

E.R.

① Sin Ewan / WJF 24/8.
Jim may be interested to see, 24/8 X RZ
MB

R9270
FAB/3129/JS

② Mr Carvill

- cc - PS/S of S (B&L)
- PS/Mr Patten (B&L)
- PS/PUS (B&L)
- Mr Bourn
- Mr Carvill
- Mr Merifield
- Mr Abbott
- Mr Edis
- Mr Reeve

NOTE FOR THE RECORD

③ Pol
cc Mr Hume

Visit to Londonderry 16 August 1983

1. I called on a number of people in Londonderry on 16 August. The following significant points emerged.

Councillor Len Green (SDLP) - Mayor

2. Councillor Green has just taken over as Mayor. He was pleased that the Apprentice Boys demonstration had passed off with little trouble and congratulated the RUC for the way in which they had maintained order. In general he said that the city was much less tense than in previous years and incidents of disorder, though more regular in July/August, were localised. I asked him about a recent incident of inter community disorder in the Waterside. He thought this an isolated incident, though he was concerned lest it should escalate. The view that the incident seemed to be isolated was also confirmed to me later by Jim Guy (UUP).

3. Councillor Green emphasised the SDLP's concern that they would continue to lose electoral ground to Sinn Fein because of electoral abuse. I made the point that Government was giving serious consideration to action appropriate to counter electoral abuse. He was aware that the Secretary of State had discussed the matter with the SDLP recently. He said that one of Sinn Fein's major objectives locally was to become the largest Party on the City Council and then to engineer serious confrontation between the Council and Government. He also said that the DUP, perhaps in anticipation of such an outcome, were engaged on a strategy of trying to make the present Council unworkable thus supporting their demand for a Waterside Council.

4. I asked Councillor Green about the request to change the name of the Council to Derry City Council. He confirmed that the SDLP had been pushed into this by the IIP. However having reached that position the SDLP could not accept any outcome other than Government approval to a change in name. He totally ruled out any possibility of agreeing to another name eg Foyle District Council. He told me that the SDLP had no desire to seek to change the Royal Charter - indeed he said John Hume had made clear to

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the local party that it should not seek to petition the Queen. However Len Green could not guarantee that they would not follow that course if it became a major political issue. His feeling, though, was that a change in the name of the Council would take the heat out of the issue. I later spoke briefly to Denis Haughey, assistant to John Hume, who confirmed that the SDLP would not wish to petition the Queen to change the Charter.

Colm Geary - Clerk

5. I met separately with Colm Geary. He was critical of Government for failing to respond so far to the Council's request for a name change. Several councillors had asked him about progress and he had felt compelled to write again to Government about the matter. He thought that interest from local councillors would increase - particularly when the Council resumed normal meetings in September. He fully expected the matter to be raised again at the September council meeting. He confirmed that he would not regard a motion to change the name to Foyle as likely to be successful. In confidence he, also, was critical of the DUP tactics in the Council chamber. He said they continually sought confrontation and to embarrass the UUP.

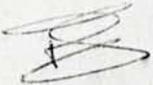
Jim Guy - UUP

6. I then met Jim Guy, leader of the UUP on the Council and a leading member of the Apprentice Boys. Like the Mayor he was relieved that the recent march had passed off relatively peacefully. Mr Guy is a moderate reasonable man who deplores the polarising of political attitudes locally. He said that the SDLP are being pushed to extremes by Sinn Fein and the UUP by the DUP. He was Deputy Mayor last year and was disappointed that the SDLP had broken with tradition in nominating their candidate for this year. He said he did not blame the SDLP for this. He told me that he knew that John Hume had issued instructions that he, Jim Guy, was to be supported for Lord Mayor. However a few days before the vote Jack Allen, UUP Assembly Member for Londonderry, had publicly accused the SDLP of unfairly treating local Protestant areas. Guy described this as nonsense and said Allen had not cleared this with the local party. Its effect however was to make it impossible for the SDLP to support him. He did not say so directly but implied that this effect may have been deliberately intended.

7. On the question of the name change Mr Guy said that he had been told by his local party to withdraw from the council in the event of a name

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change. He was guarded in his responses but did not seem to regard himself bound by this. He thought that he could live with a change in the council name though he would not welcome it; but could not remain in local Government if the name of the City were to be changed. In the event of a change in the council name he would, of course, prefer a change to Foyle or City & Foyle though he did not regard this as likely to commend itself to the SDLP. He also said that the DUP's demand for a separate Waterside Council was unrealistic. He hoped, though did not realistically expect, that the issue could be defused by referring the matter to the Boundaries Commissioner. (On this he showed himself badly informed. He was not fully aware that the Council had made a direct request to the Minister as well as a response to the Commissioner's report). Mr Guy seemed to me to be a man determined to try his best to maintain good working relationships on the Council and one who has come to terms with the changed political structure in Londonderry since the 1960's.



D G McNeill
PAB

18 August 1983

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