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ULSTER DEMOCRATIC UNIONIST PARTY

1. On 1 May 1975, elections were held in Northern Ireland for the 78-seat Constitutional Convention; the Democratic Unionist Party won 12 seats, while the United Ulster Unionist Coalition won 46 seats, thus acquiring a majority. The Report of the Convention, which was presented to the then Secretary of State for Northern Ireland, Mr. Rees, on 8 November 1975, rejected power-sharing at cabinet level; instead, the Report, which was UUUC-inspired, offered "real and substantial influence to (the) opposition" in sub-cabinet committees. On 12 January, 1976, in the House of Commons, Mr. Rees said that there would have to be a wider area of agreement if there were to be an end to direct rule and an effective transfer of power. On 3 February, the Convention was re-convened for four weeks. On 5 March, having still failed to reach an acceptable level of agreement, Mr. Rees announced the continuation of direct rule for the foreseeable future.

2. On 15 March 1976, DUP leader, Mr. Paisley declared, in reference to the British Government rejection of the Convention Report, that "the time has come for action ... we will take effective steps to end direct rule and to implement the Report". On 26 March, the DUP submitted a plan to the UUUC steering committee which detailed the proposed strategy to force the abandonment of direct rule. The proposals were never made public but a DUP spokesman said that the necessary pressure would be put on the British Government "by stages". No concerted action has been taken to date by the UUUC against the continuation of direct rule.

On 5 May, Rev. Paisley declared his support for the United Ulster Action Council which was established by the leader of the United Ulster Unionist Movement, Mr. Ernest Baird, in April, to co-ordinate loyalist opposition to direct rule. It was speculated at the time that Rev. Paisley voiced little enthusiasm for the Council in private conversations with Official Unionists (the UUP did not join the Council) and allied the DUP to the Council to allay internal party criticism. Despite the stance of the party, it is widely believed that Paisley himself is an integrationist. It will be noted firstly, that, on 20 March 1972, in a debate at Westminster, Paisley argued for the total integration of Northern Ireland into the United Kingdom, in the event of the Stormont House of Commons being abolished. Secondly, Tara, a 200-strong

extreme loyalist para-military group, declared in a statement on 5 April 1976 that it would "oppose any attempt to render continued direct rule unworkable". Paisley's influence on the group is note-worthy. According to "The Irish Times" of 9 March 1976, up to six of the DUP former Convention members were members of Tara, while the deputy editor of the DUP news-sheet, the 'Protestant Telegraph' was Tara's administrative officer.

The public position of the DUP, however, is resolutely anti-direct rule. On 6 May, for example, Rev. William Beattie, DUP deputy leader and Mr. Peter Robinson, DUP secretary criticised British Government "misrule". Rev. Beattie demanded an election for a devolved government, as recommended in the Convention Report, warning that the "democratic process will be restored by whatever means are found necessary".

3. Since its formation in October 1971, a basic tenet of the DUP has been opposition to power-sharing ("standing democracy on its head" - Paisley, 16 January, 1976).

On 2 January 1976 however, Professor Bernard Crick of Birbeck College, London, who advised the UUUC during the Convention period, claimed that Rev. Paisley at one stage supported the idea of voluntary coalition with the SDLP. The allegation was supported on the same day by an Alliance Party spokesman, who said that Paisley had given the Alliance delegation at the inter-party talks in Autumn 1975, a document which contained voluntary coalition as an option. The option was discussed in detail, with Paisley, according to the Alliance spokesman, appearing "very interested"; with the vote of the UUUC by 37 to 1, with two abstentions on 8 September 1975, that the SDLP be excluded from any future government, the inter-party talks ended and the document proposals lapsed. Paisley maintained that he was never involved in any voluntary coalition plan.

In a meeting with Mr. P. Harte, T.D., in Belfast on 9 January, 1976, Paisley insisted that the UUUC would not share power with any other group "at the present moment"; should the electorate want a different arrangement, however, and "said so through the ballot box", then he would accept this. Since then, DUP spokesmen have frequently reiterated the attitude that only "a thorough-going Unionist Government" (Paisley, 15 March, 1976) would be acceptable.

4. Since the expulsion of Mr. William Craig and his Vanguard Unionist Party supporters from the UUUC on 14 October 1975, the prospects of loyalist unity have greatly diminished. On 27 December, 1975, East Belfast Vanguard Association criticised Rev. Paisley for mounting a campaign to discredit Vanguard leader, Mr. Craig. A spokesman for the Association complained in particular about an anonymous anti-Craig leaflet, which had been circulating in Northern Ireland since October 1975. The leaflet was printed by the Puritan Printing Company, which publishes the DUP "Protestant Telgraph".

On 3 February, 1976, Paisley attacked "unionist collaborators and quislings" who advocated power-sharing and called for the isolation of "the Craigs and the Taylors". In a statement on 4 March, Paisley again criticised the Vanguard position on power-sharing.

On 4 June, a statement was issued by DUP spokesman, Mr. Peter Robinson, claiming that the UUP was engaging in secret talks with the SDLP. On the following day, a statement was issued by the UUP acknowledging that talks were indeed taking place. At an acrimonious meeting of the UUUC on 7 June, the DUP received an assurance that there would be no further talks with the SDLP until "all the relevant documents (were) on the table". On 8 June, UUP leader, Mr. West, at an impromptu press-conference, did not rule out the possibility of the UUP leaving the UUUC. On 25 June, Paisley attacked the continuing UUP/SDLP talks and accused the UUP of trying to break-up the UUUC. On the following day, a 200-delegate meeting in Portadown approved a recruiting campaign to make the DUP "the largest political party in Northern Ireland".

Despite the DUP-UUP quarrel, there appears a strong desire to keep the UUUC intact. In an attempt to smooth-over attacks on the DUP at the UUP annual conference on 2 October, 1976, UUP leader, Mr. West, argued that the UUUC had served unionism well in the "Assembly elections and general elections", and he was afraid that dissension among allies could lose seats in the future. The DUP's acceptance of this partial apology trusted that "the present leadership of the Official Unionist Party would continue to put Ulster's interests first". The indications are that the UUUC will remain intact for pragmatic reasons, at least until the local elections, scheduled for May 1977. Another possible scenario is that the DUP and the UUUM (which is expected to become a political party formally within the next few months) on the one hand, and the UUP and Vanguard could form two separate alliances.

5. The only significant internal development within the DUP since the beginning of 1976 was the replacement of Rev. William Beattie as chairman of the party by Rev. William McCrea, another Free Presbyterian Minister, which was disclosed on 9 February 1976. Rev. Beattie remains deputy leader of the party. When the inter-party talks broke-up in rancorous disagreement over the Vanguard voluntary coalition suggestion in Autumn, 1975 many in the DUP felt that Rev. Beattie's handling of the ensuing controversy with Mr. Craig was inept. The replacement was seen by observers as implicit criticism by the party leader, Rev. Paisley.

6. Mr. Desmond Boal, QC, co-founder of the DUP in September, 1971, described the party as being "right-wing in the sense of being strong on the constitution and restoring security". Since then, party spokesmen have frequently called for tougher security measures and fought against any diminution of the role of the Army in sensitive areas.

On 6 January, 1976, Rev. Paisley threatened the possibility of a strike, similar to that of May 1974, if the Secretary of State refused to declare that he was going to "militarily defeat the IRA in outright war".

On 30 April, party deputy leader, Rev. Beattie claimed that the British Government had agreed to step-up the use of police, instead of the Army, "so that IRA violence in England will stop". Mr. Beattie demanded the provision of "adequate weapons" for the RUC and called for a part-time reserve force of at least 40,000 trained men. When this had been done, he said, the Army could be withdrawn without a wholesale massacre. On 31 December, 1975, the strength of the RUC Reserve was 4,819.

On the same theme as Rev. Beattie, on 4 May, Paisley claimed that he had heard, after the Feakle talks, that there was a plan to withdraw the Army. The withdrawal of the Spearhead Battalion from South Armagh earlier in the day was cited as evidence. Paisley advised loyalists to defend themselves by supporting the United Ulster Action Council, then being established by UUUM leader, Mr. Baird.

On 24 May, in a joint statement, Mr. Baird and Rev. Paisley declared that definite action would be taken in protest against British Government security policy in Northern Ireland. The full text of the statement

reads: "As leaders of the DUP and UUUM, representing the majority of Unionist voters in Northern Ireland, we are not prepared to sit idly by and see our people destroyed. After consultations with the whole loyalist spectrum, we have decided that definite action must be taken to defend our people as Mr. Rees (the (former) Secretary of State) has utterly and totally failed Ulster. His continual negotiations with Provisional Sinn Féin are nothing less than treachery. In a matter of hours, the world will know that Ulster loyalists are determined, not only to defend themselves, but save their province. We expect every Unionist to do his duty and follow the lead." On 25 May, a statement, said to be issued by the "commanders and officers of the USC", said that patrols would be mounted "in all areas of Northern Ireland for the protection of all citizens of the Province". A request by Paisley and Baird to the RUC Chief Constable, Mr. Kenneth Newman, to establish a joint effort against terrorism was rejected by the Chief Constable. Despite, or perhaps because of, the melodramatic forebodings, the patrols were an anti-climax; only three vigilante groups were seen on the night of 30 May, when 'vigilantes in their thousands' were to start the patrols. On 18 October, however, UUUM leader, Mr. Baird claimed that patrols had recently been stepped-up in border areas, particularly in Armagh and parts of Tyrone.

Meanwhile, DUP spokesmen continue to demand tougher security measures. The speech by Rev. Beattie, party deputy leader, at an Apprentice Boys' rally on 7 August is representative. At the rally, Rev. Beattie demanded that the Provisional IRA be exterminated and that the "bloodshed and destruction they had caused ... be avenged". If the British Government and the security forces did not act immediately, he maintained loyalists "would have no option but to act themselves".

7. Loyalist para-military groups have been suspicious of Rev. Paisley since his flight to Canada during the May 1974 Ulster Workers Council-led strike, while the DUP has attacked, on numerous occasions, these groups for their violence and particularly for gangsterism in loyalist areas. At end March 1975, Paisley claimed that these groups had disgraced the Protestant cause.

In early 1976, the party moved from its position of denouncing the paramilitaries, particularly since 1 March, when the UDA abandoned its close ties with the Vanguard Unionist Party and its voluntary power-sharing

proposals. Some senior members of the DUP are now believed to be more receptive to the idea of co-operation with the para-military groups; on 25 May, the UDA announced "fullest support" for the vigilante patrols, then being organised by the Ulster Service Corps, with the support of the United Ulster Action Council of Messrs. Paisley and Baird; the party still refuses, however, to send delegates to meetings of the para-military dominated Ulster Loyalist Central Co-ordinating Committee .

8. Since the rejection of the Convention Report by the then Secretary of State, Mr. Rees, on 12 January, 1976, the attitude of the DUP to the London Government, and the Northern Ireland Office in particular, has been vitriolic and hostile.

On 3 February, Rev. Paisley warned that loyalists should demonstrate to the world that they are "not prepared to be sacrificed by Harold Wilson on the altar of political expediency" while, on the same day, DUP Convention member, Mr. Clifford Smyth alleged that the NIO was manipulating events to trick Northern Ireland into a united Ireland.

On 5 February, Paisley alleged that the British Government had established a psychological warfare team against loyalists involving officers from the Foreign and Commonwealth Office, the Ministry of Defence and the Northern Ireland Office. On 19 February, however, in the House of Commons, Paisley was severely criticised by the Secretary of State as talking nonsense; Paisley had failed to reveal any of the promised details of the psychological warfare team which he claimed to possess. The laager mentality of the DUP was further emphasised by the charge, also on 5 February, that a full-page £700 advertisement in the Belfast "Newsletter" by the SDLP was paid for by the NIO.

On 13 February, Paisley claimed that documents, which had come into his possession in August, 1975, proved that the Secretary of State had "done a deal" with the Provisional IRA. Accusing the NIO of "diabolical falsehood" and being "a seedbed of lying and deceit", Paisley declared that loyalists would take no more of the "bullying and blackmailing" of the NIO.

The former DUP Convention members, on 11 April, sent an open letter to the new British Prime Minister, Mr. James Callaghan alleging that many people in Northern Ireland considered that he carried a "grave moral responsibility for the cruel guerilla war which infests this region of the United Kingdom". The letter linked Mr. Callaghan with the "disastrous" decisions of 1969, which led to the disarming of the RUC and the disbanding of the B-Specials.

On 10 September, Mr. Roy Mason was appointed Secretary of State for Northern Ireland, on the appointment of Mr. Rees as Home Secretary. The DUP welcomed the new appointee.

9. The DUP is closely related to the Free Presbyterian Church, of which Rev. Paisley is Moderator. In all there are over 40 established Churches, with 26 full-time ministers and 20 students attending the Theological Hall training school on Ravenhill Road, Belfast. Membership of the Free Presbyterian Church, which was founded by Paisley on 17 March, 1951 in Crossgar, Co. Down, is virtually a prerequisite to advancement within the DUP.

10. The most recent indication of basic DUP proposals for the future government of Northern Ireland are contained in the UUUC statement of 23 September, 1975 -

1. Northern Ireland to remain an integral part of the United Kingdom.
2. Representation of Northern Ireland at Westminster on a scale similar to that for comparable parts of the United Kingdom.
3. Restoration of devolved assembly and executive, without "any special form of franchise for Northern Ireland different from that in use elsewhere in the United Kingdom".
4. Formation of the executive to be based on the "practices and precedents of the Westminster Parliament", i.e. no enforced power-sharing.
5. Establishment of backbench committees, covering each department of government, to make parliament and opposition more effective.
6. Enactment of Bill of Constitutional Rights and Bill of (civil) Rights.

November 1976