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Cat among DUP pigeons!

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LOCAL OPPOSITION TO PAISLEY CONTINUES TO GATHER PACE

Document to put cat among DUP pigeons

FIRST Minister, Ian Paisley, is coming under increasing pressure from local DUP dissidents unhappy with the direction of his recent leadership.

Further proof of their dissatisfaction emerged this week with the publication of an leaflet entitled 'Take a Stand'.

The publication of the four-page full-colour document follows the DUP leader and Free Presbyterian Church Moderator's hostile reception when he turned up for the annual pre-Twelfth rally at The Diamond on Sunday, July 8.

On that occasion, protestors heckled him and bombarded him with questions on what they view as being his abandonment of the values he once propounded. There were cries of "Traitor!" and "Lundy!" as PSNI minders bundled him through the crowd and into a waiting car in which he was whisked away.

POLITICIANS

Speaking about the new leaflet a spokesman for those behind it said, "Some 35,000 copies have been published. Initially, it will be forwarded to DUP councillors, MLAs and MPs. After that, it will be distributed throughout the province.

"There is no shortage of DUP voters willing to assist us get it out to the widest possible audience. "Dr Paisley has lost the confidence of

By NIALL CROZIER

many of those who have been long-time supporters of his, both as a church leader and as a politician. For the first time, doubts have arisen and questions are being asked. Unfortunately, to date, he has refused to answer those."

The leaflet quotes past utterances by Ian Paisley and measures those against his current stance, citing Biblical references in support of what is an undisguised attack on the First Minister.

TAUNT

Among other things, 'Take a Stand' denounces him on the grounds of 'treason', 'ecumenism' and having 'entered into political negotiations with the Roman Catholic Church'.

His detractors condemn him, too, for having called for reconciliation, as well as for - in its words - having "plunged the dagger of treachery into the very heart of Ulster", branding him "the assassin".

He also stands accused of having entered into a pact 'with Ulster's enemies', and is slammed for a recent statement in which, in the course of a visit to the site of the Battle of the Boyne in the company of Taoiseach, Bertie Aherne, he said "we no longer need a hedge with our neighbours". The pamphlet's authors taunt him, reminding him of an earlier tirade against Captain Terence O'Neill, who

travelled to Dublin to meet Sean Lemass. At the time, Ian Paisley's comment was, "King William crossed the Boyne to save us - O'Neill crossed it to sell us."

Readers also are reminded that he once described the real aim of the IRA as being "the annihilation of Protestantism," and of his statement, "What Rome failed to achieve in 1641, 1689, 1690, 1798, 1916 and 1968, the IRA are pushing for now - complete victory."

The pamphlet-writers' follow-up question to that is why, then, has he gone into a power-sharing executive with Sinn Fein, with Martin McGuinness sitting alongside as Deputy First Minister?

'GUILTY'

The authors' conclusion is, 'Ian Paisley's words stand as a condemnation to him; he is guilty of all he has accused others of being guilty of.'

"We make no bones about the fact that we are trying to spark a debate within the DUP as to what is going on in our country," the critics' spokesman said. "And we would remind Ian Paisley of a question he must ask himself and then answer, even if he isn't willing to answer us - 'What shall it profit a man if he gain the whole world and lose his own soul?'"

"In our opinion, betrayal of every previously held theological and political principle is a very dear price to have paid for the title of Northern Ireland First Minister."



Ian Paisley, whose politics have created opposition on the part of some local DUP followers.