

1. Mr Forbett
2. Ms McAuliffe

fill
get info for
Protestant
Areas

FROM: S QUINN
CCRU
24 June 1993

- cc PS/Mr Fell - B
- Mr Thomas - B
- Mr Carvill, DENI
- Mr Murray, DOE
- Mr Loughran, DED
- Mr Williams - B
- Mr Maccabe - B
- Mr Foster, LDO
- Mr McCusker 28.6 - B
- Mr Caravan o/a
- Mr May - B

~~Doreen.~~
This is probably a 2nd or 3rd copy.
It not, pass to Mr Corbett (for
CL issues) and Ms McAuliffe
(for cum. Campbell's views on PE).
AC
28/6.

Mr Watkins - B

WEST OF THE FOYLE: THE FUTURE OF THE PROTESTANT COMMUNITY

1. Mr May and I met a range of people in Derry last week to discuss how the Protestant community West of the Foyle see their situation; whether the haemorrhaging to the East Bank is likely to continue; what, if anything, could be done to stop or reverse that process; and what effect the loss of the last Unionist seat on the West Bank would have. Although we placed some emphasis on community relations issues, it was no surprise that a number of other issues were raised.
2. Mr May and I have collaborated on a report to Ministers which issued today. However I thought it might be useful and informative for copy recipients to see brief notes of the various meetings we held to get a more complete view of the issue. These are attached.
3. Clearly the small number of people we spoke to raises a question about the reliability of any findings. Further work does need to be done before a more definitive view can be taken and before any public expenditure implications could be resolved (if indeed it is felt that would be appropriate). PAB will continue to take soundings, and the Londonderry

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Development Office will provide an established point of reference locally; it may be that the new CRO will have a contribution to make.

[Signed: SQ]

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DAVID DAVIS

David Davis held the last Unionist-controlled seat on the West Bank. Having served for 12 years, he was clearly deeply upset to have failed to gain re-election. It is however clear that one factor in that failure was the unwillingness of a sizeable number of Fountain Estate residents to vote for Davis because they did not agree with his brand of moderate Unionism.

Detail

Davis suggested there remained about 1,300 - 1,500 Protestants of voting age on the West Bank compared to about 18,000 25 years ago. (His figures, whilst not agreed by all, reflect the order of the decline.) Many had left the West Bank because of the good new housing on offer elsewhere and the uncomfortableness felt by Unionists living in an area with an overwhelming Nationalist ethos. Davis himself had left some ten years previously. The attacks by PIRA on the Protestant areas had been prevalent but had now practically stopped. Confidence was the key to the continued presence of Protestants on the West Bank.

Although he recognised a number of Protestants lived in rural areas, his comments focussed entirely on the Fountain Estate. The drift would continue until such time as the inhabitants could be offered conditions at least as good as those on the East Bank. This meant good quality new housing (with the demolition of the 60s maisonettes), the construction of the new school (on which an announcement was made last week) and a sense soon that something was being done, in order to show there was a reason to stay. Davis acknowledged that even this might not be enough. The age profile of the Fountain Estate showed an alarmingly ageing population. Young people wishing to start families were still leaving the area. There was relatively little community leadership although the Diamond Trust (which deals with the regeneration of the Fountain Estate) provided what there was.

The Council, he agreed, might have a role to play. Davis also made very clear that those in the Fountain were not seeking partnership with Nationalists but a preservation of the Unionist ethos in the area. The attempt to move Catholic families into vacant properties in the Fountain had not been a success. Problem families were now being given those properties. There was limited contact with Catholic groups except where a common interest surfaced.

The FEC came in for flak (see also below) because it was perceived as working only to avoid discrimination against Catholics and not against Protestants. New developments on the West Bank such as Marks and Spencer et al were not seen as offering Protestants employment opportunities.

MARK DURKAN, SDLP CHAIRMAN AND DERRY CITY COUNCILLOR

Background

Durkan had expressed his concern at the loss of the Unionist seat on the West Bank at a recent dinner. He blamed Sinn Fein vote stealing for the loss, together with a feeling Davis would get in and therefore did not need SDLP transfers to see him through.

Detail

Durkan saw the problem on two levels. There was a need to ensure those living on the West Bank remained; a segregated city was in no one's interests. Durkan made the interesting suggestion that the new CRO might examine all the City Council's policies and programmes in terms of the reaction to them from both sides of the community. This would take account specifically of concerns from the Fountain which would otherwise not be heard within the Council.

He recognised the Council might need to do more. Protestant interests and concerns needed to be placed on the agenda somehow. The obvious vehicle, the Council's cultural affairs sub committee,

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) was dominated by Irish language issues and might therefore be tainted in Protestants' eyes. He agreed to consider what else might be done.

The second level was to look at community relations on a city-wide basis. The Waterside was the main mixed community. If dealt with on that basis, it might be less threatening for those on the West Bank where there was little contact between community groups.

(Durkan also asked about the possibility of CCRU or some central community relations organisations providing ongoing advice to the Council about what it might do.

████████████████████ (WEST BANK PROTESTANTS FROM OUTLYING AREAS), GERRY McCOLGAN, DERRY CITY COUNCIL DIRECTOR OF COMMUNITY SERVICES, JIM FOSTER, LDO

The two West Bank residents centred their attention on the Foyle and Londonderry College which they saw as a flagship for Protestantism on the West Bank, even though a (growing) proportion of pupils were Catholics and the teaching staff mixed. There was concern that the difficulties caused by a split site might ultimately lead to relocation on the East Bank on a single site and that Protestant Grade 2s (from West Bank primary schools) were for the first time being turned away as a result of the high level of applications at the College from both sides of the community. The effects of a new Catholic grammar school on the West Bank were uncertain. It would remove congestion, but might draw away potential Catholic pupils thereby reducing enrolments.

The sense of inevitability about the outflow of Protestants to the East Bank was particularly marked. One resident acknowledged she considered moving monthly, the other arguing Protestant institutions needed to be retained on the West Bank to allow a re-migration at some unspecified time in the future (when, by inference, the Troubles were over). There was also a sense that the Sinn Fein vote threatened Protestants - "anyone voting Sinn Fein wants to kill me".

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It was also suggested that the Fountain Initiative would by itself be insufficient to prevent the outflow continuing out of that area. Further high level resources were needed to achieve that, and even then there remained the risk of failure.

In the rural areas a residue of Protestants, linked mainly to land (and business) would remain, but become an ever smaller minority. The young did not stay on the Cityside - and were unlikely to return to the family home under current circumstances. Intimidation had been a feature of life for many living in isolated areas who had since moved. The proximity to the border was a further cause for concern.

██████████, RESIDENT OF FOUNTAIN ESTATE, MEMBER DIAMOND TRUST, PROMINENT MEMBER OF THE APPRENTICE BOYS)

██████████ started by saying that Protestants felt they were treated as if they were of no consequence because they were a minority in the City. This applied particularly on the West Bank. They needed security to feel comfortable, but to provide it would upset Nationalists, and HMG had therefore taken the line of least resistance and ignored Unionist concerns. Violence, such as the bombing of businesses and intimidation of young people, had been a feature over the past twenty years, although it was less so now. The migration of Protestants indicated the success of that policy; Nationalists had sought the current position and it was disingenuous of them now to claim they sought a retained role for Unionists there.

As a consequence Unionists were now binding together to form a state within a state whereby they could organise their own way of doing things independent of HMG and Nationalists. (There was a vaguely threatening air about this, which could have implied civil disobedience or worse, but may on reflection have been a reference to the "Ulster Community Action Network" conference held in Derry on 12 June (involving the likes of Glen Barr).)

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In contrast to what we heard elsewhere, [REDACTED] gave a strong indication of the well-being, self-confidence and permanence of the Protestant presence in the Fountain area. The Fountain had, in his view, been retained by Protestants because it secured geographically the "Protestant institutions" such as the City Walls, the churches, the Church of Ireland Cathedral and the Apprentice Boys' hall. The Diamond Trust would result in developments which would both retain the existing population and attract back people from the Waterside. A commitment from HMG to finance the plans was however essential.

[REDACTED] had set up the Bastion Property Company (presumably so-called because the Fountain is the last Protestant bastion on the West Bank) which had attracted £93,000 "shares" and had been used thus far to purchase ten properties in the area, do them up and put (Protestant) families into them (including five from the Waterside).

[REDACTED] reinforced the lack of respect for David Davis and argued there had been a concerted effort to ensure he lost his seat so that a more representative candidate could be put forward next time "to win the seat back!" He was delighted the NIO had come to see him, and claimed to have been expecting us! Community relations was not trusted in the area as it was perceived either to negate or water down Unionism. He noted our exhortation to use the CRC or CCRU for funding or advice. Derry City Council's image was tainted because of the Nationalist ethos it exhibited. Derry City Council was not their council. (The CRO will therefore have a difficult job.) The lack of Westminster representation from Unionists in the City was seen as an even bigger handicap than lack of councillors. [REDACTED] argued all Government money went to Paddy Doherty's Inner City Trust, and to the Derry Housing Association (despite the recent announcement regarding the new school for the Fountain area). There was no one to lobby on behalf of the Fountain.

GREGORY CAMPBELL (DUP COUNCILLOR)

Campbell was preoccupied by a book he was writing (to be published? next month) on fair employment based on the monitoring returns by large companies. Most of the discussion returned to fair employment

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issues. He concentrated particularly on concern regarding new employment prospects at Seagate, Fruit of the Loom and Marks and Spencer in the City.

The FEC was seen as for Catholics and not Protestants to use. His complaints to the FEC had, he believed, been dealt with slowly and unwillingly. Campbell particularly believed recruitment rates were the key figures. These demonstrated Catholic firms were becoming more so and Protestant ones less so (except in the Greater Belfast area).

Government had 18 - 24 months to make something happen in the Fountain area. If not, the outflow would become irreversible. In the elections, he believed the Unionist turnout was no different however in the Fountain than elsewhere but whereas there had been 1,200 Unionist votes in 1989, there were only 750 in 1993. The Unionist vote had dropped because of emigration. The dislike of Davis was only a minimal factor.

Derry City Council was seen as anti-Unionist. There was no genuine partnership with Unionists and specifically with the DUP as the major Unionist force. That increased the pressure and exacerbated the siege mentality. There was a lot of disillusionment in the Fountain area, but action within two years could make a difference. New housing was important but not enough in itself. The Diamond Trust was doing its best, but lacked expertise.

S QUINN
CCRU
24 June 1993

us 81^b
file 45/93

1. Mr. [unclear] Sa. 29
2. Ms. McAfee
3. Mr. Gamp
R. contact Derry
PS/Secretary of State (B&L)

Mr. Cavanagh (da)
[Signature]
[Initials]

- cc PS/Mr Atkins (DOE, DED&L) - B
- PS/Michael Ancram (DENI, B&L) - B
- PS/PUS (B&L) - B
- PS/Mr Fell - B
- Mr Thomas - B
- Mr Ledlie - B
- Mr Carvill, DENI
- Mr Murray, DOE
- Mr Loughran, DED
- Mr Watkins - B
- Mr Williams - B
- Mr Bell - B
- Mr Maccabe - B
- Mr Foster, LDO
- Mr May - B

961/6

PS/Secretary of State (B&L) - B for a new CAO.

29/6..

WEST OF THE FOYLE: THE FUTURE OF THE PROTESTANT COMMUNITY

Background

1. The past twenty years has seen a large-scale decline in the number of Protestants living on the West Bank in Derry. One current estimate suggested a total number of 1,300 - 1,500 of voting age, about half of whom live in or around the Fountain Estate with the remainder scattered in the rural area running up to the border and in the Culmore Road area. In May, the last Unionist councillor on the West Bank, David Davis, lost his seat. Twenty five years ago there were perhaps as many as 18,000 Protestants on the West Bank.

Purpose

2. In consultation with Mr Foster of the Londonderry Development Office, Peter May and I visited the City last week to meet a range of local people, discover their views of future demographic patterns, find out whether there was a desire for the Protestant presence to remain and if so, to elicit what, if anything, they would like to see done to reinforce that

Desire. This took place against the background of the work of the Diamond Trust, which is seeking to rejuvenate the Fountain area (Government is supporting this through the provision of a new primary school, recently announced by Mr Atkins, and new housing to replace the 1960s maisonettes).

3. This minute outlines the responses we received and offers some preliminary analysis of it. It does not seek to prescribe solutions, but provides background information which Ministers might find helpful in future dealings with representatives of the area, and provides some pointers for Departments and CCRU (a complementary note is being circulated to officials only).

Detail

4. Everyone we spoke to, including the SDLP, believed that it is desirable for a Protestant presence to continue on the West Bank. The segregation of the City was sharp enough already. Equally, however, many recognised that the continued outflow to the Waterside, especially among the young, was leaving an ageing population, lacking to a great extent in leadership from within those areas. Although intimidation and violence was rather less of a problem than in previous years, the overwhelmingly Nationalist ethos of the area, in particular the strong Sinn Fein vote, the City Council's perceived nationalist bias, and lack of unionist representation at Westminster had encouraged people to leave. This had been reinforced by the availability of attractive housing on offer in the Waterside.
5. Protestants had remained in some numbers in the Fountain area because of the historic importance of the city centre, with the Walls, the Cathedral and the Apprentice Boys' Hall. Improvements to the area, such as those mooted, were recognised as important and valuable steps. Housing was mentioned by a number of our contacts. If good facilities were on offer, people would be less likely to move away. However all

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suggested that currently planned improvements might not be enough in themselves. Very few Protestants were willing to move from the East to the West Bank, although one member of the Diamond Trust living in the Fountain argued otherwise, offering a vision of the area which suggested it would thrive provided HMG invested enough money. He also suggested that Davis had lost his seat because a number of (hardline) Unionists had decided not to vote for him. The latter claim has some truth (although the seat would have been in jeopardy nonetheless) but the former appeared to be an over-optimistic interpretation of the current position.

6. A number of people (perhaps most) believe the further decline in the Protestant population to be inevitable and irreversible, and that only its rate is at issue. Gregory Campbell suggested there is perhaps two years in which to act before that becomes the case. Nearly all recognise that there would be an element of risk in pumping more Government money into that area. There could be no certainty that the exodus would not continue, even if the money were expended. The scale of the investment required to stem the outflow was also open to question, with some believing that current plans did not go far enough, if a gradual decline were to be avoided.

7. The Foyle and Londonderry College (non Catholic grammar school) was represented to us as one important factor for the future. It is currently situated on the West Bank, but on split sites. A sizeable proportion of Catholics now attend the college, and this has led to some Protestant pupils (from the West Bank) being refused entry in favour of better-qualified Catholic pupils. The school was seen by some as a flagship for the Protestant presence and arguments in favour of a single site for the college being identified on the West Bank, and against a further Catholic grammar school on the West Bank, were advanced. The former would underwrite the school's continued existence on the West Bank, the latter might mean a drop in enrolments, thereby damaging its future prospects.

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Evidence of Protestant alienation was also manifest in all our meetings, directed at Government, the "nationalist" Council, and the nationalist/republican ethos of the West Bank. The FEC came in for a particularly rough ride, with the widespread belief that the FEC is only there to represent Catholics and not Protestants, and that it applies different standards to the two groupings. The new employment attracted to the City was perceived as being for Catholics to the exclusion by and large, of Protestants. Accusations were short on detail, but the sense of grievance was widespread and seemed to be deeply felt.

9. The Council was felt to have a role to play by some, in ensuring that Protestant interests were not entirely subordinated. Our SDLP contact canvassed the need to establish a forum within the Council to allow issues of concern to Protestants to be addressed and to involve members of the community as well as councillors. He also floated the idea that the new community relations officer for the Council might have a "proofing" role in relation to Council policies and programmes.

Conclusions

10. Our conclusions need to take account of the fact that our Protestant contacts were clearly disposed to confirm the existence of Protestant alienation; doubtless saw some potential advantage in so doing; and some took the opportunity to do a bit of special pleading. However it would nonetheless be reasonable to infer that:
 - (i) all believe a continued Protestant presence on the West Bank to be desirable, although opinions vary as to what extent this will prove possible;
 - (ii) there continues to be a steady outflow to the Waterside;

- iii) the remaining population is increasingly elderly and lacks leadership;
- (iv) the planned new school and new housing may arrest the flow across the Foyle; but
- (v) in the absence of a material change in the atmosphere on the West Bank, and/or a much larger investment leading to a change of heart in the Protestant community, the failure to attract new blood will cause an inevitable decline in the coming generations; and
- (vi) as a result the City will become more divided demographically, and probably politically, although a small residual Protestant community may remain on the West Bank.

Action

11. Derry City Council is about to appoint a new Community Relations Officer and CCRU can discuss with Council officials how his/her agenda might take account of the position of Protestants on the West Bank.
12. PAB will also continue to take soundings from the Protestant community, and the Londonderry Development Office will continue to be a focal point for proposals relating to the area. Relevant Departments can assess and follow up as necessary the points made, though clearly resource availability will be an important consideration.

[Signed SQ]

S QUINN