CH. 2- NEW LEADERSHIP: THE O'NEILL YEARS

Ch. 2- New Leadership: The O'Neill Years

Learning Intentions

In this chapter you will learn about:

- Terence O'Neill and his early years in power
- The Coleraine university controversy (Case Study)
- The political emergence of Ian Paisley
- Nationalist grievances and the origins of the civil rights movement

5.1 CASE STUDY THE EUCHARISTIC CONGRESS, 1932

Northern Ireland After World War II

Captain Terence O'Neill

Captain Terence O'Neill was forty-eight years of age when he succeeded Lord Brookeborough as Prime Minister of Northern Ireland in March 1963. A leading member of the Unionist Party, he had already served as Minister of Finance. Coming from a privileged, aristocratic background, he had attended a private school and university in England, later serving as an officer in the British Army. Unlike some of his predecessors, he did not relate well to ordinary people.

Despite his privileged unionist background, O'Neill was committed to the modernisation of Northern Ireland for the benefit of all sections of the community. In this regard, he represented a more liberal type of unionism, which was in marked contrast to the approach of his predecessors Lords Craigavon and Brookeborough, who saw Northern Ireland as a 'Protestant state for a Protestant people?. Speaking during a parliamentary debate at Stormont, O'Neill stated that his principal aims were 'to make Northern Ireland economically stronger and prosperous... and to build bridges between the two traditions within our community'

Adapted from Modern Ireland (Fourth Edition) by Gerard Brockie and Raymond Walsh, Gill Education.

Economic Transformation

During his seven years as Minister of Finance prior to becoming Prime Minister, O'Neill had played a key role in attracting foreign industries to Northern Ireland. He was clearly convinced of the merits of economic planning, which was opposed by the more conservative Lord Brookeborough. O'Neill greatly admired the implementation of the Whitaker Report and the Programme for Economic Expansion by the Lemass Government in the Irish Republic. On becoming Prime Minister, O'Neill invited Professor Wilson of Glasgow University, a native of Northern Ireland, to draw up a report on the future direction of the economy. Published in February 1965 and entitled *Economic Development in Northern Ireland*, Wilson's report set high targets of economic expansion, just like the Whitaker Report in the Republic.

In his report, Wilson stated that local industries and agriculture were not providing adequate employment. Between 1958 and 1968 the number of people working in agriculture and the traditional industries of textiles, shipbuilding and engineering declined by 48,000. Against this background the report recommended that foreign companies should be encouraged to set up in Northern Ireland by being offered incentives such as tax allowances and grants.

Adapted from Modern Ireland (Fourth Edition) by Gerard Brockie and Raymond Walsh, Gill Education.

Economic Transformation

The prevailing optimistic outlook in economic matters was expressed by O'Neill in his opening speech as Prime Minister:

"It is a new motorway driving deeper into the province. It is a new airport which will match our position as the busiest air centre in Britain outside London. It is a new hospital in Londonderry - the most modern in the British Isles. It is new laboratories and research facilities at Queen's to carry us to the frontiers of existing knowledge and beyond. It is the replacement of derelict slums by modern housing estates."

In some respects, the Northern Ireland economy performed well during the O'Neill years. The annual growth rate of 4 per cent was higher than that in the United Kingdom as a whole. During the 1960s around 40,000 new jobs were created in Northern Ireland. At the same time, however, around 25,000 jobs were lost in older industries such as textiles and shipbuilding.

Another example of O'Neill's break with the past was his decision to recognise the Northern Ireland section of the Irish Congress of Trade Unions. This represented mostly Catholic workers, as the majority of Protestant trade union members belonged to British-based unions.

A much more symbolic departure from the past occurred in 1965, when O'Neill invited the Taoiseach of the Irish Republic, Seán Lemass, to visit Northern Ireland.

REVIEW QUESTIONS

1. What benefits would a new airport bring to Northern Ireland?
2. What will be built in Londonderry?
3. What are the plans for Queen's University?
4. What changes are envisaged in relation to housing?

Adapted from Modern Ireland (Fourth Edition) by Gerard Brockie and Raymond Walsh, Gill Education.

The Lemass-O'Neill Meetings

On 14 January 1965 Seán Lemass travelled to Belfast for a meeting with Terence O'Neill.

This was a truly historic meeting, as it was the first time a Prime Minister of Northern Ireland had met a Taoiseach of the Irish Republic. This meeting involved political risks for both men. Lemass was a lifelong republican dedicated to the reunification of Ireland. On arriving at Stormont, he stated, 'I shall get into terrible trouble for this.' However, the risks were much greater for O'Neill, who realised the existence of opposition within the unionist community to any contact with the Irish Republic. While leading civil servants were aware of the meeting, O'Neill kept it secret from his Cabinet colleagues until the last minute in case they refused to agree to it.

The main focus of the discussions between the two leaders was economic matters. The economic gap between the two parts of Ireland had narrowed considerably and O'Neill admired the progress in the Republic under the leadership of Lemass. During the talks, both leaders explored the possibility of future co-operation in economic matters. On returning to Dublin that evening, Lemass declared:

“There is no question that this meeting was significant... its significance should not be exaggerated. I think I can say that a road block has been removed. How far the road may go is not yet known. It has been truly said, however, that it is better to travel hopefully than to arrive.”

The Lemass-O'Neill Meetings

On the evening of the Lemass visit, O'Neill defended the meeting by observing on television that both parts of Ireland 'share the same rivers, the same mountains and some of the same problems'. In February 1965, O'Neill returned Lemass's visit when he travelled to Dublin for talks with the Taoiseach.

While the Lemass-O'Neill talks were largely uncontroversial in the Republic, they proved to be far more contentious in Northern Ireland. Some of O'Neill's own unionist colleagues resented his meetings with Lemass. The strongest opposition came from a small group of extreme Protestants led by the Rev. Ian Paisley, who was moderator of the Free Presbyterian Church. They handed in a letter of protest at Stormont and accused O'Neill of behaving like a dictator, as he had not consulted unionist members of parliament before inviting Lemass to Belfast. Although Ian Paisley had little political influence in 1965, his power was to grow as O'Neill's difficulties increased in the years ahead.

Although O'Neill's contacts with Lemass showed his modernising outlook, his more traditional unionism was seen in the controversial decision to establish a new university in the largely Protestant town of Coleraine.

Adapted from Modern Ireland (Fourth Edition) by Gerard Brockie and Raymond Walsh, Gill Education.

REVIEW QUESTIONS

1. State two ways in which Terence O'Neill differed from his predecessors as Prime Minister of Northern Ireland.
2. How did the economy of Northern Ireland perform when O'Neill was Prime Minister?
3. What was the significance of the Lemass-O'Neill meetings of 1965?
4. What was the main focus of the discussions?
5. How were the Lemass-O'Neill talks viewed in Northern Ireland?

Adapted from Modern Ireland (Fourth Edition) by Gerard Brockie and Raymond Walsh, Gill Education.

CASE STUDY THE COLERAINE UNIVERSITY CONTROVERSY

CASE STUDY: The Coleraine University Controversy

A Second University for Northern Ireland

When Captain Terence O'Neill succeeded Lord Brookeborough as Prime Minister in 1963, Northern Ireland still contained only one major institution of third-level education, Queen's University, Belfast. Founded as Queen's College in 1845, it became a fully independent university in 1908. In the 1960s, it had a high reputation as a centre of learning where Protestants and Catholics mixed freely. The proportion of Catholic students at Queen's University had been increasing steadily and had reached a quarter of all students by the early 1960s.

As well as Queen's University in Belfast, there was a much smaller university college, Magee College in Derry. This college had originally trained Presbyterian ministers and in the 1960s it provided the first two years of training for university students in certain subjects. They then finished their courses either at Queen's University or at Trinity College in Dublin.

When it became clear that more university places would be required in the future, as increasing numbers of young people were completing second-level study in grammar schools, the Northern Ireland Government was faced with a choice: either expand Queen's University in Belfast or Magee College in Derry, or else establish a completely new university in the province. The decision to found a new university was to lead to a bitter public controversy during 1965.

Adapted from Modern Ireland (Fourth Edition) by Gerard Brockie and Raymond Walsh, Gill Education.

The Lockwood Committee

In 1963 the Robbins Report on Higher Education in Great Britain recommended a huge expansion in the number of places in third-level education, especially in the area of science and technology. The expert authors believed that future economic prosperity depended on a better-educated workforce. They also believed that clever working-class students should receive more encouragement to go on to third-level education. The same was proposed in the Republic of Ireland, as witnessed by the highly influential report entitled Investment in Education, which was published in 1965.

Against this background, the Northern Ireland Government set up its own enquiry on third-level education. In November 1963, a committee was appointed under the chairmanship of Sir John Lockwood, the Master of Birkbeck College in London. The eight members of the committee included education experts from Northern Ireland and Great Britain. However, not a single representative from the Catholic and nationalist community in Northern Ireland was included.

From the outset it was clear that the location of the new university would be of great interest to the general public. Three towns in particular were considered to be leading contenders: Derry, Armagh and Coleraine. As the second largest city in Northern Ireland, with a population of 54,000, Derry appeared to be in a strong position. Even before the Lockwood Committee was appointed, the city corporation set out its claims (Document 1).

Adapted from Modern Ireland (Fourth Edition) by Gerard Brockie and Raymond Walsh, Gill Education.

DOCUMENT 1: STATEMENT OF LONDONDERRY CORPORATION CONCERNING A NEW UNIVERSITY

1. The demand for university places in the 1970s may well be double the present one... The establishment of a second university is the best way of meeting this demand.
2. It is an obvious and logical step to use Magee College as the nucleus around which to build a second independent university. Magee, despite its past limitations, is today a flourishing institution with a well-qualified staff.
3. As a city, Derry is well situated geographically to support a university, and the establishment of a university in Derry would help to restore the equilibrium of Northern Ireland, educationally, economically and culturally. It is well served by communications with all parts of Northern Ireland and further afield.
4. There are several highly suitable sites in the vicinity of Derry capable of housing a university, either as a single unit or in a collegiate pattern.
5. Accommodation of students and staff presents no major problem. The city also offers excellent facilities for the cultural and recreational activities which form an important and necessary part of university life.
6. The possible establishment of a university in Derry has aroused the support of all sections of the community.
7. The Council... is prepared to make an annual contribution... towards the finances of the university for a period of ten years from the date of its foundation.

City and County Borough of Londonderry: Submission to the Government of Northern Ireland Promoting the Case for the Promotion of a University at Londonderry, Londonderry 1963

Adapted from Modern Ireland (Fourth Edition) by Gerard Brockie and Raymond Walsh, Gill Education.

The Lockwood Committee

The strong desire of the people of Derry to acquire the new university for their city was understandable. A university was a major source of employment in itself. Furthermore, it could attract more employment, in the form of industries and services, to the city. At the time, Derry and the western part of Northern Ireland were seriously underdeveloped compared to the east of the province. Around two-thirds of the population lived within a 30-mile radius of Belfast and most industrial development was located in this predominantly Protestant region. The concentration of industrial development in this region led to resentment among nationalists. In 1963, nationalists were disappointed when the Unionist Government decided to build a new town called Craigavon in a strongly Protestant area near Portadown. Areas in the south and west, including Newry, Strabane and Derry, had nationalist majorities but also much higher rates of unemployment. They began to feel isolated (Document 2).

Adapted from Modern Ireland (Fourth Edition) by Gerard Brockie and Raymond Walsh, Gill Education.

DOCUMENT 2: THE NEGLECT OF DERRY

It was hardly surprising that Derry found itself increasingly isolated in the upper left-hand corner of the map, as most of the settlement was sited east of the River Bann, around new or existing growth centres. In quick succession there were decisions on the new city of Craigavon, just twenty-five miles from Belfast, new motorways in the Belfast area, closure of one of the two Belfast-Derry rail links and the severing of Derry's shipping link with Glasgow. The maiden city's honour was at stake, and both communities united to defend it against the unsympathetic powers that be in Belfast.

The last straw was the rumoured spurning of the north-west as a base for Ulster's second university and when the rival Protestant town of Coleraine, thirty miles east, was asked to redraft its submission, signifying that success was imminent, all Derry erupted in righteous indignation. The University for Derry Campaign was lost before it began.

B. White, John Hume: Statesman of the Troubles (Belfast, 1984)

Adapted from Modern Ireland (Fourth Edition) by Gerard Brockie and Raymond Walsh, Gill Education.

A Decision is Taken

At the beginning of 1965 the majority nationalist community in Derry, supported on the university issue by most unionists in the city, waited anxiously for the publication of the Lockwood Report and the decision concerning the location of Northern Ireland's second university.

After sixteen months of investigation and discussion, the Lockwood Report was finally published in February 1965 (Document 3).

The members of the Lockwood Committee justified their decision to locate the new university at Coleraine on a number of grounds. They believed that the representatives of Coleraine had presented a better case than those from Derry or Armagh. They also believed that the availability of accommodation in the nearby seaside resorts of Portrush and Portstewart was another factor in Coleraine's favour, in contrast to Derry, where there was a chronic shortage of accommodation.

However, the recommendations of the Lockwood Committee were received with outrage by most sections of public opinion in Derry, where people set about persuading the government in Belfast to reject the Lockwood Report.

Adapted from Modern Ireland (Fourth Edition) by Gerard Brockie and Raymond Walsh, Gill Education.

DOCUMENT 3: THE MAIN RECOMMENDATIONS OF THE LOCKWOOD COMMITTEE

- We now turn to the question of location and to timing, matters which have already aroused much public interest throughout Northern Ireland and to which we have devoted much careful consideration.
- The earliest effective date for the admission of the first students will probably be October 1968.
- In our concerted view the Coleraine area satisfies our criteria better than any of the other areas we have considered and we are of the opinion that the new university will have the opportunity of a good start and of ultimate success in that area.
- The implications of this recommendation for Magee University College are inescapable. We see no alternative to its discontinuance.
- The Robbins Committee argued persuasively that Great Britain could not afford to fall behind countries overseas in higher education. No more can Northern Ireland. In this Report we have suggested some ways in which, given the necessary initiative, zest and material provision, Northern Ireland could take a lead.

Higher Education in Northern Ireland: Report of the Committee Appointed by the Minister of Finance (Lockwood Report), 1965

Adapted from Modern Ireland (Fourth Edition) by Gerard Brockie and Raymond Walsh, Gill Education.

Opposition and Protest in Derry

A 'University for Derry' campaign was set up under the chairmanship of local schoolteacher John Hume, who was later to become one of the leading political figures in Northern Ireland. At this time he was pleased that the campaign for a university brought Catholics and Protestants together in a rare example of joint action (Document 4).

DOCUMENT 4: JOHN HUME'S APPROACH

A speech Hume made in a meeting held by the university campaign in the Derry Guildhall in early 1965 was the most electrifying he had yet delivered. Some say it effectively marked the beginning of his political career. He spoke of the need to unite the two communities for the good of the city in the longer term. Derry, he said, encompassed both traditions - the Protestant siege tradition and the native Irish tradition of St Columcille. To the Protestants it was a place where the battle had been fought; to the Catholics, the city where the battle was being fought. This new approach to politics was perfectly in tune with the mood of the crowd and it won him a standing ovation.

Adapted from Modern Ireland (Fourth Edition) by Gerard Brockie and Raymond Walsh, Gill Education.

Opposition and Protest in Derry

Along with John Hume, the main figures in the campaign for a university in Derry were the city's unionist mayor, Albert Anderson, and the local MP, Eddie McAteer, who was leader of the Nationalist Party in the Northern Ireland Parliament at Stormont. At a protest meeting in Derry's town hall, the Guildhall, McAteer declared, 'Stormont might ignore the people of Derry, or even the people of Londonderry; but when the people of Derry and Londonderry get together as one, surely they will have to listen.' The members of the action group decided that a delegation should visit the Prime Minister, Captain Terence O'Neill (Document 5).

DOCUMENT 5: CONFRONTING CAPTAIN TERENCE O'NEILL

It was decided that O'Neill must be confronted face to face, and on 11 February John Hume led a delegation to see the premier. Their mood was uncompromising, but O'Neill remained noncommittal. Hume was cogent and incisive, O'Neill sympathetic but silent. Hume told him he had a glorious opportunity to do something that would not only earn undiluted applause in Derry, but could have a revitalising effect towards general reconciliation in Northern Ireland, to which he had expressed himself ardently dedicated. Hume observed later that 'we did not know of course that even as he listened to our appeal, the decision against Derry had already been taken and his government was on the point of launching a white paper accepting the Lockwood Committee Report and its recommendation that the second university should be located in the small unionist town of Coleraine, thirty miles from Derry.'

F. Curran, Derry: Countdown to Disaster (Dublin, 1986)

Adapted from Modern Ireland (Fourth Edition) by Gerard Brockie and Raymond Walsh, Gill Education.

Taking the Case to Stormont

A week after the delegation met O'Neill at Stormont, a massive public protest was planned to take place in Derry on 18 February. Most shops and businesses in the city closed early and a huge motorcade travelled to Belfast to hand in a protest at Stormont. Leading the motorcade was the mayoral car, in which Eddie McAteer travelled with Mayor Albert Anderson. More than 20,000 people took part in the protest. However, the government refused to change direction and arranged for the Lockwood Report to be debated in Parliament.

Continuing Controversy

Although the clear victory in Parliament for the O'Neill Government appeared to decide the issue, controversy continued over the treatment of Derry. One of the unionists who had voted against the government, Dr Robert Nixon, MP for Co. Down, alleged that a member of O'Neill's Government had told him that 'nameless faceless men from Londonderry had gone to Stormont and advised against the siting of Ulster's second university in the city or in settling industrial development there'. The names of those alleged to have been involved were later published; they included prominent members of the loyal order, the Apprentice Boys of Derry. Nixon's remarks caused consternation (Document 6).

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DOCUMENT 6: THE FACELESS MEN

But the die had already been cast, it turned out in favour of Coleraine and the campaign ended on an angry note. While many of the city's Protestants backed the siting of the university in Derry, some of their political leaders had secretly advised against it, on the grounds that any growth of Derry would inevitably threaten their slender majority. The 'faceless men', as they were called, preferred to leave Derry a stagnant backwater rather than see it develop out of their control. Almost for the first time, Unionist power politics was exposed to the public gaze on a major issue and the birth of the civil rights movement can be traced to those stormy days of February 1965.

White, John Hume: Statesman of the Troubles

Adapted from Modern Ireland (Fourth Edition) by Gerard Brockie and Raymond Walsh, Gill Education.

Continuing Controversy

Although Nixon was expelled from the Unionist Parliamentary Party, his allegations were indeed correct. Years later, when archives at Stormont were opened to historians, details of such a meeting became available. It took place at Stormont on 19 February 1965, when the group met O'Neill and the Minister of Education, H.V. Kirk. They spoke up for Magee College and wanted the university to be shared between Coleraine and Derry. However, throughout the meeting, these unionists stressed their fear of losing control of Derry should Catholics become more prosperous. Despite the public co-operation between Protestants and Catholics to acquire a university for Derry, these members of the Unionist Party were prepared to undermine the campaign in case a university threatened their position by benefiting the Catholic community in Derry.

Contrasting Viewpoints

Ever since the events of 1965, the Coleraine university controversy has continued to evoke radically different viewpoints from nationalist and unionist observers. Dr Edward Daly, the Catholic Bishop of Derry, was very clear in his opinion, which he set forth in his memoirs (Document 7).

On the other hand, unionist commentators continue to defend the decision of the Lockwood Committee to locate Northern Ireland's second university at Coleraine. A typical example of this viewpoint is to be found in the observations of Professor Thomas Wilson (Document 8).

DOCUMENT 7: A NATIONALIST VIEWPOINT

With the dramatic expansion of second-level education in the North, it was obvious that university provisions would have to be similarly expanded to accommodate the increasing demand for university places by the young people emerging from these new second-level schools. The North would need a second university. It was believed, indeed assumed, that even the Stormont Government could not be so arrogant as to locate such a university anywhere but in Derry. After all Derry was the second city and it already had the nucleus of a university in Magee College. Such a decision could be the springboard for the renaissance of the city.. After some toing and froing, the Stormont Government formally accepted the Lockwood Report and decided to site the North's second university in Coleraine. It subsequently emerged that several prominent unionist figures, leading citizens in Derry, had not supported the city as the site for the second university. They were described as 'the faceless men'. There was outrage among much of the Derry population. The die had been cast. Things would never be the same again.

E. Daly, Mister, Are You a Priest? (Dublin, 2000)

Adapted from Modern Ireland (Fourth Edition) by Gerard Brockie and Raymond Walsh, Gill Education.

DOCUMENT 8: A UNIONIST VIEWPOINT

At that time, I was engaged in the preparation of the development plan but not, of course, any of the meetings of the Lockwood Committee and saw none of the papers. It was arranged, however, for Sir John [Lockwood] and myself to meet after the committee had reached its conclusions. It had never seemed at all likely that he would be influenced by sectarian prejudice that Ulster noses, sometimes too readily, claim to be able to detect, and after the meeting I was quite sure of this ... It is scarcely surprising that the committee was accused of acting as a tool of a Unionist Government that wanted to do down the predominantly Catholic city of Derry. I do not believe for a moment that Lockwood would have submitted to any such instructions from the unionist leaders, as he was alleged to have done. What is, however, beyond question is that the whole affair was grossly mishandled.

T. Wilson, Ulster: Conflict and Consent (Oxford, 1989)

Adapted from Modern Ireland (Fourth Edition) by Gerard Brockie and Raymond Walsh, Gill Education.

A Missed Opportunity

The failure to locate a university in Derry can be seen in retrospect as a missed opportunity by the Unionist Government of Terence O'Neill. Instead of supporting those Protestants in Derry who wished to co-operate with the Catholic community, O'Neill followed the path recommended by the more extreme traditional unionists. By favouring the small Protestant town of Coleraine over the north's second city, he alienated the Catholic population throughout the province even further. John Hume aptly summed up the impact of O'Neill's choice in the controversy:

"The isolation of the west policy was to be continued under O'Neill as rigidly as under any of his predecessors. He lost all credibility in Derry as a crusading premier, and reinforced among the Catholic community all over the North the conviction that the unionist leopard could not change its spots, and that change would have to be wrested from them."

F. Curran, Derry: Countdown to Disaster (Dublin, 1986)

The attention of John Hume and others turned to developing a strategy to bring about such change (Document 9).

DOCUMENT 9: LOOKING TO THE FUTURE

The university setback was traumatic for John Hume. He had poured time, effort and imagination into the role of chief organiser of the campaign. The outcome was a hard lesson in his political education. The university decision cut right to the core of Derry's cultural background. The government's policy was clearly to denude the west and enrich the east.

While the Nationalist Party reaction was to resume to the political battle at Corporation level, Hume was thinking on a longer-term strategy. The '11-Plus' generation, for which he was a singular advertisement, was coming of age and Hume knew that the bright young men and women, armed with first-class qualifications, would not be content to remain second-class citizens. Their mobilisation could create the most potent threat yet to the Unionist policy of reserving all the fruits of partition for one side of the community. He reasoned too that Derry's struggle for equality and justice was indivisible. It was not attainable in isolation, it must be part of a six-county movement. The university campaign had shown that there were Protestants willing to treat Catholics as equals, prepared to dispense with the traditional philosophy of Protestant supremacy.

Curran, Derry: Countdown to Disaster

Adapted from Modern Ireland (Fourth Edition) by Gerard Brockie and Raymond Walsh, Gill Education.

DOCUMENT 10: THE VIEWS OF HISTORIANS

A. 'The solid Protestant character of Coleraine was held by critics of the decision to have outweighed other considerations and the fact that no Catholic had been appointed to the Lockwood Committee ... seemed to belie in action the community admonition of the new Premier, Terence O'Neill.'

D. Harkness, Northern Ireland Since 1920 (Dublin, 1983)

B. 'Derry was outraged ... However, although defeated on the university issue, for John Hume and many other educated young Catholics, the seeds of a civil rights street protest movement had been planted by the Magee controversy. They would shortly sprout.'

T.P. Coogan, The Troubles: Ireland's Ordeal 1966-1996 and the Search for Peace (London, 1996)

'The "betrayal of Magee" ... can in no way be construed as a cause of the "troubles", but there can be little doubt that the circumstances which surrounded the siting of the University at Coleraine conspired to make the occurrence into one of the triggers of the initial unrest.'

G. O'Brien, 'Our Magee Problem: Stormont and the second university' in G. O'Brien, Derry and Londonderry: History and Society (ed.) (Dublin 1999)

Adapted from Modern Ireland (Fourth Edition) by Gerard Brockie and Raymond Walsh, Gill Education.

The Significance of the Coleraine University Controversy

The controversy surrounding the location of Northern Ireland's second university was not confined to the sphere of culture and education. From the beginning it was deeply political and it reflected the fundamental divide between unionists and nationalists, which influenced the lives of everyone in Northern Ireland. In particular, it strengthened the conviction of many nationalists that the Unionist Government was fundamentally unfair and that public protest was required.

Far from settling the university question, the decision to locate the new institution in Coleraine influenced opinion so much that it became one of the principal grievances of the minority nationalist community in the years ahead.

Indeed, by the time the new university opened in Coleraine with 400 students on 25 October 1968, events were unfolding in Derry which would lead to profound changes in the lives of the people of Northern Ireland.

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Case Study: REVIEW QUESTIONS

1. A Second University for Northern Ireland

a. Name the only university in Northern Ireland in 1960.
b. What was the proportion of Catholic students in attendance there by the mid-1960s?
c. Where was Magee College and what were its functions?
d. Which three options were available in order to provide more university places in Northern Ireland?

2. **The Lockwood Committee**

a. What was the main recommendation of the Robbins Report on Higher Education in Great Britain in 1963?
b. Who was appointed chairman of the enquiry on third-level education set up by the Government of Northern Ireland in 1963?
c. How many members of the Catholic community were on this committee?
d. Why did Derry appear to have a strong claim to the establishment of a new university?

Adapted from Modern Ireland (Fourth Edition) by Gerard Brockie and Raymond Walsh, Gill Education.

Case Study: REVIEW QUESTIONS

3. The Case for a University in Derry

a. According to Londonderry Corporation, what should have been done with Magee College?
b. Was Derry city well served by communications?
c. According to the corporation, what was the situation regarding accommodation for students in Derry?
d. What financial offer did the corporation make in the event of the establishment of a university in the city?

4. **The Decision of the Lockwood Committee**

a. Which town was chosen as the location of the new university?
b. What did the committee decide regarding Magee College?
c. When were the first students expected to enter the new university?
d. How did most people in Derry react to the publication of the report?

Adapted from Modern Ireland (Fourth Edition) by Gerard Brockie and Raymond Walsh, Gill Education.

Case Study: REVIEW QUESTIONS

5. Opposition and Protest in Derry

a. Who became chairman of the 'University for Derry' campaign?
b. Did the campaign bring Catholics and Protestants together? Explain your answer.
c. What course of action was decided upon by the 'University for Derry' campaign?

6. **Taking the Case to Stormont**

a. How did the Prime Minister, Terence O'Neill, react to the visit of the delegation from Derry on 11 February 1965?
b. How did John Hume link a university in Derry with reconciliation when speaking to the Prime Minister?
c. Had the Unionist Government already made a decision by this point?
d. What type of public protest took place on 18 February 1965?

7. **Debate and Controversy**

a. Who opened the debate in the Stormont Parliament on the location of the new university?
b. Why was the result a foregone conclusion?
c. What allegation was made by Dr Robert Nixon?
d. Who were the 'faceless men'?

Adapted from Modern Ireland (Fourth Edition) by Gerard Brockie and Raymond Walsh, Gill Education.

Case Study: Documents-Based Questions

1. **Comprehension**
   a. List two developments that were harmful to Derry, according to Document 2.
   b. What did the author of Document 6 mean by 'Unionist power politics'?
2. **Comparison**
   a. What similarities exist between Documents 2 and 4 as sources for the historian?
   b. Compare the references to the 'faceless men' in Documents 6 and 7.
3. **Criticism**
   a. How effective, in your view, was Document 1 in putting the case for the foundation of a university in Derry?
   b. Is Document 4 a primary or a secondary source? Does it give a satisfactory description of the meeting in Derry?
4. **Contextualisation**
   a. What were the arguments put forward in favour of siting a university in Derry?
   b. How did the nationalist community react to the decision to locate the new university in Coleraine?

Adapted from Modern Ireland (Fourth Edition) by Gerard Brockie and Raymond Walsh, Gill Education.

Unionist Reaction

Throughout his term as Prime Minister of Northern Ireland, Terence O'Neill faced continuous opposition to any measures of reform from certain sections of the unionist community. These included members of his own political party as well as the powerful Orange Order. Together with the other loyal orders, the Apprentice Boys of Derry and the Royal Black Institution, the Orange Order was strongly opposed to any concessions to the Catholic minority. All members of the Northern Ireland Government, including O'Neill himself, were members of the Orange Order. Many belonged to the other two organisations as well.

The loyal orders organised parades during the annual marching season, from Easter to November, which celebrated the triumph of William of Orange at the Battle of the Boyne (1690) and other Protestant victories. They frequently marched through largely Catholic areas, supported by the police, the Royal Ulster Constabulary. Enjoying huge influence over government and society, the Orange institutions were determined to prevent any weakening in the unionist domination of Northern Ireland.

Adapted from Modern Ireland (Fourth Edition) by Gerard Brockie and Raymond Walsh, Gill Education.

The Emergence of Ian Paisley

O'Neill also faced opposition to his attempts to reach out to the Catholic minority from another source - the Rev. Ian Paisley. Born in Armagh in 1926, Paisley had become a Presbyterian minister. Dissatisfied with the official Presbyterian Church and the Orange Order, he set up his own Free Presbyterian Church and Independent Orange Order. From the outset of O'Neill's period as Prime Minister, Paisley became his constant critic.

Paisley completely condemned ecumenism, the attempt to unite Christians by friendly discussions and understanding and by emphasising the common ground they shared. He reviled Pope John XXIII (1958-63), who called the Second Vatican Council which supported ecumenical dialogue between Christians. When Pope John XXIII died in 1963, Paisley led a crowd of around a thousand protesters to Belfast City Hall because the Union flag was lowered to half mast as a mark of respect. A year later he was involved in a much more serious incident in west Belfast. He threatened to lead a group of followers into west Belfast to remove an Irish tricolour from the offices of a republican candidate during the British general election of October 1964. When the police seized the flag and its replacement, two days of violence followed. Known as the Divis Street Riots, the disturbances were the worst in the city since 1935.

This confrontation between nationalists and the largely Protestant RUC over the flying of a tricolour took place at a time when the nationalist minority was becoming increasingly impatient with the existing conditions of life in Northern Ireland.

Nationalist Grievances

By the early 1960s, pressure for change was increasing in Northern Ireland. With the exception of the largely ineffectual Border Campaign of the IRA, Northern Irish society had been more stable since 1945 than in previous years. However, beneath the surface the profile of the nationalist community was being transformed. Because of the availability of free education under the welfare state, increasing numbers of young Catholics were graduating from college. Most of them were not prepared to accept the status of second-class citizens, which their parents' generation had endured.

Northern Ireland remained a deeply sectarian society. Protestants and Catholics were educated separately, often lived in different areas and socialised with members of their own religion. Bigotry and religious intolerance were rife. Whereas Catholics tended to stereotype Protestants as sour and intolerant, many Protestants regarded all Catholics as socially inferior. Even Terence O'Neill betrayed this attitude in a notorious speech:

“It is frightfully hard to explain to Protestants that if they give Roman Catholics a good house they will live like Protestants, because they will see neighbours with cars and television sets. They will refuse to have eighteen children. But if a Roman Catholic is jobless and lives in the most ghastly hovel he will rear eighteen children on National Assistance. If you treat Roman Catholics with due consideration, they will live like Protestants in spite of the authoritarian nature of their Church.”

Given the prevailing intolerant attitudes, many Protestant employers discriminated in favour of fellow Protestants when taking on new employees. Because there were far fewer Catholic employers, their employment of Catholic workers had a much smaller impact. In addition to discrimination in the private sector, Catholics were seriously under-represented in jobs in the civil service, where over 90 per cent of the higher posts were held by Protestants.

Adapted from Modern Ireland (Fourth Edition) by Gerard Brockie and Raymond Walsh, Gill Education.

KEY CONCEPT: SECTARIANISM

Sectarianism involves **division and hatred in society on the basis of religious difference. It was further deepened in Northern Ireland by the fact that religious divisions frequently coincided with political divisions. The vast majority of Protestants were unionists who regarded themselves as British and most Catholics were nationalists who considered themselves Irish**. Catholic hostility to Protestants was based on a centuries-old tradition of considering them as Planters who took over land from the native Irish and as people who continued to treat Catholics as second-class citizens. Protestant hostility to Catholics was based on the belief that Catholics aimed to destroy the union between Northern Ireland and the rest of Great Britain. **Sectarianism remained intense in Northern Ireland** and those seeking compromise and reconciliation between the two traditions were often regarded with suspicion and distrust within their own communities.

Adapted from Modern Ireland (Fourth Edition) by Gerard Brockie and Raymond Walsh, Gill Education.

Problems in Local Government

Nationalists had two serious grievances in the area of local government:

- Gerrymandering
- Multiple votes.

Gerrymandering is the practice of adjusting constituency boundaries to suit one party.

The unionist-controlled government at Stormont did this in a number of areas that had nationalist majorities. The most blatant example was in Derry city, where the electoral wards were fixed to ensure a permanent unionist majority in the corporation, despite the existence of a nationalist majority in the city. This was accomplished by including most of the nationalist voters in one ward and spreading the unionist electors over two wards.

At the time, not every citizen could vote in local government elections. Only ratepayers had the vote, and businesses were given a number of votes. As most businesses were owned by unionists, nationalists condemned the practice and called for 'one man, one vote' in all local government elections.

The focus on reform of local government had a twofold purpose: first to ensure fair nationalist representation in county councils and corporations, but secondly, and most importantly, to bring about a change in the housing allocation in Northern Ireland. For nationalists, the unfair and discriminatory allocation of public housing by unionist-controlled councils was the most glaring of all grievances. Indeed, it was to be the spark that ignited a protest movement which utterly transformed the nature of politics and society in Northern Ireland in the years ahead.

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KEY CONCEPT: GERRYMANDERING

Gerrymandering refers **to the unfair division of electoral boundaries in order to favour certain political parties**. It originated in the US in the nineteenth century. It was also practised in the Republic of Ireland until an independent electoral commission was established to review boundaries before the 1981 general election. However, in Northern Ireland it was particularly blatant for two reasons: the determination of the Unionist Government to maintain control in areas where unionists were weaker, and the use of the British 'first past the post system' in elections which made gerrymandering easier than would have been the case under a proportional representation (PR) electoral system. **The most notorious example of gerrymandering was in Derry City, where the minority unionist population was enabled to maintain a majority on the city council.**

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The Origins of the Civil Rights Movement

The housing shortage was particularly severe for Catholic families in areas west of the River Bann. In areas like Derry city, Dungannon and Enniskillen, unionist-controlled councils refused to build sufficient new houses for Catholics in case they endangered their control by upsetting the existing - gerrymandered - electoral boundaries.

The situation was at crisis point in Dungannon, Co. Tyrone. By 1963 no Catholic family had been allocated a permanent house by the local council in the previous thirty-four years. A group of local Catholics therefore joined together to set up the Homeless Citizens' League. They decided to take direct action, such as protests and squatting in houses vacated by Protestant tenants who had moved to newly built houses. Prominent in the Homeless Citizens' League were a local doctor and his wife, Conn and Patricia McCluskey. During the protests in Dungannon, the McCluskeys received requests from nationalists in other parts of Northern Ireland looking for help with housing problems. As a result they decided to broaden their concern to include all of Northern Ireland.

On 14 January 1964 at a meeting in Belfast, the McCluskeys established the Campaign for Social Justice in Northern Ireland. They made it clear in a press release that they rejected the main approach of nationalists in the past, namely to concentrate on the ending of partition and the achievement of a united Ireland. Instead, the Campaign for Social Justice concentrated on civil rights. If Catholics in Northern Ireland were full British citizens, then they were entitled to all the rights and freedoms which this involved. In particular, the movement demanded an end to discrimination, and sought full equality for all citizens in Northern Ireland.

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The Origins of the Civil Rights Movement

The Campaign for Social Justice in Northern Ireland was strongly inspired by the contemporary peaceful struggle of African-American people for civil rights in the United States of America. One of the banners during the protests in Dungannon stated: 'Racial discrimination in Alabama hits Dungannon'. In the years ahead, the link between the struggle for civil rights in America and in Northern Ireland was to figure prominently in the campaigns of the nationalist minority.

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KEY CONCEPT: CIVIL RIGHTS

The concept of civil rights concerned the belief that **all citizens, irrespective of class, race or religion, should be treated equally by the state**. It was linked to the notion of discrimination or unfair treatment of certain sections of society. During the 1960s the civil rights movement in the US focused on the struggle of African-Americans for equality and an end to discrimination on the basis of race. In **Northern Ireland**, the **civil rights movement** demanded **equal treatment for all citizens of the UK and an end to religious and racial discrimination against the minority community because of its Catholic and nationalist identity**.

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Key Personality DR CONN MCCLUSKEY (1914-2013) and PATRICIA MCCLUSKEY (1914-2010)

Dr Conn and Patricia McCluskey played an important role in highlighting discrimination against Catholics in Northern Ireland, especially in the area of public housing. Living in Dungannon, Co. Tyrone, they were founder members of the Homeless Citizens' League, which they helped establish in response to local discrimination in the allocation of public housing. This organisation decided on direct action, including protests and squatting in houses.

In response to requests from other nationalists in the north, the McCluskeys broadened their activity beyond Dungannon and, as a result, set up the Campaign for Social Justice in Northern Ireland on 14 January 1964. The aim of this new organisation, strongly inspired by the peaceful struggle of African-American people for civil rights in the United States of America, was to campaign for civil rights for Catholics in the north. As a means of highlighting discrimination against the minority community in Northern Ireland, they wrote a number of letters to the British Prime Minister, Sir Alec Douglas Home, and published a pamphlet entitled 'Northern Ireland - The Plain Truth, which highlighted the various forms of discrimination in operation.

The McCluskeys' campaign against discrimination in Northern Ireland was to become the genesis of the civil rights movement in the late 1960s, which began with the establishment in 1967 of the Northern Ireland Civil Rights Association (NICRA). Maurice Hayes, a senor civil servant in Northern Ireland, commented as follows on their contribution: 'I believe that the civil rights movement and people like the McCluskeys did more to change society in two years than anybody else in the previous fifty.

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Publicising the Problem

One of the main functions of the Campaign for Social Justice was to gather information on the treatment of nationalists and to publicise it. They published a pamphlet entitled 'Northern Ireland - The Plain Truth', which contained facts and figures regarding various forms of discrimination.

The campaign also drew attention to the huge subsidy which British taxpayers were paying each year to Northern Ireland. During 1964 they wrote a number of letters to the British Prime Minister, Sir Alec Douglas Home, but he refused to intervene in the affairs of Northern Ireland. He justified his actions by stating that since 1921 British governments had left the running of the province in the hands of the Northern Ireland Government.

When the Conservative Government of Sir Alec Douglas Home was defeated in the general election of October 1964, a Labour administration came to power under Harold Wilson.

Publicising the Problem

Because the Conservatives were allies of the Ulster Unionists, many nationalists in Northern Ireland hoped for a more sympathetic hearing from a Labour Government. By and large they were to be disappointed, as Wilson's Government had no intention of becoming involved in affairs in the province if they could possibly avoid doing so. However, in 1965 a group of backbench Labour MPs launched the 'Campaign for Democracy in Ulster' in the British House of Commons.

This group O called for an end to discrimination and the establishment of an enquiry into the administration of government in Northern Ireland. However, the group made little headway, as the British Government steadfastly refused to intervene. After his election as a Republican Labour MP for West Belfast in 1966, Gerry Fitt added his voice to calls for reform in Northern Ireland when he spoke in the British Parliament. He was ignored, however, and it became clear that the initiative for change would not come from books, pamphlets and speeches, but rather from direct action on the streets of Northern Ireland.

REVIEW QUESTIONS

1. In what way was the housing crisis particularly acute in Dungannon, Co. Tyrone?
2. Who set up the Homeless Citizens' League and what action did they take?
3. Who set up the Campaign for Social Justice and how did this organisation differ in approach from that of nationalists in Northern Ireland in the past?
4. How did the Campaign for Social Justice go about publicising the grievances of Catholics?
5. Why were nationalists in Northern Ireland disappointed with the new Labour Government elected in Great Britain in October 1964?

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