

E. R.

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PAB/1507/BN

RBS 35/3

NOTE FOR THE RECORD

cc: PS/Secretary of State (L&B) - m
PS/Ministers (L&B) - m
PS/PUS (L&B) - m
PS/Mr Bloomfield
Mr Stephens
Mr Brennan - m
Mr Chesterton - m
Mr Innes
Mr Elliott
Mr Spence
Mr Gilliland
Mr Bell - m
Miss Elliott - m
Mr Blackwell
Mr S Hewitt
Mr G Hewitt
Mr Ehrman - m

'DAY OF ACTION' - AFTERMATH

Since Monday I have had several phone calls from people who are very closely in touch with the protestant community.

2. The general feeling is one of revulsion against the behaviour of many of the strike supporters on Monday. One spoke of the shame which he detected amongst his contacts particularly as there had been a clear sectarian element in the protest in his area (Londonderry).

3. The Unionists who spoke to me said that the line taken by Mr Molyneaux ie against violence and support for a future strike, reflected the views he was getting from members of his own party.

Comment

4. There is no doubt that many supporters of the strike have been frightened at the ferocity of the action taken by the 'hardmen'. All of the people who rang me about the violence are deeply opposed to the Agreement but while they supported the strike they are extremely concerned about the rejection of the Downing Street talks by their leaders (in particular James Molyneaux). They now feel that Unionists in Northern Ireland are in an impossible position. I encouraged this train of thought and repeated that I believed the best way forward would be by talking.

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5. When I asked about the new West/McNarry/Ardle initiative the reaction was that as usual/^{it was} too little and too late. No one believed that Mrs Thatcher would suspend the Agreement and that realism would be more appropriate at this time. I was reminded by one of the contacts that he saw sectarianism as being one of the main planks of the protest and therefore we should not expect the DUP and also some Unionists to lend support for any kind of power sharing.

6. My contacts included an Assemblyman (UUP), community activists, a church leader and a prominent UUP party member.



J E McCONNELL

Political Affairs Division

5 March 1986

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