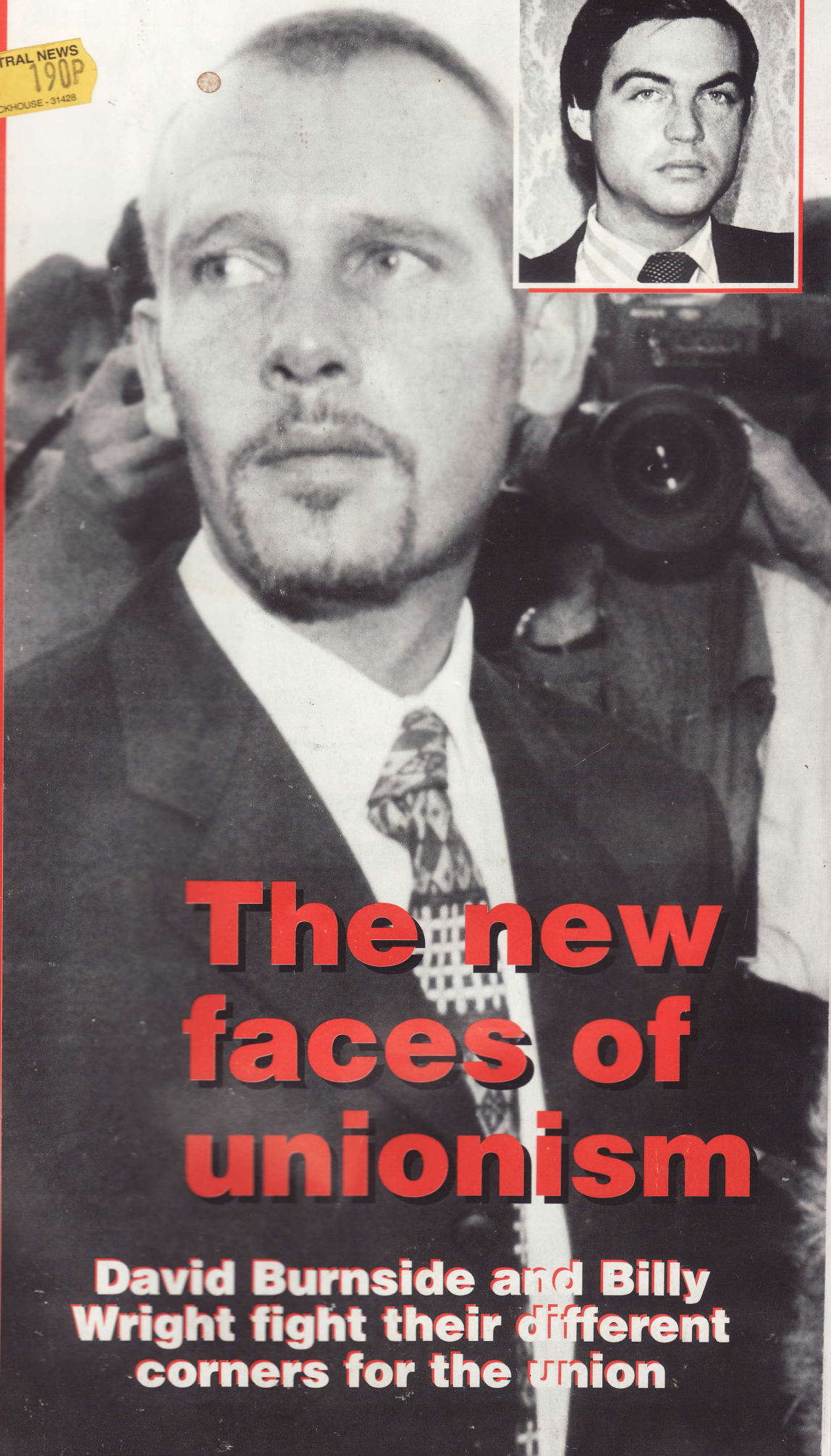
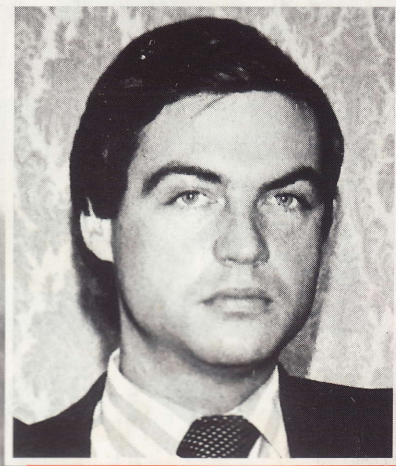


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The new faces of unionism

David Burnside and Billy Wright fight their different corners for the union

◆
The IRA:
peace or war?

◆
A short history
of boycotts

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industry

PLUS: GERRY ADAMS INTERVIEW

The discreet charmers of unionism

Beginning our coverage of new, influential figures in the wider unionist community JONATHAN MOORE examines the roles of David Burnside and Patricia Campbell in the Unionist Information Office

The Ulster Unionist Party have started a charm offensive in London with the opening of their Unionist Information Office (UIO). The opening of the UIO signals, according to party leader David Trimble, "the opportunity for unionists to get our message over as never before." It comes at a time when most observers would agree that the image of unionists could certainly do with a polish. In the aftermath of the violence, intimidation and murder of the Drumcree episode, the *Economist* magazine spoke for many in Britain.

"The behaviour of senior unionist leaders at Drumcree has been shameful. David Trimble is supposed to speak for moderate unionist opinion. If his defiance of the police and the ranting about the supposed machinations of the IRA in Portadown now pass for moderation, then Ulster is doomed to bloodshed." The episode and the press and political reaction in Britain demonstrated, once again, one of the truisms of Northern Ireland over the last quarter of a century, namely that the greatest force weakening the union of Great Britain and Northern Ireland has been the behaviour of the unionists themselves. Will the UIO manage to change all this?

On the face of it, the UUP have made a good start with the UIO with their appointment of Patricia Campbell as office manager. As David Burnside, director of the UIO, comments "She was not chosen because she is a Catholic but I am happy that she is a Catholic." In terms of public relations, it appears that the UUP have come of age. And Patricia Campbell's defence of her kind of unionism suggests that she is far more than a token Catholic unionist woman.

"I was brought up in north Antrim believing myself to be British. My father was an RUC officer for thirty years. I have always believed that the union benefits all the people of Northern Ireland, not just the Protestants. According to opinion polls only a minority of Catholics want a united Ireland. Yet all we ever hear of is the downtrodden image of the republican minority."

She does not deny the problematic image of unionism but has no doubt at whom the finger of blame should be pointed. Step forward the big man in the dog collar. "Every time he opens his mouth, he damages the image of unionism. His politics are so narrow, his style so confrontational." Such is Patricia Campbell's distaste for the politics of Ian Paisley that she has put her name forward to be Ulster Unionist candidate in the forthcoming general election, hoping to stand against him in the North Antrim constituency.

Patricia Campbell's may be the most newsworthy appointment at the UIO but the involvement of David Burnside is also of interest. Now Burnside is no virgin when it comes to the world of public relations. Indeed it was his work in this field against Richard Branson's fledgling airline on behalf of British Airways that propelled him into the news. His involvement with David Trimble goes back to the 1970s when the two of them were heavily involved in William Craig's Vanguard movement. He cut his public relations teeth as press officer for the hard line party. However placing his unionism on any continuum is difficult. Like Trimble, Burnside supported Craig when the latter committed political suicide by advocating the policy of the voluntary coalition with the SDLP in 1977. Today his politics fluctuate. He has been known to uncritically support the history of Stormont but also speaks of the need for a "constructive relationship with the Republic of Ireland."

Those who wondered whether Burnside would take with him any of his dirty tricks background which made him so famous at BA may not be disappointed. Burnside has already been accused of having "misused" business information in a bid to raise funds for the UIO by using the directory of the government backed Northern Irish Partnership. Burnside circulated business forms describing himself as a "long serving member" of the NIP. The latter are far from happy at being associated with a party political issue. The UIO denies that it has acted improperly.

Burnside is convinced that the image of unionism can be improved and argues that a good start has already been made. "I believe that the election of David Trimble is an important breakthrough in this respect. Jim Molyneux was an able and respected leader of the Ulster Unionist Party but he was never at ease on television. David Trimble is a good communicator on television. He puts over the message in a direct and yet quiet manner."

He is also optimistic about the political future of British politics. He believes that in the event of Labour winning the next general election, there will be a sea change of attitude in the Conservative party who are "likely to regroup around constitutional issues and the issue of sovereignty. Defending the United Kingdom against the loss of powers to Europe will highlight the union and its strengths, Ulster Unionism will be an easier case to argue."

However is such optimism grounded in reality? Are we about to see the re-emergence of Ulster unionism as a popular cause, a return to the halcyon days of British politics when the cause of Ulster was

supported by the vast majority of Conservative opinion in Britain? The evidence is not strong. One is strongly reminded of the Westminster debates following the signing of the Anglo-Irish Agreement in November 1985. The crucial unionist contribution to that debate came from Harold McCusker who spoke of "everything that I held dear turned to ashes in my mouth." It was a brilliant and moving speech from the most able unionist politician of his generation. As he spoke I looked down from the press gallery on the Conservative benches below. A group of young Thatcherite MPs, the sort who would have privatised the very air that we breathe if given the chance, were laughing at McCusker. His unionism had no place in their Thatcherite hearts.

Hillsborough gained the support of all but a handful of Conservative MPs despite the fact that it represented a massive political reverse for the unionist cause. Those who voted against the Conservative whip had been accurately stereotyped in *Fortnight* back in 1983 by David McKittrick who labelled them as the "Neanderthal right" whose ambition was "to drag Britain, kicking and screaming into the nineteenth century." Response to the Framework document suggests that there has been no groundswell in unionist opinion since 1985.

The simple fact is that unionism has totally failed to move into the mainstream of contemporary British politics. "The Friends of the Union" formed in the aftermath of Hillsborough has failed to move outside this small group save the support from the cabal of Anglo-Catholics surrounding Charles Moore at the *Daily Telegraph*.

What unionism needs is to relocate its values and language in the politics of the 1990s. David Burnside makes a valid point when he argues that "The problem has been that our politicians are too concerned about what is being said on UTV and in the *Belfast Telegraph* and not concerned enough about what is being written and broadcast in Britain." Yet in the aftermath of Drumcree, Burnside was guilty of this very sin. He wrote to the *Daily Telegraph* arguing that the right of Orangemen to take their traditional marches was no different to the rights of members of the Royal British Legion to march on Remembrance Day in Britain. This view may well be widely believed in unionist circles but not in Britain. As *The Economist* noted about the behaviour of Unionists at Drumcree, "such behaviour is not only alien but alienating." Sometimes you need more than a spin doctor to change a negative image.

If the marching season is one block to the unionist charm offensive, then the position of the Orange Order is another. All the protestations of unionist politicians that the UUP is a secular institution have been countered in most people's eyes by the umbilical cord linking the party with the Orange Order. Burnside points to the promise by David Trimble that the relationship with the Order is being looked at and argues that in time the Ulster Unionist Party "will become a modern democratic party based on one man one vote."

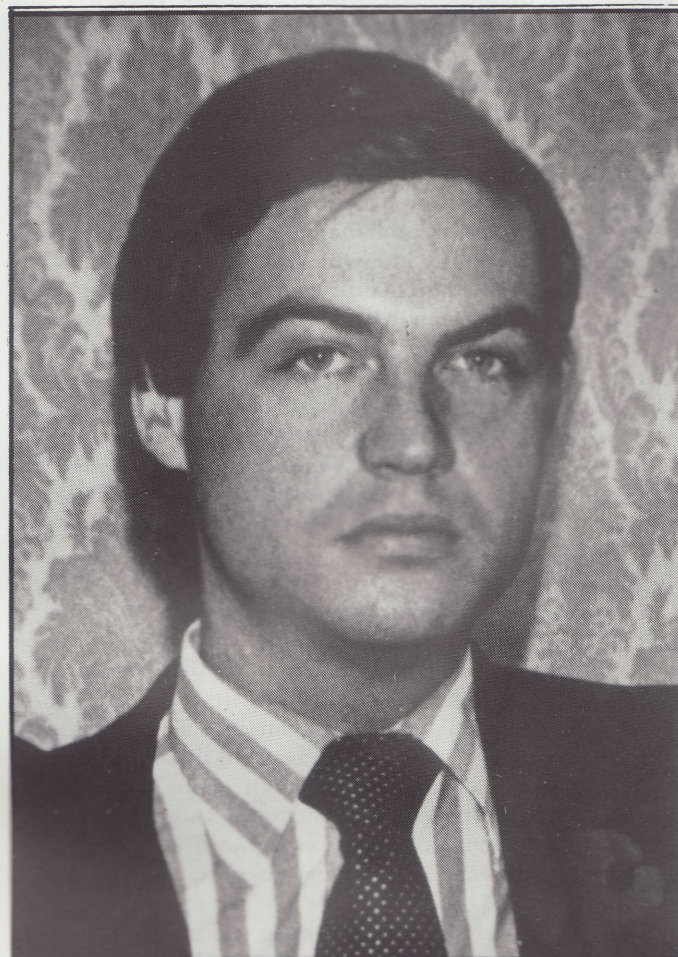
However the evidence that things are perhaps not changing in the Ulster Unionist Party is given some weight by the evidence of one Patricia Campbell, the very same Patricia Campbell who is now working for

the UIO. In her previous employment she had worked for the then party leader, James Molyneux, in the House of Commons. Last year she applied for a post as press officer at Glengall Street. She didn't get the job, which went instead to a man who wasn't even a party member and she made her anger very public indeed, claiming that the decision showed the pervasive influence of the Orange Order and the anti-Catholic bias in the party. As she argued at the time, "So much for the claim that there is no ban to Catholic advancement in the Ulster Unionist Party." In particular she singled out the influence of the Orange Order Grand Master, the Rev. Martin Smith, whom, she argued, "appeared to assert in an official party publication that Catholics were not proper Christians."

Patricia Campbell looked all set to take the Ulster Unionist Party to the Fair Employment Agency on the grounds of unlawful religious discrimination but this never happened. Instead she ended up working for them in this new post in the UIO. There are those who claim that the last two sentences are in some way related. Patricia Campbell refuses to discuss any aspect of this puzzling affair.

If unionism is to mount a major propaganda war in Britain it needs, quite simply, to clean up its act. The lack of a unionist constituency in Britain is directly related to the specificity of the UUP itself. If the UIO is to succeed, the whole sectarian baggage which the UUP carries around with it has to be dumped. It might stand a chance then. ♦

Burnside: fought for BA against Richard Branson's Virgin



Pacemaker

If this is new unionism, I want my old sash back



Frankie Quinn

Beginning our coverage of new, influential figures in the wider unionist community Jonathan Moore examines the roles of David Burnside and Patricia Campbell in the Unionist Information Office

The UUP's shift to the right has troubled **BOB JORDAN**, a pseudonym of party members who wish to remain anonymous

Observers of the internal politics of the Ulster Unionist Party over the past few years will have noticed what appeared to be a vigorous debate on its future structure, tactics and ethos. A thrusting younger generation was fed up with the old sectarian shibboleths and the obsession with links with a Britain which had died with Queen Mary. It wanted to take Unionism forward; henceforth, the Party would be free from the taint of bigotry and intellectually capable of promoting the cause in a sophisticated way. The internal organ of the Party, the *Ulster Review*, carried article after article by young Turks who demanded a package of reforms designed to make the UUP the vehicle for the creation of a modern, progressive Northern Ireland. Unionist Conferences saw splenetic diatribes against the *ancien régime* from people conceived at the time of the Civil Rights marches. The veteran leader was first challenged, and then replaced, by representatives of an articulate, University-educated, non-sectarian post-war generation.

Shortly after David Trimble's election, the ambitions of the progressives appeared to be coming to fruition. They had a young leader of almost Blairesque style, who announced that the Party would engage in structural reform (the key issue, in the minds of younger members, in establishing credibility—it was generally assumed that this meant addressing the Orange link). Information Offices were opened in Washington and London to counter Nationalist propaganda. David Burnside, Ulster loyalism's favourite export, was known to be contributing his considerable energies and intellect to the cause. Enthusiastic young radicals talked of coups

against the older MPs, and the Forum elections saw the emergence of previously unknown professionals in their thirties. There was even a couple of Catholics publicly involved—John Gorman at the Forum and Patricia Campbell in the London "Ministry of Truth". "New Unionism" had arrived, to be lionised by the English quality press. Even the *Irish Times* was impressed. The political wet dream of the modernising element had become a gloriously sexy reality.

But what was the victory of the Trimblistas actually for? Is the Unionist Party now offering a new vision of the Union which, to quote the Winter 1995 *Ulster Review*, is "inclusive, open, pluralist, dynamic, progressive, outward-looking"? Or has the Party simply developed a slicker way of bawling "No Surrender", using the constitutional distancing from Orangeism and the token taigs as justification for a claim to be non-sectarian? Behind the progressive language, what did the young Turks really want?

Unionist publications post-Trimble provide a handy indicator of what they wanted, given that it was done in demolishing the tottering old guard. Esmond Birnie and Paddy Roche have knocked up a little number bashing Nationalism on economic grounds, which is seen as preferable to disliking the Irish Republic simply because it's full of Fenians. Ian Adamson and others have bunged out a booklet about Cuchulain which rehashes the old line about Ulster's separate ethnicity—again, preferable in the minds of the younger generation to thinking in religious terms, but not exactly a new idea. One of the accompanying articles promotes the old flummery that Ulster Prods are a kind of super race who travel the globe carrying out acts of derring-do such

as winning American Independence and the First World War, which must do a lot for the self-confidence of Glengall Street's foot soldiers. Not just crappy *colons* or sub-Scots, eh lads? This sits rather uneasily with the line, repeated *ad nauseam* by the New Unionists, that their cause is about *everyone* in Northern Ireland.

The *Ulster Review* itself has become altogether glossier, with professional design and graphics. It has been able to attract as writers MPs such as Calum MacDonald and Kate Hoey, who wouldn't have touched it with a bargepole in the old days. The people from within Unionism who were so strident in attacking the leadership are still there; Jonathan Moore, Lee Reynolds, Richard Holmes, David McDowell. Now that their enemies in the old guard have been vanquished and their immediate superiors (people like Drew Nelson, Gordon Lucy and Jeffrey Donaldson) are poised for power, they are circling around looking for new prey, or at least for council seats. A comparison between what these people said in the past and what they now say is worthwhile. Reynolds, who in 1994 argued that the UUP faced a challenge from the representatives of what might be called "street-level" organisations and in 1995 acted as "stalking colt" in the first open move to oust James Molyneaux, is now condemning the UDP and PUP for being too ready to compromise in the Peace Process (a term which in the *Ulster Review* is usually prefixed with "so-called"). He is optimistic, however, that inside the average PUP member there is "a little loyalist fighting to get out". A cynical interpretation of this might be that if push comes to shove the AK47s will be out to cut down the odds. Moore, who spent the first half of the decade arguing for Party modernisation, now demands a more hard-line negotiating position. Holmes once talked of the leadership as "Dad's Army". In this year's Spring issue, he dismisses the Peace Process out of hand, refusing to accept that the IRA can or will ever be brought into talks like normal people; in the Summer issue, he calls for integration. Last year McDowell outlined a progressive vision of the Northern Ireland which the UUP must create; now he outlines why he hates Caffrey's.

It is not unreasonable to assume that these people, so energetic in their fight for reform, now believe that they have got what they wanted. Certainly, they have long ceased any criticism of the leadership, except for not being sufficiently extreme. The continued exposure of these young "progressive" Unionists is tolerated or even encouraged by Trimble and his Mandelsonian former Vanguard pal Burnside, which indicates just how much they have come from the outside into the warmth of the leader's office. New Unionism, then, is simply Old Unionism with a degree and no sash, or at least not a sash every day of the week. It is Powellite Integrationism promoted by fax and web site instead of by old men politely shaking hands with electors on market days. The "Reform" and "Change" which these young men promoted with the tacit encouragement of the new leadership, then waiting in the wings, was purely structural. It did not imply a new mindset, other than the idea that Unionists need not

regard "propaganda" as a dirty word.

There is no sign here that the Unionists are prepared to think in terms of attempting to understand, or come to an understanding with, their Catholic-Nationalist neighbours.

Indeed, having reformed, they can now be as hard-line as they like without feeling guilty. They believe themselves to be non-sectarian, their propaganda is pushed out by a token taig, they are run in a manner which resembles Blairite Labour— why, therefore, need they make concessions to others? It is noticeable that Unionists considered genuinely "progressive", like Chris McGimpsey and Ken Maginnis, have not been brought into the New Unionist fold. The overwhelmingly middle-class makeup of the New Unionists, coupled with the apparently considerable influence of Burnside, is pushing the UUP towards a hard-right ideology of the Thatcherite type. This is quite different from the rather dim but essentially pragmatic gut Toryism of the older generation. The prospect of this unforgiving, inflexible mentality dominating the Unionist position at the talks — which it does — is a frightening one. Liberal Unionists are aghast. "Compared to all this, Orangeism was a moderating influence," commented one, "If this is New Unionism, I want my sash back."

Still beating the same drum



Bobbie Harvey

The Wright stuff



Pacemaker

What does Billy Wright think? Since the Combined Loyalist Military Command gave him the choice of exile or death, Wright has maintained that it is his thinking that got him into trouble with organisations he previously supported. Although he consistently denies that he is a member of the UVF, he still publicly supports its aims. When Willie McCrea, the DUP MP for Mid-Ulster, spoke in support of Wright at a loyalist rally in Portadown last month, he did so in support of his freedom of speech, and not, he stressed, in support of loyalist paramilitarism.

So what is it about Wright's opinions that make him unacceptable to the CLMC and their political 'advisors', the Progressive Unionist Party and the Ulster Democratic Party? An insight into his thinking is published below, based on a meeting of an ad hoc 'think tank' held since the Portadown rally, at which Wright discussed his beliefs with writers and academics sympathetic towards loyalism. The author wishes to remain anonymous.

Billy Wright's view is that Protestant aggression, whether in the form of mass civil unrest or military operations, is the only avenue left for his 'besieged' tradition which in his opinion is already ruled by joint authority. He feels that the cultural education of Protestants is neglected by themselves and discouraged by the establishment while Catholics are actively encouraged and in Wright's opinion Catholics, all of whom are either republicans or closet republicans, have got their priorities right: soaking up their history as a 'tribe' and therefore knowing what their aims are in terms of their development as a people.

His views on the future of Protestantism/loyalism/unionism, a triumvirate that Wright sees as a middle class invention of varying degrees of belief in a cause, which promote middle class Protestant apathy, are fundamentalist, anachronistic/quasi-reli-

gious. He speaks with the unshakeable certainty of a Brethren preacher when he states that he is not, and does not want to be, the man who leads Protestants into a future in which he says "we have many more bitter pills to swallow." He speaks frequently of the importance of being "in love with one's faith and traditions, the basic tenets of that faith, and one's fellow Protestants."

He refutes any intimation that he is interested in becoming a political figure, saying that if he was to enter the political sphere the British government would "punch holes in him", due to, in his own words, his "shady past".

He believes his ability to draw a crowd and inspire zeal among his mid-Ulster cohorts is due to working class Protestants in general and mid-Ulster Protestants in particular, being desperate for a leader who does not vocalise in politic-speak and does not have

a hidden agenda: "And they must be desperate to seek hope in a man like me... the person who is to lead Protestants will emerge, but not from the ranks of elected representatives... He must be morally spotless and a Godly man and not in it for the career... he must be in love with his people... When Ulster is in crisis we always throw up a leader."

He feels the Loyalist institutions, Orange, Black, and Apprentice Boys, will be the spawning grounds for constructive leadership, and sees the existence of these institutions as one of the main advantages the Protestant tradition has in its struggle against gradual absorption into a united Ireland. In his opinion they are a focus for the masses, an element which he feels is lacking in relation to the Catholic people.

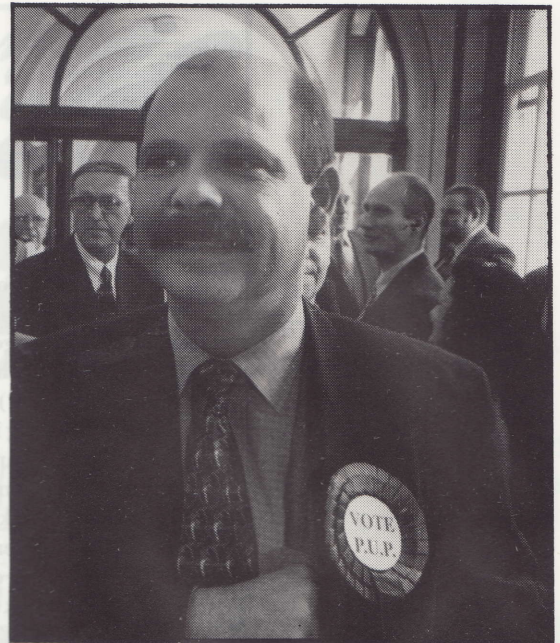
Protestant mid-Ulster is ripe for "rebellion" according to Wright, and North Armagh in particular remains as perhaps the most polarised area of the province. Talking recently to a mid-Ulster loyalist of Wright's acquaintance I asked him about the thinking, if any, behind the murder of Michael McGoldrick. He replied "He was a Catholic."

Loyalist paramilitaries in the mid-Ulster area consider themselves, seriously, to be Protestant Ulster's last hope, as they observed the CLMC 'duped' by "Leftist-Socialism" in Wright's language. He continually attaches this term to, as he sees it, the insidious influence of the corrupted, British pawns who control the political direction of the PUP and UDP. He reserves particular vitriol for the PUP leadership, David Ervine and Billy Hutchinson, blatantly labelling them as traitors and considering them to be "leading the UDP by the nose" into an endgame designed by the British and Irish governments to negate Protestant influence in Ulster. The fringe loyalist agenda of socialism and standing shoulder to shoulder with their urban Catholic neighbours, to whatever extent, is alien to Wright and his rural "purist" brigade. He considers as "imperative", the need to negate the influence of the fringe loyalists, and he considers himself instrumental in the emergence of the DUP's policy of hostility towards the fringe loyalists. He suggests a long alliance between himself and the DUP and describes them as "not perfect... but as near to the mark as I've seen". It was also suggested that the DUP's objection to the fringe under auspices of violating the Mitchell principles had more to do with Wright's unshakeable conviction, and his ability to persuade the DUP, that they are vehicles for British Intelligence.

There can be no doubt that Wright's ersatz Islamic brand of spiritual religious fundamentalism could very easily gather support from certain highly respected elements of Loyalism. His view that Loyalism must return to its roots is compounded by a belief that to counter-balance all the political rhetoric within the movement at the moment, "the military muscle must be flexed from time to time." This view has already gleaned interested enquiries from individuals within the institutions with an eye on a meeting of minds.

Wright's opinion of the Belfast paramilitaries and in particular the self appointed 'heartland' brigade of the Shankill Road is one of contempt. He sees them as having lost their grip on the importance of

seeing themselves as guardians of the loyalist community and believes that they rule by fear rather than by Wright's perception of his own ethos: hearts and minds. He believes that a future reconciliation between the rural and urban paramilitaries is not inconceivable, but it would be on rural 'purist' terms and would involve urban paramilitaries rejecting co-operation in any form with republican paramilitaries, a phenomenon which he believes to be widespread in the family orientated Shankill units and other urban groupings. ♦



Crowned

The CLMC death threat against Billy Wright has pushed into the public consciousness the face of a man known mainly by his alleged nickname, 'King Rat'. Although Mr. Wright regularly denies being 'King Rat', the fact that the public at large believe that he is, means that his denials are disbelieved, by opponents and supporters alike. The 2,000 loyalists who turned out in Portadown to support him believe it. The Catholic population of Mid-Ulster believe it. The fringe loyalist parties and the CLMC believe it. Presumably, Willie McCrea does not believe it, but we can assume that David Trimble does, otherwise what would be the point of talking to Mr Wright if he could not 'restrain' the Portadown unit of the Mid-Ulster UVF?

Media coverage of this story has been circumscribed by the laws of libel, and, quite possibly, fear of the consequences for journalists living here. The fact that the starting point of this drama, the meeting between Mr. Wright and Mr. Trimble at Drumcree, was revealed by a London-based BBC *Panorama* reporter, Peter Taylor, and not by any local press, is an indication that this story was too hot.

It's not as if Mr. Wright was a stranger to the local press. From the early '90s, he has been briefing both print and electronic media, with increasing intensity over the past 18 months. His hard-line stance on the peace process has made him a thorn in the side of the 'doves' within loyalism, but his stance has also made him a hero-figure among young loyalists, particularly in the working-class estates of Portadown, who revel in his reputation, deserved or not, as 'King Rat'.

Wright plays on this appeal by referring to the rural-urban divide within loyalism and the impression that it is the Shankill UVF making the strategic decisions. "This turnout", he told the Portadown rally, "will show these people in Belfast that they cannot dictate to dear old Portadown".

A comparison could be made with another "cunning countryman", a once equally notorious figure who once tried to kill Mr. Wright. Dominic McGlinchey was at one time the most wanted man in Ireland, and, like 'King Rat', blamed/credited for over 40 killings. It transpires, however, that most of the carnage attributed to these two men was actually the work of others within their own organisations, who were not too keen to take the blame for particularly ugly deeds. McGlinchey was erroneously blamed for the Darkley massacre of worshipping Pentecostals by INLA members masquerading as the 'Catholic Reaction Force' in 1983; likewise, the 'World Cup' murder of six Catholics at Loughinisland was, say RUC sources, carried out by Belfast members of the UVF, rather than 'King Rat's' unit.

Facts, however, rarely get in the way of a good story. Catholics in the 'murder triangle' that is north Armagh will still walk in fear of a reputation for ruthlessness that, for all the evasive moralising of the press, will attract the same fan base that worshipped gunslingers throughout the troubles.

There is a bar in Sandy Row where the walls are bedecked with framed jackets of loyalist gunmen, now dead or imprisoned. Dead republicans are granted communal headstones where their short lives are contextualised in the pantheon of the 'struggle'. The culture in Northern Ireland which celebrates violent men and their (predictably) violent ends shows no sign of being (peace) processed out of our lives.