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Loyalist paramilitaries and politicians:
some recent developments

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I had a meeting in Belfast on 17 June with the journalist whom I have seen before for discussions relating to the Loyalist paramilitaries.

Among the points which he made to me were the following:

Molyneaux

King has had two private meetings with Molyneaux recently, both at the latter's home in Crumlin (on the outskirts of Belfast). From one of the OUP leader's associates, my source understands that the integrationist measures "close to Molyneaux's heart" were discussed (e.g., a Grand Committee to scrutinise Northern Ireland legislation). My source added his own speculation that the prospects for inter-party talks might also have been discussed. After one of these meetings, Molyneaux made the rather cryptic remark to his associate that "I'm cleverer than King".

The extremist statements which Paisley has been making recently (as a means, presumably, of outflanking Robinson, hitherto seen as the 'wild man' of the DUP, and thus of reasserting his own authority within the party) have reportedly had a very unsettling effect on Molyneaux.

The word is that it will not take much more for Molyneaux to "break off relations" with the DUP. He will, however, try to do so in a restrained and undramatic fashion, carefully distancing himself from some particular utterance by Paisley and allowing the media to draw their own conclusions.

The Twelfth weekend

My contact (who knows Portadown very well and has researched the marches question in some detail) confirmed that no Orange parade has ever been routed along the Garvaghy Road before. He commented that the nationalist population in Portadown, compared with elsewhere, is rather "docile" (cf., the relatively low-key resistance to Paisley's illegal march on Easter Monday - a few bottles were thrown but nothing more). Hermon, in his view, is aware of this and deliberately exploited it in deciding on the Garvaghy route.

He understands that Hermon rang both Molyneaux and Smyth in London on 10 July and asked them to return to Belfast for discussions in relation to Portadown. He is aware that Smyth did so but does not know if Molyneaux did.

The Orange Order's inquiry into the Portadown events, which became "a bit of a farce", was intended originally as a means of embarrassing Paisley (by turning the spotlight on the DUP leader's activities in the run-up to Portadown - in particular in Hillsborough where there was a large UDA and Ulster Clubs presence).

Though not a nationalist, my contact commented that the Minister's statement had been "quite understandable under the circumstances". He mentioned also that, in his view, the Minister had performed very well in his BBC interview at 5 p.m. on 16 July.

The massive car-bomb explosion in Castlewellan was surprising because (a) it showed that some Loyalist paramilitaries at least had access to explosives; and (b) the area had never previously experienced Loyalist paramilitary violence.

There is no substance behind the "UFF" and the "PAF" (the code-names used, respectively, by the UDA and the UVF). A killing claimed by the "UFF" means simply a UDA killing - and the same applies to the PAF/UVF. There are only two organisations, not four (despite four large murals depicting ostensibly distinct entities - UDA, UFF, UVF and PAF - which have recently sprung up on the Shankill Road). In my contact's words, "there is about as much difference between Andy Tyríe and the UFF as there is between Gerry Adams and the IRA".

David Donoghue
David Donoghue,
7 July 1986.

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