

# **CIVIL RIGHTS AND CIVIL RESPONSIBILITIES**



## **HOW THE UNIONIST PARTY PERCEIVED AND RESPONDED TO THE CIVIL RIGHTS MOVEMENT IN NORTHERN IRELAND 1968-1972**

**Master thesis in history submitted at the University of Bergen May 2010**

**His 350**

**Eirik Søreide Klepaker**

**Department of archaeology, history, cultural studies and religion**



Front picture found at: <http://www.nicivilrights.org/wp-content/uploads/2008/12/burntollet20march.jpg>

## **Thanks to**

**Sissel Rosland, for giving me assistance and motivation when it was exceedingly needed.**

**My Mum and Dad**

**My fellow students**



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## **List of abbreviations**

- APNI: Alliance Party of Northern Ireland  
CSJ: Campaign for Social Justice  
DCAC: Derry Citizens' Action Committee  
DUP: Ulster Democratic Unionist Party  
IRA: Irish Republican Army  
NICRA: Northern Ireland Civil Rights Association  
NILP: Northern Ireland Labour Party  
PD: Peoples Democracy  
RUC: Royal Ulster Constabulary  
SDLP: Social Democratic and Labour Party  
UCDC: Ulster Constitution Defence Committee  
UPV: Ulster Protestant Volunteers  
UUP: Ulster Unionist Party





# CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION

In April 2010 the responsibility for law and order in Northern Ireland was transferred back from Westminster to Stormont, thereby ending a 38 year long period of Westminster control. The Alliance Party leader, David Ford is expected to take the office as the first Northern Irish Justice Minister in almost 40 years. He was the preferred choice of the provinces two largest party's, Sinn Fein and the Democratic Unionist Party (DUP). This created some discontent among the two minor parties in Stormont's four party coalition government, the Social Democratic and Labour Party (SDLP), and the Ulster Unionist Party (UUP), who felt that one of their representatives should have been considered.<sup>1</sup>

If we go back 40 years, when the troubles in Northern Ireland began, the political situation was quite different. Then, the province had in reality only one main party, and that was the Ulster Unionist Party. The UUP had governed alone since the birth of the Northern Irish state. During this period the Catholic community had very little political influence. This would all change when the Catholic community, tired of being on the outside, mounted a civil rights campaign to demand more influence in Northern Ireland in the late 1960's. The campaign would lead to the creation of both the SDLP and the Alliance Party, and was an intrinsic part of the process which led to the suspension of the Stormont parliament, and decades of violence.

## Subject outline and previous research

"I do not think a future historian of Londonderry will look back on 1968 as the year of disturbances, but as the year of the area plan"<sup>2</sup>

Terence O'Neill

The Northern Irish Prime Minister Terence O'Neill's predictions would turn out to be quite wrong. The historical writing about Northern Ireland has often focused on religious and political conflict. Plenty of books have been written about the violence that has plagued the provinces, yet, for the most of the time since the creation of Northern Ireland in 1921 and up to the late 1960's, the province had been at peace. Up to the late 1960's there was indeed little violence, and because of this the civil rights campaign has been regarded as the starting point of the period of violence.<sup>3</sup> The civil rights campaign began its journey with the establishment

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<sup>1</sup> Belfast Telegraph:12/4-2010, online edition

<sup>2</sup> Belfast Telegraph:30/11-1968

<sup>3</sup> Purdie:1990:1

of the Campaign for Civil Justice (CSJ) in 1964.<sup>4</sup> Yet, it would take 4 years before the campaign would get international attention.

Since the civil rights campaign is seen as the starting point of ‘the troubles’, as it is usually referred to in Northern Ireland, the movement itself has been thoroughly explored. My focus will be on a different aspect of that period, which has not been given the same amount of attention. In my master thesis I will explore and discuss how the civil rights movement influenced the process that led to direct rule in 1972, by analysing how the Unionist Party and different unionist politicians perceived the civil rights movement. In order to analyse the unionist perception I will also have to explore the loyalist perception of the civil rights movement.

‘Unionist’ and ‘loyalist’ are terms that are used on different political positions within the Protestant population in Northern Ireland, and the clash between these positions was one of the main conflicts in the period of which I write. The meaning of these labels will be explained later in this chapter. The main questions of this master thesis will be presented, after I have explained why and how my project can contribute with new and relevant information in relation to the existing literature. To explain why my project will represent a new approach, I will present some books and authors that illustrate the dominant approaches in the research field.

Since the civil rights movement is seen as the beginning of ‘the troubles’, the origins of the movement is well documented. The motives of the movement as been much debated, and in my “303 paper” I explored the different explanations concerning the development of the civil rights movement. One explanation is that the civil rights campaign started because of the emergence of a new well educated Catholic middle class, and their demands of equal rights.<sup>5</sup>

Another explanation is presented by Paul Bew, Peter Gibbon and Henry Patterson in the book *Northern Ireland 1921-1994*. Bew, Gibbon and Patterson say that the emergence of the larger Catholic middle class is not a sufficient explanation of the origins of the civil rights movement. They say that the growth in the middle class was accompanied by a growth in the lower sections of the Catholic community. This section would make up the majority in the civil rights movement, and because of this, the growth of the lower classes must be included in the explanation of the civil rights movement.<sup>6</sup>

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<sup>4</sup> Melaugh: <http://cain.ulst.ac.uk/events/crights/chron.htm>

<sup>5</sup> Dixon:2001:90-93

<sup>6</sup> Bew:1995:150-154

A third explanation claims that the civil rights movement was a republican conspiracy to overthrow the state. In a series of articles in *The British Journal of Sociology*, Christopher Hewitt presents his view that the civil rights movements claims of discrimination was severely exaggerated, and that this could not be the real reason for the emergence of the civil rights movement.<sup>7</sup> Instead he contends that civil rights campaign was only a new way to express the same old nationalism.<sup>8</sup>

In addition to the origins of the civil rights movement, the movement itself has been well explored. Bob Purdie's book, *Politics in the street*, contains a detailed analysis of the origin and actions of the civil rights movement. It also touches upon the conflict between the unionist Prime Minister Terence O'Neill, and the loyalist leader Ian Paisley, and how this conflict limited O'Neill's room for manoeuvre.<sup>9</sup> But the conflict within the Unionist Party is however given little focus. This if for example demonstrated when Purdie only refers to the statement from the Minister of Home Affairs William Craig, after the civil rights march in Derry on the 5<sup>th</sup> of October 1968.<sup>10</sup> And after the civil rights march from Belfast to Derry in January 1969, Purdie presents the views of O'Neill and the Minister of Development, Brian Faulkner, in a way that make it seem as if they were in an agreement.<sup>11</sup> As I will show in this master thesis, there were several points of view regarding the civil rights movement within the Unionist Party, and an in-depth analysis of these views is essential in order to understand the actions of the unionist government during the civil rights campaign.

There are already some books that touch upon the same subject. Jonathan Tonge, Professor in politics at the University at Salford, writes in his book *Northern Ireland, Conflict and Change*, that the Unionist Party was split into "reformers" and "resisters" in the period from October 1968 and up to 1972. The "reformers" held sympathy towards some of the demands from the civil rights movement, while the "resisters" dismissed it as a false movement.<sup>12</sup> In Tonge's book, the subject is however touched upon only briefly, and it is as such not a completely adequate analysis of the relationship between the civil rights movement and the unionists. The historian Thomas Hennessey has a more in-depth analyse of the situation in his book, *A History of Northern Ireland*, where he shows that there existed more positions than just "reformers" and "resisters" within the Unionist Party. He shows that there can be identified several positions within the party, and points to the difference between the

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<sup>7</sup> Hewitt:1981:364

<sup>8</sup> Hewitt:1981

<sup>9</sup> Purdie:1990:33

<sup>10</sup> Purdie:1990:147-149

<sup>11</sup> Purdie:1990:215-216

<sup>12</sup> Tonge:2002:38

unionist politicians Brian Faulkner and William Craig.<sup>13</sup> The period 1968-1972 is however not given much focus in his book that stretches from 1920 and up to 1996.

The historian Marc Mulholland has an in-depth analyse of the O'Neill period in his book *Northern Ireland at the Crossroads*, which is an analysis of the premiership of Terence O'Neill. His focus, in the period which coincides with this thesis, is however mostly on the internal conflict within the Unionist Party, and not so much on how the civil rights movement influenced the increasing split in the party.<sup>14</sup> His book ends with O'Neill's resignation in 1969, and therefore ends long before the end of the civil rights campaign.

My main focus will be on the unionists' opinion of the civil rights movement as a theme in itself, and my master thesis will then aim to bring new insight into how the civil rights movement influenced the Unionist Party and the events in this very significant period in Northern Ireland history. I have chosen to explore the period between 1968 and 1972 because this was the golden era for the civil rights movement, and the period in which the unionist movement fell apart.

## **Main questions**

The main questions throughout my master thesis will be:

- How did the unionist politicians perceive the civil rights movement, and how did the perception change between 1968 and 1972?
- How did the civil rights movement influence the development of the unionist movement and the process leading up to the suspension of the Stormont Parliament in March 1972?

Through the discussion of these questions I will also analyse the following questions:

- How did the loyalist opposition perceive the civil rights movement?
- In what way did the loyalist perception of the civil rights movement influence the unionist government's room to manoeuvre?

## **Political and religious labels**

Since I will be using several political labels throughout the thesis, I will try to explain how and why I will use the different labels. The two communities in Northern Ireland have traditionally been labelled as Protestants and Catholics. This is not sufficient for the different

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<sup>13</sup> Hennessey:1997:138-167

<sup>14</sup> Mulholland:2000:161-198

groups I will speak of in this master thesis. Therefore I will use additional labels to separate the people I write about in different groups. One particular important label I am going to use is 'unionist'. There is no definitive answer to what constitutes a 'unionist'. A 'unionist' will support the union with Great Britain, but so will a loyalist. When I use the term 'unionist', I will thus speak about a person who supported the Unionist Party during the period of which I write. In addition I will use two others label to classify the unionists who stood in opposition to the party leadership, and that will be 'hardliner' or 'backbencher'. This was members of the Unionist Party who expressed opposition to the government's policies, but still supported the Unionist Party.

I will also use the term 'loyalist'. A 'loyalist' will be used in this thesis for a person who regarded himself as particularly loyal to the union and Crown. A loyalist would be strongly opposed to the unionist government's policies, and especially its attempt to give into the demands of the civil rights movement. A loyalist would also be more inclined to use non-parliamentarian methods to make his voice heard.

When I use the term 'civil rights campaigner', it will cover a person that was a member in the civil rights movement. Most of the members in the movement were Catholics, but since the movement professed to be non-sectarian, I will use the terms 'Catholic' or 'minority' when I speak of the Catholic community in specific, not the civil rights movement.

Neither of these labels are definitive labels, but they will help me to sort the different views in a more orderly fashion. They are not labels that could be used in all periods in Northern Irish history, but they will fit into the period of which I write. The labels are not my own. They are labels that were used by the persons themselves, and often the various groups used the labels on themselves to distinguish themselves from others. As far as possible I will try to be true to their own perception of which label they should be given.

## **Sources**

My main sources for this thesis will be *the Belfast Telegraph* and parliamentary debates. *The Belfast Telegraph* is traditionally looked upon as a moderate unionist paper. The paper was a supporter of Terence O'Neill policies, and the paper printed 'support O'Neill' coupons for the readers to send in after a televised speech in 1968.<sup>15</sup> I do not think that this fact will affect my analyse to a large degree, since I will use the paper to extract statements from the different politicians, and to present different events, and not the opinions of the different journalists.

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<sup>15</sup> Mullholland:2000:172

Several speeches by the different politicians was printed in full or almost full in the period of which I write, and this makes *the Belfast Telegraph* a valuable source to explore the difference in opinions among the politicians. Since many of the most important debates from the Stormont Parliament was printed in full I will be able to check validity of what was printed in *the Belfast Telegraph* by comparing the articles with the debates themselves.

It might be that it was more difficult for politicians that were strongly against O'Neill's policies to get their opinions printed in *the Belfast Telegraph*. To counter this I will also use Ian Paisley's newspaper, *the Protestant Telegraph*, a strongly loyalist newspaper, in which the loyalists views were freely expressed. I will use *the Protestant Telegraph* in a different way than *the Belfast Telegraph*. *The Protestant Telegraph* never tried to hide that it was a loyalist newspaper, and because of this I will use the paper as source to explore the opinions of the loyalist community.

In addition to the newspapers I will use parliamentary debates. The debates that took place in the Stormont parliament between 1921 and 1972 can be found online at <http://stormontpapers.ahds.ac.uk/index.html>. These debates will be among the main sources for this thesis, and valuable as such since the parliament was a place where most of the politicians would be able to voice their opinion. Since several loyalists were elected as Members of Parliament during the period of which I write, I will also be able to use the parliamentary debates to analyse their opinions.

I will also to a lesser degree use some political pamphlets that were published in the period of which I write. These will be the Unionist Party's election manifesto, *Ulster at the crossroads*, published in 1969, the loyalist pamphlet *Which way Ulster*, concerning the governments policies towards the civil rights movement, published in 1970, and *Ulster, a program of action*, a pamphlet issued by the Northern Irish government as a response to the Cameron report in 1970. With this combination I believe I will be able to get a balanced perception of the situation.

## **Chapter outline**

The content in each chapter in this paper will for the most part be organised chronologically. With the exception of chapter four, the chapters will also be chronologically. I have chosen this structure because I aim to follow the development of the different opinions. Chapter four will explore the same period as chapter two and three, this because it will be necessary to

explain the difference between the unionist and loyalist point of view separately, before I discuss them altogether in chapter five.

In chapter two I will look into the period from the 5<sup>th</sup> of October 1968, and up to the end of that year. It was from the 5<sup>th</sup> of October that the civil rights movement really made a name for itself, and it was in this period that violence once again started to play a role in Northern Ireland. Therefore, this will be my starting point. The main focus will be on the unionist Prime Minister Terence O'Neill, and his politics towards the civil rights movement. In addition I will look into the different perceptions of the civil rights movement within the Unionist Party.

Chapter three will stretch from the beginning of January 1969, and up to O'Neill's resignation in April 1969. The main issue will be how the civil rights movement influenced the events that led to O'Neill's resignation. In addition I will explore how the perception of the civil rights movement changed among the unionists politicians during this period.

Chapter four covers the same period as chapter two and three, but discusses how the loyalist community in Northern Ireland reacted to the civil rights campaign, and how their actions influenced the political situation which led to O'Neill's resignation. My main focus will be on the reverend and loyalist leader Ian Paisley, but I will also include other loyalists that were prominent during the period leading up to O'Neill's resignation.

Chapter five will start with the beginning of James Chichester-Clark's premiership, and stretch to the suspension of the Stormont Parliament in March 1972. This chapter will focus on both the unionist and loyalist fractions at the same time. In chapter six I will present a summary of my findings and conclusions.

### **Historical context: The formation of the Northern Irish state**

The origins of the Northern Irish state can be found in the upheavals of the Home Rule crisis in Ireland of 1912-14. The nationalists of the Irish Party argued that the political Irish nation was co-extensive with the geographical island of Ireland, and rejected that the Protestants should break free and form their own nation.<sup>16</sup>

The Unionists in Ireland were strongly opposed to Home Rule, and the opposition was concentrated within the Irish Unionist Party, under the leadership of Sir Edward Carson. Carson spearheaded the fight against Home rule in close cooperation with James Craig. Craig became a Member of Parliament (MP) in 1906, and would become the first Prime Minister

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<sup>16</sup> Hennessey:1997:1-2

(PM) of the newly Northern Ireland in 1921, a post he would hold until his death in 1940.<sup>17</sup> The names Carson and Craig would be used actively by various unionist and loyalist politicians in later periods as a substantiation of their claim to represent the “true unionism.”

The result of the fight for and against Home Rule was that Northern Ireland was split, and a new political entity was created in Northern Ireland. 6 of the 9 counties of Ulster Antrim, Down, Armagh, Londonderry, Fermanagh and Tyrone, became Northern Ireland.<sup>18</sup> The Protestants were in a majority since the foundation of the state, and in 1971 the population in Northern Ireland numbered 1 536 065. Of those approximately 559 800 were Catholics.<sup>19</sup>

The model of government in Northern Ireland was built on the Westminster model, with a first past the post voting system. This system would lead to the total dominance of the Unionist Party, and they would remain in control of the Stormont parliament and the government from the foundation of the Northern Irish parliament in 1921 to its suspension in 1972.<sup>20</sup> Even if the Northern Irish parliament retained a great deal of autonomy, sovereignty was retained in Westminster, and Westminster kept the responsibility for foreign policy, defence and other UK matters.<sup>21</sup>

In 1963 Lord Brookeborough resigned after 20 years as the Prime Minister in Northern Ireland. He was succeeded by Terence O’Neill. O’Neill made it quickly clear that he was set on a reformist cause. He advocated strong cross-border economic links, and he tried to accommodate the political ambitions of an increasingly educated Catholic community.<sup>22</sup> In 1965 he surprised all with an unannounced visit of Ireland’s Prime Minister Sean Lemass. This trip angered the unionist right-wing, and is seen to have triggered the loyalist leader, and reverend Ian Paisley’s “O’Neill must go” campaign.<sup>23</sup>

## **The political parties**

### *The Ulster Unionist Party*

The Unionist Party sprang out of the Irish Unionist Party, and developed an umbrella-like structure, in which the most important was that one had to accept that Northern Ireland should

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<sup>17</sup> Hennessey:1997:2

<sup>18</sup> Rosland:2003:24

<sup>19</sup> Melaugh: <http://cain.ulst.ac.uk/ni/popul.htm>

<sup>20</sup> Rosland:2003:25

<sup>21</sup> Darby:2003: <http://cain.ulst.ac.uk/events/peace/darby03.htm#history>

<sup>22</sup> Elliott:1999:379

<sup>23</sup> Elliott:1999:379



remain a part of Britain. If one accepted that, there was much room for different political views within the party.<sup>24</sup> The party became a left to right coalition, and drew support from all classes, but disproportionately from the middle class. From 1921 and up to 1972 the unionists held up to 40 of the 52 seats in the Stormont parliament.<sup>25</sup> The governing body of the Unionist Party is the Ulster Unionist Council. The Council meets annually to elect the party leader and officers, but do not decide the party's policies.<sup>26</sup>

### *The Nationalist Party*

The Nationalist Party grew out of the Irish Parliamentary Party. For much of its existence it was a locally based party with much clerical influence. The National Party was the main vehicle for anti-partition politics until the civil rights campaign.<sup>27</sup> Because of the dominance of the Unionist Party, the party remained on the sideline. The party lacked organisation, and until the 1960s it was without headquarters, political manifesto and professional staff.<sup>28</sup> In the 1960's its leader, Eddie McAteer tried to give it a more radical image and a constituency based organisation, but the civil rights movement developing at the same time would prove to have a more popular appeal.<sup>29</sup>

### *The Northern Ireland Labour Party*

The Northern Ireland Labour Party (NILP) adopted a policy of neutrality on the border issue, but failed to attract sufficient support to make a mark in Northern Irish politics. In 1949 the party decided to formally recognise the union with Great Britain. At first this led to a fall in support, but the party made a small recovery in the 1950s. In the 1960s, when the constitutional issue was not as dominating as before, the party increased its support. The election system nullified the increasing support however, and the votes did not transfer to increased parliamentary representation.<sup>30</sup> Many of its members became actively involved in the civil rights movement.

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<sup>24</sup> Rosland:2003:26

<sup>25</sup> Elliott:1999:487, Dixon:2001:14

<sup>26</sup> Elliott:1999:487

<sup>27</sup> Elliott:1999:364

<sup>28</sup> Rosland:2003:30-31

<sup>29</sup> Elliott:1999:364

<sup>30</sup> Rosland:2003:29-30

### *The Social Democratic and Labour Party*

The Social Democratic Labour Party (SDLP) was founded on the 21<sup>st</sup> of August 1970 and would absorb most of the Nationalist Party's supporters. The SDLP grew out of the civil rights campaign, and three of the seven founders had been prominent in the civil rights movement.<sup>31</sup> The party quickly became one of the most important political forces in Northern Ireland. The party was a left-of-centre party.<sup>32</sup>

### *The Alliance Party*

The Alliance Party was formed in April 1970, and attracted most of its support from unionists that had supported Terence O'Neill, and felt that the Alliance Party better represented their outlook. It tried to attract support from both sides of the community.<sup>33</sup>

## **Organisations and movements**

### *Loyal orders*

The Orange Order was the largest Protestant organisation in Northern Ireland, formed in 1795. The order arranges the annual twelfth of July demonstrations in remembrance of King William's victory over King James at the Battle of Boyne in 1690. The effective beginning of the Unionist Party came after a meeting of seven Orangemen. The Unionist Party had a close relationship with the Order, often with overlapping membership.<sup>34</sup>

In addition to the Orange Order, the Apprentice Boys is another important organisation within the loyal orders. The Apprentice boys is a loyal organisation set up in memory of the apprentice boys who shut the gates of Derry when the Catholic King James was approaching the city with an army in 1688. This led to the siege of Derry which lasted for 105 days. The event is commemorated annually.<sup>35</sup>

### *The New Ulster movement*

The New Ulster movement developed in early 1969 to urge moderation and non-sectarianism in politics and to press for reforms. It was among the first groups to call for a community relations commission, a central housing executive and the abolition of the B-Specials. In 1971

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<sup>31</sup> Elliott:1999:446

<sup>32</sup> Rosland:2003:48

<sup>33</sup> Elliott:1999:156-157

<sup>34</sup> Elliott:1999:380

<sup>35</sup> Melaugh: <http://cain.ulst.ac.uk/othelem/organ/aorgan.htm>

it proposed power sharing in government, and later that year it called for the suspension of the Stormont Parliament. Many of its members became active in the Alliance Party.<sup>36</sup>

### *Ulster Vanguard*

Ulster Vanguard was a pressure group within unionism. It was led by William Craig, and established when the possibility of direct rule came up in 1972. Its purpose was to provide an umbrella organisation for loyalists.<sup>37</sup>

### *The Civil Rights Movement*

The civil rights movement was not a single organisation, but many groups fighting for the same goal. Since my focus is not on the civil rights movement itself, I will for the most part classify all the different groups under the label ‘the civil rights movement’ when I speak of it.

The first civil rights group is regarded to be the Campaign for Social Justice (CSJ) was founded on the 17<sup>th</sup> of January 1964. It grew out the Homeless Citizens League, which had been founded to protest over poor housing conditions and discrimination in housing allocation. CSJ would stand in opposition to what they perceived as discrimination and apartheid implemented by the Stormont government.<sup>38</sup> The organisation was built up of people drawn mainly from the Catholic middle class. The objective of the group was equal rights within the UK, although most of the members also aspired towards Irish unity. The group managed to get Harold Wilson to say that a Labour government would intervene to deal with discrimination.<sup>39</sup> CSJ wanted to collect data on justice and fight discrimination in employment, housing electoral practices, political boundaries and public appointments.<sup>40</sup>

The Northern Ireland Civil Rights Association (NICRA) was formed on the 29<sup>th</sup> of January 1967.<sup>41</sup> NICRA was the best known civil rights group, and the most important group within the civil rights movement. NICRA initiated the events that would lead to the creation of a mass movement. For a time it acted as an umbrella, under which the other civil rights groups could come together under.<sup>42</sup> Even if the organisation was formed in 1967, its main impact came after the launch of the first civil rights protest in 1968.<sup>43</sup>

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<sup>36</sup> Elliott:1999:368

<sup>37</sup> Elliott:1999:493

<sup>38</sup> Dixon:2001:76

<sup>39</sup> Dixon:2001:76

<sup>40</sup> Rosland:2003:41

<sup>41</sup> Dixon:2001:121

<sup>42</sup> Purdie:1990:121

<sup>43</sup> Dixon:2001:82

The objectives of NICRA were to defend the basic freedoms of all citizens, to protect the rights of the individual, to highlight all possible abuses of power; to demand guarantees for freedom of speech, assembly and association, and to inform the public of their lawful rights.<sup>44</sup> To achieve this they demanded: one-man, one-vote in local elections; the ending of gerrymandering of electoral boundaries; prevention of discrimination by public authorities; fair allocation of public housing; repeal of the Special Powers Act, and the disbandment of the special force the B-Specials.<sup>45</sup> Since I will be using many of these terms throughout this paper, I will define some of them here.

The definition of Gerrymandering is according to Merriam-Webster online dictionary: to divide (a territorial unit) into election districts to give one political party an electoral majority in a large number of districts while concentrating the voting strength of the opposition in as few districts as possible.<sup>46</sup>

There were examples where the electoral boundaries were gerrymandered in Northern Ireland. In Derry for example the unionists controlled 60% of the seats, with just 23.1% of the vote.<sup>47</sup> The local government franchise had democratic weaknesses, as it gave a small number of property owners more than one vote, while a large number of adults had no vote. This happened since the franchise was organised to give the vote to property owners or tenants, or the spouses of these. This meant that lodgers, or grown up children living at home had no vote at local elections.<sup>48</sup>

The B-Special was a part of Ulster Special Constabularies, and was built up by part time officers that operated in their own locality. Their numbers averaged between 11 000 and 12 000, and its members were almost exclusively drawn from the Protestant population, where many had come from the ranks of the loyalist paramilitary group, the Ulster Volunteer Force (UVF).<sup>49</sup>

The Special Powers Act was one of the first acts passed in the Northern Irish parliament. The act gave the Minister of Home Affairs the authority to take all steps necessary to preserve law and order. The act gave the minister the power to ban meetings and publications, and to intern people without trial.<sup>50</sup> The act said that "*If any person does any act of such a nature as to be calculated to be prejudicial to the preservation of the peace or*

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<sup>44</sup> Hennessey:1997:137

<sup>45</sup> Rosland:2003:41

<sup>46</sup> Merriam-Webster.com: <http://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/gerrymandering>

<sup>47</sup> Dixon:2001:68

<sup>48</sup> Whyte:1983: hentet fra: <http://cain.ulst.ac.uk/issues/discrimination/whyte.htm>

<sup>49</sup> Rosland:2003:27

<sup>50</sup> Whyte:1983: hentet fra: <http://cain.ulst.ac.uk/issues/discrimination/whyte.htm>

*maintenance of order in Northern Ireland and not specifically provided for in the regulations he shall be deemed guilty of an offence against the regulations.”*<sup>51</sup>

The first civil rights march took place on the 24<sup>th</sup> of August 1968. The march was arranged by NICRA, and the protesters walked from Coalisland to Dungannon. NICRA refused the demand from the police that they should only march through the Catholic area, since that would imply that it was a sectarian march. Ian Paisley’s Ulster Protestant Volunteers arranged a counter demonstration, and when some of the protesters tried to attack the counter-protesters they were beaten back by the police. The civil rights leaders called for restraint from the marchers, and reminded them that they were there to protest for civil rights.<sup>52</sup>

The first civil rights march was a rather peaceful affair, at least in comparison with the troubles that were to ensue. The next civil rights march on the 5<sup>th</sup> of October 1968 would prove to have a much larger significance, and was in some ways the beginning of the end of Stormont parliament.

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<sup>51</sup> Whyte:1983: hentet fra: <http://cain.ulst.ac.uk/issues/discrimination/whyte.htm>

<sup>52</sup> Dixon:2001:82-84

## **CHAPTER TWO: ESCALATION AND RECONCILIATION: OCTOBER TO DECEMBER 1968**

October 1968 was in many ways a watershed in the history of Northern Ireland. Once again violence was to play a big role in the six counties of Ulster. Rather ironically the violence started after the IRA had called a ceasefire after the failure of the 1950's campaign, and the Catholic community came together to demand equal rights with peaceful means. The civil rights campaign for reform forced the crystallization of political positions within the unionist party. The party's political structure fell apart as the civil rights movement forced the unionist politicians to take a stand on reforms.

In this chapter I will concentrate on three of the different points of views within the party, illustrated through the Prime Minister Terence O'Neill, the Minister of Home Affairs William Craig and the Minister of Development Brian Faulkner. I have chosen these three because they all had important positions in the party in the period between October and December 1968, and because their views were shared by many other unionists. The period I will look into in this chapter will be from the 5<sup>th</sup> of October and up to the end of December 1968. I will discuss the following questions:

- How did the unionist politicians perceive the civil rights movement complaints?
- How the civil rights movement influence and change the Unionist Party from the civil rights march on the 5<sup>th</sup> of October and up to the end of the year?
- What did the unionist politicians think of the movement's method of protest? What different opinions might be identified about the movement?

### ***THE PATH TOWARDS THE CROSSROAD***

Above all else, at this critical moment we want a pause, a period of calm, an interval of restraint in word and action.<sup>53</sup>

Terence O'Neill

The period between the 5<sup>th</sup> of October and 31<sup>st</sup> of December 1968 was the golden era for the civil rights movement. They managed to attract international attention to the situation in Northern Ireland, and civil rights moved to the top of the politician's agenda.

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<sup>53</sup> Belfast Telegraph:15/10-1968

## The riots in Derry

The plea from Terence O’Neill, presented above, would fall on deaf ears. After the civil rights campaigners had attracted international attention, they would not easily give it up before they achieved their goals. The 5<sup>th</sup> of October was one of the highpoints of the civil rights campaign; but it was also the beginning of the end of the movement. What was supposed to be a peaceful civil rights march in Derry, developed into a confrontation between about 2000 protesters and the police.<sup>54</sup> The civil rights march had been banned by the Minister of Home Affairs William Craig, which led to serious rioting. The media broadcasted the images of the police batoning the protesters.<sup>55</sup> Once the seed of violence had been planted, the growth could not easily be stopped. Alongside the violence, however, came publicity and the civil rights movement attracted international attention. The unionist party could not ignore the movement, since the British and international press portrayed an image of a suppressed minority and a repressive government who had ruled for 40 years.

As most other unionists, the Prime Minister Terence O’Neill laid the blame for the riots in Derry on the civil rights protesters themselves. He said that the trouble in Derry began when people decided they could choose which laws they would observe and which they would flout.<sup>56</sup> He claimed that he for the last five years had tried to improve relations between the two sections of the community. What happened the previous week had certainly set his efforts back, he admitted, but he still believed that the situation could be turned around. But if the violence and disorder were to continue, O’Neill said it would lead to the collapse of “*the slender bridges men of goodwill*” had built. And if these bridges were to fall it would take years to rebuild them, he claimed.<sup>57</sup> O’Neill did acknowledge the seriousness of the situation after the riots in Derry and feared they could damage his effort to renew the Northern Irish society, but what did he think of the accusations from the civil rights movement at this time?

O’Neill said in an interview that it was a fact that the election system in Northern Ireland was the same system as in all the other parts of the United Kingdom up to 1948. People might not like it, but the system was based upon firm electoral support of a majority.<sup>58</sup> The local government franchise was already under review. The job would be big and take a long time, but the government was genuine in their desire to undertake long lasting reform, he

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<sup>54</sup> Belfast Telegraph:28/12-1968

<sup>55</sup> Hennessey:1997:42

<sup>56</sup> Belfast Telegraph:14/10-1968

<sup>57</sup> Belfast Telegraph:15/10-1968

<sup>58</sup> Belfast Telegraph: 14/10-1968

argued.<sup>59</sup> In other words, this shows that O'Neill was willing to at least consider changing the local government franchise, but he did not see much wrong in the government's actions.

O'Neill painted a picture of a government which had done much good for Northern Ireland. What had been presented by the civil rights movement as years of stagnation, had in fact been years of immense economic and social progress. The government had, according to O'Neill, not only accepted desirable change, but urged it. But he warned the civil rights movement that the violence had to end because if those who sought to impose changes through violence or other forms of coercion were to continue, they would most likely alienate the majority of the people. The place for politics was in parliament not in the streets he argued. Disorder was the way, not to equal rights, but to an equal share of misery and despair.<sup>60</sup> This seems to indicate that O'Neill felt that he already had made the necessary changes, and that the reforms were already well underway. It is also clear that he did not think much of the methods of protest the civil rights movement used to get their message through.

On the 15<sup>th</sup> of October, the Derry disturbances were discussed in Stormont. Here the Prime Minister asked the house to accept that the decision to ban the march had been made on the advice of the police and in the interest of preserving public order. O'Neill said that the tragedy was that the organisers were not prepared to accept a decision taken in the widest public interest. By breaking the ban, the protesters had come in conflict with the law and in that situation the law had to be upheld.<sup>61</sup> For O'Neill the maintenance of peace and order came before any other responsibilities.

Concerning the causes for the widespread resentment since the events in Derry, O'Neill laid the blame on a distorted and unbalanced presentation of public affairs in Northern Ireland. The picture of a country which had shirked its responsibilities in areas such as housing and employment and where the Roman Catholic community were victims of widespread discrimination in almost every way, were wrong. O'Neill said that he did not only resent that portrayal, he repudiated it.<sup>62</sup> When speaking about the accusations of discrimination from the civil rights movement, O'Neill said that the allegations of discrimination of non-unionist were widely untrue and could not be substantiated. 2300 new government jobs in Derry and nine factories were evidence of the number one priority status of the city. These were jobs for all, not just unionists.

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<sup>59</sup> Stormont Papers: 15/10-1968: Vol. 70

<sup>60</sup> Stormont Papers: 15/10-1968: Vol. 70

<sup>61</sup> Stormont Papers: 15/10-1968: Vol. 70

<sup>62</sup> Stormont Papers: 15/10-1968: Vol. 70



He also repudiated the claims of discrimination in the allocation of public houses. 600 000 of the population were accommodated in post-war housing and according to O'Neill, everybody knew that the minority were occupying a substantial portion of those houses. He did, however, accept that the provision of adequate housing was one of the most pressing social needs, and that no single factor could do more to reduce tension and improve the condition of life.<sup>63</sup> It seems as if O'Neill agreed with the civil rights movement that there were challenges to deal with in Northern Ireland, but he did not regard them to stem from discrimination against Catholics. Still he thought that something had to be done to stop the now further escalating discontent within the Catholic community.

The support for the civil rights movement was great among Catholics. This can be seen when the Derry Citizens Action Committee (DCAC) staged a new civil rights march in Derry, and about 15 000 took part in a following sit-down protest.<sup>64</sup> The Nationalist Party also adopted a policy of non-violent civil disobedience, and reaffirmed the party's dedication to the ideal of social justice for all, irrespective of creed or class.<sup>65</sup> The support for the new methods of protest was growing, and it would not take long before the Prime Minister O'Neill would try to remove some of the grievances of the civil rights campaigners.

### **Towards reform and the five-point plan**

In a statement issued after an emergency meeting of the cabinet, O'Neill declared that a period of cooling down and restraint were absolutely essential to get the situation back to normal. He assured the civil rights campaigners that the government was closely examining the underlying causes for the disorder, and that further commotion and riots in the street would only serve to anarchy.<sup>66</sup> In the statement O'Neill again asserted that the right of all citizens depended first and foremost upon respect for the law and the maintenance of public order. Everybody had a duty to deal with lawful constituted authorities in the maintenance of order. Further violence would risk not only the safety of one section of the community, but the safety of all.<sup>67</sup> The law and order aspect was essential for the unionist politicians, and would be repeated many times during the civil rights campaign.

With pressure from the streets and from the British government it was clear the O'Neill had to make some reforms, but the resistances from within his own party against

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<sup>63</sup> Stormont Papers: 15/10-1968: Vol. 70

<sup>64</sup> Melaugh: <http://cain.ulst.ac.uk/events/crights/chron.htm>

<sup>65</sup> Belfast Telegraph: 18/11-1968

<sup>66</sup> Belfast Telegraph: 15/11-1968

<sup>67</sup> Belfast Telegraph: 15/11-1968

reforms were strong. O'Neill's ability to implement reforms would be a stern test of his leadership, and since there were many unionist backbenchers who would dismiss the reforms simply on the basis that it gave the impression of a Government who gave in to pressure from the British and the street demonstrators in Derry, it would subsequently be hard for O'Neill to get through reforms that would satisfy all sections.<sup>68</sup>

The reforms were presented on the 22<sup>nd</sup> of November. They dealt with the most pressuring grievances of the civil rights movement. The business vote in local elections were abolished, and the local government franchise were to be reformed within three years, Fair allocation of houses were promised, and an ombudsman to investigate grievances arising out of central government administration were to be appointed. The Special Powers Act were also to be reviewed, and the Derry City Council was to be superseded by the Development Commission.<sup>69</sup> In a statement the Government gave assurances that it was their intention to deal with any valid criticism of administration, however marginal such criticisms might be.<sup>70</sup> With this statement it seems as if the government felt that the criticism was marginal.

The reforms received no immediately cheers from the civil rights movement. The civil rights organisation, the Derry Citizens Action Committee (DCAC), said that they would continue their struggle until the demand of one-man, one-vote had been achieved. The DCAC welcomed the government's proposals in principle, but they criticized their vagueness and the cabinet's total failure to tackle the issue of the local government franchise at the present time. The DCAC said that they regarded the local government franchise to be the root cause of the problems in Northern Ireland.<sup>71</sup> The Northern Irish Civil Rights Association (NICRA) said that the reforms would do little to remove the evils which existed in the community. They could not accept the five-point plan as a genuine basis for reform. They called the proposal for reform a surrender to the right-wing of the government party. The allocation of houses was still left in the hands of the local authorities, they claimed, and an ombudsman without any power was virtually useless. They accepted the Derry area plan as the most radical of the five proposals; they welcomed the abolition of the business vote. But real reform in this area, NICRA argued, would be the introduction of universal adult franchise. NICRA also said that the statement on the Special Powers Act were in the nature of a confidence trick.<sup>72</sup> Judging from the statements from DCAC and NICRA it did look like the reforms were not enough to

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<sup>68</sup> Belfast Telegraph:15/11-1968

<sup>69</sup> Bew: 2007:491

<sup>70</sup> Belfast Telegraph:23/11-1968

<sup>71</sup> Belfast Telegraph:23/11-1968

<sup>72</sup> Belfast Telegraph:25/11-1968

appease the civil rights movement, but O'Neill's next move would bring about a fragile period of peace before Christmas 1968.

### **Ulster at the crossroads**

After the five-point plan for reform had got a lukewarm reception, O'Neill decided to speak directly to the people in a televised speech which went a long way in taking the heat out of the situation. O'Neill asked what kind of Ulster one wanted, a happy respected province or a place torn apart by riots and demonstrations. He said that the following days and weeks would decide the future of Northern Ireland.<sup>73</sup> In Derry and other places a small minority of agitators, determined to subvert lawful authorities, had played a part in setting fire to highly inflammable material, he claimed. But he also admitted that the tinder for that fire, in the form of grievances real or imaginary had been piling up for years.<sup>74</sup> This statement suggest that O'Neill was not ready to accept all of the accusations from the civil rights movement, yet he seems to acknowledge that it did not matter if the allegations were real or not, since the minority's feeling of wrongdoing produced the same result as if the allegations had been true. It is also clear that he believed that there was a section of the civil rights movement who had sinister motives. He said to the protesters that their voice had been heard, and clearly heard. Their duty was to play their part in taking the heat out of the situation before blood were shed.<sup>75</sup> The changes the government had announced were, according to O'Neill, genuine and far-reaching and the government as a whole was totally committed to them. He said that he would not lead a government who would water them down or make them meaningless.<sup>76</sup> The speech was an attempt to sooth as many as possible. O'Neill said that he would deal with the complaints of the civil rights movement, but he also made it clear that he would not jeopardise the connection with Great Britain.

Even though O'Neill did accept that reforms were necessary, it does look as if he did not fully support the claims of discrimination. Speaking to the parliament he said that public clamour did not always mean that the change demanded was justifiable, but if those demands could be met without any damage or danger to the community, the best thing would be to give them sympathetic consideration.<sup>77</sup> This coupled with his use of the phrase "real or imaginary" when he spoke of the allegations in the "crossroads speech" indicates that he found the

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<sup>73</sup> Belfast Telegraph: 10/12-1968

<sup>74</sup> Belfast Telegraph: 10/12-1968

<sup>75</sup> Belfast Telegraph: 10/12-1968

<sup>76</sup> Belfast Telegraph: 10/12-1968

<sup>77</sup> Stormont Papers: 17/12-1968, Vol. 71

allegations imaginary. He argued that the only restriction to human rights in Northern Ireland were those needed in order to protect all the people. According to O'Neill, the descriptions of Ulster of late had been unfair, and the lack of balance was evident to all.<sup>78</sup> It does indeed look like O'Neill's determination to implement reforms did not stem from a belief of wrongdoings against the Catholics, but more from the belief that it would cause trouble if he did nothing. O'Neill looked upon himself as a moderniser, and he thought that Northern Ireland was a somewhat backward society. He was therefore willing to initiate reform. The decision was not taken because he accepted the claims of discrimination, but stemmed from a belief that it would in the end benefit the society.

In O'Neill's opinion he had put the choice to the people, and they had answered with overwhelming support.<sup>79</sup> And it did indeed look like O'Neill had weathered the storm. *The Belfast Telegraph* wrote in mid-December 1968, that O'Neill had resisted the immediate challenge to his leadership. This had not been done not without a cost, however further changes to the local government franchise would bring the discontent from the backbenchers back to the surface.<sup>80</sup>

After the "crossroad speech" O'Neill received what *the Belfast Telegraph* described as massive support. The paper printed a 'support O'Neill' coupon, and asked the readers to send them in if they supported O'Neill.<sup>81</sup> Two days later over 60 000 had expressed their support for O'Neill's reform friendly policies.<sup>82</sup> Riding on a wave of support, O'Neill used the opportunity to fire William Craig from his minister post as Minister of Home Affairs. He said that the reason for Craig's dismissal was Craig's attraction to ideas of an UDI (Unilateral Declaration of Independence) nature. O'Neill said that Craig's belief that Ulster could go alone was a delusion and he believed that all sensible people would see it so.<sup>83</sup> The dismissal of Craig would however cause problems for O'Neill in the time to come.

At the one hand O'Neill had members of his own party who thought the reforms given were more than enough, and on the other hand he had the civil rights movement who would not leave the streets before one-man, one-vote had been granted. Still at Christmas time 1968 it looked as if the situation had cooled down.

As I have pointed out, while O'Neill was trying to appease the civil rights movement, he also had to fend off critics from within the Unionist Party. We will now turn our attention

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<sup>78</sup> Stormont Papers: 17/12-1968, Vol. 71

<sup>79</sup> Belfast Telegraph:12/12-1968

<sup>80</sup> Belfast Telegraph:13/12-1968

<sup>81</sup> Belfast Telegraph:10/12-1968

<sup>82</sup> Belfast Telegraph:12/12-1968

<sup>83</sup> Belfast Telegraph:11/12-1968

to this opposition represented here by William Craig and Brian Faulkner. How did they react to the civil rights movement from the march in Derry on the 5<sup>th</sup> October, and what did they think of O'Neill's effort to cool the situation down up to Christmas 1968?

### **THE OPPOSITION FROM WITHIN: OCTOBER-DECEMBER 1968**

At the same time as O'Neill had to try to appease the civil rights movement his policies faced opposition from within his own party. On the 4<sup>th</sup> of July 1968 the Minister of Home Affairs William Craig said this to the members of parliament: "*By all means pursue your ideals, but once you overstep the rule of law, once you neglect the proper democratic procedure, you can expect little sympathy from anyone who believes in democracy.*"<sup>84</sup> William Craig decided to ban the civil rights march in Derry, with the reasoning that it would likely clash with the announced Apprentice Boys march, a Protestant group. But it is also clear that Craig did not support the movement's right to march in Derry at all. On the 4<sup>th</sup> of October he said that contrary to usual practice, the civil rights movement proposed to move into an area which by tradition had long been agreed that they did not move into. Even if the Apprentice Boys were marching or not, Craig said that he would have to look at the public order aspect as a nationalist march would provoke extreme annoyance.<sup>85</sup> He went on to say that "*The civil rights marchers will have plenty of room elsewhere. If they want to hold meetings it would be proper for them to have them in their own quarters.*"<sup>86</sup> This was probably the traditional unionist view, but it did not fit well with O'Neill's new policy, and was of course not acceptable for the civil rights marchers, who professed to be non sectarian. Also the Derry Labour Party stated that the citizens of Derry had a right to march through their own town.<sup>87</sup>

After the march, Craig denied the allegations of police brutality. He said that if the march had been allowed, they would have had riots on a scale that would have carried them back to the foundation of the state.<sup>88</sup> He said that the protesters had received no provocation from the police, rather they had been treated with a tolerance that some would think of as undeserved.<sup>89</sup> It seems that William Craig in general believed that the civil rights movement way of protest in Northern Ireland had no place in a democratic society.

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<sup>84</sup> Stormont Papers:24/7-1968: Vol. 70

<sup>85</sup> Belfast Telegraph: 4/10-1968

<sup>86</sup> Belfast Telegraph:4/10-1968

<sup>87</sup> Belfast Telegraph:4/10-1968

<sup>88</sup> Belfast Telegraph: 7/10-1968

<sup>89</sup> Belfast Telegraph: 16/10-1968

Craig never attempted to hide his feelings towards the civil rights movement. Right from the start Craig proclaimed that the IRA was involved in the movement. On the 16<sup>th</sup> of October he asked the members of parliament to deplore the actions of the civil rights participants after the march in Derry. He said that it was clear that some elements were trying to create riot and disorder in Northern Ireland, and that they for the most part had the common bond of intent to overthrow the constitution. It was, according to Craig, two years since the IRA began the work to bring about unrest and disorder which the organization stated as a necessary prerequisite for its physical force program.<sup>90</sup> The Civil Rights Association was only non-political and non sectarian on the face of it, because, as Craig explained, when one looked at the actual composition of the movement it became clear that it was:

(...) an omnium gatherum made up of members of the Londonderry Housing Action Committee, the majority of whom are also members of the Connolly Association, of the Republican Party which includes well-known members of the I.R.A and Sinn Fein, of the Young Socialists and of the Communist Party. A body of this composition is obviously unacceptable to those of loyalist belief, particularly to those who are aware of the recent statement by Cathal Goulding that the I.R.A supported and intended to infiltrate and use the civil rights organisations.<sup>91</sup>

This statement shows that Craig felt that the civil rights member's political inclination was enough to prove that the civil rights movement did not have sincere motives, and for that reason the government had a right to stop them. With this in mind he used his position as Minister of Home Affairs in an attempt to stop the civil rights movement from marching. On the 13<sup>th</sup> of November he banned all marches in Derry for a month, except the customary parades. This in reality meant that he banned the civil rights marches, but allowed the loyal institutions to hold their parades.<sup>92</sup> He said that the situation had been aggravated because much of the protests were indented to cause public disorder, and if he allowed the marches to continue it would produce not only resentment, but violent opposition and retaliation.<sup>93</sup> He did support the right to march, but he also said that the "*coat trailing demonstrators and provocative acts (..)had to be dealt with if they constituted a threat to the peace.*"<sup>94</sup> As Craig did not believe that the civil rights movement was a non-violent movement with sincere motives, it is no surprise that he did not accept their claim of discrimination either.

Craig refuted the claims of discrimination in the local election franchise when he on the 4<sup>th</sup> of December stated that: "*The very fact that one does not have universal adult suffrage*

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<sup>90</sup> Stormont Papers:16/10-1968: Vol. 70

<sup>91</sup> Stormont Papers:16/101968: Vol. 70

<sup>92</sup> Melaugh: <http://cain.ulst.ac.uk/events/crights/chron.htm>

<sup>93</sup> Belfast Telegraph: 15/11-1968

<sup>94</sup> Belfast Telegraph:22/11-1968

*in local government in itself does not mean that there is a denial of a civil right.*<sup>95</sup> This indicates that he was aware of differences in the local election franchise, but he did not consider the lack of universal suffrage to constitute a loss of civil rights. And if it did constitute a lack of civil rights, it would imply a great lack of civil rights in England, he argued, as England did not have its own parliament.<sup>96</sup> He finished the speech with a statement which in many way sums up his view of the civil rights movement:

I would repeat that whatever political discontent there may be in this country the right way to express that discontent is not by organising marches on the scale and on the frequency that we have had in recent weeks. It is not in keeping with the whole technique of democracy and everyone of us in this House should be prepared to say so. If there is any indictment the reason this Communist and Marxist technique is being adopted is probably because people who feel that they have discontent have lost confidence in hon. Members opposite who have purported to represent them for so long.<sup>97</sup>

First of all, Craig did not think the civil rights movement way to express their discontent was fitting in a democracy; the techniques were of a communist nature. It was the nationalist politicians who were the reason that people took to the streets, not the Unionist Party. Craig said that even though there had always been marches and parades in Northern Ireland, these had been of a traditional nature, well disciplined without suspicious intentions. These new massive civil rights parades were apparently not that, and subsequently the police needed greater resources to deal with them. When the police had to use their resources it would necessary imply that some of the populations other rights suffered temperedly, such as the right to move freely, Craig claimed.<sup>98</sup>

Craig was allowed to express his discontent with the civil rights movement quite freely, but when he on November 28<sup>th</sup> in a speech criticised the government's policies, it caused a political storm. The speech did, according to *the Belfast Telegraph*, display a "singular lack of enthusiasm for the government's ombudsman plan."<sup>99</sup> Craig also criticised the standard of democracy in countries where Roman Catholics were in the majority.<sup>100</sup> In many ways Craig was a traditional unionist, with a traditional view on Catholics, but in some respects there were indications that he had a different view on the union with Great Britain.

Craig did say that he had not argued for an independent Ulster, but some of his statements do show a point of view that could be interpreted as support for an independent Ulster. After he was sacked from his post by O'Neill, for example, he said the following:

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<sup>95</sup> Stormont Papers:4/12-1968: Vol. 70

<sup>96</sup> Stormont Papers:4/12-1968: Vol. 70

<sup>97</sup> Stormont Papers:4/12-1968: Vol. 70

<sup>98</sup> Stormont Papers:4/12-1968: Vol. 70

<sup>99</sup> Belfast Telegraph:29/11-1968

<sup>100</sup> Belfast Telegraph:29/11-1968

I think too much has been read into that section (75)<sup>101</sup> and I would resist any effort by any government in Great Britain, whatever its complexion might be, to exercise that power in any way to interfere with the proper jurisdiction of the Parliament and government of Northern Ireland. (...) It is merely a reserve power to deal with emergency situations. And it's difficult to envisage any situation it could ever be exercised without the consent of the Parliament and government of Northern Ireland.<sup>102</sup>

He did also say that intervention would have been fair enough if Stormont misused its powers, but there had not been, and would not be, any danger of that.<sup>103</sup> With that statement he dismissed all of the civil rights movement's accusations, and denied any reasons for British intervention. It is clear that Craig believed that the Stormont parliament had the final say, so in any questions that concerned Northern Ireland, he would oppose any attempt by the British to interfere. This belief was of course not acceptable for O'Neill, but it was most likely Craig's actions in dealing with the civil rights movement that made him a thorn in O'Neill's side, to the extent that O'Neill used the first possibility to fire him.

After his dismissal Craig strongly criticised O'Neill's policies. He said that the unionist politicians had taken the right decision when the battle for home rule was fought, and that they should not do anything that would betray or lessen what had been achieved then.<sup>104</sup> This shows that for Craig, the situation in Northern Ireland at that time was nothing less than a fight for the survival of Ulster. Craig believed that the Roman Catholic community had a different standard of democracy since their religious faith dictated that it had to be that way.<sup>105</sup> This may also explain why he was so fervently against the civil rights movement. Craig's opposition against the civil rights movement did earn him the label of Paisleyite, a label that was used for the followers of the loyalist and reverend Ian Paisley. Paisley spoke out in support of Craig by saying: "*Thank God that in the battle which is going on in Ulster we have got a Minister of Home Affairs of the calibre of William Craig.*"<sup>106</sup> But Craig himself repudiated the label, and said that he did not support Ian Paisley. In fact the only thing he had done was to dare to disagree with O'Neill. Craig claimed that there was a tendency in Northern Ireland to claim that if one disagreed with O'Neill one had automatically to be

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<sup>101</sup> Section 75 reads: Saving for supreme authority of the Parliament of the United Kingdom. Notwithstanding the establishment of the Parliaments of Southern and Northern Ireland, or the Parliament of Ireland, or anything contained in this Act, the supreme authority of the Parliament of the United Kingdom shall remain unaffected and undiminished over all persons, matters, and things in Ireland and every part thereof. Government of Ireland Act: found at: [http://www.bailii.org/nie/legis/num\\_act/1920/192000067.html](http://www.bailii.org/nie/legis/num_act/1920/192000067.html)

<sup>102</sup> Belfast Telegraph: 11/12-1968

<sup>103</sup> Belfast Telegraph: 12/12-1968

<sup>104</sup> Belfast Telegraph: 12/12-1968

<sup>105</sup> Belfast Telegraph: 16/12-1968

<sup>106</sup> Belfast Telegraph: 9/12-1968



labelled as a Paisleyite. Craig stressed that he detested the way Paisley went about his work and much of what he stood for.<sup>107</sup>

Craig did nevertheless accept that there was a place for Paisleyites in the Unionist Party. There were serious differences between traditional unionism and Paisley's loyalist group, but Craig did believe that the difference could be resolved.<sup>108</sup> Craig did thereby place himself somewhere in between; not a Paisleyite, not a supporter of O'Neill, but still a unionist, although a unionist with a somewhat different interpretation of the union with Great Britain.

Craig's description of the civil rights movement did frequently sound more like something Paisley would have said rather than O'Neill. In a speech in Shankill Road he claimed that the riots in Derry had been perpetrated by evil men and that those men had gone there with the purpose of not only breaking the law, but also to create disorder. He went on to say that he had no quarrel with any individual Roman Catholic, but their church at least as it is operated in Ireland meant a lesser form of democracy.<sup>109</sup> This attack on the Catholic Church was something that one would expect to hear from a loyalist rather than a unionist.

Craig was one of the most outspoken critics of O'Neill in this period, but he was not the only one. Brian Faulkner, the Minister of Development, was also one of the sternest critics of O'Neill from within the government during the civil rights campaign. Faulkner did not believe that the civil rights movement had sincere motives. In a speech at Cordrain Orange Hall on the 5<sup>th</sup> of October, when the streets of Derry were engulfed in violence, Faulkner dismissed the civil rights movement as a false movement. He said that those who professed an interest in civil rights were not really interested in civil rights but were seeking the complete upset of the constitution.<sup>110</sup> It was, according to Faulkner, a fact of history that many movements inspired by idealism and a desire to better mankind, had been taken over and exploited for other purposes by determined and ambitious men.<sup>111</sup> He went on to say that the term civil rights conjured up a picture of oppression, of illegal imprisonment, of ghettos, of apartheid in the worst meaning of the word, of a denial of liberties. It was therefore a very convenient banner for the republican movement to hoist aloft.<sup>112</sup> Here Faulkner and Craig had a similar view. Craig formulated it perhaps a bit more straightforward, but both felt that the civil rights movement was an IRA plot. Faulkner believed that the nationalist community would see right through that deception because:

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<sup>107</sup> Belfast Telegraph:16/12-1968

<sup>108</sup> Belfast Telegraph:18/12-1968

<sup>109</sup> Belfast Telegraph:18/12-1968

<sup>110</sup> Belfast Telegraph:5/10-1968

<sup>111</sup> Belfast Telegraph:5/10-1968

<sup>112</sup> Belfast Telegraph:5/10-1968

Their growing sense of integration in the community, their welcomed participation in many social and economic affairs, the increasing prosperity they enjoyed in common with every unionist Ulsterman, gave the lie direct to these accusations.<sup>113</sup>

This shows that Faulkner did not accept the civil rights claim that Catholics had been treated unfair. He was however concerned about the consequence the civil rights campaign would have on the economic situation in Northern Ireland. He said in the speech that the sensational political mudslinging would rebound, not only on orange and unionist Ulstermen, but would also endanger the pay packet of every nationalist citizen and the future of their children.<sup>114</sup> He continued this tread of reasoning when he on the 5<sup>th</sup> of November said that it was time to come down from the clouds of distortion, exaggeration and prejudice which had developed the last couple of weeks. He went on to say that “*Discrimination, gerrymandering, civil rights, Irish unity may be the stuff that martyrs are made of, but they will not but butter on the bread or one penny in the pay packet.*”<sup>115</sup> The fact that he mentioned Irish unity alongside the main complaints of the civil rights movement suggests that he did not believe the claim from the civil rights protesters that the border issue was not a part of their campaign.

It is clear that one of Faulkner’s biggest concerns was the effects on the economic situation, and he urged the civil rights movement to recognise that it was the good economic situation which allowed them to protest:

There has been plenty of talk about human dignity, the franchise, and civil rights. The mantel of “civil rights” sits comfortably enough over a well-filled stomach and a warm winter suit. But it is scant protection against the cold winds of economic reality.<sup>116</sup>

Here Faulkner expresses that it was because of the good times for Northern Ireland that the civil rights movement could afford the luxury of protest. The statement also contains a warning that this prosperity could disappear if movement did not stop their campaign. The fact that Faulkner believed that the civil rights campaign stemmed from the improved conditions for Catholics, suggest that he did not support the movement’s complaints at all. The fact that Northern Ireland’s population was higher than ever before, and the living standard was rising, was proof that the allegations were wrong, he claimed. And moreover, Faulkner said that the Unionist Party had achieved this prosperity without any assistance from the Nationalist Party, which had consistently attempted to put any progress at risk by wrecking the constitution.<sup>117</sup>

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<sup>113</sup> Belfast Telegraph:5/10-1968

<sup>114</sup> Belfast Telegraph:5/10-1968

<sup>115</sup> Belfast Telegraph:6/11-1968

<sup>116</sup> Belfast Telegraph:29/11-1968

<sup>117</sup> Belfast Telegraph:29/11-1968

Faulkner did say that it was a fundamental right for all the citizens in Northern Ireland to have a good house and a fair wage, but he could not believe that a man's political or religious background would inhibit him in obtaining employment.<sup>118</sup> Faulkner remained much in the background during O'Neill's showdown with Craig, and he made it clear that he would have no part in any caucus over leadership.<sup>119</sup> This indicates that he was closer to O'Neill than Craig.

## **SUMMARY**

The period from the 5<sup>th</sup> of October 1968 and up to the end of the year was a significant period in Northern Ireland. Violence had once again played a role in the politics of Ulster. The civil rights movement had made a name for itself, and put the spotlight on Ulster in the eyes of the world.

The civil rights movement brought to the surface the difference of opinion within the Unionist Party. The movement's protest was so successful that O'Neill implemented reforms in an effort to cool the situation down. The reforms caused opposition from within the Unionist Party. The political situation within the unionist movement involved a clash between the traditional unionist values and a new reform friendly government. O'Neill's efforts to change Northern Ireland had started before the civil rights campaign, but as soon as it seemed like he was implementing reforms because of pressure from the civil rights movement, it caused discontent among many unionists. There are more than suggestions that Terence O'Neill did not accept that the complaints from the civil rights movement were true, yet he felt that the Northern Irish society needed to be reformed, and this was the main reason why he implemented the reform packages, even if he knew that it would be met with opposition. Still it is hard to envision that the reforms presented on the 22<sup>nd</sup> of November would have been implemented if it had not been for the pressure from the civil rights movement. It is also likely that O'Neill would have been able to implement reforms with less opposition, if the unionists had not seen it as a surrender to the civil rights movement.

The reforms did cause opposition from within the Unionist Party. Brian Faulkner dismissed the civil rights movement as a false movement, and claimed that their goal was to end the union. Faulkner's language concerning the civil rights movement was stronger than that of O'Neill, but he refrained from strongly criticising the government's policies.

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<sup>118</sup> Belfast Telegraph:21/10-1968

<sup>119</sup> Belfast Telegraph:13/12-1968

The same could not be said about William Craig. Even as a member of the government he criticised the policies of O'Neill. Craig was one of the sternest critics of O'Neill within the Unionist Party, and this would cost him his position as Minister of Home Affairs. Craig did also right from the start dismiss the civil rights movement as an IRA conspiracy, and he was strongly against giving in to their demands. He did not think the civil rights movement form of protest had any place within a democratic society, and because of this he felt that the government gave into pressure when they implemented the reform package in the 22<sup>nd</sup> of November 1968.

O'Neill had in this period managed to calm down the largest civil rights organisations, but not all. On the 20<sup>th</sup> of December the civil rights group Peoples Democracy, not satisfied with the government's measures, announced that they would hold a march starting in Belfast on the first of January.<sup>120</sup> The march was modelled on the Selma-Montgomery march in Alabama in 1966. The intent, as one of the organizers Michael Farrell has put it, was to test the government's intentions. Either the government would face up to the extreme-right elements within the Unionist Party, or it would be exposed as "*impotent in the faces of sectarian thuggery*", forcing Westminster to get involved, and thus opening the Irish question for the first time in 50 years.<sup>121</sup> The result of the march would prove to do just that. The next chapter will focus on the period leading up to O'Neill's resignation in April 1969.

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<sup>120</sup> Melaugh: <http://www.cain.ulst.ac.uk/events/pdmarch/chron.htm>

<sup>121</sup> Farrell:1976:249, hentet fra: <http://www.cain.ulst.ac.uk/events/pdmarch/sum.htm>

## CHAPTER THREE: O'NEILL'S DOWNFALL: JANUARY TO APRIL 1969

The period of calm after O'Neill's "crossroad speech" came to an abrupt end in the beginning of January. The People Democracy march from Belfast started on January 1<sup>st</sup> 1969 and right from the start there were confrontations between protesters and counter-protesters who showed up along the route. But the most serious confrontation came on the last day of the march. When the march reached Burntollet bridge the protesters were attacked by two groups armed with lead piping, crowbars and iron bars. The police could offer little protection against the aggressors; the attacks were brutal and relentless. The unresisting marchers were beaten, prevented from seeking shelter and then pursued when they tried to escape. The attacks were well prepared, piles of stones had been left in the fields, and the phone wires had most likely been cut the night before. The incident was good propaganda for the civil rights movement since, many of the attackers were members of the B-Specials.<sup>122</sup>

This chapter will stretch from the Burntollet march in January 1969 up to O'Neill's resignation in the end of April. It was in this period that the Unionist Party really started to split, and when O'Neill announced a general election the party became split into Pro and Anti-O'Neill candidates. The questions I will explore in this chapter are:

- Did the unionist perception of the civil rights movement change in this period?
- How did the civil rights movement influence the process that led to O'Neill's resignation?

### **ENOUGH IS ENOUGH**

O'Neill issued a statement concerning the Burntollet incident on January 5<sup>th</sup>. He said that enough was enough. He was clearly upset that his effort before Christmas had not lead to a better result. He said that "*We have heard sufficient for now about civil rights let us hear a little about civil responsibilities.*"<sup>123</sup> His tone in this statement was much more condemning than in the crossroads speech. He said that the march, planned by:

(...) the "so-called" Peoples Democracy was from the outset a foolhardy and irresponsible undertaking. At best those who planned it were careless of the effects it would have: at worst they embraced the prospect of adverse publicity causing further damage to the interest of Northern Ireland as a whole.<sup>124</sup>

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<sup>122</sup> Purdie:1990:214-215

<sup>123</sup> Belfast Telegraph:6/1-1969

<sup>124</sup> Belfast Telegraph:6/1-1969

It was time that certain students returned to their studies O'Neill claimed, for which they had the support of the tax-payers. They should learn a little more of the nature of the society before they again displayed such arrogance towards those who had built up the facilities they enjoyed.<sup>125</sup> The way O'Neill characterised the Peoples Democracy was different from the way he had spoken about the civil rights movement before the Burntollet march. He was much more sceptical about the motives of this group than he had been about the other civil rights groups.

But O'Neill also condemned the Protestants who he claimed had played right into the hands of those who were encouraging the current agitation. The right thing to do would be to treat the march with silent contempt. By turning their back to what he called irresponsible and misguided people, they would have won a new respect. Peaceful contempt would bring the marches to an end.<sup>126</sup> This statement suggests that O'Neill did not support the civil rights reasoning for arranging these marches. But he did support their democratic right to express their views on the street, regardless "*how foolish, ill-judged and untimely they may be.*"<sup>127</sup>

The statement also contained a poorly concealed threat of the consequences if the marches should continue. If the warring minorities did not rapidly returned to their senses he would consider further reinforcement of the police by using the B-Specials. He would also have a look at the Public Order Act to see if he would have to ask the Parliament for further powers to control the elements that were holding, in his words, "*the entire community to ransom.*"<sup>128</sup> It is clear that O'Neill did not believe that the Peoples Democracy had sincere motives, but unlike the backbenchers he did not give the organization all the blame, he also condemned what he called the extremist Protestants. It is also clear that his tolerance had its limits. If the movement refused to remain within what he saw as the normal democratic procedures, he would use force to make them conform.

The Peoples Democracy march changed the situation in Northern Ireland. *The Times* wrote that it, after O'Neill's political victory within the Unionist Party the previous month, had looked like the province had won another chance to outgrow its communal antagonism, but that this scenario looked less likely now.<sup>129</sup> O'Neill's statement did nothing to appease the civil rights movement; unlike the crossroads speech it did most likely inflame the situation. The Derry Citizen Action Committee (DCAC) called the statement a disgrace, and stated that:

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<sup>125</sup> Belfast Telegraph:6/1-1969

<sup>126</sup> Belfast Telegraph:6/1-1969

<sup>127</sup> Belfast Telegraph: 6/1-1969

<sup>128</sup> Belfast Telegraph: 6/1-1969

<sup>129</sup> The Times, quoted in the Belfast Telegraph:6/1-1969

“whether he agreed with the march or not, his attack on the conduct of the marchers is completely indefensible when one considers that the marchers preached and practised non-violence in the face of the most extreme and horrifying provocation.”<sup>130</sup> The image among the civil rights campaigners of a Prime Minister who stood on their side diminished, the DCAC argued, when O’Neill criticised people who had been attacked only because they tried to express their views. The Burntollet march showed that the problems in Ulster had not disappeared after O’Neill’s five-point plan for reform. The renewed tension demanded new measures from the government.

### **THE APPOINTMENT OF THE CAMERON COMMISSION**

On the 15<sup>th</sup> of January the cabinet sat up an independent commission to investigate the disturbances in Northern Ireland.<sup>131</sup> The reason for the commission was, according to the Attorney General, to invite to an “*objective, unbiased scrutiny by competent minds into various factors of our recent problems. Objective findings by such a body are always of value to a wise Parliament.*”<sup>132</sup> The commission would be lead by the judge, Lord Cameron.<sup>133</sup>

O’Neill was disappointed over the renewed conflict in the community. In an interview to *the Washington Post* he said that they had achieved peace before Christmas, but that the students broke that peace when they decided to hold a protest march. However he laid the blame on the counter demonstrators too. If only people had been sensible and left these “*miserable, long-haired, bedraggled students*” alone everything would have been alright, but there was a counter demonstration and everything was blown up.<sup>134</sup> He asked how they were to achieve reforms when one had this communal strife, and claimed that the extremist feed upon each other, when one did something the other one had to react.<sup>135</sup>

Yet O’Neill also saw something new in the situation. There had always been extreme Protestants and extreme Irish republicans, but the anarchist and Trotskyites among the students were something new. These radicals were, according to O’Neill, different from the civil rights leaders in Derry. In Derry they had driven the Trotskyites and anarchists out of the movement.<sup>136</sup> It is interesting that O’Neill separated the civil rights movement in Derry from

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<sup>130</sup> Belfast Telegraph:7/1-1969

<sup>131</sup> Belfast Telegraph:16/1-1969

<sup>132</sup> Stormont Papers: 29/1-1969: Vol. 71

<sup>133</sup> Stormont Papers: 29/1-1969: Vol. 71

<sup>134</sup> Washington Post, quoted in the Belfast Telegraph:21/1-1969

<sup>135</sup> Washington Post, quoted in the Belfast Telegraph:21/1-1969

<sup>136</sup> Washington Post, quoted in the Belfast Telegraph:21/1-1969

the Peoples Democracy. This may imply that he felt that the protesters in Derry had more sincere motives.

It is obvious, however, that it was a frustrated Prime Minister who gave this interview. He complained that he could do nothing without being criticised; if he let the demonstrators fight among themselves he was abdicating to violence, and if he called in the police, he was guilty of repression.<sup>137</sup>

The frustration did however not lead to a change of policy. O'Neill would continue his effort to bring the different sections of the society together. Speaking in Stormont he pleaded to the Roman Catholic leaders to recognise that his administration policy aimed to assure that justice would be done to all sections of the society. In return he asked the Catholic leaders to "*render unto Caesar the things that are Caesar's*", which according to O'Neill was to "*to observe the normal courtesies towards the authorities of this State.*"<sup>138</sup> With this he probably meant that the civil rights movement should accept the normal parliamentary methods of democracy, and refrain from politics in the street. He did not seem to fear what the Cameron Commission would uncover. On the contrary, he stressed that the future had to build on the truth:

On the one hand there are those who see recent events as a struggle between honest idealism and the forces of reaction. On the other there are those who see them as a cynical plot by radical subversives to overturn the Government and all lawful authority. Where does the truth lie? And who, outside Northern Ireland, will heed our partisan interpretations? I say: let the truth be known, and let us build upon it. I do not fear the truth for Ulster. The words "The truth shall make you free" seem to me to be politically wise as well as morally right. Let us create a glass in which we may all see ourselves clearly, and with a determination not to shrink from what we may see.<sup>139</sup>

It seems as if O'Neill wanted the truth to come out; he wanted a society which did not fear to right its wrongs. This strategy fitted well with his effort to modernise the Northern Irish society: all the possible wrongs of the past had to come out, so they could create a society above all suspicions.

But the suspicions would not be removed so easily from the politics in Northern Ireland. However, the beginning of the end of O'Neill's leadership was not directly caused by the civil rights movement; it started when Brian Faulkner resigned from his minister post on 23<sup>rd</sup> of January.

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<sup>137</sup> Belfast Telegraph:21/1-1969

<sup>138</sup> Stormont Papers: 29/1-1969: Vol. 71

<sup>139</sup> Stormont Papers: 29/1-1969: Vol. 71



In his resignation letter to O'Neill, Faulkner wrote that he had been unhappy about the setting up of the Cameron Commission. In his opinion it was a political manoeuvre and to some extent an abdication of authority.<sup>140</sup> The commission would, according to Faulkner, most likely pinpoint the local government franchise as one of the main matters leading up to the troubles. And it would be next to impossible for the government not to implement the findings of the commission.<sup>141</sup> The government had thereby, according to Faulkner, surrendered all initiative in dealing with the matter, both decision and the timing had been taken out of the government's hands.<sup>142</sup> The straightforward thing for the government to do would be to initiate discussions within the unionist party on universal adult franchise in local government.<sup>143</sup> Faulkner felt that the government was better qualified to decide for itself what was to be done.<sup>144</sup> In this matter he was united with Craig in opposition to the inquiry, but Faulkner proposed a totally different solution to the problem. Faulkner proposed to implement universal adult suffrage right away, and in this respect he went further than O'Neill was willing to go in reforming the society.<sup>145</sup> The economical development in Northern Ireland was threatened, Faulkner claimed, and unless something was done fast it would seriously damage all economic development in the future. This was one of the main reasons the government had proposed the reforms, and Faulkner believed that they would produce a desirable result. The rioting and violence had not, according to Faulkner, done irreparable damage to the country's development.<sup>146</sup> This shows that Faulkner still believed that the troubles could be turned around, but if they were to continue he was pessimistic about the future, both for the Unionist Party and the country. He said that the Unionist Party was tearing itself to pieces, and the situation in the country was such that the work in his department was imperilled.<sup>147</sup>

Faulkner's willingness to concede to the civil rights movement greatest demand at that time did not stem from a newfound belief in the sincerity of the movement. A few days after his resignation he said:

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<sup>140</sup> O'Neill:1972:150

<sup>141</sup> Belfast Telegraph:24/1-1969

<sup>142</sup> Stormont Papers: 28/1-1969: Vol. 71

<sup>143</sup> Stormont Papers:28/1-1969: Vol. 71

<sup>144</sup> O'Neill:1972:150

<sup>145</sup> Belfast Telegraph:24/1-1969

<sup>146</sup> Belfast Telegraph:17/1-1969

<sup>147</sup> O'Neill:1972:150

Were it not for the historic divisions in our society, the civil rights marchers, with their inevitable connections of students, socialist, Marxists, republicans, evident as they are in so many other places in the world, would have been an embarrassment rather than a tragedy.<sup>148</sup>

The only truly democratic way to exert political influence was through political associations, “*not marching about the streets or sitting on the fence to offer advice.*”<sup>149</sup> Faulkner could not accept the allegation that the minority had suffered grave social injustice in Northern Ireland.<sup>150</sup> Faulkner’s support for one-man, one-vote came because he wanted the government to appear strong, not because he supported the civil rights movement’s accusations. Both Faulkner and O’Neill wanted to reform Northern Ireland, but Faulkner was more sceptical towards the civil rights movement. So when the government seemed to give into the pressure from the movement, instead of implementing the reforms of their own accord, it was enough to make Faulkner resign.

Faulkner and Craig would both oppose the decision to set up the Cameron Commission, but for different reasons. Craig found it hard to understand why the government had set up the inquiry to the causes and nature for the unrest and violence.<sup>151</sup> He called it an act of appeasement to the civil rights movement.<sup>152</sup> Craig demanded a promise from the government that there would be no change to the local government franchise until the review of the structures and functions of the local authorities had been completed.<sup>153</sup> Both Craig and Faulkner felt that the civil rights movement had ulterior motives, but Craig separated himself from Faulkner by rejecting the necessity for reforms, thereby placing himself outside the group within the Unionist Party who felt that reforms would benefit the Northern Irish society. Craig felt that the Prime Minister had caused the split in the party by implementing the reforms. The only way to unite the party was, according to Craig, that O’Neill stepped down and gave way for a new leader, this because O’Neill had failed to give the sufficient assurances about the constitutional position and powers of the Stormont parliament. Craig said that even if O’Neill were to give those assurances now, it would be too late to reunite the party.<sup>154</sup>

It was the constitutional situation which concerned Craig the most at this time, but unlike the loyalist section in Northern Ireland it was not the integration into the Republic that he spoke of, but the concern for British intervention into matters of Stormont business.

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<sup>148</sup> Belfast Telegraph:27/1-1969

<sup>149</sup> Belfast Telegraph:27/1-1969

<sup>150</sup> Belfast Telegraph:27/1-1969

<sup>151</sup> Belfast Telegraph:17/1-1969

<sup>152</sup> Belfast Telegraph:14/2-1969

<sup>153</sup> Belfast Telegraph:17/1-1969

<sup>154</sup> Belfast Telegraph:20/1-1969

I would say to hon. Members that as one looks at the legal argument it goes hand in hand with the common-sense approach because if devolution means anything at all and if legislative authority is given to certain people one cannot willy nilly take it away from them or undermine it without making a nonsense of it. The Northern Ireland Parliament has always used its powers rightly and properly and it is difficult to envisage any justifiable situation in which the United Kingdom Government would be entitled to legislate over the head of the elected will of the people of Northern Ireland as expressed in their Parliament.<sup>155</sup>

Since Craig in no way agreed with the allegations from the civil rights movement and believed that the parliament had always used its powers rightly and properly, the British government had no authority to intervene in Northern Ireland. It does indeed seem like he believed that the British parliament had no jurisdiction over Northern Ireland.

The situation for O'Neill took a turn for the worse when 13 unionist MP's signed a letter calling for his resignation. They wrote that the only way to resolve the disunity of the party was a change of leadership.<sup>156</sup> The support O'Neill had enjoyed since his "crossroad speech" was now rapidly dwindling away. The Unionist Party was in disarray about which course to take, and it looked like the party which had ruled continually for over 40 years was torn apart by the challenge from the civil rights movement. O'Neill had to do something, and it did not take long before he made his move.

## **THE ELECTION CAMPAIGN**

On the 3<sup>rd</sup> of February O'Neill announced the dissolution of parliament and stated that there were to be an election on the 24<sup>th</sup> of February. Just months earlier, O'Neill had called such an election irresponsible, and the election was not well received among O'Neill's adversaries. Craig said that an election would prove to be disastrous for both the party and for the country. Craig believed that an election would almost inevitable lead to riots and disorder.<sup>157</sup>

It seems as if the election debates did not concern the disagreement with O'Neill's policies as such, but his leadership. Faulkner said that it was an extraordinary election since many unionist, like himself, would support the policies "*to the hilt*", but who could not find it in themselves to support O'Neill's leadership.<sup>158</sup> Craig said that he wanted to counter what he called "*spurious propaganda campaign*" mounted on behalf of the Prime Minister who

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<sup>155</sup> Stormont Papers:29/1-1969: Vol. 71

<sup>156</sup> Belfast Telegraph:31/1-1969

<sup>157</sup> Belfast Telegraph:3/2-1969

<sup>158</sup> Belfast Telegraph:4/2-1969

alleged that he challenged O'Neill because he wanted a change of policies rather than a change of leader.<sup>159</sup>

Craig was fighting the election as a unionist candidate, and he claimed that O'Neill tried to bypass the traditional party procedures by taking the leadership election out of the hands of the unionist party members and give it to the people. I believe that Craig's stern conviction that all matters should be handled within the parliament and the party was one of the reasons why he could not support Ian Paisley and his street-politics. Craig felt that the Unionist Party had always been an extremely democratic party and he accused O'Neill of only allowing one point of view within the party<sup>160</sup>, to which O'Neill replied:

I am getting tired of having to correct Mr. Craig's misstatements as an ex-minister as I had become of being asked to defend his blunders when he was a minister. (..) He wearies us with his talk of party unity. (..) is he or is he not fighting this election on the official manifesto of the Unionist Party?<sup>161</sup>

O'Neill asked how Craig could say that he supported the government's policies, when he previously had said that he would deny giving witness to the Cameron Commission if asked. More interestingly O'Neill also accused Craig of contributing the troubles in Derry with his "*meaningless and quite unenforceable ban.*"<sup>162</sup>

Even if Craig denied that he and his followers had become a party within the party<sup>163</sup>, the Unionist Party was at this time tearing itself apart, and the election became an election over who were going to be leader in the Unionist Party. The party was split into Pro-O'Neill and Anti-O'Neill candidates.<sup>164</sup> The view of the Pro-O'Neill candidates would be published in a political manifesto, which we will now turn to.

## **The manifesto**

The election manifesto was published by the Unionist Party, and considering that O'Neill was the party leader, I will interpret it as the political views of O'Neill and his supporters. The manifesto was an attempt to satisfy as many as possible without alienating too many. O'Neill spoke to the Catholics when he wrote:

The party acknowledges and proclaims the right of all citizens to equal treatment under the law, to full equality in the enjoyment of health, education and other social benefits, and to the protection of

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<sup>159</sup> Belfast Telegraph:3/2-1969

<sup>160</sup> Belfast Telegraph:15/2-1969

<sup>161</sup> Belfast Telegraph:15/2-1969

<sup>162</sup> Belfast Telegraph:15/2-1969

<sup>163</sup> Belfast Telegraph:15/2-1969

<sup>164</sup> Belfast Telegraph:4/2-1969

authority against every kind of injustice...We believe in the creation of new opportunities in which all will share: new jobs: new houses: and new economic development for all parts of the country.<sup>165</sup>

It was an attempt to say that he had heard the civil rights movement's complaints, and that he was doing something about them. He also spoke to the Protestant community, saying that Stormont still enforced the rule of law, and would continue to do so:

In all our policies, we will combine FIRMNESS with FAIRNESS. We believe in the rule of law and that no person is above the law. We believe that those who seek to disrupt society and benefit from the divisions they create or attempt to take the law into their own hands must be answerable to the law...We shall resist every attempt to usurp the authority of Parliament or to substitute the rule of force for the rule of law.<sup>166</sup>

Even if the civil rights movement is not mentioned in the pamphlet it is clear that the manifesto still deals in a large degree with the complaints of the movement. It contains passages about the education system, the housing situation, the labour market, the election franchise, the situation in Derry, and it says that the Special Powers Act would come up for consideration within a short while.<sup>167</sup> Therefore there is little doubt that the manifesto is intended to deal with many of the movement's grievances.

Faulkner came out in support of the Unionist Party's manifesto, and embraced the philosophy of bridge-building. He did even take it a bit further, suggesting that Catholics should become actively involved in the Unionist Party. The only qualification required to join the party was a determination to maintain the constitutional position. He continued with his concern for the economical development, by saying that political consideration should never influence industrial development.<sup>168</sup> Faulkner remained supportive of the government's policies even after he had left the cabinet.

Faulkner may well be the one who was willing to give the greatest concessions towards the civil rights movement among the unionist politicians I analyse in this chapter, but he did not think much of the people who took to the street. He said that one of the saddest aspects of the situation was that:

So many who have now become involved in politics for the first time have not have time to study the political situation objectively. They are riding out like knights in armour with bugles blowing and pennants flying, but they have not carefully considered where they are going, nor have they much knowledge or experience of the principles behind the campaign (..) emotions have too often replaced argument, and propaganda replaced facts.<sup>169</sup>

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<sup>165</sup> UUP:1969:Ulster at the Crossroads

<sup>166</sup> UUP:1969:Ulster at the Crossroads

<sup>167</sup> UUP:1969:Ulster at the Crossroads

<sup>168</sup> Belfast Telegraph:15/2-1969

<sup>169</sup> Belfast Telegraph:20/2-1969

When the tumults died down people would still depend on the unionist government to win them their daily bread Faulkner stated, and he feared that the situation could lead to a fatal weakening of the Unionist Party if members of the opposition were given to much influence.<sup>170</sup>

## **THE CROSSROAD ELECTION**

While party unity is important, it's not more important than the unity of the country.<sup>171</sup>

Today we decide our destiny.<sup>172</sup>

Terence O'Neill

While his opponents mainly focused on the split of the Unionist Party, O'Neill tried to move the spotlight to the splitting of the country. The civil rights question did not dominate the election campaign among the unionist candidates. This is quite striking considering that the civil rights movement to a great extent had facilitated the events which lead to the election. In general, this does seem to indicate that the general election had become an election for choosing the leader of the Unionist Party. O'Neill tried to paint a picture of himself as the Prime Minister of all the sections of Ulster, not just the unionists. In a televised interview he said that he thought that religion should be a private matter, religion had bedevilled Ulster politics for too long. He asked the people to work together, to put an end to the civil strife and repair Ulster's damaged reputation in Britain and the world. The remarkable achievements a divided Ulster had achieved could be surpassed if the communities in Ulster were united.<sup>173</sup> In O'Neill's mind the election would be a judgment of the government's measures. If the verdict at the ballot box said that the government had gone too far, it would be hailed with delight among their enemies and dismay by their friends.<sup>174</sup> The result would turn out to be a disappointment for O'Neill.

Craig used the last speech of his election campaign to repeat his claim of IRA involvement in the civil rights campaign. He had warned of the danger of civil unrest two years ago, he claimed. On the founding of the civil rights movement, the IRA had been there to see if they could use the movement as a spearhead, and on every occasion one would see IRA involvement in some form or another, Craig argued. He went on to say that the civil

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<sup>170</sup> Belfast Telegraph:20/2-1969

<sup>171</sup> Belfast Telegraph:21/2-1969

<sup>172</sup> Belfast Telegraph:24/2-1969

<sup>173</sup> Belfast Telegraph:22/2-1969

<sup>174</sup> Belfast Telegraph:24/2-1969

rights movement was “*the shallowest and falsest movement that has ever tried to project itself on any democratic community*” and that they were “*nothing more than a crowd of reckless agitators*”<sup>175</sup> Craig saw himself as a saviour of the Unionist Party. He repudiated the label “rebels” which had been given to the twelve members who openly opposed O’Neill; the label the “*twelve apostles of unionism*” was more suitable. He said in his the speech that he would say, without fear or favour, anything he felt was necessary to defend the constitution of the party.<sup>176</sup>

“The constitution of the party” is a somewhat interesting phrase since most politicians proclaimed that they would defend the constitution of Ulster. It might point to his displeasure with the British government at the time. He believed that the threat of British intervention from Harold Wilson had been a bluff, and it would take better men than Wilson “*to bluff unionist Ulstermen.*”<sup>177</sup>

The result of the election would not resolve anything in Northern Ireland one way or another. Of the 39 unionist candidates who were returned after the election, 27 were in support of O’Neill’s policies, while 12 were against or undecided.<sup>178</sup>

## **THE AFTERMATH OF THE ELECTION**

Asked about what kind of Ulster the voters had asked for, O’Neill replied that he hoped it was the dawn of a new Ulster. The dawn had broken, but not as fully as he would have hoped. It would take time.<sup>179</sup> O’Neill was disappointed that not more Catholics had voted for him. He said that there had been Catholic support after his television speech, but that had not transferred itself to the polling booths. The Catholics were willing to write a letter of support, but they had not reached the stage of putting an X to his name.<sup>180</sup>

It is clear that he had expected that the Catholics would come out in support for him, and that the disappointing result came as a result of their reluctance to do so. O’Neill’s gamble of alienating some of the unionist vote to win the Catholic vote had failed. So as the *Belfast Telegraph* put it: Ulster still stood on the crossroads. Nothing had been resolved.<sup>181</sup> Still, O’Neill got renewed confidence as party leader on February 28<sup>th</sup> 1969. 23 members

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<sup>175</sup> Belfast Telegraph:24/2-1969

<sup>176</sup> Belfast Telegraph:24/2-1969

<sup>177</sup> Belfast Telegraph:24/2-1969

<sup>178</sup> Melaugh: hentet fra: <http://www.cain.ulst.ac.uk/events/crights/chron.htm>

<sup>179</sup> Belfast Telegraph:25/2-1969

<sup>180</sup> Belfast Telegraph:25/2-1968

<sup>181</sup> Belfast Telegraph:28/2-1969

supported O'Neill, whereas one (Faulkner) voted against. Ten walked out before the vote was held, and perhaps most surprisingly, Craig refrained from voting.<sup>182</sup>

The election changed little in Northern Ireland. The Catholic community did not support the government; instead several civil rights campaigners were elected. O'Neill still remained in power, but his grasp on the premiership was more vulnerable than ever. His next move was designed to appease the right wing of the Unionist Party, but in the process, he would also alienate the civil rights movement and its supporters.

### **Public Order Bill**

The 12<sup>th</sup> of March a new law was discussed in the parliament. Even though O'Neill said he wanted to reform the Northern Irish society, the law proposals which was introduced would in effect strip the civil rights movement of many of their ways to protest. The new Minister of Home Affairs, Morgan Porter, presented the law for the members of parliament. He said that even though some of the penalties would increase, the law was not designed to punish, rather it was designed to prevent the breaking of the law.<sup>183</sup> The parts of the law that would directly touch the civil rights movement involved a doubling of the time limit to give notice of a parade to 96 hours. The law also made it illegal to participate in any unlawful processions, as opposed to organize or assist in organizing one, thereby in effect vilifying not just the leaders, but all the civil rights campaigners who defied a ban such as they had done in Derry. Sit-downs were to be treated like any other form of protest. The penalty for partaking in actions like this were reduced from twelve to six months, this because the Magistrates` Courts Act of 1964 stated that the accused could demand to be put before a jury if the sentence could surpass six months.<sup>184</sup>

The method of protest the civil rights movement used did not belong in a democratic society, since it influenced the life of the "average citizen", Morgan Porter said:

We have been told that "the streets belong to the people." I wholeheartedly agree that the public are entitled to free passage on the highway, and the new Clause 3B is designed to preserve this right more effectively, to keep the streets for the people to use for the purpose for which they were intended. . Similarly, public buildings are for the service of the public and Clause 3C tries to ensure that the public will be able to use them for that service. To take these rights from the people by physical force is not democratic protest but an arrogant interference with their civil liberties.<sup>185</sup>

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<sup>182</sup> Belfast Telegraph:28/2-1969

<sup>183</sup> Stormont Papers:12/3-:1969: Vol. 72

<sup>184</sup> Stormont Papers:12/3-:1969: Vol. 72

<sup>185</sup> Stormont Papers:12/3-:1969: Vol. 72



Porter said that the legislation could be labelled a law for the protection of civil rights since it was designed to protect the right of the average citizen to express his opinion or live his life in a peaceful and inoffensive way. The fact that the law would protect the public from obstructive demonstrators, did not represent a radical change Porter, claimed, since there had always been protection against types of behaviour which amounted to assault or trespass. It had also since 1851 been a statutory offence to prevent or interrupt the free passage of any person or carriage on any public road.<sup>186</sup>

The law would cause a strong discontent among the civil rights campaigners as they felt that the government removed their fundamental right to march, to protect the non-protesters right to move freely. The newly elected MP and civil rights campaigner John Hume said that the government should focus on dealing with the underlying causes for the unrest rather than putting the boot down on people's necks.<sup>187</sup> The difference between the civil rights movement and the parliament members of the opposition were increasingly blurred now. During a debate on the Public Order Bill, the members of the opposition had to be removed by force after staging a sit-down protest and singing the civil rights anthem "we shall overcome" during the debate.<sup>188</sup> This shows that the way politics were conducted in Northern Ireland was starting to change, the civil rights movement way of protest had moved in to the Stormont Parliament

The law seems to have been intended to give the government more opportunities to control or stop civil rights marchers. Since the reforms had not removed the people from the streets, the government needed more tools to enforce law and order. By making some of the civil rights methods of protest illegal, they could perhaps use more force without receiving more criticism from the British government.

O'Neill said, in a speech held at Randalstown Orangehall, that the allegation that the government was practising repression rather than reform, was utterly false. No one had cause to say that the parliament did anything else than represent the opinions of the people.<sup>189</sup> But there were people that did not accept the decisions of the democratically elected parliament. These people did, according to O'Neill, proclaim a right of the minority to blackmail the majority with the threat that what could not be gained by democratic means, would be pursued through disorder in the streets. For O'Neill, the primary right was that of the people

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<sup>186</sup> Stormont Papers:12/3-:1969: Vol. 72

<sup>187</sup> Belfast Telegraph:20/3-1969

<sup>188</sup> Belfast Telegraph:21/3-1969

<sup>189</sup> Belfast Telegraph:25/3-1969

going about doing their lawful business.<sup>190</sup> People had of course the right to protest, but it came a point when lawful protest merged into unlawful intimidation. And there came a point when the minority was clearly trying to subvert the ordinary democratic process and impose its will by any means.<sup>191</sup> The speech showed how difficult the situation had become for O'Neill. Even when he spoke at a unionist rally he was heckled by around 50 protesters. They were screaming "Up with Paisley", "Traitor", "What about Lemass?" and "No surrender." To which O'Neill replied:

People who just came here to shout must have very small brains indeed. I honestly think all you people who shout would far rather be employed under Paisley. You are only interested in sectarian bitterness.<sup>192</sup>

O'Neill's support was now rapidly dwindling away. At the annual meeting of the Unionist Council his leadership was only narrowly endorsed by a vote of 338 for and 263 against.<sup>193</sup>

## **O'NEILL RESIGNS**

The work of reconciliation has, in fact, been the whole basis of my Premiership. Today I see that work threatened with disaster.<sup>194</sup>

Terence O'Neill

In his last speech in Stormont as Prime Minister, O'Neill made a last emotional appeal to the people to get over their differences and come together in peace. When he looked at the situation in Northern Ireland his reaction was one of sadness:

Sadness that the hand of one Ulsterman has been turned against another and that so many of our hopes and plans for the future have been put at risk. Those who speak of civil war are using extravagant language which I cannot endorse. But it is certainly true that Ulster is in the process of inflicting a great injury upon herself.<sup>195</sup>

Northern Ireland had been caught up in a process that could lead to the destruction of the province. They were now, according to O'Neill, in danger of losing one of the most fundamental of all rights, the right to work. If the madness that had been allowed to reign the last couple of months were to continue, it would become difficult to proceed with work as usual.<sup>196</sup>

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<sup>190</sup> Belfast Telegraph:25/3-1969

<sup>191</sup> Belfast Telegraph:25/3-1969

<sup>192</sup> Belfast Telegraph:25/3-1969

<sup>193</sup> Belfast Telegraph:31/3-1969

<sup>194</sup> Stormont Papers:23/4-1969: Vol. 72

<sup>195</sup> Stormont Papers:23/4-1969: Vol. 72

<sup>196</sup> Stormont Papers:23/4-1969: Vol. 72

O'Neill accepted that there were those who wanted to express their discontent with what they perceived as legitimate complaints in a peaceful and orderly fashion, but the movement had got out of hand and had become a monster the civil rights organizers no longer could control. He wondered what kind of interest stone throwing teenagers had in civil rights. He asked where one could find the peaceful protest in vicious assaults on police and property.<sup>197</sup> The Peoples Democracy had changed O'Neill's opinion of the civil rights movement. He did not believe that this organisation was fighting for civil rights, but he still supported their right to express their views in a normal democratic fashion. This ambiguous perspective is highlighted when he also pointed out that one had to condemn those who tried to hinder people using their freedom to speak. He had little liking for the views and actions of Bernadette Devlin, but he defended her right to express those views in all the parts of her constituency.<sup>198</sup> Bernadette Devlin was one of the leading members of the PD, and she had been elected as a Member of Parliament in Westminster in a by-election on the 17<sup>th</sup> of April 1969.<sup>199</sup>

O'Neill and his similar minded colleagues were, according to O'Neill, determined to implement universal suffrage in the next local election. He said that no decision had been made thus far, but he said that if the party did not support it, he could no longer continue as Prime Minister. The task of reconciliation had been the cornerstone of his premiership.<sup>200</sup> In the previous months he had heard slogans like "we shall overcome", but one had to remember that the man that so often had spoken these words, Dr. Martin Luther King, had not sought after one group's triumph over the other, but that each man should be equals in dignity and respect. If this was the meaning of civil rights, then O'Neill said that he could support it.<sup>201</sup>

O'Neill made it clear that there could be no doubt about the way to confront terrorists or rioters, they would be met and defeated with absolute firmness. The streets would not be given over to rioters, and the government would not surrender to terrorists.<sup>202</sup> He finished his speech with an appeal to both sides of the house:

I ask all hon. Members to rise above sectional partisanship today. For our future, our livelihood, our reputation are all in danger; and if we go over the brink to disaster all we will have will be equal rights

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<sup>197</sup> Stormont Papers:23/4-1969: Vol. 72

<sup>198</sup> Stormont Papers:23/4-1969: Vol. 72

<sup>199</sup> Melaugh: <http://cain.ulst.ac.uk/events/crights/chron.htm>

<sup>200</sup> Stormont Papers:23/4-1969: Vol. 72

<sup>201</sup> Stormont Papers:23/4-1969: Vol. 72

<sup>202</sup> Stormont Papers:23/4-1969: Vol. 72

in poverty and despair. The hour is late, but we must make another attempt to set this country on a new course.<sup>203</sup>

But the course set by O'Neill was not acceptable for all. Craig said that it was the attempts of appeasement which had destroyed the confidence in the Unionist Party, and that the party could not be healed without a new leader.<sup>204</sup> Craig felt no reluctance about criticising the government from his own party. Because as he put it: "*We are a democratic party and everyone have a right to say exactly what they think and it should be taken in the spirit of that right, provided that it is being properly and democratically exercised.*"<sup>205</sup>

The possibility to express criticism towards the government's policies from within the Unionist Party would diminish as the violence grew. With that change I will later show that Craig's opinion of what was proper in a democracy changed as his channels of political influence disappeared. This would however not take place during the leadership of O'Neill.

On the 19<sup>th</sup> of April there were serious clashes between NICRA marchers, loyalists and members of the RUC. RUC officers broke into the house of a civilian who had not taken part in the riots, and beat him with batons, causing a heart attack, and subsequently death.<sup>206</sup> A few days later bombs exploded in Silent Valley Reservoir. The RUC claimed that it was the IRA that was behind the explosions.<sup>207</sup> Three days later there were new explosions that wrecked Belfast water supply Lough Neagh.<sup>208</sup> Later it would come out that it in fact had been the loyalist, Ulster Volunteer Force (UVF) that had carried through the attacks in an effort to further undermine O'Neill's position.<sup>209</sup>

The act would succeed, but not before O'Neill forced the Unionist Party to accept the principle of one-man, one-vote on the 23<sup>rd</sup> of April 1969. The vote was 28 to 22 in favour, and it would lead to further turmoil in the party. The Minister of Agriculture, James Chichester-Clark resigned his post in protest.<sup>210</sup> The end of O'Neill's premiership came just five days later, when he resigned as Prime Minister.<sup>211</sup> His efforts to reform the society had forced him out of office, but he insisted that he had no regrets about the reforms. In his last speech as Prime Minister he said to those who had supported him: "*What you and I were trying to do*

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<sup>203</sup> Stormont Papers:23/4-1969: Vol. 72

<sup>204</sup> Belfast Telegraph:12/4-1969

<sup>205</sup> Belfast Telegraph:12/4-1969

<sup>206</sup> Melaugh: <http://cain.ulst.ac.uk/events/crights/chron.htm>

<sup>207</sup> Belfast Telegraph:21/4-1969

<sup>208</sup> Belfast Telegraph:24/4-1969

<sup>209</sup> Hennessey:1997:161

<sup>210</sup> Belfast Telegraph:23/4-1969

<sup>211</sup> Belfast Telegraph:28/4-1969

*together was right- morally right, political right, and right for our country and all who seek to live in peace within it.*"<sup>212</sup>

## **SUMMARY**

The political situation changed much after the Burntollet march, and influenced O'Neill's room of manoeuvre. He had tried to give the civil rights movement some of its demands, thereby making himself an easy target for the hardliners within the Unionist Party. When his efforts did not lead to an end of the street politics, he lost much support. He continued with his efforts to reform the society, but as the violence grew, more people asked for a harder line against the civil rights movement, not new reforms. The election did not give him the clear mandate he sought, and it showed that many Protestants felt that he had gone to far, while his efforts had not transferred into an increased Catholic vote.

His view on the civil rights movement did change during this period, and he spoke much more strongly about the Peoples Democracy than he did of the other civil rights groups. He expressed more scepticism about the PD's motives, and condemned their actions after the Burntollet march.

Faulkner and Craig did not change their opinion about the civil rights movement during this period. Craig expressed a stronger condemnation of the movement than Faulkner, but both doubted the sincerity of the movement. Even if they were united in opposition against O'Neill, it did not mean that Faulkner and Craig were politically united. Faulkner was willing to give more to the civil rights movement than even O'Neill, and Craig demanded stronger actions against the movement. The difference between these two will be further explored in following chapters.

There is no doubt that the civil rights movement influenced the events that led to the general election in February 1969. The Burntollet march made O'Neill appoint a commission to investigate the causes for the unrest. This decision led to Faulkner's resignation from the government, which made O'Neill's position much more unstable, and made him announce an election. O'Neill's concessions to the civil rights movement did cost him many Protestant votes, and since he received little support from the Catholics his position became more unstable after the election.

The civil rights movement also changed the view on the proper way of protest in a democratic society. The Public Order Bill was designed to make it more difficult to express

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<sup>212</sup> Belfast Telegraph:30/4-1969

one self in the way the civil rights movement had. The view that the street protest was dangerous and irresponsible grew in this period.

The civil rights movement had a big influence in this period, but there were another movement that used many of the same methods of protest, but for a very different cause. The next chapter will focus on Ian Paisley and the loyalist's reaction towards the civil rights campaign and O'Neill's policies.

## CHAPTER FOUR: ULSTER BETRAYED

”Make no mistake about it. The dark eleventh hour draws on and sees us sold. The powers that be would do well to remember that there are still those in Ulster who are determined to defend their heritage and that the heritage of our fathers will not be sacrificed without a tremendous struggle.”

Ian Paisley.<sup>213</sup>

By using the first words of Rudyard Kipling’s poem *Ulster* from 1912, Ian Paisley connected the resistance against the civil rights campaign with the unionist fight against Irish home rule in 1912. Paisley wanted to show that there still were those who were willing to fight for the legacy of the unionist founding fathers, Edward Carson and James Craig. This was not a fight against civil rights, but a battle for the survival of Ulster, he argued.

The years 1966-1970 were some of the most momentous and significant years in Northern Ireland, and Ian Paisley was to play a significant role during the gradual breakdown of law and order.<sup>214</sup> In many ways he would lead the procession which walked towards the troubles. In a time when the Unionist Party failed to provide the unionist community with a clear leader, Paisley shone like a star for a large section of the loyalist community, which felt abandoned in the dark.

In this chapter I will discuss in which way the loyalist reaction to the civil rights campaign influenced O’Neill’s possibility to reform the Northern Irish society. To do so I will try to compare the loyalist view of the civil rights movement with that of O’Neill. The loyalist response to O’Neill’s reforms will be an important element in this chapter. The questions I will ask are the following:

- How did the loyalists speak of the civil rights movement?
- On what basis did Paisley and other loyalists criticise O’Neill’s reform policies?
- How did the loyalist elements hamper O’Neill’s possibilities to take the heat out the situation in Northern Ireland?

The sources for this chapter will be a mix of articles and interviews from the *Belfast Telegraph*, discussions from Stormont, secondary literature, and articles and interviews from the loyalist newspaper *the Protestant Telegraph*. *The Protestant Telegraph* was Ian Paisley own newspaper, and it is thus a good source for pinpointing his views. But when I examined the sources in Belfast, I discovered that the microfiches of *the Protestant Telegraph* at Linenhall Library had not been used before. This meant that they were not sorted in any

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<sup>213</sup> Paisley: *Which way Ulster* :1970

<sup>214</sup> Cooke:1996:145

logical fashion, so I could not get as much out of that source as I would have liked. I will therefore rely slightly more on secondary literature in this chapter than in the previous chapters.

Much of the attention will be on the actions of Ian Paisley, but I will also include other persons who had important position within the loyalist community. Among those will be Desmond Boal, a member of the Unionist Party. When he was in the party he was often at odds with the leadership. He started a backbench revolt against Terence O'Neill after O'Neill had met with the Irish Prime Minister at Stormont.<sup>215</sup> The reason I will include him in this chapter and not as a part of the opposition to O'Neill in the previous chapters, is because he later would leave the Unionist Party, and together with Paisley, form the Democratic Unionist Party (DUP).

Another politician that will be mentioned in this chapter will be Major Ronald Bunting. He was a leading loyalist activist in 1968-70. In those years he was leader of the Ulster Protestant Volunteers (UPV), the Loyal Citizens of Ulster, and associated with other groups that were opposed to the civil rights campaign.<sup>216</sup>

These individuals would all influence the events during the civil rights campaign, but it was Ian Paisley who became the closest thing to a leader of the loyalist community.

### ***IAN PAISLEY'S PATH TO STREET POLITICS***

Ian Paisley was born into the Orange tradition of politicized Protestantism in County Armagh in 1926. His grandfather and great-grandfather had both served as District Masters of the Orange Order, and his father had been an Ulster Volunteer.<sup>217</sup> His father, Kyle Paisley, resigned as a reverend in the Baptist Union of Great Britain and Ireland because too many English congregations were becoming too "modernist" and were getting involved in interdenominational meetings and associations.<sup>218</sup> Kyle Paisley was followed by a few members of his congregation and began to hold services in a warehouse. This strong religious conviction was passed on to his son, and became the guiding star of Ian Paisley's political career.<sup>219</sup>

Considering the strong political legacy of his family, it was a natural step for Ian Paisley to become involved in politics when he moved to Belfast. Paisley became a member

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<sup>215</sup> Elliott:1999:185

<sup>216</sup> Elliott:1999:185

<sup>217</sup> Bruce:1986:65

<sup>218</sup> Bruce:1986:28

<sup>219</sup> Bruce:1986:28



of the Unionist Party, but from 1949 to the late 1950`s he was part of a fringe faction of unionist politics. In his early years, he got involved in marginal groups such as the Ulster Protestant Action, who was pressing for an employment policy that would reward loyal Protestants, and campaigned for the right to hold marches.<sup>220</sup>

Paisley's increasing popularity as a preacher led to an invite to lead a small group of disaffected conservative Presbyterians, and in 1951 he founded the Free Presbyterian Church of Ulster (FPC). It grew slowly, and in 1966 it contained only 13 congregations, but during the years of civil unrest it increased with 23 new congregations.<sup>221</sup> Even though politics came to dominate much of Paisley's career, it was religion that was most important to him. Politics became a way for him to realise and further his religious goals.<sup>222</sup>

Even though Paisley was an outspoken critic of O'Neill, he was as late as 1964 willing to render his support to unionist candidates he found acceptable. When O'Neill began forming his political plans, conservative unionist began to organise against him at two levels; within the Unionist Party and in the street. It was on the street that Paisley were to build his reputation.<sup>223</sup>

It is an interesting point that some aspects of Paisley's movement appeared before the movement for civil rights. That means that the religious part of Paisley's movement was not established as a defence against the civil rights movement and their claims for civil rights.<sup>224</sup> Paisley's three months imprisonment in 1966 for unwillingness to be bound over to keep the peace after the disturbances outside the Presbyterian General Assembly, earned him an upsurge of interest for his church and politics.<sup>225</sup> So Paisley was a well known figure in Ulster before the civil rights troubles started, but his fame would grow, as the troubles increased.

### **The fight begins**

At the same time as the General Election in 1966 the RUC started getting complaints about an Irish tricolour hanging in the window of the Republican headquarter in Falls Roads. Paisley announced that he would organise a march if the police did not remove it. James Kilfedder, a unionist hardliner sympathetic to Paisley, wrote a letter to the Minister of Home Affairs, Brian McConnell, calling for the removal of the flag, because its intent was *`to provoke and*

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<sup>220</sup> Bruce:1986:66

<sup>221</sup> Bruce:2001:389

<sup>222</sup> Cooke:1996:133-134

<sup>223</sup> Bruce:1986:75-76

<sup>224</sup> Bruce:1986:89

<sup>225</sup> Cooke:1996:145

*insult loyalist in West Belfast*.<sup>226</sup> So on the 28<sup>th</sup> September the RUC broke in to the republican headquarter and removed the flag by force. Still Paisley went ahead with a rally outside City Hall, which attracted over a thousand people. At the same time, between one and two thousand people blocked the Falls Road, singing republican songs, waving republican flags and throwing missiles at passing buses.<sup>227</sup> When a new flag was up hung and subsequently removed it led to three nights of rioting. When the riots settled down 72 persons had been arrested, 46 police officers had been injured, 53 business premises had been damaged, and 14 police vehicles and 20 public transports damaged or destroyed. It was the worst rioting since 1935.<sup>228</sup>

O'Neill looked upon Paisley and his supporters as a small group of rabble, and failed to see how widespread the discontent had become in the protestant community. Paisley and his followers were, according to O'Neill, "*a fascist organization masquerading under the cloak of religion(...)*deluding sincere people(...)*hell-bent on provoking religious strife in Northern Ireland.*"<sup>229</sup> This point of view may have made it difficult for O'Neill to understand the threat Paisley posed for his reform-friendly policies. O'Neill failed to muster the support he needed to secure his position in the general Election in 1969. His attempt to win over the Catholics did not pay out at the ballot-box, and at the same time the loyalist candidates grew in strength. In previous elections had almost all Protestants voted for the Unionist Party, but the political climate had changed, and the protestant vote had been split.<sup>230</sup>

Many unionist hardliners objected to O'Neill's attempt to approach the Catholic community, and found it easier to support Paisley's loyalist populism.<sup>231</sup> O'Neill's minimal concessions towards the Catholics led to a revival of the old sectarian animosities towards the end of 1964.<sup>232</sup> Paisley's fundamentalist pressure, combined with uncompromising attitude of the Peoples Democracy, ensured that there could be no accessible middle-ground. In 1968-69 Paisley resurrected the Orange tactic from the 1880s of arranging loyalist demonstrations to coincide with Catholic protest.<sup>233</sup> The demonstrations started before October 5<sup>th</sup>, and were therefore not caused by the violence. On 11<sup>th</sup> of May 1968 thousands attended a demonstration in Armagh organised by the Ulster Constitution Defence Committee

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<sup>226</sup> Mulholland:2000:65

<sup>227</sup> Mulholland:2000:66

<sup>228</sup> Mulholland:2000:66

<sup>229</sup> Bruce:1986:93

<sup>230</sup> Bruce:1986:95

<sup>231</sup> Mulholland:2000:44-45

<sup>232</sup> Mulholland:2000:65

<sup>233</sup> Jackson:1999:372

(UCDC)<sup>234</sup> and UPV. On the 1<sup>st</sup> of June Paisley led a “Protestant demonstration and loyalist parade” in Dungannon. When NICRA announced plans to march, the loyalist organised counter-demonstrations, and on the 24<sup>th</sup> of August the civil rights protesters and UVP protesters had to be kept apart by a police cordon.<sup>235</sup> The situation was already tense before the events in October 1968, but the next months would change Northern Ireland forever. Before the events in October O’Neill was not the only one to be strongly criticised by Paisley. William Craig became a target for a “Craig must go” campaign because of his reluctance to ban the civil rights marches. Paisley said that compromise was the key word in Craig’s policy, and he called him incompetent, inconsistent, and unpopular. This attitude would change dramatically in the following months.<sup>236</sup>

The fact that O’Neill faced opposition from both Protestants and Catholics, was nothing new in Northern Ireland. Previous Prime Ministers had been forced to deal with problems stemming from both communities, but what was unique with the situation O’Neill had to face, was the extent of the problems. The anger from the civil rights movement, the threat of intervention from both London and Dublin, and the Protestant protest produced an impossible situation.<sup>237</sup>

Paisley had, according to Dennis Cooke, never any sympathy for the civil rights movement, neither the Northern Irish or the American.<sup>238</sup> The *Protestant Telegraph* printed this statement when Martin Luther King was shot on the 4<sup>th</sup> of April 1968:

He laid great emphasis upon the brotherhood of man rather than the Kingship of Christ. He chose liberal theology rather than fundamentalism. He chose ecumenism rather than separation. He chose pacifism, looking to Gandhi as his guru and to the Pope as his friend, but his pacifism could not adequately be transmitted to his followers...The people that he led have now taken to riot, arson, looting and murder. The smouldering racial tensions have once again been rekindled. The Communist agitators have whipped up grief and emotion into xenophobia and uncontrollable rioting; and America is on the brink of civil war.<sup>239</sup>

It was the experiences from the American fight for civil rights that would influence Paisley’s view on the Northern Irish civil rights movement.<sup>240</sup> If one assumes that Paisley agreed with the quote above, something which is likely since it was printed in his newspaper, it seems

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<sup>234</sup> The UCDC was established in 1966 and was made up of a committee of 13 with Ian Paisley as the head of the committee. The UCDC was the means by which Paisley led the protest against the reforms of Terence O’Neill in the late 1960s. The UCDC was also the ruling body of the Loyalist paramilitary style grouping the Ulster Protestant Volunteers (UPV). Martin Melaugh: hentet fra: <http://www.cain.ulst.ac.uk/othelem/organ/uorgan.htm>

<sup>235</sup> Cooke:1996:153

<sup>236</sup> Cooke:1996:153

<sup>237</sup> Jackson:1999:372-373

<sup>238</sup> Protestant Telegraph:13. april 1968, sitert i Cooke:1996:152-3

<sup>239</sup> Protestant Telegraph:13. april 1968, sitert i Cooke:1996:152-3

<sup>240</sup> Cooke:1996:153

evident that Paisley only saw one outcome of a civil rights campaign, and that was chaos and violence. This was a view shared by a lot of unionist politicians, so what was the difference between the unionist and loyalist view on the civil rights movement?

One difference between Paisley's view on the civil rights movement compared with the unionist backbenchers concerns the political perspective and leadership of the civil rights movement. Whereas the conservative unionists proclaimed that the civil rights were just another IRA plot to topple the state, Paisley saw another enemy behind IRA. In the pamphlet *Which Way Ulster* it says that: "*The IRA- the armed wing of the roman Catholic Church- has now officially admitted its part in the present rebellion.*"<sup>241</sup> So even though Paisley, as the unionist backbenchers, thought that the IRA was behind the civil rights campaign, it was the Catholic Church that was the true enemy according to Paisley.

Dennis Cooke refers to an article in the *Protestant Telegraph* where Paisley's view on the background for the conflict becomes clear:

There are those who mistakenly analyse the Ulster situation in terms of social and economic factors, in terms of politics, or philosophies. These theories and analyses collapse because they ignore, deliberately or otherwise, the main key, and to us the most obvious factor: Protestantism versus popery. The war in Ulster is a war of survival between opposing forces of Truth and Error, and the principles of the reformation are as relevant today in Ulster as they were in Europe in the sixteenth century.<sup>242</sup>

The idea that the situation in Ulster came down to protestantism vs. popery is a view that clearly can be separated from the view of the conservative unionists, and Paisley's perspective was miles away from the reform-friendly policies of O'Neill. With a political outlook like that it would be difficult for Paisley to accept even the smallest gesture towards the Roman Catholic community, since it would bring the pope one step closer to the threshold.

## **THE RIOTS IN DERRY AND THE AFTERMATH**

The events in Derry in October 1968 were not only a turning point for the civil rights campaign, it would also give Paisley support among the angry loyalist community, which felt abandoned by O'Neill and his government and therefore searched for a different policy. Paisley would waste no time, and his campaign against O'Neill intensified fast during the first months of the troubles.

Paisley supported Craig's decision to ban the march, and he defended strongly the actions of the police during the march. Paisley warned that the march was a sign of the IRA

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<sup>241</sup> Paisley: *Which way Ulster* :1970

<sup>242</sup> Paisley sitert i Cooke:1996:134

planning a massive campaign.<sup>243</sup> In a special edition of *the Protestant Telegraph* the blame for the riots was laid at O'Neill's feet. According to the editorial, it was O'Neill's policies of appeasement that had caused the troubles in Derry, and the folly of this appeasement was now seen in all its ugliness and hideousness.<sup>244</sup> There could be no doubt that they had been betrayed by O'Neill, it was argued. O'Neill had according to the editorial, used every opportunity to smear the Protestants and eulogise and condone the action of the Roman Catholic Church and her puppet politicians and her puppet priests, cardinals and canons.<sup>245</sup> This reasoning would be used by Paisley throughout O'Neill's premiership. By trying to reform the Northern Irish society O'Neill had betrayed the Protestant community.

The attack on the Roman Catholic Church would also be repeated many more times. In mine mind this is one of the factors that would separate the hardliners in the Unionist Party from the loyalist outside. The great fear for what the Catholic Church would do if the Catholic community got any influences in Northern Ireland, did separate Paisley and his followers from most unionists. One can clearly see Paisley's fear in the editorial after the riots in Derry. According to the paper, when Rome was on a plane of equality it was like a fox, and Rome was now starting to believe that she was in the equality in regard to strength in Ulster, thus when Rome came from a place of minority, to a place of majority, she became a "tiger with barred teeth," *the PT* argued. The barred teeth had, according to the paper, been seen in Derry.<sup>246</sup> This indicates that *the Protestant Telegraph* felt that the civil rights movement's claim that it was non-sectarian and non-violent, was only a ploy to in the end achieve a united Ireland. When this was achieved, the Protestants would be battered down. In this way the loyalist leaders played on the inherent protestant fear of what would happen if the Catholics took control over Northern Ireland.

### **Not on my land**

When NICRA announced that they would march in Armagh on the 30<sup>th</sup> of November 1968, Paisley got furious. According to Dennis Cooke, Paisley said that nobody were going to march there; that was his city, his birthplace, and nobody were going to desecrate it. He said that if the march would go on, he would take the appropriate actions.<sup>247</sup> Major disturbances were only avoided because of a significant police presence. Paisley was warned that he was

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<sup>243</sup> Cooke:1996:154-155

<sup>244</sup> Protestant Telegraph: October 1968

<sup>245</sup> Protestant Telegraph:October 1968

<sup>246</sup> Protestant Telegraph: October 1968

<sup>247</sup> Cooke:1996:156

holding an unlawful assembly, and for this he was later found guilty and sentenced to three months imprisonment.<sup>248</sup> The fact that Paisley demanded the right to march wherever he wanted, but denied the civil rights marchers the same right, demonstrates his view of Ulster as a Protestant territory. The Protestants should have the right to go wherever they wanted, but the Catholics should not go outside their own quarters. It was the Protestants, not the Catholics that were under attack, Paisley claimed.

In an editorial in *the Protestant Telegraph* from October 1968, the allegation from the civil rights movement that the Catholics were discriminated in Ulster was repudiated; in fact the loyalist felt that it was they who had been discriminated against. According to the editorial there had been the reign and rule of two laws in Ulster, a rigid and hard law of blatant injustice against Protestants. Neither did the Protestants receive justice from the courts, and there had been an effort to beat traditional Protestantism into the ground, and to beat those who raised a “*standard for truth and righteousness*” into the ground.<sup>249</sup>

This reasoning was followed up by Paisley in a speech on the 7<sup>th</sup> October, he said that the real appeasement policy of O’Neill worked to: “*batter down the Protestants, and encourage the Romanist the do so.*”<sup>250</sup> Paisley said to O’Neill that he was in Ulster because Protestant people kept the law, because Protestant people did not break the law, because the Protestant leaders had called upon the people to work within the framework of the law, and consequently, O’Neill was safe in Ulster because of the tolerance of the Protestant people.<sup>251</sup>

O’Neill’s warning that if the situation did not cool down, the British government might withdraw its financial support, did not affect Paisley. Paisley did not fear what would happen if Britain withdrew its financial support. If he had been Minister of Finance he would get the millions of pounds the Country wanted by removing the children’s allowance after the third child.<sup>252</sup> This was a kick towards the Catholic community, and the belief that Catholics produced many more children than the Protestants. He did also say that he would remove the support of Catholic schools.<sup>253</sup> The Catholics were presented as a burden for the Northern Irish community, and it seems as if Paisley saw them as foreigners in Ulster.

Paisley was not the only one who did not fear the threats from the British prime minister. The, at that time, unionist Parliament Member Desmond Boal did not accept that the British Prime Minister should interfere in the affairs of Northern Ireland. Boal called the

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<sup>248</sup> Cooke:1996:156

<sup>249</sup> Protestant Telegraph: October 1968

<sup>250</sup> Protestant Telegraph: October 1968

<sup>251</sup> Protestant Telegraph: October 1968

<sup>252</sup> Belfast Telegraph:9/12-1968

<sup>253</sup> Belfast Telegraph:9/12-1968

British Prime Minister Harold Wilson's remarks, that there would be a reappraisal of the relationship between Northern Ireland and Great Britain if O'Neill was overthrown, an unwarranted and unwelcome intrusion into the affairs of the Unionist Party. Boal would not accept any interference in his freedom of action.<sup>254</sup> At this time Boal, like most other unionist, focused on the maintaining of law and order, but he did not like the way everybody who held strong views was labelled extremist.

Like the other unionist hardliners Boal had the "*greatest contempt*" for the "*so-called*" civil rights movement.<sup>255</sup> He found it pathetic that the movement could do nothing better than to borrow their political thinking, political dress and musical encouragement from the Negroes in America. It made him sick to his stomach to see these unthinking masses marching and chanting like parrots phrases they did not understand.<sup>256</sup> Yet, however misguided the movement was, he defended their right to move through the streets. Their way of protest had a place in a democratic society, as long as the movement conducted their protest in a peaceful way and did not threaten with the use of force, Boal claimed. But if the demonstration most likely would cause disorder, for example if the rout went through an area which did not share the marcher's beliefs, it should be stopped. Considering this, Boal said that he could not condone the actions of the Protestants that gathered together during the march in Armagh.<sup>257</sup> Still, even though he did not defend them, it is clear that he had much more sympathy for their cause than that of the civil rights protesters. Concerning the loyalist protesters' reasons Boal said this:

I think they were there as the result of confused thinking. No doubt a great many of them, if not all, were very sincere. No doubt they regarded themselves as being in a desperate plight and no doubt they regarded themselves as being competent in fact, they probably thought it was necessary for them -to express in an overt way the feeling of frustration, an understandable feeling of frustration, that they have had looking at the spectacle of these fellow citizens of theirs throughout the community chanting at the police, making vulgar signs at the police and flaunting authority. No doubt they felt frustrated at that over the past couple of months. No doubt they felt that in order to play their part in showing their contempt and their disgust for such behaviour they had to resort to the overt and regrettably physical actions that they did on Saturday.<sup>258</sup>

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<sup>254</sup> Belfast Telegraph: 7/11-1968

<sup>255</sup> Stormont Papers: 4/12-1968: Vol. 70

<sup>256</sup> Stormont Papers: 4/12-1968: Vol. 70

<sup>257</sup> Stormont Papers: 4/12-1968: Vol. 70, A Northern Ireland Civil Rights Association (NICRA) march in Armagh was stopped because of the presence of a Loyalist counter demonstration led by Ian Paisley and Ronald Bunting. The Loyalist crowd then took over the centre of Armagh. Melaugh:

<http://cain.ulst.ac.uk/events/crights/chron.htm>

<sup>258</sup> Stormont Papers: 4/12-1968: Vol. 70

Even if he said that he could not support the loyalist protesters, Boal had sympathy for the reason for their, in his words, misguided way of protest. He laid the blame on the civil rights movement, which had provoked the Protestant community to the extent that they felt no other choice but to respond. He was willing to appear in court for the defence of the people who had gathered in Armagh, but that did not mean he was condoning or justifying their actions, in fact he felt that it was quite distinct.<sup>259</sup> It does seem as if Boal had different standards for Catholics and Protestants. His willingness to defend the civil rights movement right to march, as long as they did so in a peaceful manner may stem from his belief that the movement's intention was not non-violence. On the 20<sup>th</sup> of November he said that those who was concerned about civil rights, was in reality only intent upon disrupting the community.<sup>260</sup>

In the same speech, Boal gave his support to William Craig after his O'Neill critical speech. He said that the speech could possibly loosely be called a strong speech, a speech of conviction, and he had every right to make it.<sup>261</sup> In this period Boal was a part of the fraction within the Unionist Party who openly opposed O'Neill, but his belief that it was right to march in the street separated him from the other unionist hardliner who focused most on the maintaining of law and order.

Paisley also supported Craig after his speech. He said that the allegation from Craig that there was a lesser standard of democracy where there was a Roman Catholic majority was "absolutely correct." One could not, according to Paisley discuss Popery without being branded as an extremist and fanatic.<sup>262</sup> Major Bunting said that by firing Craig, O'Neill had committed political suicide, and asked if they now could expect that Eddie McAteer<sup>263</sup> was appointed as minister of Home Affairs.<sup>264</sup> Craig did in general receive support from the loyalist community after his actions as Minister of Home Affairs after the events in October. When O'Neill fired Craig, the loyalist felt that the Prime Minister would fire the only one who was willing to fight for their cause in the cabinet.

This probably increased their determination to remove O'Neill from his post. The support from the loyalist community was not reciprocated from Craig however. He denied that he supported Paisley. This did not go over very well with Paisley, and he claimed that this was not what Craig had said to him in private, but if it was true, then Craig had cut himself

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<sup>259</sup> Stormont Papers: 4/12-1968: Vol. 70

<sup>260</sup> Stormont Papers: 20/11-1968: Vol. 70

<sup>261</sup> Stormont Papers: 20/11-1968: Vol. 70

<sup>262</sup> Belfast Telegraph:6/12-1968

<sup>263</sup> Eddie McAteer was the leader of the Nationalist Party at Stormont, 1946-1969. Elliott: 1999:323

<sup>264</sup> Belfast Telegraph:11/12-1968



from the vast majority of Protestant support in the province.<sup>265</sup> But even though Craig did not support Paisley, he did certainly believe that there was room for Paisleyites in the unionist movement.<sup>266</sup>

The fact that Craig, one of the most outspoken critics of O'Neill, did not want to be associated with Paisley shows that there was a marked difference of opinion between the unionist hardliners and the loyalists. So far it looks as if the greatest difference was the loyalist insistence to express their views in the street, and the fact that Paisley spoke so harshly about the Catholic Church. But even though Craig did not want to be associated with Paisley, he avoided the furiously attacks from Paisley that O'Neill had to face.

When O'Neill fired Craig it became clear that something had changed in Northern Ireland since October. From calling Craig incompetent and unpopular, Paisley now called the decision to remove him from office a "*capitulation to the Romanist and republicans, the anarchists, the civil rights agitators and the communist.*"<sup>267</sup> This implies that Craig, at least in Paisley's mind, had moved closer to the loyalist position.

Paisley called O'Neill's "crossroad speech" on the 9<sup>th</sup> of December 1968, a complete capitulation to the civil rights movement. O'Neill had indicted the unionism of the past, and showed that he had more in common with the enemies of Ulster, than with her true defenders.<sup>268</sup> For Paisley this was the time for Ulster to prepare for the final conflict, the time for Ulster to arise and acknowledge their God, because it should be no surrender, no compromise.<sup>269</sup> For Paisley there was no middle ground, and this would show in the way he spoke. The language Paisley used resonated with the Protestant community as many saw the situation growing increasingly violent. Paisley would use any opportunity to make a very clear distinction between himself and O'Neill.

O'Neill's call for people to show where they stood was, according to Paisley, an act of the basest hypocrisy, since the only way people could show where they stood was at the ballot box.<sup>270</sup> This is an interesting statement, as O'Neill when calling for the General Election in 1969, was accused by *the Protestant Telegraph* of tearing the country apart in order to secure his own position.<sup>271</sup>

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<sup>265</sup> Belfast Telegraph:17/12-1968

<sup>266</sup> Belfast Telegraph:18/12-1968

<sup>267</sup> Cooke:1996:159

<sup>268</sup> Belfast Telegraph:10/12-1969

<sup>269</sup> Cooke:1996:159

<sup>270</sup> Belfast Telegraph:10/12-1969

<sup>271</sup> Protestant Telegraph:8/2-1969

As 1968 drew to an end it looked as if O'Neill had weathered the storm. He had managed to appease most of the civil rights movement, and he had managed to hold on to the moderate Protestant support, and by doing so, managing to fend off the challenges from Paisley. But as seen in the previous chapter, the peace would not last, and O'Neill would not be able to control the situation. And even though the Peoples Democracy (PD) was those who would light the fire again, Paisley and his supporters would pour on enough gasoline so it would burn the Stormont parliament straight out of existence.

### ***THE BURNTOLLET MARCH AND THE NEW OPPOSITION***

The participants of the Peoples Democracy march from Belfast to Derry were warned, by Major Bunting, before the march started that they would do best to stay away from loyalist areas or accept the consequences.<sup>272</sup> The government did not ban the PD march, hoping that it would peter out on its own. When the march started there were minor skirmishes right from the start. The RUC stopped the march several times, and did not allow the marchers to follow their intended route on several occasions. Paisley and Major Bunting met with the Minister of Home Affairs; to try to convince him of banning the march, if he did not they would continue with their "harassing and hindering" campaign. According to one of the PD leaders, Michael Farrell, what happened on the 4<sup>th</sup> of January was nothing less than a planned ambush. The spot of the ambush was well chosen. The loyalists were on a height, heaps of stones had been collected and the crowds had been gathering since early morning. RUC did not stop the attackers, and according to Farrell did some of them join in the attacks. The attacks followed all the way to Derry. When the PD marchers finally reached the city, they received a hero's welcome. That night there were confrontations with the RUC, and the people build barricades to keep them out, and "Free Derry was born."<sup>273</sup>

It was not long after these events that O'Neill announced his intentions to set up a commission to investigate the underlying causes for the troubles since October 1968.<sup>274</sup> Paisley called the setting up of the Cameron commission "*a complete capitulation to false and insidious propaganda emulating from those who wanted to destroy the Ulster constitution.*"<sup>275</sup> Just a glance at the activities the previous months made it clear that the civil rights movement was in fact the IRA plot in operation. The central positions of leading republicans high up in

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<sup>272</sup> Belfast Telegraph:20/12-1968

<sup>273</sup> Farrell:1980:250-251

<sup>274</sup> Cooke:1996:160

<sup>275</sup> Belfast Telegraph:16/1-1969

the civil rights movement were evidence enough for the IRA involvement, Paisley argued.<sup>276</sup> The loyalist movement felt that it was under attack from pretty much everybody else. *The Protestant Telegraph* claimed The Catholic community was trying to bring down the constitution, the Northern Irish and British prime ministers were helping them, and the Press was concealing the real truth about Ulster.<sup>277</sup> The loyalists saw themselves as the true unionist Protestants and the last true defenders of the constitution.

Paisley, in accordance with O'Neill, did not fear what the Cameron commission would uncover, since he believed that the Ulster unionists had nothing to hide. He expected that the commission would investigate the attitude of the press and the discrimination by O'Neill against the Protestants.<sup>278</sup>

On the 29<sup>th</sup> of January Paisley and major Bunting were arrested, after having been found guilty of unlawful assembly they were sentenced to three months of imprisonment. Paisley was released after paying the bond the next day, and he proclaimed that he would not appeal the sentence.<sup>279</sup> However, he would later have to serve the sentence, and he used his various prison sentences to paint a picture of himself as a man who do anything to protect the Protestant heritage in Northern Ireland. By doing so he would try to distinguish himself from O'Neill, the man who, according to the loyalists would do anything for power. *The Protestant Telegraph* wrote late in January 1969 that O'Neill had jeopardised the future of Northern Ireland. O'Neill had betrayed Ulster in order to safeguard his own position. He had sold Ulster to the man who had declared that he wanted a united Ireland, the British Prime Minister Harold Wilson.<sup>280</sup>

Paisley's strong resentment for the British Prime Minister may seem like a contradiction to his commitment to fight for the union, but as Paisley explained, he was loyal to the Crown and the flag, not any particular political party.<sup>281</sup> But there is no mistaking the loyalist movement's dislike for the British Prime Minister Wilson. *The Protestant Telegraph* characterized him as "A bully who had not fought the fascists during the last war" and claimed that a man like that should not criticize the standard of decency of the Ulster Protestants. O'Neill's meeting with Wilson was as despicable "as a crawl of a half starved fly into the web of a well-fed spider."<sup>282</sup> The reason for these remarks was a statement from

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<sup>276</sup> Protestant Telegraph:25/1-1969

<sup>277</sup> Protestant Telegraph:25/1-1969

<sup>278</sup> Belfast Telegraph:16/1-1969

<sup>279</sup> Belfast Telegraph:29-30/1-1969

<sup>280</sup> Protestant Telegraph:25/1-1969

<sup>281</sup> Hennessey:1997:160

<sup>282</sup> Protestant Telegraph:25/1-1969

Wilson where he said that he was glad that the response of all decent thinking people in Northern Ireland was to support the reform movement and reject the courses which would lead to fascism.<sup>283</sup> Paisley felt that his heritage was being attacked from every section of the community who was not of his own. And When Paisley got a chance to challenge O'Neill in the general election; he would fire all his canons in an effort to stop the man he felt destroyed Ulster.

### **The Protestant Unionists**

Even if Paisley had asked for an election several times, he expressed scepticism when the election was announced. He fronted the same view as Craig, and he did still believe that he and Craig had a lot in common. He said that they agreed that Ulster had to be an integral part of the United Kingdom, and that the leadership of the Unionist Party ought to be settled by the Unionist Party, not an election.<sup>284</sup>

In *the Protestant Telegraph* he took it even further. The paper called the election a plan to wreck the country. Terence O'Neill had only one interest and that was Terence O'Neill. He cared nothing about the Unionist Party, the parliament or the country; these were only steppingstones over which he tramped in the "*madness of his dictatorship.*"<sup>285</sup> The paper wrote that O'Neill had run scared from the meeting of his own parliament party because he knew that they would not support him. O'Neill was a destroyer, he had destroyed the stability of Ulster's constitution, he had destroyed the unity of the Unionist Party, and he had destroyed the protestant people's faith in the justice of Ulster's administration.<sup>286</sup> The *PT* expressed that it was the loyalists that were the victims in Ulster. Loyalists could according to the paper no longer expect a fair treatment from the police and the courts. The only crime loyalists were guilty of was loyalty; "*Loyalty to the Crown and constitution.*"<sup>287</sup> The government had abdicated its authority and was no longer fit to rule, it was claimed. The police had failed to protect the Protestant community, and when the loyalists tried to protect themselves they were jailed.<sup>288</sup>

Paisley told 4000 supporters outside Ballymena town hall that he would contest the Bannside constituency, O'Neill's seat. Paisley told the audience that O'Neill had done enough

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<sup>283</sup> Protestant Telegraph:25/1-1969

<sup>284</sup> Belfast Telegraph:21/2-1969

<sup>285</sup> Protestant Telegraph:8/2-1969

<sup>286</sup> Protestant Telegraph:8/2-1969

<sup>287</sup> Protestant Telegraph:8/2-2969

<sup>288</sup> Protestant Telegraph:8/2-2969

to jeopardise the 50 years of consolidation and progress the province had enjoyed. He had at this time decided that he would appeal his sentence, and that meant that he would be a free man during the election campaign.<sup>289</sup> The election would indicate how much support Paisley had taken away from O'Neill. A strong result for Paisley would make it even more difficult for O'Neill, and his attempts to reform the society. O'Neill could not ignore the threat Paisley posed, and he hit hard against Paisley when he in a statement on the 12<sup>th</sup> of February, asked what positive suggestion Paisley and his kin ever had made about any aspect in their life, what could they offer the electorate but empty and angry words? They were only against him; they had no policies O'Neill argued. The loyalists were in O'Neill's mind a collection of "*canutes vainly trying to hold back the tide of the 20<sup>th</sup> century.*"<sup>290</sup>

It did not take long before Paisley announced what direction he wanted for Ulster. He wanted an Ulster which was so strong in constitutional standing and in its link with Great Britain that no southern politicians, the Roman Catholic lobby in Westminster or any traitor inside the Unionist Party could assail. He wanted an Ulster where the police was strong enough to cope with the IRA front-organizations, and an Ulster whose parliament would have the confidence of all loyalist citizens.<sup>291</sup> Paisley and the others who campaigned with him, called themselves the Protestant Unionists. This was a kick towards O'Neill and the Unionist Party, which they felt had betrayed the traditional Protestant unionism. Ulster and Protestantism was one and the same for Paisley. First and foremost he wanted justice for the Protestants, the Catholics were outsiders. This perspective separates Paisley views from that of O'Neill and Faulkner, and even Craig did not completely ignore the Catholics place within Ulster, even if he did not make an effort to win them over.

Even though Paisley spoke of the civil rights movement as an IRA plot, he did want to reform some of the same sections of the Northern Irish society. He called for a reform of the local government, so that every citizen would obtain his full democratic rights; he wanted a crash program on housing; a program that would improve the existing houses and speed up the slum clearances, and he wanted an Ulster with full employment.<sup>292</sup> Several of these demands coincided with that of the civil rights movement's demands. Yet at the same time the loyalists also wanted to stop or hinder many of the reforms that the civil rights movement had been granted the last months. The Protestant Unionists wanted a strengthening of the B-Specials, which they regarded to be the real bulwark against Ulster's enemies. The loyalists

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<sup>289</sup> Belfast Telegraph:4/2-1969

<sup>290</sup> Belfast Telegraph:12/2-1969

<sup>291</sup> Belfast Telegraph:21/2-1969

<sup>292</sup> Belfast Telegraph:21/2-1969

also demanded the restoration of confidence in the parliament by removing the bodies set up by O'Neill which infringed on the parliament's sovereignty (the Cameron commission). In addition the loyalists asked for the absolute demonstration that justice was done in the courts, a reorganising of the local government with reform of its taxation system, and a crash program on housing.<sup>293</sup>

The Protestant Unionists did not concern themselves with the Catholic community; instead they took a judgemental attitude against their church. In a rather condescending statement they wrote: "*We stand for full civil and religious liberty for all the people of Northern Ireland, particularly Roman Catholics, whose freedom from authoritarianism is of great concern to us.*"<sup>294</sup> It seems as if it was a popular belief among the loyalists that the Roman Catholic Church was authoritarian and undemocratic in nature, and that the Roman Catholics were repressed by their church. In an article in *the PT*, Avro Manhattan<sup>295</sup>, wrote for example that the fact that the Catholics owed their first allegiance to the pope made them dangerous instruments for a foreign power: they would obey the pope first and the law second.<sup>296</sup> Modern democracy was contrary to the Catholic faith. A Catholic had to be anti-liberal and anti-Protestant; so a good Catholic could never rightly claim to be a good democrat, since it would not only be a contradiction in term, but an impossibility.<sup>297</sup> Paisley had a similar opinion. He would make no apology for his Protestant conviction, but he did say that he would not deal with his constituencies on the basis of their religion. Just because he was against the Roman Catholic Church for constantly attacking the constitution, and rejecting to stand for the singing of God Save the Queen, it did not mean that he was against the Roman Catholics.

Paisley's religious and political views were, according to Thomas Hennessey, diametrically opposed to those of O'Neill.<sup>298</sup> The election would be a test of which one of the two that had been most successful in their strategy: O'Neill's attempt to attract the moderate population or Paisley's attempt to fuel the always underlying Protestant fear of what would happen if Ireland was united.

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<sup>293</sup> Protestant Telegraph:22/2-1969

<sup>294</sup> Protestant Telegraph:22/2-1969

<sup>295</sup> Avro Manhattan was an Italian author, and he has written critical books concerning the Roman Catholic Church. Among this is *The Vatican's holocaust*, and *the Vatican's Billions*. Hentet fra: <http://www.amazon.com/Vaticans-Holocaust-Manhattan-Avro/dp/B000KOOLWE>

<sup>296</sup> Manhattan: Protestant Telegraph: 22/2-1969

<sup>297</sup> Manhattan: Protestant Telegraph: 22/2-1969

<sup>298</sup> Hennessey:1997:160

## **THE RESULT AND CONTINUING FIGHT**

Even though not a single Protestant Unionist candidate was elected, Paisley considered the election as a success. His result of 6331 votes against O'Neill's 7745 was the highest number for the Protestant Unionists. The election was a disappointment for O'Neill who had hoped that the moderates from both sides would come together to support him. Instead it was Paisley who would get confirmation of his increasing popularity. Paisley expressed delight over the election result. Losing to O'Neill by only 1414 votes was enough to make Paisley proud. He said that if the election campaign had lasted a week longer, he would have won.<sup>299</sup> The Roman Catholic priests had, according to Paisley, exhorted the people of Bannside to vote for O'Neill, and the fact that O'Neill depended upon the votes of the enemy meant that he was open for all sorts of pressure.<sup>300</sup>

In a televised speech, printed in the *Protestant Telegraph*, Paisley said that O'Neill had a threefold policy: first, he wanted to break up the Unionist Party, in which he had succeeded, second, he wanted a collation with the nationalists, and thirdly, he wanted a united Ireland. The Protestant Unionists on the other hand stood for the constitution it was claimed, they stood for everything their fathers had fought and died for, and they stood for religious and civil liberty for all. Paisley continued with the claim that it was the Protestants that were being discriminated against. The civil rights campaigner's who burned police tenders and were guilty of acts of violence was not punished, but protestant leaders was imprisoned. The IRA plot was now moving over in the second phase.<sup>301</sup> The first phase was IRA's incitement of civil unrest. That had succeeded, and now they could start with the second phase which meant a quickening of the acts of civil disobedience, and the occupation of public and crown buildings.<sup>302</sup> *The PT* claimed that the Peoples Democracy was now announcing plans along those lines. The PD was now virtually in control of the Civil Rights Association, and that was evidence of the success of the IRA plan, according to *the PT*.<sup>303</sup>

After the election, Paisley said to a crowd of 3000 people at a Limavady rally, that his campaign against O'Neill had only begun. He would arrange a march that would show O'Neill that he was not wanted to lead Ulster. The civil rights people could go on the streets, so now the loyalists should show that the Protestant people also could, and would, go on the

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<sup>299</sup> Belfast Telegraph:25/2-2969

<sup>300</sup> Belfast Telegraph:15/4-1969

<sup>301</sup> Protestant Telegraph:22/3-1969

<sup>302</sup> Protestant Telegraph:22/3-1969

<sup>303</sup> Protestant Telegraph:22/3-1969

street.<sup>304</sup> Paisley himself would not get the possibility to protest in the street much longer. With his sentence still in effect it would not take long before he had to go to jail.

On the 25<sup>th</sup> of March 1969 Paisley and Major Bunting began to serve their prison sentences. Desmond Boal, counsel for both, said that the only reason that the loyalist gathering had armed themselves during the march in Armagh November 1968, was because they feared for what the counter protesters would do to them. Paisley himself had only been armed with a walking stick.<sup>305</sup> The imprisonment would be used for all it was worth by Paisley. He would paint a picture of a man who had been unjustly jailed for following his own conviction. During his prison sentences he would publish letters from jail in *the Protestant Telegraph*.

Even as Paisley served his prison sentences, he was still able to remain in control over the fight against O'Neill. The plan forward was presented after a special session of the Ulster Constitution Defence Committee (UCDC), and a statement signed by Paisley was published in *the PT*. Paisley reminded the government that those who they smeared as Paisleyites had also rights, and they would no longer be trampled on. He called for an inquiry into "*the strange actions of the Attorney General, and his campaign to indict loyal Protestants and to excuse Romanist who had rioted, burned police tenders, looted, damaged property, and savagely attacked Protestant people.*"<sup>306</sup> Paisley obviously felt that it was only the Protestant that were punished, and that the Catholics could do what they wanted, since they had the support of O'Neill.

The UCDC planned to launch a campaign called "justice for Protestants", and as a part of this campaign they would demand their right, as British citizens, to parade and demonstrate. They refused to allow that their town and cities was taken over by an IRA front movement. These movements and their illegal activities could not be ignored.<sup>307</sup> The campaign would focus on those areas where the police, according to the UCDC, had abdicated their power to the so-called civil rights stewards, who were only thugs of the rebel movement.<sup>308</sup> So to sum up: Paisley would fight for the right to protest in the street, and fight against the right for the civil rights movement to do the same.

On the 4<sup>th</sup> of April *the PT* criticized *the Belfast Telegraph* for being engaged in a conspiracy to rob the Protestant of their civil and religious liberties. This conspiracy was from

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<sup>304</sup> Belfast Telegraph:4/3-1969

<sup>305</sup> Belfast Telegraph:26/4-1969

<sup>306</sup> Protestant Telegraph:5/4-1969

<sup>307</sup> Protestant Telegraph:5/4-1969

<sup>308</sup> Protestant Telegraph:22/2-1969



time to time uncovered, it was alleged, such as when *the Belfast Telegraph*, enraged by Protestant victories, uncovered its true objective and goal. The reason for this was that *the Belfast Telegraph* had not published the statement mentioned above in full.<sup>309</sup>

Paisley blamed O'Neill for the splitting of the Unionist Party, but he blamed the Catholic Church for the troubles. Speaking to an audience at a Reformation rally in Enniskillen, he said that one should not blame the politicians for the troubles, because the troubles started in the pulpits of the churches. Because, as Paisley put it, when leprously curses a nation, it is in the churches that leprously begin. He went on to say that he was against the pope, and that he was against the ecumenical movement with every fibre of his body.<sup>310</sup>

O'Neill never managed to fulfil his attempt to reform the society. When the bombs exploded, he had to go. But not before he sat in motion the removal of what had been one of the biggest complaints of the civil rights movement.

### **Reactions to O'Neill's resignation**

O'Neill's last act in power made *the PT* furious. O'Neill's decision to grant the civil rights movement's demand of one-man, one-vote, was an act of a government that had ceased to rule; it was the O'Neill's final capitulation to the republican movement. O'Neill had only been willing to give into the demand when it became clear for him that he would not be able to remain in power, it was alleged, and cowardly he had sized the possibility when Paisley was in jail, thereby fulfilling his six year treachery against Ulster. The paper claimed that the act had cast hundreds of thousands of Protestants into a terrible fury, which would be used to make sure that all of O'Neill's policies and puppet supporters would be forced out in obscurity.<sup>311</sup>

There was no regret from the loyalist community over O'Neill's resignation. *The PT* wrote that his "*reign of terror*" had been characterised by broken pledges and blatant association with Ulster's enemies.<sup>312</sup> O'Neill had allied himself with the civil rights movement and the Roman hierarchy, the paper alleged. He had believed that the Roman Catholics were loyal to the crown and that they should come together and form a political and

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<sup>309</sup> Protestant Telegraph:5/4-1969

<sup>310</sup> Belfast Telegraph:15/4-1969

<sup>311</sup> Protestant Telegraph:3/5-1969

<sup>312</sup> Protestant Telegraph:3/5-1969

religious utopia, this could not *the PT* accept. There was not, and could never be any common ground for Protestants to unite with those who ravaged the town and cities of Ulster.<sup>313</sup>

Yet the fight was not over even though O'Neill was gone. *The Protestant Telegraph* warned that anybody who believed that was dreaming. The problems in Ulster had been created by sophisticated enemies of partition. These enemies had made the Unionist Party a victim rather than the master.<sup>314</sup> The paper also made it clear that the loyalists would not make it any easier for the next Prime Minister, since the Unionist Party had yet to produce a man “*with vision and spiritual insight into the root causes of the disintegrating political situation.*”<sup>315</sup>

## **SUMMARY**

The fact that Ian Paisley played a big role in the downfall of O'Neill is not disputed. O'Neill's room of manoeuvre became reduced because of Paisley's and the loyalist's opposition towards the Prime Minister's reforms. If O'Neill had been able to deal with the civil rights movement without Paisley's interference, the situation would probably have turned out different. The loyalist populist policies attracted a large section of the Protestant community, who felt that the government was giving too much to Catholic community, without getting something in return. Paisley played a big role in making the situation into a Catholic vs. Protestant dichotomy, instead of a question of modernisation as O'Neill tried to make it.

The reason why Paisley criticised O'Neill to the extent that he did, can be explained by his fear of what would happen if the civil rights movement was granted their demands. O'Neill did not fear Catholic influence, and could therefore try to modernise the Northern Irish society. Paisley would fight against this, not primarily because he was against modernisation as such, but because he believed that this would lead to more power to the Roman Catholic Church, a process which would endanger the union with Great Britain. The political and religious beliefs of Paisley and O'Neill were so far apart that there could be no common ground, and no compromise. This goes to show that O'Neill and Paisley were fighting different fights. O'Neill fought a political fight for modernisation, while Paisley fought a religious fight for Ulster's survival and the survival of its Protestant heritage.

When it comes to the civil rights movement, there is no doubt that Paisley and the other loyalist saw it as a front. Sometimes they expressed the belief that it was a front for the

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<sup>313</sup> Protestant Telegraph:3/5-1969

<sup>314</sup> Protestant Telegraph:3/5-1969

<sup>315</sup> Protestant Telegraph:3/5-1969

IRA, and a step in their plan to end partition, sometimes they said it was a front for the Roman Catholic Church and communism. In any case, discrimination against the Catholics in Northern Ireland was not the real reason for the campaign it was alleged. In fact it was the Protestants that experienced discrimination at that time, the loyalist claimed: Protestants were not allowed to express their views in the same way as the civil rights movement, and as long as the Premiership was in hand of one of Ulster's enemies, they would be discriminated against by the police and courts.

The main issue that separated the loyalist politicians from the hardliners in the Unionist Party, was the fact that the loyalists insisted on their right to express their views on the street. The hardliners in the Unionist Party put law and order before the right to march. The fact that the loyalist demanded their right to march in the street, did not mean however that they accepted that the civil rights movement could do the same. It was an accepted belief among the loyalists that the Roman Catholics should only march within their one quarters, whereas the Protestants should be able to march were they wanted. Another difference was Paisley's strong criticisms of the Catholic Church. This also separated him from Boal, who did not lashed out on the Catholic Church in the same way.

Paisley would get his wish fulfilled when O'Neill resigned, but this would not end his fight. The next chapter will focus on the period leading up to the suspension of the Stormont Parliament.

## CHAPTER FIVE: THE FALL OF A PARLIAMENT: MAY 1969 TO MARCH 1972

During the last years of the Stormont period the Unionist Party crumbled, the loyalists grew in strength and the civil rights campaign were to be replaced by mayhem with a magnitude not seen on the Irish isle since the 1920's. On the 1<sup>st</sup> of May 1969 Major James Chichester-Clark was elected Prime Minister and unionist leader by seventeen votes to sixteen over Brian Faulkner.<sup>316</sup> As we have seen in the previous chapters O'Neill received much resistance during his effort to reform the Northern Irish society, and the situation would not turn out to be much easier for his successor.

This chapter will focus on the last years of the Stormont parliament, the years from 1969 to 1972. Towards the end of O'Neill's premiership the situation in Northern Ireland deteriorated fast, but it would seem like smooth sailing compared to the troubles that were to come. Since the violence in this period became an overshadowing element, the cries for civil rights were muffled by the chaos that was to ensue. It will therefore be more difficult to sort out the different views on the civil rights campaign during this period. Even so I believe that it will be productive to look into the actions of the civil rights movement and the perceptions of the civil rights campaign in an effort to explain how the situation could turn out so bad. I will in this chapter focus on the loyalists, unionists, and the civil rights movement's actions concurrently. The reason why I have not split the different groups into different sections, as I have done in the previous chapters, is that the actions and events in this period got so intertwined that such a structure would conceal the intrinsic dynamic of the process. The questions I will discuss in this chapter are:

- How did the different views on the civil rights movement, and civil rights within the Unionist Party develop? Did the change of Prime Minister represent a change in the unionist opinion of the civil rights movement?
- Did the new PM change the government's policy on civil rights and reforms?
- How did the civil rights movement continue to affect the development within the unionist movement?
- How did the loyalists perceive the Unionist Party's actions towards the civil rights movement, and in what way did the loyalists influence the Unionist Party's possibilities to act?

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<sup>316</sup> Elliott 1999:3

## THE HONEYMOON PERIOD

This is not war, and please let it never be.<sup>317</sup>

Major James Chichester-Clark

The first period of Chichester-Clark's premiership was calmer than one could expect. The different fractions who had stood so far apart in the last months of O'Neill's term, gave the new PM a chance to prove that he would take care of their interests.

The election of the new Prime Minister was a tight race, and rather ironically it was Terence O'Neill that should cast the deciding vote. It was the history between himself and Faulkner that made his decision. In his autobiography O'Neill wrote that he could not make himself to vote for the man (Faulkner) that had tried to bring him down for the last six years.<sup>318</sup> Chichester-Clark was a relative unknown name in Ulster politics. *The Belfast Telegraph* wrote that his narrow win over Faulkner had brought him from comparative obscurity to the province supreme political office.<sup>319</sup> Chichester-Clark did not display a great overconfidence over the tasks ahead. Asked if he would be able to unite the Unionist Party, he said that he would give it a good try. And asked if he would be able to get the protesters of the street, he answered that he could not know that, but that he would do his best.<sup>320</sup> If he did not display an overwhelming confidence, he did say that he would continue along the same path as O'Neill. He was fully behind O'Neill's last act, the introduction of one man, one vote in 1971. He would also consider meeting the Irish Prime Minister, and he saw no reason that there should not be a good relationship between the north and south.<sup>321</sup> The policies would therefore be much the same, but how would that affect his support among the Unionist Party members?

Chichester-Clark received support from some of O'Neill's most outspoken critics, Faulkner said that he would fully support the new PM, and Craig said that the Unionist Party was united again, and that the new PM had a better chance of dealing with the situation.<sup>322</sup> Chichester-Clark tried to reunite the party by picking cabinet members from both the Pro-O'Neill and Anti-O'Neill sections of the party. Faulkner accepted the position as Minister of Development.<sup>323</sup> The fact that Faulkner was willing to go back into the cabinet even if the

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<sup>317</sup> Stormont Papers 30/9-1969: Vol. 74

<sup>318</sup> O'Neill:1972:129

<sup>319</sup> Belfast Telegraph:1/5-1969

<sup>320</sup> Belfast Telegraph:1/5-1969

<sup>321</sup> Belfast Telegraph:1/5-1969

<sup>322</sup> Belfast Telegraph:1/5-1969

<sup>323</sup> Belfast Telegraph:3/5-1969

new Prime Minister announced that he would continue with the policies of O'Neill, supports the conclusion that his departure from the previous administration came about because of a personal conflict with O'Neill, and not so much the policy.

Chichester-Clark had managed to calm down some of the opposition within the party, but he would also have to deal with the civil rights movement. He asked the civil rights movement for patience. There was a great deal to be done before the local government franchise could be changed, and it would be foolish to make the changes now, only to realise that they had to change everything a year later, he said. Chichester-Clark felt that if the civil rights movement had any goodwill they would accept the government's word, which had been given so clearly.<sup>324</sup> The civil rights movement did not see it the same way, and they were not very pleased with the new cabinet. The Dungannon Citizens Action Committee called it a sob to the right wing, and claimed that the Prime Minister tried to appease the "*wild men*" of the party, rather than to dispense justice to all the community.<sup>325</sup> The appointment of people who had spoken strongly against the reform policies of O'Neill might have given the civil rights movement the impression that the new PM was closer to the hardliners in the party.

Even if the new cabinet did not please the civil rights movement, Chichester-Clark would manage to obtain some goodwill when he, as one of his first acts in office gave an amnesty for all offences connected with the demonstrations since October 5<sup>th</sup>, a decision that would make Ian Paisley and Major Bunting free men. His hope was that all would see that this had been done in order to restore the peace, and that the community would respond in a spirit that showed that they recognised a shared responsibility with the government to achieve this. If they did not, Chichester-Clark claimed, disharmony would persist, and the economic situation would be in danger.<sup>326</sup>

The decision was received with enthusiasm from both loyalists such as Desmond Boal, who called it a bold and adventurous act, and by civil rights leaders such as John Hume, who expressed the hope that this would be an indication of the spirit in which the government would deal with the situation.<sup>327</sup> In a rare instance, the government had managed to please both the loyalists and the civil rights campaigners. Judging from my material, the launch of the amnesty was one of the main reasons why Chichester-Clark received a period of goodwill in the beginning of his premiership. It was one of the few times both the civil rights movement and the loyalists saw a government action as a genuine act of goodwill, and not a

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<sup>324</sup> Belfast Telegraph:2/5-1969

<sup>325</sup> Belfast Telegraph:3/5-1969

<sup>326</sup> Belfast Telegraph:6/5-1969

<sup>327</sup> Belfast Telegraph:6/5-1969

trick to appease one side over the other. But even though the motion was greeted with optimism, it would not take the people of the street.

In early May 1969 Paisley announced that he would lead a parade through Belfast.<sup>328</sup> Even though the loyalists remained on the street, there was something new about their protests. *The Protestant Telegraph* wrote that the loyalists would not organise counter-demonstrations to the “CRA-IRA” front, they would leave the government to deal with them.<sup>329</sup> Speaking to a crowd of several thousand after his release, Paisley announced that O’Neillism was dead, and that it was worth going back to prison to rid the country of O’Neill once and for all. He said that if a civil rights demonstration moved through a Protestant area, damaging property, the Loyalist would step up. But as long as the new Prime Minister stopped the civil rights marchers, and did not disband the B-Specials, Paisley would give him his full support.<sup>330</sup> There was a willingness among the loyalists to give the new PM a chance to show that he would not be dictated by the civil rights movement the same way they felt O’Neill had. The civil rights movement was also willing to give Chichester-Clark a chance to show that he would deal with their complaints.

NICRA announced that they would call off their civil disobedience campaign for the time being. The organisation was sceptical, but they decided to give the government a chance to prove that they were sincere in their intent to deal with the grievances at the local government level.<sup>331</sup> There was at this time something that looked like a fragile peace. The new Prime Minister tried to balance the same line as O’Neill, by trying to assure that he would make changes, but not too drastic changes. He continued with a promise that the government would propose positive proposals for the reorganising of the local government. He also assured that there would be no wavering in the governments resolve to maintain the link with Great Britain.<sup>332</sup> It did not look like much had changed with the new Prime Minister. He had given cabinet posts to some of the hardliners, but it looked like he would continue along the path set by O’Neill. So what would separate him from O’Neill?

For one thing he attacked the civil rights movement right from the start. Speaking to the Mid. Ulster Scout Council in Cookstown, Chichester-Clark said that “*the social parasites*” could make their protest since other people provided them with a livelihood.<sup>333</sup> The only reason the minority could choose to opt out, was that the majority was opting in, he claimed.

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<sup>328</sup> Belfast Telegraph:7/5-1969

<sup>329</sup> Protestant Telegraph:17/5-1969

<sup>330</sup> Protestant Telegraph:14/6-1969

<sup>331</sup> Belfast Telegraph:8/5-1969

<sup>332</sup> Belfast Telegraph:7/5-1969

<sup>333</sup> Belfast Telegraph:7/5-1969

Because they were so noisy they did not realise what a “*tiny and unrepresentative minority*” they were.<sup>334</sup> This was strong words, and he most likely was talking about the Peoples Democracy, still most Catholics would probably take offence. This separated him from O’Neill, who for the most part had tried not to speak down to the civil rights movement, and had done so only on a few occasions. Chichester-Clark made it perfectly clear the he did not regard the Peoples Democracy as a sincere organisation. Because as he said “*never was a name so ill chosen as the Peoples Democracy.*”<sup>335</sup> They did not represent the people and they had scant respect for democracy, according to Chichester-Clark. Where was the democracy if militant groups were to dictate to parliament what laws should be passed, he asked.<sup>336</sup> He told a unionist rally that the “*rabble-rousers*” was deadweight around Ulster’s neck. He knew that there were moderate elements within the civil rights movement, and he felt that it was high time that these would separate themselves from the anarchist like Michael Farrell and Bernadette Devlin.<sup>337</sup> Even if he still believed that there was a sincere element within the civil rights movement, he could not have it seem as if he implemented the reforms because of their pressure. If he did so, he would most probably face opposition from the loyalists.

Chichester-Clark made it therefore clear that he would not yield to pressure from NICRA.<sup>338</sup> Chichester-Clark continued with argument that proper democratic procedure belonged within the walls of the parliament. In fact he compared the demonstrations in the street to holding a gun to the government’s head.<sup>339</sup>

Faulkner was at this time fully behind the government again. He refused to accept that it was the actions of the civil rights movement that had lead to the reshaping of the local government. He said that it had not come as an atoning of a sinful past; the work had started long before a single civil rights banner had been raised.<sup>340</sup> This goes to show that the government felt it necessary to stress that the reforms had not come as a result of the civil rights campaign. There can be several reasons for this. One can be that they wanted to avoid a British perception of a backwards Northern Irish government who only had given the Catholics reforms because of a civil rights campaign. It can also be because the government did not want the loyalists to perceive the reforms as a result of pressure from the civil rights movement. This might explain why Chichester-Clark used stronger words to characterise the

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<sup>334</sup> Belfast Telegraph:7/5-1969

<sup>335</sup> Belfast Telegraph:30/5-1969

<sup>336</sup> Belfast Telegraph:30/5-1969

<sup>337</sup> Belfast Telegraph:5/7-1969

<sup>338</sup> Belfast Telegraph:21/5-1969

<sup>339</sup> Belfast Telegraph:5/6-1969

<sup>340</sup> Belfast Telegraph:26/6/1969



movement than his predecessor had. Regardless the reason, the government pressed on with the reforms.

On the 9<sup>th</sup> of May the unionist delegates endorsed the government's plans to introduce one-man, one-vote in 1971. It seems as if Chichester-Clark received less opposition than O'Neill because of the fear that the party would split again. The former Prime Minister Lord Brookeborough carried the motion, and he said that it was only through unity that the Prime Minister could resist the pressure from Whitehall and the streets.<sup>341</sup> The British perception of the situation was always an aspect the government had to deal with. As long as the British government pushed for reforms, the Northern Irish government would have to deal with the civil rights movement in a way that made it seem as if they took the complaints seriously. Yet at the same time they could not act in a way that gave the loyalists the impression that they were giving into pressure. This may help to explain why they pressed on with reforms they knew the loyalist community would object to, but at the same time said that the reforms had not come as a result of the civil rights campaign. At this time it seems as if the acceptance of the civil rights movement's way of protest, and the belief in their allegations was somewhat weakened with the new administration. But the government still said that there were problems to be dealt with, and they would therefore continue with the reforms.

The opposition MPs accepted the government's timetable for the introductions of the reforms, this after they had private talks with the Prime Minister. The decision was published in an all-party statement.<sup>342</sup> The fact that the opposition got to be a part of the decision process was something new. The situation seemed to be much calmer than during the previous months under O'Neill, but there were mutterings of discontent over the reorganisation of the local government. Chichester-Clark still managed to remain in control, but there were small signs that indicated that the party was not completely united.<sup>343</sup>

This is for example demonstrated when Chichester-Clark lashed out against the "*so-called*" unionists, who he felt kept throwing stones at the government. He said that if Carson and Craig had been forced to look over their shoulders in 1912, Ulster would not have been a part of the United Kingdom.<sup>344</sup> By using Carson and Craig, Chichester-Clark did the same as Paisley, and presented himself as the protector of their heritage.

Paisley posed a real threat to the Unionist Party, since as we have seen in the previous chapter, his support among the Protestants was growing. But he did not attack the policies of

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<sup>341</sup> Belfast Telegraph:9/5-1969

<sup>342</sup> Belfast Telegraph:19/6-1969

<sup>343</sup> Belfast Telegraph:26/6-1969

<sup>344</sup> Belfast Telegraph:5/7-1969

the new government right from the start. Chichester-Clark did manage to get the support from Paisley. After giving Paisley assurances that the government would continue the traditional unionist policy, and that he would not meet the Irish Prime Minister before the Irish Prime Minister acknowledged the constitutional position of Northern Ireland, Paisley promised the Prime Minister his full support.<sup>345</sup> This did not mean that Paisley would remain quiet. When he and some of his supporters gathered to salute the Queen as she travelled to the Church of Scotland general assembly, he also had with him a banner that said: “*the Pope of Rome is a man of sin, and the anti-Christ.*”<sup>346</sup> On the other side of the road, NICRA held high placards which called for an end to bigotry and ignorance.<sup>347</sup> This goes to show that the goodwill only extended to the government. The animosity between the civil rights movement and the loyalists persisted.

Even so, Paisley did remain much more in the background in this period than he had during the last months of O’Neill’s leadership. When a civil rights march was to be held in Strabane, Paisley said that he would not interfere as long as the government did not break down, and he could not see that happening.<sup>348</sup> There were however some mutterings of discontent among the loyalists as the new proposals for local government did not go well over with the loyalists. *The Protestant Telegraph* asked if Ulster was being betrayed. The reason for this was a statement from Faulkner stating that the plan was a legacy from the O’Neill days. If the plan were to be implemented, it would mean the loss of Derry for the Protestants, and fuelled by this victory, the Catholics would, according to the paper, move to the next area for their attack, and soon would even Belfast itself be doomed.<sup>349</sup> The fear about what would happen if the Catholics were given any concessions would make the loyalists fight almost all government proposals that would change the status quo.

If there was something new under Chichester-Clark, there was also something that would not change, and that was Craig’s insistence on criticising the policy of the government. Craig said that it was time to hit back, and hit back hard. He said that the speeches by the civil rights campaigner and MP Bernadette Devlin were nothing more than the language of Connolly socialism.<sup>350</sup> This language was reminiscing of the language used in 1912, 1914 and

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<sup>345</sup> Belfast Telegraph:10/5-1969

<sup>346</sup> Belfast Telegraph:20/5-1969

<sup>347</sup> Belfast Telegraph:20/5-1969

<sup>348</sup> Belfast Telegraph:18/6-1969

<sup>349</sup> Protestant Telegraph:12/7-1969

<sup>350</sup> James Connolly was a Irish patriotic Marxist, who played a vital role in the Irish fight for home rule. Bew:2007:365, 373

1916.<sup>351</sup> By connecting the current situation at that time to these years, Craig implied that there was nothing new with the civil rights movement. Their goal was not one of modernising; it was as it always had been a question of a united Ireland. So even though Craig said that he hoped that Chichester-Clark would succeed, he also made it clear that he would not accept that the new PM gave into pressure from “*the revolutionary groups*” within the community.<sup>352</sup>

It caused strong discontent among Unionist Party members, when Craig once again called for a new administration. Craig described most of the reforms the government was implementing, as foolish and unnecessary. He felt that the only thing that had changed since O’Neill was the Prime Minister. The cabinet was still the same, he claimed.<sup>353</sup> Craig felt that the government’s intent to implement the reforms were an indictment of the unionists of the past, and this would make people feel ashamed of the Unionist Party, and eventually destroy it.<sup>354</sup> The claim that the reforms were “foolish and unnecessary” was not a new allegation. Those who viewed the civil rights movement as a front movement did not accept the need for reforms. So when the government had implemented the reforms, it meant that they had succumbed to pressure. This was a view that would be frequently expressed in the time to come, but in the beginning it seemed like Craig was the only one who strongly hit out at the new PM. This would not last, however, and Chichester-Clark’s honeymoon period came to an abrupt end when the violence started up again.

The first months of Chichester-Clark’s premiership was characterised with a fragile period of calm. This did not come as a result of a new policy. The new Prime Minister continued with the reforms the last Prime Minister had set in motion. The calm came because of a perception among the civil rights movement and the loyalists that the new PM would implement a new policy. Chichester-Clark earned himself the period of calm by granting amnesty to all that had been arrested or charged with offences relating to the troubles caused by the civil rights movement. This pleased both the loyalists and the civil rights movement, and gave Chichester-Clark a chance to prove that he was sincere in his effort to deal with their grievances. The animosity between the civil rights protesters and the loyalists did not go away, however, and the peace was therefore an artificial one. The two movements had so different perceptions of what the new government would have to do to show that it was sincere, that it was only a question of time before Chichester-Clark would be forced to do something that would alienate one of the groups. With the civil rights movement, the loyalist movement and

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<sup>351</sup> Belfast Telegraph:30/5-1969

<sup>352</sup> Belfast Telegraph:30/5-1969

<sup>353</sup> Belfast Telegraph:3/7-1969

<sup>354</sup> Belfast Telegraph:3/7-1969

the British government pressuring he had to do something, but he did not find the balance the troubles could ignite again.

The unionist view on the civil rights movement changed somewhat with the new Prime Minister. Chichester-Clark used a stronger language than O'Neill had used to characterise the movement, especially the Peoples Democracy. In addition it seems as if the acceptance of the civil rights movement's way of protest became more frowned upon within the Unionist Party. Yet there still was a belief that some part of the movement was sincere in their cause.

Paisley and the loyalist stopped arranging counter demonstrations against civil rights demonstrations during the first few months of Chichester-Clark's premiership. They did not do this because they had changed opinion on the civil rights movement, but as a gesture towards the new PM.

## ***BACK TO THE STREET***

The fragile peace that had lasted since Chichester-Clark took office would come to an end in July 1969 when a new period of violence erupted.

It soon became clear that the new PM had not made the civil rights movement friendlier towards the Stormont parliament, or more willing to accept the jurisdiction of the parliament. On the 4<sup>th</sup> of July something new happened as NICRA announced the plans for a "signing of the covenant", which meant the signing of a document which called for British intervention in Northern Ireland. In the document they wrote that they demanded justice and civil rights for all, and pointed out that Westminster had the constitutional responsibility to remove these grievances.<sup>355</sup> This was a new demand from the civil rights movement, and it would most likely fuel the suspicion that the movement's real goal was the destruction of the Northern Irish state.

The fact that the loyalists had stopped to arrange counter-demonstrations to the civil rights demonstrations, did not mean that they removed themselves from the street. Paisley announced in July of 1969 that he would hold a march in Newry. He said that it was time that the Protestants took back Newry, after the "*tragic happening*" when the civil rights movement and the IRA had marched through the town for the first time for 49 years.<sup>356</sup> He went on to say:

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<sup>355</sup> Belfast Telegraph:4/7-1969

<sup>356</sup> Belfast Telegraph:7/7-1969

We shall march through the town with the flag of our country and demand civil rights for Protestants. We shall never rest before we have civil rights for Protestants.(..) We want to tell the CR agitators and the IRA that we just as good men as our forefathers. Let them not mistake our tolerance for weakness(..) We are taking up the gauntlet that has been thrown down at us.<sup>357</sup>

Paisley still said that he would support Chichester-Clark, but only as long as the Prime Minister stuck to the constitution, defended the province, and did so by ruling firmly. But if he let the civil rights movement march through Protestant areas they would say “*no surrender*,” Paisley argued.”<sup>358</sup> For Paisley it was not a right for Catholics to parade through a Protestant area, and if they did so, Paisley seemed to regard it as a breach of Protestant civil rights. It seems as if Paisley thought of the civil rights gains of the Catholics as a loss for Protestant civil rights. This was one of the reasons for his ‘Protestant civil rights campaign’.

The relative peace that had lasted since Chichester-Clark became PM came to an abrupt end when the violence flared up again, and once again Derry was the stage for the violence. On the 13<sup>th</sup> of July youths fought fierce fights with the police, in riots which, according to *the Belfast Telegraph*, overshadowed all other incidents in the city since the 5<sup>th</sup> of October 1968. The rioting was not instigated by the civil rights movement. The Derry Citizens Action Committee strongly condemned the “*wanton hooliganism and looting*”.<sup>359</sup> They said that the ones responsible for the rioting were not representative for anyone in the civil rights movement or any Roman Catholic.<sup>360</sup> The important new element with this event is that the violence did not come as a result of a demonstration by the civil rights movement, and this indicates that the movement was no longer able to control the actions of the Catholic community to the same extent as before.

The violence spread to Belfast the following days when violence erupted between Protestants and Catholics in Shankill Road. *The BT* wrote that the city had the Derry air, a city chewed up by violence. The riots lasted for two days, and 55 persons were arrested, and 32 policemen injured. Paisley had pleaded for people to calm down and go home, but to no use.<sup>361</sup> This shows that Paisley was not in control over the loyalists, a development similar to the way that the civil rights movement was losing control over rioting in the Catholic community. The fact that the violence did not come as a result of a civil rights march, and the fact that Protestants participated in the violence, did, however, not stop people from blaming the civil rights movement.

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<sup>357</sup> Belfast Telegraph:7/7-1969

<sup>358</sup> Belfast Telegraph:7/7-1969

<sup>359</sup> Belfast Telegraph:14/7-1969

<sup>360</sup> Belfast Telegraph:14/7-1969

<sup>361</sup> Belfast Telegraph:4/8-1969

*The Protestant Telegraph* wrote that the civil rights movement had put street bands of accomplished rioters who were “*trained in the art of street warfare and revolutionary tactics*” on the street.<sup>362</sup> The paper said that the Protestants could not wait to find out what their enemies would do next, they had to prepare for any event.<sup>363</sup> The civil rights movement was not the only one the loyalists blamed for the troubles. On the 19<sup>th</sup> of August the Ulster Constitution Defence Committee and the Ulster Volunteer Protestants issued a joint statement. They stated that it was the “*abysmal failure*” of the government that had led to the situation. Now they were “*reaping the dreadful harvest of the O’Neill years.*”<sup>364</sup> The organisations “*utterly condemned the acts of violence*”, but the acts of loyalist violence had come as a result of a terrible frustration and disillusionment from the Protestant population they claimed. The government had forced the situation when they, because of fear, had let the “CRA-IRA” conspiracy unfold, and at the same time hit hard down on Protestant processions. It was alleged that the government had been exploited by the Roman Catholic hierarchy, and had no longer any mandate from the people of Ulster to continue its policy of appeasement.<sup>365</sup> The honeymoon period was definitely over for Chichester-Clark. The violence had started up again, and the loyalists were no longer willing to give Chichester-Clark the benefit of the doubt.

The worsening situation did not stop Paisley from pressing on with the arranging of the loyalist march in Newry on the 16<sup>th</sup> of August. The march was a collaboration between the UCDC and UVP. Both organisations rejected that they had any association with the rioters in Belfast, but the organisations felt that if the government had not condoned the violent actions by the IRA, PD and NICRA front organisations, the riots would never have occurred. The statement warned the government that they should not try to stop the loyalist processions. Catholic agitations should not be used as an excuse for turning on the Protestants.<sup>366</sup> This fit nicely in with the reasoning the loyalists used. They felt that it was the Catholics that stood behind the violence, and if the violence was used as an excuse to stop what they saw as a lawful loyalist protest, it would be an infringement of their rights. Whenever this happened they warned that they would intensify their Protestant civil rights campaign. This is another similarity between Paisley and his followers and the civil rights movement. Both sides refused to give up their right to protest in the street, even if the protest could cause disorder.

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<sup>362</sup> Protestant Telegraph:2/8-1969

<sup>363</sup> Protestant Telegraph:2/8-1969

<sup>364</sup> Protestant Telegraph:16/8-1969

<sup>365</sup> Protestant Telegraph:16/8-1969

<sup>366</sup> Belfast Telegraph:5/8-1969

The reintroduction of violence produced something new in Northern Irish politics. In an attempt to achieve peace, the opposition joined the government in a joint appeal to the community to restore law and order. The statement said:

While putting forward different views on the origins and background of the recent disturbances there was general agreement that all those who had political or other influence in the community should in the present situation use it for a reduction in the temperature.<sup>367</sup>

The new situation had brought the moderate elements in Northern Ireland closer together, and they were willing to put away some of their differences in order to restore the peace.

The appeal achieved little, however, and on the 12<sup>th</sup> of August 1969, there were new confrontations between loyalists and Catholics in Derry, as an Apprentice Boys parade was attacked by Catholics from Bogside. Among the marchers was the former Minister of Home affairs, William Craig.<sup>368</sup>

Chichester-Clark made it perfectly clear that the recent violence had not come as a result of a minority seeking political rights by lawful means. Rather, he viewed it as a political conspiracy seeking to overthrow the government and constitution. Those who “*cry so loudly for British intervention*” saw it as a halfway house on the road to an Irish republic.<sup>369</sup> NICRA’s demand of British intervention had made Chichester-Clark more convinced that there were ulterior motives behind the campaign. The statement also shows that the civil rights movement was being blamed for troubles it had expressly condemned, and had taken no part in. At this time Catholic rioting was labelled as civil rights rioting, and this led to further doubt of the movement’s intentions.

As a method to stop the rioting Chichester-Clark restricted the right to hold ordinary processions, because it “*was a plain fact*” that any demonstration, however well organised and inoffensive could provide the occasion for disorder.<sup>370</sup> This was not enough to restore the peace, however, so on the 15<sup>th</sup> of August the British Army moved into Northern Ireland. The army was ordered into Belfast by the British Prime Minister Harold Wilson, after an emergency request by Chichester-Clark. The mission was to restore the peace after the latest rioting.<sup>371</sup> The introduction of the army made Chichester-Clark’s position more vulnerable since it became harder to profess control when he gave away much of the security policy to the army and British government. Chichester-Clark experienced how much discontent it could cause if the loyalists thought he was giving into pressure from the British government, when,

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<sup>367</sup> Belfast Telegraph:5/8-1969

<sup>368</sup> Belfast Telegraph:12/8-1969

<sup>369</sup> Belfast Telegraph:14/8-1969

<sup>370</sup> Belfast Telegraph:14/8-1969

<sup>371</sup> Belfast Telegraph:15/8-1969

as a result of talks between himself and British Prime Ministers, it was suggested that the B-Specials should be disbanded. This pleased some of the civil rights campaigners. Bernadette Devlin said that “*Mr. Wilson had given hope that now things are going to be for the better for the people in Ulster.*”<sup>372</sup> But not all were pleased. Civil rights leader Frank Gogarty said that he was dissatisfied by Wilson’s remarks, since the Stormont government had no right to continue.<sup>373</sup>

The news was not well received by the unionist hardliners and the loyalists. Craig said that if this were to be, the government would have no choice, but to resign. Ian Paisley said:

Mr Wilson has capitulated to the hierarchy of the Roman Catholic Church by destroying at a stroke by the pen the Special Constabulary- Ulster loyalist’s last line of defence(..) He has done exactly what the Civil Rights Association and the IRA wanted him to do. Ulster’s Protestants must now join themselves together as their fathers did in 1912.<sup>374</sup>

Under O’Neill the British government made threats to force the unionist dissenters to fall back in line. But during the increasing violence the British government could not put Chichester-Clark in the same situation. In a joint statement, published in a commentary to the Cameron rapport, the British government gave Chichester-Clark full support. They gave the assurance the Northern Ireland would always be a part of the United Kingdom unless the Northern Irish people wanted different, and that the affairs of Northern Ireland were “*entirely a matter of domestic jurisdiction*”<sup>375</sup> It was important for both the Unionist Party and the British government that Chichester-Clark looked like a strong leader, but with the violence increasing and the army coming in, the Northern Irish PM was weaker than ever.

Chichester-Clark refused to take responsibility for the situation in Northern Ireland. The unionist had governed fairly and well for nearly 50 years he said. He had not turned back or slowed down any of O’Neill’s reforms. This was not the reason for the disorder; the reason could be found in the “*activities of extreme republican elements and others determined to overthrow the state*”.<sup>376</sup> Chichester-Clark’s language was now much more similar to the unionist hardliners, than that of O’Neill had been. Chichester-Clark only avoided a backbench revolt by promising that the B-Specials were not to be disbanded, and blaming Harold Wilson for the misunderstanding.<sup>377</sup> Instead Chichester-Clark appointed a non-Ulster commission to

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<sup>372</sup> Belfast Telegraph:20/8-1969

<sup>373</sup> Belfast Telegraph:20/8-1969

<sup>374</sup> Belfast Telegraph:20/8-1969

<sup>375</sup> Ulster a Program of Action: 1970

<sup>376</sup> Belfast Telegraph:18/8-1969

<sup>377</sup> Belfast Telegraph:21/8-1969



inquire into what changes that could be made in the police structure.<sup>378</sup> The committee was lead by Baron Hunt, and its intent was to:

Examine the recruitment, organisation, structure and composition of the Royal Ulster Constabulary and the Ulster Special Constabulary and their respective functions and to recommend as necessary what changes are required to provide for the efficient enforcement of law and order in Northern Ireland.<sup>379</sup>

The conclusion of the report would prove to be vital, and as I will show later in this chapter, it would make the situation more difficult for Chichester-Clark when it was presented.

As the situation deteriorated, more and more people pleaded for peace. Chichester-Clark asked people to refrain from actions and words that could worsen the situation. Craig joined in and said that he would support any appeal for peace. Ian Paisley asked the people to take down the barricades.<sup>380</sup> But the pleas went unheeded. The rioting in Belfast continued. The ones who did the rioting were mainly young people, who according to *the Belfast Telegraph*, roamed the streets looking for trouble.<sup>381</sup> This shows how out of hand the situation had become. The civil rights campaign had been pushed into the background by acts of violence. The people who had been in the foreground during the campaign had lost control over the situation. There was at this time no one who could step up as a leader in any camp, and restore the peace.

The government continued to insist that reforms were the right thing to do in order to achieve peace. Faulkner urged for the implementation of the reform plan, and said that this would be in the interest of all. Faulkner did still not believe that there was any truth in the allegations from the civil rights movement; in fact he said that evidence of real grievances were rare. But he also said that it did no matter if the grievances were real, since the sense of grievances was real.<sup>382</sup> This was pretty much the same reasoning as O'Neill had used when he was Prime Minister and it shows that there was not much that separated Faulkner from O'Neill when it came to their political conviction. They both felt that modernising was the right course for the country. The prospect of further reforms seemed more limited at this point, however, since Chichester-Clark also felt that the grievances had been met. In a dramatic tv-broadcast, he made it clear that the barricades in Belfast had to be removed, and that there would be set up a "peace-line" between Divis Street and Shankill Road. The government could not tolerate a further shift to anarchy, and Chichester-Clark would not give into pressure

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<sup>378</sup> Belfast Telegraph:22/8-1969

<sup>379</sup> Hunt Report:1969

<sup>380</sup> Belfast Telegraph:5/9-1969

<sup>381</sup> Belfast Telegraph:6/9-1969

<sup>382</sup> Belfast Telegraph:8/9-1969

from the minority, as all the legitimate demands had been met, he said.<sup>383</sup> The situation in Northern Ireland had changed dramatically since October 1968. The “peace-line”, which was a physical barrier between the Catholic and Protestant streets, demonstrated the increased separation between the two Northern Irish communities; now there existed an actual wall separating them.

The separation was enhanced through the speeches of Paisley. In a speech he said that the Roman Catholic Church was getting closer to communism day by day.<sup>384</sup> He continued his argument that it was the Roman Catholic Church that stood behind the troubles and claimed that many misunderstood the situation in Northern Ireland as a class conflict, when it according to Paisley, was a religious conflict.<sup>385</sup>

When the British PM reorganised his cabinet in October 1969, he gave four of the positions to Roman Catholics. This infuriated *the Protestant Telegraph*. The paper warned that Wilson was out for Ulster’s destruction. It was the removal of Lord Stoneham, which was “no friend of Ulster”, but a Protestant, as Minister of the Home office, the concerned the paper the most.<sup>386</sup> This position had for the first time in 50 years been given to a Catholic, Mrs Shirley Williams. Since she was a Catholic, *the PT*, argued that she owed her first allegiance to the Pope, and therefore would be “bent on the destruction of Ulster Protestantism.”<sup>387</sup> The paper called for Chichester-Clark resignation, and asked the Protestants prepare “for the final confrontation”.<sup>388</sup> The loyalists were becoming more and more sceptical over the motives of the British government. This is demonstrated in their criticism of the appointment of Shirley Williams, and through an increasing discontent over the army presence.

*The Protestant Telegraph* strongly opposed the army presence and what they saw as blatant discrimination against Protestants. The paper claimed that the army protected the lawless Roman Catholic areas, and attacked peaceful Protestants. Chichester-Clark was now, according to the paper, nothing more than a puppet to “the socialist government” at Westminster and its leader Harold Wilson, and Wilson was the puppet of Cardinal Heenan.<sup>389</sup> The strong feeling of wrongdoing in the loyalist community still made it difficult for Chichester-Clark to give too much to the Catholic community, but when the Cameron

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<sup>383</sup> Belfast Telegraph:10/9-1969

<sup>384</sup> Belfast Telegraph:11/9-1969

<sup>385</sup> Belfast Telegraph:11/9-1969

<sup>386</sup> Protestant Telegraph:23/10-1969

<sup>387</sup> Protestant Telegraph:23/10-1969

<sup>388</sup> Protestant Telegraph:23/10-1969

<sup>389</sup> Protestant Telegraph:13/9-1969

Commission delivered its rapport, it became impossible for the PM not to go on with the reforms.

To sum up; the return of the street violence had removed any goodwill Chichester-Clark had received since he took office. The fact that the civil rights movement continued with their campaign made the unionist politicians turn against it. It was a belief that the movement had received all their legitimate demands, and that their continued campaign meant that the movement had ulterior motives. NICRA's call for British intervention increased this doubt. The belief among unionist politicians that there existed sincere elements within the movement was now rapidly dwindling away. The government assured that they would continue with the reforms, but at the same time they claimed that all legitimate claims had been met.

The loyalists in Northern Ireland blamed the civil rights movement for the violence, and blamed the unionist government for not dealing with the civil rights movement with more force. The feeling among the loyalists was that they were under attack from the Catholics, and Protestants acts of violence was only a defence. There was a growing discontent over the actions of the British government, and when Harold Wilson suggested that the B-Specials should be disbanded the loyalists felt that the British government was selling them out. At the same time there was a pressure from Westminster for the continuation of the reforms, something that significantly reduced Chichester-Clark's room of manoeuvre. His chances of introducing stricter actions towards the civil rights movement became even more diminished when Lord Cameron presented his report on the causes for the unrest following the events around the 5<sup>th</sup> of October 1968 in Derry.

### ***THE CAMERON COMMISSION AND ITS AFTERMATH***

The Cameron Commission had been set up by Terence O'Neill to investigate the reasons for the troubles in 1968 to early 69. When the report was presented it passed a crushing judgment over the unionist rule in Northern Ireland. The commission upheld the civil rights movement's complaints of discrimination in local government appointments; they confirmed the allegations of gerrymandering of local government electoral boundaries, and an unfair allocation of houses. This they said had led to a "*powerful sense resentment and frustration among the Catholic population.*"<sup>390</sup> The Catholic resentment towards the B-Specials as a partial and sectarian force was confirmed, and the Special Powers Act was highlighted as one

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<sup>390</sup> Cameron Report: §229:Section 1,2,3,4

of the causes of the civil rights campaign.<sup>391</sup> The commission concluded that the former Minister of Home Affairs, William Craig's decision to ban the civil rights march on the 5<sup>th</sup> of October 1968 had:

Swelled very considerably the number of persons who ultimately took part in the march. Without this ban the numbers taking part would in all probability have been small and the situation safely handled by available police forces .(..) The police handling of the demonstration in Londonderry on 5<sup>th</sup> October 1968 was in certain material respects ill co-ordinated and inept. There was use of unnecessary and ill controlled force in the dispersal of the demonstrators, only a minority of whom acted in a disorderly and violent manner.<sup>392</sup>

This statement implies that Craig was given a large share of the blame for the violence on the 5<sup>th</sup> of October. The commission did however not accept that the entire civil rights movement had sincere intentions, when they concluded that the Peoples Democracy was an:

Unnecessary adjunct to the already existing and operative Civil Rights Association. People's Democracy provided a means by which politically extreme and militant elements could and did invite and incite civil disorder, with the consequence of polarising and hardening opposition to Civil Rights claims.<sup>393</sup>

The commission acknowledged that there were elements within the civil rights movement that had an interest in causing disorder, and this had led to a "*hardening of opposition to civil rights claims.*"<sup>394</sup> Among this opposition, Paisley and Major Bunting was attributed most of the blame for the increasing violence. The report stated that:

The deliberate and organised interventions by followers of Major Bunting and the Rev. Dr. Paisley, especially in Armagh, Burntollet and Londonderry, substantially increased the risk of violent disorder on occasions when Civil Rights demonstrations or marches were to take place, were a material contributory cause of the outbreaks(of violence) which occurred after the 5<sup>th</sup> of October(..)<sup>395</sup>

The commission expressed a conviction that the implementations of the reforms "*already promised or foreshadowed by the government with the least necessary delay*" was one "*essential step towards the development of a lasting peace.*"<sup>396</sup>

To sum up, the report was a vindication for the civil rights movement and its allegations, and it laid much of the blame for the violence on the actions of Craig, Paisley and his followers, and called for the fastest possible implementation of the reforms.

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<sup>391</sup> Cameron Report: §144-145

<sup>392</sup> Cameron Report: §229:Section 9 and 14

<sup>393</sup> Cameron Report: §229:Section 12

<sup>394</sup> Cameron Report: §229:Section 12

<sup>395</sup> Cameron Report: §229:Section 13

<sup>396</sup> Cameron Report: §232

## The response of the government

When the report was presented, Chichester-Clark gave his support and thanks to the commission. He said that the report was not an indictment of unionist rule down the years as some had claimed. Nevertheless they had to accept that there were real grievances and tensions in Northern Ireland.<sup>397</sup> This did not, however, mean that he was willing to accept that it come into being because of discrimination. He said that this fact could not be allowed to obscure the remarkable progress over almost a half century. Chichester-Clark said that there still were problems, in housing, particularly; there still were many living in unacceptable conditions. But he could not accept that the government had readily or complacently tolerated such conditions.<sup>398</sup> He denied that sectarian politics had played a part in such matters as the placing of new industry. Chichester-Clark said that he had been a member of the government at the time of the decision to establish a new University at Coleraine,<sup>399</sup> and:

(..) there was absolutely no plot to persuade the Lockwood Committee to recommend a place other than Londonderry as a location for the New University. We had no other motive than to do what was best for higher education in this Province.<sup>400</sup>

Chichester-Clark could neither accept that the local government, in general, had been conducted on any other than perfectly proper lines. But he said that they had to accept that some authorities in a number of instances had fallen below these high standards. And in the future, the government would not tolerate any cases of allocations based upon other criteria than a proper and objective assessment of need. Clark made it perfectly clear that he could not continue to lead the government if reform did not come.<sup>401</sup> The report had forced Chichester-Clark to moderate his statements that all legitimate claims had been met, but there can be no doubt that the government was sceptical towards the commission's conclusions. When one reads the motion concerning the commission it is obvious that the government's support was not so clear. The motion reads:

That this House in taking note of the Report of the Commission of Inquiry, expresses its thanks to Lord Cameron and his colleagues for their investigation into disturbances in Northern Ireland, declares its determination to remove from our society any legitimate causes of fear, distrust or injustice(...)<sup>402</sup>

Nowhere does it say that the House support the findings of the commission, it takes note of it. It confirms the government's determination to remove the reasons for fear, distrust or

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<sup>397</sup> Stormont Papers 30/9-1969: Vol. 74

<sup>398</sup> Stormont Papers 30/9-69: Vol. 74

<sup>399</sup> The decision to establish a new university in the mainly Protestant Coleraine rather than in Derry had caused discontent in the Catholic community, and increased the belief that the unionist government prioritised Protestant areas. Hennessey:1997:131

<sup>400</sup> Stormont Papers 30/9-69: Vol. 74

<sup>401</sup> Stormont Papers 30/9-69: Vol. 74

<sup>402</sup> Stormont Papers 30/9-69: Vol. 74

injustice, without mentioning what they may be. But what is clear is that Chichester-Clark did not accept that the unionist side should get all the blame. He said the following to the members of the opposition:

You must accept that fear and suspicion in this community of ours has never been one-sided. A fear which one does not share and may not understand can often seem absurd, but that does not make it less real. The people you represent will now again have the opportunity to play a full and constructive part in the public life and activities of Northern Ireland.(..) I say "again" because I believe it was never the intention of the founding fathers of our State to debar our Catholic citizens from a full part in affairs. If, later on, attitudes developed which were harmful to the cause of communal understanding, was this not due in very large part to a standing aside, to a refusal of allegiance, and to a policy of public boycott?<sup>403</sup>

Chichester-Clark wanted to divert the blame away from the government. This is why he said that the opposition's lack of participation had contributed to the lack of Catholic influence in the Northern Irish society. In addition he defended the actions of the unionist governments by saying that one had to accept that there were those who had an interest in strife, who tried to subvert the constitutional position of the state. Clark asked all sides of the house to come together and resist those elements: One should come together and condemn alike Burntollet and Newry and the mentality represented in the events which took place there.<sup>404</sup> Condemning Protestant acts of violence is something Chichester-Clark did not do much. He was more than willing to condemn the violent actions by Catholics, but he was more hesitant to condemn Protestant violence. The PM's position did not change much with the report. He removed himself somewhat from his earlier position which implied that all grievances had been dealt with, and promised to continue with the reforms.

Chichester-Clark was not the only one within the government who felt that the unionist should not get all the blame. During the debate Brian Faulkner tried to clarify the rights of those who wanted the change the constitutional position of Northern Ireland. As long as they were determined that it should be done in a democratic fashion, they had the same rights as everybody else.<sup>405</sup> But at the same time he said:

When people complain that they are prevented from playing a full part in Northern Ireland's affairs because they are opposed to the position of Northern Ireland within the United Kingdom, when they differ not only from the Government party but from majority opinion in Ulster, they create distrust and fear in the minds of hundreds of thousands of ordinary people. They must really understand that. It is for that reason that it has been hard to take critics into full consultation or full partnership. Ordinary,

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<sup>403</sup> Stormont Papers 30/9-69: Vol. 74

<sup>404</sup> Stormont Papers 30/9-69: Vol. 74

<sup>405</sup> Stormont Papers 1/10-69: Vol. 74

responsible people have asked again and again how people who are constantly ready to deny our position in the United Kingdom can be accepted as partners.<sup>406</sup>

The nationalist and Catholic community had, according to Faulkner, right from the start the full chance of getting their opinions heard.<sup>407</sup> So according to Faulkner people had the right to pursue a change of constitutional position, but if they did they could not expect the government to heed to their criticism. So in Faulkner's opinion the criticism levelled against the unionist governments could be explained by the Catholics opposition against the constitution.

There was a feeling among the moderate unionists that they should get something in return for their willingness to implement the reforms. Chichester-Clark said in a speech to young unionists that the choice ahead was one "*between absolute fair and just government, or no government.*"<sup>408</sup> But as they did that, he felt that they had the right to demand something in return. The minority had to accept that the decisions of the majority on the basic constitutional issue were democratic decisions, they had to play a full part in the life of the country without inhibitions, and the representatives from the opposition had to shed their bitterness resulting from the recent strife.<sup>409</sup> The government issued a statement where it said that it there had been well-meaning organisations, that tried to put the spotlight on genuinely held grievances, but these organisations had been exploited by "*ill-disposed people for their own ends*".<sup>410</sup> The faith in the civil rights movement was rapidly dwindling away. The belief became more and more that the civil rights movement had been taken over by people with sinister motives.

Chichester-Clark was disappointed over what he felt as the lack of support from both unionists and the opposition. He had expected more involvement in the debates from the unionists, and he deplored the "*Inability of the opposition to rise to the needs of a critical hour in Northern Ireland's history. Every old grievance or imaginary grievance has been trotted out again, quite regardless the change of train.*"<sup>411</sup> This statement shows that Chichester-Clark still held to his opinion that all grievances had been dealt with. It was time for the opposition to ask themselves what they could do to improve the situation, he said.<sup>412</sup> The fact that the opposition not had participated fully in the parliamentary process was the unionist excuse for the opposition's lack of political influence.

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<sup>406</sup> Stormont Papers 1/10-69: Vol. 74

<sup>407</sup> Stormont Papers 1/10-69: Vol. 74

<sup>408</sup> Belfast Telegraph:30/9-1969

<sup>409</sup> Belfast Telegraph:30/9-1969

<sup>410</sup> Belfast Telegraph:11/9-1969

<sup>411</sup> Belfast Telegraph:4/11-1969

<sup>412</sup> Belfast Telegraph:4/11-1969

Even though the unionist Prime Minister criticised the opposition, my material demonstrates that the opposition and the minority had a much bigger say in Northern Irish politics than ever. In a speech about the situation in Derry the PM said that “*only by planning together, achieving together, working together, can its people (...) work out the future we want for them*”.<sup>413</sup> Chichester-Clark also gave assurances that Catholics were welcome in the Unionist Party, and he believed that an increasing amount of Catholics saw themselves as unionists.<sup>414</sup>

The Cameron rapport did not change the opinions among the Northern Irish politicians much. Those who had supported the claims of discrimination, took it as proof that they had been right, whereas those who had been sceptical said that there were grievances, but that this did not mean that they stemmed from discrimination. Those who had denied that discrimination existed dismissed the rapport as false. What the report did do was to give credibility to those who fought for civil rights in the eyes of the British government. This would make it harder for the unionist government to use more force against the civil rights movement or delay the reforms. The situation was not made easier when the loyalists completely rejected the conclusions of the commission. This gave Chichester-Clark and his government very little room to act.

### **The loyalist response to the commission**

The loyalists made it very clear that they did not accept the Cameron reports conclusions. Major Bunting said that the commission had not “*got to the bottom of all the lies submitted to it as bona-fide evidence*.”<sup>415</sup> When the truth came out, the loyalist would be vindicated, and the world would see that Ulster was not a divided country, but a victim of an international Trotskyite movement and conspiracy. Desmond Boal called the rapport an “*enormous damp squib*.”<sup>416</sup> The press had, according to Boal, already begun to try to convince people that the rapport was some sort of divinely revealed truth, but he hoped that people understood that it was nothing of the sort.<sup>417</sup>

Craig continued his denial of the existence of discrimination in Northern Ireland. Craig stated that the report had little to offer or contribute to the problems of Northern Ireland. He felt that the appointment of the Cameron Commission was not only an abdication of

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<sup>413</sup> Belfast Telegraph:6/11-1969

<sup>414</sup> Belfast Telegraph:21/11-1969

<sup>415</sup> Belfast Telegraph:12/9-1969

<sup>416</sup> Belfast Telegraph:12/9-1969

<sup>417</sup> Belfast Telegraph:12/9-1969



authority, but since it came to being in a time when a serious effort was being made to undermine the rule of law: “*it gave some credibility to those who with the utmost recklessness, were coming to the streets, disrupting the peace of the community and using vicious tactics, including the use of weapons which could cause death and destruction.*”<sup>418</sup> Ulster had paid a heavy price for those tactics, he said. Those who, according to Craig, had set out deliberately to create massive civil disorder with the purpose of undermining the parliament and government of Northern Ireland, had succeeded beyond their wildest dreams.<sup>419</sup>

Paisley dismissed the conclusions of the commission. In a speech delivered at Bob Jones University, Paisley said that the conclusions of the commission could not be valid, since all the evidence before the commission had been given anonymously.<sup>420</sup> The Protestants would, according to Paisley, not have anything to do with a commission of that sort, and had therefore not given their side of the story. He went on to say that it was because of this that the commission had come to the conclusion that he was “*the big bad wolf, running around Ulster.*”<sup>421</sup> The commission had condemned the unionist government, the police, William Craig, and the B-Specials, on the “*basis of evidence that never saw the light of day*”.<sup>422</sup>

The loyalist opposition to the Cameron report was unison. They said that the commission’s conclusions had been made without testimonies from loyalists, and could therefore not be valid. The loyalist’s point of view made it difficult for the government to act upon the report without criticism. If they did nothing the British government and civil rights movement would object, and if they followed the recommendations, the loyalists would express their discontent.

The situation was not made any easier by the continuation of the violence on the streets. In the middle of October 1969 Constable Victor Arbuckle became the first policeman to be killed during the troubles. For two nights loyalists rioted in Shankill Road, resulting in the deaths of three people, and 66 injured.<sup>423</sup> With the violence came also the calls for responsibility.

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<sup>418</sup> Stormont Papers 1/10-69:Vol. 74

<sup>419</sup> Stormont Papers 1/10-69: Vol. 74

<sup>420</sup> Paisley: What is the real situation: published 1970

<sup>421</sup> Paisley: What is the real situation: published 1970

<sup>422</sup> Paisley: What is the real situation: published 1970

<sup>423</sup> Dixon:2001:111

### **Calls for responsibility**

As the situation worsened, Paisley called for people to get off the street. Pleading to a crowd roaming around Belfast, he said that they had already proved their point and that they were only “*playing into the hands of our enemies*”.<sup>424</sup> Desmond Boal was appalled by the acts of violence that had led to the deaths of three people. In a statement he issued on behalf of the Shankill Residents Association, he said that he did not condone the acts of violence that had occurred, but it was because the people of Shankill had endured weeks of humiliation the violence had started. The confidence in the government had rapidly evaporated, and when the government had denied the Protestants “the safety valve” of open air meetings and parades, it did not, according to Boal, take long before frustrated people turned to violence.<sup>425</sup> There was a tendency among the loyalist to if not defend, at least explain the Protestant violence as a result of the Catholic violence. Since they saw the Catholic violence as an effort to undermine the constitution, they were inclined to say that the Protestant violence was justifiable. Yet, at this time, they started to express the belief that the Protestant rioting also benefitted the Catholics. The unionists did not condemn the Protestant rioters in the same way as they did the Catholics, but they warned strongly of the consequences if the violence would continue.

Faulkner said that it was not through a terrorist rebellion that Irish reunification would come, but as a result of “*traditionally minded who through confusion of a religious-doctrinal issues with civic-political ones, allow themselves to be driven by fear and short-sightedness into acting against their own best interest*”.<sup>426</sup> There seemed to be a general agreement on the Protestant side, that future Protestant violence would benefit the republicans, whereas the reasons for the violence were disputed.

The civil rights movement was considered more and more irresponsible. On the 2<sup>nd</sup> of December the Minister of Education William Long asked if there would be no end of demands from the civil rights movement, if the hand never would be outstretched in cooperation, but always with a clenched fist.<sup>427</sup> It was a feeling among the unionist that the civil rights movement had received much without giving much in return. Long said that the movement changed their slogans and demands every time they were given concessions.<sup>428</sup>

Chichester-Clark also said that it was time for people to start to act responsibly. The minority could not ride roughshod over the majority, if they continued; it would not matter if

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<sup>424</sup> Belfast Telegraph:7/10-1969

<sup>425</sup> Protestant Telegraph:23/10-1969

<sup>426</sup> Belfast Telegraph:23/10-1969

<sup>427</sup> Belfast Telegraph:3/12-1969

<sup>428</sup> Belfast Telegraph:3/2-1969

they had one man, one vote, because it would mean the death of democracy.<sup>429</sup> This did not mean that Chichester-Clark denounced the movement entirely as a republican conspiracy as many other unionist, he did still believe that there were sincere people in the movement.<sup>430</sup>

As most tried to calm the situation down, Craig came out with a controversial statement. Addressing Pottinger Young Unionists he said that if Westminster were to take over and suspend Stormont and removing the Northern Irish people's right to decide their future in relation to the Irish republic, they would oppose this with any means, and including out the use of arms.<sup>431</sup> Speaking at a unionist meeting in Glenarm, Craig denied that he supported an independent Ulster, instead he suggested that Northern Ireland should be organised in a federation.<sup>432</sup> Craig was moving further and further away from the traditional unionist policies, but at the same time he did not move closer to the position held by the loyalists such as Paisley. He was carving out his own niche within Ulster politics.

The situation was growing increasingly difficult for Chichester-Clark. Paisley said that the only thing Chichester-Clark could do to remain in power was to destroy him and his Church, and that was exactly what the government had set out to do.<sup>433</sup> Paisley did not believe that the British army acted impartial, it protected the rebels in Bogside and the Falls, and attacked law abiding Protestants, he claimed.<sup>434</sup> Soon the loyalists would also lose what they saw as Ulster's last line of defence, the B-Specials.

When the Hunt report was published on the 10<sup>th</sup> of October 1969, the situation became even more precarious for Chichester-Clark. Among the recommendations were that the B-Specials should be disbanded, and that the RUC should become an unarmed police force.<sup>435</sup> This would definitely anger the loyalist population, and make the situation worse for the Prime Minister.

1969 had changed Northern Ireland for ever, but even at the end of the year Chichester-Clark was hopeful for the future. Summing up the year, he said that:

When people would look back to 1969 not as a year of feud and near disaster, but as the year in which the province came to full maturity, realised its own strength, shed its unnecessary weakness, and made a new name for itself in Britain and the world.<sup>436</sup>

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<sup>429</sup> Belfast Telegraph:5/12-1969

<sup>430</sup> Belfast Telegraph:5/12-1969

<sup>431</sup> Belfast Telegraph:22/10-1969

<sup>432</sup> Belfast Telegraph:24/10-1969

<sup>433</sup> Protestant Telegraph:6/12-1969

<sup>434</sup> Protestant Telegraph:23/10-1969

<sup>435</sup> Hunt Report:1969

<sup>436</sup> Belfast Telegraph:29/11-1969

This was an overly optimistic statement considering the hardships that had come about during 1969. The phase after Chichester-Clark's honeymoon period ended was an ambiguous period for the civil rights movement. The violence that had erupted was not instigated by the civil rights movement, nor did it come as a result of civil rights parades. Even so, the movement was blamed for the recurrence of the violence. As a result many unionist politicians expressed more disbelief in the sincerity of the movement. Unionists now felt that the movement had been given all their legitimate demands, and that the movement's insistence to continue their campaign meant that they campaigned for a united Ireland.

When the Cameron report was presented, it vindicated the civil rights movement, and upheld most of its allegations of discrimination. This made it more difficult for the government to say that the movement was a front movement. Not because they changed their mind, and accepted that the movement should be given more concessions, but most likely because the report confirmed the movement's allegations in the eyes of the British government. The British government had called for the continuation of the reforms since O'Neill had begun them, and they would not ease up the pressure after the report gave the civil rights movement credibility. The report put the government in a squeeze between the British government and civil rights movement demands for more reforms, and the loyalist population who felt the government gave into pressure, and thereby endangered the constitution. The pressure would increase the split within unionism.

### ***UNIONISM DISUNITED: 1970-1971***

I believe we have weathered the storm<sup>437</sup>

Chichester-Clark

Make no mistake, we have been sold out.<sup>438</sup>

Ian Paisley

The allegations from Paisley and an increasingly number of both loyalist and unionist politicians that the government had succumbed to pressure, put Chichester-Clark in a precarious position. No one could doubt that the government had given into many of the civil rights demands since the reforms were on or on the way into the statute book. Since the Prime Minister could not deny that the reforms had been given, he denied that they had been given as a result of the civil rights campaign. On the 3<sup>rd</sup> of January 1970 Chichester-Clark denied

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<sup>437</sup> Belfast Telegraph:6/3-1970

<sup>438</sup> Protestant Telegraph:6/12-1969

the allegations from within the Unionist Party that the government had yielded to pressure from the civil rights movement and Westminster.

Speaking at a meeting of Central Armagh Unionist Association Chichester-Clark stated that *“Every reform on the statute book is there because we put it there. It was our decision, not the decision of the civil rights marchers, nor the decision of the Westminster politicians.”*<sup>439</sup> He also lashed out on those who spoke of *“50 years of despotic rule in Ulster”* because that *“nothing could be further from the truth. The achievements of the Unionist Party are there for all to see- we don’t need to apologise for them”*.<sup>440</sup> It was more important than ever to show that the government was in control. This was not made any easier since Chichester-Clark had accepted the recommendations from the Hunt committee, and accepted that the B-Special should be disbanded. *The Belfast Telegraph* wrote that this had led to an outcry of horror in the unionist ranks, but Chichester-Clark refused to accept that he had let the police or the B-Specials down.<sup>441</sup>

The decision would not go well down with the loyalists, but the government stood fully behind the decision, and said that they had to take action. Even if the government said it had not given into pressure, it is difficult to imagine that the B-Specials would have been disbanded if it had not been for the recommendations from the Hunt report, and pressure from the British authorities. It would be important for the government to convince the Protestant population that this was not the case, and that the government was in control.

Faulkner said that he had felt that the government had been indecisive the last time he had been in the cabinet. He implied that it was because the government had shirked its responsibilities, that the troubles had grown to the extent that it had.<sup>442</sup> Faulkner said that he had always warned of the dangerous element at work, and the need to isolate the hard core of militant republicans, and this had been done. The government’s reforms had not weakened unionism.<sup>443</sup> Even if the government felt that the reforms had not weakened unionism, it is very clear that they had weakened the Unionist Party. Soon it became clear that the umbrella-like structure that had been the Unionist Party, could not survive the new political situation that had arisen.

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<sup>439</sup> Belfast Telegraph:5/1-1970

<sup>440</sup> Belfast Telegraph:5/1-1970

<sup>441</sup> Belfast Telegraph:5/1-1970

<sup>442</sup> Belfast Telegraph:19/1-1970

<sup>443</sup> Belfast Telegraph:27/2-1970

## A less tolerant Unionist Party

For almost 50 years the Unionist Party had been a party with one main political goal, and that was the preservation of the union with Great Britain. Apart from that, there had been plenty of room for different political views, but as the situation worsened, and criticism of the government's policies increased, the acceptance for criticism from within the party became more frowned upon. This did however not stop some politicians from speaking their mind, and soon they would have to face the consequences for this.

Craig was one of those who felt that the government policy was on a wrong path, and he was not afraid to say what the government had done wrong. He said that the biggest mistake the government had done was to call in the army. Speaking to the Ulster Loyalist Association at Magherafelt he said that the government had the constitutional right to call in the army, but they had not the right to surrender control over the security forces, and by doing that they had "*committed the province to another period of violence.*"<sup>444</sup> The army had, according to Craig, allowed the creation of lawless areas by parleying with lawbreakers.<sup>445</sup> As a result of this

Stupid blunder on the part of the army, we have allowed a situation to develop which I think has been exploited by an ugly element and where decent law abiding loyalists have become so frustrated that they indulged in quite inexcusable conduct.<sup>446</sup>

He said that there could not be any excuse for the violence on Shankill Road; it was a product of the "*government's incompetence and the army's blunder as well as the Belfast peace line and the army's dealing with the IRA element.*"<sup>447</sup> Craig felt it was time for the government to start to reverse some of "*things it had done.*"<sup>448</sup> He was willing to face a constitutional crisis, rather than to "*betray unionism*". The government should carry out the policies it felt was best for the country.<sup>449</sup> Here Craig displayed the typical loyalist explanation that the Protestant violence came as a result of the Catholic violence, and that the right thing to do was to strike back at the Catholic rioters, and removing the reforms the civil rights movement had been given. This was of course not within the lines of the government's policies, and he faced opposition when he expressed a view that collided with that of the government.

Craig felt that one could not debate the differences of opinion that existed inside the Unionist Party without someone "*trying to evade the debate by attaching labels which are*

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<sup>444</sup> Belfast Telegraph:30/1-1970

<sup>445</sup> Belfast Telegraph:30/1-1970

<sup>446</sup> Belfast Telegraph:30/1-1970

<sup>447</sup> Belfast Telegraph:31/1-1970

<sup>448</sup> Belfast Telegraph:30/1-1970

<sup>449</sup> Belfast Telegraph:31/1-1970

*indented to be derogatory.*<sup>450</sup> Those who was labelled as hardliners and right-wingers, was in fact, according to Craig, the people who carried the burden of thinking progressive and imaginative terms for unionism.<sup>451</sup> This shows that Craig was starting to feel marginalised within the Unionist Party, and this belief was not without merit.

Chichester-Clark made it clear that he would no longer tolerate that people had the “*luxury of remaining under the party umbrella*” and still fight against the party’s policies.<sup>452</sup> Chichester-Clark said that the members had to choose what kind of government they wanted, a sensible and moderate, or if they wanted the policies of “*the strong arm, and the jack-boot which could only in a time lead to sectarian bloodbath in this province*”.<sup>453</sup> The majority in the party was growing increasingly frustrated the minority within the party which they felt tried to dictate over the majority. The Minister of Home Affairs Porter, said that the rebels, led by Craig, who continually feel the need to attack the party, should leave.<sup>454</sup>

Tired of the opposition from within the party, it was decided to expel five of the biggest dissenters, among those: Craig and Boal. The reason was that the five voted against a vote of confidence in the government during a debate in the Commons.<sup>455</sup> This would mean that they no longer were under the Party Whip in the Stormont Parliament, but they could still remain as members of the Unionist Party.

During the debate Craig clarified why he felt it necessary to publicly criticise the government. He said that he was disappointed that the decision to accept the Hunt reports recommendations had been taken without a debate in the commons, and claimed that they had not been given the opportunity to discuss it within the Unionist Party. He said that he could not let loyalty to the party to stop him from saying what he meant.<sup>456</sup> His frustration and the decision to expel him and the other members who voted against the confidence motion, shows that the Unionist Party had become a more closed party since the beginning of the civil rights campaign. It seems as if the government would prefer that critics would stop making their discontent known, and go along with the government’s policies in an effort to restore the peace. There was no longer room for views that conflicted with the government’s policies in the Unionist Party. In addition the government was also upset that the opposition made their discontent so clear.

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<sup>450</sup> Belfast Telegraph:14/2-1970

<sup>451</sup> Belfast Telegraph:14/2-1970

<sup>452</sup> Belfast Telegraph:6/3-1970

<sup>453</sup> Belfast Telegraph:6/3-1970

<sup>454</sup> Belfast Telegraph:14/3-1970

<sup>455</sup> Belfast Telegraph:19/3-1970

<sup>456</sup> Stormont Papers: Vol. 75:18/3-1970

Chichester-Clark hit out at both Catholic and loyalist opposition when he on the 2<sup>nd</sup> of February said that people should not waste their time making political speeches, instead they should prepare their case for the review body, and he hit out on the “*so-called loyalists*” who demonstrated in Belfast in the defence of law and order.<sup>457</sup>

Even after the expulsion of some of the most rightwing members of the Unionist Party, there was an element within the moderate fraction of unionists who felt that the Unionist Party did not represent the policies that O’Neill had begun. The split in the unionist fraction increased on the 21<sup>st</sup> of April when the Alliance Party was formed. The Party grew out of the New Ulster Movement, and many of its members came from there. The New Ulster movement had been established in early 1969 to urge moderation and non-sectarianism in politics and to press for reforms. The Alliance Party would be a unionist party with a small u, which meant that it would be a party that supported the constitutional link with Britain.<sup>458</sup> In a statement the party announced that they had succeeded in:

Creating a province-wide political organisation of the moderate people, which is firm on the constitutional issue, provides a viable alternative to the existing splintered Unionist Party, and combines Catholics and Protestants together in a partnership which is the essential prerequisite for a new deal in Northern Ireland.<sup>459</sup>

John Hunter presided over the press conference at which the party was announced. He said that the split had not come as a result of the government’s policies; rather it had occurred because they felt that the Unionist Party did not fully support the government’s efforts to reform the society. He said that the Unionist Party no longer was a “*credible political force*” and that they believed that the party would “*never recover from its present division*”.<sup>460</sup>

The party would not make any great imprint in the period which I write about, so I will not give the party much attention in this thesis. The establishment of the Alliance Party, however, shows that the alliance that had been the Unionist Party was falling apart, and that personal political convictions were starting to play a greater role than ever before. It is also an example of an event that probably would not have occurred if it had not been for the civil rights campaign. The civil rights campaign had forced the unionist politicians to take a stand, and this had brought to the surface the great political differences within the Unionist Party. The party was losing support among those who was against reforms, and among those who

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<sup>457</sup> Belfast Telegraph:3/2-1970

<sup>458</sup> Elliott:1999:368

<sup>459</sup> Belfast Telegraph:21/4-1970

<sup>460</sup> Belfast Telegraph:21/4-1970



supported them. The party's ambiguous policies made people turn to those with more clear-cut opinions.

Alongside the increasing conflict within unionism, there developed a new conflict within Northern Ireland. Up to this point it had been the Protestants who had displayed the greatest discontent over the army presences in Northern Ireland. The Catholics had mainly regarded the army as protection from the loyalist forces. On the 1<sup>st</sup> of April 1970 the first violent confrontation between the British troops and the civilian Catholic population came, when the army was attacked in Ballymurphy housing estate in Belfast.<sup>461</sup> As tension between Catholics and the army grew, loyalist anger increased when one of the traditional defences for the union was abolished.

On the 30<sup>th</sup> of April the B-Specials were officially disbanded, and were replaced by a new Ulster Defence Regiment.<sup>462</sup> The removal of the B-Specials had been one of the demands from the civil rights movement, since the Catholics felt that the all Protestant police force could not be trusted. This would cause a strong discontent among the loyalists since they tended to stress that it had been set up by the British government in 1920 to counter the IRA.<sup>463</sup> The extent of the loyalist disapproval over the government's policies would be shown when Paisley once again would fight an election.

### **The By-elections and the intra-unionist conflict**

When O'Neill was made a Lord and took his place in the House of Lord's, the Bannside seat opened up. Paisley announced that he would contest it. His main platform would be the restoration of law and order in the "*whole of Northern Ireland*".<sup>464</sup> The law and order focus was the same as the unionist party members used, but for Paisley there were just one section that escaped the law. Paisley felt that there still were Catholic areas where the law was not enforced, and he said that there had been issued an order from the head of security in the army to the RUC and USC, which said that they should stay out of some Catholic areas. This statement was rejected by the army.<sup>465</sup>

Chichester-Clark and the Unionist Party organised in an effort to hold on to the seat. Chichester-Clark went on a tour with the unionist candidate Bolton Minford.<sup>466</sup> Faulkner

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<sup>461</sup> Dixon:2001:113

<sup>462</sup> Melaugh: <http://cain.ulst.ac.uk/events/crights/chron.htm>

<sup>463</sup> Elliott:1999:640

<sup>464</sup> Protestant Telegraph:11/4-1970

<sup>465</sup> Belfast Telegraph:5/1-1970

<sup>466</sup> Belfast Telegraph:13/4-1970

issued a statement to the electors in Bannside in which he asked the people to think of the “*disastrous consequences*” the policies of Paisley would have.<sup>467</sup> This shows that the party took the threat Paisley posed seriously. The election would show who was the most successfully in attraction support from the Protestants; Chichester-Clark’s moderate policy or Paisley’s loyalism.

Considering the effort the Unionist Party put in to holding the Bannside seat, it was a major blow when Paisley won the by-election. *The Belfast Telegraph* wrote that for the first time since the reforms were implemented a substantial portion of the Protestant population had showed opposition to the changes that had been made.<sup>468</sup> Paisley’s growing support became even more evident when he beat the unionist candidate, and became MP in Westminster for North Antrim.<sup>469</sup> The reform-line in Northern Ireland was losing Protestant support rapidly.

In his maiden speech in Stormont, Paisley showed that he would not change his tone when speaking in the parliament. As one of his first statements, Paisley said that he would like to use a canon on the Minister of Commerce Bradford. He went on to say that the previous MP for the Bannside constituency, O’Neill, had talk about the British standard and way of life, and talked about himself as “*the apostle of progress*” but neglected his own constituency.<sup>470</sup>

Paisley said that he would be the same man in the commons as he was in Bannside. He would not “*stoop the way the Unionist Party stooped at a previous election*” when the party had tried to win over Catholic voters.<sup>471</sup> For Paisley it would not be natural to try to convince any other than the Protestants to vote for him, in fact he felt that it would be dishonest if he did. He did, however, demand the loyalists should be heard. Paisley hoped that the government would start to take his and the other Protestant unionists seriously. He said that he hoped that the Minister of Community relations would listen to them, even if they were a menace to his seat. Paisley was sick of the government efforts to jackboot the people he represented, his people were entitled to get their voices heard: There was only one basis for a fair society, and that was that justice was done, and seen to be done to all sections of the society.<sup>472</sup>

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<sup>467</sup> Belfast Telegraph: 14/4-1970

<sup>468</sup> Belfast Telegraph: 17/4-1970

<sup>469</sup> Belfast Telegraph: 19/6-1970

<sup>470</sup> Stormont Papers: 22/4-1970: Vol. 75

<sup>471</sup> Stormont Papers: 22/4-1970: Vol. 75

<sup>472</sup> Stormont Papers: 29/4-1970: Vol. 75

The demand for the minority to get their voice heard, sounded like something the civil rights movement demanded, and the civil rights leader and MP John Hume, said that Paisley's remarks were something that most could agree with, but one could not forget that the thing that hurt community relations was that some people held their religious views at the expense of other people. Hume said that Paisley did so when he continued to make speech after speech that were offensive to a section of the community, to which Paisley replied: "*I will continue to make them.*"<sup>473</sup> The language used by the civil rights movement and by Paisley had many similarities, but the meaning was very different. This shows how the civil rights movement's language had contributed to a change in the political language in Northern Ireland. The civil rights movement had been so successful that its opponents were starting to use the same language. This may explain why Paisley often called his campaign a loyalist campaign for Protestant civil rights.

One of the most pressing rights for the Protestant was now the right to defend one self. Speaking in the commons, Boal said that it was because of the government's failure to impose its will on the people that, the civil defence groups had appeared. The lawbreakers, in the Catholic street, Falls Road had, according to Boal, been made into public heroes, the police was cordial with them, and the army sought consultations with them. When the people from his area (Shankill Road) saw this, they started rejecting the law. The Government had to start enforcing law and order.<sup>474</sup> The right for Protestants to use violence defend themselves was defended among the loyalists in the parliament. The Catholics who committed violent acts did not receive the same support.

Paisley would criticise both sides of the house. He called the members of the opposition petrol bomb throwers, stone throwers, murders, and revolutionaries, and he blamed the government for giving into the demands from them. He said that the government did not have the courage to stand up and say no to the opposition. This had, according to Paisley, made the opposition believe that the members of the opposite side of the house would stand by, and see the members of their society being murdered without raising their voices. All the government's assurances could not allay the loyalist fear. Paisley said that the B-Specials had done a good job in keeping the security, and had been disbanded just because the government had given in to the pressure from the "*so-called*" civil rights movement, which was nothing more than an IRA front.<sup>475</sup> There had never been a greater need for loyalist demonstration, he

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<sup>473</sup> Stormont Papers:29/4-1970: Vol. 75

<sup>474</sup> Belfast Telegraph:21/5-1970

<sup>475</sup> Stormont Papers: 1/7-1970: Vol. 76

claimed, and until the government started protecting the Protestant people, they could not have the security, progress and prosperity they wanted. The government had “*utterly failed*” the Prime Minister had “*utterly failed*”, and the people were “*prey to gunmen and thugs*”<sup>476</sup> Paisley continued to blame the civil rights movement for the troubles, and the government for not using enough force to deal with it. It was a similarity between the loyalists and unionists that that the civil rights movement was blamed for all violence, even the one that occurred without any connection to a civil rights protest. The fact that he condemned the actions of the civil rights movement did not stop Paisley from advocating the use of the same methods of protest. Because of this there were now several unionists who felt that Paisley’s way to express himself contributed to the violence, just as much as the civil rights campaign, and just as they had tried to stop the civil rights movement with the Public Order Bill, they would try to stop Paisley by legislation in the parliament.

The extent of the government’s dislike of Paisley and his methods became clear when they proposed the Prevention to Incite Hatred Bill. The Bill was intended to give protection to people distinguished by their religious belief.<sup>477</sup> But it would also make it illegal to spread:

(..)harmful rumours. Such rumours have during the past year or so led directly to widespread violence and there has been some evidence that the rumours have been deliberately manufactured and spread for that purpose. It would theoretically be possible to use this Clause against persons who publish or broadcast false information(..)<sup>478</sup>

This shows how much the government felt that Paisley and his counterparts contributed to the increasing violence, and made it more difficult to achieve peace. The new modernising government found it hard to deal with the traditional Protestant beliefs of Paisley. Paisley himself felt that this was a law directed against him.<sup>479</sup> He said that the purpose of the bill was to:

(..)curb the speeches of the people whom he cannot defeat at the polls with all his skulduggery in the Press and all his lying attacks upon the loyalists of the Province. He will now seek as best he can to keep the Protestant Unionists from expressing themselves and putting forward their views.<sup>480</sup>

How much the language of the moderate unionists and Paisley differed can be seen when Paisley compared his fight to that of Jesus. Speaking in the commons, Paisley said that the same charges that had been made against him had been “*made against the person of the Lord Jesus Christ and against His Apostles. He was called a sedition-rouser by the members of the*

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<sup>476</sup> Stormont Papers: 1/7-1970: Vol. 76

<sup>477</sup> Stormont Papers: 30/6-1970: Vol. 76

<sup>478</sup> Stormont Papers: 30/6-1970: Vol. 76

<sup>479</sup> Stormont Papers: 30/6-1970: Vol. 76

<sup>480</sup> Stormont Papers: 30/6-1970: Vol. 76

*establishment of those days*".<sup>481</sup> Paisley said he would give into those who tried to make him "*dilute the views that are based on and agreeable to the Word of God*".<sup>482</sup>

This is an example that the moderates of the Unionist Party, and Paisley were fighting different battles. The fight for the moderates was for the most part a political one, but for Paisley it was a religious one. The moderates saw that Paisley's statement would worsen the situation, and introduced the law to try to stop him. Paisley saw this as a gross impeachment of his rights, since what he said was the creeds of his religion.<sup>483</sup> Northern Ireland was in general becoming less tolerant than ever before. The relationship between Catholics and Protestants were less tolerant, and the tolerance to express views that would make the situation worse was gone within the government. In addition, the relationship between the army and the Catholics were becoming much worse.

### **More violence and a new oppositional party**

Between the 3<sup>rd</sup> and 5<sup>th</sup> July the army imposed a curfew in Falls Road in Belfast. The decision came after there had occurred serious rioting, in which five people had been killed, and many more injured. The curfew was so strict that the inhabitants of Falls Road were only allowed to leave their house for two hours to do their shopping. During the curfew the army searched the houses after weapons, and a significant number of weapons were found.<sup>484</sup> Paul Dixon, Professor at Queens University, writes in his book *Northern Ireland, The politics of war and peace* that the curfew was one of the worst decisions made in Northern Ireland, because as a result of the curfew, many Catholics became alienated from the army, and turned to the IRA.<sup>485</sup>

On the 27<sup>th</sup> of July the government announced a ban on all parades in Northern Ireland until the end of January. This meant that the traditional Protestant parades, like the 12<sup>th</sup> of August would be banned.<sup>486</sup> The Apprentice Boys called the decision ridiculous, and said that it would most likely cause serious trouble. They said that the celebrations would most likely go on regardless of the government's ban, since they were "*entitled to march*".<sup>487</sup> They called the decision the "*ultimate surrender of shameless and discredited government (..) to the forces*

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<sup>481</sup> Stormont Papers: 30/6-1970: Vol. 76

<sup>482</sup> Stormont Papers: 30/6-1970: Vol. 76

<sup>483</sup> Stormont Papers: 30/6-1970: Vol. 76

<sup>484</sup> Belfast Telegraph:4/7-1970

<sup>485</sup> Dixon:2001:117

<sup>486</sup> Belfast Telegraph:23/7-1970

<sup>487</sup> Belfast Telegraph:23/7-1970

of subversion and rebellion".<sup>488</sup> The South Derry division Of the Ulster Protestant Volunteers said if the Apprentice Boys did not march on the 12<sup>th</sup> of August, they would march instead. The UPV could not accept a ban, since they felt it was obvious that if a loyalist march was held again, the Catholic rebels would use it as an excuse to defy the lawful authorities.<sup>489</sup> *The Protestant Telegraph* said that this showed how "bankrupt of loyalty, honesty and courage" the cabinet was. They went on to say that one should praise God that the Apprentice Boys had showed signs of defying the ban.<sup>490</sup> Loyalists and civil rights campaigners both saw parades as a valid method to express ones political beliefs, and when they were denied this possibility they felt as their freedom to speak was curbed. This was probably not the intent of the government, as they saw parades at this time as a threat to the peace not, a political expression. This is an example of how the new and old ways to express one self politically collided.

As the pressure from the loyalist community increased, the pressure from the British government increased too. At this time the Home Secretary, Reginald Maulding, warned that if there was any backtracking of the reforms, Westminster might assume direct responsibility over Northern Ireland. He said that if the reforms, implemented from the "*ideal of impartially and reconciliation*", were reversed, it would endanger the constitutional position of Northern Ireland.<sup>491</sup> This put Chichester-Clark in a precarious situation. At this time he could not afford to look weak in front of Westminster, since this would give fuel to the loyalists. He warned that if Westminster introduced direct rule, it might produce a very violent reaction from the Protestant-loyalist population. In a pleading statement he said to Westminster: "*For goodness sake, you must realise that we in Northern Ireland are very independent people. We want to be allowed to run our own affairs.*"<sup>492</sup> As the situation got worse and worse, the discussion of whether the government should start to intern people without trial under the Special Powers Act, started among the unionist hardliners.<sup>493</sup>

The troubles that had occurred, made the nationalists politicians come together to form a new political party. The Social Democratic and Labour Party (SDLP) was launched on the 21<sup>st</sup> of August 1970. The party was a build up of members of the old Nationalist Party, Republican Labour, and Northern Ireland Labour Parties, in addition to the civil rights movement's MPs.<sup>494</sup> The party became the political driving force for the Catholic community.

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<sup>488</sup> Belfast Telegraph:24/7-1970

<sup>489</sup> Belfast Telegraph:28/7-1970

<sup>490</sup> Protestant Telegraph: 1/8-1970

<sup>491</sup> Belfast Telegraph:11/8-1970

<sup>492</sup> Belfast Telegraph:12/8-1970

<sup>493</sup> Belfast Telegraph:4/8-1970

<sup>494</sup> Belfast Telegraph:21/8-1970

The party's strong link with the civil rights movement was demonstrated in one of the party's main political goals, which were to "*secure civil rights for all citizens, irrespective of race, creed, or political outlook.*"<sup>495</sup> The civil rights movement had thus resulted in the establishment of a traditional political party. Yet, at the same time as the nationalist population was coming closer together, the unionist collation was falling more apart.

On the 26<sup>th</sup> of August the Minister of Home Affairs Robert Porter resigned his post. Chichester-Clark would not appoint a new minister, but take the reigns of the office himself in an interim period.<sup>496</sup> *The Protestant Telegraph* was pleased with the decision, because they saw the resignation as a sign of Porter's failure, and claimed that it heralded the collapse of the government.<sup>497</sup>

As Chichester-Clark got attacked from all sides, he became more and more fed up with the civil rights movement. It was no longer only the Peoples Democracy who were labelled as a front organisation for the IRA, now NICRA was also described as such. Chichester-Clark said in a speech to the Strandtown unionists in Belfast that the right of minority groups to "*flaunt and foist and ultimately force their opinions on others*" had been established. He went on to say that "*perhaps its time for revolution. For the revolution of majorities (...) who are sick of being pushed around.*"<sup>498</sup> Chichester-Clark was sick of people using the slogans of democracy, when they showed no respect for the elected representatives of the people.<sup>499</sup> He said that NICRA's call for people to return to the street demonstrated the "*total moral bankruptcy*" of the organisation, and claimed that this revealed that it was nothing more than a front organisation for forces who sought to undermine the development and progress of the country. He asked that all moderate people should rally, "*not to the government, not to the Unionist Party, not to any single vision of Northern Ireland's future, but to the cause of democracy itself.*"<sup>500</sup> The statement is significant as for the first time since the civil rights movement had begun the whole movement was dismissed as a plot against the constitution by the Prime Minister.

Trying to avoid the return of "*politics in the street*", Chichester-Clark introduced the immediate introduction of one-man, one-vote in council by-elections.<sup>501</sup> Even if Chichester-Clark and the government said that they did not give into pressure from the civil rights

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<sup>495</sup> Belfast Telegraph:21/8-1970

<sup>496</sup> Belfast Telegraph:27/8-1970

<sup>497</sup> Protestant Telegraph:29/8-1979

<sup>498</sup> Belfast Telegraph:27/10-1970

<sup>499</sup> Belfast Telegraph:27/10-1970

<sup>500</sup> Belfast Telegraph:27/10-1970

<sup>501</sup> Belfast Telegraph:30/10-1970

movement, they could not ignore it, and the government had now given into most of the demands of the movement. This did not lead to a halt in violence, however, and the civil rights movement did not go away. This is also one of the episodes that one can see clearly demonstrated that the civil rights movement influenced the unionist government. Since Chichester-Clark dismissed the movement as a false movement, it is unlikely he would have implemented the immediate introduction of one-man, one-vote unless he had felt pressured to do so.

1970 would prove to be one of the most violent years in Northern Irish history thus far. About 100 explosions had occurred in 1970.<sup>502</sup> 2 police men and 23 civilians had been killed; in addition 191 policemen and 620 soldiers had been injured. The civilian total was unaccounted for.<sup>503</sup> The next year would be worse still.

To sum up; 1970 was the year in which the last belief in the sincerity of the civil rights movement vanished among the unionist politicians. The fact that NICRA called for the return to the street at a time when the violence plagued the province, was enough to remove any doubt among the politicians in the Unionist Party. Even so, they went on with the reforms, and introduced one-man, one-vote with immediate effect. This most likely happened because of the pressure from the civil rights movement, as well as pressure from the British government who threatened with direct-rule, if the reforms were stopped.

The success of the civil rights movement started to change the way politics was conducted in Northern Ireland. Paisley and his “Protestant civil rights movement” adopted much of the same language that the civil rights movement used. The civil rights movement’s effect on how politics were conducted in Northern Ireland would prove to be even more significant in the following year.

The acceptance of different political views diminished within the Unionist Party, and this led to the expulsion of some of the government’s strongest critics. There can be little doubt that the civil rights campaign was an important factor in bringing about a more closed Unionist Party. The political landscape was changing. The nationalist community formed a new party, based to a large degree on the civil rights platform. At the same time the most moderate elements within the Unionist Party withdrew, to form a party which they felt would better follow the reform policies of O’Neill.

Chichester-Clark’s position was becoming more and more unstable, as he received pressure from all sections of the society. The Unionist Party struggled to keep up with the

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<sup>502</sup> Elliott:1999:5

<sup>503</sup> Elliott:1999:681,684



constantly changing political situation, and it would not take long before the conflict would cost another Prime Minister his job.

### **STORMONT'S SWANSONG: 1971-1972**

On the 25<sup>th</sup> of January, following more riots in Shankill Road, 170 leading unionists called for Chichester-Clark's resignation. They signed a statement which said that the government had failed to maintain the law and security in the country, and called for a new administration.<sup>504</sup> The next day 250 unionists signed a statement in which they said that they would support Chichester-Clark.<sup>505</sup> There were still more unionists that supported the Prime Minister, than there were unionists that opposed him, but the split in the party was greater than ever before.

Faulkner said that there had been a change since last year, and that was that the government had established beyond any doubt that it was an administration of "*integrity, progressive ideals determination.*"<sup>506</sup> At the same time the republicans had been exposed for what they really were, Faulkner claimed. He went on to say that no responsible citizen could have any reservation about letting the security forces deal with the troublemakers and criminals. Faulkner made it clear that one should not confuse political activity with criminal activity. A person had, according to Faulkner, the right to push for an end to partition, but if he used force the government had the right to stop him.<sup>507</sup> Faulkner said that the republican diehards had exploited the civil rights movement for two years, but because of the actions of the government, had they now been exposed, and stood alone.<sup>508</sup> At this time the word civil rights was not much used, even by the most moderate in the Unionist Party. The unionists did no longer have any doubt that the troubles that plagued the province, came as a result of republicans deliberately trying to unsettle the situation. The ones who committed the violence were not civil rights campaigners, but rioters. This did not, however, mean that the government would abandon their efforts to get the minority involved in peaceful participation.

In a debate on cross borders relations, Chichester-Clark said that he could understand that a person would prefer to be a first-class citizen in a poor country, rather than a second-class citizen in a rich one. That is why it was the policy of the government to insure that there were no second-class citizens. He accepted that this meant something more than just fairness;

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<sup>504</sup> Belfast Telegraph:25/1-1971

<sup>505</sup> Belfast Telegraph:26/1-1971

<sup>506</sup> Belfast Telegraph:25/1-1971

<sup>507</sup> Belfast Telegraph:25/1-1971

<sup>508</sup> Belfast Telegraph:9/2-1971

it meant the possibility to participate in every section of the society and in every aspect of the institutions.<sup>509</sup> This statement shows how much the perception of minority rights had changed since the start of the civil rights campaign. In the over 40 years of unionist rule, the minority had never had the possibility to participate in upper levels of the government. Chichester-Clark's statement indicates that the Prime Minister thought that they should have a possibility to get their voice heard even in the government. When one combines this with the fact that the opposition now had been consulted in some cases, one can see that the possibilities for the Catholics to get their point across had increased since the start of the civil rights campaign. Since then, they had gone from relative political obscurity to in many ways directly influencing the political agenda.

The Prime Minister distinguished himself from Paisley, since he still would appeal to the Catholics to join in, when he in the same speech said that he did not think of unionism as a sectarian faith, but a political one and he hoped that the minority would profess it with him some day.<sup>510</sup> But if some were getting more influence, there were certainly others that felt that they got less.

At this time it is clear the Craig was displeased with his opportunities to express his views. He said that the government ridiculed all that had a different view than themselves, and that they try to make it seem like nobody but themselves could contribute with something good.<sup>511</sup> Craig's growing dissatisfaction with the Unionist Party can be seen on the 23<sup>rd</sup> of February lashed out at the Unionist Council, the governing body of the Unionist Party, and said that it was "*sick with senile decay*". He went on to say that if nothing was done to save the Unionist Party soon, there would have to be a new political organisation, "*freed from the dishonesty and quilt of the two last years*".<sup>512</sup>

### **A change of Prime Minister**

As the situation deteriorated, more and more unionists called for internment under the Special Powers Act. Faulkner said the he would only be in favour of internment if it was the only way to stop the violence.<sup>513</sup> The fact that many unionists wanted to imprison people without trial, show how much the situation had spiralled out of control, and that the call for stricter measures had now been adopted by most unionists.

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<sup>509</sup> Stormont Papers: 24/2-1971: Vol. 78

<sup>510</sup> Stormont Papers: 24/2-1971: Vol. 78

<sup>511</sup> Belfast Telegraph:30/1-1971

<sup>512</sup> Belfast Telegraph:23/2-1971

<sup>513</sup> Belfast Telegraph:9/2-1971

On the 13<sup>th</sup> of February 1971, *the Protestant Telegraph* declared that Northern Ireland had been enveloped in a war. The paper asked about how many more explosions, riots and murders that had to happen before the government woke up. The B-Specials had to be reconstituted, and a people's militia had to be formed.<sup>514</sup> According to the PT there could not be a method drastic enough to stop the rioters, since the rebels rioters had "*no rights*".<sup>515</sup>

On the 16<sup>th</sup> of March Chichester-Clark flew to London to demand more troops to deal with the crises. He would ask for an increase of soldiers from the 8 000 at the time to 12 000. If this was not granted he threatened to resign.<sup>516</sup> The British government did not give him the troops he demanded, so on the 19<sup>th</sup> of March the time was up for Chichester-Clark. He decided to resign from his post as Prime Minister.<sup>517</sup>

This time it would be Brian Faulkner and William Craig that would try to become the next Prime Minister.<sup>518</sup> Last time Faulkner lost with one vote, this time he won with 22. When the votes had been cast, Faulkner had received 26 votes against Craig's 4.<sup>519</sup> The support for the policies of the previous administrations was still great within the party, and Faulkner assured that the program of progress that the previous administrations had embarked on would be continued. Faulkner said that what was needed were practical results in dealing with the terrorism, sabotaged, riots, and disorder.<sup>520</sup> He refused to let sectarianism enter Ulster politics, and claimed that it did not matter to him where a man went to church.<sup>521</sup> Even though Faulkner said he would continue with the previous administrations policies, he was another step closer to the right wing of the Unionist Party. This can be seen when he appointed Harry West, a hardliner who had fought against both the previous Prime Ministers, as Minister of Agriculture. This appointment was not well received among the liberal wing in the party, and one PM, Anne Dickinson resigned the party whip in the commons in protest.<sup>522</sup> There seemed to have been a slow orientation to the right since Terence O'Neill's premiership. The Unionist Party had lost much of its liberal support to the Alliance Party, and people who had been backbenchers had moved into position of power.

It is indicative for how much the civil rights movement had changed the political situation in Northern Ireland that one of the first subjects Faulkner talked about in the

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<sup>514</sup> Protestant Telegraph:13/2-1971

<sup>515</sup> Protestant Telegraph:13/2-1971

<sup>516</sup> Belfast Telegraph:16/2-1971

<sup>517</sup> Belfast Telegraph:19/3-1971

<sup>518</sup> Belfast Telegraph:22/3-1971

<sup>519</sup> Belfast Telegraph:23/3-1971

<sup>520</sup> Belfast Telegraph:23/3-1971

<sup>521</sup> Belfast Telegraph:26/3-1971

<sup>522</sup> Belfast Telegraph:26/3-1971

parliament was his administration policy on parades. There he made it clear that the government would try to reserve the right to processions as far as possible. Nevertheless he saw that there were particular routes that could pose a threat to the peace, and these parades would be rerouted or banned.<sup>523</sup> This he followed up when he on the 9<sup>th</sup> of April announced a ban on parades in the Lough area in Derry, and that only traditional parades, or those already announced would be allowed to proceed over the Easter. The Lough area was the place for two parades, one republican commemoration parade and one loyalist rally arranged by the Free Presbyterian Church, which had been scheduled at the same time.<sup>524</sup> The hope that the limited ban on parades would ensure that remaining parades would proceed peacefully, would not pay off when both Belfast and Derry saw violence erupt during the Easter parades.<sup>525</sup>

Faulkner would not receive any honeymoon period from the loyalists. Paisley said that Chichester-Clark should have resigned long ago, but Faulkner would not be acceptable for the loyalist community, in fact he said that if he had to choose, he would prefer Chichester-Clark.<sup>526</sup> Boal said in the Commons that he could not support the new administration, since it was nothing new from the old. He said that he had only opposed the previous administration on one issue, and that was the law and order issue, and he had been proven right on that.<sup>527</sup> The new Prime Minister was not, according to Boal, something new from the previous. Boal expressed confusion over how some of the hardliners in the Unionist Party could accept cabinet positions in an administration that had the same policies as they had protested against. He made it clear that he would not join the Unionist Party again, even if he was allowed. He would not change his opinion, or be afraid to express it no matter what happened.<sup>528</sup>

*The Protestant Telegraph* declared that there could be no doubt that Faulkner would continue with the suppressing of loyalist activity by banning loyalist processions. The paper also predicted that Faulkner would consider interning Protestants.<sup>529</sup> This would be an infringement of the rights of Protestants, but the paper did not feel that the same should count for the “IRA rebels.” On the 29<sup>th</sup> of May, the *PT* called for “*the internment of known IRA men (including some politicians.)*”<sup>530</sup> *The Protestant Telegraph* continued to say that the fight was a fight for the survival of Ulster, and that a “*weak government have already conceded too*

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<sup>523</sup> Stormont Papers: 31/3-1971: Vol. 80

<sup>524</sup> Belfast Telegraph:9/4-1971

<sup>525</sup> Belfast Telegraph:14/4-1971

<sup>526</sup> Belfast Telegraph:19/3-1971

<sup>527</sup> Stormont Papers: 31/3-1971: Vol. 80

<sup>528</sup> Stormont Papers: 31/3-1971: Vol. 80

<sup>529</sup> Protestant Telegraph:27/3-1971

<sup>530</sup> Protestant Telegraph:29/5-1971

*much*”, and that Ulster should “*metaphorically (..)stick to its guns*”.<sup>531</sup> This statement was in many ways typical for Paisley and his paper. They had up to this time not directly called for the use of force, but they used a language that easily could be interpreted as such. Something similar can be seen on the 29<sup>th</sup> of May when the paper wrote that if the army could not control the situation, then the Protestants of Ulster would hold the province.<sup>532</sup>

After the outbreak of violence during the Easter processions, *the Protestant Telegraph* called for an inquiry into the actions of the army towards the Protestants in Newtownards Road. The paper dismissed the “*papist propaganda*” that “*harmless, unarmed prosecuted papists*” had been provoked and harried by savage Orange extremists.<sup>533</sup> Paisley said in the commons that he could not accept that it was only when Roman Catholics were fatally injured, that inquires should be held. When one looked at the patterns of events it was clear that this was the situation, Paisley argued.<sup>534</sup> The feeling among the loyalists that their grief was overlooked, while the Catholics had been given several inquires to investigate their complaints was growing, this may help to explain why the loyalists continued to call out for Protestant civil rights.

Even with the increasing violence *the Protestant Telegraph* protested when the Orange Grand Lodge of Ireland after consultation with Faulkner abandoned plans to arrange “*the greatest Protestant march in the history of Ireland.*”<sup>535</sup> The paper called the act a betrayal, and said that the responsible would be removed from their ranks.<sup>536</sup>

The insistence of both the civil rights campaigners and the loyalists to protest in the street, lead the government to allow the army to use more force. Up to this time the army had caused relative few civilian casualties, but on the 25<sup>th</sup> of May Faulkner announced that a soldier that saw someone with a weapon, or who was acting suspiciously could fire in warning or with effect without waiting for orders. This did not go well down with the SDLP, and they warned that if the powers of the parliament would be given to soldiers, they would withdraw from Stormont.<sup>537</sup> The *PT* wrote that the IRA had intensified their campaign, and that they where holding Ulster ransom. There were no signs that the rebels were on the run, and now was the time “*to shed the velvet glove and softly-softly tactics.*”<sup>538</sup> Faulkner’s statement that soldiers could shoot at bombers and people who were acting suspiciously could,

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<sup>531</sup> Protestant Telegraph:10/4-1971

<sup>532</sup> Protestant Telegraph:29/5-1971

<sup>533</sup> Protestant Telegraph:1/5-1971

<sup>534</sup> Stormont Papers: 21/4-1971: Vol. 80

<sup>535</sup> Protestant Telegraph: 15/5-1971

<sup>536</sup> Protestant Telegraph: 15/5-1971

<sup>537</sup> Hennessey:1997:192

<sup>538</sup> Protestant Telegraph: 29/5-1971

according to the paper, only be credible if it was made effective.<sup>539</sup> This was a direct call for the use of deadly force against the Catholics, and shows how extreme measures the loyalists called for. The loyalists felt that the Protestant community got the worst of the situation, while the Catholics got treated with velvet gloves, and given all their hearts desire in an effort to stop them from causing violence. The animosity towards the army was growing among both loyalists and Catholics, and both sides called for an inquiry into the actions of the army, but for very different reasons.

On the 8<sup>th</sup> of July, after four nights of riots between Catholics and the British army in Derry, a civilian was shot and died from the injuries. The army claimed that he had aimed at them with a gun, something that was denied by the other rioters. The incident led to more rioting, and on the 9<sup>th</sup> another man was shot and killed. This time the army claimed that the man had been about to throw a nail bomb. This was also denied by the local people, who claimed that the man had been unarmed. The SDLP announced that they would withdraw from Stormont if an inquiry into the murders was not held. This did not happen; so on the 12<sup>th</sup> of July the SDLP withdrew from the Stormont parliament.<sup>540</sup> The Catholics were now without political representation at Stormont, but the civil rights movement would once again be the main political vehicle for Catholics, as the movement experienced a revival when the government started to intern Catholics without a trial.

### **Internment**

On the 9<sup>th</sup> of August, Faulkner announced that he would implement internment of suspected IRA leaders under the Special Powers Act, and at the same time he announced a 6 months ban on all parades. The same day more than 300 people were taken in to custody. The decision came after one of the worst weekends of violence in Northern Ireland. One soldier died, six soldiers and 4 civilians were injured by gunfire, and several bombs exploded throughout the province.<sup>541</sup> Faulkner told the members of the parliament that since the 1<sup>st</sup> of January and up to the first week of August, 38 people had died and there had been 327 explosions. The government could not tolerate this situation to continue, and Faulkner said that the most obvious measure was internment.<sup>542</sup>

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<sup>539</sup> Protestant Telegraph: 29/5-1971

<sup>540</sup> Hennessey:1997:192-193

<sup>541</sup> Belfast Telegraph: 9/8-1971

<sup>542</sup> Stormont Papers:5/10-1971: Vol. 82

Faulkner defended the decision by saying that every other means had been tried to make “*the terrorist amendable to the law*”, they had been successful in some extent, but the terrorist campaign continued on an unacceptable level and Faulkner concluded that ordinary law was not enough to deal with the situation.<sup>543</sup> He said that the government was not acting to suppress freedom, but to allow the overwhelming mass of people to enjoy freedom. Faulkner said that he did not for one moment confused the Catholic community with the IRA, and that the acts of violence had been committed in their name or with their approval. He pleaded for the Catholics to join in to save the community, and said that his door would always be open.<sup>544</sup> Concerning the civil rights members who were interned, Faulkner said that they were interned only if they also were members of or actively involved in IRA.<sup>545</sup>

Faulkner said that he had banned all processions because the defeat of terrorism had to come before anything else. For that reason he had also decided that the security forces could not be diverted from their essential task. In addition he saw that parades resulted in violence, and that would hurt commerce, the industry and the community.<sup>546</sup> He said that he was sorry that this would interfere with rights and traditions cherished by so many, but they were at war with the terrorists, and in a war many sacrifices had to be made.<sup>547</sup>

The SDLP called the decision further proof of the total failure of the system of government in Northern Ireland, and said that they would give their full support to organisations that would organise meetings against internment. In a statement they called for all who held public positions to withdraw from them in protest, and they called for the government in Westminster to immediately suspend the system of government in Northern Ireland.<sup>548</sup> NICRA announced that they would start a campaign of civil disobedience, which would include non-payment of rents and rates. They said that they would pay no more attention to Stormont.<sup>549</sup> The decision the intern people to restore the peace, would prove to be counterproductive. After a period in which it seemed like the civil rights movement had lost momentum and fallen into the background to the violence, internment provided the movement with a renewed energy and a new fighting cause. The decision would also backfire because it removed the goodwill of the moderate Catholic opinion. The hope of a settlement based on the moderate elements in Northern Ireland seemed distant after this decision.

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<sup>543</sup> Belfast Telegraph:9/8-1971

<sup>544</sup> Belfast Telegraph:9/8-1971

<sup>545</sup> Belfast Telegraph:15/9-1971

<sup>546</sup> Belfast Telegraph:9/8-1971

<sup>547</sup> Belfast Telegraph:9/8-1971

<sup>548</sup> Belfast Telegraph:9/8-1971

<sup>549</sup> Belfast Telegraph:17/8-1971

The SDLP would indeed refuse to take part in any settlements talks while anyone was held without trial.<sup>550</sup> The fact that the civil rights movement and the opposition in Stormont were against internment is no surprise, a bit more unexpected is Paisley and Boal's opposition to the measure. Paisley told the members of the parliament that:

If a man is described as a gunman there must be evidence that he is a gunman. If there is such evidence then the place for him is not in an internment camp but in Crumlin Road prison.<sup>551</sup>

Boal said that internment had "*made matters much worse; done without principle, ineptly carried out*".<sup>552</sup> This is another example on issues in which the civil rights movement and the loyalists shared a point of view. This did not, however, mean that they had come to the same conclusion based on the same reasoning. There are indications that Paisley objected to internment because he was worried that it might be used against Protestants. He said to the MPs that "*if Protestant people were interned on the same type of flimsy evidence, hon. Members opposite would be up on their feet saying, "It should not be done."*".<sup>553</sup> Paisley took offence to a claim that he sounded like the republican opposition, and said that he advocated the strongest possible measures against the republican army, and that if they had been implemented there would have been no reason for internment.<sup>554</sup> There was therefore no sympathy towards the republicans among the loyalists. The reason why Paisley and Boal could oppose internment stemmed probably from the belief that the Catholics who committed the violence were mere criminals and could therefore be removed from the street with normal procedures.

In a parliament without the nationalist opposition, the government tried to stop the non-payment strategy of the Catholics by passing a law in an effort to force the people withholding rent, to pay. According to the government were 19% of public authority tenants withholding rents which amounted to a loss of £60 000 a week for the local authorities.<sup>555</sup> The bill would make it possible for the government to withhold governmental payments, and use those to pay the debtors.<sup>556</sup> The fact that so many were withholding rents shows how significant support the civil rights movement had obtained among the Catholic population, and shows that internment as an effort to get people off the street, proved to be

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<sup>550</sup> Belfast Telegraph:10/9-1971

<sup>551</sup> Stormont Papers:20/10-1971: Vol. 82

<sup>552</sup> Stormont Papers: 5/10-1971: Vol. 82

<sup>553</sup> Stormont Papers: 20/10-1971: Vol. 82

<sup>554</sup> Stormont Papers: 20/10-1971: Vol. 82

<sup>555</sup> Stormont Papers: 7/10-1971: Vol. 82

<sup>556</sup> Stormont Papers: 7/10-1971: Vol. 82



counterproductive. As the Catholic community came closer together as result of interment, the Protestant split became more formalised.

### **A new Protestant party**

On the 13<sup>th</sup> of September 1971 Boal formally resigned his membership in the Unionist Party. Boal, who had been out in the cold and without the party whip since he refused to support Chichester-Clark, left the party because Faulkner intended to have tripartite talks with the British and Irish governments. Boal said that he had for the last five years seen the government make blunder after blunder, while the party had stood by, condoning the actions who nourished their political enemies, and alienated their political friends.<sup>557</sup> Faulkner defended the decision to have talks with the Irish Prime Minister Lynch by saying that Lynch could influence the situation to good. The border would not be an issue, but if the talks could help to stop the violence Faulkner felt that it was worth a try.<sup>558</sup>

This sentiment was not shared by the loyalists. The Shankill Unionist Association said that “*such talks with the sworn enemy of Ulster would be a complete sell out and the betrayal of one million Protestants*”<sup>559</sup> This is another clear difference between the moderate unionists and the loyalists. Faulkner had moved the official position of the party closer to that of the loyalists by using more force to stop the violence, but he would still try to resolve the situation by talking with all the moderate sections of the society, rather than the mere use of force, such as the loyalists had cried out for during the previous years.

After his departure from the Unionist Party, it would not take long before Boal announced his intention to create his own party. On the 1<sup>st</sup> of October Boal announced that he had taken the first steps to the formation of a new party. He said that the new government perpetuated the errors of the previous administrations, and by so doing hastened the country’s political destruction and psychical chaos.<sup>560</sup> The government had failed to provide security for the population, and was now set on a course that would undermine the democratic institutions and the effectiveness of the majority to determine their constitutional future.<sup>561</sup>

The Democratic Unionist Party was formed on the 30<sup>th</sup> of October 1971, and was headed by Boal and Paisley; in addition the party had William Beattie and John McQuade as

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<sup>557</sup> Belfast Telegraph:13/9-1971

<sup>558</sup> Belfast Telegraph:13/9-1971

<sup>559</sup> Belfast Telegraph:13/9-1971

<sup>560</sup> Belfast Telegraph:1/10-1971

<sup>561</sup> Belfast Telegraph:1/10-1971

representatives in the parliament. The main issues for the party would be the security and constitutional ones.<sup>562</sup> The political goals of the party was the same as the loyalists and hardline unionists had cried out for since the start of the campaign, and it is therefore not an exaggeration to conclude that the new loyalist party had came about as a result of the civil rights campaign, and the loyalist perception of the government's failure to deal with the movement with enough force. The split of the Protestant population was now more formalised with the new parties, but there were still those who were on the outside.

Craig was at this time a somewhat diffuse political entity in Northern Irish politics. He was no longer under the Unionist Party whip, not a part of the Paisley group, and in some aspects he stood in opposition to all in the parliament. But one thing that had been and would be consistent, was his opposition to the government's policies. At this time one could see that Craig started contemplating using non-parliamentarian methods to stop the violence. He said that he would support the formation of loyalist civil defence force. Such a force would in Craig's mind give the feeling of protection in exposed areas, and give the people confidence and lessen the risk of civil war. He stressed that the force could not be a paramilitary organisation, but he said that it was a dreadful commentary on the actions of the government that Protestants had to organise such a force in order to protect themselves.<sup>563</sup> Craig wanted more internal control over the situation. He was in no way pleased with the British government's interference in Northern Ireland's internal matters. At this time he made it clear that if the situation did not change, then Ulster may have to become an independent entity.<sup>564</sup>

In an interview with *the Belfast Telegraph*, Craig said if Britain was not ready to agree to realistic policies to ensure constitutional and political stability, then it was in the interest of the people to say:

Our present constitution doesn't work. The necessary base upon which to look forward to a peaceful, prosperous future is not there, and it is in the interest of the majority to have a constitution under the Crown similar to that of a dominion.<sup>565</sup>

Craig said that this alternative was more likely than direct rule. If the British government was to implement direct rule, they would, according to Craig, immediately be in the wrong, since the British government had no right to go against the will of the majority of Ulster. If the British did so, it could no longer "*pretend to hold its head up in the democratic world*".<sup>566</sup>

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<sup>562</sup> Belfast Telegraph:30/10-1971

<sup>563</sup> Belfast Telegraph:29/9-1971

<sup>564</sup> Belfast Telegraph:29/9-1971

<sup>565</sup> Belfast Telegraph:1/10-1971

<sup>566</sup> Belfast Telegraph:1/10-1971

This answer led the interviewer to ask whether the world did not already see the democratic standards in Ulster in an unfavourable light, and if the British government would not be able to justify its actions by the fact that half a million people could not agree to serve in a parliament under the current system.<sup>567</sup> To this Craig replied that one could not take away the rights of a million people to placate a half a million, who in the end were not interested in making any system work under the crown.<sup>568</sup> He said that he did not believe that a majority of the minority supported the campaign against the constitution. He did not accept that the SDLP, the main political vehicle for the Catholics had genuine intentions.<sup>569</sup> In Craig's mind was the newly formed SDLP a part of the IRA campaign to bring down the constitution. He said that SDLP and others "*associated with the escalation towards violence*" would be the main casualty of an election.<sup>570</sup>

SDLP was founded on street violence and has always shown a readiness to resort to violent political tactics. Their support for civil disobedience is another example of that. (...) I don't think one should try overmuch to talk to SDLP until they show a willingness themselves to participate in democratic government and abandon the pressures of violence.<sup>571</sup>

It is hard to figure out what Craig believed to be a genuine Catholic political expression. Since the start of the civil rights campaign he had dismissed all Catholic political activity as a plot against the constitution. But at this time, Craig was among those threatening to end the union with Great Britain, and to go outside the parliament to ensure that his rights were not infringed. Asked of what he would do if direct rule was implemented, Craig replied that the right thing to do then would be to "*mount a campaign where the majority would insist that it be given freedom against a situation that it could not trust.*"<sup>572</sup> This statement demonstrates how much the political situation had changed since the start of the civil rights campaign. The fact that one of the sternest critics of the civil rights movement's way of protest would mount a similar campaign if he was denied the possibility to make his voice heard in the parliament is interesting. It is an ironic twist of faith that the ones who had started the street protest, both civil rights campaigners and the loyalists had formed traditional political parties to make their voice heard, whereas at the same time one of the strongest defenders of 'politics in the parliament' would form a movement that used the same methods of protest as he so strongly had denounced when he had influence in the government. Craig was at this time probably

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<sup>567</sup> Belfast Telegraph:1/10-1971

<sup>568</sup> Belfast Telegraph:1/10-1971

<sup>569</sup> Belfast Telegraph:1/10-1971

<sup>570</sup> Belfast Telegraph:1/10-1971

<sup>571</sup> Belfast Telegraph:1/10-1971

<sup>572</sup> Belfast Telegraph:1/10-1971

feeling more and more marginalised, and it is a telling sign of the civil rights movement's influence on how politics was conducted in Northern Ireland that Craig was contemplating using the same methods when he experienced being more and more put to the side.

The fact that Craig did consider to start a non-parliamentarian movement did not mean that he would stop to criticise the government in the traditional parliamentary fashion. On the 13<sup>th</sup> of October he asked that the:

House, having regard to the continuing deterioration in the maintenance of the peace and security of Northern Ireland, censures the Government for their continuing failure to adopt realistic policies to ensure an effective police force adequate to deal with the terrorist threat.<sup>573</sup>

This was one of the biggest complaints from the Protestant opponents of the current administrations. The government's decision to disband the B-Specials and to reorganise the RUC was seen as a betrayal by the loyalists. Craig said that the army had "*failed the community in a very big way*"<sup>574</sup> Paisley expressed support for Craig's proposal, and asked the house to condemn:

the Government for surrendering control of Northern Ireland's security and acquiescing in the dissolution of its security forces, but recognises that the deplorable state that this folly has brought about can best be remedied by the Government ensuring that the proper directives are given to the military forces presently engaged in security duties, preparatory to the reorganisation of our police forces.<sup>575</sup>

There was not much that separated the position of the two politicians. Paisley called for more use of the army against rioters, something Craig with his now very anti-British point of view, probably would not condone. Even so there is little doubt that Craig was closer to Paisley than the government at this time. Still they would not come together to form a united front against the Unionist Party, and soon the chance to form an alliance in the Stormont parliament would be gone.

## **The end of Stormont**

Internment gave the civil rights movement a new momentum, and it was during an anti-internment march that the faith of the Stormont Parliament would be sealed. The troubles would once again start in the month of January. The first protest march came already on the 2<sup>nd</sup> of January 1972, and once again did Paisley warn that there would be a loyalist backlash if

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<sup>573</sup> Stormont Papers: 13/10-1971: Vol. 82

<sup>574</sup> Stormont Papers: 13/10-1971: Vol. 82

<sup>575</sup> Stormont Papers: 13/10-1971: Vol. 82

the march went on.<sup>576</sup> The march went on, without any great disturbances, but it was enough to make Faulkner ban all parades and marches to the end of the year.<sup>577</sup>

As it had in the past, the ban would not take the civil rights movement of the street. On the 22<sup>nd</sup> of January there was an anti-internment march in Derry. When the marchers neared the internment camp they were held back by the army. When it became clear that some of the marchers went past the barriers set up, the army started shooting rubber bullets and CS gas into the crowd. There were allegations of army brutality, and John Hume accused the army of "*beating, brutalising and terrorising the demonstrators*".<sup>578</sup> The relationship between the Catholics and the army was worse than ever, and soon it would end in a deadly confrontation that would change Northern Ireland forever.

As the internment continued, the civil rights movement announced that they would defy the governments ban on parades, and march in protest on the 30<sup>th</sup> of January. The march would go from Dungannon to Coalisland, the same route as the first civil rights march in August 1968.<sup>579</sup> The birthplace of the civil rights movement would also become its graveyard. The army warned that the marchers had to be prepared to accept the full consequences of breaking the law.<sup>580</sup>

The demonstration went on, and the result would be the end of large scale street demonstrations for civil rights. On the 30<sup>th</sup> of January were 13 people shoot dead after clashes between civil rights protesters and the army.<sup>581</sup> It was by far the most serious incident since the troubles had begun three years previously. The army said that it was the civil rights protesters that had opened fire first, but the protesters themselves said that it was the army that had shot first, and that they had shot indiscriminately on the protesters.<sup>582</sup>

Northern Ireland had changed much since the events on October 5<sup>th</sup> 1968, and the situation had outgrown the civil rights movement. The time of peaceful civil rights protest in the street was over. In Faulkner's mind there could not be any doubt about the intent of these parades were, and that was to achieve a united Ireland.<sup>583</sup> He said that the government had striven to remove the last of any legitimate complaint, but:

if our gestures are spurned, our overtures rejected, and in the end we are faced with a continuing defiance of lawful authority and an attempt to overthrow the state, then this government and this house

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<sup>576</sup> Belfast Telegraph:1/1-1972

<sup>577</sup> Melaugh: <http://cain.ulst.ac.uk/events/crights/chron.htm>

<sup>578</sup> Melaugh: <http://cain.ulst.ac.uk/events/crights/chron.htm>

<sup>579</sup> Belfast Telegraph:29/1-1972

<sup>580</sup> Belfast Telegraph:29/1-1972

<sup>581</sup> Melaugh: <http://cain.ulst.ac.uk/events/crights/sum.htm>

<sup>582</sup> Belfast Telegraph:31/1-1972

<sup>583</sup> Belfast Telegraph:31/1-1972

will demand to be heard over any clamour in the street to assert that those we represent also have their basic rights and will defend them.<sup>584</sup>

He would not say anything about who had shot first, that would be investigated by an inquiry by Westminster, but he did say that at this time, any gathering of thousands of people would pose a threat to the peace.<sup>585</sup> Because of this, Faulkner said that the blame could be laid at the feet of people like John Hume, who knew the risk, but went on with the protest anyway.<sup>586</sup> There was no longer any sympathy towards the civil rights movement within the government. Any goodwill that had existed within the Unionist Party since the beginning of the civil rights campaign, was gone.

As the civil rights movement had come to what would in effect be its end, a new movement was established. The movement would adopt some of the methods used by the civil rights movement. On the 9<sup>th</sup> of February Craig's new loyalist association, Vanguard, was presented. He stressed that the movement was not a political party, and denied that its intent was to challenge Faulkner's position. The association was established in the event that some tried to interfere with the constitution, and to take the necessary action needed in that event. Craig said that the talk of a political settlement in reality meant changing the constitution and give all the powers to Westminster. This would leave Stormont as "*nothing more than a glorified county council.*"<sup>587</sup> To stop this people had to be willing to make "*the supreme sacrifice.*"<sup>588</sup> If there was no choice, the movement would support the establishment of an independent British Ulster.<sup>589</sup> To show the loyalist discontent, Craig announced that the new movement was to arrange loyalist rallies all over the country, and that would culminate in a big rally in Belfast in March.<sup>590</sup>

The rally on the 18<sup>th</sup> of March attracted thousands of people. The army and RUC estimated that more than 75 000 people showed up. Craig announced that the movement would implement contingency plans, which would make any political initiative that were unacceptable to the majority, unworkable.<sup>591</sup> The rhetoric and methods of protest that had been first used by the civil rights movement, than adopted by Paisley and his loyalist movement, was now being used by one of the strongest defenders of 'politics in the parliament.'

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<sup>584</sup> Belfast Telegraph:1/2-1972

<sup>585</sup> Belfast Telegraph:1/2-1972

<sup>586</sup> Belfast Telegraph:1/2-1972

<sup>587</sup> Belfast Telegraph:9/2-1972

<sup>588</sup> Belfast Telegraph:9/2-1972

<sup>589</sup> Belfast Telegraph:14/2-1972

<sup>590</sup> Belfast Telegraph:9/2-1972

<sup>591</sup> Belfast Telegraph:18/3-1972

If Craig had moved closer to the position Paisley had, it did not mean that they had the same point of view. Paisley never supported an independent Ulster, and he said that he would accept direct rule as long as Northern Ireland remained British.<sup>592</sup> As Craig formalised his position as an alternative loyalist leader, it was possible that the loyalist community could split the same way that the unionist had, but as time would show, this would, however, not happen during the Stormont period.

In March 1972 there were more than rumours that the British government would soon implement direct rule.<sup>593</sup> Speaking to a crowd of approximately 12 000 people during a Vanguard rally, Craig said that it would be foolish to reward the “*terrorists and republicans*” by tampering with the constitution.<sup>594</sup> As the constitutional crisis loomed, Faulkner went to Downing Street to discuss the security situation, but it was clear that the two Prime Ministers stood far apart in respect to what should be done.<sup>595</sup> It soon became clear that the British Government felt that the system of government that had ruled Northern Ireland for 50 years, no longer were sufficient to deal with the situation.

On the 24<sup>th</sup> of March the British government announced that they would suspend Stormont for a year, and govern Northern Ireland through a local commission. The decision came after Faulkner refused to accept the British government’s proposals for changes in the security policy. The Unionist Party expressed “*shock and amazement at the breach of thrust and surrender to violence by the conservative government*”, and said that they supported Faulkner’s decision to refuse to give in to the demands from the British government.<sup>596</sup> The British government said that they saw it as an indispensable condition for progress in Northern Ireland that Stormont transferred the responsibilities over law and order to Westminster. Since Faulkner refused to do so, they saw no other possibility than to assume the full and direct responsibility over Northern Ireland.<sup>597</sup>

Faulkner said that even if they did not like the decision to suspend Stormont, they had to realise that the act had been made, and they had to accept it because it was the law. If they did not, they would “*sink to the level of that rabble who for the past few years have proclaimed civil rights but recognised no civil obligations.*”<sup>598</sup> The Unionist Party, as one of the few political entities in Northern Ireland, was still in favour of the traditional political

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<sup>592</sup> Belfast Telegraph:18/3-1972

<sup>593</sup> Belfast Telegraph:2/3-1972

<sup>594</sup> Belfast Telegraph:11/3-1972

<sup>595</sup> Belfast Telegraph:23/3-1972

<sup>596</sup> Belfast Telegraph:24/3-1972

<sup>597</sup> Belfast Telegraph:24/3-1972

<sup>598</sup> Belfast Telegraph:30/3-1972

procedures, and would therefore accept the British parliament's decision. Not all would be contained to do the same. Craig and the Vanguard movement called for a two day strike to stop what he called the "*surrender to terrorist violence*". He said that urgent action was required to stop the proposed changes, and make them impossible.<sup>599</sup>

SDLP expressed support for the take over, and asked those who were engaged in a campaign of violence to cease immediately, so that interment would be brought to an end. They would continue with their campaign of civil disobedience until interment was abolished.<sup>600</sup> The civil rights movement had outplayed their role in the Northern Irish society, but the fight was only starting. It would be close 30 years before a lasting peace settlement was reached, and it was not until 2010, that the powers of law and order were to be handed back to Northern Irish control.

## **SUMMARY**

The end of Chichester-Clark's premiership came early in 1971. On the 19<sup>th</sup> of March he resigned because of the British government's refusal to send more troops to Northern Ireland. Faulkner was elected as Prime Minister, and announced that he would continue along the same lines as Chichester-Clark. Faulkner moved the position of the Unionist Party closer to the position of the hardliners, however, by appointing Harry West as Minister of Agriculture, but this did not earn him any goodwill from the loyalists, who right from the beginning expressed opposition to Faulkner.

Faulkner continued with the policy, of talking with all the moderate sections in Northern Ireland in an effort to restore the peace. But the moderate sections were dwindling away. On the 30<sup>th</sup> of October 1971, Paisley and Boal formed the Democratic Unionist Party. The party had come about as a result of the loyalists view that the government had failed to deal with the civil rights movement with enough force, and is therefore an example of how the civil rights movement influenced the split in the unionist movement.

As the violence grew, the civil rights movement had been pushed out in the background, but when Faulkner interned suspected IRA leaders in August 1971, it led to the alienation of the entire Catholic community. Internment provided the civil rights with a new fighting cause and gave the movement a new momentum. And it was during a civil rights march against internment in Derry that the faith of Stormont would be sealed.

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<sup>599</sup> Belfast Telegraph:24/3-1972

<sup>600</sup> Belfast Telegraph:25/3-1972



A new movement emerged during the last period of the Stormont parliament, Craig's Vanguard movement. Vanguard was a loyalist movement that used many of the same methods as the civil rights movement. Both the political methods and language of Vanguard was a clear indication of how much the civil rights movement had changed the political climate in Northern Ireland. The fact that Craig, one of the strongest defenders of 'politics in the parliament', formed a movement along the same lines as the civil rights movement is evidence of how much the civil rights movements way of protest had been adopted by other groups who felt they stood on the outside of the traditional channels of political influence.

## CHAPTER SIX: CONCLUSION

Northern Ireland in March 1972 was very different from Northern Ireland on the 5<sup>th</sup> of October 1968. Even if there were those who in October 1968 warned of the consequences of what would happen if the civil rights movement was not forcefully dealt with, few would consider direct rule from Britain as a probable outcome of the campaign. There can be little doubt that the civil rights movement played a vital role in the downfall of Stormont.

The first question I asked in the introduction of this thesis was:

- How did the unionist politicians perceive the civil rights movement, and how did the perception change between 1968 and 1972?

There were several perceptions of the civil rights movement within the Unionist Party, even at the beginning of the disturbances in October 1968. The Prime Minister Terence O'Neill and his followers, expressed doubt about the claims from the civil rights movement that Catholics were being discriminated against in Northern Ireland. However, O'Neill did not dismiss the movement as a false movement. O'Neill felt that the Northern Irish society in some ways was backwards, and he had therefore set out to reform the society. Since he did not see the civil rights movement as a front movement, and because he wanted to modernise Northern Ireland, he had no great inhibitions to giving the civil rights movement some reforms in November 1968.

The reforms coupled with his “crossroad speech” did earn O'Neill some goodwill from the civil rights movement, but it alienated a large section of the Protestant community, even a section within the Unionist Party. His own Minister of Home Affairs, William Craig, expressed opposition to the government's policies towards the civil rights movement. Craig claimed right from the start that the civil rights movement was a front movement for the IRA. In addition he did not condone the civil rights movement's methods of protest, which he felt had no place in a democratic society.

William Craig was not the only one who expressed scepticism about the civil rights movement's motives. The Minister of Development, Brian Faulkner, said that the movement's real aim was to overthrow the constitution. Faulkner, however, did not criticise the government's reforms straight after the 5<sup>th</sup> of October 1968, and this separated him from Craig. Faulkner did, however, stress that if the campaign was to continue, it would have serious effect on the economy.

The views of O'Neill, Faulkner and Craig represent three different views of the civil rights movement within the Unionist Party. O'Neill was the one who expressed the strongest

belief in the sincerity in the movement. Faulkner and Craig both said the movement was a front movement, but they would choose different approaches in dealing with the civil rights campaign and potential reforms.

The perception of the civil rights movement among the moderate section of the Unionist Party changed gradually between 1968 and 1972. Still there were some events that contributed more to the change of opinion than others. The March in Derry in October 1968 forced the politicians to take a stand on the civil rights campaign. Another event was the Burntollet march organised by the Peoples Democracy in January 1969. Terence O'Neill changed his tone after the Peoples Democracy march. He used stronger words to characterise the PD than he had used when he spoke of the civil rights movement before the Burntollet march. He also felt that the group's real aim was to cause disorder. This did, however, not lead to a change of policy, and O'Neill continued with his efforts to reform Northern Ireland.

Faulkner's perception of the civil rights movement did not change after the Burntollet march. His practical approach towards the movement did, however, change somewhat. Faulkner resigned from the cabinet after O'Neill announced an inquiry into the reasons for the disorder following the events after the 5<sup>th</sup> of October 1968. Faulkner felt that the conclusion of such an inquiry would pinpoint the local election franchise as one of the main reasons for the civil rights campaign, and then the government would have no choice but to change it. Faulkner proposed instead that they should implement one-man, one-vote right away. He did not come to this conclusion because he had accepted the allegations from the civil rights movement, but because he felt that it would seem as if the government gave into pressure from the movement, if they waited to after the conclusions from the Cameron commission were presented.

Craig did not change his opinion of the civil rights movement during the years of the civil rights campaign. He did say that civil rights movement real aim was to end the union with Great Britain, and did this remained his position on this during the civil rights campaign.

The change of Prime Minister in May 1969, also demonstrated a change in how the unionist government spoke of the civil rights movement. The new Prime Minister, James Chichester-Clark, used stronger words to characterise the civil rights movement than O'Neill, and thus moved the position of the government closer to that of Faulkner. Nevertheless, Chichester-Clark said that there were elements within the civil rights movement that had sincere motives, and that he would continue with the reforms started by the O'Neill administration. Faulkner joined the government again, and from this point on, he was in agreement with the new cabinet's policies towards the civil rights movement. The fact that

Chichester-Clark said that he would continue the reforms, does, however, not mean that Chichester-Clark had taken O'Neill's position towards the civil rights movement. This is shown when a section within the Unionist Party withdrew and formed the Alliance Party in April 1970. The founders of the Alliance Party felt that the Unionist Party had moved to far away from the position of O'Neill.

When the violence erupted again in July 1969, it affected how the unionist politicians perceived the civil rights movement, and thus is one of the events that increased the unionist doubt of the civil rights movement's motives. Even if the civil rights movement took no part in the rioting, it was blamed for the return of violence. This led to an increasing doubt of the motives of the movement among the unionist politicians.

The event that would remove all doubt within the unionist movement that the civil rights movement was a front movement for the IRA among the unionist politicians came in October 1970, when NICRA called for people to return to the street when the violence plagued the province. This led the Prime Minister Chichester-Clark to dismiss the entire movement as a republican plot against the constitution. Still, the government tried to reason with all the moderate sections of the society, but the civil rights movement was from this point on seen as a movement with aim to incite violence in an effort to end the union with Great Britain.

I have also explored what the loyalists in Northern Ireland thought of the civil rights movement. I asked the question of how the loyalist opposition perceived the civil rights movement? The answer to this is that the loyalists saw the civil rights movement entirely as a plot against the constitution. Similar to the hardliners in the Unionist Party, they claimed that the IRA was behind the campaign. In addition, the loyalist leader Ian Paisley said that the Catholic Church and the communists were behind the campaign. The belief that the civil rights movement was a plot from the Catholic Church separated the loyalist position somewhat from the position of the hardliners in the Unionist Party.

The main aim for this thesis has also been to answer how the civil rights movement influenced the events leading up to the suspension of Stormont in 1972, by exploring how the movement influenced the internal dynamic in the unionist movement. The questions I asked in order to explore this were:

- How did the civil rights movement influence the development of the unionist movement and the process leading up to the suspension of the Stormont Parliament in March 1972?

- In what way did the loyalist perception of the civil rights movement influence the unionist government's room to manoeuvre?

There is little doubt that the civil rights movement to a large extent instigated the events leading up to the suspension of Stormont. There are of course several factors that influenced the events that led to direct rule in 1972, and as the situation grew more chaotic, it becomes more difficult to sort out which events that came as a result of influence by the civil rights movement. I will in this conclusion highlight three points in which the civil rights movement's influence is evident. These points are:

1. How the civil rights movement's influenced the split in the Unionist Party, and the increasing difference of opinion within the Protestant community.
2. How the civil rights campaign weakened the unionist government's position in regard to the British government.
3. How the civil rights movement changed the political language and how politics were conducted in Northern Ireland.

*1. How the civil rights movement influenced the split in the Unionist Party and the increasing difference of opinion within the Protestant community.*

Before 1968 almost all Protestant political activity had been concentrated within the Unionist Party. The party had a great deal of room for different political views. This would change drastically during the years between 1968 and 1972.

After the civil rights march on the 5<sup>th</sup> of October 1968, O'Neill had to take action. The reforms presented on the 22<sup>nd</sup> of November 1968 did go some way in appeasing the civil rights movement, but the reforms also alienated a section within the Unionist Party who felt that the civil rights movement was an IRA plot, and that the movement should be stopped with force, not reforms. The civil rights campaign forced the politicians within the Unionist Party to take a stand on the reform package, and thereby bringing to the surface the different political views within the party. The reforms caused uproar among the unionist hardliners and the loyalist community who felt that O'Neill was betraying their unionist heritage. The hardliners within the Unionist Party and the loyalists felt that the civil rights movement should be dealt with more force, not reforms.

William Craig was one of the most outspoken critics against the government's policies, and this cost him his position as Minister of Home affairs in 1968. When the reforms did not lead to an end of the violence, but more conflict after the Burntollet march in 1969, O'Neill's position got more vulnerable. His decision to appoint a commission to investigate the causes for the unrest, led to Faulkner's resignation. As the split in the party was growing, O'Neill

announced that there would be a general election in February 1969. The election did not result in a clear mandate for O'Neill, and his position therefore became more unstable. O'Neill's effort to win over Catholics by promising them reforms did not pan out, and instead he alienated a large section of the Protestant community. The Protestant community was thus divided as a result of the civil rights movement. The loyalist community expressed a strong discontent with O'Neill's policies towards the civil rights movement, and when this discontent moved more and more into the Unionist Party after the Peoples Democracy march in January 1969, the opposition against O'Neill grew so strong that he resigned as Prime Minister in April 1969.

After Chichester-Clark took over as Prime Minister, the civil rights movement was pushed more and more in the background by the acts of violence that occurred during and after the summer of 1969. The movement lost control over the actions of the protesters, and could not stop the violence that occurred. The increasing violence made the Prime Minister call in the army in an effort to stop the rioting. The decision to call in the army would anger the loyalist community, who would come to feel that the army only protected the Catholics, thereby increasing the split in the Protestant community.

Even if the violence was not being committed by the civil rights movement, the movement received much of the blame from the unionist politicians. So, when the civil rights movement lost momentum due to increased violence, the differences of opinion between the unionist politicians grew over how the movement should be dealt with.

As Chichester-Clark tried to continue with the policy of reform, the Unionist Party was falling apart. The umbrella structure of the party could not cope with the new political situation facilitated by the civil rights movement. The political landscape changed much as a result of the civil rights campaign. The events that followed the civil rights campaign, forced the unionist politicians to take a stand towards the civil rights movement and the reforms, and the Unionist Party would prove to be unable to handle this new focus on personal political conviction. The split in the Protestant community led to the creation of two new political parties, the loyalist Democratic Unionist Party, and the moderate unionist Alliance Party. The Unionist Party had lost support both to the loyalist side and to the moderate unionist side, and struggled to find their place in the new political landscape. In addition the Social Democratic and Labour Party was formed as a result of the civil rights campaign.

The unionist government was not only forced to deal with the civil rights movement, and the loyalist movement, they also had to deal with the British government who became

more involved in Northern Irish politics as a result of the civil rights campaign. This brings us to the next point of the civil right movement's influence.

*2. How the civil rights campaign weakened the unionist government's position in regard to the British government.*

The civil rights campaign led to an increased British attention towards Northern Irish politics. Since the civil rights movement was successful in portraying the image of a suppressed Catholic minority, the British government pushed for reforms, and warned of the consequences if the reforms were stopped. This put the Northern Irish Prime Minister in a squeeze between the British government's demand for reforms and the loyalists' demand that the government should not succumb to pressure. The effect of the British pressure was in some degree felt already during O'Neill's premiership, but both Chichester-Clark and Faulkner would have an even harder time in dealing with the British government without appearing to succumb to Westminster pressure. When the army moved into Northern Ireland in the summer of 1969, it became more difficult for the Northern Irish Prime Minister to profess control, since the army took over many of the law and order responsibilities normally reserved for the state.

Craig was one of those who objected to Westminster's interference into Northern Irish affairs. When the British became more involved in Northern Ireland, Craig's opinion on the constitution changed. His support for an independent Ulster grew as the British presence in Northern Ireland increased.

After the army was called in and up till internment was implemented, the civil rights movement lost much of its momentum. This, however, did not mean that the civil rights movement lost its influence. When the Cameron report, in September 1969, confirmed the allegations from the civil rights movement in the eyes of the British government, it became difficult for Chichester-Clark to ignore the complaints or justify the use of stricter measures towards the movement.

As the violence increased, Chichester-Clark asked the British government for more troops in order to deal with the violence. When this was not granted he resigned as Prime Minister on the 19<sup>th</sup> of March 1971. He was followed by Faulkner as Prime Minister.

The civil rights movement moved back into the spotlight after the Faulkner government started interning suspected IRA leaders. This act alienated the entire Catholic community and gave the civil rights movement a new momentum. The moderate section that the Unionist Party had tried to attract, decreased as the violence grew.

Even if the government's policies caused strong discontent in the Catholic community, it was a clash between civil rights protesters and the British army that would seal Stormont's faith. On the 30<sup>th</sup> of January 1972 the British army killed 13 civil rights marchers during a civil rights march protesting against internment. The increasing violence made the British government demand that the Northern Irish government surrendered the control over the law and order responsibilities to the British government. Faulkner refused to comply with this demand, and because of this the British government introduced direct rule on the 24<sup>th</sup> of March 1972.

The British perception of the civil rights movement is not given much attention in this thesis. However, further research into how the British politicians and the British media perceived the civil rights movement and the unionist response would increase the understanding of the years between 1968 and 1972, and would therefore be an interesting topic for future research.

The civil rights movement changed the political landscape in Northern Ireland. The Unionist Party fell apart as a result of the civil rights movement, three new political parties were formed. A loyalist, a moderate unionist, and a one Catholic party based upon the platform of the civil rights movement, were all established, although for different reasons, as a result of the civil rights campaign. With the new political landscape, the way that politics were conducted in Northern Ireland changed, and this brings us to the last point of civil rights influence:

3. *How the civil rights movement changed the political language and the way politics were conducted in Northern Ireland.*

Before the civil rights campaign, the rule of the Unionist Party had been undisputed, and virtually unchallenged. Those who stood on the outside had few possibilities to make their voice heard. This would change during the civil rights campaign. As I have shown in the section above, the political landscape changed in Northern Ireland between 1968 and 1972. With the establishment of the new parties and movements, the political language that was used by those who stood on the outside of the halls of power changed.

The civil rights movement's way of protest was also adopted by other sections in the society. Paisley and his loyalist movement started early to use many of the same methods of protest, as well as the language that the civil rights movement used. Paisley and the loyalists defended their right to protest in the street, even if the protest could lead to disorder. In this, Paisley was closer to the point of view of the civil rights movement, than the hardliners in the Unionist Party.



Another example of how the civil rights movement changed the political language in Northern Ireland can be seen when Paisley started calling his campaign against the civil rights movement a campaign for “Protestant civil rights.” As the civil rights movement attracted attention, Paisley adopted the civil rights claim of discrimination, and Paisley started to say that it was the Protestants that were being discriminated against in Northern Ireland. One of the explanations for this change of language might be that the civil rights movement’s protest had proved to be quite successful in attracting attention and support from the British government. The concept of “civil rights” became a political expression for those who stood on the outside of the main channels of political influence, with both sides claiming that it was their side who were the true victims.

Craig was one of those who changed his political expression after he was forced out in the cold in the Unionist Party. When he formed his own movement, Vanguard, in 1972, he based it to a large degree on the structure and method of protest used by the civil rights movement. This fact is one of the clearest examples of how the civil rights campaign had changed how politics were conducted in Northern Ireland. If we look back at some of the statements Craig made after the civil rights march in Derry on the 5<sup>th</sup> of October 1968, it becomes clear how much he had removed himself from his original position. On the 4<sup>th</sup> of December 1968, Craig said this in Stormont:

I would repeat that whatever political discontent there may be in this country the right way to express that discontent is not by organising marches on the scale and on the frequency that we have had in recent weeks. It is not in keeping with the whole technique of democracy and everyone of us in this House should be prepared to say so.<sup>601</sup>

Here he said that the civil rights movement’s way of protest was not in keeping with the technique of democracy. His position was quite different when he used these methods to express his discontent with the actions of the British government in 1972. At the time when the civil rights movement’s protest had come to an end after “Bloody Sunday” in 1972, Craig continued with mass rallies, attracting several thousands protesters, to oppose the British government intervention in Northern Ireland.

The civil rights movement’s influence on the unionist movement was both direct and indirect. Direct in the sense that the movement’s protest was the direct reason for the unionist government’s reforms, the reason for the increased British attention, and the reasons for the changes in the political landscape. But the influence was also indirect because the civil rights campaign made it impossible for the unionist government to modernise Northern Ireland

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<sup>601</sup> Stormont Papers:4/12-1968: Vol. 70

without meeting opposition from the loyalist community, who would see most changes as a surrender to the civil rights movement. The civil rights protesters and the loyalists stood so far apart that the middle ground Terence O'Neill set out to find in 1968, was unobtainable in the years between 1968 and 1972. That ground was not to be found until the peace settlement in 1998.

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## **Abstract**

Denne oppgaven omhandler hvordan det nord-irske unionistpartiet oppfattet den nord-irske borgerrettsbevegelsen i perioden mellom 1968-1972. Gjennom en analyse av unionistenes oppfattelse og behandling av borgerrettsbevegelsen har jeg vist hvordan borgerrettsbevegelsen påvirket hendelsene som tilslutt skulle føre til direkte styre fra Storbritannia i 1972.

Jeg sammenlignet de ulike synspunktene innad i unionist partiet, og hva som skilte disse synspunktene fra de lojalistiske grupperingene i det protestantiske samfunnet i Nord Irland. Gjennom denne analysen viste jeg hvordan borgerrettsbevegelsen i stor grad påvirket den økende avstanden innad i det protestantiske samfunnet. Borgerrettighetskampen førte også til større innblanding fra den britiske regjeringen, og dette førte til at posisjonen til den nord-irske statsministeren ble mer utsatt. Borgerrettsbevegelsen gjorde at reformer som kanskje kunne blitt gjennomført uten store protester, av lojalistene ble sett på som en forræderi mot den protestantiske arven og protestantiske rettigheter i Nord Irland. Jeg har også vist hvordan borgerrettsbevegelsen førte til en forandring i det politiske landskapet og i det politiske språket som ble brukt, og hvordan de som sto på utsiden av maktapparatet i stadig større grad begynte i større grad å bruke språket og slagordene til borgerrettsbevegelsen for å uttrykke seg.