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THE PEOPLE'S DEMOCRACY
1968 – 1973

THE PEOPLE'S DEMOCRACY

1968 – 1973

Paul Arthur

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Published by Blackstaff Press Limited, 15 Donegall Square South, Belfast BT1 5JE.

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SBN 85640 020 3

SBN 85640 021 1

Printed in Northern Ireland by Belfast Litho Printers Limited
Typeset in Northern Ireland by Century Services Limited

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Preface

I first met the author in the spring of 1970 when I was Professor of Politics at Sheffield and had the habit of taking my students on a field trip to 'Westminster and Whitehall,' the regulation said, which was always voted 'quite interesting but a bit boring,' until I got the Faculty to change the regulation, without particularly explaining why, to '...er some centre of regional government'; and so we went to Belfast. And my colleagues at the Queen's University arranged for one of their postgraduate students, a Mr. Paul Arthur, to act as a kind of political Thomas Cook's courier for us, steering us, with admirable knowledgeability and objectivity (which I distinguish at times from neutrality) around all points of the political spectrum. I myself held up the traditional tobacco - tin lid to the then Miss Bernadette Devlin, as she chain-smoked her way through a harangue at us; and saw to my surprise and good - mannered relief, all of my students, even the wildest, get to their feet when the Speaker of Stormont moved (for they had given us an official lunch, so startled was anyone at an educational visit to Stormont) the Loyal Toast in orange juice.

I gathered then that Paul Arthur was writing a M.S.Sc. thesis on the People's Democracy. It seemed to me an intellectually dangerous thing to be doing. It is just so very hard to be of scholarly objectivity about contemporary politics, particularly about — the point is obvious. It seemed to me perhaps more tolerant than wise of his supervisors. But when I saw the finished product, from which this book emerges, not merely did my doubts vanish, but I saw that Mr. Arthur had pulled off that most rare of achievements: a really convincing and important scholarly study of a contentious contemporary movement both by participating in it and observing it (in different proportion at different times, it is only fair to him to say) or by setting it in a wider, comparative context. Too often interesting and important political phenomena get well or badly reported by journalists, but then they simply vanish from public eye: the terrible daily paradox of so much effort by intelligent men going into something utterly ephemeral. Often long afterwards a scholar comes along looking for the trail, when it is cold; interviewing the actors in the events when they have already several times changed their roles; and expecting people to remember accurately what they would often rather forget or have already found a protective skin of re - remembering (I would say, rather than misremembering — that is recreating what one once did or said in light of where one now stands). Very rarely does someone with the equipment of a scholar stay with a new movement long enough to write a definitive account of its origins — and decline.

Paul Arthur has shown how a student movement, the People's Democracy, had some significant influence from the days of 1968 when it appeared both bright, new, strange, startling and (at least to someone outside the province) even heartening because it cut

across old sectarian lines and showed that some of the younger generation were refusing to be stereotyped, until it collapsed back not just into the old sectarianism for that perhaps has to be accepted as the limits of manoeuvre for a long time hence; but into the blinkered, violent politics of the old sectarianism — oddly (again it seems from the outside) so little different on either side. The reader in Ireland needs no warning that 'P.D.' is but part of a broader Civil Rights movement. The reader from outside the province needs to remember that firmly. The author, though then a student himself, is far from uncritical of P.D.'s ability to make contact with ordinary people even in the early days, even in the Catholic community, among the Protestant majority. 'Student politics' is, indeed, in my opinion, to be characterised by most of the things its critics say of it: as a style of politics it is both too abstract and too passionate, too much in a hurry, too much committed to abstract ideas of 'the People' but often too lacking in knowledge of or sympathies with the actual aspirations of ordinary people. Young, inexperienced, impatient and transitory: the professional politicians nightmare, not so much because of threat as of irrelevance and unreliability. But consider the professional politician. Consider the converse of the defects of 'the students.' How good it is to see a movement of some effect arise from people who might otherwise simply be busy 'getting their degree and getting out,' and who were (are?) one of the very few groups in Northern Ireland who refuse to accept the inevitability of the old divisions and the reading of history as an inevitable demonstration that the old thing as it is can never be changed.

The changes that there have been since the beginning of the Civil Rights movement and of Peoples Democracy show that the old institutional conservatism of the province has broken down. Many of the slogans of the past, on both sides, seem less and less descriptive of possible objectives.

Perhaps I overstress the political. For though no one can or should be without their own beliefs, or those long meditated pre-judgments that are sometimes badly called (fixed and arbitrary) prejudice, yet Paul Arthur has simply written an astonishingly detailed, interesting and objective account of a movement as interesting to those involved in actual politics in Ireland as to those healthy parasites, of which I am one, who try to study politics in a scholarly way. Certainly Mr. Arthur has his biases. But he passes well, to my mind, the two great tests of political writing: that his account of the facts will be largely acceptable by those who differ from him in doctrine; and that he explains realistically the failure of some things that he would rather have seen succeed. 'The more one is conscious of one's political bias', wrote George Orwell, 'the more chance one has of acting politically without sacrificing one's aesthetic and intellectual objectivity.' Mr. Arthur is to be congratulated on writing one of the best books to arise from the present troubles.

Bernard Crick,
Professor of Politics,
Birbeck College, London University.

Introduction

'Contemporary history embarrasses a writer not only because he knows too much, but also because what he knows is too undigested, too unconnected, too atomic. It is only after close and prolonged reflection that we begin to see what was essential and what unimportant, to see why things happened as they did, and to write history instead of newspapers.'

R G Collingwood: *Speculum Mentis: The Map of Knowledge*
(London 1924) B 236

Armed with this stricture I approached this work with modest intentions. My purpose was to write a chronological account of the activities of the People's Democracy and to analyse it against a backcloth of international student radicalism; and, where that becomes superfluous, I have examined its influence in five very turbulent years of Irish politics. No doubt deeper reflection would have been an advantage but it is important to record the facts with the aid of oral evidence before they are allowed to become part of Ireland's ever-growing political mythology.

Another difficulty arises over my own involvement in PD. I was a member from the beginning in October 1968 until after Easter 1969 and was closely involved in some of the important decisions taken during that period; and some of those I write about were my contemporaries at university. I leave it to the reader to decide whether my involvement has clouded my judgment.

Originally this work studied PD's activities from 1968-70. I have added a short postscript to examine its development since 1971. It does not pretend to be detailed nor particularly analytical. I was concerned with general trends and PD had long since lost most of its influence. Its role had become that of providing a pseudo Marxist gloss to the Provisional Sinn Fein. It had become so far removed from its original student character that my five stage model may be no longer applicable.

Finally I have attempted to make the book a little less academic by excising as many footnotes as possible. These excisions should not interfere with the flow of the narrative and the missing references can be checked in a copy of the original thesis at the Queen's University of Belfast.

Acknowledgements

This book first saw the light of day as an academic thesis presented to the Faculty of Social Science at Queen's University Belfast for the award of a Master's degree. Whatever merit it may have is largely due to the detailed criticisms and invaluable advice I received from Dr Cornelius O'Leary, Dr Roger Scott and Dr Robert Baxter, all of the Department of Political Science. I should also thank Professor J H Warrender of that Department. He encouraged my research interests and offered me the facilities to undertake this work.

Professor Bernard Crick and Dr Conor Cruise O'Brien were both kind enough to read the completed thesis and offer valuable new insights and criticisms. I owe a deep debt of gratitude to all of these men. Needless to say I accept full responsibility for any errors of fact or interpretation.

My thanks are due to the Queen's University Librarian and his staff, to Miss P Howard of the Linen Hall Library Belfast, to the staff of the *Belfast Telegraph* Library, and to Kevin Boyle who gave me the unlimited use of his private press cuttings and of his time. Similarly I am indebted to those whom I interviewed, notably Mrs Bernadette McAliskey MP and Mr John Hume MP.

I wish to thank the following authors or publishers for permission to quote from their work: Professor S M Lipset, editor of *Student Politics*; *The Journal of Social Issues* for articles by G Abcarian, R Flacks, A L Mauss, D R Schweitzer and J M Elden; Derek Birrell, Harvey Cox and Bob Overy, authors of Papers presented at the Conference on Conflict in Northern Ireland at Lancaster University in December 1971; The Lyric Players Theatre Belfast (*Threshold*); and *New Left Review*.

Finally I am particularly grateful to my wife for her encouragement and forbearance. I dedicate this book to her, and to my mother and father.

Prologue

(i) The politics of the crystallized majority.

'The six north-eastern counties of Ireland were grouped together and given a parliament and government of their own not because anyone in the area wanted (let alone demanded) such an arrangement, but because the British Government thought that this was the only possible way of reconciling the rival aspirations of the two Irish parties—the Nationalist (and mainly Roman Catholic) majority, who demanded self-government for the whole country, and the Unionist (and mainly Protestant) minority, who wished Ireland to remain as it was, within the United Kingdom.¹

The constitutional vehicle for such inauspicious beginnings was the Government of Ireland Act which became law on December 23, 1920 and was to be brought into operation in June 1921. Its passing created conditions of turbulence which were to be endemic during the first fifty years of the State. Between 1920 and 1922 'nearly 300 people were killed, most of them in Belfast, in what amounted to civil war between Unionists and Catholics.'² In 1922 alone, 232 people were killed, nearly 1,000 were wounded while more than £3 million worth of property was destroyed. Serious sectarian rioting also broke out in 1933, 1935, 1964 and 1966.³

Superficially Northern Ireland operated under the liberal democratic Westminster model of government. It had its own Parliament elected freely in single member constituencies, and had a government endorsed by free electors. But it was not a sovereign Parliament, a fact which was underlined by Section 75 of the Government of Ireland Act.

'Notwithstanding the establishment of the Parliaments of Southern Ireland 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.'

However, the sovereign Parliament did not devote much attention to Northern Ireland affairs:

'Although in theory the shadow of Westminster legislation loomed over Northern Ireland from the beginning, in practice the mother Parliament had devoted very little time to the affairs of the six counties — in one period of just over a year in 1934/35 the time spent was one hour and fifty minutes, and that seems, until very recently, to have been about the average.'⁴

Richard Rose reinforces this point.

'In the five years preceding the disorder of 1969, the Commons devoted less than one sixth of one per cent of its time to discussions of Northern Ireland questions; most of this talk concerned matters of trade, not the matters that affected allegiance to the regime.'⁵

Consequently the governing party in Northern Ireland conducted their own affairs, largely unhampered by interference from Westminster, and were able to secure 'the compliance of Ulster Catholics, even though they could not obtain their support.'⁶

Catholic compliance was sullen and defiant. Its political mouth-piece, the anti-partitionist Nationalist party, did not begin to attend parliament regularly until 1927 (nor did it assume the mantle of official Opposition until 1965, although it had always been the largest opposition party).

For its part the governing Unionist party met Catholic complaints with indifference or antagonism as it strengthened its power base. The withdrawal of proportional representation from parliamentary elections in 1929 was considered to be directly political. It ensured that only those parties which took a firm line on the constitutional position of Northern Ireland were certain to succeed at general elections, and the Unionist Party as the historic guardian of Ulster and British sanctity could look forward to an indefinite period of untrammelled one-party rule.

Nationalist MPs were reduced to acting 'merely as an ombudsman for their Catholic constituents and had little interest in the legislative process'.⁷ They succeeded in securing passage of only one Bill, the Wild Birds Act of 1931. Over the years the two major parties withdrew to contest only those constituencies they felt sure they could win. As a result the Unionist Party never failed to win less than 34 seats in a 52 seat Parliament between 1929 and 1965 and 'the median figure for uncontested constituencies at all elections between 1929 and 1965 was 22'.⁸

This state of permanent one party rule in a competitive party system has been described by one observer, Arendt Lijphart, as 'majority dictatorship'.⁹ Perhaps a more helpful analysis for our purpose is the concept of a 'crystallized politics'. It has been described thus:

'A crystallized politics is the result of a group of voters which has developed as a unit, sharply divided from the rest of the social system and unable either to communicate with it or to understand its wants and needs. Its representatives are not forced to compromise because they are a majority of the legislature. They have no need to go elsewhere for programs and ideas, because the divided society has produced a political subsystem which produces in turn all the dynamics of the whole system in microcosm. Opposition becomes divided, transitional, plaintive and, above all, futile because there is no need for the legislative majority to attend to the interests of the opposing groups in the system. If leadership of this segment of the society is united fully behind a programme

inimical to the interests of the remaining groups in the society, the whole system can come perilously close to a democratically sustained, but dictatorial, government.¹⁰

This seems to be a useful description of the state of Northern Ireland politics between 1920 and 1968. But such a system has a basic flaw:

‘... there can be little hope for tranquillity in the political system if the electoral system, functioning normally, produces a majority in the legislature which rests upon a strong and disciplined large voting segment which will come together on all issues because its internal identity is stronger than any issue confronting it’.¹¹ What is likely to happen is that ‘eventually the pressures of the minority would become too great’.¹²

There had been a measure of tranquillity until the late 1960’s:

‘... between the early 1920’s and the late 1960’s Ireland enjoyed a longer period of freedom from major internal disturbance than it had known since the first half of the eighteenth century’.¹³ The minority sunk into an attitude of sullen acceptance and the governing party tackled the underlying economic problems created by the Government of Ireland Act. F S L Lyons has noted:

‘... so much effort and so much money went into the frantic race to keep up with Britain in the scale of social benefits paid out, that there were no resources left to put through those essential long-term reforms that ministers had set their hearts on in the first flush of enthusiasm. So in 1939, as in 1922, the province was still plagued by ill-health, poor housing, bad roads and inadequate schools.’¹⁴

The development of a viable economy has always been a major problem for any Northern Ireland government. Ironically, as the one part of the United Kingdom which was not forced to introduce conscription, it benefitted greatly from the economic effects of World War II. One significant pointer to its war-time prosperity may be mentioned.

‘... income per head, which had been less than three-fifths of that in Britain before the war, rose in Northern Ireland between 1939 and 1945 until it was three-quarters of the British figure ...’¹⁵ As a result the War ‘raised the Ulsterman’s standard of living in the present and aroused his expectations of the future’.¹⁶

The post-war years saw the rise of the Welfare State in Britain — and its acceptance in Northern Ireland. The continuing battle to establish economic viability was not helped by the decline in the traditional industries of agriculture, textiles and shipbuilding. Yet progress must be recorded, particularly in the social welfare field.

While it is true that Northern Ireland was still the most deprived region of the United Kingdom in socio-economic terms on a comparison of incomes, unemployment rates and housing conditions,¹⁷ its record was considerably more healthy than that of the Irish Republic.¹⁸

Thus by the 1960's some economic progress was being made but the political divide seemed as irreconcilable as ever. As late as 1961 Lord Brookeborough, Prime Minister since 1943, could play down economic problems by raising the old battlecry: 'Ulster has only room for one party . . . recent economic issues should not divide protestants'.¹⁹ Yet, as the decade progressed, there was evidence of a growing desire for change, especially after March 1963 when Capt Terence O'Neill succeeded Lord Brookeborough as Prime Minister.

To appreciate why change became possible it is necessary to examine O'Neillism, not only in the context of the Prime Minister's policies, but also in relation to the British Labour Party's general election victories of 1964 and 1966, and to the growth of a new middle class, Catholic as well as Protestant, containing ambitious and articulate men.

'Improving community relations was a major means by which Terence O'Neill sought full legitimisation of the regime.'²⁰ He began by recognising the Northern Committee of the Irish Congress of Trade Unions, an organisation with headquarters in Dublin. He constantly stressed the need to close the rift in the community, in particular his speech to a joint Protestant-Catholic conference at Corrymeela on April 8, 1966.²¹ He acted on his words — albeit symbolically — by visiting Catholic schools and other institutions. His most daring action was to meet Mr Sean Lemass, Prime Minister of the Irish Republic, at Stormont on January 14, 1965. (O'Neill had not bothered to consult his parliamentary party before he undertook this historic meeting.) A month later the gesture was reciprocated when a series of inter-departmental discussions on matters of common interest got under way.

This aspect of his policy appeared to be working since the Nationalists agreed to accept the role of official Opposition in February 1965. Richard Rose produces further evidence to illustrate that 'O'Neill's "era of good feelings" was not a myth'.²² Rose carried out a survey covering exactly the period in which Terence O'Neill had then been Prime Minister. Fifty-six per cent of Protestants and sixty-five per cent of Catholics felt that there had been a change for the better.²³

It should be noted however that improved community relations had very little effect upon political outlooks. 'Among Catholics who felt that community relations had improved only thirty-six per cent supported the Constitution, and forty-four per cent still favoured illegal demonstrations. Improvements in community relations were associated with a tendency for Protestants to reject Ultra tactics; these were endorsed by forty-six per cent of Protestants who thought relations had improved, by sixty-one per cent of those who thought they had remained the same, and by seventy-one per cent of the small group that thought they had worsened.'²⁴

Essentially the Prime Minister's problems were two-fold; he failed to bring his own extremists with him; and he could not win the

trust of the minority. 'His clandestine encounters with Lemass and Lynch (both of whom outwitted him) and his furtive visits to clerical establishments, together with other similar gestures, were dismissed as stunts by the opposition, but received with increasing unease by many of his followers.'²⁵

The fear of the more extreme Unionist supporters manifested itself in the growth of Paisleyism and of the self-styled Ulster Volunteer Force, which took its name from the illegal army raised by Unionists in 1913 to fight against Irish Home Rule. Rioting between Catholics and Paisley's supporters in 1964 and again in 1966,²⁶ and the murder of a young Catholic by the UVF in June 1966 underlined the threat of Protestant extremism to O'Neill's community relations effort. (As a result of the latter action the Prime Minister was forced to proscribe the UVF under the Special Powers Act on June 23, 1966, the first occasion on which this legislation had been invoked against a Protestant organisation.)

Within the Unionist Party O'Neill was treated with a measure of distrust:

'In 1966 and in 1967 there were two revolts within the Unionist Parliamentary Party which O'Neill put down by the expedient of broadcasting to the people and challenging his opponents to put their case. This they were not willing to do and both revolts ended in votes of confidence of specious unanimity for O'Neill. Although never publicly acknowledged, the reasons for the intra-party opposition to O'Neill were inferentially that he seemed to be going too far to cultivate the minority and the suspect Southern Government.'²⁷ Following the riots of 1966, the pro-O'Neillite *Belfast Telegraph* reckoned that the Prime Minister could not be certain of the unequivocal support of eighteen of his thirty-six parliamentary colleagues.²⁸

Underlining the fears of the Party for O'Neill's creeping ecumenism was the constant worry of the effects of the British Labour Party's general election victories of 1964 and 1966. The Unionist Party has been described as a 'party of regional defence' whose 'strategic strength has lain in its capacity to represent and nurture an alliance between "Ulster" and the English Conservative party, or certainly a blocking section of it.'²⁹

The dilemma of the Unionists had been illustrated when Labour was last in power between 1945 and 1951:

'What happened was that at Westminster the Unionist representatives joined with the Conservative opposition in resisting the socialist legislation which established the welfare state, while at Stormont the Unionist party solemnly resolved to annex as much of this legislation as possible to its own purposes.'³⁰

Unionism need not have worried. The post-war Labour Government had too many other problems on its mind — even if it had the inclination — to scrutinize Northern Ireland affairs. In fact it appeared to strengthen the Union when it enacted the Ireland Act

of 1949. An ominous note was struck, however, in the discussion of this piece of legislation. It 'received an unusual amount of opposition in the British House of Commons; sixty-three Labour MP's voted against it at committee stage.'³¹

Most of those Members belonged to the Friends of Ireland Group whose 'aim is to secure democratic Labour Government in Ireland, both North and South, with a view to attaining a united Ireland by common consent at the earliest possible moment.'³² (This group was not terribly effective although it produced some damaging propaganda,³³ and embarrassed some Labour supporters in Northern Ireland.)

The post-1964 Labour Governments shared the same relationship with Unionism as their predecessors, that is, a Labour Cabinet too busy to be unduly concerned with Northern Ireland and a sizeable pressure group within the Labour party which was anti-Unionist. But there was one major exception. In 1964 Labour was returned to power with a tiny majority, and was 'particularly resentful at the influence of the twelve Ulster Unionists, without whom the Opposition would have presented a far less serious challenge at Division time . . . Whereas Ulster Unionists had gone into the Division lobbies to vote against a Rent Act that did not apply to Northern Ireland . . . it was impossible to raise discrimination on public bodies appointed by the Government of Northern Ireland or issues such as housing in Dungannon on the floor of the House of Commons.'³⁴

The very first debate to be held on Northern Ireland on February 22, 1965 was a turning-point in Anglo-Northern Ireland relations.³⁵ The Speaker refused to alter the convention whereby Ulster affairs were not discussed at Westminster, and, as a consequence, the Campaign for Democracy in Ulster (CDU) was established. This successor to the Friends of Ireland group was to act as a vigilant watchdog of Northern Ireland affairs within the Labour party.

Its numbers and spirit was improved by Labour's clear victory in the 1966 General Election and by Gerry Fitt's victory in West Belfast in that campaign. (Fitt's victory ensured that an alternative voice to Unionism could be heard at Westminster, a point underlined by his very forceful maiden speech calling for an enquiry into Northern Ireland affairs.)³⁶ Three of its members visited Northern Ireland early in 1967 and published a report on April 29 which emphasised 'how near the surface violence lies in current political life' in Northern Ireland, and issued a plea for a Royal Commission.³⁷

By the middle of the '60s, therefore, it was becoming evident that political life in Northern Ireland was under change. The Unionist party, unsure of its Leader's reconciliation policy, was aware of the scrutinizing attitude of a Labour Government at Westminster. The stirrings of Protestant extremism and the tenuous position of Prime

Minister O'Neill were signs that reforms would be resisted by 'loyalists.'

Nor could O'Neill count on the automatic support of the Catholic community. There were indications that Catholics had turned from their pre-occupation with the albatross of partition to a willing acceptance of their status as citizens of Northern Ireland, provided that they were granted equal status. One possible reason for this change of heart has been cited by O D Edwards in a discussion on the effects of the ecumenical movement:

'... the Johannine translation of the concept of community from ideal to real terms seems to have been extremely important. It raised a very nasty problem for the Unionist leadership: their Catholic subjects instead of, as formerly, expecting them to behave with the perfidy and brutality of damnable heresiarchs, now began to demand that as members of a community they were entitled to expect the just rights of all members of that community. The very arguments that John XXIII himself had made so tellingly in the context of racial segregation had every relevance to religious apartheid.'³⁸

A more obvious reason was the failure of the last Irish Republican Army (IRA) campaign from December 1956 until February 1962. 'In all, there were about 300 major incidents, and six members of the RUC lost their lives.'³⁹ This abortive campaign highlighted the unwillingness of most anti-partitionists to achieve their ends through violence. (Also it had an important indirect influence on Ulster politics insofar as the IRA's activities kept the constitutional question to the forefront and thereby helped the Unionists to retain command of the Protestant vote.)

The major reason for their willingness to participate in the affairs of state lies in the paradox of O'Neillism. The Prime Minister's moderation lay in avoiding bigotry. It did not extend so far as to endorse change sufficient to dispel the Catholic sense of grievance.⁴⁰ As we have seen, a section of his own party and the Protestant Ultras were not prepared to accept any concessions made to the Catholic minority. In its turn, that minority saw O'Neillism as a weakening in the politics of the crystallized majority and a period of rising political expectation.

We should remember that, although most Catholics considered themselves to be second-class citizens, they did benefit from the social welfare policies undertaken after World War II. For instance, the Education Act of 1947 opened up higher education to all those with the ability to take advantage of it; in the seventeen years following the Act there was an increase in pupils in grant aided schools from 213,211 to 295,855 an increase paralleled in the building and extension of many new schools.⁴¹ O'Neill's attempt at broadening the economic base also met with some success:

'... in the sixties the numbers in employment rose, housing output increased, the index of wages rose from 100 in 1960, to 118

in 1963, to 173 in 1968 (Digest of Statistics 1969 and Housing Returns 1969). An Education Act in 1968 gave more money to Catholic voluntary schools.⁴²

The Prime Minister laid great emphasis on improving the lot of the Catholic community:

'...he assumed that the reason why Catholics protested about justice and power was that they lacked houses and jobs... People who protest that the rules of the game are biased politically will be told that the game is not about political power but about economic well-being.'⁴³ He did not realise that this policy could be self-defeating because it raised the problem of relative deprivation:

'A steady level of poverty favours the stabilization of social and cultural relations. But if economic conditions are changing then people are likely to feel more frustrated and insecure as they compare their lot with the one that has been held out to them as their legitimate condition and with other classes and countries that enjoy a higher standard of living.'⁴⁴

Catholics looked no further than Britain and demanded equal rights as British citizens.

The change in Catholic attitudes was noted by one observer in 1966:

'Many Catholics exhibit a mere hopeless antagonism to the present situation but there are signs that this is changing to a more active self-respect. It is not ridiculous to envisage a Catholic civil rights movement in the not too far distant future.'⁴⁵

The 'signs' which John Macrea detected can be seen in a number of instances. One was a visit to London in 1964 by a delegation of the anti-partitionist Nationalist Party to discuss discrimination with British party leaders. This was a tacit acknowledgment of the fact that Britain had a right and a duty to interfere in Northern Ireland affairs, if only to clean up the mess. In other words the Nationalists were beginning to think about reforming the system rather than insisting on talking only about the fundamental problem of the Constitution. (Incidentally, Jo Grimond was the only party leader prepared to meet them.) Its acceptance of the role of Official Opposition in February 1965 was a more positive step in this direction.

Another sign of changing attitudes was to be seen in the growth of effective pressure groups. The Campaign for Social Justice in Northern Ireland (CSJ) was founded in Dungannon on January 17, 1964 'for the purpose of bringing the light of publicity to bear on the discrimination which exists in our community against the Catholic section of that community representing more than one-third of the population.'⁴⁶ It produced pamphlets on such matters as allegations of gerrymandering in Derry and discrimination in employment, and publicized them as widely as possible.

The Working Committee on Civil Rights in Northern Ireland was another body founded in 1964 — in April — and composed of a

group of students at Queen's University, Belfast. Its task was to investigate allegations of discrimination in Newry and Derry, but it did not publish a report — lack of finance was given as the reason — and it did not function after its initial investigation.

The organisation which severely tested the tranquillity of the political system operating under the crystallized majority was the Northern Ireland Civil Rights Association (NICRA). It had been founded in February 1967 with a constitution based on that of the National Council of Civil Liberties in England. Its membership covered a wide spectrum of political views, although it was predominantly Catholic. It eschewed the violence and the aims of the IRA and concentrated on non-violent direct action. Consequently its success 'stemmed partly from the fact that it concentrated less on issues of personal liberty ... and more on pressing social problems like housing and employment. The target was less the Unionist Government than the Unionist controlled councils; Catholic resentment was organised, not for the traditional and seemingly unobtainable objective of Irish unity, but towards clear social goals.'⁴⁷

When it became clear to some Catholics that O'Neill could not, or would not, rise above pious platitudes the embryonic NICRA began to threaten action. But it was unsure of itself, since it lacked a popular mandate. The more militant edge of political agitation came from a small group of students at Queen's University, Belfast.

(ii) Student activism

When the Prime Minister embarked on his 'Programme to Enlist the People (PEP) in January, 1967, he was intent on building the new Ulster' largely with the assistance of the younger generation's idealism:

'I have never shared for one moment the disapproving opinions which some people seem to hold about our younger generation. Irreverent, yes, questioning, certainly, but also full of energy and idealism which we do not harness often enough.'⁴⁸

His words fell on deaf ears among the student activists, both Right and Left. The Right was concentrated in the Young Unionists, the vanguard of Loyalist intransigence:

'It is not possible to conceive the position of Irish Loyalists as anything other than a garrison, culturally and spiritually divorced from a numerically superior and relentlessly hostile populace.'⁴⁹ The Left saw PEP as a patronising effort at community reconciliation.

Queen's University had one great advantage as a centre from which a civil rights campaign could be launched. It was 'the chief centre of non-sectarian education in the Province'⁵⁰ with the Catholic student population composing 22 per cent of the total in the early 1960's, about the percentage which one would expect to find, given the Catholic community's economic disabilities. Relations between students from the two communities are good, and

there is considerable mixing in university societies and clubs.⁵¹ Later we shall see that the University base had a long term disadvantage in that it was transitory and secular. This was a problem peculiar to student politics elsewhere.

It had no real tradition of radical dissent among its students⁵² and yet one should not be altogether surprised that a mass of students, and some teaching staff, were involved in the formative demonstrations which launched the civil rights campaign. There are a number of reasons why this should be so. We have mentioned the first already; down the years Queen's students had established their credentials as a bona fide non-sectarian group. Secondly the inception of the civil rights demonstrations beginning in late 1968 coincided with the tail-end of a series of student riots in the Western world, and for some time its form of protest was permissible because it was considered to be a student protest. Finally, the student group which played such an important part in the early civil rights campaign, the People's Democracy (PD), threw up leaders of calibre and tenacity.

Any examination of the People's Democracy entails a study of it in relation to the international student movement. We shall see that patently it belonged to the student *milieu*: that the vast bulk of its membership was student; that its meeting place was in a campus hall; that its student character was denoted in the fluidity of its membership; that it established *some* contact with other student bodies; and that its brand of activism was similar to that denoted by one observer in six other countries — Mexico, Colombia, Japan, India, Egypt and the USA.⁵³

At the outset it needs to be said that 'student politics' covers a multitude of activities and attitudes. We need to be more precise about what we mean by the term especially since many observers have tended to concentrate on it as a recent phenomenon. The fact is that it has existed in varying forms over a number of years in widely disparate political cultures. 'Many developing areas have highly articulated traditions of student participation in, and sometimes leadership of, political events. In Latin America students have participated in political affairs for generations and are expected to do so. They have well defined powers in the governing of universities. In many Asian and African countries, students were a leading force in the struggle for independence, and former student leaders often achieved political power in the post independence governments. Since independence, the student role in many of these countries has diminished substantially although governments must still take account of the student movement. Recent events in South Korea, Turkey, Japan, Indonesia, South Vietnam, and other countries graphically emphasize the importance of the students.'⁵⁴

Our concern is not with the developing areas, but rather the liberal-democratic societies of the Western world. 'By world standards, Northern Ireland is a relatively prosperous industrial nation. In short, it meets the two criteria usually employed to define

Western nations: free elections and a modern, industrial economy.⁵⁵ In particular, we need to look at those countries lacking semi-legitimated student political activity such as the United States or Western Europe, where the student protest movement appears to have been a product of the 1960's. We discover, however, that in France and the United States there is some evidence of student political activity in the past. The French organized a national student strike in 1947 for reduction of university fees and increased government grants. It was a total success.⁵⁶ In the United States, in the late 1930's 'the most important general left-liberal group,' the American Students' Union was reported to have involved over 200,000 students in peace strikes, 'a larger absolute figure than any peace or anti-war national demonstrations have secured in recent times.'⁵⁷

A further qualification needs to be made. We are not interested with those student movements which may be concerned only with 'campus' issues and which have relatively little interest or impact on the external political situation. 'Such movements have been called '*etudialist*' because of their primary student orientation. They are often quite militant over issues of student welfare, fee increases and administrative harassment of students. They are occasionally interested in the broader issues of educational policy and reform, although generally student interests are confined to more limited areas.'⁵⁸ Probably the best example of the granting of '*etudialist*' demands was the Cordoba Manifesto of 1918 when Argentine students achieved a fair measure of what they called '*Cogobierno*', that is a place in the governing of the university. Their success has been the model upon which '*etudialist*' students have acted ever since.⁵⁹

The People's Democracy was not such an organisation, although we shall see that one of its off-shoots displayed a marginal interest in '*etudialist*' matters. It belongs to that body of 'society-oriented student movements, which are concerned with societal issues — usually political, although occasionally social or cultural.'⁶⁰ Superficially it can be compared to Japan's Zengakuren, a militant student organization adhering to extreme leftist views, insofar as its orientation has been value directed but 'it has switched its tactics on a number of occasions to meet the needs of the students and/or its political ideology.'⁶¹

To understand the nature of student activism in Northern Ireland it is necessary to say *when* it happen — that is at the end of 1968. The academic year 1967-68 had witnessed a particularly eventful — and in some cases violent — upsurge of student militance in Europe. In Italy 'nineteen of the thirty-three state universities were affected and in thirteen of them the university buildings were occupied.'⁶² In Barcelona the authorities were forced to install a permanent university police, the *policia Universitaria*, on the campus in January 1968.⁶³ France had its 'May-Days'⁶⁴ and

Czechoslovakian students were in the forefront in resisting the Russian invasion.

The events of that year had been described by a sympathetic, but critical, observer thus:

‘1968 changed for ever the climate, and indeed the limits, of protests. It saw the baptism of new radicals, now isolated from the old Left by their revolutionary actions and the theory which had grown from them, which had been melded in the frustrating struggle for civil rights, against nuclear extinction, and against the war in Vietnam. Those struggles brought the participants face to face with the governing system whose total authority they challenged and fought. Armed with ideals (but not an ideology), strong on rhetoric and weak — deliberately so — on concrete proposals, they sallied forth to test their ideals on a larger canvas, to add to them the experience of those whose discontents were as yet inarticulate.’⁶⁵

It was in this *milieu*, that the People’s Democracy emerged. In its first few months of existence it was to reflect the militance of the European student movement — direct action, sit-ins, sit-downs, pickets, marches, spontaneity. Like its French counterparts ‘... the emphasis was on spontaneity: “*Bourgeons d’abord; nous ferons la theorie du mouvement apres*” was how Daniel Cohn-Bendit described it (roughly translated it means “let’s give things a shove first: we’ll compose the theory of the movement afterwards”).⁶⁶

It belonged to what is known as the New Left which has been defined as ‘a particular segment of young activists who were self-consciously radical ideologically, but disaffected from all “established radicalisms” and who self-consciously sought to provide political direction, theoretical coherence, and organizational continuity to the student movement. The central issue for the New Left has always been the problem of agency — that is, which classes and strata in the society are more disposed towards active opposition to the status-quo, what means of power can they exercise, and with what effect?’⁶⁷

We shall see, then, that PD was a movement of radical dissent, equipped with the militance of student activism, ideologically uncertain but composed of a *mélange* of leftist ideals. Any study of its evolution must concentrate not only because it established it in the mainstream of student politics but also because it influenced its search for ideology. ‘It was Daniel Cohn-Bendit who best understood that the only way to break through the doctrinal and organizational divisions was to fuse all radical groups in direct action with immediate aims. Being contagious, action would mobilize growing numbers of students ... The radical education of the mass of the students would be best obtained not by having them listen to leaders, but by involving them in radical action, in daily free assemblies, in deciding through collective debate what was to be done by who. The practice of direct democracy and action would

produce a new type of self-organized vanguard, abolishing all authority and responsibility, abolishing all divisions into "leaders" and "led" submitting the theorists to the criticisms and control of the rank and file.⁶⁸

Its evolution through activism can best be studied in three phases: the first from October 1968 until after the general election in February 1969 when it was an organization to be reckoned with; the second from March until October 1969 when it was in decline and searching for a role; and the third was from October 1969 onwards when it began its slow and ponderous attempt at building up an overtly revolutionary organization.

(iii) Incipiency⁶⁹

By 1968 there was very little indication that Belfast undergraduates were part of the world-wide wave of student protest. There were a few demonstrations protesting at American involvement in South East Asia but it is clear that the vast majority of the student body were indifferent to them. For example, the largest anti-Vietnam march in Belfast attracted only about fifty participants.⁷⁰ Bernadette Devlin had been disillusioned by her first encounter with student apathy: '... I'd been involved in a demonstration when we were asked to show solidarity with the foreign students at Queen's whose fees had been raised by 125 per cent by the Government. On that occasion we couldn't get fifty students on the streets to complain.'⁷¹

The small clique of students who were self-consciously activist and socialist were centred around the 'Queen's University Independent Left' (QUB Labour Group). Essentially they were anti-partitionist although some of them belonged to the Northern Ireland Labour Party (NILP), a social democratic party which accepted the union with Britain.⁷² These people — in particular Bowes Egan, Michael Farrell and Eamonn McCann — were responsible for the 'Working Committee on Civil Rights in Northern Ireland' of April 1964, one of the first bodies to concern itself with demands for social justice within Northern Ireland. They personified the prescience, the tenacity, the idealism and the militance of the early civil rights campaign.

The same group also personified one aspect of the success of the Welfare State. They were part of that generation of Catholics which had taken advantage of the Education Act of 1947 which opened up higher education to those of ability. And they represented another facet of the 'student movement': 'Student political activity often contains an important non-student element, which sometimes provides direction and ideological sophistication to the movement. In most societies the student community consists not only of students currently enrolled in institutions of higher education, but also of ex-students or part-time students who wish to remain on the periphery of the student community ... Part of the underground of

the student population, those elements cannot be overlooked as they are often of crucial importance to student movements.⁷³

Easily the most important member of that 'underground' was Michael Farrell. A cursory examination of his early political career is revealing. As an undergraduate Farrell had been chairman of the QUB Labour Group 1965-6, Vice-President of the Union of Students of Ireland 1965-6, External Relations Officer of QUB Students' Representative Council, Queen's Orator in two successive years, executive member of the Northern Ireland Labour Party (NILP) in 1967, and founder member and first chairman of the Irish Association of Labour Student Organisations (IALSO) 1966-7. Furthermore he had belonged to the Irish Workers' Group, a revolutionary socialist group named as a subversive organization by the Minister of Home Affairs, Mr William Craig, at Stormont on October 16, 1968. Finally he was the first chairman of the Young Socialist Alliance (YSA)⁷⁴ founded in June 1968 after he had returned from the University of Strathclyde where he had been pursuing a postgraduate course in political science. His talents as an organiser, orator — some would say 'demagogue' — and agitator are unquestionable. More than anyone else he personifies the People's Democracy in all its phases.

During the early 1960's the QUB Labour Group concentrated on a programme of propaganda and education. Farrell and others weaved a thread through their contacts with NILP, the Young Socialist Alliance, the Irish Association of Labour Students Organisations and the Irish Workers' Group, the thread of student activism and promotion of a leftist anti-partitionist stance. Thus their activities within the NILP appeared to be conventional enough. They canvassed vigorously for NILP candidates in the General Election of 1965, but they used their other organisations to move NILP in a leftward and anti-partitionist direction. At Easter 1966, for example, Farrell represented the Labour Group at the National Association of Labour Students Organisations annual conference in Sheffield. 'Queen's submitted six motions, all of which were carried, including a long policy statement on Northern Ireland which condemned religious discrimination and sectarianism as the devices of the ruling classes to keep the working class divided and in subjection . . . The only solution to Ulster's problems was the union of the Catholic and Protestant working class in a united and militant Labour movement.'⁷⁵

The Ulster problem was brought to the attention of another militant New Left group, the London-based International Socialists⁷⁶ and in October 1966 one of its members, John Palmer, addressed South Belfast Young Socialists on 'The Crisis of the Labour Government.'⁷⁷ (This cross-fertilisation of information and ideas, a familiar trait of the New Left, resulted in the International Socialists becoming involved in the civil rights issue from 1969 onwards by

working with the People's Democracy in Belfast and Eamonn McCann in Derry.)

The desire for a united working class in Ulster appears to have been only the opening act in Farrell's intended scenario. He worked with others — in particular Cyril Toman⁷⁸ — to establish closer links with socialists in the Republic. The Irish Association of Labour Student Organisations was the first fruit of this policy. It was what its name implied — a loose formation of socialists from the Irish universities, modelled on its British counterpart, NALSO. Farrell's view of the significance of IALSO can be seen in an extract from his (the chairman's) report to the first conference in 1967:

'IALSO by virtue of its all-Ireland character can play an important part in creating a single all-Ireland Socialist Party which is a vital prerequisite for the establishment of a workers' Republic as only a socialist party can unite the working class of both parts of Ireland in the struggle against their common capitalist master.'⁷⁹

Within the NILP Farrell campaigned vigorously to establish some formal links with other Irish social-democratic parties, and, with the support of some of the more senior members of the executive, he played his part in starting 'The Council of Labour in Ireland.' It brought together the NILP, the Republican Labour Party and the Irish Labour Party from time to time to discuss matters of common interest. It was not an entirely harmonious body but its significance lies in the fact that some sort of respected socialist body with an all-Ireland character had been formed; and also in the fact that it was the Universities' branch of the Irish Labour Party which had proposed the motion for its formation at the southern end.⁸⁰ This was the first example of Irish socialist students working in close liaison towards a common end.

The influence of the QUB Labour Group within the NILP did not stop at the formation of the Council of Labour in Ireland. At the 1967 Annual Conference the Labour Group were successful in having a motion accepted which called for a British Government Enquiry into Northern Ireland and urged co-operation with the Campaign for Democracy in Ulster.⁸¹

Thus the Labour Group had used conventional political tactics to open up the Ulster problem. It had been instrumental in the formation of IALSO, had played a leading role in establishing the Council of Labour in Ireland and had persuaded the partitionist NILP to call for an enquiry into the administration of Ulster by the Unionists. Some of the leaders of the Labour Group had made contact with the more overtly revolutionary organisations, the Irish Workers' Group and the International Socialists.

These successes, however, could only be converted into reality by a mass movement. The student activists of the Labour Group quite naturally looked to students to supply the basis of such a movement. Their first real opportunity occurred in 1967. On 7 March 1967 Mr William Craig, the Minister of Home Affairs, made

an order under the Special Powers Act proscribing Republican Clubs on the grounds that they were simply a front for the IRA. His move was widely interpreted as an attempt to appease extreme Protestants and was resisted immediately by some Queen's students with republican sympathies. On March 8 they set up a Republican Club and applied to the Student Representative Council for official recognition. On 10 March they held a protest march banned by the Academic Council, in which about eighty students took part. The following day Young Socialists joined the protest by parading through Belfast chanting 'Tories Out — North and South', 'Repeal the Special Powers Act,' 'Craig Must Go' and 'No Fascist Laws — No Fascist Bans.'⁸² (These slogans were to become familiar to the Belfast public at the latter end of 1968 when the People's Democracy campaign got under way.)

In May, the QUBSRC approved the Queen's Republican Club, but on 6 November the Academic Council refused to recognise it. As a consequence of this decision and in protest against the intransigence of the Home Affairs Minister they decided to march to the Unionist headquarters to protest against the ban. The march — on 15 November — was organised by a body calling itself the Students' Joint Action Committee Against Suppression of Civil Liberties, an amalgam of students from the political movements within the university and the SRC. It attracted considerable support among the student body:

'The students of Queen's University — not merely those belonging to this Republican Club — as represented on a joint action committee, have decided on the good old principle that an injury to one is an injury to all, to combine in the interests of civil liberty and in order to meet this arbitrary decision by the Minister of Home Affairs.'⁸³

Between 1,500 and 2,000 students participated in an orderly march to Mr. Craig's home. (A late decision had been taken not to march to the Unionist headquarters because it entailed passing through Shaftesbury Square, an area which the Rev Ian Paisley considered to be loyalist territory. He held a meeting there to ensure that the students did not march through it.) At Mr Craig's home the marchers observed a silence, and handed in a protest against the ban on the Republican Clubs. Afterwards Mr Craig praised the students for their orderly conduct.⁸⁴

In itself the protest appeared to be uneventful and relatively unimportant. It demonstrated that Belfast students were not totally apathetic. But in retrospect one realizes its significance. Martin Wallace aptly makes the point: 'On the whole, the ban proved ineffectual but it had the effect of stirring up student opposition to the Unionist administration and to Craig himself and this was to prove an important factor when the civil rights campaign got under way.'⁸⁵ Further, it created a machine, the Joint Action Committee, which could be used to organise more protests if need be, and it

illustrated the point that undergraduates were willing to protest if their sense of justice was injured. But they were not willing to be led by any partisan politicians and they would insist that the organising committee would have to be a broad spectrum of student opinion. Given these prerequisites the student body indicated that it could be a strong and responsible pressure group.

The moderate behaviour of the student action also underlined two facets at the inception of a radical movement. 'In liberal democratic societies the establishment's response is typically an indulgent one at the inception of a radical movement, with emphasis upon co-optation and absorption.'⁸⁶ The Minister of Home Affairs congratulatory remarks can be seen as an example of the establishment's indulgence. Secondly, 'There is typically a commitment within the movement in its earliest stages to work within the system, since the boundaries of "the system" (at least as they pertain to the particular movement) are not well defined.'⁸⁷ The avoidance of Shaftesbury Square and the peaceful conduct of the demonstration indicated the students' deference to 'the system.'

That march was probably the first assertion of the 'mere active self-respect' which John Macrae detected in some Catholics. NICRA was to provide others during 1968.

At a conference in London in February 1968 at which Labour MPs and members of the Stormont Opposition were present, the civil rights movement decided to make 'a more open challenge of the Stormont Government, taking as their point of attack the discriminatory allocation of housing by Unionist-controlled local authorities.'⁸⁸ Their first attack was made on 20 June when a Nationalist MP, Mr Austin Currie, occupied a house in the Co Tyrone village of Caledon, in protest against alleged discrimination in allocation. He was evicted after a few hours, but had the satisfaction of wide media coverage of the event.

This action was followed up by a protest march from Coalisland to Dungannon on 24 August, again to protest at alleged discrimination, and organised jointly by the Campaign for Social Justice (CSJ) and NICRA. It passed off peacefully but the marchers were prevented from reaching their final destination in Market Square, Dungannon. They held a meeting at the police barrier instead and thus 'had accepted the restriction which gave them the appearance of engaging in a sectarian agitation.'⁸⁹

Its partial success encouraged NICRA to hold another demonstration in Derry — seen by Catholics as epitomising the evils of Unionist rule with its high unemployment, gerrymandering and discrimination in public services — on 5 October. When the Minister of Home Affairs refused to accept the route proposed by NICRA on 3 October, some of the executive were in favour of calling off the march. But left-wingers in Derry would not countenance any change in plans, and persuaded the majority of the executive to go ahead with the march. The person who argued

their case most cogently and was largely responsible for the initial organising was Eamonn McCann.⁹⁰ Immediately he received the support of the QUB Labour Group, the Belfast Young Socialist Alliance, the NILP, Young Socialists, the James Connolly Republican Club in Derry, the Londonderry Labour Party and the Derry Housing Action Committee.

The march went ahead on October 5. It attracted about 2,000 people including six members of Parliament (three of whom were English observers) and forty members of the Young Socialist Alliance who had travelled from Belfast. It ended in a serious riot when the demonstrators attempted to break the ban. The police riot squad retaliated by hemming in the crowd in a narrow street and using their batons and two water cannons indiscriminately. In all, 77 civilians and 11 policemen were injured. Rioting spread to the Catholic west side of the city and spilled over into the next day. Subsequently there were vigorous criticisms of police behaviour that day.⁹¹ Among those arrested were four students.

The wheel was turning full circle. The violence at the setting up of the state, which had been replaced by a sullen apathy by the Catholic minority, was creeping back into Northern Ireland politics. The activists were insistent on destroying the supposed tranquillity of the system and the key they were to use was the demand for 'civil rights and social justice.' The student movement was to be in the vanguard of this movement as it probed the boundaries of tolerance in the system.

1: October 1968—February 1969. A Child of Events?

‘... And as far as I was concerned it was one of those peaceful civil rights marches, go along, make your protest and go home. The police brutality did something much more important than focus the attention of civilization on Northern Ireland. It awakened the people of Northern Ireland, particularly the students. I know what it’s like to live in an unbalanced society. Because the more you become involved in it, the more you realize that the whole problem is much bigger than a few bigoted members of the government. It’s the whole system that’s wrong.’¹

Miss Devlin was summing up her feelings towards the Derry violence of October 5, 1968 seventeen months after the event, during which period her political views had undergone a radical transformation. But, for our immediate purpose, she was speaking one truth which has become evident to me after interviewing a number of people in the People’s Democracy (PD). Among students at Queen’s University there was a sense of deep shock and guilt surrounding the events of October 5. It was this fund of moral protest which was to guide PD in its early days, the type of protest which was common to the student protest movement.

‘Few young radicals are sure of themselves in terms of ideology. They feel much more sure of themselves in postures of moral intransigence using the purity of youth and action to answer their critics’ political attack.’² It was moral outrage which launched the PD and sustained it in its first phase, a period of political innocence — outrage at the behaviour of the RUC in the streets of Derry on October 5 and the subsequent intransigence of O’Neill’s Government. Even some of the left-wing activists who were to the fore in the Derry march were shocked at the violence of the events. Cyril Toman knew that the police were going to stop the march and that there was going to be trouble. But ‘I didn’t see beyond that. I didn’t conceive of the Unionists as being as thoroughly bad as they were. I didn’t foresee things like police perjury for example.’³

The activists and the uncommitted were united, then, by the violence of the situation and by the administration’s over-reaction to events. On October 6, ten students held a picket outside the home of Mr William Craig, Minister of Home Affairs; he is reported to have called them ‘a crowd of bloody fools’ for their pains. At a well-attended meeting in the Students’ Union the next day a decision was taken to march to the City Hall on Wednesday, October 9. The organisers were to be the Joint Action Committee

which had planned the protest march on November 15 the previous year.

On October 9 the march of about 3,000 people, including twenty members of the academic staff, passed off peacefully. The march organisers complied with police instructions and avoided Shaftesbury Square, the Rev Ian Paisley's territory,⁴ on the understanding that they would be allowed to hold a meeting at the front of the City Hall. In Linenhall Street, at the rear of the City Hall, the police again blocked the march to avoid a conflict with a small number of Paisleyites. There followed a frustrating three-hour sit-down in Linenhall Street and eventually a march back to the University.

The demonstrators were anxious to avoid a clash at all costs — with the exception of one small group:

'While there were undoubtedly voices raised by an excited sub-Guevara group towards the end of the proceedings advocating a charge through the police, the main body of the march was made up of embarrassed indignant young Ulstermen and women whose deep-grained conservatism of behaviour was outweighed by a reluctant recognition of injustice.'⁵ The militant student leaders learnt a few valuable lessons from the conduct of that march. This was not to be the time for pressing ahead with revolutionary demands, and it was significant that it was Michael Farrell who had the foresight and the authority to persuade the dissidents to adopt a more reasoned view.

It was clear to all of those who had been involved in the sit-down that they had to overcome the frustration of not reaching their destination. Again it was Farrell who seized on this point and who called a meeting of all interested parties immediately after the marchers arrived back at the University. What began as a small gathering of disenchanted students intent on voicing their criticisms of the organisers, the police and the counter-demonstrators grew into an emotional and intense mass meeting concerned with solving the fundamental problems of the divided community. At least one newspaper, admittedly partisan, compared it 'to the kind of free debate of which the Sorbonne in the May Days was the best example.'⁶

At that meeting a number of important decisions were taken, and PD emerged as a spontaneous, militant, democratic group working within the Civil Rights Movement. It made six demands which were sloganised into an appeal leaflet illustrating its civil rights nature:

One man, one vote
Fair boundaries
Houses on Need
Jobs on Merit
Free Speech
Repeal of the Special Powers Act.

The nature of its organisation was agreed upon. As a democratic organisation it was open to literally anyone who wished to come along to its meetings, a fact which the Cameron Commission felt obliged to explain:

'People's Democracy has no accepted constitution and no recorded membership. At any meeting any person attending is entitled both to speak and to vote; decisions taken at one meeting may be reviewed at the next — indeed during the currency of any given meeting. No subscription, entrance fee or membership qualification is required of members (if they can be so called) of this movement, and the requisite finance is obtained from collections at meetings, subscriptions or contributions from well wishers and supporters both within Northern Ireland and elsewhere.'⁷

A 'faceless committee' was elected. The body of the meeting, fearing that the 'professional' student politicians would take over PD, insisted that a committee of ten be elected on the basis that none of them had any known political affiliations. The faceless committee consisted of Miss Bernadette Devlin (undergraduate), Miss Patricia Drinan (undergraduate), Miss Ann McBurney (a recent graduate), Ian Goodall (undergraduate), Michael O'Kane (undergraduate), Eddie McCameley (undergraduate), Joe Martin (a recent graduate), Fergus Woods (a recent graduate), Kevin Boyle (lecturer in law at the University) and Malcolm Myle (worker and member of the Young Socialist Alliance). The committee did not have executive powers. It was elected in a co-ordinating capacity to administer the decisions of the general meetings and it was given the right to elect ad hoc committees for specific projects and functions.

Finally, the name of this new student movement emerged as the 'People's Democracy.' John Murphy tells how it was created:

'In Linenhall Street there was dissatisfaction with the organisation of the march. I felt the need for a democratic organisation rather than a joint action committee. I remember saying at the time, "This is the only democratic street in Northern Ireland. This is a People's Democracy." On the next morning I had to stencil an announcement and decided "There will be a meeting of the People's Democracy tonight." It was the most natural description of what was to take place that night. The name was adopted at that meeting.'⁸ (This account of the naming of PD clashes in some respects with that reported in the *Sunday Times* of 27.4.1969, but I see no reason to doubt the veracity of the interviewee). So the PD was formally launched on October 11, 1968.

An observer of the contemporary political scene in the United States has noted that 'a main difference between the New Left and both the Old Left and traditional Right is the New Left's antipathy to conventional political forms and organisations. It does not relate to the Democratic Party or to the larger structure of pluralistic politics.'⁹ A parallel can be drawn with the initial position

of PD in relation to Northern Ireland's political scene. The adoption of its name (with its obvious Marxist connotations), its Libertarian organisation which allowed for non-student participation, and the election of its 'faceless committee' which includes five Socialists¹⁰ — Patricia Drinan, Ian Goodall, Michael O'Kane, Joe Martin and Malcolm Myle — were victories for the 'underground' of ex-students 'which sometimes provides direction and ideological sophistication to the movement.' From the outset then, PD was part of the larger civil rights movement but the nature of its organisation had helped to establish its separate identity.

(i) From 'Incipiency' to 'Coalescence'

'The situation within the embryonic movement is reminiscent of what Blumer (1951) has had to say about what he calls *general*, as opposed to *specific* social movements... "groping unco-ordinated efforts...unorganised with neither established leadership nor recognised membership, and little guidance or control."'¹¹

During this early period the PD was aware of the sympathy and respect it had won from important sections of the community. 'In a bitter atmosphere, the students strike a note of hope,' wrote Mary Holland in the *Observer*. The President of the Methodist Church complimented 'the students of Queen's on the restraint and non-violence of their demonstrations this week.' The Liberal Party praised the first march as 'an example of effective, responsible and non-violent protest.' The Minister of Education, Captain Long, two senior civil servants and a District Inspector of the RUC saw fit to address it during the first fortnight of its existence. Even some members of the Queen's University Conservative and Unionist Association, including the chairman, were prepared to support it.

In this incipient phase PD's reaction to its immediate acclaim was to be spontaneous and contradictory. On October 10 it exercised caution by postponing a proposed march in Belfast on Saturday (October 12) until the following Wednesday to avoid a clash with a demonstration organised by the Rev Ian Paisley. Always it stressed its non-sectarian and non-violent nature. For example, on October 15 it called on Church support: 'At this most critical time in our community, if we are to avoid the forces of violence which surround us and if we are to achieve our ideals of peaceful change then more than anything else we need the heartening support of the religious bodies of this province.'

On October 16 more than 2,000 students reached the City Hall, having accepted another re-route after the Rev Ian Paisley cancelled his meeting at Shaftesbury Square. On November 1, it wrote to the Prime Minister suggesting a debate on the civil rights issue,¹² and on the same day it supported the proposed march of Paisley's supporters through the predominantly Catholic city of Derry on November 9 as being a basic civil right for them.

These actions and sentiments suggested a movement with a passion for justice, but a movement which would not attempt to overthrow the system — in short its radicalism was tempered by a sense of responsibility and of working for the possible. This absence of utopianism is best summed up in Bernadette Devlin's disarmingly naive statement: 'We are not out to embarrass the Government or cause civil strife or divide the people on any issue. Our movement is non-political, non-sectarian, and if we can get civil rights established we can return to our books and studies with the satisfying knowledge that we have achieved something in the interests of the community.'¹³ Miss Devlin demonstrated her political innocence in a more positive manner at this time when she attempted to parley with the Rev Ian Paisley at his home. The meeting achieved nothing. Yet her words and deeds personified the spirit of PD in these early days.

The liberal acclaim which PD had received was by no means universal. The allegations of the link between the Irish Workers' Group and prominent personalities in PD made by the Minister of Home Affairs at Stormont was one attempt to invoke a 'red scare'. A few days previously RUC Special Branch detectives claimed that 'members of the illegal Irish Republican Army are enlisting undercover agents among students at Queen's University'.¹⁴ In a letter to the *Belfast Telegraph* (October 14) the President of the SRC, Ian Brick, wrote: 'I am concerned that all too often students are used as a readily available supply of people for others to manipulate. Hence if trouble does occur on a march or demonstration almost certainly students alone will receive the blame.' Finally Mr D D Rogan, chairman of the Young Unionist Council, said that he was convinced that 'the Campaign for Social Democracy (sic), the People's Democracy, the Students' Joint Action Committee (sic), the Civil Rights Association, and the Londonderry Citizens Action Committee were mostly, if not all, Communist and Republican'.

PD reacted to these criticisms by dismissing them as the smear tactics of discredited Unionism, and it continued its campaign for civil rights and social justice. At Stormont, on October 24, 1968, United Nations Declaration of Human Rights Day, it occupied the Great Hall for three hours and conducted its own mini-Parliament. Eventually most of the protesters left having collected the signatures of twelve MPs¹⁵ on a statement demanding its six basic civil rights demands, and 'having taught Stormont a lesson in democracy'. Eleven, however, decided to squat on until midnight, the first public sign of some disagreement within PD. What was more significant at this stage was the fact that the Government sent Capt Long, Minister of Education, to parley with the demonstrators. Here was a clear acknowledgement of PD's potential — not only was the Cabinet prepared to allow it a sit-in at the centre

of power but it felt it necessary to send along one of its senior Ministers to negotiate with it.¹⁶

As far as the Government was concerned that was the end of its short and curious honeymoon with PD. The movement was proving that it had time and energy to be of considerable nuisance value. When the Prime Minister opened an exhibition at the Arts Council Gallery on October 28, he was met by a small picket. When the new Governor, Lord Grey of Naunton, went to Stormont to receive addresses from both Houses of Parliament on December 3, he was met by about twenty PD supporters carrying placards declaring: 'Welcome to Fascist Ulster' and 'Houses on Need'. On December 6, six PD supporters paraded outside a Unionist Party Standing Committee meeting demanding that Mr William Craig be sacked; next day another forty mounted a picket outside his private residence for three hours, and a further twenty-five held a meeting and distributed leaflets at the City Hall.

All those demonstrations had the support of the other civil rights groups and opposition parties so long as they were non-violent. The older generation was only too aware of the frailty of non-sectarian politics. For example, many individuals in the inter-confessional NILP were prepared to take part in the early protests even at the risk of losing votes in Protestant working class constituencies. If there were to be any incidents of violence they would want to wind down the civil rights campaign. To a lesser extent this was the attitude of the local civil rights groups which tended to be led by the Catholic professional middle class. When minor acts of violence did occur the moderates were irritated.

On November 4, Capt O'Neill travelled to London to discuss the civil rights demands with the British Prime Minister at Downing Street; it had been arranged that a small picket of PD sympathisers would meet him there. Simultaneously a march, from the University to the City Hall via Shaftesbury Square (ie disputed territory), had been planned. The demonstrators decided that they had been reasonable in accepting two re-routes in the past and were not prepared to agree to another. Consequently there were some scuffles with the police when the group tried to enter Shaftesbury Square and nine of them were arrested on charges of disorderly behaviour.¹⁷ The remainder made their way individually to the city centre where they held a meeting and a sit-down which disrupted rush-hour traffic. In retaliation a Protestant extremist, Major Ronald Bunting, and nine of his supporters occupied a University Hall of Residence for three hours.

One other incident lost PD support within the University. On November 13 the Prime Minister came along to the University to a prize-giving ceremony and was met by a PD picket. But the demonstration got out of control, and PD came under attack. On the following day the Presbyterian, Church of Ireland and Methodist chaplains in the University described the incidents as 'a

disorderly and ill-mannered demonstration.' Professor Sir John Biggart, Pro-Vice-Chancellor of the University called for a report on the incidents to be sent to him, and a PD spokesman placed the responsibility on a 'splinter group' of 'revolutionary infants.' PD was forced to make a formal apology:

'The People's Democracy to-day stated that the demonstration at the Whitla Hall on Wednesday afternoon was ineffective because of hasty and incomplete organisation . . . It was not our intention to disturb the Methodist College prizegiving and an apology is being forwarded to all concerned,' — and retreated from demonstrations on the campus. This was not just a face-saving retreat; rather it demonstrated PD's concern with larger issues, a fact noted by Richard Rose: 'at a time when student riots were disrupting campuses elsewhere in the Western world, it is entirely in character that events in Northern Ireland moved in the opposite direction. Student members left the university precincts in peace and concentrated attention upon the society around them.'¹⁸

One of the signs of the *coalescence* of a radical movement is 'the organisation of a number of local and ephemeral ad hoc committees, caucuses, fronts, and the like, here and there around the society. There is not yet any nationally co-ordinated organisation.'¹⁹

The set-back of the Whitla Hall incident unwittingly revealed one of PD's strengths. Its radical animus did not depend on the promotion of '*etudialist*' demands. It must always be remembered that it was only one of a number of organisations demanding civil rights. It began extending its influence outside the University *milieu* by allying with organisations in other areas — particularly Derry where the most effective local civil rights group, the Londonderry Citizens' Action Committee, held a number of demonstrations.

It took part in a sit-down in Derry on October 19; and on November 16 about 120 PD members were among a 15,000 crowd which marched through Derry. This march had been banned three days previously, and had the procession been violent it could have certainly swept aside the police barriers erected to prevent it entering the old walled city of Derry. As it was the march dispersed after a 'token' breach of the barriers by its leaders and after a few minor skirmishes PD was also to the fore at a march in Armagh on November 30 when Michael Farrell was one of the invited platform speakers. Again, the success of this demonstration was guaranteed when the procession was blocked by a large group of Paisleyites and yet it refused to allow itself to be provoked.

Not all of PD's supporters were prepared to submerge the organisation in the all embracing cloak of 'civil rights'. Some insisted in pushing PD's individual line. John Hume was wary of certain individuals in it from the beginning: 'Their tactic was that wherever there was a confrontation with the police a spontaneous meeting should be held and votes taken. They wanted the right of anyone in

the crowd to get up and speak. I wondered did they in fact want the crowd to get out of control . . .²⁰

This tactic and the tensions which it created, manifested itself at the mass demonstration in Derry on November 16. One press correspondent, Joe Carroll, noted that:

'The role played by several hundred Queen's students in last Saturday's Derry march reflected the strains within the PD. The PD Committee, including Kevin Boyle and Bernadette Devlin, organised most of the students as stewards to help control the huge crowd. The RSSF²¹ group gave the Derry stewards some anxious moments, according to one of the committee, when they seemed only too anxious to have a go at the police; but a clash was averted . . . in fact the socialist element is probably the most influential and vociferous at the moment . . .'

The same element was involved in the minor violence of November 30 in Armagh where there was some trouble at the point of confrontation with the Paisleyites, most of it stemming 'from members of the People's Democracy, several of them throwing themselves at the barricades,' while other PD supporters held a spontaneous meeting at a street corner after the march broke up.

A more obvious example of its attempt to extend its influence outside the University was its campaign of PIP, a Programme to Inform the People, in opposition to Capt O'Neill's PEP. A local branch of PD was formed in Newry on November 9 when a small group travelled from Belfast and held two meetings in the town. Its sphere of influence was extended to Dungannon and Omagh on November 23 when standing committees were elected but these meetings were marred by scuffles with Paisleyites and consequently PD suffered a further dent in its non-violent image.

The PIP campaign has certain similarities with ERAP, the Economic Research and Action Project, undertaken by the American civil rights-cum-revolutionary socialist group, Students for a Democratic Society.²² 'Apart from campus activities, SDS undertook community organising, mainly of the poor in their Economic Research and Action Project (ERAP) which did work in Newark, Chicago, Cleveland, Boston and other towns . . .'²³ The type of activity may have been different but the aims were the same in both cases — to extend the influence of each group — though it should be said that there is no evidence that PD were aware of SDS activity.

The 'Long March'

It was the decision to march from Belfast to Derry which finally separated the militants from a large group of students who were worried about a left-wing takeover. The moderates won their last major victory when they persuaded PD by a small majority to cancel a planned march for December 14 to the City Hall, Belfast,

one condition being that 'Mr O'Neill should still be in power on Saturday.'

This concern for the plight of the Prime Minister was an indication of what was going on at Government level. For some time the Prime Minister had been aware of the necessity to make some concessions to the insistent civil rights demands. He realized the dangers in ignoring them:

'Political leadership has a responsibility and a motive to assess the informal power behind the conflicting demands of social groups and to find a basis of accommodation in terms of cost and risk. In doing this they must adjust their own and their followers' values to make the accommodation feasible or face the dangers of direct action and escalated violence and counter-violence. Where a community drifts towards alienation and violence, leaders of the establishment cannot evade the responsibility of adjusting majority values to moderate minority needs.'²⁴

Urged on by the British Prime Minister, Mr Harold Wilson, Capt O'Neill did not attempt to evade his responsibilities. On November 22 he introduced his 'reform package.' He promised an Ombudsman, the introduction of a points system in the allocation of houses, the reform of local government elections, the repeal of parts of the Special Powers Act and the suspension of Derry Corporation.

This announcement was received with mixed feelings by the various interest groups. Within his own party the 'hard-liners' began a campaign for his removal, and from that date his position as Prime Minister was a tenuous one. In the civil rights movement the moderates saw the package as a victory for their dignified protests and a declaration of the Prime Minister's good intentions. (Consequently there was a lull in civil rights activities.) However, the militants — chiefly within PD — felt that it was too little too late, although it indicated the efficacy of direct action.

The November 22 reform deal did not stem the tide of agitation mounted against O'Neill by a section of his own party. As a result, on December 9 he made an emotional televised speech, full of Churchillian cadences, warning Ulster people that they were on the brink of disaster.²⁵ His speech made considerable impact and moderate opinion flocked to his support. Over 100,000 people supported a 'I back O'Neill' campaign organised by the liberal-unionist *Belfast Telegraph* and within a matter of days 2,000 undergraduates signed a message of solidarity.

On December 11 he strengthened his position with liberal opinion by sacking William Craig, his right-wing Minister of Home Affairs, thereby coincidentally acceding to one of PD's most insistent demands. Immediately the Derry Citizens Action Committee pledged 'as an indication of their sincerity' to conduct their campaign without marches for a month.

By succumbing to some of the civil rights demands in his announcements on November 22 and December 11 it could be argued

that the Prime Minister was attempting to 'co-opt' the civil rights activists, thereby fulfilling one of the factors of the 'incipency' and 'coalescence' stages of the growth of a radical movement. The upsurge of public support for him indicated that he had met with short-term success at least.

The suggestion that PD should march from Belfast to Derry was made at one of its regular meetings from the floor of the house in early December. Michael Farrell became very enthusiastic with the idea and was instrumental in having an organising committee set up to work out the details. But the timing of the decision was delicate since it occurred when civil rights activists were reconsidering their views on direct action. Following the lead of the Derry Citizens Action Committee decision of December 9, a large meeting of PD decided to call off the march in the interests of peace. O'Neill's co-optive efforts had achieved another short-term gain.

Against this background of growing support for the Prime Minister the New Left was not prepared to let the matter rest. A small meeting was held at the end of term when most students had returned home. A decision to go ahead with the march was taken after leaders of the Young Socialist Alliance²⁶ emphasised that they would undertake it if PD was not in favour. It was an important victory for Michael Farrell and Cyril Toman. The latter summed up his attitude by saying: 'To accept O'Neill's moratorium was not a neutral decision, it was a tacit acknowledgement of O'Neill's policies.'²⁷

The decision embarrassed the Derry Citizens Action Committee: 'I had long conversations with Bernadette Devlin and Kevin Boyle. I expressed the view that the march would lead to sectarian violence. I thought they agreed with this and as far as I know they went back and argued that the march be not held . . .'²⁸ (Nonetheless when the march did take place the Action Committee in Derry met it, largely because it generated an emotional Catholic response to its courage.)

The decision also indicated the overt breakdown of the ultra-democratic structure of the organisation. While two militants, John McGuffin (an anarchist) and John Murphy (a former nationalist), have stated in interview that they were prepared to abide by the original decision to cancel the march, Farrell and Toman demonstrated clearly that they would have their way at all costs. One of the 'faceless committee,' Kevin Boyle, was annoyed by this attitude: 'I was bitter about the way in which the YSA had upstaged the thing.'²⁹

Boyle's opinion was an important one because he had been seen to have exercised a moderating influence on the 'faceless committee,' a fact acknowledged by the Cameron Commission.³⁰ He was certain of what his role should be:

'At the very beginning the only people aware of mass politics were the Left and SRC people . . . In a sense we (ie Bernadette

Devlin and himself) held back the Left. My fear was that it would push too far, dissipate itself and disappear.³¹

Bernadette Devlin concurs with this statement:

'Essentially we were referees between the existing political groups so that none of them actually took over... I was coming to the realisation that if people felt it was a YSA idea a lot of people wouldn't go. If he (ie Michael Farrell) had taken his time he might have held on to a lot of other people who were idealistic but hadn't come round to socialism yet.'³²

Although Kevin Boyle and Bernadette Devlin were not too happy about the timing of the decision they felt it incumbent upon them to go on the march.

That may have been one small indication of the successful takeover of PD by the New Left. Another more important sign was that the New Left felt powerful enough to dissolve the Young Socialist Alliance by majority vote on the night before the march to Derry.³³ (Yet Michael Farrell claimed that he didn't want to see PD being turned into a socialist organisation, that his task was to recruit people from PD and move them into a socialist group such as the Young Socialist Alliance, and that it was only by February 1969 that he was thinking of trying to move PD to the left.)³⁴ The simple fact is that this decision was a victory for the socialist element and for Farrell in particular. The composition of the march clarified that point. Only about forty to eighty people set out from Belfast on January 1 under the twin banners of 'Civil Rights' and 'Anti-Poverty.' It received the active assistance of the Londonderry branch of the NILP and the Radical Socialist Alliance (a small extreme left-wing splinter group from Derry). During the march itself, an Anarchist and a Republican banner were hoisted, and Republicans and NICRA supporters housed and fed the marchers along the route.

As was to be expected the Unionist Party and the Orange Order were opposed to the march but the Government was not prepared to ban it.³⁵ Confusion was sown in the ranks of the opposition parties. The NICRA, Austin Currie MP (Nationalist) and Miss Sheelagh Murnaghan MP (Liberal) welcomed the decision.³⁶

From a number of sources, however, disquiet was evident. The elder statesman from the Opposition, E McAteer MP, leader of the Nationalist Party, considered it 'not good marching weather — in more senses than one.' Both the *Irish Times* and the *Belfast Telegraph* in their editorials on December 30 counselled caution and care. With the advantage of hindsight it is obvious that no one was certain what would happen on the march and that most people on the opposition side were prepared to let the march go ahead if only to gauge the feelings of the body politic after a few months of intense agitation.

There were those in PD who knew why they were marching. Michael Farrell thought that civil rights agitation would come to

a stop if PD did not go ahead, because the other groups 'would have accepted O'Neill's miserable reforms.'³⁷ Bernadette Devlin was equally unequivocal:

'Our function in marching from Belfast to Derry was to break the truce, to relaunch the civil rights movement as a mass movement and to show people that O'Neill was, in fact, offering them nothing. What we really wanted to do was to pull the carpet off the floor to show the dirt that was under it so that we could sweep it up.'³⁸

This mixture of expediency and moral outrage was typical of many of the marchers. One of them aptly summed up feelings as the march proceeded:

'The violence that had grown around us was a living proof of the rottenness that was built into the system: our little march had lit a fire that would help to burn out the dross of Ulster.'³⁹

On the eve of the march a PD statement, outlining the reasons for proceeding with the exercise, likened it to the famous march of 1965 between Selma and Montgomery led by Dr Martin Luther King.

'We are marching because nothing has really changed since the Government's package of reforms in November which was condemned as inadequate by the entire Civil Rights movement and even the British Prime Minister, Mr Wilson ... It is, perhaps, as well to repeat that we are demanding not privileges but rights and that in marching to Derry we are merely exercising another fundamental democratic liberty.'

Ostensibly, then, the march to Derry was to be an exercise of a 'fundamental democratic liberty' but it can be seen also as an attempt to build a worker-student alliance. Similar attempts had been made by French students in the 'May-Days' of 1968 and earlier by Japanese and Uruguayan students. For example 340,000 trade unionists and students had converged on the Japanese Diet on June 19, 1960, in the famous 'snake-march.' As a gesture of contempt, there was a mass-urination on the steps of the Diet building.⁴⁰ Since 1962 radical students and sugar workers had organised an annual May-Day march in Uruguay. Their manifesto of May 1, 1968 indicates their aims:

'We set out from Bella Union in this "March for Land" with the idea of passing through villages and towns and talking with all the exploited and oppressed ... We reject dialogue with those who govern us ...'⁴¹

In reality the march from Belfast to Derry through the towns and villages of counties Antrim and Derry was a rejection of dialogue with the Government. Attacks on the march by Protestant workers automatically ensured Catholic support for it, particularly after the Burntollet ambush. Burntollet bridge, about six miles outside Derry was the scene of a carefully staged ambush by about 400 Protestant extremists. Armed with bricks and nailed cudgels and wearing white armbands as a means of identification, they laid into the

defenceless marchers, many of whom were badly injured and whose only escape route was a swollen and freezing river. The remnant of the march fled on towards Derry, convinced that the RUC had offered little or no protection.

The 'Long March,'⁴² as it came to be called, had far-reaching effect. Cameron summed it up thus:

'For moderates this march had disastrous effects. It polarized the extreme elements in the communities in each place it entered. It lost sympathy for the Civil Rights movement and led to serious rioting in Maghera and Londonderry. It divided the Civil Rights movement and weakened the Derry Citizens' Action Committee. We are driven to think that the leaders must have intended that their venture would weaken the moderate reforming forces in Northern Ireland. We think that their object was to create tension so that in the process a more radical programme could be realised. They saw the march as a calculated martyrdom.'⁴³

Reaction to the Burtollet ambush was immediate. John Hume, for the Derry Citizens' Action Committee announced:

'The pre-Christmas truce which we voluntarily imposed may now be considered at an end. There will certainly be a return to militant action. To this we are totally committed.'

The Prime Minister condemned the march as 'a foolhardy and irresponsible undertaking' and advised students 'to return to their books.' In an interview given to Karl E Meyer of the *Washington Post* he demonstrated his concern with the PD:

'... We've always had extreme Protestants and extreme Irish Republicans — the anarchists and Trotskyites among the students are something new. About 95 per cent or even 99 per cent of the students don't want violence, but a small minority doesn't care. These radicals are quite distinct from the leaders of the civil rights marches in Londonderry. In fact, up there they drove the anarchists out of the movement.'

It is much too soon after the event to make any definitive statements about the effects of the Burtollet march particularly since the situation has been conforming to a sort of inexorable logic of violence and counter-violence. Certain cautious comments can be made.

The Prime Minister was correct in fearing the influence of PD since it had demonstrated that it was interested in weakening his position:

'All were going for at least one common reason: a reaction against the evasive platitudes with which O'Neill and his men tried to pass the can for his own misdeeds... in marching we felt that we were pushing a structure (that contained the seeds of great violence among other things) towards a point where its internal proceedings would cause a snapping and a breaking to begin.'⁴⁴

In short some PD members were now seeing their task as the destruction of the State, no matter what the consequences. The

'Long March' began the long march from the policy of persuasion to that of polarization. This method of attack was built by New Left radicals in the United States:

'Their answer to the government-by-consensus that is becoming universal in the advanced countries has been to polarize opinion: not for them the dialogue leading to co-optation that distinguished their predecessors, but the solidarity of those alienated from the system and all its works.'⁴⁵

Millenarianism had arrived and while it might be some time before it asserted itself in PD it was clear that reformist politics were on the way out. This is a phenomenon which has been noted by at least one academic observer of the student movement:

'What starts as a limited protest against some isolated issue may easily turn into a sustained movement, with concerns extending to the broader society. The leadership of the student movement is notably fluid, and it is very possible for a norm-oriented leadership to be supplanted by students interested in capitalising on a particular movement for their broader political purposes.'⁴⁶

Within PD it created an elite of marchers; those who had gone to Derry were conscious of the solidarity and camaraderie which had grown up among them. Kevin Boyle noted this point: 'In a sense those who had taken part in the march regarded themselves as PD, and those who didn't weren't. Certainly afterwards the meetings were smaller.'⁴⁷ Michael Farrell read wider implications into the 'success' of the march: 'It gave students — red flag flyers — credibility with the working class and peasantry. This has not been seen anywhere else in Europe.'⁴⁸ (This view would very probably be disputed by the students of Nantes for example, who had a very successful, if short-lived, alliance with peasants and industrial workers.)⁴⁹

What the student marchers seemingly were not capable of was self-criticism. They accepted the accolades heaped on them when they refused to be provoked into reacting violently; they accepted that the march had split PD somewhat, but what remained was the elite of the movement; they accepted that it 'established in people's minds the separate identity of PD as the most extreme of civil rights groups,'⁵⁰ and they accepted that Kevin Boyle and Michael Farrell were elected to the NICRA executive in February largely as a result of the publicity won on that march.

But no one stopped to ask what effect it had on Protestant opinion. An Australian observer has noted that 'arrogant' invasion of enemy territory 'has often been the flashpoint of the religious riots which have punctuated Ulster's short but stormy history.'⁵¹ The 'Long March' was seen by many Protestants as a series of arrogant invasions of their territory; the ambush at Burntollet bridge was their answer to it.

Nor did anyone wonder if it would have a debilitating effect on the civil rights campaign. Michael Farrell, in a characteristic

blanket statement, thought the contrary: 'Without this resumption there would have been no "one man, one vote" and no Cameron Report.'⁵²

The charge of 'calculated martyrdom' made by Cameron is one which John Hume accepted:

'I would think that the leaders of the march calculated it and knew what would happen. Anyone with any experience of Northern Ireland politics knew it would happen. It was a calculated move by the leaders . . . As a result of the Burntollet march Farrell became a national leader.'⁵³

While subsequent actions and writings of a few of the leaders bore this point out we must not extend the criticism beyond a few people. Account must be taken of the genuine political innocence of many of those involved in the march. Even those who had had political experience before October 1968 had been limited to protests over, say, Vietnam or Czechoslovakia, 'safe' issues in Belfast. They made the further mistake of believing that if they stated that they were non-sectarian and non-violent enough times they would persuade the wider world to accept them and even adopt their tactics.

In brief, then, the 'long march' illustrated a number of points. It may have widened the sectarian divide — the intemperate reactions of two moderate leaders, John Hume and Captain O'Neill, is one slight example of the polarization in the community — although any coming together of the two communities had been very tenuous indeed. It established PD's separate existence within the civil rights movement, giving it a sense of self-importance and helping to create a division between itself and the more moderate groups. Within PD it created a left-wing elite which may have alienated more moderate students. Finally it weakened O'Neill's position. His advice to students to return to their books cannot have won him any Catholic votes in the general election in February, and the defiance of authority in Derry following the Burntollet ambush strengthened the hand of his right-wing opponents in the party.

John Hume's promise that there would be a return to militant action on the streets manifested itself in Newry on the following Saturday, January 11, 1969. The local branch of PD — it had had virtually no contact with the parent body since its formation on November 9, 1968 — decided in December to hold a march in the town some time in January, but since there was a lack of public support the committee called off the march on December 30. The ambush at Burntollet heightened public feeling and a decision was quickly taken to organise a march. 'They had decided to hold Saturday's march to capitalize on the emotions engendered by Burntollet and to express disgust with Captain O'Neill's speech,' said T Keane, chairman of Newry PD.

The civil rights movement wanted to demonstrate that marches could proceed without attracting violence, and PD in Belfast had a vested interest in ensuring that the demonstration passed off peacefully. Kevin Boyle thought that Newry would be more important than the 'Long March.' 'Was PD to expand through the branches? Newry would provide the answer.'⁵⁴ The damage done in Newry illustrated that the emotions of Burntollet could not be channelled in a non-violent direction. Seven police wagons were destroyed; eighteen people — including ten policemen — were injured; and twenty-four, most of them PD supporters, were arrested.

The Civil Rights movement suffered a temporary set-back and PD took much of the blame with the result that a local branch of the NICRA was set up in its place. The violence was a useful propaganda victory for the Government:

'... their aim now appears to be the creation of civic strife in an attempt to disrupt the harmonious relationships which have grown up among all sections of the community in recent years.'⁵⁵

PD could readily dismiss Unionist opinion, but had to take account of civil rights opinion. Local people objected to the diversionary tactic of Michael Farrell and twelve others when they occupied Newry General Post Office. At a public meeting in the Town Hall on January 15, 'members of the audience were sharp in criticism of the occupation of the GPO, which they felt could have led to violence, which was in direct conflict with the Civil Rights movement.' Cyril Toman's diversionary actions were even more ludicrous. He attempted to organise local teenagers into a 'People's Army.' It was this type of tactic which led Fergus Pyle to sum up the feelings of many towards PD:

'In the first confused reaction on Saturday night a man from the Omagh CR group said: "This proves that we must cut loose from the PD." His main fear was that its form of organisation laid it open to "infiltration, abuse and demagoguery."'

Yet, certainly in the short-term, PD's popularity did not seem to suffer, and the General Election of February 24, 1969, confirmed its acceptability among a section of the Catholic population. One reason could have been that it realised the futility of marching during that tense period. Kevin Boyle made the point at a meeting in Dublin: 'By Civil Rights marches we have heightened the risk of sectarian conflict and polarised the community. Marches have become counter-productive and are in danger of becoming redundant.' Thus PD favoured the postponement of a NICRA march in Strabane on January 18 and agreed to hold a teach-in at the University with a group from Oxford rather than risk a march through Belfast on January 25. To replace marches it announced a shift in tactics towards a campaign of civil disobedience.

The General Election February 1969

Following the reaction to the 'Long March' the Prime Minister's position was becoming increasingly untenable, particularly within his own party. In response to growing Catholic agitation Capt O'Neill announced the setting up of the Cameron Commission to inquire into the reasons for the civil disturbances. This displeased his own right-wingers, and on January 23 Brian Faulkner, the Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Commerce, resigned. Two days later William Morgan, Minister of Health and Social Services, followed Faulkner's example. Finally thirteen Unionist back-benchers met in Portadown to publicize their grievances with O'Neill. He replied by calling a General Election for February 24.

PD decided to contest the election. Once again, however, the first meeting to discuss the issue decided that the group should not become a parliamentary party. The decision was reversed at a later meeting when the pro-election caucus presented the meeting with a *fait accompli*, that is, it had drawn up an electoral strategy, had decided its candidates and what constituencies to contest and had produced a manifesto. It entered the campaign full of amateur enthusiasm, but uncertain of financial support. (It was the responsibility of each candidate to raise his own deposit and expenses, though it seems that some money came from a group of PD supporters in London.) Initially twelve candidates had been chosen, but only eight stood. Six of these were recent graduates, most of them ex-members of the Labour Group,⁵⁶ one, Bernadette Devlin, an undergraduate, and one, Mr E Weigleb, who stood in Cromac, a salesman. They contested six Unionist-held seats,⁵⁷ and two Nationalist-held seats,⁵⁸ in three cases being the only opponents to the member in the last Parliament,⁵⁹ and in five they were taking part in a three-way fight.⁶⁰

The endorsement of the candidate in Cromac is an example of an essentially student movement attempting to establish links with the working-class. Few of PD's active supporters knew the candidate personally but supported his nomination simply because he had come along to the meeting and indicated his willingness to stand. During the campaign he received very little help from the students and was the only candidate to lose his deposit. Kevin Boyle summed up PD confusion on this point:

'We were so ignorant of the situation that we didn't know there was a Labour candidate in Cromac. My girl-friend was shanghaied into acting as Weigleb's election agent . . . We half-heartedly went on with it.'⁶¹

PD saw the election as a 'non-event', an attempt to decide 'whether sectarianism is to be polite and covert — the O'Neill approach — or paraded as something to be proud of, the approach of his so-called right wing colleagues.' It chose to fight 'traditionally uncontested Unionist and Nationalist seats in the main, not on the basis that they will most easily assure our election but on the

argument that our policy is right for all and not for the ears of one particular group. In these constituencies we intend to provide for the first time to the mass of the people real policy and real choices.'⁶²

Although PD's manifesto⁶³ was fairly predictable in that it reiterated its familiar civil rights demands, it went beyond these to make some radical suggestions. Among other things it demanded state investment in building new factories which would be run by the workers; the expropriation of large estates to be replaced by small farmers's co-operatives; and a comprehensive integrated educational system. Within such a conservative society these demands were radical indeed and were an indication of the success of the former Labour Group left-wing activists in imposing their will upon PD.

This is particularly clear if one examines PD's housing policy in the manifesto. Back in October 1968, the demand had been for 'One Family, One House — and that a decent house — and all houses allocated by a fair points system.' Now that was a policy which the Catholic working class would support, simply because it believed that housing was allocated on political and religious lines and that it was the minority who suffered most by this policy. By February 1969, however, this vague slogan had been transformed into the demand for:

'The declaration of a housing emergency and the diverting of financial and physical resources to a crash house-building programme and away from unnecessary or prestige building. All vacant housing accommodation must be requisitioned, the Housing Trust debts to the Central Banks must be cancelled.'⁶⁴

Clearly, those people who had actively supported PD's civil rights demands in late 1968 could not be expected to go along with the above unless they accepted socialism. Most of them did not and consequently PD was a much smaller group. It would be wrong to say that PD was now under the thumb of the radical New Left, if only because the whole movement had moved in this direction.

However, one should avoid the pitfall of emphasising the radicalism of the manifesto. Certainly, PD played down its more radical aspects. Kevin Boyle felt that the demands for workers' control in industry was not necessarily revolutionary, although it was socialist, and, on the same point, Vincent McCormack, PD's election co-ordinator, wrote: 'This is not such a radical proposal as the national executive of the British Labour Party has endorsed a policy statement on democratisation of industry.' Again, one journalist asked Michael Farrell would he call himself a Marxist. 'His answer was a qualified one, saying that there were good and bad elements in Marxism. "Anyway," he added, "you cannot give a blanket endorsement to the ideas of any dead man."'⁶⁵

Perhaps the most surprising aspect of PD's campaign was the fact that it was run on orthodox lines — door to door canvassing, street meetings, literature, posters and pamphlets. But there were some strains of the radical and the unorthodox in PD's electioneering. For example, at a 'Peoples Convention'⁶⁶ held in Omagh on February 13, PD's nominee for West Tyrone, Peter Cush, stood down in favour of a local man, Dr Aidan Lagan.⁶⁷ Nor was it orthodox for candidates with a Catholic background to campaign on 'Loyalist' territory as did most PD candidates.

Before we analyse the election results it is as well to understand PD's election strategy. In the words of its chief ideologue, Michael Farrell:

'The contribution of the PD throughout the campaign was both to expose the confidence trick of O'Neillism and to continually drive home the message that there should be no compromise with the Unionist regime and no let up in the CR campaign without the total dismantling of the whole apparatus of discrimination, gerrymandering and repression. At the same time the PD warned clearly that such measures would expose the Protestant working class to the North's economic depression and split the Orange alliance wide open. Even at this stage the PD candidates argued that the only real solution to the Northern problem was the creation of an Irish Socialist Republic.'⁶⁸

At first glance PD's success was unexpected and impressive but it must not be examined in isolation. Its eight candidates took 23,000 votes, 4.23 per cent of the total vote,⁶⁹ running pro-O'Neill candidates into third place in Mid-Armagh and Enniskillen, and depriving Capt O'Neill of an absolute majority vote in Bannside; and in South Down its candidate, Fergus Woods, was within 220 votes of victory against the sitting Nationalist, E Keogh. There is no strong evidence to suggest, however, that it persuaded people to vote across the traditional divide. In South Derry, for example, Bernadette Devlin polled almost the same vote as the Nationalist candidate in the 1949 election — that was the last time the seat was contested. Nor does Miss Devlin's claim — '... mainly thanks to us, the Nationalists lost three of the nine seats they held in Stormont'⁷⁰ stand up to the light of examination. These three seats were won by Independent civil rights candidates.⁷¹

Rather the voting indicates a shift in traditional Catholic voting attitudes. The success of the three Independent candidates was largely a note of endorsement of civil rights policies. All three had been very actively involved in the campaign from October onwards, whereas the Nationalists had been slow to see the potential in the civil rights campaign. John Hume's victory in Derry is especially instructive since he defeated the sitting member, E McAteer, Leader of the Nationalist Party, and Eamonn McCann. The latter candidate had been even more active than Mr Hume but his socialist policies

proved too radical for the Catholic working class in Derry and he lost his deposit.

The Catholic voter demonstrated that he was prepared to vote for civil rights activists first rather than revolutionaries. PD received its large vote because it had proved itself, particularly at Burntollet, as the ginger group of the civil rights movement and not as revolutionary socialists. PD's attempt at continuing its demolition job on O'Neillism was only marginal. Granted that Michael Farrell's intervention in Bannside led to a damaging loss of prestige for O'Neill, but, whether Michael Farrell liked it or not, the real election battle was within the Unionist Party. Captain O'Neill failed because he did not purge the party of anti-O'Neill candidates. If one accepts PD's logic it was in its interests to inflict serious wounds on all Unionists and quite obviously it did not manage to do this in any case.

Given its lack of interest in gaining parliamentary seats, PD's real success lay in the fact that it extended its scope outside the University. The first excursion out of Queen's into Newry had broken down with the damaging march of January 11. Following the success of the general election, PD was able to set up branches in Armagh, Fermanagh, Toomebridge, Dunloy, South Derry, Newry and Cromac. Some of these were to be short-lived but at last PD seemed to have broken away from the University mentality. This had occurred fortuitously because the various candidates could not rely on student help. 'We received no support from anyone else at Queen's . . . we were forced towards the local population. They became our source of reference.'⁷² Another candidate soon realized that he would have to look to the local population for support: 'My election workers were nearly all local people. PD supplied me with printed material only. One local man bought me a public address system. Local women collected for me.'⁷³

A further two points strike the observer as being worthy of examination. Why did Eamonn McCann stand in Foyle as a NILP representative rather than a PD candidate? Secondly, why did PD receive so little help from the student body? To deal with the latter point firstly: we are faced with the problem that an organisation which had been able to bring 3,000 students on to the streets five months previously could not get enough undergraduate support to campaign in eight constituencies.

Undoubtedly there was dissension within PD⁷⁴ when the decision was taken to contest the election. One member, John McGuffin, who objected to fighting elections on principled grounds, made no secret of his annoyance: 'It was hypocritical to fight it. It was voted down at the PD but later a small meeting was held and the real activists managed to swing it narrowly.'⁷⁵ Yet McGuffin accepted the logic of the situation which was, that since it was the activists who decided to fight the election, they had the right to go ahead: 'It didn't shame my sense of democracy.' This attitude of mind aptly sums up the reasons for the diminution in numbers in PD. Those,

the New Left, who were frenetically active, had a distinct political ideology which acted as a motivating force. Those whose liberal conscience had been shocked at police brutality in Derry on October 5, 1968, did not have the staying power nor the desire to fight left-wing activity. They started to drift away following the November reform package and because they were more concerned at passing examinations than in becoming politicians, and because they disagreed with the late decision to march to Derry. Ultra-democracy could only work where there was unanimity.

One cannot explain Eamonn McCann's candidature so easily because it raises problems of a personality clash. The Cameron Report assumes that PD and McCann were part of the same movement. If one were to examine and compare his election manifesto with that of PD's one would be forced to the same conclusion. Similarly we find that McCann involved himself in all of PD's major demonstrations and spoke at a PD meeting as early as November 6, 1968. But it would be more correct to speak of the 'PD-McCann axis'.⁷⁶

We have here two inter-related problems, one of geography and the other of personality. Eamonn McCann's political base was in Derry, and his political home was in the NILP — the Derry branch of the NILP, which was much more unorthodox and radical than the NILP generally. In the space of a few years he had built up considerable support among young Derry radicals and he was not prepared to submerge that in PD. Nor was he prepared to allow PD to establish a branch in Derry, a point he admitted frankly in interview, and a point which Cyril Toman made in a letter to the *Irish Times*.

'In spite of visits by several PD members to Derry, Eamonn McCann refused to join any other organisation than NILP and used his undeniable influence to dissuade others from setting up a PD branch in the city.' While it may seem a trivial point we will discover that personality clashes were to be a recurring theme in PD's short history.

Even allowing for the temporary set-back of Newry on January 11, PD enjoyed its greatest success in the months of January and February 1969. It had reached the apex in the curve of the five-stage cycle of radical movements, the stage of *institutionalization*. As far as can be ascertained it is the only student movement in the Western liberal-democratic countries which has tested its popularity at the polls in a national election. 23,000 votes may not have won it any seats but it allowed it to extend its influence and it was concrete evidence that it should be taken seriously.

'Success for the movement during this stage can also be seen in the legislative arena, where repressive legislation is being increasingly accompanied by ameliorative legislation aimed at some of the criticisms which the movement is making.'⁷⁷

The setting up of the Cameron Commission on January 15 was seen by right-wing Unionists as a betrayal since it was a concession to anti-unionist activists who were either Republicans or Marxists. The introduction of the Public Order (Amendment) Bill⁷⁸ on January 28 was seen by these same activists as the first of a series of pieces of repressive legislation. While it is true that both these measures were aimed at containing civil rights agitation generally, it could be argued that the Prime Minister would not have created the former, and introduced the latter had there not been a 'Long March' with its ambush at Burntollet. Any measure aimed at the Civil Rights movement was of necessity aimed at its militant off-shoot, the People's Democracy.

2: March 1969 — September 1969. In Search of a Role

The 'Long March' and the February election proved to be a watershed in PD's development. As a group it was never again to win so much popular support, and as a ginger group within the Civil Rights movement its influence was to wane. Its fundamental strategic problem had already been acknowledged by one commentator:

'... it is torn by the same doubts as the Student Movement — whether to remain a pressure group with Anarchist overtones, or try to work through conventional political machinery.'¹

PD's strategy was to change. It still believed in the politics of the streets — the 23,000 votes won by its eight candidates had been construed as a mandate to pursue its policy of harassing the Government by a programme of marches and demonstrations. But community divisions had hardened — in some measure due to the activities of PD — and demonstrations were becoming a dangerous exercise. Much of its student support had disappeared, and it had failed to put down roots in any urban or rural area with the exception of Armagh and Fermanagh. Thus it was desirable to concentrate its activities outside Belfast.

One of the reasons for this change in strategy may have been helped by the increasing attention paid to Irish politics by various left-wing groups in Britain. To appreciate this shift in attitudes we must return to the events of early January 1969.

As a result of the Burntollet ambush Derry erupted in violence on January 4: 'The day ended in serious rioting. Shops and department stores were looted, windows smashed and gangs of police terrorised Bogside throughout the night.'² (As a result of allegations of police misconduct the Minister of Home Affairs announced on January 6 that County Inspector Henry Baillie had been appointed to conduct an enquiry into the incidents.)³ The Bogside area of the city closed itself off to the RUC and called itself 'Free Derry.' A 'people's militia' of 500 male residents was formed and patrolled the area until the RUC returned on January 12. A radio transmitter was smuggled into the area by PD members, and Derry left-wingers launched Radio Free Derry, which broadcast traditional music and political statements while the barricades remained.⁴

For some, the barricades symbolised the first signs of the revolution to come. Eamonn McCann was to speak of Northern Ireland being 'in a pre-revolutionary situation.'⁵ *International*, the organ of the International Marxist Group,⁶ went so far as to claim in an

editorial comment that 'Permanent Revolution Reaches UK in the form of the young street fighters of Derry.'⁷

In a special paper the Revolutionary Socialist Students' Federation attempted a Marxist analysis of the Irish situation and promised its support to PD:

'The importance and uniqueness of PD is that as a student organisation from the only non-sectarian institution in the country led by socialists it has combined the militancy to mobilise the Catholic working class, the principle of non-sectarianism and the example of bravery. Now its participation in the elections has given it a national presence and at the same time removed it from its university base.'⁸

A *New Left Review* editorial looked at the Irish situation with some envy:

'The struggle in Northern Ireland has attained a higher level than on the English mainland. The Left here has traditionally failed to win any important section of the working class to anti-imperialist positions, even where it is subjectively anti-capitalist. The situation in Northern Ireland highlights the urgency of doing so.'⁹

In the short-term the aspirations of Left-wing ideologues from Britain have not been realized, but their views are important in the development of PD for three reasons.

It reinforced the belief of the more optimistic socialists that, perhaps, Ireland was in a pre-revolutionary situation. (The importance of having an ideology should not be underestimated. 'The fact that student groups are able to fall back on ideology — usually some form of Marxism — makes it easier for such groups to survive periods of political quiescence.'¹⁰ It gave them a sense of self-importance. For example, when one humble interviewer asked what English comrades could do to help the Irish situation, Michael Farrell told him bluntly: '... the best way English comrades can help the Irish revolution is by making the English revolution.'¹¹

Thirdly it left the PD open to charges of 'Reds' and 'Communists' and agents of international atheistic revolution.¹² The conspiracy theory did not help its cause among the Catholic working class, a factor it was to realise when it worked behind the barricades in 'Free Belfast' and when it tried to put down roots in the Catholic housing estate of Ballymurphy.

The March to Dublin April 1969.

In deciding to march to Dublin at Easter the organisers may have considered it an opportunity to pull the various left-wing strands together and thus demonstrate that the sects of the left could be united by the experience of direct action. (The 22 March Movement, which played a leading role in the struggles in France in May 1968, illustrated this type of solidarity: '... they were an activist group containing every branch of political radicalism — anarchist, Marxist, Trotskyist, anarchist-Marxist — without compromising

either their revolutionary efficacy or their individualistic ideals.¹³ If this was so it appears to have been low on their list of priorities.

From its inception the New Left in PD had seen the Fianna Fail Government as a *bête-noir*. On November 2nd 1968, it had written to Mr. Jack Lynch 'deplored his attempt to make capital out of the civil rights issue in Northern Ireland by linking it with the question of partition.'

Again, we have earlier evidence that Michael Farrell and Eamonn McCann were unwilling to accept the status quo in the Irish Republic.¹⁴ The march was to begin in Belfast on Friday, April 4, under the banner of 'Civil Rights, North and South.' It attracted the support of about forty members of the RSSF¹⁵ (John McGuffin had spoken at their conference in Manchester about three weeks previously)¹⁶ about forty anarchists who had been advised by *Freedom* as early as March 8: 'See You At Easter ... Belfast Where It's All Happening'¹⁷ some members of the Birmingham ad hoc Civil Rights organisation; representatives from a conglomeration of British Left-wing groups;¹⁸ the Western Civil Rights Movement who were marching from Galway; and a number of socialist organisations in the South, some of whom had taken part in the 'Long March.'¹⁹

From the beginning the march ran into several difficulties. Mr Richard Ferguson MP, a moderate Unionist, and a group of 'prominent citizens' from Lisburn expressed their fears for community relations if the march went through the town. In the prevailing political atmosphere confrontation would have been dangerous. Capt O'Neill was fighting a losing battle to save his position, and it had been announced that the 'B' Specials were to be mobilised.²⁰ By April 3, PD decided, in the interests of peace, to begin its march in Newry, to hold a 'manifestation of personal discontent' at the City Hall, Belfast on April 4 and to have a demonstration in Lurgan on the same day. To ensure that this decision was carried out, the Minister of Home Affairs, Mr Robert Porter, issued Orders at 2.00 a.m. on April 4 prohibiting any march by the PD from Belfast to Newry and also the holding of PD meetings in certain parts of Lurgan.

The 'manifestation' did not happen. Instead a meeting took place outside the City Hall attended by police and Paisleyites. It was in Lurgan that the only serious violence of the march erupted. 'Police waded into 150 PD marchers who sat down in Lurgan's Frances Street last night. Eighteen people, one of them a girl, were arrested. Twelve of these, a police spokesman said, were from "across the water." (The charges were for disorderly behaviour, assaulting the police and obstruction.) In Newry a fifteen minute sit-down passed off without incident.

It was a rather insignificant incident at the border which illustrated serious differences of opinion among the marchers. One of

the organisers, Cyril Toman, challenged the Irish Republic's censorship laws by bringing with him two novels, *The Ginger Man*, and *The Girl With Green Eyes*, and presenting them at the customs post. (The former was not banned at that time in the South.) This action particularly annoyed some of the southern supporters, one of whom issued a press statement:

As co-ordinator of the Belfast to Dublin march and series of demonstrations of the PD, I, in common with the Young Socialists, Students for Democratic Action,²¹ the Socialist Society TCD, and the Civil Liberties Association received an assurance from PD that they would not give prominence to the issues of birth control or censorship.

'We believed that any such action would be an adventurist attempt at breaking sectarianism by attacking areas of traditional Protestant prejudice. As a means of attaining this it cannot be successful . . . Thus I would condemn as strongly as possible the adventurist gimmick of Cyril Toman in displaying two banned books at the border post on Saturday morning . . . Mr Toman's action was an anti-socialist one calculated to offend the republican socialist feelings of a large section of the Twenty-Six Counties.'²²

The rest of the march was uneventful and badly organised, although a meeting in Dundalk had been carefully planned and meetings in Balbriggan and Swords were well attended. When the marchers arrived in Dublin on April 7, they were greeted by a crowd of 3,000 and another rebuff—four of the Galway marchers resigned and refused to have anything to do with the mass meeting in Dublin.

'We think PD are not interested in civil rights in the Republic but are here only for their own political ends.'

Further they objected to the organisation as a 'Conglomeration of all sorts' since it included British anarchists, communists and other bodies.

A march from the General Post Office to the Department of Justice led to the burning of copies of the Criminal Justice Bill and the Public Order (Amendment) Bill. Again there was some disagreement between PD and the southern groups. Michael Farrell failed to pacify the 800 dissidents who moved off to protest at the British Embassy in Merrion Square. There speakers 'claimed—and it was argued by Mr. Basil Miller, Mr. Paddy Wally, Mr. Rory Quinn, Mr. John Feeney and a number of others — that the main motive of the PD group was just to use their criticism of the South as a tactic to show the followers of Ian Paisley that they were not agents of the Government.'

At the end of the day five windows had been smashed, but PD's reputation had suffered a much more serious set back. Clearly it had alienated potential support among southern left-wingers, and generally it had received a bad press²³—a matter of some concern to an organisation which realised the value of good publicity. The only

exception appears to have been the *Irish Times*. A leader described it as: 'a useful exercise. It is a forcible reminder that to young people the border is more and more an irrelevancy . . . A united Ireland would bring much more of the aggressive thinking which these students typify into our political life, much more irreverence, and impatience, and hopefully with constructive results.'

This view was to the satisfaction of PD: 'PD recognised no borders in the struggle against injustice and the march to Dublin under the slogan Civil Rights, North and South, drove that point home . . . PD did not expect to precipitate a revolution in the South. It did hope to arouse the anger of the working people against the exploitation of Green Tories as well as Orange ones, and against the fact that the 40,000 unemployed in the North were matched by the 60,000 in the South . . .'

Within PD there was a measure of disagreement as to its success. Cyril Toman was criticized for bad organisation.²⁴ One prominent member began to drift away from the group as a result. He saw it as 'a gimmick for Protestant support,' 'a fiasco' and it enabled people to think of FD as 'an eccentric bunch of students.'²⁵ The anarchist, John McGuinness, felt that it was a useful exercise because it enabled British left-wingers to see the situation for themselves. As one of the two organisers he made the most out of the failings of the march since 'people found they could organise spontaneously in a short time.'²⁶

On the whole anarchists were satisfied with the march if only because it gave them a greater insight into the host organisation.

'There are a lot of misconceptions about PD which is (in organisation) an open libertarian umbrella movement. It consists of many sections and is open to anyone who wishes to speak. Of course this means the rise of charismatic leaders, furthering their own factional ends. It is also evident that PD will only survive if the bulk of the people are aware of this problem and are determined to carry on their campaign of a non-factional basis with the use of free assemblies.'²⁷

The relative failure of the Dublin march jolted PD's confidence, no matter what its official press statement might claim. It had expected to make a greater impact on public opinion and it did not expect the volume of hostile press comment which it received. The media were able to trivialise the march after Cyril Toman's juvenile protest at the border and left-wing activists in the Irish Republic felt that their task was being made more difficult by the incident. The bad organisation and the multifariousness of the organisations involved led to recrimination during the march. It is difficult to imagine how it increased support for PD in the North. Slogans such as 'Build Houses, Not Churches' can have impressed very few. Only the converted were assured.

While PD was marching to Dublin, Miss Bernadette Devlin was campaigning in Mid-Ulster as a Unity candidate in a straight fight against the Unionist nominee, Mrs Anna Forrest. The march may have caused her some annoyance; she described it as 'a stupid mistake.' Certainly some of her more conservative advisers considered it to be badly timed. But there was no evidence at this stage that there was any split in PD concerning her nomination. Her manifesto was a duplicate of the PD February manifesto; her programme was 'an aggressively non-sectarian campaign speaking sometimes through hails of broken bottles and stones,' (for example in Moneymore she had to cancel a meeting after a mob stoned her platform; she promised to return the next day — she did, and held a peaceful meeting) her opponent linked her with PD, denouncing it as Communist or Republican.

Her brand of socialism, crude 'Connellyism' again was to the liking of PD:

'If necessary we will take over the factories for ourselves. That way there will be no discrimination because there is no sectarianism in the heart of the ordinary working man. That was put there by a bigoted Unionist party in order to keep itself in power.'

Some leading members of PD supported her by speaking on her behalf — Kevin Boyle and Bowes Egan in Omagh on April 7; Fergus Woods and Michael Farrell in Moneymore on April 10 and Strabane on April 12; Bowes Egan, Kevin Boyle and Michael Farrell at the eve-of-polling rally in Carrickmore on April 16. Her campaign was hectic — in the largest parliamentary constituency in Northern Ireland she spoke in sixteen places in ten days — and successful.²⁸

Several questions pose themselves to the interested observer. How was it possible for a twenty-one year old undergraduate with only six months active political experience to capture a Westminster seat? The youngest MP to go to Westminster since Pitt in 1781 gives her own account²⁹ of how she managed to win the nomination and the election. What that account illustrated was the complexity of opposition politics. What the remainder of the book demonstrated was that Miss Devlin's charismatic personality made her very popular with the Catholic minority. She had demonstrated intelligence, courage, debating ability and a rebellious spirit. But the fact that she had won the Unity nomination owed itself to something more than her personal qualities. The one commentator who comes closest to describing the reason is J Bowyer Bell:

'Very young, very sincere, widely out of touch with the tradition-encrusted electorate, she was accepted by the Republicans because she did not look like a stayer in Mid-Ulster politics, backed by the civil rights movement because she symbolized all the idealism of the young and endorsed by Austin Currie because he had no choice . . . Whatever Bernadette Devlin was for, Mid-Ulster knew

what to vote against — and the Unionists lost a seat. With Devlin at Westminster, the Republicans scraped through.³⁰

The choice of the mid-Ulster constituency to fight her first Westminster election must also have helped Miss Devlin. Mid-Ulster had a Republican tradition, a tradition which had been highlighted in the General Election of 1955 — (in that year Tom Mitchell, a Republican who preached a policy of abstention from Westminster, defeated his Unionist opponent. However he was prevented from claiming his seat because he was a convicted felon, and a re-election was ordered. Again he stood and again he won and again a further re-election was ordered. On the third occasion Republican abstentions enabled the Unionists to win.) — and Miss Devlin faced an indifferent opponent in Mrs Anna Forrest (Unionist).

Yet much had been made of her radical socialism:

'Miss Devlin is a Socialist and preaches the Irish rebel leader James Connolly's Utopia of an Irish Workers' Republic. This, combined with her youth, may well alienate the Catholic middle class.' She herself refused to fight as what she wryly called a 'pan-papist candidate.' She tells us:

'I'd fought the election honestly on the non-sectarian radical socialist policies I believed in. I was quite sure I'd alienate more Catholic Tory votes than I could make up for by an honest vote.'³¹ Miss Devlin is guilty of a degree of self-deception in the above statement. While it is correct that her speeches were radical and that she relied on radical support from PD and individuals like Eamonn McCann, her platform party often included conservative Nationalists.³² (It should be remembered that PD pilloried the Nationalist Party in the February elections because it epitomised the traditional political values of a united Ireland.) And in answer to the allegation that she was a Communist, Miss Devlin issued a statement (April 10):

'... As a practising member of the Roman Catholic Church I cannot accept the policies of the Communist Party which denies the existence of God and opposes the basic ideals of Christianity and the teaching of the Christian Church in which I believe.' If anyone again suggests that she is a Communist, 'I shall have no hesitation in consulting my solicitor, and if necessary, clear my name in open court.'³³ Such a statement can have done her electoral prospects no great harm in Mid-Ulster.

After her election Miss Devlin appeared to move further away from the PD organisation — one must stress 'organisation' since she had contact with individuals in PD from time to time. This caused some resentment among PD stalwarts, though Miss Devlin explained her position thus:

'I felt personally justified in that I was not a member of Parliament for the People's Democracy nor was I anything particularly unique in the People's Democracy.'³⁴

She believes that it is a mistake to see the by-election as a turning point in her relationship with PD.

Her fundamental criticism of PD at this stage was that it did not move out of the University mentality. She saw the February election as an attempt to commit the movement to the people and so justify itself as a 'people's' democracy rather than a 'student's' democracy. It was at that period that the break came, though she would not put it so strongly: 'It was a natural drift. I was virtually cut off in South Derry between the February election and the by-election in April.'³⁵ Nonetheless her nomination and campaign exacerbated her relationship with PD leaders. She has made it clear that she would have preferred Michael Farrell's nomination to her own, and that they discussed this problem at his home.³⁶ But she felt that she had been let down when she did stand:

'I was sour on the PD leadership because it was their idea that I should stand as an individual on a PD basis. I felt I was being sold out. Michael Farrell and Cyril Toman were caught between two stools. They personally thought it was a good idea but were not too sure PD would back it. They refused to help me actively.'³⁷

Circumstances, too, played their role in preventing PD support. Most of the activists were committed to the Dublin march. Kevin Boyle could only give limited support because he had too much academic work to do. Others, like John McGuffin, had a principled objection to elections and, besides, he could not help because 'she didn't stand as a PD candidate and she was a pan-papist candidate.'³⁸ There is further, admittedly slender, evidence that these last complaints were voiced by more than John McGuffin. The fact remains that her two closest advisers during the campaign were Louden Seth, her election agent and Eamonn McCann, her Press officer. Neither of them had been closely involved in PD for some time.

PD's Campaign to Spread Its Influence

If the first three months of 1969 marked the apex of PD's influence on the community, April illustrated the beginnings of the downward curve. The Dublin march had brought its share of bad publicity and Bernadette Devlin's campaign had been a victory for her rather than a triumph for PD. However, the media had now turned their attention to the power struggle within the Unionist Party.

Law and order seemed to be breaking down and the Government did not appear to have the answer. There had been attacks on electrical and other installations on March 31, April 20 and April 23 (twice) and it was widely believed that the IRA were responsible. A serious riot in Derry on the days following April 19 had led again to the temporary creation of 'Free Derry.' The last straw for the loyalist faithful was the ability of the Prime Minister to persuade the Party to accept 'One man, One vote' in principle on April 23. His Minister

of Agriculture, Major James Chichester-Clark, resigned in protest over the timing of this decision. Clearly the Prime Minister could not continue in power indefinitely. On April 29 he resigned to be replaced by Chichester-Clark on May 1. The new Prime Minister took his first decisive step on May 6, when he announced an amnesty for all 'political' offences committed since the disturbances began.

PD's tiny demonstrations could not hope to compete with such news stories. It contented itself by building up its support in the urban and rural areas — and, incidentally, refuting Bernadette Devlin's criticism that PD remained part of the University mentality. Largely as a result of the February election, active branches sprang up in Fermanagh and Armagh, while others existed for only a very short period.

The best example of a 'one issue' branch which met a very sudden death was Cromac PD. On March 12 and 19 a small group of people — never numbering more than thirty — marched to the City Hall from the Cromac area of Belfast to protest about housing conditions in their area. It ran into the same difficulty as PD in its earliest days — on both occasions it was re-routed away from Shaftesbury Square. There is no evidence of any activity by this group after March 19, 1969.

(a) Armagh

The most militant branch to appear after the general election was the Armagh PD. The committee of young people who had helped the candidate in Mid-Armagh, Cyril Toman, remained in existence to form another PD branch. Its chief spokesman and leader was Niall Vallely, a contemporary of Toman, Farrell and McCann at Queen's. It first sprung into prominence on March 22, 1969, a day in which PD and the NICRA had organised demonstrations in six centres to protest against the Public Order (Amendment) Bill, and a day in which all civil rights sympathisers were aware of undoing the valuable gains already achieved by the civil rights movement. With the exception of Armagh, where five arrests were made after scuffles with Paisleyites, all the meetings passed off peacefully.

Like its counterpart in Cromac, Armagh PD concentrated on the housing issue. On May 13 a small group of old-age pensioners and PD members held a silent picket outside Armagh Rural Council monthly meeting. Their leader, Niall Vallely, addressed the Council demanding the immediate rehousing of the residents of Mill Row and Lislea. Though that protest was peaceful the PD was dissatisfied that nothing had been achieved and returned to make their protest to the Armagh City Council annual meeting on May 27. But they were refused permission to address the Council, a scuffle developed and four PD members, including Niall Vallely, were arrested on charges of disorderly behaviour. As a result the Council imposed a ban on public attendance of its meetings.

That action, combined with an imposition of increased rents, resulted in a much larger demonstration on June 2 when 350 demonstrators protested. While PD and Civil Rights supporters held a two-hour rally in front of the City Hall, a group of two hundred people marched from four Catholic housing estates but would not join the rally. Instead, they sent a deputation to hand in a protest to the Council members, much to the displeasure of Niall Vallely who called 'the Curse of Cromwell' on the tenants and described the march as a 'Catholic tenants' protest.'

The conflict with the Council continued into July and had not resolved itself by September. An attempt at a sit-in on July 7 was foiled although a three-man deputation, led by Senator G Lennon, of the local branch of the NICRA, staged a sit-in in protest against the council's decision not to receive the deputation in the presence of the Press. While this was going on, 200 PD supporters marched through the town. At one point they were confronted by a police blockade and scuffles broke out with one policeman being injured and a number of protesters being arrested.

By July 26 PD appeared to have achieved its objective when eighteen supporters held a five-hour sit-in. But PD was not satisfied with this token occupation, so it extended its protest to highlight discrimination in jobs as well as housing in the city. Finally, on September 5, PD returned to the housing issue when it accused the local tenants' association of 'selling-out' to Armagh City Council because it postponed a rent and rates strike in the larger interests of community peace:

'This sell-out can only be regarded as the final episode in the disgraceful careers of Armagh Green Tories. This alliance with the Orange Order and abandonment of solidarity with the people of Derry and Belfast exposes the Tenants' Association for what it is.'

The extension of PD activity to Armagh clarified the militance of the organisation but not necessarily a socialist militance. It was following the traditional pattern of opposition protest by concentrating on discrimination in jobs and housing. It is difficult to see how it hoped to attract Protestant support especially in the city of Armagh which had a delicately balanced Unionist majority in the Council. By attacking other Catholic groupings it was not necessarily demonstrating its own non-sectarian base, rather it was proving to Protestants that it was a more militant, therefore more dangerous, Catholic organisation. This was seen in its protest of July 7 when a policeman was injured. On that occasion its 200 'supporters' included many who were not members of PD. One can only surmise that an open-ended militant organisation whose means was direct action and whose ends were vaguely utopian would inevitably attract the disenchanted, particularly in a polarised situation.

(b) *The Battle with the NICRA: Generational Conflict*

One of the victims of PD's youthful exuberance was its relationship with the NICRA. In its enthusiasm to build up branches it was inevitable that it would clash with the NICRA at central and at local level. A serious split did develop within the NICRA executive and it spread throughout the local branches never to be properly healed. This rift highlighted a fundamental difference of opinion on tactics and principles between the 'moderates' and the 'activists'. It was the first clear sign of a 'generational struggle' within the Civil Rights movement.

In Gulladuff, Co Derry, on March 6, Bernadette Devlin disclosed that the NICRA and PD were to march through Belfast to Stormont to protest against the Public Order (Amendment) Act on March 29. In fact, the NICRA's decision to support PD was not taken until March 14 when four members of the Executive — Mr John McAnerney, secretary; Mr. Fred Heatley, treasurer and founder member; Miss Betty Sinclair, former chairman; and Dr Raymond Shearer — walked out of the meeting in protest. They objected to what they considered to be brinkmanship:

'All we needed was time . . . a lull in which to see if Captain O'Neill is going to carry out the reforms he had promised. But PD would not give us time and their political views are infringing the non-political aims of the NICRA.'

Furthermore they objected to PD's political principles:

'We have been taken over by people preaching the most extreme form of revolutionary socialism, the sort of politics that have been causing trouble in France, Germany, Japan and many other parts of the world.'

(The irony in the above statement was that one of the signatories, Miss Betty Sinclair, had been a member of the Communist Party all her life. PD's contempt for that organisation was an open secret and, in that respect it was in line with 'New Left' thinking in the Western world.)³⁹ But that is not to say that PD's political judgment was correct in this case, a fact acknowledged by Owen Dudley Edwards:

'... before the New Left emerged on the scene, the vanguard of the movement was led by Miss Betty Sinclair of that organisation (ie the Communist Party of Northern Ireland). As the CPNI is predominantly of Protestant stock, it was in a good position to balance the predominance of Catholic stock on the New Left; but the PD and its friends, strongly anti-Communist, made extended co-operation impossible. Significantly enough, this was the one real casualty of "Popular Front" politics in Northern Ireland; the fault was not on one side only.'⁴⁰

To charges of infiltrating the Civil Rights movement, Michael Farrell's reply was uncompromising. He described such charges as 'arrant nonsense. There are only two PD members in an eighteen man committee. The real crime of the PD appears to be that they

want action in the field of Civil Rights.' John Murphy claimed in a letter to a Belfast newspaper that 'the Civil Rights movement never has been and never could be non-political. Any movement which campaigns to have laws changed is, of necessity, political. While the CRA constitution proclaims that it is non-political this can only be interpreted to mean that the organisation is non-party political.'

The argument did not remain within the Belfast area. In Derry Ivan Cooper MP and John Hume MP resigned as Chairman and Vice-Chairman respectively for Derry Citizens' Action Committee, perhaps in sub-conscious solidarity with the NICRA dissidents: 'We will still serve on the action committee, but we felt our role as politicians might be misconstrued with our role as civil rights supporters.'

In Omagh eight of the thirteen-man CRA committee resigned in sympathy with the four dissidents: 'We feel that the Civil Rights movement is being undermined by extremists for whose action we cannot hold ourselves responsible.' (The Omagh Committee had been formed only in January and the resignations meant that it no longer officially existed because the five members remaining did not constitute a quorum.)

At a meeting in Enniskillen Town Hall on March 15, a decision was taken to join PD for a march on the Public Order (Amendment) Bill in the town the following Saturday. The chairman described Fermanagh Civil Rights Association as 'an umbrella under which all bodies can unite and demand for civil rights.' Five members of the local executive would not accept this decision and resigned, explaining that the committee had already taken a decision (March 10) that the People's Democracy was a political party, and could not therefore receive the support of a non-political body.

It was against this unhappy background that PD and NICRA embarked on a series of demonstrations against the Public Order (Amendment) Bill in six centres on March 22. Since a special conference had been called for Sunday, March 23, to investigate the split in the movement, it was vital that the protests pass off peacefully. The demonstrations were organised by the local Civil Rights Associations in Newry and Toomebridge, and jointly with PD in Enniskillen; in Derry by the local Unemployed Action Committee; and in Belfast and Armagh by PD. With the exception of Armagh they passed off peacefully, and PD distributed 30,000 leaflets explaining the proposed act.⁴¹ However, this did not satisfy the dissidents who refused to withdraw their resignations at the conference.

Genuine attempts seem to have been made to prevent a further exacerbation of the rift between NICRA and PD. The proposed march to Stormont on March 29 was postponed until after Easter. (It never took place.) Instead PD supporters made their way to Derry where they marched with 8,000 others over the route refused to them on October 5, 1968—this was the first legal march over that

route. Miss Bernadette Devlin MP, Eamonn McCann and Michael Farrell shared the same platform as Ivan Cooper MP and John Hume MP who welcomed 'friends from the PD and people from Belfast, Dungannon and all over the North.' Again in Omagh on April 12 and Enniskillen on June 14 PD speakers appeared to be in agreement with the NICRA speakers. Perhaps the most successful alliance occurred in Dungiven, Co. Derry during June. On June 8 an Orange parade was attacked as it passed a Gaelic Athletic Association field in Dungiven. One policeman was injured and eleven people were arrested. Fears were expressed that the planned unfurling of a new banner for an Orange lodge in the village on June 28 would meet the same fate.⁴² During the next fortnight some members of PD, notably Kevin Boyle, travelled to Dungiven and met local people and politicians in an attempt to prevent violence erupting on that day. They drew up a leaflet,⁴³ persuaded people to boycott the parade and marchers, and to poster the village with civil rights material. The parade passed off peacefully and could be considered a minor success for the civil rights movement. It may have helped to have restored PD's somewhat tarnished image. Kevin Boyle considered it 'one of the most successful non-Old Left activities.' He accepts responsibility for not getting enough publicity for PD,⁴⁴ although he believed that 'Ivan Cooper and company took advantage of the situation.' (Certainly in a Commons debate on the march Ivan Cooper did not mention PD's role in the affair at all.)⁴⁵ The fact that PD could not generate enough favourable publicity was more indicative of its irrelevance to the situation in general.

While members of the Orange Order were unfurling their banner in Dungiven, a civil rights march was taking place in Strabane. (The march had originally been planned for January 18 but had been postponed because of the abject failure of the Newry march of the previous Saturday.) The demonstration, attended by about 3,000 people, followed the same format with the same platform speakers who had orated and harangued in so many different centres over the past nine months. What was peculiar about the platform speeches on that occasion was the tendentious material uttered by two prominent activists, Miss Bernadette Devlin MP and Eamonn McCann.

The latter wanted to know: 'What the hell are three Opposition MP's (Mr Austin Currie, Mr P. O'Hanlon and Mr P. Kennedy) doing on the same platform if they believe the Government's reform time-table is reasonable?' He was followed by Bernadette Devlin who claimed that she had never heard more sectarian speeches from an allegedly non-sectarian platform:

'It does not matter what your religion is; it is the whole system of the individual minds of people . . . You have got to stand up with the Protestant working class who have "got it." You march for employment in Strabane but you march with employers who pay low wages in Strabane.'

Mr. John Hume MP who was not present at that meeting, issued a press statement clarifying the parliamentarians' point of view and demonstrating the rift between the moderates and the militants. He pointed out that 'the acceptance of a timetable did not mean the acceptance of the reforms. We could not accept what we have not seen.' He explained what he understood the civil rights movement not to be about:

'It is not, it never has been, and it has been repeatedly stated not to be a movement which seeks to promote either a socialist or a conservative society. It seeks only a just society, and the achievement of justice and democracy is surely a necessary first step in Northern Ireland to end for ever the equation of religion and politics before normal politics can take place . . . the place to express these views is on a political platform. To seek to use the civil rights platform to express these views is dishonest.'

To counter charges that the platform speeches were sectarian he gave his definition of sectarianism:

'To me, it is an attempt by one religious group to promote hatreds against or to seek to dominate another. This has never been the policy or the attitude of the Civil Rights Movement or of the thousands of the people who marched for justice. We have always upheld the rights of all sections of the community and we can hardly be held responsible for the fact that there are still many people in the community who cannot support our call for no more or no less than simple justice . . . I am convinced that the approach to our problems of people like Mr McCann and the People's Democracy — which is today far removed from the large number of sincere students who sat down in Belfast last October — is much more likely to lead to sectarian strife than the approach which we advocate.'

Significantly there is no evidence to indicate any attempt to refute this reasoned reply to the militants. Of further significance is the fact that Michael Farrell had not been part of the initial attack on the Opposition MP's, an example of a rift within a rift. The one undeniable fact is that the split which had first appeared in March but which had been temporarily healed was now irrevocable. Necessity, in the form of the greater enemy, Unionism, might force them to join in temporary alliance but they could never work together effectively again.

Following the Strabane affair two other marches tended to underline the split. A march of 2,000 Civil Rights supporters on July 5, along the route banned to them on January 11, in Newry was attended by only two Opposition MP's. (Mr P Kennedy and Mr P O'Hanlon.) On the previous day Miss Devlin MP had requested people at the unemployment exchange to march under the banner of 'Newry Unemployed' but she had been warned by local CRA committee members that she and PD must conform to the march programme.

At the public meeting following the march she had to seek permission to address the crowd.

(c) Fermanagh

The Fermanagh branch of PD was another active group formed after the general election, though it was not as consistently militant as the Armagh PD. Its early activities are best studied within the broader context of the civil rights movement. Events in Fermanagh during July illustrated PD intransigence and the worsening of relations with the local CRA committee. At the beginning of the month the local branches of both organisations issued a joint statement announcing two marches to take place on July 19 (later postponed one week) in the county. Both marches would converge in Enniskillen where a rally would be held to call attention to the high rate of unemployment in the county, the continued flight of people from the area and the iniquitous behaviour of the County Council. On July 24 the Fermanagh Civil Rights Committee withdrew from the march on the grounds that it was ill-timed and ill-advised. Later Major Bunting had warned: 'We will be glad to advise the loyalists in Fermanagh on how to hinder or harry the revolutionaries of the so-called PD movement.'

On July 25, the Minister of Home Affairs banned the march and all meetings between Newtownbutler and Enniskillen, but Peter Cosgrove,⁴⁶ for the local PD told a small meeting that it would defy the ban by holding a rally in Enniskillen.

The proposed meeting in the Diamond, Enniskillen, never took place. It had been occupied by a group of Paisleyites. An impromptu meeting in Church Street, a protest procession in single file to the police station and a sit-down led to the arrest of fifty-four PD sympathisers.⁴⁷ At a special court that evening thirty-seven of those arrested were remanded in custody. The heavy handed administration of the law led to the inevitable closing of the ranks. Protest meetings were held in Birmingham by the Irish Civil Rights movement, in London by the local NICRA branch, in Downpatrick by the local Civil Rights committee, in Armagh by PD, and in Derry by the NILP branch. At this latter meeting Eamonn McCann made a veiled reference to the latest split:

'We would point out that it was the action of the 'moderate' leadership in the Civil Rights movement that tried to denigrate and isolate the Fermanagh PD protest which gave the authorities the confidence to behave in such a manner.'

At a special vacation sitting of the Northern Ireland High Court thirty-four of the thirty-seven prisoners were released on bail on July 29.

The Fermanagh episode demonstrated a lack of responsibility on the part of the PD leadership, though one of them described it as 'brinkmanship of the worst sort.'⁴⁸

The annual celebrations of the July 12 ceremonies had illustrated that intercommunal violence was very near to the surface. Serious rioting on the days following July 12 in Derry, Belfast, Lurgan and Dungiven had made it evident that any form of street politics could have a debilitating effect on the local community. Nor could the leadership excuse itself on grounds of lack of foresight; the Burntollet ambush had brought the politics of innocence to a rapid close. The events of July 28 only succeeded in importing sectarian strife — albeit on a minor scale — to Enniskillen.⁴⁹

(d) Belfast

In Belfast PD had lost the initiative and was aware of the fact. Its ingenuity was stretched in trying to take the lead again. It realized that the parliamentary opposition was now in the hands of men of ability and it was they who were getting the publicity. The successful civil rights candidates transferred the politics of the street into parliament — in the short-term at any rate. (One incident, in particular, suggested that the opposition could still embarrass the Government without having to resort to protest on the streets. When the Government decided to press ahead with the Public Order (Amendment) Bill — seen as a repressive measure directed against civil rights campaigners — opposition MP's tabled fifty-eight amendments in a fourteen hour sitting. The Government Chief Whip reacted by moving a closure motion, a rare occurrence in Northern Ireland. The opposition, in its turn, staged a sit-down on the floor of the House singing 'We Shall Overcome.' For their pains they received a week's suspension from the House but managed to prevent the Bill becoming law by Easter.)

By contrast PD's words and deeds were mostly hollow. Its threat to undertake a massive campaign of civil disobedience, and to involve trade unionists in its opposition to the Public Order (Amendment) Bill did not materialise.⁵⁰ It had attempted an abortive housing campaign when eleven demonstrators occupied a large office block in the centre of Belfast in protest against the building of prestige office blocks; and it reacted to the City Council's decision to sell off some of the grounds of Belfast Castle to private enterprise by organising a folk festival in the 'People's Park' on June 14.

Attempts were made by PD personalities to influence events in certain areas after they erupted but they met with limited success. There were riots around Hooker Street on the Crumlin Road for a number of nights after May 16. After allegations of police brutality had been made by local people, Belfast CRA, the Ardoyne Citizens Action Committee and PD offered their assistance. Michael Farrell, Kevin Boyle and a few other PD supporters took statements from residents and spoke at public meetings. But their influence was not very strong, because when a four man deputation was being selected to meet the City Commissioner of the RUC, Mr H Wolseley,

the Ardoyne Citizens Action Committee, which was in control, made it clear that it did not want anyone from PD on the deputation.⁵¹

The one attempt to establish some sort of left-wing unity at this time also failed. Michael Farrell tried 'to form a Socialist Alliance with people like the Newtownabbey Labour Party,'⁵² but it was a half-hearted gesture. He may have known that PD socialism had not made the required impact, a fact which Eamonn McCann was to comment on much later:

'By the middle of 1969, the Left was established in the public mind as those who were most impatient, who were willing to run most risks, who wanted to go along the same road as the moderates, but further faster. It was not clear that the Left wanted to go along a different road.'

At this stage it was probably too late to change course anyway. On the streets the occasional skirmish had been replaced by widespread communal rioting. Rioting on the Crumlin Road, Belfast, for a number of nights after August 2 — the worst riots in the city since 1935; pitched battles in four centres — Belfast, Lurgan, Dungiven and Derry — following the July 12 celebrations; these ominous manifestations of sectarian warfare put PD's activities in the shade.

'Free Belfast': The Concept of Dual Power

Ironically, it was the death and destruction of August 1969 which re-activated PD and gave it some credibility — in the eyes of its remaining supporters at any rate. The Apprentice Boy's parade in Derry on August 12 led to the inevitable violence of stone-throwing at the RUC followed by a withdrawal into the barricaded Bogside and the resurrection of 'Free Derry.' On this occasion the residents of the area were determined that the police would not gain entry and had taken all the necessary precautions. One month previously a Citizens Defence Committee, representing a broad spectrum of political opinion within the Bogside, had been formed and was ready to take control of the defence of the area. The intensity of hatred for the police by the local people revealed itself in the fierce rioting which showed no sign of abatement.

On the next day when it became inevitable that this battle would continue, and that it would be supported in other areas — already RUC stations in Strabane and Coalisland had come under attack, and there had been a sit-down in Newry — NICRA issued an ultimatum to Stormont demanding the immediate withdrawal of police from the Bogside. It threatened to hold meetings in about twelve centres in defiance of a Government ban if its wishes were not met.⁵³

The crisis had taken on a momentum of its own by this stage. A verbal intervention by the Premier of the Irish Republic and an angry reply by Mr Chichester-Clark escalated the situation. Rioting spread to Toomebridge, Dungannon, Enniskillen and Belfast. After

Catholics attacked the Andersonstown and Hastings Street RUC stations in Belfast, Protestant militants retaliated by launching a fierce attack on the Catholic ghettos. By Saturday, August 16, the official death toll had risen to eight, the injured numbered many thousands and hundreds of homes were either destroyed or badly damaged. It was the Catholic communities of the Falls and Ardoyne areas which had borne the full weight of the attack. They fell back on the traditional means of defence by building huge barricades.

The speed and nature of events took everyone, including the IRA, by surprise. 'The IRA, like everyone else unprepared for the August outbreak, had too few men on the ground, no real chance to bring in people from the South... and very few available arms in the city.'⁵⁴ A Republican, Jim Sullivan, was responsible for forming a co-ordinating body for the defence of the areas, the Central Citizens Defence Committee, on August 16. Eventually, this body elected ninety-five delegates to represent 75,000 people in Free Belfast. The PD did not have a single representative on any of the defence committees. The group was tightly stretched in August: Fergus Woods was on holiday in London and returned as quickly as possible; John McGuffin was in Morocco and could not get back until September 1; Peter Cosgrove was in Fermanagh but returned to Belfast; Cyril Toman stayed in Belfast until August 13, moved on to Armagh for a few days, then to Dublin for one day to raise support, and finally to assist in Free Derry. Others were involved in the NICRA — Kevin Boyle produced most of its press and propaganda material, and Niall Vallely assisted in Monaghan, where a CRA had been set up.

During the period of Free Belfast it is difficult to get a precise picture of the role played by each organisation behind the barricades.⁵⁵ There were very few examples in the press of PD activity and therefore we are forced to rely on material obtained by interviewing some of the personalities who worked in the Free areas. Besides information that Michael Farrell spoke in Toomebridge, and Peter Cosgrave spoke in Enniskillen on the night of August 13, there appear to be only two examples of Press statements made by PD — in one it criticises the role of Mr John McQuade MP and in the other it rejects a speech made by the Prime Minister. In interview, Michael Farrell gave one reason for PD's lack of publicity. He said that about twenty Republicans had been detained under the Special Powers Act and PD supporters did not want to draw attention to themselves lest they be arrested.⁵⁶

This seems somewhat plausible. Nor does one gain any insight from Farrell's pamphlet which devotes only two paragraphs to 'Free Belfast'.⁵⁷ One would have expected a close analysis of the situation behind Belfast's barricades since the author had first-hand experience of it and since he has stressed earlier his concept of 'dual power.'

'We cannot call for all power to the Soviets because our present basis is not the working-class as a whole, or the working-class and small farmers as a whole, it is only one section of the working class. This leaves us with the question of whether we concentrate initially on putting forward the largely reformist demands which could unite Catholic and Protestant working class, or whether we concentrate on posing the question of dual power in areas where the Catholic population is concentrated and militant — by getting the local Catholic population to take over and run its own affairs, a sort of "Catholic power". This would be a very serious decision, but it is just possible that it might be necessary for us to establish such dual power; on the one hand Catholic-based power, of a socialist form, and on the other, Unionist state power.'⁵⁸

The Free Belfast experiment lasted just over one month, that is a period when Catholic power ruled. There is no evidence, however, that PD was in the vanguard of the movement to create a socialist area. What is evident is that PD was subservient to the Republicans who controlled the CCDC.

PD acted as a minuscule but important group behind the barricades. Both Fergus Woods and Michael Farrell could only remember about ten of its members being actively involved. It produced most of the literature and manned Radio Free Belfast most of the time but it had to pass on its material first to the Republicans who vetted it.⁵⁹ (This happened after one of the PD members threatened a particular 'B' Special over the air; the CCDC considered this to be sectarian and insisted on censoring all proposed broadcasts and news-sheets.)⁶⁰ Also there was criticism of PD on the one occasion when it tried to assert its own identity by holding a meeting in Leeson Street; it was charged with taking people away from the barricades.

It is from the Radio⁶¹ and from the *Citizen Press* that we can glean PD attitudes during these days. Both the newspaper and the radio were similar in style and content. Generally, the paper reflected the aspirations and the fears of those behind the barricades. For example, an early edition of *Citizen Press* published what minimum demands would have to be met before the barricades would come down:

1. Disband the 'B' Specials.
2. Disarm and re-organise the RUC.
3. Amnesty for those held without trial, and those threatened because they fought to save their homes.
4. Use of Article 75 of the Government of Ireland Act to force those reasonable demands through.

But the paper also indicated attitudes which were to become familiar in *Free Citizen*⁶² when it attacked 'moderates' or prominent persons from the Catholic community.

Radio Free Belfast presented much the same material as the news sheet, in some cases quoting directly from it. Mostly it broadcast political statements⁶³ and music . . . 90 per cent of the material put on by 'Radio Free Belfast' was made up of Catholic music (that is to say the political music of the Catholic community).⁶⁴ One of the people involved in producing the Radio agreed that some sectarian music was played.⁶⁵ Attempts were made at being satirical in two series entitled 'Profiles in Carnage' and 'Profiles in Corruption'; some of it may have been slanderous, and most of it was vituperative. The socialist content of the Radio was virtually non-existent, apart from a number of platitudes directed at the Protestant working class urging them to recognise their real class interests and unite with their Catholic comrades.

The Free Belfast experiment did little to enhance PD's reputation as a radical organisation with revolutionary socialist overtones. It did leave it open to charges, by the New Ulster Movement, of attempts at exploiting the situation:

' . . . the street rioters and agitators of the People's Democracy have been capitalising on the legitimate fears of the Roman Catholic population by insisting that the barricades in the Falls, Ardoyne and Bogside must stay up. The disease has now spread. The followers of Mr Paisley and the other rabid Protestant extremists are trying to get in on the act by erecting further barricades.'

It did not enable it to sink roots in the area, although local people were aware of 'the students' as being a separate group who were trying to help them. (Fergus Woods remembers that 'it was recognised that PD contributed quite a bit' but some people objected to it as being 'communist').⁶⁶ In fact in the long protracted arguments as to when the barricades would come down, PD was not consulted. As a result PD withdrew its support from the Radio and *Citizen Press*. There were other reasons — in particular PD insisted in criticising the Fianna Fail Government, a liberty which some Republicans wanted to deny it.⁶⁷

In Derry, PD had little influence. Bernadette Devlin and Eamonn McCann personified left-wing activism and opinion, a factor which annoyed Cyril Toman:

' . . . some PD supporters, including myself, held public meetings at Free Derry Corner to keep up morale and make it more difficult for the CDC to arrange the dismantling of barricades. Mr McCann was always too busy participating in the deliberations of the CDC — where he represented the NILP — to attend the public meetings.'⁶⁸

Frequently they gave press statements and demonstrated that they exercised some control in the area. PD's role at the time was to help in running Radio Free Derry, which did not play as important a function as its counterparts in Belfast, but then the situation was much more serious in Belfast.

PD activists did not seem to realise the implications of their failures in the 'Free' areas. They were more aware of an atmosphere of solidarity — 'There was a good spirit behind the barricades'⁶⁹ — and of possibilities for the future:

'... Those who doubt people's ability to manage themselves could consider the soviets set up here in Ireland during the civil war and even various aspects of conditions prevailing in Free Belfast and Free Derry . . . Moreover, the atmosphere of solidarity behind the barricades was in itself a political education to many sceptics.'⁷⁰

'The very success of the institutionalization stage leads to the fourth stage, *fragmentation*. As the movement and some of its leaders gain increasing respectability, they come to have an increasing stake in maintaining the status quo, or at least in not changing it too rapidly. In short, they are "bought off". Radical militancy is reduced also by the realization that some of the radical programme has been implemented, or at least picked up as part of the campaign of one or more of the establishment political parties. Increased repression, meanwhile, is making the radical stance more and more costly. It is perhaps inevitable that such conditions should make for a great proliferation within the movement of varied degrees of radicalism, as each radical individual continues to assess and reassess his position vis-a-vis an everchanging establishment. It is just as inevitable that this proliferation should lead to segmentation into small factions (fractions) representing the various degrees of radicalism.'⁷¹

Fragmentation had occurred at two levels — within the Civil Rights movement generally and within PD.

We should not underestimate the success of the Civil Rights movement. The November reform package; the sacking of the right-wing Minister of Home Affairs, William Craig, on December 11, 1968; the appointment of the Cameron Commission on January 15, 1969; the acceptance by the Unionist Party of 'One man One vote' in principle on April 23, and the announcement of a general Amnesty, for all those convicted of 'political' offences during the civil disturbances, on May 6; all contributed to an easing of civil rights demands. The success of the three civil rights candidates in the general election of February ensured that protest would be removed from the streets and taken into parliament.

This was not to the liking of PD activists, a fact which revealed itself in the split within the NICRA executive and in the platform disunity of Strabane on June 28. It also revealed a measure of generational conflict — PD supporters were youthful and impatient whereas most of the NICRA members belonged to the older generation and appeared to be satisfied with most of the concessions gained from the Government — but that aspect of the conflict was not too important. The row in Strabane highlighted the dangers of adopting a millenarian approach to the Northern Ireland problem:

‘. . . splitting the civil rights movement on a class basis was a dangerous thing to do, since people in Derry and PD who suddenly saw their goals in terms of the distant ideal of a James Connolly Socialist Workers Republic, rather than the pragmatic achievement of specific reforms and immediate projects, then found themselves acting not in relation to people and neighbourhoods, which must be respected, but on a vast stage dominated by historical forces in a battle between good and evil for an ideal future. In this battle the individual is insignificant, trapped in a situation where violence is inevitable and his individual acts can be judged by no more precise criteria than what has helped most in the light of history in the struggle for a Socialist Workers Republic.’⁷²

Fragmentation within PD appeared during this period. It had been going on ever since the reform package of the previous November was announced. It continued after the February election for a number of reasons. PD’s electoral success had been ephemeral simply because it did not win any seats. The partially successful tactics of the opposition in the new session of Parliament encouraged some PD supporters to place their trust in the efficacy of the parliamentary process. Bernadette Devlin’s by-election victory encouraged this reasoning, since it demonstrated that parliament was open to radicals. The march to Dublin with its continuous public bickering was a positive example of the failure of radical unity attempts. And the row at Strabane indicated that PD and its allies were quite willing to destroy the successful civil rights alliance and replace it with some vague formula for a Workers’ Republic.

The growth of PD branches in such places as Fermanagh and Armagh revealed varying degrees of radicalism, even within the PD movement. The Armagh branch undertook a series of militant demonstrations which won it a measure of notoriety but which did little to narrow the sectarian divide. This fragmentation and segmentalization took its toll on PD to such an extent that it could only muster about ten supporters to work behind the barricades in Belfast in August.

With such small numbers Michael Farrell’s ‘dual power’ theory could not get off the ground. (‘Double power’ was considered by the New Left to be the most important political innovation of the ‘May Revolution’ in France. It owed its development to the Russian Revolution of 1917 and found its contemporary expression in the insurrectionary centres (focos) of the Guevarists in certain South American countries. Its function was not only to challenge existing social values and institutions but was also to create the embryo of a new society to which it aspires in a parallel movement.)⁷³ Thus, by the end of September 1969, PD had a base and had the basis of an ideology, but it lacked the necessary support to build the Workers’ Republic.

3: October 1969—October 1970 Towards Connolly's Republic

The lessons to be learnt from the period behind the barricades were clear. PD had to stop being the amorphous grouping of October 1968 seeking basic civil right demands and become a disciplined political movement dedicated to continuing the unfinished revolution of James Connolly. Or as Eamon McCann put it on April 20, 1969:

'What we have to do is to complete the national revolution by making the theoretical and practical link between what we are doing now, and what was fought for in 1916.'¹

(1) Reorganisation

At a meeting in St Mary's Hall, Belfast on October 12 it was Farrell and PD, not McCann, who made the first tentative step towards building a movement for the establishment of an Irish Socialist Republic. 'Now that all the civil right demands have been met, we must work further into the future,' Farrell told the gathering.²

Farrell's proposal of the following motion was accepted unanimously:

'The People's Democracy, which have been active in the struggle for civil rights, for more jobs and houses, and against Toryism, North and South, believes that its objectives can only be obtained by the ousting of both Tory governments and the establishment of an Irish Socialist Republic.'

He argued that three main factors made it imperative that PD clarify for itself its own ultimate objectives. These were:

- (i) The Protestant backlash and the threat of Orange Fascism.
- (ii) The use of 7,000 troops in Northern Ireland.
- (iii) The necessity for support from the South.³

A decision was taken to establish PD branches in Cork, Limerick and Galway. (In fact nothing came of this proposal, though links were established on a personal basis.)

One means of establishing its identity was to publish a newspaper. When it gave up its participation in *Citizen Press* PD started to publish *Free Citizen* on a weekly basis from October 1969. The group was fortunate to have a printer, John Murphy, and his premises to produce a weekly newspaper, and it now had a permanent base in the Falls Road area. This meant that it could reach a wider, working class readership and that it would not have to compete with other university publications for the limited student market. *Free Citizen* has been a useful production, to the researcher

at any rate, because it gives an insight into the workings of the PD machine as well as expressing opinions on what was happening in the wider political world.

PD's base in the Falls area was a conscious effort to move into a working class district where it had encountered some popularity during the Free Belfast experiment. However it should be said that the organisation was influenced by a decision of the university Vice-Chancellor to exclude the public from meetings at Queen's. Yet it did not abandon the university altogether. On the first day of Michaelmas term, Kevin Boyle addressed a meeting of first year students but he did not receive much support, and when a Queen's branch of PD applied to be recognised at the Annual Conference it was refused until it produced further evidence of activity.

Armed with an ideology and medium of communication, PD needed to tighten its organisation and to work out a programme of action. The first objective was reached at a weekend school and first Annual Conference in St. Mary's Hall, Belfast on November 22-23. The lectures given by the guest speakers were indicative of PD's political interests at that time. Tony Cliff of International Socialism (London) spoke on 'Contemporary Imperialism.' James Kemmy of the Irish Labour Party gave a lecture on the 'Labour Movement in Irish History' and Des Geraghty of the same organisation on 'The Irish Republic at Present.' But it was the decision to change the nature of the organisation which is much more important.

PD organised itself on strict organisational lines.⁴ It became a card carrying individual membership organisation open to those who accepted its version of Connollyism. (The curious layman may have had some difficulty in deciding what was PD's version of Connollyism since this was not enunciated until November 29, 1970, that is more than a year later.) A steering committee was elected; it consisted of Gerry O'Hare, John Gray, Eamonn O'Kane, Peter Cosgrove, Joe Quigley, Niall Vallely, Cyril Toman, Michael Farrell—all but the first two were graduates and contemporaries at Queen's. Four branches—Armagh, Belfast West, Fermanagh and Lurgan—were formally recognised with the power to draw up rules for the conduct of their local business, and the right to elect one delegate to sit and vote on the central steering committee which was to meet at least once a fortnight.

Michael Farrell had already hinted at the type of programme PD might undertake when he said that the 'way of dealing with the sectarian divide is to shift the whole emphasis of the CR Movement away from symbolic activities such as marches to smaller agitational groups working on housing, farming and employment and try and involve Protestants in these.'⁵ Over the following year this was precisely what PD did work on, in particular campaigns to fight the increases of Belfast Corporation bus fares, to combat the serious housing shortage in Belfast, to hand over the fishing rights of

Lough Neagh to the local fishermen, to publicize and defeat what it considered 'repressive legislation' to build a united left-wing group for all Ireland and to assist strikers. Of course PD also reacted to events if only to try to adapt the actions of others to its ideology.

(2) *Strategy: (a) The continuing battle with the NICRA*

Now that PD had declared itself an overtly socialist organisation the continuing problem of its relationship with NICRA presented itself again. The issue resolved itself at the NICRA annual conference in February 1970 when the two PD members who sat on the NICRA executive resigned although they made it clear that PD supporters would continue to be members of NICRA. In an article critical of NICRA later in the year, Kevin Boyle gave two complementary reasons for this decision; the fact that there was an urgent need to put PD's energies into the first priority of building a 'socialist' movement; and the fact that PD disagreed with the proposed future direction of NICRA.

In fact the issue was not resolved so simply. The rancour first engendered on March 14, 1969 and heightened by speeches made in Strabane on June 28, 1969 carried itself beyond Free Belfast and Free Derry into the latter end of 1969. Mr Ivan Cooper MP felt that the only way to combat PD infiltration was by a 'purge'. It even carried itself into another continent when Mr James Heaney of the American Congress for Irish Freedom (ACIF)⁶ made a personal attack on Kevin Boyle describing him as a 'Johnny-come-lately' to the Irish civil rights movement and as representing only 'a very small minority of what really are "Red Tories".'

When Kevin Boyle and Frank Gogarty, the chairman of NICRA, went to the United States for a short visit in early November, division was carried a stage further. The purpose of their visit was to bring Irish groups together and to create a national association linking the groups to support the Civil Rights Movement in Northern Ireland. Out of this visit there emerged a co-ordinating body led by the National Association for Irish Justice (NAIJ) but without the support of the ACIF. The new organisation was led by Brian Heron, grandson of James Connolly, a socialist with connections in the Black Panthers and Students for a Democratic Society (SDS), and, according to one commentator, 'the most dynamic young leader seen by Irish-Americans in fifty years.'⁷

The visit to the United States by Gogarty and Boyle was raised in an omnibus condemnation of the NICRA executive by three of its members in early December. Dr Conn McCluskey⁸ Mrs Brid Rodgers and Mr John Donaghy felt that the trip may have antagonised thousands of moderate Irish-Americans. They considered themselves to be 'the custodians of the reputations and the consciences of the thousands of ordinary unattached marchers for equal rights in Northern Ireland,' since the other members were chosen by about 200 people, the ordinary membership at the time, and since

they were the only members left who did not owe allegiance to one or other relatively small organised political group. Their strongest criticism appears to have been directed at PD.

'This party can only be described as another Catholic splinter group'

for its continuous attacks on the Opposition MPs and for its attitude toward reform:

'... we can never allow ourselves to support uneasy demands nor can we demonstrate again on the streets about such things as the lack of efficacy of the new Stormont legislation before we have carefully documented the true facts and established the rightness of further action.'

On the latter point the dissidents were on stronger grounds and were following the argument raised by earlier critics of PD. But most of their attack was misdirected, and two of them — Mrs Rodgers and Mr Donaghy — could hardly complain of the unrepresentative nature of the executive since they had been co-opted on to it, and not elected. Nor had they taken the opportunity to raise their doubts about NICRA policy at executive meetings before rushing into print. For their pains they were condemned by the rest of the executive 'in the strongest possible terms' and their criticisms refuted one by one. In a personal statement Michael Farrell described their action as 'typically arrogant' and warned them that if they attempted 'to impose their reactionary views by underhand manoeuvres then those who, like the PD, stand for Socialism, will have to fight it out.'

Dr McCluskey may have been motivated to some extent by personal animosity. Earlier he had been attacked, perhaps unfairly, by *Free Citizen*:

'Dr McCluskey's main concern with NAIJ is that it is destroying his exclusive and private monopoly of money and support for the North in America.'

PD questioned his links with the Fianna Fail Government and with James Heaney, and made it clear that it considered his general attack on the executive was the first move in an attempted take-over of NICRA by the right-wing.

(b) Attacks on its political enemies

Equally, however, it was evident that PD intended to personalise the issue. 'The McCluskey group,' 'the McCluskey junta' and McCluskey's 'in clique' were spattered liberally through the pages of *Free Citizen*.

One of Dr McCluskey's original criticisms had been that too many disparaging remarks were being written about the opposition in general and individuals in particular. Undoubtedly this was the case ever since PD produced a regular newspaper. Within the first few months of publication every opposition member came in for

heavy criticism in the pages of *Free Citizen*. In particular Austin Currie was pilloried for advising his constituents to join the newly formed Ulster Defence Regiment; the Parliamentary opposition was summed up in the message — 'If you don't like our principles . . . we'll change them,' and the Nationalist party were described as a 'spineless, gutless and talentless bunch of political has-beens,' 'a bankrupt clique of tired old men,' and a 'collection of political gigolos' by Michael Farrell. This type of criticism was described by Kevin Boyle as 'an unconsciously inherited tradition of Irish journalism's scabrous criticism. Clearly, also, there is personal antagonism, and perhaps some jealousy at people who have got on.'⁹ (There is no necessity to analyse this aspect of the newspaper's policy at present, except to state that it did not help to improve relations with PD's erstwhile political allies.)

Criticism of personalities and parties did not stop at the pages of *Free Citizen*. At meetings throughout the country Michael Farrell and Cyril Toman launched into attacks on every major party or politician who did not share their viewpoint — and that left very few unscathed. At a University College Dublin Labour Party meeting on December 8, Cyril Toman claimed to have been horrified by the failure of the Irish Labour Party to respond meaningfully to the Northern crisis of the previous summer. He cited Conor Cruise O'Brien as being particularly blameworthy. While representatives of the Labour Party in London and NILP were discussing a proposed merger Michael Farrell¹⁰ was condemning it as:

'A shoddy little manoeuvre designed to con Unionist voters into thinking that the Labour Party was more "loyal" than the Unionists . . . The narrow familiar world of many loyalists has been rudely shattered, and they are searching desperately for any straw to cling to. There has never been a better opportunity for socialist propaganda. And yet the leadership of the NILP have chosen this very moment to pander to the prejudices of these workers instead of trying to root them out.'

On another occasion, when both Labour parties in Ireland were holding separate conferences on the same week-end, Michael Farrell issued a personal statement: 'At both a timid and weakened leadership is preparing to sell out the last vestiges of their commitment to Socialism.'

On the non-socialist front PD was equally critical of the politicians. The Nationalist controlled Limavady Rural District Council was attacked by Michael Farrell for its poor housing record. When PD had to call off a demonstration against the Public Order (Amendment) Act in Derry on February 7 Cyril Toman blamed local 'Green Tory' politicians whom he named as Messrs Hume, Cooper and McAteer, for their 'betrayal.'

Certain Southern politicians did not escape the wrath of Michael Farrell. After Mr Neil Blaney TD and Mr Charles Haughey TD had

been sacked from the Fianna Fail Cabinet Farrell used the occasion to attack the three major parties in the Republic:

‘... the hypocrisy of Fianna Fail and Fine Gael expressing horror at gun running aroused his contempt as much as the members of the Labour Party who were prepared to join with Fine Gael in this sham condemnation.’

One of the obvious difficulties with this type of strategy is that it is liable to rebound. This was precisely what happened on several occasions, though for the most part critics of PD tended to be more balanced and less hysterical.

One politician who had more cause than most to feel bitter with PD was Austin Currie. Twice, in January 1970, he referred disparagingly to its leadership, though he did give it credit for much of its previous activity. He had expressed concern at the flying of the Red Flag and the singing of the Internationale at a PD conference in Armagh on January 17.

‘The PD has made a considerable contribution to the success so far of the civil rights campaign. However it has become obvious over recent months that there are some people in that movement who have been attempting to use civil rights for the purpose of putting over policies which have the support of only an insignificant percentage of the Irish people.’

PD’s reply is typified in the opening sentence of its statement:

‘The PD is more than flattered that Mr Austin Currie MP has taken time off from recruiting for the UDR to glance at our meeting in Armagh last Saturday.’

Mr Currie came back with the rejoinder that ‘there are people in the North who believe in a workers’ republic who would not touch the PD with a barge-pole,’ and ‘it would be difficult to find anywhere in Irish history a bunch of political opportunists to compare with the PD.’ There the matter rested as just another revealing little episode of the animosity engendered by the PD.

Yet one should not dismiss the volume of criticism and counter criticism as being too trivial. These attacks indicated certain aspects of PD strategy. Undoubtedly there was a good deal of personal animosity involved. It is not wholly accidental that Austin Currie came in for the great brunt of PD’s dissatisfaction with the parliamentarians. He had been a contemporary of Farrell and company at university and while they tended to concentrate around the Labour Group, Currie’s political work was done within the New Ireland movement, a nationally-minded organisation concerned with cultural, social, political and economic matters. Thus from undergraduate days there had been rivalry between these people. Coupled with Currie’s relative political success there was a simple fact of geography, the fact that in such a small province the very locality of Stormont and the attention paid to it by the media allowed the parliamentarians to make a bigger impact than most of them deserved. Envy could have been an outcome of this situation.

(Certainly this is a view shared by opposition Members of Parliament.)¹¹

Leaving aside the trivia of the personality issue, PD was interested in stressing its own identity. This became obvious as early as October 9 and clarified itself when PD combined with other organisations on demonstrations. For example, the decision to march against the South African rugby team in Dublin was taken on the understanding that 'we reserve the right to make our own points in our own way.' One fundamental reason for adopting this tactic was that PD wanted to capture the support of the estranged radicals who, it believed, had been let down by the more conventional parties. This line of thought came to the surface after the publication of the Hunt Report¹² which led to a week-end of very serious rioting on the Shankill Road and three people, one of them a police constable, were killed. It was the first time that there had been an intense and bitter confrontation between 'loyalists' and the forces of the Crown. PD's reaction was summed up in an article entitled 'Shankill Backlash' in which two factors were enunciated to explain away the riots:

'... they (the Protestant workers) have been betrayed and abandoned by their own traditional leaders. They were led to the brink by Craig and Paisley and the MPs of the Portadown Parliament.'

Secondly, '... this is a shortage society. Previously Protestant workers have to some extent been privileged. They are bound to be hurt in a levelling up process.'

PD saw salvation in the dream of a united working class of Belfast which 'can play a leading role in the building of the socialist republic.'

For the moment we must leave aside the mental gymnastics involved in equating a Protestant riot with the Utopianism of a united working class. The fact that PD accepted this line as an essential part of its strategy is what matters to us. It was necessary, then for PD to establish its differences with the other parties. The February elections of 1969 had demonstrated that the Nationalists could no longer count on the automatic support of Catholic workers, and it was clear that any criticism of them would not be lost on Protestant ears. But PD went further than setting their sights on politicians. The description of Dr Philbin, Bishop of Down and Connor, as a 'political cleric' might help in building up a reputation of being genuinely radical. There was also the necessity to discount the one party, the NILP, which had claimed to be radical, socialist and non-sectarian. Here its attitude was to dismiss the NILP as simply pandering to Protestant workers' prejudices:

'It has never been a socialist party. Its leaders have always been the mildest of reformers... Since the NILP has never faced the issues and recognised the necessity for a working class based movement to oppose imperialism and stand for a socialist republic they have been able to forge a purely superficial unity of the

working class based on ignoring the border and discrimination and concentrating solely on economic issues.'

The impression that PD was being consciously opportunist must be avoided. Nevertheless, it was anxious to make capital at the expense of its opponents, as would any political group. More important, this strategy placed PD in the mainstream of the type of New Left thinking common to student movements:

'... the members of a student movement... have the conviction that, as young intellectuals, they have a special historical mission to achieve the goals which the older generation failed to achieve, or to correct imperfections in their environment.'¹³

The attacks on organisations like the Nationalist Party or individuals like Dr Conn McCluskey highlighted this policy.

Because PD saw itself as being in the vanguard of a potentially powerful revolutionary movement it did not feel itself obliged to adopt the niceties of political interplay. This tendency has been noted in the American New Left:

'Such terms as "power structure," "establishment," or even "fascist pig" can be used to cover anything from a well-meaning old liberal in a college administration to a policeman, bank president or labour leader. In particular, the more militant factions of the New Left that have emerged recently have tended to condemn just about anyone in a position of responsibility who does not yield to their demands.'¹⁴

(PD brushed aside criticism of its organisation with the explanation that it was constantly developing; while it might have been theoretically weak this was improving all the time.)¹⁵

(c) Campaigning in the Irish Republic

PD's confidence — some would say 'arrogance' — in attacking all and sundry lies, to some extent, in its belief in its own importance. In one respect it was unique; it was consistent in its criticism of all democratic parties in the Irish Republic. In the past, opposition MPs looked to the South for succour. Only the Republican movement dared to criticise the Government of the day in the Republic, and it had good reason because it clashed fundamentally with the conventional parties on the means to achieve the unity of the island. PD had been part of that very successful civil rights wave with which no Southern politician could disagree. In the short term it proved the efficacy of activism while seemingly eschewing violence. Thus it did not suffer the popular disapproval of, say, the Republicans in their campaign of physical force between 1956-62. Nor did it appear to have the time or energy to devote to destructive introspection which must be the lot of a revolutionary movement used to failure over a long period. Thus it pushed ahead with criticism of the Southern establishment, oblivious to whatever little condemnation came from that quarter. By adopting this method of attack it hoped to kill two birds with the one stone; it

wanted the support of Southern radical groups and it was informing the 'loyalists' that it recognised tacitly that many of their primordial fears were justified.

Once again it is a proposal by Michael Farrell — at the annual conference of NICRA — which illustrates PD's strategy towards the South:

'The NICRA recognises that considerable help has come for the Civil Rights cause in the North from supporters in the South, and that more help may be necessary. At the same time NICRA recognises that many of the injustices which it is struggling against in the North also exist in the South.'

'Accordingly, NICRA would urge all those who support its cause to oppose similar injustices in the South, in particular (i) high unemployment and emigration, (ii) the chronic shortage of houses and the neglect of itinerants, (iii) repressive legislation, that is, the Offences Against the State Act and the proposed Criminal Justice and Trade Union Bills, (iv) discriminating provisions in the Constitution and laws such as the special position accorded to the Catholic Church and the prohibition on divorce and the sale of contraceptives.'¹⁶ PD made no secret of its desire to win over the left wing of the Irish Labour Party to its point of view, a subject to which it constantly returned:

'O'Brien, Corish and the Parliamentary Labour Party seem to have abandoned Connolly . . . The real socialists in the Irish Labour Party must meet with socialists in the North, particularly the PD, and those who leave the Northern Ireland Labour Party when it merges with its British masters. Then we can start to build a real party committed to the struggle for the only solution — the Workers' Republic.' This wish to involve radicals from the South went back as far as 1968 when PD held its first public meeting in Dublin on December 14. The march to Dublin at Easter 1969 was a concrete expression of this strategy, but it was only after PD became a disciplined organisation with distinctive political objectives that it adopted a consistent policy towards this end.

A meeting of the Dublin Housing Action Committee and PD in Dublin on October 7 was the first of this campaign. Later on in the month, three PD speakers addressed Limerick Socialist Workers' Group and another spoke at a debate in University College, Cork. In December Cyril Toman was at University College, Dublin, to talk to a Labour Party meeting, and one week later a reactivated branch of Newry PD held a public meeting under the general heading of 'Civil Rights, North and South', the first discussion on this subject under PD auspices in the North. Kevin Boyle and Michael Farrell were among the speakers. The latter made what was a statement of intent:

'Only a Government in the Twenty-six Counties which cares for the poor and needy on its own side of the border has any right to complain about the corruption of the Unionists in the North. Since

it will be many a day before we see a Fianna Fail Government do that, we might as well start now and build a Socialist movement throughout Ireland that will throw the Orange and Green Tories out North and South.'

1970 saw a continuation of the same policy and a growing possibility of a formal alliance between Northern and Southern groups. Some slight evidence that PD's overtures were beginning to pay dividends occurred on March 21, when a representative of the Dublin Housing Action Committee spoke at a Housing Rally organised by the PD outside the City Hall in Belfast.¹⁷ Another indication was a march from Kinlough in Co. Leitrim, through part of Co Donegal to Belleek in Co Fermanagh on May 16, 1970. It was to be a one day version of the Easter March of the previous year, but it did not attract those left-wingers from Dublin who had helped to organise the Dublin march and it received very little press coverage.¹⁸ More than seventy young people representing the PD in Belfast and Armagh, Sinn Fein—'Provisional' and 'Official'—marched the twelve miles to draw attention to emigration, unemployment, and bad housing in the three counties. Meetings were held in the towns and villages through which they passed, and speakers included Michael Farrell, Kevin Boyle and Liam Slevin of Belleek Provisional Sinn Fein. It was followed by a meeting in Sligo on June 13, and discussions with the local Connolly Youth Movement.

The most striking example of PD's intention to involve itself as a socialist group occurred as a result of a strike by cement workers in the Irish Republic. In early February 750 cement workers in Drogheda and Limerick went on strike for higher wages and better working conditions. After dock workers in the Republic refused to handle imported cement, supplies ran low and 13,000 building workers were suspended. But orders began coming in through Northern ports and were transported across the border. At this stage militants on both sides of the border began taking action. The situation was tailor-made for PD's propaganda concerning an Orange and Green Tory alliance: 'The connivance of Capitalist interests, North and South, in reaping benefits from the workers' misery glaringly indicates the urgent need for working-class unity North and South.' PD first took action on March 28 when it mounted pickets at two customs posts. The pages of *Free Citizen* were used to report on the state of the strike and to appeal for funds for the strikers. Collections were taken up in Belfast, Fermanagh, Armagh, Newry and Ardglass. On Saturday, June 13, PD held meetings in Kilkeel, Newry and Ardglass.

Three days later PD returned to Ardglass to protest at the unloading of cement from three Dutch boats. A meeting was held on the quayside and members erected a barricade of fish boxes across the quay in an effort to prevent cement supplies leaving the port. When police arrived, scuffling broke out and seventeen PD

members were arrested, fifteen of whom were held in custody overnight. This was no more than PD expected.

'We chose to champion those rights (of working men for a living wage) and when we chose to do so we could expect no more, no less, than that the full weight of legal repression should be thrown against us.'

For their troubles, seven of their members were sentenced to a total of fifty-seven months imprisonment, and eight others fined a total of £140. *Free Citizen's* appeal for strike funds reappeared as a fines fund, since the twenty-two week old strike had come to an end. (The sentences were appealed and eventually only three of its members were jailed.)

There was no immediate evidence that this type of militant action was bringing PD any nearer to an alliance with Southern radicals. The policy of informal meetings with various groups continued, when, for example, members of the Central Committee met left-wingers from Limerick and Dublin branches of the Irish Labour Party. During the next six months there was only one case of PD involvement in activity in Eire, and that was a demonstration against American policy in Vietnam on October 4. As with the demonstration against South Africa in January, PD insisted again on establishing its separate identity. The march through Dublin to the American Embassy led to a rift over tactics. A small group of PD members and Young Socialists broke away from the 1,000 strong march and held a separate demonstration at the rear of the embassy. Roles had been reversed since the Easter march of 1969 because on that occasion, it was PD which had attempted to maintain cohesion and avoid violence. Now it was the PD contingent which attempted to rush the police lines but it was prevented from gaining entry to the embassy precincts.

Socialists throughout Ireland did not object in principle to the notion of an alliance. Some, like Paddy Healy of the League for a Workers' Republic, thought that PD was representing merely the bourgeois-radical wing of the Civil Rights' Movement. Others, like John Feeney, Southern co-ordinator of the Easter march, felt that 'the left-wing PD in the Civil Rights Movement became the vanguard of Catholic bigotry.'¹⁹ Eamonn McCann was prepared to grant that it may have been useful in implanting the idea of a radical alliance North and South but that it had alienated Southern Socialists by its arrogance; when it spoke of unity of the Left, it meant unity under PD leadership.²⁰ Eventually, however, its persistence paid off.²¹

(d) The Rift in the non-parliamentary Left

PD found it no easier to establish its type of socialist unity in the North. It looked for support chiefly from dissident branches of the NILP and from supporters of Miss Bernadette Devlin MP but neither camp smoothed its path towards an alliance. On January 4,

Cyril Toman said in Derry that he hoped to see the Republican movement, the Labour movement and the PD getting together to establish an organisation that would fight Green and Orange Tories on both sides of the border. At the same meeting Eamonn McCann welcomed its plan to establish a branch in the city — 'we look forward to a close and fruitful relationship with them' — but he warned that PD must clarify its thinking on politics in Northern Ireland generally, and draw up a concrete political programme and put it to the people as a political party. But PD never managed to build up a branch in Derry.

In June 1970 PD succeeded in creating a Socialist Action Committee in Belfast, but it did not last long. The catalyst which political situation in 1970 persuaded the Northern Committee of the Irish Congress of Trade Unions to call off its annual May Day parade in the hope that it would persuade other organisations to do likewise later on in the year. PD reacted immediately arguing that this decision equated the May Day parade with the Orange and Hibernian marches, and it affirmed the need 'more than ever at the present time to demonstrate the unity and solidarity of all workers.' The Labour Party, in its turn accused the PD of clearly seeking to use the opportunity to further the policy of confrontation with the Paisleyite faction.

One branch of the NILP, Newtownabbey, was not in agreement with the executive on this point. It convened a meeting to set up a committee to organise the parade. PD supported it:

'There is the basis of an alliance there, but it will have to by-pass the leaders of the Unions and the Labour Party. The times demand that the working-class movement move to the centre of the stage. The alliance must be built.'

A seven-man ad-hoc committee was set up and the march went ahead on May 2. *Free Citizen* considered the march a success with a turn-out of nearly 400 — this compared with an attendance of 3,000 the previous year — and the avoidance of violence. After the march Michael Farrell said that it had been one of the most historic marches ever held in Belfast. 'After the events of August of last year, when workers attacked their fellow workers, it was more necessary than ever to have this march to demonstrate clearly that workers can unite together in their common cause.'²²

Ironically, as PD marched through Belfast and towards another alliance, Eamonn McCann was in Dublin addressing a May Day meeting and suggesting a conference of all socialist groups in the Republic and the North by-passing present leaderships to form a united socialist movement; Miss Devlin was marching in Strabane on the same day. The rift in the non-parliamentary left in Northern Ireland can most clearly be seen in the persons of Bernadette Devlin, Eamonn McCann and Michael Farrell. We have already noted that Miss Devlin's drift from PD began after her election Campaign in South Derry in February 1969. But this point was

missed by most people at that time, and it was only when PD became a more disciplined, socialist organisation that the rift became public knowledge. In fact it was only when Miss Devlin had been sentenced to six months' imprisonment in December 1969 for her part in the battle of the Bogside of the previous August that *Free Citizen* clarified the division between Miss Devlin and the organisation which is generally thought of as having created her:

'Miss Devlin has many political failings — she is part of no political organisation since she turned her back on the People's Democracy. Since her election she has neglected her constituency, her political views are confused and inconsistent...'

At one stage Bernadette Devlin would certainly have accepted the criticism of her failings as a constituency MP:

'I soon satisfied myself that the whole grinding procedure of Parliament worked too slowly to be of any material use to the people of Mid-Ulster, and that Westminster, anyway, was basically indifferent to the problems of Northern Ireland.'²³

But as her knowledge of the workings of Parliament grew she adopted a more realistic attitude towards the solution of problems, a fact acknowledged by one newspaper in November 1969:

'Having dismissed Parliament as a "phony institution" she is now showing that she can use it with a confidence and wit which is making members of both sides of the House sit up and take notice.'

One major reason for her change of heart was that the convention which had prevented MPs from discussing Northern Ireland affairs at Westminster was finally destroyed on November 13, 1969.²⁴ She also had the advantage of the active intellectual support of a small group of people who had been in PD — or were on its periphery — who were based in London: Eamonn McCann, Bowes Egan, Louden Seth, her election agent, and Alan Morrison, a lecturer in philosophy at a London polytechnic. These people believed with her that the time had come to turn their attention from the barricades to using Parliament more effectively. In February, 1970, for example, she saw Mrs Shirley Williams MP, the Junior Minister at the Home Office responsible for liaison with Northern Ireland, and discussed a number of points — investment policies of the Northern Ireland Government; the setting up of Government controlled industries; the possibility that Stormont would not carry out agreed reforms; and the policy of allocating houses by the Cookstown, Dungannon and Omagh councils.

However, she had not abandoned the politics of the streets altogether. The clearest example of her combination of parliamentary skill and street militance occurred when she attempted to re-open the Devenny case, ie, she wanted a top-flight investigation by senior CID officials into the circumstances surrounding the fatal attack by the RUC on Samuel Devenny in Derry on April 19, 1969, particularly since Sir Arthur Young found the RUC investigation to

be 'most unsatisfactory.' She tried to get an adjournment debate at Westminster into the case but failed, although she managed to get a thirty-minute hearing from the Home Secretary, who could not promise her any action. With an eye to valuable publicity she followed this up with an all-night vigil on the steps of No. 10 Downing Street. Beyond a meeting with the Prime Minister on the following day, that brought her nothing, because she failed again in raising the matter in the Commons.

One other episode demonstrates her belief in direct action. Along with twenty other protestors she disrupted and took over a meeting of Omagh Urban District Council in protest against its alleged unfair allocation of houses. Six days later she received a suspended prison sentence and was fined £20 for her troubles. She involved herself in marches too, even though they were on a much smaller scale than the previous year.

It may seem curious that PD and the Devlin/McCann axis could not unite at least in a loose alliance — since they all had the same ultimate objective, Connolly's Workers' Republic, and since they appeared to want some sort of unity. Both Miss Devlin and Michael Farrell have denied that there is a personality clash, but some of those who have been close to both of them were aware that the personality issue did count.²⁵

When one takes a closer look at her speeches and her actions one sees that she is close to PD in most respects, even to the extent of supporting its demonstrations on a few occasions. Thus, following the arrest of fifty-seven PD supporters in Enniskillen on July 26, 1969 Miss Devlin spoke at a protest meeting in County Fermanagh with Michael Farrell a few days later. Again, she was prepared to join a PD march in Newry because its protest was concerned with unemployment. She adopted much the same attitude towards Southern politicians as did PD though her stand was more courageous than PD because she consistently criticized the role of the Catholic hierarchy in Irish politics. Speaking to an after-Mass gathering in Thurles, for example, she said that there was room in a Socialist republic for every Church and that it was about time that the Catholic Church took its place alongside the poorer sections in the community.

Her links were overtly closer to Republicanism than those of PD. She agreed to speak at a 'Release the Prisoners Rally' in London in May, and during her election campaign she spoke at a Republican meeting in Maghera, urging her listeners to buy the *United Irishman*.

Yet PD did not help her in her campaign for re-election as MP for Mid-Ulster at Westminster in June 1970. In fact it expressed dismay at her apparent willingness to attend a Unity convention — 'we regard Unity conventions as a thoroughly sectarian attempt to unite all Catholics regardless of class or ideology' — but it urged its supporters in Mid-Ulster and Derry to vote for her and Eamonn

McCann respectively. (In fairness to Miss Devlin it should be stated that she fought her campaign on socialist issues, even to the extent of threatening to resign on three separate occasions when one section of her supporters wanted her to adopt a more traditional sectarian approach, such as holding after-Mass political meetings and having local priests campaign for her. Eamonn McCann acted as intermediary and arranged a compromise between the two wings of her campaign.)²⁶ Her attitude to her re-election was summed up in the phrase: 'The majority of the 37,000 people who voted for me may not be socialists but they have a socialist Member of Parliament,' and in her declaration that the people of Mid-Ulster were now going forward to a socialist James Connolly Republic.

The same issue of *Free Citizen* urged those who voted for Eamonn McCann 'to learn the lessons of McCann's clash with the NILP and realise the futility of continuing membership of this totally opportunist party and the need for a party openly committed to the Workers' Republic.'²⁷ According to Michael Farrell, this was an issue of fundamental importance on which McCann and PD disagreed, and while they were prepared to work with him on specific issues, just as they would co-operate with Bernadette Devlin, if she had an organisation, their clear political differences made permanent reconciliation difficult.²⁸ For her part Miss Devlin saw the differences between the two camps as being political, rather than personal:

'There is no denying that my personal position is much closer to Eamonn than it is to Michael. This is not a personality clash. There is a difference in tactics. It depends on whether one accepts that you have a base in the Catholic working class and that you then proceed to radicalise them, leaving the door open for the Protestants to join or whether you move completely out and take very few people with you, standing on a clear, socialist basis, taking only part of the Catholic working class and definitely cutting off the Catholic middle class and thereby beginning to get more of the Protestant working class to stand with you. These are two different approaches. This is why in some cases Michael Farrell might be seen as a militant Catholic. I don't mean that he is sectarian but he is using Catholic militancy as a base on which to build his socialist movement rather than using the fundamental principles of socialism . . .'²⁹ In short, Miss Devlin could not accept Michael Farrell's notion of 'dual-power.'

These differences, personal or political, did not prevent PD continuing with its policy of attempting to forge a Northern alliance. The imprisonment of Miss Devlin on June 26, 1970, gave it the opportunity of combining a demand for her release with its campaign on 'legal suppression.' More important, it gave PD the chance to establish contact with some of her constituents. Protest marches and meetings by Armagh PD during July and Fermanagh PD on

August 1 established PD's concern for her plight (though the tone of articles in *Free Citizen* suggest that it was more interested in making political capital out of the issue than in demonstrating genuine concern for the personal hardship involved). While she was in jail a group of her election workers formed the Cookstown Independent Socialist Committee on September 25. It was to be the first of a number of committees to be organised in the constituency. PD lost no time in establishing contact with it. PD received the support of the Mid-Ulster Independent Socialist Group at a conference it sponsored in methods for combatting 'legal repression,' a support which was expressed in concrete terms at a series of protests against the Criminal Justice (Temporary Provisions) Act towards the end of October.³⁰ On the same day Miss Devlin MP made her first public appearance since her release from prison on October 21, at Carrickmore. She pledged herself to the formation of what she termed 'a loose alliance' of all those committed to the ideal of a Socialist republic for Ireland. Michael Farrell, Eamonn McCann and Mairin de Burca from Sinn Fein spoke on the same platform, an early indication of the form the alliance was going to take.³¹

(e) Combatting Sectarianism

The tactic of using the organisation as an umbrella group for all left-wingers to defeat the twin-Tory governments of Belfast and Dublin was only one strand of its grand strategy, the other was to combat sectarianism in the North by uniting the Catholic and Protestant working class. Difficult though the first task had been proving, it was incomparably more easy than attempting to win over the Protestant worker. One reason for its failure with the latter was the simple fact that PD made no attempt to understand the Protestant tradition or its institution. In refusing to 'pander to Protestant prejudices' (Michael Farrell's phrase) it unconditionally condemned Orangeism and Paisleyism. While it was prepared to accept credit for radicalising a section of the Protestant working class it could not conceive that this radicalism need not necessarily be socialist. Thus the by-election victories of the Rev Ian Paisley and his subaltern the Rev William Beattie in Bannside and South Antrim respectively in April 1970 was greeted by *Free Citizen* in near-hysterical tones:

'Bannside had a frightening similarity to Berlin in 1931. Paisley has brains, money and ambition. Added to mental instability, megalomania and the number of guns stockpiled throughout the country by "loyalists" and we have a formidable combination.'

Besides a very crude analysis of Paisley's political beliefs, little attempt is made to understand this phenomenon, no effort is made to examine the social composition of his supporters, and their genuine fears are either dismissed with platitudes or nurtured by

further examples of PD militance. Its attitude to Orangeism is similarly simplistic:

'The People's Democracy believes that the Orange Order is a reactionary and sectarian organisation. Over the last 200 years despite a predominantly working class membership it has always served as a tool of the ruling class, opposed not only to revolutionary socialism, but even to the smallest reformist demands. It opposed and smashed any working class revolts within its ranks.'³²

There is no clearer evidence of its use of double-think than its attitude towards the Apprentice Boys' annual march in Derry in 1970. Michael Farrell wrote 'There should be no talk of the "Prentice Boys' rights" to march.' This is a strange attitude indeed to come from the person who was largely instrumental in conceiving and leading the Burntollet march in January 1969.

Of course one can still be an opponent of Orangeism and Paisleyism and yet criticize the PD line, simply because PD does not attempt to lighten the load of confusion of the archetypal Protestant worker. It accepts that in demanding certain basic reforms in a 'scarcity society' the Protestant worker will lose in the short term. It declares that the Protestant proletariat have been dupes of the Unionist and Orange hierarchy; that Paisleyism is a manifestation of traditional Unionism, that is a reaction to the implementation of some eagerly desired civil rights' reforms; that they should not look to the 'moderates' for succour since they 'have no backbone and at the first tramp of the jackboot they would fade away' and that ultimately the only solution, a Marxist one, lies in the establishment of an Irish Workers' Republic. What the PD argument succeeds in doing then is to knock away all the props of tradition and institution which gave the Protestant working class its sense of identity and dignity and replaced it with an unsophisticated version of crude Marxism.

(f) *The Toome Eel Fisheries Campaign*

One of PD's major problems was to establish links with Protestant workers. For an organisation which believed in the Workers' and Small Farmers' Republic it was having little success in getting the support of those bodies it intended to liberate. Besides a few mentions in *Free Citizen* there is no evidence that it attracted any active interest from the farming community, unless we include its policy to expropriate Lough Neagh from the Toome Eel Fishery Ltd and hand it over to the people:

'When we demand expropriation, the taking over of the Lough for the people, no (sic) 'compensation' and reparations paid to those fishermen and their families forced off the Lough and those denied a decent living for so long . . . we are only demanding justice.'

This campaign, one of the most militant which PD undertook, began in December 1969 and continued throughout 1970. It con-

sisted of protest meetings, marches, sit-ins, a Radio Free Lough Neagh, pickets and even a pamphlet.³³

During 1969 three fishermen had been sent to jail, one had been heavily fined and twenty had lost their fishing licences in a continuing battle against the policy of the Company which owned the fishing rights of Lough Neagh. When a further three men appeared in court at Toomebridge on December 8 on charges of trespassing, illegal possession of eels and obstructing bailiffs, PD mounted a small picket to express its solidarity with the fishermen. Out of this picket and further meetings with some of the workers, an Arboe Fishermen's PD was set up and held their first picket outside the courthouse at Toomebridge and then moved on to picket the Company's headquarters. It was supported by PD branches from Belfast, Armagh, and Portglenone, about fifty in all, and succeeded in getting the cases adjourned for a month. A meeting in the town a week later indicated the growing success of PD policy when about two hundred people listened to Seamus O'Toole, editor of the *United Irishman*, and PD speakers criticise the Opposition's policy of nationalisation of the Lough. PD felt that nationalisation simply meant handing over the Lough from one group of exploiters to another.

This policy of attacking Opposition MP's was familiar to PD. On this issue it concentrated its attack on Senator J G Lennon (Nationalist) who was employed as the prosecutor for the Fisheries Conservation Board. His role in one case in particular gave PD cause for complaint. During the early months of 1970 the militance of the fishermen had been growing and on the night of May 18, nineteen men were arrested after bailiffs seized a lorry containing three tons of eels in Armagh. Those arrested represented the Lough Neagh Fishermen's Association and PD members. In retaliation seventy of their supporters staged a protest meeting outside the home of Senator Lennon. (Earlier, rival factions, one side carrying red flags and the Starry Plough and the other side Union Jacks, faced each other outside Armagh RUC station, a further indication that demonstrations of whatever nature could always degenerate into a sectarian confrontation.)

But PD's criticism was not limited only to the elected public representatives. It was aware that the leaders of the Fishermen's Association were not too happy with PD interference. On May 30 about twenty PD members occupied the premises of the Toome Eel Fishery Ltd in protest against 'the continued usurpation of the fishing rights of Lough Neagh by the Company and the exploitation of one of the North's richest natural resources by a consortium of London and Continental merchants.' In gaining access to the building some windows were broken, an action which PD felt might be technically against the law but . . . 'Where the law is used in the interests of property against people, then it is unworthy of respect.'

This incident was referred to by Fr Kennedy, Chairman of the Fishermen's Association, when he was speaking at the blessing of a new boat. He said that the Association was campaigning for the return of the Lough to the fishermen and warned them not to let the issue be exploited by any political group. In fact, Fr Kennedy had been working together with Mr Austin Currie MP and a Dungannon solicitor, Mr Patrick Duffy, in an effort to reach an equitable solution to the problem. They had been consulting the Minister of Agriculture, Mr. Phelim O'Neill, suggesting that the Government should buy out the Fishery and run it as a State Industry. They felt that the actions of the PD might adversely affect its chances of success.³⁴

This conflict in attitudes and actions throws into sharp relief PD's insistence on the efficacy of direct action. Michael Farrell's pamphlet sums up PD's opinion of the Association which, he said, 'is weak and disorganised and has failed to develop leaders among the fishermen.'³⁵ Its reply had been to step up its activist policy.

Radio Free Lough Neagh had been set up by PD to state the fishermen's case and to broadcast traditional music over Easter weekend, March 29 to 31. It appeared on the air at irregular intervals after that date. A march around one side of Lough Neagh from Coalisland to Toomebridge was held on June 27, with meetings held in villages along the route. It began with about one hundred marchers and finished with a meeting of five hundred. It extended its protest by arranging pickets simultaneously in Toomebridge, in Galway at Corrib Fisheries Ltd, owned by one of the directors of the Toome Company, and at the London offices of the Fisheries Company. The last two pickets were organised by local socialists and by members of International Socialism respectively.

Paradoxically its greatest success was the publicity it received after nineteen of its members were summoned for the sit-in of May 30. They appeared before Magherafelt Court on October 28, that is five months after the offence had been committed and only a fortnight after three of its members had been sent to jail. PD saw some significance in this:

'The fact that the cases have only now come before the courts reflects the hardening in the Government's attitude towards left-wing activists, a change which coincided with Taylor's appointment to the Cabinet, virtually as Minister of Home Affairs.'

The nineteen each received a three months jail sentence suspended for three years and a £25 fine. Referring to the cement strike and the Lough Neagh affair, PD read further significance into the sentences:

'Sectarianism plays little part in these issues—they are issues which help to unite the exploited. They are therefore a threat to the Unionists' tactics of utilising sectarianism. They are also issues which directly attack the pockets and the property of imperialist capitalists and their lackeys.'

It is difficult to see what long-term gains PD won for itself or the fishermen's cause in their campaign against the company. After November 1970, PD's influence in the area seems to have waned. Both the Arboe Fishermen's and the Portglenone branches of PD ground to a sudden halt or, at least, their roles were so minimal as to be inconsequential. Certainly PD had boosted its own morale, had established once again its credentials as a militant activist group and may have sown some seeds of radicalism among the fishermen and small farmers of the area. No doubt these would be considered to be substantial gains by its members, particularly its record for action:

"There are many "socialist" groups proclaiming that only they are the repository of true wisdom as there are so-called Christian sects, each howling in the wind. It is particularly noticeable that these groups are quite rightly ignored by the State as being no threat... At present PD has over 100 summonses outstanding and 99 at present appealing jail sentences. We are not pleased about this, but nor will we be intimidated, and it is quite clear that here the State does take us seriously."³⁶

(The above statement would have seemed the inflated opinion of an organisation attempting to justify its own existence, had it not been for the actions of the Government on the morning of August 9, 1971, when it detained nine members of the PD, including Michael Farrell, John McGuffin and John Murphy, under the Special Powers Act. Most of them were released on September 14, 1971.)

(g) Industrial Action

In PD eyes the significance of the fines and imprisonments arising from the cement strike and the Lough Neagh campaign was summed up in *Free Citizen* when it launched a fund for the dependents of imprisoned PD members, Eugene Cassin and Brian Vallely: "We must not forget that these comrades are the only Irish prisoners in jail for industrial action. These comrades have shown in the past that they cannot be intimidated by the forces of "law and order." Nor can we." Leaving aside its penchant for self-praise, some PD members were aware that one of its major failures was its lack of contact with the shop floor. John McGuffin pointed to its policy of leafletting factories in and around Belfast, such as Rolls-Royce or Courtaulds or ICI, but he admitted that this was not a regular activity:

"To a certain extent we would accept that we haven't had an industrial policy. Our best policy would be to make shop-floor contacts but we can't succeed there as long as the sectarian divide remains."³⁷

Besides the campaign on the cement strike, the unofficial May Day parade, the organisation of an unemployment march by Newry PD on April 18, 1970 and participation in a Derry unemployed march on March 7, 1970, PD confined itself to leafletting a few

factories and using *Free Citizen* as an organ of information, propaganda and attack. For instance, an article on pay and working conditions of unskilled labour on building sites was useful in presenting some essential facts. Government policy, exploitation by foreign capitalists and betrayal by trade union leaders were the usual subjects for criticism. Under the heading, 'Union Sell-out at Newry Factory,' we have a typical example of PD's attitude towards trade union officials and foreign investors. Describing a month-old strike at the Ulster Textile Mills Ltd factory in Newry, the article sees it as 'another vivid example of the grip that foreign capital has on the Irish economy and the lives of industrial workers.' It highlights also the perfidy of the union officials who refused to make the strike official after they had promised to do so. In retaliation the strikers occupied the union building:

'But the union sell-out was complete. First the local organiser hastily ended his lease of the local union premises, so that the workers now could be turfed out by the landlord, and from Belfast came a statement by the union blaming the whole situation on PD and others. The union took the side of the bosses, saying the workers were jeopardizing their fellow-workers' jobs.'

PD's solution was to call for workers' control and it promised its support. (We are concerned here only with the simplistic nature of PD's argument, its tendency to see issues in black and white terms and to freely criticise authority, presumably with the hope that it would capture the support of the militants.)

(h) Housing Action

It should be noted that PD's success, ephemeral though it might be, was largely confined to rural areas, and that its impact in Belfast was limited to the Catholic ghettos. It made some headway in breaking out of this religious and geographical straitjacket by concentrating a lot of effort on housing conditions in Belfast. In January 1970, Belfast had a major rent strike when the Corporation introduced its new rent structure which meant an increase in rent for a majority of its tenants. Under the leadership of the Amalgamated Tenants Association fourteen housing estates came out on strike. PD lent its assistance, the Central Committee accusing the Corporation of attempting to dupe the tenants into a general increase by proposing to decrease the rents on some of the worst housing: 'The tenants in fact are being asked to put their money into the bottomless well of debt and interest on debt owed to big finance'.

A housing committee was organised within the movement pledged to support squatters intimidated by 'an alliance of landlords, estate agents and jobbing builders', and demanding that a Housing Emergency be declared:

'If it is possible to requisition the King's Hall for troops surely it is possible to requisition all empty property for the homeless . . . If

the Government does not take action, others will. On behalf of the homeless we will declare war on empty property.'

Having embarked on a policy of promising support to squatters and to those threatened with eviction, PD was involved in the usual activities of pickets and squat-ins, but it was involved with a non-sectarian organisation, the Amalgamated Tenants' Association. Its most constructive work was in the field of education as when, for example, it produced an article letting tenants know what rights they had and what grants they could claim for repairs and improvements in their homes.

A branch of PD reformed at Queen's drew attention to vacant University property when it protested against that clause of the Public Order (Amendment) Bill which forbade the occupation of buildings. In the following month it organised a rota of people to protect a tenant threatened with eviction because he had joined the rent strike. For the most part, however, PD was concerned with holding a housing rally at the City Hall on March 21. It distributed 15,000 leaflets in fourteen different estates throughout Belfast, Catholic and Protestant. Among other things the leaflets called for the declaration of a housing emergency, a concentration on the building of decent homes, and not luxury flats or prestige office blocks; a cancellation of all debts and interest on debt owed by the Corporation and the Housing Trust to the Banks; and the provision of interest free loans for the building of homes.

The attendance at the Housing Rally was disappointingly sparse, a point noted by one commentator:

'When the meeting got started at 3.30 pm, the crowd had swelled to about 250, but it did seem a sad indictment of either the PD or the working-class that one could have drawn an audience ten times this size merely waving a Tricolour or a Union Jack and making tribal noises.' The fact that platform speakers did not include a representative from the Amalgamated Tenants' Association was another indication of PD isolation; and the presence of Miss Mairin de Burca of the Dublin Housing Action Committee and Sinn Fein as a guest speaker was not a fact which was likely to endear PD to many Protestant workers.

It is unlikely that a more representative platform would have made much difference anyway because the strike was beginning to be weakened by sectarian splits. When two Protestant estates, Glencairn and New Barnsley, pulled out of the strike it was only a matter of time before it was called to a halt. When tenants who had refused to accept eviction notices were summoned before the courts but won their cases on a legal technicality the strike began to weaken. The court decision meant that striking tenants could sign a new agreement without legal consequences. Most did, and on April 28, the chairman of the Amalgamated Tenants' Association called off the strike. PD attached the blame to that organisation: 'Without strong organisation and because of its "non-political"

approach the Amalgamated Tenants' Association lost what should have been a militant battle . . .'

Interest in the housing issue waned after this date, although the housing committee ran an advice centre at its headquarters in Plevna Street every Monday night. The locality of this centre meant that it was more likely to be used by the Catholics of the Falls Road. PD's contribution to publicising the state of housing in Belfast was considerable. The leaflet drawn up for the Housing Rally presented in vivid form some very unpalatable facts concerning lack of amenities in Corporation housing.³⁸ Articles in *Free Citizen* highlighting the plight of those made homeless by the rioting of August 1969 and criticising both the Government and the Housing Trust were good examples of muckraking journalism. If nothing else, PD widened the debate by making the unsavoury facts available to the general public, and it attempted to weaken the sectarian divide by involving the two communities.

(i) The Bus Fares Campaign

Another campaign in Belfast which gave some satisfaction to its activists was the bus-fares issue. Kevin Boyle saw it as 'an example of incubating desires in the Protestant working class,'³⁹ and Michael Farrell thought that 'the fact that we got Protestant support over bus-fares is remarkable.'⁴⁰ A proposal at a City Council meeting in Belfast on August 11, 1970, that bus-fares be increased by fifty per cent and that there should be a cut back in some services drew a picket of PD supporters to the City Hall. They received some public support and a decision was taken to mount a campaign against the proposed increases. It was fought in three separate phases: phase one consisted of pickets, meetings and demonstrations; phase two was the launching of a petition against the increases — it was signed by 50,000 people; and phase three was an attempt to boycott the buses. In the last, car drivers who were willing to give free lifts to pedestrians were offered stickers to draw attention to this fact, and bus users were given cards to hand to conductors when they refused to pay their fares.⁴¹

The architect of the campaign was John Murphy, PD's printer, who supplied the cards, stickers, 400 posters and 5,000 leaflets as well as being largely responsible for the production of a memorandum⁴² which set out the group's transport policy. Briefly, it was in favour of a fast, free bus service combined with the provision of car parks on the outskirts of the city and a limitation of cars in certain areas. This would involve the repeal of the 'Aberdeen' clause, which makes it obligatory for each department of the corporation to balance its books without being subsidised from the rates, and the Government's writing off of the Transport Department debt. The Government would also be expected to provide interest-free loans for the purchase of equipment, thus preventing banks and money-lenders from profiting from the buses.

Finance for the scheme would be provided by a special 'Transport Rate' levied on 'those firms which benefit most from public transport, namely the employers and the large shops in town.'

The protest against the increase received wide popular support. The Communist Party, Belfast Trades Council, the NILP, tenants' associations and trade union organisations were some of the movements who made their opposition clear. PD were seen to be the most active and most vociferous organisation involved. When the PD petition — which had got them 38,000 signatures — was refused by a City Hall official because the statutory twenty-four hours notice had not been given, John Murphy interrupted council business to protest. The meeting was suspended until the public gallery was cleared. On November 2 when the fifty per cent increase went into effect, the City Council monthly meeting was besieged for over two hours by a large crowd at a meeting organised by PD, and later in the same day it blocked traffic in the centre of the city for over half an hour.

An earlier edition of *Free Citizen* had given the names, addresses and telephone numbers of those councillors who had voted for the increase, advising their constituents 'to contact them and voice their opinions about the voting habits of those so-called representatives.' PD followed this up by holding pickets outside the shops of the Lord Mayor in Sandy Row, Shankill Road and Duncairn Gardens. It considered the fact that it managed to stay in these areas for a period of up to an hour before local residents ordered them out as a considerable success.

It is not easy to evaluate PD success in this campaign since it was one of a number of organisations which were active. Its more militant stance brought it some approbation from an unlikely source.

'The protest has had some curious side-effects. People who detested the PD for its coat-trailing tactics over the past two terrible years are now giving that student-based organisation grudging approval.'⁴³

The fact that a regular columnist in a national newspaper considered PD to be still student-based may be indicative of its lack of impact in the previous year.)

John Murphy was prepared to give his campaign the credit for forcing the City Council at a later meeting to reduce the children's fares and in preventing it from increasing the fares again.⁴⁴ What is certain is that it boosted PD morale, and pushed it back into the limelight of press and public, albeit for a transitory period. Further, it demonstrated that PD had the ability and the energy to make capital out of a social issue which attracted much public disapproval.

After a year spent in laying the foundation of a revolutionary socialist organisation, PD was getting less and less coverage from the media, a matter of some concern to its activists.

'It's deliberate policy by the media not to print for us now. The newsmaking has been overtaken by the Provisional IRA . . . The trouble is that if we're not in the news for a long time people might think that we're dead.'⁴⁵

The truth was not so simple as that. The fact of the matter was that PD was not as relevant to the very phrenetic political situation as it had been in its first year. August 1969 had altered the situation radically. The concerted and murderous attack on the Falls Road by armed Protestants had deeply embittered the Catholic population removing any last slight hope of community reconciliation and splitting the Republican movement. Out of this split there arose the Provisional IRA, an organisation which placed its first and last priority on reunifying Ireland by traditional means — physical force.

On the other hand, the Downing Street communique of August 19, the publication of the Hunt Report and the massive inflow of British troops — 8,000 by the end of October — all led to a growing alienation of the Protestant working class from the Governments at Stormont and Westminster. This manifested itself in many forms. The forced resignation in October of the young liberal Unionist MP Mr Richard Ferguson (South Antrim) was an early sign of the determination of the right-wing of the party to fight reform. The vicious rioting of the Shankill Road following the publication of the Hunt Report demonstrated the estrangement of the residents of that area from the Unionist Party. This carried itself into 1970 with the successes of Protestant Unionist candidates in local government elections in working class areas, the growth of organisations like the Shankill Redevelopment Association which were prepared to compete with the Unionist Party for votes and the by-election victories of the Revs Paisley and Beattie in April, 1970.

The 'silent majority' added to the confusion by raising its voice, or, rather, by organising itself into a political party. The Alliance Party committed to a programme of reform and entrusted to upholding the constitutional link with Britain first saw the light of day in April 1970. (PD described it as the 'Peace and Property' Party and was able to compare it with Paisleyism.)⁴⁶ The decision not to contest the General Election (Westminster) of June 1970 meant that it lost further valuable publicity.

The formation of a new Opposition party, the Social Democratic and Labour Party, in August 1970, opened up the possibility of a more effective opposition to Unionism in Stormont, particularly since it was composed of the talented MP's who had proved their mettle in the civil rights campaign. Michael Farrell did not see it that way:

'They are a hotch-potch of the gombeen-men's Nationalist Party, the non-existent Republican Labour Party, and the three Independents elected on the back of the Civil Rights movement and having neither policy nor party. They haven't an ounce of principle among them.' The creation of this new party reflected the necessity for unity in a volatile situation, a point lost on PD.

Violence on the streets occurred more regularly and was liable to be more dangerous with the result that the NICRA cut back on street demonstrations. In protest against the passing of the Public Order (Amendment) Act it organised, with PD support, meetings in ten centres on February 7. Later in the same month two local branches of the NICRA, Armagh and Fermanagh, held demonstrations on local issues. But it was aware that its activities might be seen as 'coat-trailing' and therefore it curtailed them. Naturally this policy did not meet PD's approval which insisted in attempting to carry the word into Portadown. The result was chaos; PD's open-air meeting was attacked by 300 'Loyalists' and had to be abandoned, three people were arrested on charges of disorderly behaviour, the 'Loyalists' went on the rampage, breaking many windows and being held back from attacking the Catholic area of the town. These incidents, the first of their type in Portadown since the civil rights' agitation had begun, were raised in Stormont at an adjournment debate in which Mr. G Fitt MP, censored PD.⁴⁷ It was clear, then, that the policy of going to the people was not going to succeed in 1970, at least, in Protestant areas.

The spread of violence in Belfast continued. After April, rioting became endemic in the Catholic housing estate of Ballymurphy; and it took on the form of being more overtly sectarian when Protestants were stoned and intimidated in the neighbouring New Barnsley Estate. PD summed up its attitude in familiar terms:

'We categorically condemn sectarian attacks by one group of workers on another but we do not condemn clashes with the British army. However, this army will not be defeated by force alone. It will only be defeated when the majority of people here oppose British imperialism and are prepared to fight for a Workers' Republic.'

The arrest of Miss Devlin MP on July 26 and the holding of Orange parades which marched past Ardoyne and Ballymurphy led to a week-end of bloodshed in Belfast resulting in five deaths and eighty-six wounded. But on this occasion it was Protestants generally who suffered.

After the General Election victory of the Conservatives in June, many commentators detected a change in policy towards dealing with the Northern Ireland problem. A curfew imposed on the Lower Falls area by 1,500 troops on the week-end of July 3-4 led to three known deaths, many more injured and a number of arrests. Following the shooting of a man alleged by the army on July 31 to have been throwing petrol bombs, left-wingers detected a hardening of attitudes by the authorities:

'It demonstrates once again and quite conclusively that the British troops are in Northern Ireland to protect nothing except the interests of British imperialism . . . We are entering a period of severe repression. Repressive laws will be used.'⁴⁸

PD's response to the changing situation is instructive. It clarified its attitude to the British army at its conference in Portglenone on June 21, 1970.

'We were prepared to oppose them wherever they defended the interests of the ruling class. In Clause 3, however, we did make it clear that there were circumstances in which attacks on British troops could do no credit to the socialist cause — "we do not feel any gratitude to these troops for clearing up the mess their masters have created. Neither do we feel however that attacks on British troops by Fascist or sectarian elements will further the cause of the Workers' republic." Thus in situations where the British troops stand between two sectarian mobs, and workers attack troops in order to get at fellow workers they will have no support from the PD.'

It reacted to the Criminal Justice (Temporary Provisions) Act which became law on July 1, by holding twenty-seven separate demonstrations against it during September and October.

But there were those in PD who did not react so predictably to events. Kevin Boyle reported to a conference on criminology in Cambridge how PD had attempted to politicise the people of Ballymurphy after the first riots there in April:

'We organised them into committees to pursue their objectives. We organised collections for legal defence funds and organised them into marches against unemployment and low wages. We had a conference bringing the hooligans of Ballymurphy and Derry together . . . We have not been successful.'

The reasons why they were not successful were predictable also. With so many divergent interests and commitments to their own work they couldn't give it the necessary time it needed, and the Voluntary Services Bureau (a voluntary welfare organisation) moved in.

Many of the young people were attracted to the aims and means of the Provisional IRA and many of the older people suspected PD of being 'communist.'⁴⁹ Ultimately they were the victims of events which appeared to have taken on an inexorable logic from October 1968, a logic to which PD had contributed in its own way.

It is extremely unlikely that PD recognised its diminishing relevance to the situation. In fact, when over one hundred summonses were served on PD members in two weeks at the beginning of September *Free Citizen's 'Crime' Correspondent* expressed himself in tones of masochistic self-satisfaction:

'Many of the charges indicate clearly that the authorities have decided to carry out a policy of victimisation against People's

Democracy and have hocked out every conceivable charge that can be made against PD members . . . Unlike the "moderate" leaders who become satisfied with the system once they get themselves into Parliament, PD refuses to be bribed into silence. Neither will we be intimidated.'

'The final stage of the movement, its demise, is from the establishment's point of view only a "mopping up." The various factions of the co-optation process have appropriated most of the movement's effective members and all of its outside societal support, leaving only small bands of true believers to engage in increasingly desperate measures (including violence and terrorism) to keep the movement alive. Their behaviour alienates them still further from the rest of the society, including their erstwhile radical colleagues, and they are either driven to complete secession from the society or left to face the onslaught of total repression from a now unrestrained establishment backed by a strong public consensus. The "mix" of co-optation and repression with which the establishment first began its approach to the movement has now changed from almost total co-optation to almost total repression . . .⁵⁰

It might be too early to write of PD's political demise. It had suffered numerous set-backs; it could not call on any significant section of societal support; it had estranged itself from the parliamentary opposition; and it considered that it was facing 'the onslaught of total repression from a now unrestrained establishment.' But it had not reverted to terror or violence, and it had shown powers of resilience in the past, a resilience which owed much to its 'normative certitude.' It 'signifies the moral sense of purity and validity that the believer derives from a commitment to an ideology, a feeling of commitment to principles whose validity is beyond challenge and which may be described alternatively as political fundamentalism in the usual religious sense.'⁵¹

Besides its resilience PD also benefited from the intransigence of the ruling elite, the Unionist Government. It had attempted to buy off the civil rights movement by the usual 'fix' of co-optation and repression. Its attempts at repression only served as ammunition for extreme groups like PD, and its efforts at co-optation helped to split the Unionist Party. Thus the establishment had too many problems of its own to even bother about 'mopping up' PD. However, all the evidence would suggest that it was in a state of extreme fragmentation, if not demise.

Conclusion

The violence of October 5, 1968, and the subsequent growth of the People's Democracy came at the tail-end of a series of student riots in the Western world, a fact noted by Michael Farrell:

'The savagery of the RUC in Duke Street . . . shook the students in Queen's University to whom the border was irrelevant but who suddenly found on their own doorstep, the sort of thuggery that shocked them in Chicago, Paris or Vietnam.'¹

Leaving aside Farrell's grossly inflated analogy, he was touching on something which deeply concerned sociologists, educationalists and politicians, that is, the world-wide student protest movement.

It would be facile to place PD in the forefront of the student movement, because what strikes one about it is its peculiarly Irish nature. In one important respect it differed from the type of student protest in other parts of the world; it was not concerned, not even initially, with campus grievances. Of course in its earliest days it did have a militant off-shoot, the Revolutionary Socialist Students' Federation² which was concerned with the reform of the university structure. After producing two editions of a juvenile publication *Detonator* and making a nuisance of itself on PD's early demonstrations, it soon faded away because it did not have leaders of any political stature and, more importantly, there were much greater grievances in society which had to be faced.

PD's early success can be explained partially by the fact that it was an important fragment of that strong wave of civil rights agitation which protested against genuine grievances in a dignified manner. While its undergraduate counterpart in England was involving himself with such ersatz problems as the political allegiance of a Vice-Chancellor, the revolutionary and the reformer was dealing with much more concrete — and complex — problems in Northern Ireland.

The Government of Northern Ireland lacked full legitimacy and the opposition parties lacked drive and direction and unity. In these circumstances — that is, ' . . . where, in a condition of political tension the existing adult elites and counter-elites are ill-organised and ineffectual'³ — PD as a student organisation was able to become more important in the political sphere. In this respect it was analogous with the two western student movements which have mounted the most serious challenge to the state — the French and German — because all three made much of the weakness of genuine parliamentary opposition in their countries.⁴

One should not dismiss completely, however, PD's role in the mainstream of the student protest movement. It shared with other students a combination of political disillusion, moral concern,

enthusiasm, frustration and a certain amount of imitativeness. As it developed it underlined its earlier lack of ideology, a factor not uncommon to students in other countries:

‘. . . what British students have been making is moral protest; they have not been responding to any theoretical analysis of society. Theoretical analysis has indeed arisen from the protests rather than vice-versa.’⁵

Furthermore it adopted the defensive solidarity of a self-styled persecuted minority, a trait recognised in other student movements by Harold Hurwitz.⁶ In PD’s case this attitude came to the fore in the middle of 1970 when over one hundred summonses had been served on it.

Apart from the facts that it was not concerned with campus grievances and that it was dealing with a political situation peculiar to Northern Ireland — in the Western world at least — there is one major factor which stresses its Irish nature. One notices its lack of reference — or reverence — to the ‘gurus’ of the New Left in its developing ideology: Sartre, Fanon, Marcuse and even Marx are missing from its list of distinguished thinkers. One could suggest unkindly that PD ideologues were unaware of the writings of these men. The probable explanation is that if PD was to win support in Ireland it would have to wean its potential members on a diet of Irish thinkers and activists, and avoid at all costs the alien culture of ‘Marxism.’

This is not to suggest, however, that the lynchpin of the PD Political Manifesto,⁷ Connollyite Republicanism was adopted on grounds of expediency. What was expedient was the (implied) decision not to refer to the ‘New Left’ ideologues. And again if one reads through the pages of *Free Citizen* or the *Northern Star*, one is struck by the parochial nature of its content, since very little news or analysis is presented on the international situation.

In using the word ‘parochial’ above we are not using it in a pejorative sense. One of the problems for the political activist in Northern Ireland was to come to terms with its localism. It was a small area — 5,242 square miles — with a parliament which had most of the trappings of sovereignty, and fifty-two MPs who were accessible to their constituents. At the lower level Northern Ireland had seventy-three local councils, all of which had varying degrees of power and were seen to have power:

‘. . . it is inevitable that the local councils should be seen to be important centres of influence and power. In a small area such as Northern Ireland the politics of welfare are necessarily and properly local politics.’⁹

Given this state of affairs it was not surprising that PD was engrossed in the inter-related problems of local politics and the larger constitutional question. Again, F S L Lyons describes the dilemma:

'The work of local councils . . . cannot simply be judged, as it might be elsewhere, from the way these bodies deal with drainage, health, education or the social services. Always overshadowing these pre-occupations is the larger question — is local government to remain in the hands of those who uphold the political settlement as it is now or to those who wish to destroy it.'¹⁰

As a student organisation in Ireland we must consider what impact it has made on other Irish students. The simple answer is, 'comparatively little,' and one of the reasons for this is that it did not concern itself with university grievances. Inside Northern Ireland it attracted very little support from students as a body in other centres of higher education. A brief flirtation with members of the New University of Ulster Labour Club in December 1969 and with students from St Mary's College of Education in December 1968¹¹ came to nothing. Meetings were held with students from St Joseph's College of Education, at least one of whose members, Oliver Cosgrove, was a member of the Central Committee of PD. But there is no evidence that it made any impact on Stranmillis College students, that is, the teacher-training college composed almost wholly of Protestants.

It was a little more successful in the Irish Republic. Some radicals from University College Dublin were in the Burntollet march, and some were involved in organising the march to Dublin at Easter 1969. The bad organisation and recrimination following that march largely broke off relations with that source. PD speakers addressed meetings at the University Colleges in Cork and Galway but they didn't succeed in generating enough support — with the exception of a few students who joined the Western Civil Rights Movement march to Dublin during Easter 1969. Again we do not have to search far for the reason why this policy failed. PD was not over-concerned about making contact with students; its ostensible interests lay with workers. Students in the South largely directed their grievances at the campus — as for example, the campaign in University College Dublin in March 1969,¹² or the continuing battle against the authorities at the National College of Art in Dublin.

The problem of evaluating PD's contribution to the civil rights campaign and to the much greater Northern problem is much more complex. There are obvious difficulties in studying an on-going organisation in a highly volatile political situation. The particular difficulty with PD was in its evolution from a norm-oriented to a value-oriented movement. The distinction has been explained by Philip G Altbach:

'Norm-oriented student movements generally aim at the correction of a specific grievance or at a particular goal, and do not have broader ideological overtones. The norm-oriented movement is unlikely to maintain itself after its goal has been attained, although as had been noted, such movements often provide an impetus for further activity.'

'While the norm-oriented movement is concerned with specific goals and is more likely a product of emotional response to a specific limited issue, the value-oriented movement is concerned with broader ideological issues, and, when it is involved in concrete action, this activity is usually linked directly to a broader concern. Most revolutionary political movements, and most of the on-going student political organisations, particularly "underground" groups, are value oriented. A value orientation does not prevent students from participating in limited campaigns or agitations, although such participation is usually done for reasons transcending the specific object. In the student community a value-oriented movement has a more important influence in the long run and is often a leading element in apparently norm-oriented actions . . . there is some overlap between these two types of groups, and it is often difficult to make a clear distinction between them, since the leadership of a group which is seemingly norm-oriented may be ideologically sophisticated and able to turn the attention of participants to broader issues.'¹³

It would seem to be a reasonable assumption that the majority of the 3,000 students who supported PD in its earliest demonstrations were responding emotionally to the events of October 5 and were seeking as a limited end a declaration of intent by the Government on the civil rights issue. It was their moral fervour which rocketed PD through the *incipiency* and *coalescence* stages to the *institutionalization* stage. This group derived some satisfaction from the November reform package, were disheartened by the outcome of the 'Long March' and disillusioned by the decision to contest the General Election in February 1969. They had supported PD as a norm-oriented movement.

It was the 'underground' of ex-students who supplied the political sophistication. They had nurtured radical student dissent in the period before October 1968, and it was they who provided the ideology which turned the attention of the participants to broader issues. (Some of those participants, notably Kevin Boyle and Bernadette Devlin, were converted to active socialism after coming into contact with the forces of the State in PD's early demonstrations).

That 'underground' was composed of people of calibre. Owen Dudley Edwards described them as 'off-spring of the communications revolution,' and wrote of them:

'Michael Farrell emerged as an able and effective pamphleteer . . . Cyril Toman's brand of abrasive knowledgeability proved well adapted for television appearance. Eamonn McCann as an orator won the admiration of almost every audience he encountered . . . Bernadette Devlin in the course of her intellectual Odyssey from liberal nationalism to Connolly Socialism became an outstanding debater.'¹⁴

Nevertheless, that same 'underground' was guilty of errors of judgement. It attempted to build an ideology to meet the developing political situation, but it made the mistake common to many ideologues:

'Ideologies combine an evaluative and an empirical element in the diagnosis of social situations. Because of evaluative pressures, they tend towards selectivity and sometimes towards outright distortion, both in stating the case of the proponents and attacking that of the opponents. It is typical that the former are pictured as 'actuated by the highest of idealistic motives, while the latter are guided by the grossest forms of self-interest. That is, ideological definition of the situation tends to get drawn into the general polarization.'¹⁵

PD's ideologues lacked a sense of proportion and perspective. This failing became clear as early as November 1968 when PD reacted to the Prime Minister's reform package. The revolutionaries forgot one simple political fact:

'Revolutions take place when governments break down, not just by purposeful and heroic struggles from below. And those who fortunately seize the chance of power are, certainly in their ideologies and their historical writings too obsessed with themselves and their opportunities to understand the basic reasons for the decline of the old order.'¹⁶

PD militants were too obsessed with their own success to date to make more than a superficial analysis of the break-down in Government or to realise the historical assumption of the November 22 reforms — O'Neill's package contained more concessions to Catholics than had been won in the forty-seven years of the state. But PD did not see it in that light. It considered that too little had been granted too late and was not going to be satiated by emotional television appearances by the Prime Minister or his sacking of a controversial Minister of Home Affairs. Thus it dragged the civil rights movement — a not too difficult task with some civil rights supporters — into the Burntollet march and emerged in Derry on January 4, 1969, facing the political realities of life in Northern Ireland. The Left was unaware of the consequences of its actions, being more concerned with the success it had won from the Catholic section of the population.

One of the few socialists imbued with a sense of self-criticism, Eamonn McCann, was to complain later of 'the transitory attractions of illusory mass influence.' He had seen the fundamental mistake made by the Left:

'When we were confronted with an audience tens of thousands strong our reaction was to abandon the attempt to win people if necessary in ones and twos to a hard political position, and instead to try to exert some general influence over a broad political movement.'¹⁷

At Burntollet and in the general election PD succumbed to 'illusory mass influence' and unwittingly submerged itself in the civil rights movement as its ginger-group and gad-fly. Its relationship with the NICRA was an unhappy one because as a potential revolutionary organisation it did not want to be concerned with reformist demands; and equally the NICRA was embarrassed by its unwanted radical offshoot.

The months of decline and *fragmentation* following the general election indicated that it had fallen between two stools. It had lost mass student support and it had not found a working class base. It floundered around seeking a role, reacting to events and government policy rather than initiating radical alternatives. One exception may have been the march to Dublin at Easter though there is no strong evidence that PD was aware of its significance. The march highlighted two features in PD's development. One could be seen in the composition of the march itself; it was a conglomeration of left-wing activists extending from social reformers through traditional communists to Anarchists and Trotskites. The concept of PD as an umbrella group was important in its development, a concept which has been noted elsewhere:

'Behind the surface of every modern youth movement lies a babel of tongues, a chaos of competing rubrics and prescriptions for the new social order, springing from the mass of more specific social interests and identities contained explosively within the chimera of the younger generation.'¹⁸

The umbrella was not wide enough to hold either Bernadette Devlin or Eamonn McCann, but it could stand up to the strains of John McGuffin's anarchism, Michael Farrell's marxism-cum-republicanism and Kevin Boyle's 'pragmatic left-wing views.'¹⁹ There are very few examples of differences among members, or, if there are, they are not aired in public. *Free Citizen* on two occasions illustrated that members were not in total agreement over their attitude to 'official' and 'provisional' Republicans; and that John McGuffin was not prepared to accept Michael Farrell's 'transitional period' towards the Workers' Republic. But these strains of opinion never snapped, helping, possibly, to give PD a measure of resilience.

The second feature was that PD demonstrated its all-Ireland character by marching to Dublin and by warning the Fianna Fail Government that it was not in the position to be critical of Northern politicians. It was the first Northern group to export the civil rights 'idea' to the South, and in its criticism of the parliamentary 'republican' party, Fianna Fail, illustrated that its (ie FF), Northern policy was a sham and that it was not prepared to govern a thirty-two county Ireland. It is much too early to quantify PD's contribution towards the growing dissatisfaction with politicians in the Irish Republic but there can be little doubt that it helped the export of agitation across the border²⁰.

The events of August and September 1969 and the Free Belfast experiment showed that PD had become more irrelevant to the situation. It foisted itself upon a Catholic ghetto where it worked usefully articulating the fears and grievances of the people. But it was obvious that PD had been working in a vacuum and that it had to re-organise itself. In becoming a disciplined movement committed to Connollyite Socialism it pledged itself to the unity of the working class and immediately came up against the fundamental dilemma which faces all socialists in Belfast.

At no stage had it heeded the advice of Dr Conor Cruise O'Brien when he wrote:

'Now I think it is likely that these young people will find as the civil rights struggle develops, that religion is more important than they thought it was, and that historically formed suspicions and animosities are not quite so easy to dispel — even in themselves — as they now assume.'

In the year following the formation of a PD committed to revolutionary socialism it became clear that it would not face up to this problem; in fact it can be seen that it could not altogether dispel historical animosities in itself.

That is not to say that PD became overtly sectarian. There are instances — from as early as April 1969²¹ when PD has attacked Catholic sectarianism. After a weekend of serious rioting in Belfast in which some Protestants were killed at the end of June 1970, PD Central Committee issued a statement which said, among other things:

'The week-end incidents also show that sectarianism is not the monopoly of the Orange Order. Catholic bigotry and direct action to exploit sectarianism was rampant. Socialism must remain clearly opposed to the reactionary policies of the Green as well as the Orange militants. No one can be blasted into Socialism.'

Its attempts at working across the sectarian divide on issues like the bus fares campaign and the housing policy were wholly commendable and, incidentally, demonstrated how effective a pressure group PD could be. However, the problem was that these statements and actions were either the exceptions or they were too late. The organisation which had insisted in walking from Belfast to Derry in January 1969 and yet wanted to curtail the right of the Orange Order to march in July 1970; the organisation which belittled the Protestant workers' beliefs and institutions whether it be the monarch or the local lodge; the organisation which spent more time demonstrating against repressive legislation than against redundancies; the organisation which broadcast 'Catholic music' over Radio Free Belfast; that organisation had not established the right to expect the trust of the Protestant working class.

PD's main error has already been mentioned by Talcott Parsons: '... ideological definition of the situation tends to get drawn into the general polarization.' PD saw the solution to the Northern

Ireland problem in a 'class-war.' It failed to take proper account of the ethnic cleavage, and made the same mistake as its Quebec counter-parts:

'... the coupling of socialism with Quebec independence is ethnic in a sense since ... national lines coincide with economic lines and to soak the rich means to soak Anglo-Saxons.'²²

It was easier for the PD majority with a Catholic background to combine republicanism and socialism than it was for the Protestant working class. The latter was committed traditionally to loyalty to the monarch and to the Union with Britain, economically and culturally.

The New Left in PD compounded error upon error by adopting the Catholic working class as its agent for advancement. We have already seen that the central issue for the New Left has always been the one of agency:

'... which classes and strata in the society are more disposed towards active opposition to the status quo, what means of power can they exercise, and with what effect.'

Clearly Catholics generally were opposed to the status quo, and the working class as the most economically deprived section of that community could be relied on to mount the most militant opposition to the State. But the adoption of the Catholic working class meant antagonising Protestant workers, and there was no guarantee that Catholic workers would welcome PD support.

In fact that was what happened: French students had made the same mistake:

'The workers were attached to the 'consumer society' the students wanted to destroy: only in isolated cases, specifically those where the bureaucratic representation of the trade unions was weakest or non-existent, did the students fulfil a sort of "vanguard" role, and then only in helping to formulate demands that were qualitatively radical (workers' control) but easily compromised by quantitative concessions (a wage rise whose maximum was fourteen per cent).'²³

Having cut itself off from its student base and been spurned in the working class areas *fragmentation* set in. *Demise* seemed only a matter of time.

Conor Cruise O'Brien described PD's dilemma succinctly. He criticised 'those who think it sufficient to conjure with the names of Tone and Connolly and pretend that revolutionary sloganeering based on the ideas associated with these names will in the present circumstances bring members of the Protestant and Catholic communities together.' He said slogans of this kind coming from Catholic ghettos in the North might be subjectively non-sectarian and socio-revolutionary but to most Protestants in the North including the Protestant working class they remained repellent and suggestive of attempted Catholic dominance.

The last word can be left with Michael Farrell — ‘possibly the most determined political operator in Northern Ireland,’ according to Eamonn McCann. He rejected Dr O’Brien’s assertion: ‘We’re not concerned in the least justifying ourselves to people who have proved by their theory and action that they are not socialists.’²⁴

The arrogance of this reply typified an important factor in PD’s failure — it lacked the ability to criticize itself and it refused the advice of potential allies. It might manage to struggle on for some time to come but it had condemned itself to the limbo world occupied by radical student movements elsewhere.

Postscript

'After August, 1969, the radical orators had in fact nothing further to offer to the Catholic population; they never had had anything to offer to the Protestants.' The Catholic mass response had won its remarkable gains, and also elicited a great over-shadowing danger, in the shape of the Protestant mass response. The fear of the Catholic community, under that shadow, did not call for more oratory or marches, or appeals to a non-existent class solidarity, or a resolution of the hopelessly divided working class. It called for guns to defend Catholic homes. The men who brought the guns and were able to use them would have the key to the situation in the Catholic ghettos, and the initiative elsewhere. The stage was set for the return of the Irish Republican Army: the "Catholic guerrilla."¹

The Catholic guerrilla emerged in the form of the Provisional IRA. Following the Protestant attacks on the Falls Road in August, 1969, the Republican movement split. The IRA and its political wing, Sinn Fein, had not been prepared for such an attack. The people of the Catholic ghettos demanded the means for their own defence. Marxist rhetoric offered no protection against guns and arson. Those who broke away became known as 'the Provisionals.' 'Any ordinary, patriotic Catholic, clinging to the dual pieties of his community, could identify with the Provisionals. There was no "taint of Communism" about them, nothing puzzling or foreign at all. And there was no nonsense about them either.'² Over the next four years they moved on to the offensive to try to finish off the work of the 1916 Easter Rising. 'One last big heave' would drive the British off Irish soil for ever.

In this period the death toll mounted to over 800, and massive intimidation forced between 30,000 and 60,000 people to leave their homes in the Greater Belfast Area in what the Community Relations Commission considered to be the largest enforced population movement in Europe since 1945. In response to IRA violence a para-military organisation, the Ulster Defence Association (UDA), rose from the Protestant ghettos with the ostensible aim of defending its territory against IRA incursions. Its creation added to the difficulties of the Westminster Government which now had to face the prospect of fighting on two battle fronts.

Its attitude to a rapidly deteriorating situation was 'pragmatic' — a euphemism for 'contradictory.' Following the General Election of June, 1970, the Conservative Government initiated a policy of full scale repression of the IRA. It supported fully the Unionist

Government's policy including the introduction of internment without trial in August, 1971. The failure of the policy of repression — highlighted by the killing of 13 unarmed civilians by the Paratroopers in Derry in January, 1972 — led to the prorogation of Stormont in March.

'Direct Rule' was imposed upon Northern Ireland and as the year progressed the growing disenchantment of the loyalist people was reflected in the fragmentation of the once monolithic Unionist Party. By mid-1973 loyalism was represented by the Unionist Party, the Democratic Unionist Party (DUP), and the Vanguard Unionist Progressive Party (VUPP), and there were at least two loyalist para-military organisations. Thus, during the period 1969-73, the political waters had indeed been muddied, enabling the urban guerrilla fish of the Provisional IRA to swim around in relative freedom.

In this highly volatile situation PD had been trapped in its own rhetoric. Its concentration on tendentious single issues (as described in Chapter 3) had removed it even further from its original student character, and it had not succeeded in imposing itself as a revolutionary mass party. By August, 1973, only Michael Farrell remained as a prominent member of the group which first took to the streets in October, 1968. And even those people who had been elected to its steering committee in late 1969 when it had become a disciplined revolutionary group had drifted away: Peter Cosgrove returned to Zambia and lost contact with PD; Eamon O'Kane joined the British and Irish Communist Organisation which was ideologically opposed to PD; John Gray went to London and became national organiser of the Anti-Internment League but resigned from that on a point of policy; Gerry O'Hare freelanced in opposition politics; Joe Quigley remained interested in unattached politics and Niall Vallely and Cyril Toman were expelled by a PD national conference for 'disruptive activity' in March, 1973.

PD's activity can best be studied through the person of Michael Farrell, its dominant personality and ideologue. On 16 March 1971 he gave an interview to Vincent Browne of the *Irish Press* in which he expressed concern with the rise of the Provisional IRA: 'The Provisional IRA in Belfast has become more and more sectarian . .

As the result of the situation here there has developed the largest militant socialist organisations that have been seen in Ireland since the 1930's — the PD and the Official Republicans.' Yet before the end of the year PD and the Provisional movement had become close allies in the civil resistance campaign.

This apparent volte-face can probably be explained in a number of ways. An anonymous correspondent of *Hibernia* was to write in October 1971 that 'PD complain that the Provisionals are much more eager to talk to them than the Officials who treat them very arrogantly.' A year later Michael McKeown wrote a profile of

Farrell. He believed that Farrell's five weeks of internment made a fundamental impact on him: '... Farrell was released, more resolutely anti-Unionist than before, but also more sceptical about the tactics of the CRA. Increasingly it had come under the influence of the Official Republican movement, and Farrell found the doctrinaire sloganizing of the Officials irksome and restrictive. As the Provisionals cast around for a political front, Farrell and the PD with their flair for instant protest seemed natural allies and a coalition was welded within the Northern Resistance Movement.³

It must be remembered that PD had tenuous links with the Republican movement virtually from the outset. During the Burntollet march Republicans housed and fed the marchers and at one stage a Republican banner was unfurled. Individual Republicans gave active assistance to at least three of PD's candidates in the General Election of February 1969. PD and Republicans had worked together in Free Belfast in August 1969 although this had not been an entirely harmonious relationship. During 1969-1970 PD's strategy for the South dovetailed with that of Sinn Fein in its appeal to all radicals to form a popular front against the parliamentary parties. A loose unity of purpose could be seen in specific activities both undertook eg the cement strike and the Toome Eel Fisheries campaigns. Much of the rhetoric, the imagery and the use of traditional music resembled that of Sinn Fein.

It was the introduction of internment without trial which crystallized PD's long term strategy. Internment was a grotesque failure. Militant Republicanism won a major propaganda victory when it was learnt that the security forces had detained men whose crime had been strident and vocal criticism of Unionism. It was able to build on that propaganda victory when allegations of torture and ill-treatment began to leak out of the internment camps. (Eventually the Government was forced to appoint a Committee of Inquiry to examine those charges.)⁴

The internment exercise gave a tremendous fillip to the Provisional IRA. Many of its leading officers had escaped arrest and were able to carry on the military battle against the security forces. The people of the Catholic ghettos, who had been uneasy at the Provisional's escalating offensive until that time, now fell in behind them. They added their weight to the struggle by organizing a very successful rent and rates strike in most Catholic areas.

If Michael Farrell's dual-power strategy was to continue and his agency for revolution, the Catholic working class, was now supporting the Provisional movement, then PD would have to ally with the Provisionals. 'Civil resistance' would replace 'civil rights' as the campaign slogan, and the enemy would clearly be seen to be 'British imperialism' as represented by 'increasing repression and Army harassment of Catholic areas.'⁵

But PD had to clarify its strategy in relation to the Official Republican movement and the Protestant working class. It cri-

ticised 'NICRA and the Official Republicans' which 'are still wedded to the notion of a Bill of Rights adopted by Westminster and to defending the doomed Stormont system against any moves to abolish it . . .' ⁶ In other words, the Officials were wasting their time tinkering with the system when it needed to be overthrown.

Protestants were reassured in the same issue of *Unfree Citizen* '... the Provisionals must be persuaded that a united Ireland isn't around the corner. Any attempt to bomb the unwilling Northern Protestants into a united Ireland will drive them into the arms of the Paisley-Boal fascist party and lead to civil war,' 'Dail Uladh, a nine county Ulster parliament envisaged by Provisional Sinn Fein, would go a long way towards assuaging Protestant fears; and an extension of British social security standards throughout the whole island would quell any economic fears they might have. Not surprisingly, the loyalist working class was not impressed.

The Northern Resistance Movement (NRM)-was launched in November 1971 and was immediately condemned by the Official Sinn Fein as an attempt to subvert the NICRA. Its founders maintained that it was born out of frustration:

'The NRM was born out of the failure of several meetings in Omagh and Dungannon to agree on a formula for a mass movement. NICRA insisted on having control. The PD and many individuals felt that NICRA would be undemocratic and a brake upon militant action. The Provisionals were then concerned with the military campaign against the British Army and had little time for what they described contemptuously as "politics".'

Later Michael Farrell verified this interpretation in his usual forcible fashion. He accused the CRA of holding back the revolution, and described the role of the NRM. It is 'dedicated to smashing Stormont, establishing a flexible democratic structure based on street committees and keeping up the pressure on Britain by militant street demonstrations. The choice is simple: between holding back the revolution and spurring it on.'

Farrell succinctly described NRM's activities. It organised marches against internment — the Government had banned all marches for twelve months after the introduction of internment — and it concentrated on the rent and rates strike and the election of street committees. One optimistic account of the latter experiment was written by John McGuffin: ' . . . with its resistance councils it gave many people for the first time in their lives the chance to see that they could "seize the time," that they could exercise a very real measure of control over their jobs, their streets, their areas . . . '

It is not our purpose to write a chronological account of NRM's activities. We are concerned with it only in so far as it adds to our understanding of PD's development. What strikes the interested observer is the curious symbiotic relationship which grew up between PD and the Provisionals in the NRM. Initially it had expressed some doubts at the IRA military campaign but such criticism was to become muted as the battle against 'British

imperialism' reached its peak. In fact by March 1972 it supported basic Provisional demands as being the absolute minimum to ensure peace.

Two examples will suffice to demonstrate its complicity in the Provisional campaign. *Unfree Citizen* seemed to consider that the Bloody Friday atrocity — ie 21 July 1972 when the IRA set off twenty-two explosions in a two hour period in Belfast, killing nine people and injuring 130 — was simply another episode in the Anglo Irish war. 'If ever a people were justified in using violence against British imperialism that people is the Irish people, especially the Northern minority . . . Therefore we refuse to join in the chorus of unconditional condemnation of last Friday's blitz.' True, it did 'regret' the death of seven civilians — the other two were soldiers — but its major concern was with the counter-productive effects of the action. Nor had Bernadette Devlin helped the situation; she was criticised for 'joining in the hypocritical cant in Westminster attacking the Provos . . .'¹⁰

Sean MacStiofain, the man considered by most people to be the architect of the Provisional bombing campaign, was described in near adulatory terms by one of the NRM leaders. When Mac Stiofain was imprisoned in the Irish Republic in November 1972, Aidan Corrigan told a Dublin protest meeting that he condemned scurrilous attacks made on the 'great leader of the Republican movement.' He compared him to Kenyatta and Grivas, and said that 'Mr Mac Stiofain was now heading the greatest guerrilla movement the world has ever known.'¹¹ There is no record of PD countering this statement.

During 1972, then, PD had firmly nailed its colours to the Provisional masthead. The arrangement suited both organisations. The Provisionals were not endowed with a surfeit of articulate political talent. PD supplied a measure of that and enjoyed its role — however diminished — of being in the vanguard of the struggle against British imperialism.

The NRM had hoped to keep PD in the public eye. Demonstrations organised solely by PD attracted little attention eg the fourth anniversary march of the Burntollet ambush brought out no more than 100 people, whereas up to 4,000 attended NRM marches. PD's decline was real but it continued to display its resilience.

By March 1973 its popularity was at its lowest ebb. It expelled three of its most militant and articulate leaders — Cyril Toman, Niall and Brian Vallely — for 'disruptive activities.' They had displayed 'arrogant and domineering behaviour . . . at Conferences and Committee meetings,' had engaged in 'constant personal attacks . . . and stunted the ideological development of the organisation by preventing political discussion,' and they preferred 'a loose decentralised structure which gave them more personal power' rather than accept centralization which would befit a 'tough, disciplined, revolutionary party.' The dissidents openly ridiculed the

National Conference' which expelled them. They described it as a 'circus' of only twenty-two people who had smashed down the doors and illegally occupied the premises from which they issued their expulsion notice. For a time both PD's published their editions of *Unfree Citizen*. Publicity of this nature cannot have helped the morale of the remaining, divided faithful.

Yet PD was not dead. It was resurrected through the ineptitude of the authorities. During 1972 PD and the NRM had marched in protest against internment, a rapidly increasing rate in sectarian assassinations — 118 in the nine months after the introduction of Direct Rule — and alleged complicity between the security forces and the loyalists. This last charge referred to the fact that the security forces appeared to allow loyalists in para-military uniform to march when and where they pleased, whereas republicans and socialists were restricted to the Catholic ghettos.

All of these marches were illegal, and 'in the space of five months, Michael Farrell, PD collected two years jail sentences (in the form of four separate six months sentences — none of which he had to serve), Bernadette Devlin, MP received three years and Frank McManus, MP got five years in all.'¹² When it was obvious that the ban was not being taken seriously by any of the political activists, Mr. William Whitelaw, Secretary of State for Northern Ireland, announced an amnesty on 27 April 1972 for all sentenced for breaking the march ban.

The reprieve had little effect on PD marchers. Demonstrations would continue until the last internee was released. Thus PD held its by-now-annual May Day parade; in June and July it marched in the Irish Republic in protest at the detention of Republican prisoners; in September it was marching with the Andersonstown Anti-Internment Co-ordinating Committee; in November 500 of its supporters tried to march to Belfast city centre but were restricted to the Falls Road by the security forces; and at Christmas it was thwarted in its attempt to march from Belfast to Long Kesh internment camp eight miles away.

Michael Farrell summed up PD exasperation with this state of affairs when he wrote to the *Irish News* on 1 January 1973: '... there is one law for so called "loyalists" and another for Socialists and Republicans. I would also ask them whether ... it will ever be possible for an anti-Unionist organisation to hold a march or parade outside the Catholic ghettos of our cities and towns.' On 12 February PD tested this possibility but, yet again, the security forces halted the march on the Falls Road, and withstood the ritualistic mini-riot which accompanies these occasions.

The authorities decided to act; consequently Farrell and Tony Canavan, a PD leader, were given sentences of eight and six months respectively for behaviour likely to lead to a breach of the peace. (It is indicative of their diminishing status that the police felt confident

people on the streets). No sooner had they been jailed than both demanded to be recognised as 'political prisoners.' Their request was refused, and immediately they went on hunger strike. It generated a groundswell of emotional support from the Catholic areas and led the SDLP, among others, to demand that the prisoners' wish be granted. The whole episode was denting whatever good-will the Whitelaw regime had in Belfast's Catholic ghettos, and was boosting the morale — if not the numbers — of PD supporters.

Finally, after the two men had been on hunger strike for thirty-five days, the Government extricated itself from a nasty situation by announcing remission for about 100 prisoners, including Farrell and Canavan, on mandatory sentences for comparatively minor offences. They emerged as heroes but had failed to attain the status of political prisoners.

By August 1973 PD was still in existence, but exercised little real influence in its own right. *Fragmentation* had had its effect. Michael Farrell was the only personality left who spanned all the phases of PD development — from student radicalism in October 1968 to acting as apologists for the Provisional movement in 1972-73. His 'dual-power' theory was still being practised — and with a vengeance. Undoubtedly a section of the Catholic working class had been radicalised; it supported, or, at least acquiesced in, the politics of violence of the Provisional IRA. In seeking its political fortune through an alliance with the Provisionals, it abandoned any pretensions it may have had in healing the fundamental working-class splits. It had taken its rightful place in the Catholic radical camp in which the socialist solution became subservient to the national question.

Appendix A

People's Democracy's Reasons for Contesting the General Election of February 1969

People's Democracy, the Civil Rights Group based mainly in QUB, have decided to contest the forthcoming elections. The PD has issued the following statement:

In adopting at this time the tactic of contesting seats in this election it is our belief that we can advance both the cause of Civil Rights in Northern Ireland and the mass movement which the Civil Rights campaign has become. The election, which we regard as a non-event, provides the opportunity to reiterate the Civil Rights demands and to make an effective statement about democracy and about elections in Northern Ireland.

The forthcoming election has been represented as being different, in that within the Unionist ranks there is a difference of opinion. But that should not obscure the fact that in common with all previous elections in Northern Ireland's history it is a sham event, having nothing of the function of an election in a normal democratic system, but like all others being concerned to increase the grip of the ruling party, the Unionists, in a one-party state. All elections in Northern Ireland, both at local government and Stormont levels, are essentially undemocratic, and this is what the whole Civil Rights Movement has been concerned to point out and to change. They are conducted in gerrymandered constituencies along sectarian lines and on the basis not of genuine policy alternatives between political groups, but by the manipulation of traditional religious and historic allegiances.

Somebody sometime has to assert in Northern Ireland's political life what normal democracy is about; the election by the people of representatives on the basis of policies which are material to their lives. People must be given an opportunity to cast real votes and not votes for the past and for the dead. The People's Democracy therefore is prepared in this election, on the basis of their Civil Rights Manifesto, to assert the beginnings of real politics.

The principle on which we have chosen the constituencies in which PD candidates will stand has been by direct rejection of the logic of the political parties in this country. Their attitude is that there are unchanging Unionist and Nationalist areas of power and neither side trespasses on the other's territory. Even the small opposition groups, such as Labour and Liberal parties, accept this logic, being prepared to fit in as best they can between the two sectarian groups. We reject this logic in the same fashion as on our march to Londonderry we rejected the concept of Public Order, which said there were Unionist streets and Nationalist streets. Then we demanded the right, since we were fighting for justice for all, to march where we liked. Hence we have chosen seats which are traditionally uncontested Unionist and Nationalist seats in the main, not on the basis that they will most easily assure our election but on the argument that our policy is right for all and not for the ears of one particular group. In these constituencies we intend to provide for the first time to the mass of the people real policy and real choices.

This election we reiterate is not about real issues of policy. Rather it is about whether sectarianism is to be polite and covert — the O'Neill approach — or paraded as something to be proud of, the approach of his so-called right wing colleagues. It is important for the electorate to remember that those in the O'Neill administration now labelled as 'moderate' and 'pro-Civil Rights' are almost to a man members of the sectarian Orange Order and that the five-point programme of reform proposed last November, which is still not forthcoming, has been rejected as inadequate by the whole Civil Rights Movement.

Finally we would stress that the People's Democracy remains a mass movement and individuals within it, if elected, are committed to the struggle for civil rights both inside and outside Parliament.

Appendix B

People's Democracy Statement: West Tyrone

On Wednesday, 13th February, a convention of the people of West Tyrone will be held in Omagh, on the steps of the Courthouse at 8.0 pm.

The purpose of this meeting is to give all the citizens of the constituency an opportunity to select, by popular vote, a civil-rights candidate to represent them in the forthcoming elections.

Last Monday night, a closed meeting of invited 'guests' (sixty-six of them approximately), appointed Mr Roderick O'Connor to 'represent' them again. You were not at the meeting unless you were among the sixty-six. The People's Democracy, believing in democracy, asserts that every citizen who supports civil rights, should have a say in the election of the civil rights candidate. Thus, you are invited to attend this meeting on Wednesday.

The People's Democracy have put forward the name of Mr Peter Cush for your consideration. If selected he will fight this election on the policies of the People's Democracy. These are:

One man, one vote NOW

Reform of Electoral Boundaries NOW

Repeal of the Special Powers Act NOW

A crash housebuilding programme, especially in depressed areas.

A complete reorganisation of agriculture policies which will reduce unemployment, especially in the West and South of the province.

The huge estates of the landed gentry should be broken up and distributed to those who are willing to develop them.

What have the Nationalist party done for you?

What are their policies?

What can they do for you?

THINK ABOUT IT

Appendix C

Manifesto of the People's Democracy, February 1969

1. One man one vote. This means not only the introduction of universal adult franchise at Local Government level, but also the redrawing of boundaries in a fair manner so that all votes have equal value; it means a swift end to the Londonderry Commission and direct control by majority decision in that city and throughout the Province.
2. An end to repressive legislation and partial law enforcement by repeal of the Special Powers Act; the existing Public Order Act and the proposed amendments to it; and by the disbanding of the Ulster Special Constabulary.
3. A centrally drawn-up points system, based only on need, for allocation of houses with a central board of appeal. The drafting of a housing list open to inspection by the public. An end to social and religious segregation in housing. That there be freely elected democratic councils to control the estates.
4. The declaration of a housing emergency and the diverting of financial and physical resources to a crash housebuilding programme and away from unnecessary or prestige buildings. All vacant housing accommodation must be requisitioned, the Housing Trust debts to the Central Banks must be cancelled.
5. An emergency programme of direct state investment in industry to provide permanent full employment and to halt emigration. A massive injection of capital by the Government to set up industries under workers' control in those state-owned factories vacated by short-term private industrialists. The extension of workers' control to all branches of industry.
6. The transfer of responsibility for all educational functions to a democratically elected central government. The grouping together of schools — both state and voluntary — into a comprehensive system, integrated on a social and religious basis, involving parents, students, and teachers in the government of such schools. Cast-iron guarantees that there will be no discrimination in the appointment of staff and that there will be no political indoctrination in education.
7. We oppose the existing agricultural policy of the Government which involves the clearing of large numbers of farmers from the land in the West and South of the Province and advocate the provision of employment in their own area for all members of the Rural Community. We feel that the situation where a few people control huge estates while many others barely exist on very small holdings is intolerable and suggest that these huge estates are broken up and the land used to form co-operative farms for those small-holders who are willing to move into them.
8. Since we are making our demands for Civil Rights within Northern Ireland and recognising that the people of Northern Ireland have the right to determine their own political future, we regard the border as irrelevant in our struggle for Civil Rights. Our view on the Republic of Ireland is that many of our demands in the North are equally relevant in the Republic and we support those who are working for full Civil Rights there and elsewhere.
9. This election presents us with an opportunity of furthering our demands for full Civil Rights in Northern Ireland; we shall continue to make our demands by all peaceful, non-violent methods both inside and outside Parliament until they are attained.

Appendix D

Party Performance in NI General Election 1969—Contested Seats¹

People's Democracy Performance in the NI General Election 1969

PARTY	SEATS FOUGHT	VOTES	%	SEATS WON
O'Neill Unionists ²	39	252,856	45.22	22
Anti-O'Neill Unionists ²	17	102,786	18.38	11
Protestant Unionists	5	20,991	3.75	—
NILP	16	45,121	8.07	2
Liberals	2	7,337	1.31	—
Nationalists	8	42,315	7.57	5
National Democrats	7	26,009	4.65	—
Republican Labour	5	13,155	2.35	2
People's Democracy	8	23,645	4.23	—
People's Progressive	1	2,992	0.54	—
Independents	4	21,997	3.93	3

1 I am indebted to Dr Sidney Elliot for permission to reproduce this table.

2 There may be some dispute as to the exact number of candidates who were pro and anti O'Neill (see, for example, an article by Alf McCreary in *The Belfast Telegraph*, 11.3.69). In a situation where some of the candidates equivocated, one must be arbitrary in one's choice.

Appendix E

CROMAC:

J W KENNEDY	(Unionist)	6,320
J BERKLEY	(NILP)	1,134
E WIEGLEB	(PD)	752 lost deposit
		—
	Unionist Majority	5,186

MID-ARMAGH:

J M STRONGE	(Unionist)	6,932
C TOMAN	(PD)	3,551
J I MAGOWAN	(Ind Unionist)	2,321
		—
	Unionist Majority	3,381

BANNSIDE:

T O'NEILL	(Unionist)	7,745
REV I PAISLEY	(Prot Unionist)	6,331
M FARRELL	(PD)	2,310
		—
	Unionist Majority	1,414

ENNISKILLEN:

H WEST	(Unionist)	4,891
B EGAN	(PD)	2,784
D T ARCHDALE	(Ind Unionist)	2,418
		—
	Unionist Majority	2,107

LISNAS EA:

J BROOKE	(Unionist)	4,794
J D A HENDERSON	(Ind Unionist)	2,701
M CAREY	(PD)	1,726
		—
	Unionist Majority	2,093

S FERMANAGH:

J CARRON	(Nationalist)	4,108
P COSGROVE	(PD)	2,100
		—
	Nationalist Majority	2,008

S DERRY:

J D CHICHESTER-CLARK	(Unionist)	9,195
Miss B DEVLIN	(PD)	5,812
		—
	Unionist Majority	3,383

S DERRY:

M KEOGH	(Nationalist)	4,830
F WOODS	(PD)	4,610
		—
	Nationalist Majority	220

Appendix F

Statement of Policy Broadcast over Radio Free Derry — January 1969

In a matter of months, the Civil Rights movement has succeeded in bringing its grievances to the notice of a sympathetic world. Its tremendous success to date has been due more to the brutal and repressive response of an arrogant regime than to any other single factor. The brief hard-fought campaign on the streets has exposed to the world, and to an embarrassed British government, the corrupt infra-structure of Unionist rule. It has shattered dramatically the self-confidence that has come from half a century's monopoly of power, and has rent the Unionist Party with internal strife. It is at this very moment, however, that the Civil Rights movement is in great danger of betrayal.

All who have worked so intensely over the past six months — and the few who have been diligent over the years — are tempted from sheer physical exhaustion to let up for the moment and be content with the sops so begrudgingly conceded under pressure. But this is the moment when the movement must maintain its impetus; when the advantages gained must be pressed home with greater urgency. To let up now would be nothing less than fatal. The Unionist regime, consolidated over the years, and entrenched at every level of society, has resources and machinery so powerful, that given any breathing space at all, it is capable of complete recovery. The recent speech of Captain O'Neill, which was written by Dr Doyle in 1822, exactly 146 years ago, and addressed to 'the deluded and illegal association of Ribbonmen' is having the very same effect on public conscience as the Bishop's pastoral had in his day. This must not be allowed; and just as Dr Doyle failed in the end to discredit the Ribbonmen, the *Buachailli Bana*, and the right of the people to possess the land, so must all those active in the Civil Rights movement continue to maintain pressure, and, in the course of time, make the name of O'Neill as repugnant as that of Dr Doyle's is in our own.

At the same time a new danger, and from within the movement itself, must also be recognised. This comes from those who appeal for moderation. Their voice grows daily louder, and unfortunately, is being heeded. But theirs is the voice that was so long silent over the years when injustices were the normal pattern of life in Northern Ireland; and they who cry loudest are the false champions of old who seek only to assert their former power. They, like the Unionists, fear change most for what it means to their privileges.

But to return to the present campaign, however, it must be pointed out that it is very doubtful if marches, as such, will achieve much more than what has been won to date. The time of year is also against them and an unfavourable public reaction is not unlikely. To continue a programme of marching, and nothing else, shows not only a paucity of ideas but would perhaps be pushing luck too far. That is not to say that marches should be abandoned but rather that they should be an adjunct in a more positive programme, and their timing and location planned in accordance with the strategy of that programme.

Marches to date have achieved another important end; they have shaken the people out of their lethargy and made them aware of their own strength. A new spirit has been born, and with it, an eagerness to participate in the struggle for civil and social reform. Goodwill exists that was never seen before. To sit back now and do nothing, to merely wait for a reluctant government to concede reforms would not only be rank stupidity but would be the very betrayal of the people's trust. A new programme and more positive action is an urgent necessity. Such a programme could be 'Civil Disobedience.'

To most of us the words 'civil disobedience' conjure up the post-war resistance of the Indian people to British over-lordship. It brings to mind the Land war and the Young Irelanders of the last century, and, in more recent times the Negro resistance in the United States.

But Civil Disobedience must always be adapted to the local scene. An overall plan for universal application is not possible and just how and when any co-ordinated action of disobedience can be effectively implemented in Northern Ireland will require the advice of experts. Nor will these specialists be required only to educate the mass of the people in such a programme but also to guide and advise the activists in the Civil Rights movement itself who are, perhaps, as equally ignorant of the know-how and the potentialities of a positive and integrated civil disobedience programme.

The following remarks are by no means intended as a programme and are suggested more as a guide line, high-lighting some of the more obvious actions in such a programme. It must be stressed, that in order to be wholly effective, a campaign of civil disobedience should be initiated only in those specific areas where success can reasonably be guaranteed, that is, it should be restricted to areas where the mass of the people, by their concerted effort, with a common and equal interest at heart, can give it their united and full hearted support. This does not necessarily mean, however, that the isolated protest of Professor Huxley, for example, in his declaration of intent to withhold payment of taxes is to be disdained. To quote Fintan Lalor:

'Somewhere, and somehow, and by somebody, a beginning must be made. Who strikes the first blow?'

It remains, for such rural areas as Tyrone, Fermanagh and South Armagh, and specifically the urban districts of Derry, Newry and Dungannon, for example, to initiate and implement the new campaign.

A passive form of disobedience would be the delayed payment of rates and taxes for the maximum length of time. Were this to be organised on a large scale in an entire city, or even in a housing estate in one of the ghettos, its consequences could be significant.

Of more importance, is a policy of active civil disobedience which can best be summarised under the following:—

1. Boycott and Ostracism.
2. Industrial Strike.
3. Hunger Strike.
4. Non-payment of rates and taxes.
5. Disruption of Public Transport.
6. Picketing.
7. Squatting.
8. Disruption of Civic Weeks.
9. Organisation of Unemployed.
10. Local Elections based on Universal Adult Franchise.
11. Seizure and Occupation of Public Buildings.

To deal with these specifically:—

(1) *Boycott* has been successful in the past and is still one of the most powerful forms of pressure in that it requires little or no sacrifice on the part of those who use it while severely crippling the victim. It can be used against the small firm or businessman, for example, who is aggressively engaged in perpetuating undemocratic practices against his fellow citizens. The larger businessman can best be hurt at trade union level but is not necessarily immune to boycott.

Allied to boycott is ostracism, older in time than the boycott and for centuries the only form of punishment that could be executed in an Ireland that had no police force or means of punishment. John D Stewart recently declared his intention to adopt a form of ostracism when he publically stated that he would no longer associate with any person who openly professed the right-wing Unionist view, and not only would he turn down public engagements where such people were likely to gather, but he would leave any company which included such people. This was a brave declaration, by a very brave man, whose sole means of income depends to a large extent on the goodwill of those who control communication media and who, for the most part are those very people corrupted or pressurised by right-wing Unionism. In recent years he has suffered materially for having expressed his honest opinions in that the TV medium, a source of income, is now virtually closed to him. In fact, a form of ostracism has been, and is continuing to be used against him. Like

Professor Huxley he too fights a lone battle. They, both of them show an example in courage.

(2) *Industrial strike*: This is probably the most effective weapon of all and possibly the most difficult to evoke. One can only despair at hearing of demarcation disputes, however legitimate, when considered against the background of disinterest shown when a man's religion or political affiliation is a barrier to his obtaining employment. It is disheartening, therefore, when on the verge of a breakthrough, when the Dockers, the Factory girls and others from the Maydown Estate came out, with loss of pay, and marched for democracy through the streets of Derry, they were hastily ushered off the scene by the Derry Action Committee, the very people who set themselves up to be the arbitrators of the people.

(3) *Hunger strike*: Another form of protest that comes through the centuries from the Brehon Code down to the present day. This should be the final act of peaceful protest after all other means have been exploited. The classical example in modern times was the supreme protest of Terence McSwiney when, true to his words — 'Not all the armies of all the world can conquer the spirit of one true man, and that one man will prevail,' he focussed world attention on the Ireland of his day. No other single factor at that period made more impact on British public opinion. His hunger strike brought an end to the Black and Tan reign of terror.

(4) *Non-payment of Rates*: Most people even in a normal democratic society are loath to pay rates at the best of times. It should not be difficult, therefore, to persuade a majority to withhold payment altogether, or better still, to pay them into the account of a Citizens' Committee to be held in trust for the people until such time as a democratic council or corporation is elected.

(5) *Disruption of Public Transport*: This can be brought about by various means. There can, for instance be total boycott as was done in one city in America with the result that the local Transport Company, brought to near-bankruptcy, was forced to yield to the demands of the protesting negro population.

Another tactic is the mass sit-down in a city or town centre, or at strategic junctions. This could be augmented by sympathetic motorists converging on such areas at peak traffic hours. This tactic has the additional effect of disrupting the normal business of a city or town.

The People's Democracy very recently annoyed Belfast Corporation when they implemented a scheme of bus-fares. Their gallant effort, in spite of a lot of goodwill from bus crews, failed from lack of public support; but that is not to say that as a tactic it should be abandoned. It is still very much one to be considered for future action in the appropriate area.

(6) *Picketing*: Although the most common form of protest, picketing is not always taken seriously. Its success would seem to depend to a big extent on the element of surprise, on its unexpectedness as when, for example, the Young Socialists picketed Crumlin Road Gaol.

For the most part, however, picketing seems to take place when the issue of protest is no longer news. It seldom makes news. It can be, and often is, effective. Genuine grievances have, in fact, been highlighted by picketing alone. As a form of protest it is easily organised and simple to execute; but it could and should take a more aggressive form.

(7) *Squatting*: This has been going on spasmodically for a number of years but it was not until Austin Currie with the aid of TV proved that it could effectively be used as a propaganda weapon. The Derry Housing Action Committee has been doing more frequently and for a longer period of time what Austin Currie did in a single day and achieved less from the point of view of rousing public conscience. That is not to say, however, that the efforts of the Derry Housing Action Committee and the Derry Labour Party are not successful. A recent court case when a fine of only one shilling was imposed was, in a way, a sympathetic gesture from the bench, and a measure of their success in this humanitarian field.

There was a token occupation of flats in London last month which gained national network TV coverage. Neither the Derry Housing Action Committee nor the Derry Labour Party got little or any publicity at all. That is a pity. These people, in

concerning themselves in a practical programme solely of housing the needy have not time, it seems, to pay any attention to establishing a TV image. Be that a failure or not, the good work they are doing must not only be continued, but be encouraged as well. In any overall programme of civil disobedience such bodies as the Derry Housing Action Committee must play an essential part and all the machinery of publicity exploited for their support. The expertise of this and all other housing committees must equally be made available to everyone actively concerned with civil and social reform throughout Northern Ireland.

(8) *Civic Weeks*: The civic week with its false picture of a happily integrated community rollicking in a prosperous Unionist paradise must be exposed for the lie that it is — an O'Neill inspired gimmick designed to entice the entire community into the Unionist fold. The committees for these weeks are Unionist dominated and their programmes Unionist orientated. Very often these civic weeks are used to promote recruiting for HM Forces. But the mass of the people, ecumenically minded, are only too anxious to participate for the sake of good neighbourliness. For one week in the year they are allowed to get together, then it's back to the ghettos for another twelve months.

There is no doubt that the egotism of O'Neill will drive him in the forthcoming year into an even greater promotion of his PEP brainchild. This he must not be allowed to do. Civic weeks must be boycotted. 'No civic weeks without civil rights' must be our answer to O'Neill. The lick-spittle Nationalists who do not appear to resent O'Neill's sneering at our gaelic traditions, and who feel privileged to be allowed to participate must be denounced for what they are — a gutless, unprincipled lot just as capable of exploiting the people as their Unionist counterparts.

When in 1967, Danny Moore protested on the steps of Newry Town Hall against the local civic week being used for recruiting, he received a month's imprisonment. His case barely merited notice in the press far less than produce an outburst of indignation from an outraged Nationalist front.

(9) *Local Elections based on Universal Adult Franchise*: In every area where a Unionist minority returns a Unionist majority that election must be regarded as null and void and rejected by the electorate. An election committee, therefore, should be set up to organise a new election based on universal adult franchise and this election should be seen to be carried out dramatically, the co-operation of the entire electorate being sought. A council so elected, (the Council of the Majority) having a clear mandate from the people, should assume office immediately, should occupy the local town hall and proceed to carry out its functions of office. This will result in a situation where two rival councils will be in existence at the one and the same time, the Council of the Minority and the Council of the Majority. The people should be encouraged to recognise only one, that is, the Council of the Majority, and all local rates and taxes be paid to it alone.

(10) *Organisation of the Unemployed*: For the present, at least; there would appear to no direct end towards which the unemployed should be organised for civil disobedience unless it be along such lines as a citizens' police force to protect demonstrators and property, and to give aid to squatting families. Another function they could usefully serve could be in the capacity of election personnel.

Eamon Melaugh and Matt O'Leary of Derry have already organised the setting up of an Unemployed Action Committee with the sole purpose of looking after the interests of the unemployed. The advice of this committee should be sought at this stage.

In conclusion, it must be stressed, that even if the civil rights movement is not at present contemplating a programme of civil disobedience, it is still the clear duty of those who are directing the movement to be aware, at least, of the full scope and potentialities of such a programme. From this very moment, by lecture, symposium, and public meeting, the general public should be educated in all its aspects in order to be prepared if and when the occasion should arise that there is no alternative other than civil disobedience. That time could be very close.

The purpose of this talk is primarily to stimulate and promote an interest in the subject.

21st December, 1968.

— — — — —

Since the above talk was given the courageous march of the People's Democracy to Derry has made the need for more knowledge of civil disobedience a matter of urgency. It is to be hoped, that this paper will be used to further the interests of civil disobedience.

As a foot-note to marches, it seems almost unfair to expect people to come out and march if they are to be left defenceless against organised and well-armed thugs. Is it not time that marchers were defended — not by stewards — but by a volunteer body of citizens' police?

Appendix G

Reject Stormont Repression

The Public Order Bill, may soon become law in Northern Ireland, it provides:—

Marches: Requires you to give 96 hours notice of a march. In England no notice is required. You can be sent to prison for 6 months or fined £100 for taking part in a march which has not given 4 days notice to the police.

You can be sent to prison for 2 years or fined £500, if you defy a ban on a march or a police re-route order. It is no defence that you believed the ban or order to be improper. This Bill says Courts cannot question the Unionist Government.

Sit downs: You can be imprisoned for 1 month or fined £50 or both for 'sitting, kneeling or lying down in a public place.' You can be fined £20 if you refuse to give your name to a police officer at a 'sitdown.'

Public buildings: If you protest peacefully in any Public Building, in any way you are liable to 2 years imprisonment or £500 fine or both. Public Buildings include any government local authority, school or university Building. A police officer can remove you by force without the consent of anyone in charge of the buildings.

Counter-demonstrations: People who oppose marches have the right to do so. The police have enough powers under the present law to deal with those who wish to be violent or physically obstruct processions.

A separate law should deal with offensive weapon and para-military organisations.

This Bill is Repressive. It intends to banish peaceful protest against injustice. We call on you to protest against it now. The answer to unrest is full Civil Rights; not more power to police and government.

Appendix H

People of Dungiven: About the Orange Order

This is a call to you from, the local Action Committee, the North Derry CRA, the CRA Executive (Belfast) and the Peoples' Democracy

We all ask you to remember that the struggle for Civil Rights in Northern Ireland will be a long one. It is a struggle which calls on people to play their part in different ways.

You are being asked to play a part now by ensuring that no violent objection is taken to the Orange Parade next Saturday, June 28th.

There can be many legitimate objections, to the Orange Order, including its objectives and its influence. But at this time we feel the most effective way of making a protest is in a non-violent fashion. Therefore we ask that you help to ensure there is no obstruction of the parade, and that you support the Strabane Civil Rights March on Saturday 28th, at 4 o'clock, or that you stay indoors, and leave a deserted town as a protest, during the Orange Parade.

There will be a public meeting, next week, to discuss these proposals, and a date will be announced. Please come and help the Civil Rights Cause.

Appendix I

Workers' Civil Rights

Workers in Northern Ireland are denied their rights.

The 1927 Trades Disputes Act was never repealed in Northern Ireland. This means that Trade Union Funds cannot be donated to the Labour Party unless a worker 'contracts in.' In Great Britain, Trade Union Funds can be used to affiliate the Labour Party, unless the worker 'contracts out.'

The *Rookes v Bernard* decision still applies in Northern Ireland. This means that an employer here can sue a Trade Union for loss of income due to a strike. In Britain the Labour Government enacted legislation overruling the *Rookes v Bernard* decision.

The Special Powers Act can be used to outlaw strikes in public Utilities.

The Emergency Powers Act can be used to ban almost any strike if a State of Emergency is declared.

The Public Order Act makes spontaneous marches (by strikers) illegal.

The Proposed Public Order Amendment Bill, as it stands will make marches or demonstrations by strikers illegal unless four days' notice has been given. The Minister of Home Affairs has promised that he will amend this clause, but has not indicated if he will include marches by unofficial strikers.

Almost 40,000 people are out of work.

The average industrial wage for a manual worker is £3. 10. 0. a week less than in Britain.

24,000 people, mainly young workers and old-age pensioners, are deprived of any vote in local government elections. Local government controls housing in Northern Ireland.

Half the population in Northern Ireland live in sub-standard housing.

The Unionist Party has always set out to divide the working people of Northern Ireland by encouraging irrelevant sectarian divisions. It thus is able to force both sections of the working class to accept these otherwise intolerable conditions in housing, employment and trade-union rights.

The struggle by workers in the trade-union movement for better wages, full employment workers' control and trade-union rights is at one with the struggle by the workers in the civil rights movement against discrimination, sectarianism, repressive legislation and the lack of houses and jobs.

Appendix J

Socialist Alliance — Statement of Aims

1. Members of the Socialist Alliance reject the principle of co-operation with or reform of capitalism in solving the problems of unemployment, bad housing and the need for democratic control. Only the establishment of a workers' and farmers' state, prepared to nationalise basic industries under workers' control and base its agricultural policy on state-assisted producers' co-operatives can establish full employment and build sufficient houses.
2. Recognising that the division of Ireland has only served to defend local groups of landlords and employers North and South and, by dividing the working class, allow the strengthening of the control of British and international finance on the economy of both states the Socialist Alliance stands for the creation of a workers' and farmers' Republic in Ireland. Recognising the legitimate though exaggerated fears of Protestant workers in the North the Alliance rejects the strategy of uniting Ireland first and then struggling for Socialism.
3. While fully committed to the establishment of Socialism in Ireland members of the Alliance recognise that the achievement of this is ultimately dependent on the overthrow of capitalism internationally and especially in Britain. Accordingly the Alliance will co-operate with and support the Socialist and workers' movements in other countries, particularly Britain.
4. The Socialist Alliance rejects the politics of great power blocs, East or West, and the nuclear balance of terror.
5. In the current situation in Northern Ireland the Socialist Alliance agrees to give critical support to the Civil Rights movement but with the intention of trying to deepen its political consciousness and direct its policies towards the underlying and less sectarianly divisive issues of housing, unemployment and low wages.

Suggested Structure for Socialist Alliance

1. Membership on an individual basis.
2. Conference once every two months, open to all members.
3. Conference to elect the following committees:
 - (i) Organising committee which will have overall responsibility for organisation and will appoint a secretary, treasurer, regional organiser and any other necessary officers from its number. Responsible for keeping contact with members in different areas.
 - (ii) Policy committee which will facilitate the discussion of policy between conferences and be responsible for press statements in the light of agreed policy.
 - (iii) Publications committee which will be responsible for publications of the Alliance and will appoint editors where necessary.
4. Members of the Alliance in a given area are to form their own groups, hold regular meetings and elect whatever committees may be necessary. They should notify the organising committee that they have done so, and notify the policy committee of policy resolutions passed.
5. Should the need arise to make an important policy decision quickly, the policy committee should call a special conference of delegates, one from each area.

Appendix K

Broadcast from Radio Free Belfast August 1969

Let us make our position clear about our barricades. For 50 years a Unionist aristocratic clique, who have nothing in common with the ordinary people either Catholic or Protestant, have ruled this province. They have kept themselves in power by a simple strategy. They have duped the underprivileged Protestant people by creating the myth that if these people did not support the Unionist regime they would immediately be swept away by the Papists and IRA. In other words they have injected a terrible fear into the hearts of the Protestant working people. Therefore the Unionist Party by breeding the sort of people who committed the atrocities of the 14th and 15th August were in fact the real murderers.

Let our message be heard loud and clear. We seek to oppress no-one. We don't want revenge for the terrible attacks on innocent people. We seek justice. We seek equality. We seek an end to rule by the Unionist junta which uses religion to divide the ordinary working people and to divert them from their misery, from their bad houses, from their poor wages, from their dole queues.

Unfortunately because of the Unionist policy of segregation (which is comparable to that in South Africa where people are kept apart because of their colour) most of the people behind the barricades are Catholic. We have not erected barricades to keep Catholic and Protestant apart. We have erected barricades because the people of the barricaded districts are terrified and must be protected against a possible repetition of the savagery of 14th and 15th August. We are not going to ever again risk the murder of children and innocent people. Our barricades must stay until we are sure this will not happen again. The Army can't stay here for ever. The 'B' Specials must be disbanded, the RUC must be disarmed and the Special Powers Act must be repealed. Trust will only be built on the removal of fear. Peace will only come when all men stand equal and unafraid.

Appendix L

People's Democracy Conference, October 12th

Motion: The People's Democracy, which has been active in the struggle for civil rights, for more jobs and houses, and against Toryism, North and South, believes that its objectives can only be obtained by the ousting of both Tory governments and the establishment of an Irish Socialist Republic.

Proposed by M Farrell

Argument: Three factors make it imperative that the PD clarify for itself its own ultimate objectives and that these include the establishment of a Socialist Republic in Ireland. The factors are:

1. The Protestant backlash and the threat of Orange Fascism.
2. The use of 7,000 British troops in Northern Ireland.
3. The necessity for support from the South.

(1) The Protestant Backlash:

The PD long ago recognised that an end to discrimination was not enough. Slums and unemployment would remain, breeding violence and misery. Our struggle would have to continue. Now this has become urgent. The Protestant working class has been shielded from some of the worst aspects of economic depression by the system of discrimination. They now see this privileged position — however derisory the privileges — coming to an end. The result has been the growth of Orange Fascism.

Orange Fascism is a reality. The pogrom in Belfast on August 14th and 15th and the subsequent campaign of burning and intimidation showed the Fascists' teeth. Paisley's rally at Stormont showed their considerable strength. They are well armed and will be better armed and stronger if the Specials are disbanded.

PD and CRA face a dilemma. To press ahead with purely civil liberties demands will lead to more pogroms and inevitably to a sectarian response from the Catholics who have suffered so much during it. They would turn to green sectarianism and random terrorism, again leading to pogroms. There is no liberal way out of this dilemma.

The Protestant workers fear unemployment and having to take their place behind Catholics with large families in the housing queue. They fear this even more if, as they think likely, the Border goes. They are moving towards Paisley because he provides the best defence against these dangers.

These people will not be wooed by promises that the Catholics won't harm them, or by 'recognising the Constitution.' They will only be won away from Paisleyism by involving them in struggles — with their Catholic fellow workers — against redundancies, for higher wages, and for more houses. They must also be shown how their Unionist leaders are really their exploiters and the British connection is a source of exploitation. All this means launching a campaign for socialism and supporting workers' struggles on day-to-day issues.

But Northern Ireland with its current economic system cannot provide more jobs and houses, or higher wages. It is a fringe area of the UK economy and is experiencing a run-down of its traditional industries. The new industries being established are either only made viable by the massive investment grants or are subsidiaries of British companies which will be closed down during periods of 'squeeze.' Only large-scale public ownership and control of the flow of profit and capital out of the area can end the shortages. However, Northern Ireland is by itself unviable and this strategy would have to be applied over the larger area of Ireland as a whole. Even to attempt such a strategy in Northern Ireland alone, however, would mean 'subverting' the Constitution and creating a Six-County Socialist Republic.

(2) *The British Troops:*

The British troops served to de-fuse the situation in Belfast and Derry and still provide some protection for the threatened Catholic ghettos. But no-one, except Eddie McAteer and Dr Philbin, dreams of trusting them completely. They have already helped the RUC raid Republican houses and arrested people for putting up PD posters. They work in close co-operation with the RUC and the 'B' Specials. Their operations are controlled by a Security Committee which consists of the Army chiefs, the RUC authorities and the (Unionist) Minister of Home Affairs.

The troops co-operate with the Stormont regime because they are basically sent here to shore it up, not as the representatives of an impartial outside arbiter. Just at the moment there are some contradictions between the interests of the British Government — and the British companies and firms they represent — and the Unionists. In the interests of long-term stability Whitehall wants reform here and is trying to push the Unionists. But if the Left and the CR movement aren't satisfied with the reforms agreed on between Callaghan and Chichester-Clark no-one should doubt that the British troops will be used to enforce the ban on meetings and demonstrations, and even to round up the 'subversives' if Britain decides that that was in her interest. They decided that way in Malaya, Aden, Kenya, and Cyprus — where Freeland himself saw active service.

The point is that the British troops are here to serve British interests and will only protect threatened people so long as that is what Britain wants. They will also be used at any time, now or in the future, against progressive forces here when they threaten British interests, especially economic interests. Accordingly the presence of the British troops is a sharp reminder of the reality of British imperialism in Northern Ireland. This means that the anti-imperialist struggle is still relevant in this area and must be linked with the social and economic struggle. While British troops are in Northern Ireland, or are only an hour's flight away, the granting of civil rights in Ulster will be at the whim of the London government. That is intolerable. The struggle for a Socialist Republic links the economic class-consciousness of the Protestant workers with the anti-imperialist outlook of Republicans.

(3) *Support from the South:*

During the siege of Bogside even the people who had wholeheartedly opposed previous intervention by Fianna Fail politicians in Northern affairs had mixed feelings about Lynch's television speech. It gave some encouragement to the beleaguered Bogsiders and it may have deterred the Stormont regime and their Whitehall masters from trying to wipe out for good the pocket of resistance in Bogside.

It would be idle to rule out the danger of further pogroms in the North or of concerted assaults by the police and British troops on barricaded areas. In these circumstances the threat of intervention from the South is a useful deterrent. It is a two-edged weapon, however. Lynch's speech may also have helped to stir the ultra-Unionists to a peak of rage in August and there is no doubt that the actual intervention of the Free State army would drive any 'moderate' Protestants into the arms of the Paisleyites. Anyway it is inconceivable that the Eire army could intervene against the wishes of the British government, given the extent to which British economic interests now control the economy of the South.

There is only one way of ensuring that there is a force in the South capable of intervening in the North if pogroms begin again, and capable of doing so without meeting the unqualified hostility of the entire Protestant population. That is, to heighten the struggle against economic imperialism there, breaking the British — and US — control over the Republic's actions, and to change the Tory nature of the state. The only conceivable Southern intervention in a Northern pogrom which would not plunge the area into an even bloodier civil war would be an intervention designed to secure a socialist republic — not to submerge the Protestant workers in a state where their standard of living would be lower and the Catholic church would have the controlling hand.

For these reasons the PD should acknowledge that the only solution lies in a socialist republic. It is necessary to be clear on the final objective both as a guide to future activities and so that a coherent alternative can be offered to people who wish to join the PD. The clear stating of the ultimate objective should not conflict with any practical activities but should involve trying to integrate day-to-day activities into an overall strategy.

Appendix M

PD Standing Orders

1. Membership:

The People's Democracy is an individual-membership organisation and membership is open to all who accept its policies. Members are recommended to make a contribution on joining.

2. A conference of all the members of PD shall be held every month at a different venue. The conference will discuss recent activities and future policies, and will recognise new branches. The Committee must give members one week's notice of the venue, and must circulate in advance copies of the proposals and topics to be discussed at the meeting.

3. General Meeting:

A general meeting of all members of the PD shall be held every six months under the same rules as the conference. The General Meeting shall have the power to make changes in the Standing Orders of PD. The General Meeting shall elect nine members of the committee by secret ballot. Only 25 members, or any branch of PD may call a Special General Meeting of PD by making a request to the Committee. On receiving such a request, the Committee must call a Special General Meeting within two weeks, and must give members one week's notice of the Special General Meeting. The Special General Meeting has all the powers of the ordinary General Meeting.

4. Voting:

Voting at the Conferences and General Meetings shall be restricted to PD members.

5. The Committee:

The Committee shall consist of nine members elected at the General Meeting and one delegate from each branch with more than 10 members. The Committee shall be responsible for the general administration of PD, and in particular shall have the power to issue statements. It shall work closely with local PD branches. The quorum for a Committee Meeting shall be 6, and the Committee must regularly inform PD members of the attendances of Committee members. The Committee shall meet on a fixed day of the week once a fortnight at least. The Committee shall appoint from among its members the Treasurer and Secretary. The Secretary must convene meetings of the Committee and inform each Committee member.

6. Branches:

A Branch of the PD should be established in any area where there is a group of PD members. Branches are responsible for enrolling PD members in their area. Branches should make their own rules for the conducting of business. Branches shall appoint a secretary, treasurer, and a delegate to the Committee.

Appendix N

Belfast Housing Crisis

29% of houses are unfit to live in

90% of houses on Falls and Shankill lack any of the basic amenities

20,000 people are on housing lists in Belfast and district

12,000 tenants on Corporation Estates face crippling rent-increases

What are the facts?

Belfast is a slum city. It has one of the worst housing records in Europe. Today 30,000 or 29 per cent of housing in the city is not fit to live in. The housing lists grow longer every year. 30,000 people await homes in the Belfast area. Add to this 1,000 families homeless, now living in 'emergency' huts or 'prefabs' and you have a serious housing crisis.

AREA	No back entrance	No inside Toilet	No Bath or Handbasin	No Hot Water	Less than standard no. of Bedrooms
	%	%	%	%	%
SANDY ROW	50	94	90	94	30
DONEGALL PASS	13	84	85	85	22
CROMAC AREA	37	90	89	93	47
SHANKILL AREA	61	94	94	93	30
ALBERT BRIDGE ROAD	46	99	94	96	22

Conditions as bad, and worse, exist in such areas as Falls Road, York Street, Ravenhill and Crumlin Road.

These areas include parts of the City which are predominantly Protestant or Catholic. Housing conditions are not based on religion. The Government has failed and criminally neglected to house working class people, Protestant and Catholic.

The solution is not to get into one of the Corporation Housing Estates. Many of the houses on these estates, all built post-war, are as bad as the older slums. This is because they were built as cheaply as possible and cramped together with no concern for comforts or proper amenities. Thousands of children have no play facilities. Whole estates lack community centres, Public telephones, or adequate Public transport. And now the Corporation's 12,000 tenants face a crippling rent increase.

What's the Answer?

Many thousands of new houses are needed — Built as Homes and not built for profit.

A Housing Emergency must be declared. A freeze must be directed to the building of decent homes.

None of this will be possible unless the Corporation and the Government throws off the shackles of debt that holds them in the grip of the financiers and Banks. Here is an example of where your money goes:

Belfast Corporation 1969

Total housing revenue	£1,006,479
Interest paid on debt to Banks	£1,902,000
<hr/>	
Balance paid by tax-payer	£895,521

All debts and interest on debt to Banks must be cancelled. Loans must be provided at no interest rate to build homes.

These are the facts and a socialist plan for providing decent homes for Belfast people.

Appendix O

The Revolutionary Socialist Students Federation

demands:

- (i) That the University be controlled by all its members, ie, Teachers and Students.
- (ii) That present unjust selective entrance qualifications be abolished ie, a Free and Open University with priority given to a vast expansion of educational facilities.
- (iii) The abolition of the present examination system which negates the true meaning of education ie, free dissemination of ideas.'
- (iv) That the Union be controlled by general meetings of students.
- (v) That the President and Executive be elected by the general student body.

The University cannot be divorced from the society from which it evolves. Our society is one where, the majority are continually being manipulated by a powerful minority who account only to themselves for their actions. The University reflects this repression. The Academic Council need not justify itself to the majority of students and teachers. We believe people should have effective control over those matters which affect their own lives. We demand that all students and teachers be given control over their own University, and workers over their factories.

Appendix P

PD Political Programme

This political programme was adopted at a PD Conference on Sunday, November 29, 1970.

Aims:

The aim of the People's Democracy is the establishment of a socialist system of society in Ireland and throughout the world. The first step towards that objective is the establishment of a Workers' and Small Farmers Republic in the 32 counties of Ireland. But, since complete socialism cannot be established in any one country, or so long as the great imperialist powers like the USA remain capitalist, the PD will readily co-operate and render every assistance to socialists in all other countries.

Believing that both parts of Ireland today suffer from the twin evils of capitalism and imperialism the PD is firmly committed to the removal of British troops and Anglo-American economic control from Ireland, and to breaking the stranglehold of grasping native capitalists over the Irish people.

The Workers' Republic will be a society in which all natural resources, major industries and financial institutions will be publicly owned and jointly controlled by those who work in them, or use their products. It will guarantee to each citizen a home, a livelihood and a job, plus an adequate medical and educational service. It will encourage the development of cultural activities and end the tyranny of commercialism over art and culture. Believing that progress can only come about through intellectual freedom and the right to question the established order, the Workers' Republic will also guarantee to all its citizens freedom of political and religious belief and freedom to disseminate political and religious views. It will not grant a special position or privileges to any religious group. The Workers' Republic will be based on a mutual respect for the different cultural tendencies in Ireland, and will work to create one unified community out of a synthesis of what is best in the different traditions in Ireland, rather than by the destruction of one tradition by another.

The Workers' Republic will be a thoroughly democratic society in which governmental functions will be shared by representatives elected on a territorial basis by all citizens over 18, and by delegates from councils of workers, tenants and farmers. All public representatives will be subject to re-call and re-election by their constituents. As much decision-making as possible will be devolved from the centre to local factory councils, tenants associations and farmers' co-operatives.

Methods of Achievement:

The PD believes that the Workers' Republic can only be achieved with the consent of the majority of the Irish people. The PD hopes to win that support by building a mass political organisation throughout Ireland committed to the establishment of the Workers' Republic and totally opposed to both Green and Orange Toryism, and to sham Labourism. This organisation will work for the immediate improvement of the conditions of the working class and small farmers, but will constantly attempt to show that only a socialist society can ultimately free working people from poverty and want and give them the opportunity to develop their personality to the fullest extent.

To secure its objectives the PD will use both parliamentary and extra-parliamentary means as appropriate. Recognising also that grasping employers and exploiting imperialist powers rarely give up their ill-gotten gains without a struggle and that the law, the police and the imperialist troops constantly defend the exploiters, the PD will not be intimidated by the threat of force and recognises that a certain degree of counter force may be necessary to carry out the wishes of the people.

While anxious to stimulate increased political awareness and political activity among working people, the PD recognises that haphazard and directionless activity will not overthrow the highly-organised forces of imperialism and capitalism. A well-organised political movement with a clear political strategy, whose members

have a sound understanding of socialist theory, is the best weapon of the working class in the struggle for socialism.

Immediate Demands:

The PD believes that the following measures are necessary both immediately to improve the living conditions of the working class and to lay the foundations of the Workers' Republic by wresting control of the economy from the profiteers and exploiters. Some of these measures could be taken by a socialist administration. The PD will campaign for the implementation of this programme both by harrassing the existing government and by winning the public support necessary to socialism to come to power. These measures could be applied in the 26 Counties as in the 6 Counties.

1. Nationalisation or handing over to co-operatives of all mines, inland fisheries, forests and other natural resources including large estates.
2. Nationalisation of all Banks, Insurance Companies and Financial Institutions.
3. Nationalisation, or handing over to co-operatives, of all firms and farms employing over 25 people.
4. All nationalised resources or industries to be handed over to co-operatives or to be managed by workers' councils.
5. A ban on the export of profit from any part of Ireland.
6. All remaining privately-owned firms to publish annually a full statement of accounts including the salaries of all involved in the firms.
7. A minimum wage of £20 per week for all full-time workers and guaranteed work of full maintenance for all. An upper wage-limit for all workers.
8. An upper-limit on all privately-owned farms. Encouragement of the growth of co-operatives among small producers (privately owned firms and farmers) by a re-structuring of grants and subsidies and by a programme of education in the value of co-operation.
9. Massive state and municipal investment in new industry, taking account of people's social and environmental needs as well as economic requirements.
10. The abolition of all ground rent and absentee landlordism.
11. No-one to own more than one dwelling house. Local housing authorities to be given first option on buying all vacant housing and housing authorities to have the power to order the sub-division or re-allocation of unusually large houses.
12. The provision of a universal free health service, ie the abolition of prescription charges etc and full maintenance for the sick. No preferential treatment for anyone under the Health Service.
13. Schools to be organised on a comprehensive and co-educational basis, and to be religiously integrated. New schools to be provided by the state and all schools controlled by management committees, representative of parents, students, teachers and local authorities.
14. The provision of nursery school places for all children, and adequate provision of parks, swimming pools and playgrounds. Widespread provision of community centres and greatly increased grants for cultural activities. Commercial advertisements to be excluded from television and radio services.
15. Repeal of the Special Powers Act (NI) and Offences Against the State Act (26 Counties), Criminal Justice Act (NI), Public Order Act (NI), and all other repressive legislation. Rigid outlawing of all discrimination on the basis of religion, colour, or sex in all spheres of activity, public or private.
16. Guarantees of freedom and equality of religious and political belief and repeal of all laws and ordinances which give a special position to any religious or political belief eg the section of the 26 County constitution which gives a special position to the Catholic church and the law in Northern Ireland prescribing an oath of allegiance for most public employment. No legal enforcement of the moral code of any particular sect, eg an end to the ban on contraception and divorce in the 26 Counties and to restrictive laws on Sunday observance in Northern Ireland.
17. The establishment of a national (32 county-wide) Council of Delegates from shop stewards' groups, tenants' associations and co-operative and small farmers' associations. The Council would foster solidarity among the exploited sections of the community and organise widespread support during strikes and agitations. The Council should seek to extend its control over all sections of the economy.
18. The convening of an Assembly of elected representatives from both the Northern and Southern areas as soon as a majority agrees to this, and the new

Assembly to replace the present partitioned ones at Stormont and Leinster House. The function of this new Assembly is to co-ordinate, not control, the work of the democratic workers' councils.

19. The repudiation of the Government of Ireland Acts and the breaking of the links between Northern Ireland and Britain.

20. The immediate withdrawal of all British troops from Northern Ireland.

21. The disbandment of the RUC, UDR and Garda Siochana. The organisation of a Civic Defence Force under the control of locally elected representatives and delegates from workers' organisations. All officers of the RUC, and Garda Siochana, all members of RUC and Garda Special Branches, and all members of the RUC Special Patrol Group (riot squad) to be barred from membership of the Civic Defence Force.

22. No membership of the EEC, and no participation in any existing military alliance.

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44. William Kornhauser, *The Politics of Mass Society* (Routledge and Kegan Paul 1965), pp 159-60.
45. John Macrae, *Polarisation in Northern Ireland: A Preliminary Report* for the Lancaster Peace Research Centre, July 1966, p 14.
46. *Why Justice Can Not Be Done*, a policy statement issued by the CSJ, nd.
47. Martin Wallace, op cit, p 31.
48. O'Neill, op cit, p 152.
49. Gardiner, op cit, p 8.
50. D P Barritt and C F Carter, *The Northern Ireland Problem A Study in Group Relations*. (Oxford University Press 1962), p 70.
51. Ibid, pp 90-91.
52. Eric Ashby and Mary Anderson, *The Rise of the Student Estate* (McMillan 1970), pp 52-4. The authors cite only one example of student protest at Queen's and that was circa 1900.
53. E Wight Bakke, 'Roots and Soil of Student Activism' in S M Lipset (ed), *Student Politics* (Basic Books, 1967), p 56.
54. S M Lipset and P G Altbach, *Student Politics and Higher Education in the United States* in Lipset, op cit, p 243.
55. Richard Rose, *Governing Without Consensus*, p 419.
56. Jean-Pierre Worms, 'French Student Movement' in S M Lipset, op cit, p 273.
57. S M Lipset and P G Altbach, 'Student Politics and Higher Education in the United States', in S M Lipset (ed), op cit, p 251.
58. Philip G Altbach, 'Students and Politics' in S M Lipset (ed), op cit, p 88.
59. For details of the Cordoba Manifesto see Fred Halliday, *Students of the World Unite in Student Power: Problems, Diagnosis, Action*, edited by Alexander Cockburn and Robin Blackburn (Penguin Books, 1969), p 287 and K N Walker, *A Comparison of the University Reform Movements in Argentina and Colombia* in S M Lipset, op cit, pp 295-6.
60. Philip G Altbach, *Students and Politics* in S M Lipset op cit.
61. Ibid, pp 88-9. See also Cockburn and Blackburn, op cit, pp 294-8.
62. Fred Halliday, *Students of the World Unite* in Cockburn and Blackburn, op cit, p 303.
63. Ibid, p 309.
64. *Reflections on the Revolution in France: 1968*. ed C Posner (Pelican Books 1970), passim.
65. Peter Buckman, *The Limits of Protest* (Panther Books, 1970), pp 50-51.
66. Ibid, p 49.
67. Richard Flacks, *The New Left and American Politics After Ten Years* in *The Journal of Social Issues*. Vol 27 No 1, 1971, p 24.
68. Andre Gorz, *What Are the Lessons of the May Events?* in C Posner, op cit, p 260.
69. See Armand L Mauss, *On Being Strangled by the Stars and Stripes: The New Left, the Old Left, and the Natural History of American Radical Movements* in *The Journal of Social Issues*, Vol 27 No. 1, 1971. p 192 for a model of the stages of growth through which radical movements pass in the natural history of their careers.
70. Interview, John McGuffin. He had been chairman of QUB Campaign for Nuclear Disarmament (CND) 1964-65 and a member of the University Labour Group. He says that he did not take his politics too seriously until about late 1967 when he considered himself to be an anarchist. He was attracted to the People's Democracy by its libertarian organisation and was to play an active role in its development. At that time he was a lecturer in Liberal Studies at Belfast's College of Technology. One of his colleagues was Michael Farrell.
71. Bernadette Devlin, *The Price of My Soul* (Pan Books, 1969), p 100.
72. The NILP had been formed in 1949 and was regarded as the chief non-sectarian party in the province. It had never won more than four seats at Stormont and when the civil rights campaign began it had only two MPs. Richard Rose (p 231) has written that it is better understood as an inter-confessional party, ie, an organisation bringing Protestants and Catholics together in pursuit of common interests, but still responsive to religious pressures.'
73. Philip G Altbach, *Students and Politics* in S M Lipset, op cit, p 89.

74. The Young Socialist Alliance was composed of radicals within the Northern Ireland Labour Party, the Republican Labour Party, the National Democratic Party, and other young people who considered themselves to be socialists. It played a very active role in the People's Democracy in its formative period. Also it is an example of the fusions of radical activists common to the New Left.

75. *Gown* (undergraduate newspaper, QUB), 22.4.1966.

76. The International Socialists (IS) group was the largest Trotskyist fragment in Britain. For further details see Peter Sedgwick's *Varieties of Socialist Thought in Protest and Discontent*, edited by B Crick and W A Robson (Penguin, 1970), pp 64-5.

77. *Irish Militant* (organ of the Irish Workers' Group), No 8, November, 1966.

78. Cyril Toman joined the QUB Labour Group in 1963, visited Moscow as its representative in September 1964, edited its magazine *Impact* in 1965-66 and was Chairman of the Literific Society (Queen's principal debating society) 1965-66. He joined the Willowfield branch of the NILP in 1964, was chairman of the NILP Young Socialists and a member of the Irish Workers' Group.

79. *Irish Militant*, Vol 2 No 3, March 1967. Later we will see that the principle of an all-Ireland Workers' Republic was to be the end towards which the People's Democracy was directed.

80. Interview, John Graham.

81. *Impact* (QUB Labour Group Magazine), 1966-7, p 2; and interview, John Graham.

82. *Irish Militant*, Vol 2 No 4, April 1967.

83. H Diamond MP, *Hansard (NI)*, Vol 67, cols 1878-9, 15.11.1967.

84. *Hansard (NI)*, Vol 67, col 1890.

85. Martin Wallace, *Drums and Cuns: Revolution in Ulster* (Geoffrey Chapman 1970), p 101.

86. Armand L Mauss in *The Journal of Social Issues*, Vol 27 No 1, 1971, op cit, p 192.

87. Ibid p 193.

88. Liam de Paor, *Divided Ulster* (Penguin Books 1970), p 166.

89. Ibid, p 168.

90. Eamonn McCann was a contemporary of Farrell, Toman and Egan at University. He was a former Chairman of the QUB Labour Group 1962-3, and editor of its magazine *Impact*. He had also been Chairman of QUBCND 1963-4, President of the literific 1964-5, Queen's Orator and member of the QUBSRC. He was a member of the NILP, joining its executive in 1969 and had been an active member of the Irish Workers' group and a regular contributor to its newspaper *Irish Militant*.

91. *Disturbances in Northern Ireland: Report of the Commission appointed by the Governor of Northern Ireland*. Cmd 532 (hereinafter known as the Cameron Commission), paras 171-2. See also Max Hastings *Ulster 1969: The Fight for Civil Rights in Northern Ireland* (Victor Gollancz, 1970), pp 52-56. It should be remembered that allegations of police brutality were in vogue at the time. This riot occurred less than two months after the Chicago police had reacted violently to an anti-war demonstration outside the Democratic Party's National Conference in that city. The one television crew present in Derry showed its film of the events widely around the world.

1: October 1968—February 1969

1. *Transcript of 60 Minutes*, Vol 11 No 2, CBS Television Network, 3.2.1970.
2. P. Jacob and S Landau, *The New Radicals* (Pelican 1967), p 86.
3. Interview, Cyril Toman.
4. This problem of 'territoriality' was, and is, of the essence of the Northern Ireland problem — to encroach on the other man's territory is seen as a refusal to recognise the status quo and an attempt to breach the sectarian divide. It was a problem which PD was to probe none too subtly on a number of occasions.
5. *The Listener*, 24.10.1968. An article, *Old Derry's Walls*, by Seamus Heaney.
6. *Freedom*, (newspaper of the London Federation of Anarchists), 19.10.1968.
7. Cameron Commission, para 195.

8. Interview, John Murphy. He was a contemporary of Michael Farrell and the other left-wing activists in the early 1960's. At that stage he considered himself to be a nationalist, but he says that he became a socialist overnight after he had gone to Derry on October 5. His importance in PD lies in his organisational ability and in the fact that he owned a printing business. He had been a committee member of the New Ireland Society 1961-62, the Secretary of the Students' Union 1964-65, founder and first chairman of the 16 Club (an arts society), editor of its magazine, National Democratic Party candidate in the local government elections of May 1967 and in the general election of February 1969. He had participated in some Young Socialist Alliance demonstrations in 1968 but he did not join it formally.
9. D R Schweitzer and James M. Elden, 'New Left As Right. Convergent Themes of Political Discontent,' in *The Journal of Social Issues*, Vol 27 No 1, 1971, p 145.
10. It should be remembered that five socialists were elected despite the fears of the body of the meeting that one particular political sect might attempt to control the new organisation. There was nothing sinister in this development: most people were concerned to prevent only the better-known activists from being elected.
11. H Blumer cited in *The Journal of Social Issues*, Vol 27 No 1, 1971, p 193.
12. On the previous evening Capt O'Neill had called for 'proper debate and not a monologue' (*Belfast Telegraph*, 31.10.1968).
13. *Irish News*, 21.10.1968. This statement is in stark contrast to her interview with the CBS programme, *60 Minutes*.
14. *The Times*, 12.10.1968.
15. The MPs who signed consisted of six Nationalists, two Republican Labour, two NILP, one Liberal and one Unionist, Mr. Phelim O'Neill (North Antrim).
16. As far as I can ascertain this is the only successful example of a student sit-in inside a parliamentary building in the Western liberal-democratic countries.
17. This was the most serious incident in which PD was involved in a violent situation with the police during this early period. It is in sharp contrast with, for example, a battle between 4,000 students and police in Rome in March 1968 when hundreds were arrested (see A Cockburn and R. Blackburn, *op cit*, pp 305-6) or a battle between students and police in Paris on May 3, 1968, when 596 were arrested (see C Posner, *op cit*, p 65).
18. Richard Rose, *Governing Without Consensus*, p 159. (In so far as it avoided university issues completely, PD seems to be unique in the Western World. The literature does not mention any other student movement so totally absorbed in *societal*, as opposed to *etudialist*, issues).
19. Armand L Mauss, in *The Journal of Social Issues*, Vol 27 No 1, 1971, *op cit*, p 193.
20. Interview, John Hume. He was MP for the Foyle division of Derry and one-time vice-chairman of the Derry Citizens Action Committee.
21. The Revolutionary Socialist Students Federation, an extreme and very small left-wing splinter group whose primary aim was radical reform of the University structure. At no time was it an influential group within PD.
22. For details of SDS see Jacobs and Landau, *The New Radicals*, *op cit*, pp 36-51.
23. P Buckman, *The Limits of Protest*, *op cit*, p 29.
24. N L Nieburg, *Violence, law and the informal polity*, in *Conflict Resolution*, Vol 13 No 2, p 204.
25. See O'Neill, *op cit*, pp 140-6.
26. The Young Socialist Alliance lay dormant during the early months of PD's existence. It held regular meetings but, since its members belonged to PD, did not promote any demonstrations of its own. Its role appears to have been that of a left-wing lever on PD decisions.
27. Interview, Cyril Toman.
28. Interview, John Hume.
29. Interview, Kevin Boyle. He was a lecturer in law in Queen's at this time. He had been one of Farrell's contemporaries, but had not been a member of any political group — unless one accepts his tenure in the Marxist Society for a very short period in 1967. He had been interested in the Working Committee on Civil Rights in Northern Ireland in 1964 but had not been asked to join it. He had been a founder member of the NICRA and had been on its first executive.
30. *Cameron Commission*, para 61.
31. Interview, Kevin Boyle.
32. Interview, Miss Bernadette Devlin MP.

33. *Irish Times*, 6.10.1971. This fact appeared in an article by Eamonn McCann giving a personal view of the civil rights campaign, but I can find no contemporary report of the dissolution of the YSA.
34. Interview, Michael Farrell.
35. Bernadette Devlin, *The Price of My Soul*, pp 121-123.
36. *Sunday News*, 29.12.1968 and *Irish Times*, 1.1.1969. Miss Murnaghan felt that, 'This march could be a test of our progress towards maturity.'
37. Interview, Michael Farrell.
38. Bernadette Devlin, op cit, p 120.
39. Eoin Sweeney, *Threshold*, No 23, Summer 1970, p 21.
40. Fred Halliday, *Students of the World Unite*, in A Cockburn and R Blackburn, *Student Power*, p 297.
41. Robert Moss, *Urban Guerrillas* (Temple Smith London 1972), pp 214-5.
42. There is no reason to detail the incidents which occurred during the march. This ground is very adequately covered in *Burntollet* (LRS Publishers 1969) by Bowes Egan and Vincent McCormack.
43. *Cameron Commission*, para 100.
44. Eoin Sweeney, op cit, p 38.
45. Peter Buckman, *The Limits of Protest*, p 23.
46. P G Altbach, *Student Politics* (ed S M Lipset), p 88.
47. Interview, Kevin Boyle.
48. Interview, Michael Farrell.
49. C Posner (ed), *Reflections on the Revolution in France: 1968*, p 96.
50. Interview, Cyril Toman.
51. R D Scott, *Ulster in Perspective: The Relevance of Non-European Experience in Australian Outlook*, XXIII, 3, December 1969, p 254.
52. Michael Farrell, *Struggle in the North* (a PD pamphlet), p 12.
53. Interview, John Hume MP.
54. Interview, Kevin Boyle.
55. *The Times*, 12.1.1969. A quote from Capt Long, Minister of Home Affairs.
56. Five to be precise: Fergus Woods was the only candidate who had not been involved in politics during his undergraduate days.
57. Cromac, Mid-Armagh, Bannside, South Derry, Enniskillen and Lisnaskea.
58. South Down and South Fermanagh.
59. South Down, South Fermanagh and South Derry.
60. Cromac, Mid-Armagh, Bannside, Enniskillen and Lisnaskea.
61. Interview, Kevin Boyle.
62. *PD Press Release*. See Appendix A.
63. See Appendix C.
64. *Ibid.* No 5.
65. *Irish Press*, 14.2.1969. Of course, Farrell's reply was misleading. One has only to examine his pamphlet *Struggle in the North* to detect the reverence he reserves for the ideas of another dead man, James Connolly.
66. See Appendix B.
67. *Irish Independent*, 14.2.1969. On nomination day the candidate's papers were declared invalid and Mr R O'Connor (Nationalist) was returned unopposed.
68. Michael Farrell, op cit, p 13.
69. See Appendices D and E.
70. Bernadette Devlin, op cit, p 152.
71. Foyle (John Hume MP), Mid-Derry (Ivan Cooper MP), and South Armagh (P O'Hanlon MP).
72. Interview, Miss Bernadette Devlin MP.
73. Interview, Fergus Woods.
74. Bernadette Devlin, op cit, p 152.
75. Interview, John McGuffin.
76. Owen Dudley Edwards, op cit, p 267.
77. Armand L Mauss, in *The Journal of Social Issues*, Vol 27 No 1, 1971, p 194.
78. Among other things it attempted to make sit-downs illegal; attempted to increase by forty-eight hours the notice which marchers had to give to the police before holding a procession; and made the holding of counter-demonstrations illegal.

2: March 1969—September 1969

1. *Financial Times*, 20.2.1969.
2. Russell Stetler, *The Battle of Bogside: the politics of violence in Northern Ireland* (Sheed and Ward 1970), p 48.
3. The Baillie Report as it came to be called was made available to the Ministry of Home Affairs in May, and to the Cameron Commission but it was never made public. Both County Inspector Baillie and the Cameron Commission accepted that a grave breakdown in discipline on the part of a number of policemen had occurred on the night of January 4/5. See *Cameron Commission*, para 177.
4. See Appendix F for an example of probably the most important political statement broadcast by Radio Free Derry.
5. Interview in *New Left Review* No 55 May-June 1969. 'People's Democracy: A Discussion on Strategy'. The interview took place on April 20, 1969.
6. A London based Trotskyite organisation.
7. *International*, Vol 2 No 5, May 1969.
8. *The Struggle in Ireland*, RSSF special paper, May 1, 1969.
9. *New Left Review* op cit p 1.
10. S M Lipset and P G Altbach *Student Politics and Higher Education in the United States*, in *Student Politics* (ed S M Lipset), pp 239-40.
11. *New Left Review*, op cit p19.
12. The best example of this type of smear occurs in the *Daily Mail*, 11 and 12.9.1969. *How world revolutionaries took the lead in Ulster's Civil Rights Struggle: The Professionals Behind the Barricades*. See also *Cameron Commission*, para 197.
13. Peter Buckman, *The Limits of Protest*, pp 209-210.
14. *Irish Militant*, Vol 2 No 3, March 1967.
15. *The Struggle in Ireland*, op cit, p 4.
16. Interview, John McGuffin.
17. *Freedom* 8.3.1969.
18. Such a group was the Socialist Society from the University of Bristol. See its magazine, *Offensive* 1.5.1969, pp 3-4, for an account of the march.
19. Philip Pettit (ed) *The Gentle Revolution: Crisis in the Universities* (Sceptor Books, Dublin 1969) p 65.
20. *Irish Independent*, 1.4.1969. The previous day O'Neill's leadership had been endorsed by the Ulster Unionist Council by 338 votes to 263.
21. A group of radical students at University College, Dublin, committed to radical reform of the university structure in particular and of society in general.
22. *Sunday Press*, 6.4.1969. Statement by John Feeney.
23. The attitude of the Dublin correspondent of the *Sunday News* (13.4.1969) is fairly typical: 'Their performance can only be described as a pathetic failure to enlist sympathy and support from Southern people in the campaign for Civil Rights . . . The stone throwing, name calling confrontation between rival Northern and Southern demonstrators outside the British Embassy in Dublin brought the affair down to the level of back street schoolboy "war".'
24. Interview, John McGuffin.
25. Interview, Fergus Woods.
26. Interview, John McGuffin.
27. *Freedom*, 19.4.1969.
28. Mid-Ulster By-Election Result, 17.4.1969:

Miss Bernadette Devlin (Unity)	-	-	-	-	33,648
Mrs Anna Forrest (Unionist)	-	-	-	-	29,437
					4,211
- 169 spoiled votes; 91.78% poll
29. Bernadette Devlin, op cit, pp 159-170.
30. J Bowyer Bell, *The Secret Army: A History of the IRA 1916-70* (Anthony Blond 1970), p 360.
31. Bernadette Devlin, op cit, p 170

32. Mr Roderick O'Connor MP spoke on her platform in Omagh and in Pomeroy, where Mr Tom Gormley MP spoke. In Strabane Mr Austin Currie MP spoke on her behalf.
33. *The People's Democracy . . . From a Working Class Viewpoint* (An Irish Communist Organisation pamphlet), May 1970, p 8. The ICO are a 'Stalinist' group which believes that there has been the historical evolution of two national communities in Ireland, that the Ulster Protestant community must be recognised as having distinct national rights, and is therefore entitled to remain with the United Kingdom if it so wishes. There is no evidence that it was a particularly active group. Its significance lies in its impressive literary output of pamphlets, its diligent research, and in its success in having its views discussed seriously across the political spectrum.
34. Interview in *Gown* 3.3.1970.
35. Interview, Miss Bernadette Devlin MP.
36. Bernadette Devlin, op cit, pp 165-6.
37. Interview, Miss Bernadette Devlin MP.
38. Interview, John McGuffin.
39. See, for example, an article on the SDS, the German Socialist Student Union, in *Survey: A Journal of Soviet and East European Studies*. No 67, April 1968. *Germany's Student Revolt* by Harold Hurwitz, p 93.
40. Owen Dudley Edwards, op cit, p 284.
41. See Appendix G.
42. Hansard (NI), Vol 73, col 1396. See the remarks of Mr J Burns MP (North Derry).
43. Appendix H.
44. Interview, Kevin Boyle.
45. Hansard (NI), Vol 73, cols 2043-2046.
46. Peter Cosgrove was a contemporary of Farrell, McCann, et al, a former committee member of QUB Labour Group and a contributor to its magazine *Impact*. He became active in PD when he returned from Zambia, where he had been teaching, in December 1968 and stood as its candidate in South Fermanagh. In common with Bernadette Devlin, he remained in his constituency and helped to build up the Fermanagh PD. After the serious rioting in August he returned to Belfast and worked behind the barricades. A few months later he returned to Zambia.
47. The list included three defeated PD candidates at the last election — Peter Cosgrove, Malachy Carey and Cyril Toman.
48. Interview, Kevin Boyle.
49. On a Catholic housing estate on the outskirts of Enniskillen a van was burned, barricades were erected temporarily and slogans had been painted on the road warning 'Paisleyites Keep Out'. *Irish Independent*, 28.7.1969.
50. See Appendix I.
51. Interview, Fergus Woods. See also *Violence and Civil Disturbances in Northern Ireland in 1969: The Scarman Tribunal*, cmd 566, Vol 1, paras 6.5 to 6.12.
52. Interview, Michael Farrell. See Appendix J.
53. 'If Mr. Porter does not agree to our plans these meetings will force him to take many police out of Derry.' Kevin Boyle quoted in the *Belfast Telegraph*, 13.8.1969.
54. J Bowyer Bell, op cit, p 366.
55. Reporters did not have easy access to the area and very few broad pictures emerge besides the information passed on at CCDC press conferences. An exception is *Free Belfast* by Martin Lindsay in the *Belfast Telegraph*, 8.9.1969.
56. Interview, Michael Farrell.
57. Michael Farrell, op cit, p 17.
58. *New Left Review* No 55, May/June 1969, pp 11-13.
59. Interview, John Murphy.
60. Interview, Fergus Woods.
61. I have managed to read those transcripts salvaged from the area but since some of them may be libellous, they must be referred to sparingly.
62. It became the official organ of PD from October 1969.
63. Appendix K. This is a fairly typical example of Radio Free Belfast's political line.
64. *Irish Communist Organisation* pamphlet, op cit, p 14.
65. Interview, Fergus Woods.
66. Interview, Fergus Woods.
67. Interview, Michael Farrell.

68. *Irish Times*, 7.10.1971. Letter from Cyril Toman.
69. Interview, Fergus Woods.
70. *Idiot International*, August 1970. Interview, John McGuffin.
71. Armand L Mauss, in *The Journal of Social Issues*, Vol 27, No 1, 1971, p 194.
72. Bob Overy, *A Pacifist Perspective On The Civil Rights Movement* p 7. A Paper presented at *The Conference On Northern Ireland*, Lancaster University, December 1971.
73. See, in particular, Jean-Pierre Vigier, *The Action Committees*, pp 199-212, in *Reflections on the Revolution in France: 1968* (ed C Posner).

3: October 1969—October 1970

1. *New Left Review*, No 55, May/June 1969, p 10.
2. *Gown*, 21.10.1969.
3. See Appendix L for a discussion of these factors.
4. See Appendix M.
5. *New Left Review*, No 55, May/June 1969, p 12.
6. The ACIF was the creation of Mr James Heaney. Its primary task was to issue propaganda, most of which was grossly simplistic and unsophisticated, to American businessmen to discourage them investing in Northern Ireland. A good deal of its publicity seems to have been directed against left-wing groups in the United States and Ireland.
7. For an account of divisions in the United States see Proinsias MacAonghusa's *The split among Irish-Americans*, in *The Irish Times*, 9.12.1969.
8. He was one of the pioneers of the civil rights' movement, having been a founder-member of the Campaign for Social Justice in 1964.
9. Interview, Kevin Boyle.
10. He was speaking to a meeting of the New University of Ulster Labour and PD Club. Besides one passing reference in *Free Citizen* No 12, 12.12.1969, this branch of PD does not appear to have existed. In fact, two of the New University's leading socialists, Alan Carr and Moira Evans, criticised PD in *Free Citizen* No 21 27.2.1970.
11. Interview, John Hume MP.
12. *Report of the Advisory Committee on Police in Northern Ireland*, Cmd 535, published on 10.10.1969.
13. P G Altbach, *Students and Politics*, in *Student Politics* (ed. S M Lipset), p 82.
14. A L Mauss, *Lost Promise of Reconciliation: New Left versus Old Left*, in *The Journal of Social Issues*, Vol 27 No 1 1971, p 11.
15. Interview, Michael Farrell.
16. NICRA annual conference 15.2.1970. The meeting decided by 90 votes to 88 to refer the proposal to the incoming executive, a decision which Farrell felt to be hypocritical and which led to the premature withdrawal of Eamonn McCann, who said that it was more than probable that he would resign from the CRA. For details of the conference see *Irish Times* 16.2.1970.
17. This followed a meeting of PD members and Dublin Housing Action Committee members in Dublin on March 7. See *Free Citizen*, No 23, 13.3.1970, and No 25, 27.3.1970.
18. One of the few newspapers to cover it was the *Irish Times*. Its correspondent, John Rooney, wrote a wry account (2.6.1970) under the heading 'Quiet Day at Belleek.' In trying to explain the apathy of local people he examined a number of possibilities including the following: 'Perhaps it was a communications block? A pointer to this last was an old lady who was heard to ask what confraternity we were, as the banners were unfurled in the street . . .'
19. *Irish Times*, 15.9.1970, 'Rise and decline of CR Movement' by John Feeney.
20. Interview, Eamonn McCann.
21. On March 14, 1971, a Socialist Labour Alliance was formed in Dublin. It composed PD, Young Socialists, left-wing dissidents from the Irish Labour Party, the Waterford Socialist Movement, and smaller delegations from University College Galway Republican Club, Saor Eire and the Ennisberg Citizens Action Committee. PD was the only Northern group present.
22. *Irish Times*, 4.5.1970. Its estimate of the number on the march was 'about 200'.

23. Bernadette Devlin, *op cit*, p 189.
24. See two articles by Paul B Rose MP, *The Smashing of the Convention in the Irish Times*, 3 and 4.2.1970.
25. Interview, Fergus Woods, John McGuffin and Kevin Boyle.
26. Interview, Miss Bernadette Devlin MP.
27. *Free Citizen* No 36, 12.6.1970. The clash with the NILP refers to the fact that the executive of the NILP refused to endorse McCann's candidature, and he was forced to stand as an Independent Socialist.
28. Interview, Michael Farrell.
29. *Gown*, 3.3.1970.
30. *Irish Times*, 22.10.1970. The effect of the Act was to impose compulsory six-month jail sentences for cases of disorderly behaviour, taking part in a riot or unlawful assembly or in a banned demonstration, and sitting down in the road or in public buildings.
31. *Ibid* 26.10.1970. See also *Free Citizen*, Vol 2, No 5, 30.10.1970, for evidence of a dispute in the ranks. In fact the Devlin/McCann group and PD never formed a permanent alliance.
32. Clause One of a resolution passed by the PD conference at Portglenone on June 19, 1970. For further information on that resolution see *Free Citizen* No 38, 26.6.1970.
33. Michael Farrell, *The Great Eel Robbery* (People's Democracy pamphlet August 1970).
34. See an article by Nicholas Acheson, *The Lough Neagh Troubles* in the *Irish Times*, 9.7.1970.
35. Michael Farrell, *op cit*, p 18.
36. *The Northern Star*, No 2, Autumn 1970. Editorial. (This magazine, which first appeared in May, 1970, was intended to be the theoretical journal of PD. Even a cursory glance at its table of contents illustrates the point that there is very little theory in it indeed.)
37. Interview, John McGuffin.
38. See Appendix N.
39. Interview, Kevin Boyle.
40. Interview, Michael Farrell.
41. They read, 'I am temporarily withholding my fare as a protest against the Corporation's decision to increase fares and to cut services. I will pay within forty-eight hours at the traffic kiosk at Castle Junction.' (Names and addresses were to be supplied.) See *Free Citizen*, Vol 2, No 5, 30.10.1970.
42. *A Transport Policy related to the needs of the people: A Submission to the Belfast Corporation special transport committee by the People's Democracy*, September 1970.
43. Ken Nixon in the *Sunday News*, 8.11.1970.
44. Interview, John Murphy, 6.4.1971.
45. Interview, John McGuffin.
46. *Free Citizen*, No 29, 25.4.1970: 'The Alliance Party stands for (1) The Constitution (2) Law and Order. So does Paisley.'
47. Hansard (NI), Vol 75, cols 1457-1464.
48. A statement by Eamonn McCann quoted in the *Irish Times*, 1.8.1970.
49. Interview, Kevin Boyle.
50. Armand L Mauss, in *The Journal of Social Issues*, Vol 27, No 1, 1971, pp 194-5.
51. Gilbert Abearian, *Romantics and Renegades: Political Defection and the Radical Left*, in *The Journal of Social Issues*, Vol 27, No 1, 1971, p 128.

Conclusion

1. Michael Farrell, *Struggle in the North*, p 11.
2. See Appendix 0.
3. S M Lipset, *op cit*, p 20.
4. Frank Parkin, *Adolescent Status and Student Politics*, p 149, in *The Journal of Contemporary History*, Vol 5 No 1, 1970.
5. Stephen Hatch, *From CND to newest Left*, p 126 in *Anarchy and Culture* (D Martin ed), Routledge and Kegan Paul 1969.
6. *Survey*, No 67, April 1969. *Germany's Student Revolt*, p 98.

7. See Appendix P.
8. Compare it with, say, France 212,737 square miles — another country where student activists were prominent.
9. F S L Lyons, *op cit*, p 746.
10. 16 ed, p 746.
11. *New Statesman*, 3.1.1969, *Conflict in Ulster* by A Cockburn.
12. P Pettit (ed), *The Gentle Revolution*, *passim*.
13. Philip G Altbach, *Students and Politics*, in *Student Politics* (S M Lipset ed), pp 87-8.
14. Owen Dudley Edwards, *op cit*, pp 258-9.
15. Talcott Parsons, *The Place of Force in the Social Process*, p 66 in *Internal War: Problems and Approaches*, H Eckstein (ed) (New York 1963).
16. Bernard Crick, *Protest and Discontent*, p xi.
17. *Irish Times*, 6.10.1971.
18. Philip Abrams, *Rites de Passage: The Conflict of Generations in Industrial Society* in *Journal of Contemporary History*, Vol 5 No 1, 1970, p 179.
19. One cannot be more precise at this stage. In two interviews it became clear to me that Kevin Boyle had made an intellectual commitment to Marxism, and having made that commitment he was developing it through experience in action. Because he had not entered PD with a well-tested ideology he tended to be more thoughtful — and thus more critical — of actions which were being undertaken. He did not see the Northern Ireland situation simply as a microcosm of the world situation, a mistake made by some PD ideologues.
20. The formation of the Socialist Labour Alliance on March 15, 1971, was a continuation of that policy.
21. *Irish News*, 23.4.1969. A statement by Michael Farrell condemning petrol-bombing in the Falls Road.
22. George Z F Bereday, *Student Unrest On Four Continents: Montreal, Ibadan, Warsaw and Rangoon*, pp 102-3 in *Student Politics*, S M Lipset (ed).
23. Peter Buckman, *op cit*, p 50.
24. Interview, Michael Farrell.

Postscript

1. Conor Cruise O'Brien, *States of Ireland* (Hutchinson 1972) p 186.
2. *Ibid*, P 205.
3. *Hibernia* 17.11.1972, *Michael Farrell: The Master of Agit-Prop*.
4. *The Compton Report* published on 10.11.1971. For a lively criticism of its findings by a former detainee see John McGuffin, *Internment*, Anvil Books 1973, pp 124-132.
5. *Unfree Citizen*, No 13, 8.10.1971. Following the introduction of internment PD's weekly became known as *Unfree Citizen*.
6. *Ibid*.
7. John McGuffin, *op cit* p 108.
8. *Belfast Telegraph*, 15.3.1972 quoting an article written by Farrell in *Unfree Citizen*.
9. John McGuffin, *op cit*, p 115.
10. *Unfree Citizen*, No 51, 31.7.1972. John McGuffin was less equivocal 'Twenty two bombs in the heart of a crowded city in broad daylight are bound to kill people no matter what warnings may be given, and the Provisional IRA must bear the full responsibilities for these murders . . .' *Op cit*, p 193.
11. *Irish Times*, 21.11.1972. Interestingly, PD had once considered Aidan Corrigan to be a bigoted Catholic. It referred to him as 'Count-'em Corrigan' because of his penchant for publishing statistics illustrating discrimination against Catholics.
12. John McGuffin, *op cit*, p 114.

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