



The Burning Bush—Online article archive

Ethnic cleansing in North Belfast



Nigel Dodds MP,
MLA

According to Nigel Dodds, DUP MP for North Belfast, a campaign of ethnic cleansing is to blame for forcing Protestants out a north Belfast community. By the end of August all of the Protestant families will have left Torrens Court. The residents of the Housing Executive estate, which is surrounded by a nationalist area, between the Cliftonville and Oldpark Roads, say they can no longer tolerate sectarian abuse from republicans. A spokeswoman said staff had been in “constant contact” with the families and 13 have already been rehoused. “The remaining households are awaiting rehousing into new-build or re-let properties

which are due for completion at the end of August,” she added.

Pensioners

William Moody (73) and his wife Ellen (72), who have lived in the area for most of their lives, will leave Torrens Court next week. Mr. Moody said that he was forced to put up metal grilles on the windows of his home for fear of sectarian attack. “Attacks on people living here really started to escalate around the time of Drumcree in 1996. In the last four years, one woman has had her windows smashed 26 times. Kids going to school have been spat on and stoned. It now seems there’s no future for a Protestant Torrens.”

Anger

Mr Dodds says that he is angry that residents are being forced to leave, but said they could no longer tolerate the situation. “This isolated Protestant community has been systematically targeted by republicans over many years. The people living there simply can’t take any more.” Mr Dodds said it was “a scandal and outrage” that the Northern Ireland Office refused to take adequate measures to ease the pressures on the community.

Intimidation

When workmen tried to get a fence erected to protect the Protestant area they were intimidated off the site and, despite police recommendations, the security measures were never put in place. Were this a nationalist group who were suffering we can imagine the outcry that there would be! But in Blair’s Ulster, Protestants basically have no rights!