

ULSTER DEFENCE ASSOCIATION (UDA)

Leader: Andy TYRIE

Membership: About 10,000 drawn largely from the Protestant areas of Belfast

Activities: The UDA is the largest and best-organised of the Loyalist para-military associations. It tries to maintain a respectable front and, to this end, either denies responsibility for sectarian murders and terrorist bombings or claims them in the name of the ULSTER FREEDOM FIGHTERS (UFF), a proscribed and essentially fictitious organisation which is widely known to be a nom de guerre of the UDA. The UDA was born out of an amalgamation of local street defence associations (the WOODVALE DEFENCE ASSOCIATION being the best-known) and still sees itself as carrying out this role in "inter-face" areas. TYRIE is essentially a pragmatist. He would like to convert the UDA into a mass movement under his leadership, outwardly respectable and commanding widespread support from the Loyalist community. His main difficulty in achieving this end is his constant need to keep in step with his rank and file many of whom are far more militant than he is himself. TYRIE is however not averse to killing Catholics, even those who have no Republican connections, if he thinks it necessary at any particular point in time. He is openly contemptuous and deeply suspicious of the Loyalist politicians and although prepared to work loosely with them has taken care to keep the UDA free from any deep involvement either with political parties or other Loyalist para-military groups; he withdrew the UDA from the ULCCC(qv) in May 1976 and has co-operated loosely since then with the UUAC (see Index). Like the PSF and the UDA is now going in for co-operative and community ventures; it has two main subsidiaries, the ULSTER COMMUNITY ACTION GROUP (UCAG) and NORTHERN IRELAND CO-OPERATIVE ENTERPRISES (NICE).

Chairman: Glenn BARR (UDA and VANGUARD)