



### The nationalist response

The nationalist response to the reforms announced was more positive.

Following the frustrations of the O'Neill period, it finally seemed as if the reforms sought by NICRA and other groups were now within their grasp.

### NATIONALIST RESPONSE



### The unionist response

Many members of the Unionist community were not satisfied by the reassurances contained within the Downing Street Declaration.

Instead they focused on what they viewed as more and more concessions to nationalists.

They were confirmed in their suspicions when the report of the committee set up to investigate policing was published.

The Hunt Committee Report recommended that:

- The RUC become an unarmed police force.
- The B Specials be disbanded and replaced by a new force – the Ulster Defence Regiment (UDR). This new part-time force would be controlled by the British Army.

Some unionists were so angered by the Hunt Report that rioting broke out in the Shankill Road area of Belfast.

### UNIONIST RESPONSE

### More reforms

In the days and weeks that followed, a number of other reforms were announced.

These included the following:

- The introduction of one man one vote for local elections.
- An end to **gerrymandering**.
- The establishment of a committee to investigate policing in Northern Ireland (this committee was chaired by Lord Hunt).
- The creation of a **Tribunal** led by Lord Scarman to investigate recent disturbances in Northern Ireland.
- The setting up of a new housing authority to look after the housing functions previously undertaken by local councils.
- The implementation of a range of measures aimed at preventing discrimination in public employment.
- The creation of a Ministry of Community Relations.

Alongside these reforms a number of actions designed to improve Northern Ireland's economy were also revealed.

These included:

- Additional investment grants.
- New work creation schemes costing £3 million.



Following events at Burntollet and Derry, Northern Ireland Civil Rights Association (NICRA) marches and the resulting counter-demonstrations became even more confrontational.

Tensions in Belfast rose to the extent that serious rioting broke out in the summer of 1969.

### Rising tensions following BURNTOLLET

### Increasing tensions

As time moved closer to Northern Ireland's traditional **marching season** (July-August), there were increasing concerns about what would happen.



■ The Government in London was so worried about the deteriorating situation in Northern Ireland that it had set up a special **Cabinet Committee** on Northern Ireland.



■ The Dublin administration sent an intelligence officer to Northern Ireland to report what was happening to the minority nationalist community.

■ The Stormont Government feared that any more increases in the levels of unrest/violence would overwhelm the police.

If that was not bad enough, there was growing evidence that paramilitary groups were emerging within both communities:

- Loyalist paramilitaries were being set up to stop nationalists gaining further concessions.
- Republican paramilitaries were being set up to protect their own community.

### Increasing tensions



### BATTLE OF THE BOGSIDE Aug 1969

The unrest that had been feared made its appearance in July 1969.

Trouble first occurred in Belfast, but the worst unrest broke out in Londonderry in the aftermath of the **Apprentice Boys'** marches in August.

The rioting that took place in Derry lasted for 50 hours and was christened the 'Battle of the Bogside'.

In the end the police were so exhausted that the decision was taken to order a small number of British troops on to the streets of Derry to help restore calm.

The troops arrived on the 14th August 1969.

However, violence continued elsewhere, especially in Belfast.



### Violence in 1969: Causes, Events and Responses



### 1969: Causes, Events and Responses

### 1) BACKGROUND RISING TENSIONS AFTER BURNTOLLET

### 2) BATTLE OF THE BOGSIDE

### 3) BELFAST VIOLENCE

### 5) REACTIONS

### 4) REACTIONS AND REFORMS

### The Downing Street Declaration (August 1969)

The Government in London also decided that it was time to get involved.

Following a two-day meeting between British Prime Minister Harold Wilson and Northern Ireland Prime Minister James Chichester Clark on 19th August, a statement was issued that sought to provide reassurance to both nationalists and unionists in Northern Ireland.

The statement – known as the Downing Street Declaration – stated that:

- Northern Ireland should not cease to be a part of the United Kingdom without the consent of the people of Northern Ireland. **This was designed to appeal to unionists.**
- Every citizen of Northern Ireland is entitled to the same equality of treatment and freedom from **discrimination** as exists in the rest of the United Kingdom irrespective of political views or religion. **This was designed to appeal to nationalists.**



### Violence in Belfast

Bad as things were, they were not helped by the decision of **Taoiseach** Jack Lynch to issue a statement on events north of the border. Lynch stated that:



*“ It is evident that the Stormont Government is no longer in control of the situation. Indeed the present situation is the inevitable outcome of the policies pursued for decades by successive Stormont Governments. It is clear, also, that the Irish Government can no longer stand by and see innocent people injured and perhaps worse.*

Whatever his intention, Lynch's words - and his decision to send both Irish soldiers and **field hospitals** to locations close to the border with Northern Ireland - did not improve an already tense situation.

The events of August 1969 were later to be seen as a turning point in the development of what became known as the 'Troubles'.

They were seen as directly responsible for:

- The deployment of the British Army on the streets of Northern Ireland in an attempt to restore law and order.
- The eventual re-emergence of the IRA.

