

# The early years of Terence O'Neill 1963–1967

Headings	Notes
<p><b>TERENCE O'NEILL BECOMES PRIME MINISTER OF NORTHERN IRELAND</b></p> <p><b>THE RIVALS FOR POWER</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Two leading members of the Unionist government hoped to replace Brookeborough as Prime Minister.</li> <li>• One was the Finance Minister, <b>Terence O'Neill</b>. He wanted to modernise Northern Ireland</li> <li>• planned economic development.</li> <li>• The other was the Minister for Home Affairs, <b>Brian Faulkner</b>. He had used internment in 1959</li> <li>• to defeat the IRA's border campaign. This made him popular with traditional unionists who</li> <li>• disliked O'Neill's modernising ideas.</li> </ul>
<p><b>TERENCE O'NEILL (1914–1990)</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Born into an aristocratic family in Co. Antrim, O'Neill grew up in England and served in the British army during World War II. Afterwards he settled in Northern Ireland and was elected to Stormont.</li> <li>• Brookeborough made him Minister for Home Affairs in 1955 and Minister for Finance in 1956.</li> <li>• When Brookeborough retired, O'Neill became PM. He wanted to modernise Northern Ireland, through economic planning and development.</li> <li>• He encouraged multinational companies to come to Northern Ireland to replace jobs lost in the traditional industries of linen and shipbuilding.</li> <li>• He also set up committees to suggest reforms in education, transport and town planning.</li> <li>• In order to encourage economic co-operation with the republic, he invited Taoiseach Seán Lemass to visit Belfast and went to Dublin himself.</li> <li>• In order to improve relations with the Catholic minority, he made some small gestures like visiting a Catholic school.</li> <li>• But even these gestures were too much for some unionists. Led by Ian Paisley, they mounted an 'O'Neill must go' campaign.</li> <li>• At the same time, Catholics noted that he made no significant concessions. After he agreed to site the North's new university in Protestant Coleraine rather than Catholic Derry, some of them decided that only direct action could lead to reform. This led to the civil rights campaign in 1967.</li> <li>• When violence broke out in Derry, O'Neill tried to strengthen his own position by calling an election for February 1969. The gamble failed.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Keywords</b></p>	<p><b>Summary</b></p>











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<b>WHY DID O'NEILL ACCEPT THEIR RECOMMENDATION?</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• O'Neill did not have to accept their recommendation. He could have put the new university in Derry.</li><li>• But, like Derry unionists, he feared that doing so would disturb their control of the city.</li><li>• He also knew that it would please unionist voters outside Derry if it was put in the mainly Protestant town of Coleraine.</li></ul>
<b>QUESTION</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• How did the controversy about the location of Northern Ireland's second university reflect the political and religious divisions there?</li></ul>
<b>EXAM QUESTION</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• To what extent were the activities of the Apprentice Boys of Derry and/or the choice of Coleraine as the site of Northern Ireland's second university divisive? (HL 2009)</li></ul>
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## Terence O'Neill

1. Finance Minister under Brookeborough
2. Believed N.I. could be modernised and reformed without threatening British rule
3. Unemployment double the rest of UK
4. Tried to attract foreign industry to N.I.
5. Mainly established in Protestant areas and did not keep pace with job losses
6. O'Neill introduced an official policy of Protestant-Catholic reconciliation.

### O'Neill Meets Lemass

1. Taoiseach Sean Lemass had introduced a similar policy of attracting foreign industry to the South
2. As part of his policy of reconciliation O'Neill invites Lemass to visit Belfast in 1965
3. Visit a success
4. Visit provoked protests from Protestants led by Ian Paisley
5. In 1966 O'Neill visits Dublin
6. Many Protestants viewed these visits with dismay as they believed Catholics were their enemies

### Civil Rights

1. As a result of welfare state and investment in education many Catholics now better educated
2. Started to demand equal rights
3. 1966 Gerry Fitt becomes MP for West Belfast and gets support from British MPs for equal rights
4. Civil Rights Association inspired by the black Civil Rights Movement in USA
5. Demand was not to end partition
6. Catholics insisted that if they were part of UK they should have the same rights as all the citizens of UK
7. Many Protestants support civil rights

### Five Demands

1. One person one vote
2. Redrawing of electoral boundaries and an end to gerrymandering
3. Laws against all forms of discrimination
4. The repeal of the Special Powers Act
5. Disbandment of B-Specials

### Fall of O'Neill

1. In response to Civil Rights Campaign O'Neill sets up Cameron Commission to investigate disturbances and their causes
2. British Government force O'Neill to accept reforms (p.20)
3. Reforms enrage Loyalists and fail to satisfy the NICRA
4. Fearing he would introduce more reforms, Unionists begin to demand O'Neill's resignation
5. In Feb. 1969 O'Neill called a General Election
6. O'Neill won a slight majority but the election showed the Unionists were bitterly divided. O'Neill resigned in April 1969