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March for truth slammed as 'fancy dress with menace'

(William Graham, [Irish News](#))

A row broke out yesterday (Tuesday) at Stormont over a Sinn Féin-backed 'march for truth' which was described in a debate as "fancy dress with menace".

A motion was passed from DUP members Nelson McCausland, Sammy Wilson, Robin Newton and Wallace Browne declaring that Belfast city centre should be a shared space.

The wording also deplored "the Sinn Féin-sponsored parade to City Hall on August 12 which involved depictions of IRA terrorists and participants carrying guns" and called on the PSNI and Parades Commission to ensure it never happens again.

An amendment from the SDLP's Alban Maginness deploring any parades that include depictions of terrorism was defeated by 41 votes to 31.

Mr McCausland complained that banners at the march to highlight collusion depicted IRA members and a masked man also walked through the city carrying a gun, although it was not known if it was real or a replica.

"Maybe Gerry Adams, who was overseeing the IRA in Belfast in 1972, will actually tell us who were the people responsible for Bloody Friday?"

"Maybe Martin McGuinness could tell us who was responsible for the crimes and murders carried out by the IRA when he was in charge?"

Mr Maginness also said the march for truth was selective but the motion was merely a DUP exercise in political therapy.

"But of course the reality is that we have moved on. Mr McCausland's leader shares the first and deputy first ministership with Martin McGuinness, member of Sinn Féin. It is now Sinn Féin/DUP."

Sinn Féin's Jennifer McCann said the city centre should be a

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shared space for everyone, including nationalists and republicans, and the march and rally was organised to draw attention to collusion and British state violence – "a policy which resulted in many thousands of victims who were killed or injured or bereaved".

Ulster Unionist Danny Kennedy described the march as "fancy dress with menace".

However, Alliance's Naomi Long said the debate brought to mind similar occasions at Belfast City Hall.

"They are to my mind the political equivalent of poking a dog with a stick," she said.

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