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NEWS LETTER

*Irrelevant if marches should cause offence.
Sinn Féin scenario falsehood.*

TIME to draw up the balance sheet on the marching season. It makes sobering reading.

A moderate unionist from Donegal, Co Tyrone, where my mother's family came from, said to me: "Even during the worst of the troubles, I have never known the bitterness that now exists between the two communities."

The prospect of a so-called 'independent' commission on the marching issue coming to any conclusion that might be accepted by both sides is too remote to be contemplated.

For one good reason: the controversy has been deliberately stirred up and brilliantly manipulated by Sinn Féin in order to provoke the Protestant population into retaliation and thus provide the IRA with its justification for continuing the sectarian war.

In every case, Drumcree, Ormeau and Londonderry, the threat of violence has come not from the Orangemen who sought only to walk down a main thoroughfare, but from Sinn Féin who threatened serious trouble if the traditional processions were allowed to go ahead.

The picture of Orangemen forcing their way through Catholic estates, a picture too easily accepted by the media, was totally false.

The only credible reason advanced for Catholic opposition to the marches was that the sound of a band or the glimpse, however remote, of an Orange sash, was just too distressing and hurtful for Catholics to bear.

The artificiality of such a pretext for threatening violent reaction is reinforced by the Sinn Féin tactic of appointing convicted IRA terrorists as the spokesmen for all three disputed areas, thus ensuring that the Orangemen would refuse to parley with them and enabling the Sinn Féin representatives to pose as anxious for dialogue, for reasonable compromise, while intransigent bigoted Orangemen were intent only on confrontation.

It was a beautifully constructed scenario which left the inadequate Orange spokesmen floundering.

The efficiency of the Sinn Féin organisation matched that of the Orange cadres at Drumcree.

Sinn Féin supporters were bussed in from Belfast and Garvaghy to provide additional muscle in Derry and Bellaghy.

Press releases for the Bogside Residents were issued through the Sinn Féin Press office.

This was never a spontaneous upsurge of anti-Protestant feeling from the Catholic grassroots.

It was a well-orchestrated and conducted campaign which played on Catholic fears and the latent sectarianism endemic in the Province.

The resultant hostility between the two sides effectively spells curcains for any talks that may resume in September.

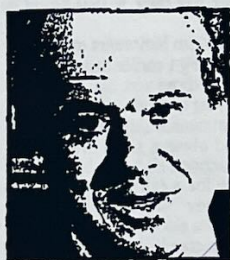
The growth in Sinn Féin militancy and their domination of the SDLP, for example, in Londonderry and Belfast where John Hume has come under fire from his own SDLP supporters for refusing to condemn the vicious republican "punishment" attacks, means that any conceivable peace formula proposed by the nationalist front will be dictated by the IRA.

The same applies to any contribution by the nationalist side to the "independent" commission to be set up on the "marching" issue.

By hi-jacking the Principle of Consent, embodied in the Downing Street Declaration, and by attempting to give such a right of veto to any Catholic area or estate, however small, they would make a mockery of Government's right to take decisions in the wider public interest and of its overall responsibility to carry out democratically sanctioned policy despite objections from minority groups.

Apply the consent principle in the way suggested by Sinn Féin and no hospital would ever be relocated, no motorway built and no police force worthy of the name ever established.

Quite apart from the overwhelming irony that this consent principle, devised simply to pre-



Bradford's View

vent constitutional change against MAJORITY wishes — not MINORITY — was rejected by Sinn Féin at the Dublin Peace and Reconciliation Forum, months ago.

You've got to hand it to them forchutzpah!

Demanding that unionists accept a Sinn Féin interpretation of a principle which Sinn Féin has already rejected publicly and categorically.

Were it not for wide-awake and open-minded commentators in the London broadsheet Press and in Dublin's Sunday Independent

AND — let us not forget — those admirably well-informed academics in the Cadogan Group, here in the North, the unionist case would be drowned out by default. Forces of objective enlightenment with which your humble servant is proud to be associated.

This "independent" commission on marches is already deeply worrying.

An Oxford chairman has been nominated and the jury must remain "out" on his contribution.

But two members have been named, both clerics, a Catholic priest and the Reverend John Dunlop.

I have, in the past, had serious and worthwhile discussions with John Dunlop, especially when I profiled his life and work four years ago when he was Moderator of the Presbyterian Church.

The logo of the Church is the Burning Bush with the angel of God in its midst and I ended, in 1994, writing that "amid the fiercely burning issues of today, John Dunlop, like his illustrious predecessors, will go on striving to discern more clearly in the heart of the fire, the true face of the Lord".

At the age of 29, he chose to spend 10 years, 1968-78, critical for him and for Northern Ireland, as a missionary minister in Jamaica.

In 1991, he wrote an article entitled 'The Terminal Decline of Protestantism'.

In it, he paints a grim picture of Protestants under siege in Ireland, of ethnic cleansing along the border areas, of Protestants moving out when an urban area has a certain percentage of Catholics, leaving their churches and schools marooned in a surrounding Catholic tide.

"Where will this retreat end?" he asked. "The student split in both universities here is approaching 80/40 in favour of Roman Catholics."

What was his answer? "Instead of retreating into isolation and weakness, we should be engaging with the wider society and crossing religious, political and cultural frontiers."

Fine words. His first public emergence from "isolation and weakness" was last December when he voted to ban the National Anthem from Queen's University.

He justified his action as "honouring diversity". On reflection, does he not realise that he was in fact honouring perversity? The perversity of those who, while enjoying all the privileges of British citizenship — and for students those privileges are substantial — continually express their loathing for all things British, seek politically and by less reputable means,

THE PERVERT OF THE ORDER OF THE BRITISH EMPIRE, CHAIRMAN OF FAIR EMPLOYMENT, FIND THE LIKENESS OF HIS QUEEN "INTIMIDATING" AND NOXIOUS TO A "NEUTRAL WORKING ENVIRONMENT".

The pervert of the Order of the British Empire, chairman of Fair Employment, find the likeness of his Queen "intimidating" and noxious to a "neutral working environment".

As a man of honour, the Commander should surely tear that equally noxious bauble from his neck and consign it to a neutral pyre. Will he? Maryah!

The National Anthem ban was recommended by a "Special Advisory Sub-Group" of the Senate, a very special group, hand-picked, and the proposal was bulldozed through the pusillanimous, compliant sheep, all terrified of being labelled "divisive Brits" and pathetically anxious to be regarded as "enlightened" eccumenicals, with allegiance and principle forgotten.

On that evening, good men were silent and, afterwards, I would hope, ashamed. The playing of the "Queen" is political, whined the banners.

It is not. It is a simple statement of allegiance, of national identity. Banning it was a political act of the most hypocritical nature. If he is logical, John Dunlop must now favour abolition of the Crown itself and of the Union flag for republicans find them equally divisive and "exclusive".

He must be conscience-ridden and riven with doubt when he reflects that his action runs counter to the deeply held convictions of the vast majority of his Church.

Of Presbyterians who wish to assert their British citizenship with pride, with offence towards none but with determination that their anthem is not something to be traded for republican favour or to be cast aside like some stained and shameful garment.

Its replacement with Beethoven's Ode to Joy has now been happily abandoned. More appropriate would have been the Hebrews Chorus from Nabucco, the theme of an oppressed people seeking deliverance. Deliverance from fellow-travelling republican Adamites.

How then, holding such a bias and guilty of such misjudgment, can John Dunlop inspire confidence in the majority community?

The idea of banning to "honour diversity" trips too easily off his tongue. Was that the effect of the Derry ban?

Such an "independent" commission was a nonsense in the first place. For where is the "independent" to nominate the "independents"?

The right to march is inalienable and indivisible in a free society. Whether against nuclear missiles or in favour of civil rights.

Whether such marches give offence or have minority consent irrelevant. Desertmarin with Protestants welcoming the AOH march is the formula for the future.

Freedom of expression is the First Amendment of the US constitution. It must remain as unassailable here as the freedom of the democratic majority to choose its way of life.