

PA Loyalist parade 1995.

Dr.
24/4

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CONFIDENTIAL

Lower Ormeau Orange parade, 23 April 1995

1. I spoke to my Quaker contacts (Alan and Janet Quilley) yesterday afternoon, immediately after the parade was halted at the Ormeau bridge. They had been present at the events (one on either side of the bridge) and their perceptions were as follows:

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- events passed off reasonably quietly. The Orangemen held an open air service at the entry to the Lower Ormeau (where they had been stopped by the RUC) and dispersed. One bottle had been thrown (from the Loyalist side, it appears). The Quakers said that the Orangemen did not follow an alternative route to the Ulster Hall in the city centre (location for the main Orange event of the day);
- there were about 400 protesters on the Nationalist Lower Ormeau side and about 200 pro Orange counter-protestors who paraded from Ballynafeigh (starting point of the Orange parade) along the road to the bridge before the Orange march took place. There were about 75 Orange marchers in the official parade;
- the Quakers were quite worried at the potential for confrontation throughout. On the Loyalist side, the presence of a substantial number of Loyalists from outside the area, notably East Belfast, was noted including, according to Janet Quilley, a group of "tough nuts" who were identified as such by the Orange stewards. On the Nationalist side, Republicans from outside the Lower Ormeau were said to be in the crowd, in addition to Sinn Féin representatives from Belfast and Lisburn;

- The Quakers commented that LORAG and the Orange Order kept their people under control. Alan Quilley commented that on the Nationalist side Gerard Rice of LORAG (whom we had counselled on the wisdom of a restrained and dignified approach) was actively working to ensure good order and at one stage climbed on top of a RUC landrover to urge people to disperse quietly and quickly as the Orangemen were holding their service. His request was heeded;

- the Quakers have been mediating between the Lower Ormeau residents and the Orange Order. This process, on which they have been keeping me informed in strict confidence, has not moved very far (the Orangemen cancelled an initial face to face meeting with LORAG during last week) and is more long term in scope. While happy that the event passed off peacefully yesterday, the Quakers are mindful of what they see as resentment in the Orange/Loyalist camp. They see little prospect at this stage of an early resumption of their mediation and dialogue between LORAG and the Orange Order.



Declan Kelleher

24 April, 1995

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