference vote for them will keep Sinn Fein at bay. Such hypocrisy!

The way to protect the second unionist seat is to vote for all the unionists in order of your preference; then the vote is maximised, not shredded. Vote according to your conscience and preference.

Opposing Sinn Fein 24/7

TUV recognises IRA/Sinn Fein for what it was and still is, and treats it accordingly. The recent OTR scandal and exposure of Florida gunrunning, despite supposed ceasefires, demonstrate the duplicitous nature of Sinn Fein. They are not in government to give Northern Ireland good government – as the current stalemate demonstrates, but to advance their age old goal of dislodging Northern Ireland from the United Kingdom. TUV refuses to play the game of empowering Sinn Fein. You can't prop up Sinn Fein in government 9 to 5 in Stormont, and then go out, with credibility, to claim you are the party to stop the Shinners!

When last a Euro MP Jim Allister gave no quarter to Sinn Fein, opposing and exposing their every move. Likewise in Stormont he

takes them on and wins, as with Ann's Law, which saw the Chelsea bomber, the husband of sitting Sinn Fein MEP, expelled from his £90,000 per year job as Special Adviser to Martin McGuinness.

For 24/7 opposition to Sinn Fein and principled politics at home and abroad, vote 1 Allister.



Jim Allister with Ann Travers following the passing of Ann's Law

LOCAL GOVERNMENT

The background to RPA

TUV has made it clear from the outset that we believe the new council boundaries are a dog's dinner. In relation to a whole host of areas they make no sense. Most of Castlereagh, instead of joining Belfast, has gone in with Lisburn and Omagh with Fermanagh, areas which have no natural affinity or historic ties. Ballymena, instead of being partnered with its natural North Antrim hinterland of Ballymoney, will bizarrely be twinned with Carrickfergus.

There is nothing sensible or logical about the new council boundaries.

The DUP once said that the logical outcome of RPA was 15 councils. However, in a sordid deal with Sinn Fein they climbed down and agreed to 11.

The betrayal of Belfast

The greatest betrayal with regards to Unionism has been the surrender of the capital city.

For a while the DUP made a stand over Dunmurry, only to roll over and concede - thereby making it easier for a nationalist majority in the city of Belfast. This shameful betrayal of the Unionist people of Belfast will have long reaching consequences, not least for the prospect of seeing the Union Flag back on City Hall 365 days a year.

Flags

Recent events show that there is a concerted attempt by Republicans to strip Northern Ireland of its Britishness. The Haass process, which was championed by others, achieved no progress on this issue. The

constant effort to use the Irish language as a political weapon, as part of the republican agenda, is something which TUV will continue to resist.

Every Council needs TUV there to lead the resistance to further attack on the Unionist identity. Not fettered by coalition with Sinn Fein, Unionists can be assured that TUV will not roll over.

Belfast City Hall as the prime civic building in our capital city is in a special position. The Union flag symbolises our constitutional affinity. It reflects the reality that Northern Ireland is part of the United Kingdom. Thus, it should fly every day on Belfast City Hall.

With many nationalist councils refusing to fly the Union flag even on designated days, this inequity must be addressed as a pre-requisite to any settlement on the flags issue. Thus, outside of Belfast, the minimum acceptable is 'designated plus', whereby every council would fly the Union flag on designated days, with all councils having the option to fly it more frequently, or every day, if that is the majority wish. Thus, Ballymena, for example, could continue its 365 practice, in accordance with the wishes of the greater number of its inhabitants.

Recently, there was an opportunity for Unionists to force a resolution of this issue. When the Local Government Bill was going through Stormont a number of amendments to resolve the City Hall impasse and require all councils to at least fly the national flag on designated days were blocked by the nationalist front. Instead of facing down this intransigence, the DUP walked away.

It is simply not good enough for those Unionists who back RPA to claim that they tried but were blocked by a Petition of Concern in the Assembly. That was not how it had to be. If the flag issue really goes to the core of what the primary Unionist party in Stormont wished to defend, that party had the option, as others exercised in respect of other Bills, of stalling the Bill until the issue was addressed.

If all Unionists were as exercised as they claim to be about the tearing down of the flag and wished to see the flag flown on political buildings, such as council chambers, in every part of Northern Ireland they would have blocked the Bill. Likewise, if those who boast they control Stormont really meant business they would have radically increased the flying of the flag there too.

Use of D'Hondt in new councils

TUV has always resolutely opposed the use of D'Hondt to fill executive places at Stormont. It is undemocratic and un-British and has underwritten the inertia and dysfunctionalism that hallmarks the devolved institutions.

The DUP claim they are working towards a more normal form of government in Northern Ireland. However, far from moving away from D'Hondt, it will play a key role in the allocation of positions on local councils. Indeed, in concert with plans to enable councils to run with a small cabinet of councillors, it could see power concentrated in the hands of the few, with most councillors mere spectators. This is neither progress nor the path to open, transparent and good local government.

Securing a fair deal in the new councils

The passing of long established councils must not cause areas to be sidelined. TUV pledges to fight to ensure that the interests of areas which once had a council, which added to a strong sense of local identity, don't lose out now that they have been swallowed up into much bigger councils.

TUV will fight to ensure no area is overlooked and communities get the funding which they deserve.

In councils like Fermanagh / Omagh and Newry, Mourne and Down Unionists will be very much in a minority. TUV needs to be there to face down Republicanism and take an unapologetic stand for the minority community. Just as in Stormont we will be relentless in exposing and opposing Sinn Fein misrule.

Fairness in rates

TUV is a party with a consistent track record of exposing waste and promoting transparency in regard to spending. Party leader Jim Allister is well known for exposing the squander of public money in Stormont. TUV candidates are committed to bring the same approach to council.

One of the major reasons cited for the new council boundaries has been the claim that, because they will create economies of scale, they will save ratepayers money. The reality is that some ratepayers who live in areas which traditionally had low rates will find themselves now aligned with an area where rates are much higher.

Such convergence relief as has been offered must be fulsome and lasting.

TUV will relentlessly resist squander of your rates on vanity projects and needless expenditure.

Revitalising our town centres

The decline in town centres across Northern Ireland deeply concerns TUV. Once bustling high streets and their remaining businesses are now struggling to survive. Crippling rates have been a major contributor to decline. Aesthetically pleasing artwork on empty shop fronts may bring cosmetic change, but are no substitute for kick-starting economic revival in our town centres.

Invest NI loves the glamour of foreign direct investment but where is the meaningful investment in our town centres?

We renew our call for central government to step up to the mark and incentivise and promote town centre shopping as a cost-effective and viable alternative to out of town locations. DRD imposing ever more parking restrictions and DSD reducing parking spaces in streetscape schemes is not helping essential footfall. It's time to listen to the high street traders, rather than impose the ill-conceived desktop machinations of overpaid consultants!

As things stand, businesses are being penalised if they choose town centre premises because of higher rates. TUV believes that they should be rewarded for doing so. This will help fill the empty units and entice more consumers back into our town centres.

With the councils obtaining economic development powers new opportunities exist. A focus on town centres will be key in many areas. Restoring a viable economic hub is essential to a strategy for growth.

Looking at Planning objectively

The new councils will have significant new planning powers. TUV welcomes economic development across Northern Ireland and wants to see unreasonable barriers to it removed. However, we note that in the past connections between some political parties and developers have caused considerable public unease.

Free of any vested interests with developers, TUV councillors will fight for fairness and transparency when it comes to this important issue.

The devolving of planning powers to councils risks conflicting approaches from council to council. Thus, oversight and departmental guidance must strive to ensure an acceptable level of consistency.

Fighting for YOUR essential services

TUV is committed to fighting for the services which are essential to you, both in respect of council provided services and in using the councils as a vital vehicle in campaigning in support of local facilities and provision.

We steadfastly oppose the assault of the Education Minister upon the controlled sector. TUV will fight for the preservation of the sector in places where its very survival is under threat, particularly in the west of Northern Ireland, where state schools are being closed and forced into mergers.

TUV strongly supports the Dickson Plan in those areas where it has successfully operated for generations. In this area, or anywhere, there must be no funding hierarchy whereby secondary schools are disadvantaged.

TUV has been to the forefront of the fight against the Poots cuts in the health service. We helped force the Health Minister into a sudden U-turn when he planned to close most of the statutory residential care homes across a huge part of Northern Ireland. He is still angling for closure by stealth through blocking new admissions.

TUV is clear that it is imperative that the National Health Service does not disengage from the residential home sector, leaving us wholly at the mercy of the private sector. We have and need to maintain a mixed economy in residential care provision. A strong vote for TUV will help put the brakes on any attempt to push ahead with the 100% closure plan.

Across Northern Ireland cuts to the health service have led to chaos in A & Es. Every day we seem to hear another horrific story. TUV has set out to expose the Poots cuts which too often are making life intolerable for medical professionals and patients alike.

TUV exposed the fact that since 2009 the number of hospital beds has fallen by 16%. In some Trusts the figure is closer to 20% and even above that in the Southern Trust. This is a huge contributor to the logjams in our emergency departments.

While all this is going on, Stormont continues to squander £32 million a year on useless North/Southery. TUV is the only party which opposes that squander and says the money needs to be invested in YOUR essential services.

TUV - YOUR insurance policy

- The new super council will see an orchestrated assault on our British flag and symbols. TUV will resist further attacks on our Britishness. Unfettered by coalition with Sinn Fein, TUV will not roll over.
- TUV will ensure that the needs and interests of YOUR district are not swamped and ignored in the larger council. As in Stormont, we will fearlessly oppose misrule from whatever quarter it comes.
- TUV is committed to defending YOUR local hospitals and residential homes against closure and downgrading. No more Poots cuts!
- Unconnected with the vested interests of developers, TUV will fight for fairness and transparency in planning. Sustained economic development is key.
- With controlled schools under attack from the Sinn Fein minister, TUV will defend and promote YOUR local schools.
- Crippling rates devastate struggling town centres while country areas get a poor return for their rates. TUV will guard YOUR money from squander by the council.
- TUV is pledged to resist the Sinn Fein endorsed Haass proposals, which are destructive of parading and victims' rights. The best insurance against another DUP climb down, after the election, is a strong vote for TUV.



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