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## **The Northern Ireland Government, the Paisleyite Movement and Ulster Unionism in 1966**

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# The Northern Ireland Government, the 'Paisleyite Movement' and Ulster Unionism in 1966

## Abstract.

*This article presents original documentary material discovered at the Public Records Office, Northern Ireland (PRONI) relating to the RUC's position in June 1966 on what was referred to as the 'Paisleyite Movement'. According to the documents which were sent by the RUC Inspector General to the Ministry of Home Affairs, the 'Paisleyite Movement' was an umbrella organisation which was made up of the Ulster Constitution Defence Committee; the Ulster Protestant Volunteer Division; the Ulster Volunteer Force; the Ulster Defence Corps; the Ulster Protestant Action Defence Committee and the militant Ulster Volunteer Force. We know that these documents were seen by the Prime Minister, Terence O'Neill and the Minister of Home Affairs, Brian McConnell. These documents appear to have partly informed the cabinet decision to ban the UVF at the end of that month. The documents confirm the scale and significance of the threat presented by extremist Protestantism to the stability of the state in the eyes of the RUC and the Government at that time and suggest that the starting date of 'the Troubles' in Northern Ireland should be back-dated to 1966.*

## Introduction

In his study of the religion and politics of Paisleyism, Steve Bruce makes it clear that the increased popularity of Ian Paisley's religious message and Free Presbyterian Church had begun in the years before the Northern Ireland Civil Rights Campaign of

1967 and 1968. Bruce stresses that Paisley's support grew as a result of the struggle between O'Neill's liberal unionism and Paisley's resistance; Walker emphasises the class dimension to these divisions (Bruce: 1986: 89, Walker: 2004: 157-62). This essay seeks to develop the former insight by emphasising the sheer scale of the problem that Paisley and what was seen to be 'his movement' presented to the O'Neill Government in 1966. It shows that some years before the official 'outbreak' of the Troubles street politics in Belfast were fraught and violent. Though nationalist celebrations of the 1916 Rising in their own areas acted as the ostensible catalyst for Paisleyite street politics it is clear that the Paisleyite challenge antedated and paralleled the celebrations. The Lemass/O'Neill meetings of 1965, the debate on ecumenism, the naming of the new bridge over the Lagan, and O'Neill's clumsy modernisation and gestural minority appeasement all served to raise the hackles of Paisley and his fundamentalist circle. Through set-piece public provocation of the Unionist establishment the street politics of the summer of 1966 also provided the basis for a growth in popular Protestant support for the extreme views that Paisley and his close colleagues uttered. O'Neill acted to ban the UVF on the basis of police intelligence that linked them, correctly or incorrectly, with Paisley. Regardless of the correctness of the information with which O'Neill was provided it nonetheless acted to confirm him in his analysis. It obscured, perhaps fatally, what a letter from Robin Bailie, (later the Minister of Commerce in Brian Faulkner's Government) to O'Neill later that year reveals – that direct support for the UVF was strong within the mainstream Unionist party, with whole branches like the Shankill effectively composed of UVF supporters.<sup>i</sup> It demonstrates that the RUC intelligence on which the cabinet relied in June and July of 1966 was key to policy decisions.

### *The political context of 1966*

The challenges which the mid-1960's posed for unity within Ulster Unionism were unprecedented, as the existing historiography demonstrates (Mulholland, 2000; Bew and Patterson, 1996; Sayers, 1995). This article seeks to deepen our understanding of the debates within Unionism at that time. The extent of the challenges facing Unionist unity was epitomised in a speech to the Unionist Party Conference in April 1966 by the Northern Ireland Prime Minister Terence O'Neill. He congratulated the Unionist community on its tolerance in relation to the 1916 Easter Rising Anniversary celebrations of that year which he argued had disabled a renewed IRA campaign. In addition he also urged resilience in the face of various attacks:

We can expect to face - as indeed we have already faced - attacks upon our constitutional position. They will come from within:- from those who speak constantly of their rights but never of their obligations; from those who consider it normal to demand every advantage which our State confers, while refusing to concede it a minimum duty of allegiance... Attacks may also come from without:- from those in Great Britain - fortunately quite unrepresentative of British opinion as whole - who listen too readily to our enemies, and who ignore the evidence of Ulster's loyalty given on the battlefields of two World Wars....We can expect attacks from those in the South who cannot stomach the plain fact of our existence...In the long term, there is no future in a modern democracy for the advocates of extreme courses...sooner rather than later, the great mass of people seek a middle ground. I believe it also to be true that there is little future today for a Party whose appeal is exclusive...we have got to behave sensibly here at home. It is a sad fact that the announcement of a new factory for Northern Ireland employing 3,000 will receive far less notice in the popular press of the world than some incident whose very idiocy ensures a massive headline.<sup>ii</sup>

One such threat to which O'Neill referred was the threat of an IRA campaign. 1966 marked the 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the 1916 Easter Rising and there had already been considerable discussion about the possibility of a renewed IRA campaign. Tensions relating to the potential for IRA violence dated back to November of the previous year. In November 1965 it was announced that any literature on the proposed commemorations of 1916 would be monitored by the RUC (*Belfast Telegraph*, 20<sup>th</sup> November 1965). In the course of the November 1965 Stormont election, the Government admitted that Cabinet Ministers had been advised to take extra security measures because of police reports that the IRA were planning to disrupt the upcoming election (*Belfast Telegraph*, 11<sup>th</sup> November 1965). It seems reasonably clear that no military campaign was planned by the IRA. Nonetheless the Government continued to concentrate on the potential for IRA violence at Easter 1966. There had also been the suggestion that the anniversary of the IRA's previous campaign in 1956 on the 12<sup>th</sup> December 1965 would provide the impetus for a renewed campaign. The Minister of Home Affairs, Brian McConnell, declared "we are ready to deal with trouble" and it was also reported that the RUC and the Army were both reviewing their security measures in light of this anniversary (*Belfast Telegraph*, 11<sup>th</sup> December 1965).<sup>iii</sup>

However, McConnell made it clear that the Government was "more worried" about the build-up of IRA activity in the period around the 1916 50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary than the 12<sup>th</sup> December anniversary (*Belfast Telegraph*, 8<sup>th</sup> December 1965). While O'Neill and his Government expressed concern about an IRA campaign and did limit train travel from the Republic on the weekend of the Easter Commemoration (*Belfast Telegraph*, 15<sup>th</sup> April 1966), the Minister of Home Affairs, with the agreement of the RUC Inspector-General, had already revoked certain regulations which had been in

place during the IRA border campaign some years earlier under the Civil Authorities (Special Powers) Acts (Northern Ireland) 1922-43.<sup>iv</sup> From Government papers we know that some Ministers expressed concern at the security implications relating to the Easter Commemorations<sup>v</sup>. Many in the Cabinet also viewed the 1916 celebrations with dislike and distaste, but the Government was not prepared to impose a blanket ban on them in the light of the external scrutiny to which they felt themselves to be subject in the wake of a new Labour Government at Westminster.<sup>vi</sup> Concerns relating to the opinion of the British Government featured prominently in O'Neill's calculations and provided the context to the Government's reaction to Paisley's demonstrations at the Presbyterian Church of Ireland General Assembly (see below). During the elections the Unionist establishment had been happy to wave the spectre of danger from the 1916 celebrations at their supporters. They assumed however that the spectral genie could be put back in the bottle when elections no longer required standard Unionist horror-tales. Ian Paisley was however to demonstrate that the Unionist party leadership no longer had a monopoly on such tales, nor was their duration and potency at the leadership's command.

A number of unionist contributors to debates on the Easter commemoration in the Northern Ireland House of Commons made a case for the tolerance necessary in a modern state and the rights of minorities to express their allegiances, however repugnant.<sup>vii</sup> In contrast considerable grassroots Unionist pressure was exerted upon individual members of the Cabinet from a range of local Unionist and Orange Order lodges at the temerity of nationalist celebrations, albeit celebrations confined as in the past to nationalist areas.<sup>viii</sup>

Ian Paisley led the more public and vocal objections to the Government's decision to permit the 1916 celebrations. Building on earlier protest acts by Paisley in

1964 which had threatened to lead to considerable civil strife he and his followers organised a number of demonstrations protesting at the Government's decision to allow the celebrations of the 1916 Easter Rising 50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary. Paisley organised a counter-demonstration in Belfast as well as a 'thanksgiving' service to the defeat of the 1916 rebels in the Ulster Hall (*Belfast Telegraph*, 16<sup>th</sup> April 1966). This service at the Ulster Hall which was offered 'for the defeat of the 1916 rebels and the salvation of Ulster from Papal domination' was organised through the Ulster Constitution Defence Committee of which Paisley was President. In a message of defiance to O'Neill, Paisley declared that he had substantial support throughout Northern Ireland and attacked the "weakness of the Government for not stopping the stream before it became a current" and declared that "Ulster people are definitely not going to bow to IRA thugs" (*Belfast Telegraph*, 16<sup>th</sup> April 1966). It was the possibility of a clash between the Commemorative parades and Paisley's counterdemonstrations that held the real potential for violence at the time of the Easter commemorations held over two weekends in key sites throughout Northern Ireland. The Easter Commemorative Parade leading to Casement Park and Paisley's counter-demonstration came close to meeting at one point but few incidents arose with the intervention of the RUC.<sup>ix</sup> Paisley's march was reported to be 5,000 people strong while some 8,000 participated in the Falls Road commemoration with 20,000 spectators (*News Letter*, 18<sup>th</sup> April 1966). Real trouble was avoided by the decision by Paisley and his followers to call off a number of anti-1916 demonstrations which had been planned for Newry and Armagh (*Belfast Telegraph*, 9<sup>th</sup> April 1966). As well as leading a number of high-profile demonstrations Paisley saw the prospect of the 1916 Commemorations as the best possible opportunity to initiate publication of his newspaper, the *Protestant Telegraph*, which provided a vehicle for vitriolic attacks on, among others, the

Government, ecumenism and the IRA. The paper focused on pernicious dangers to the future of 'Ulster' epitomised in the slogan of the Ulster Constitution Defence Committee organised protest of April 17<sup>th</sup> 1966 as referred to above.

Once the relatively peaceful if highly supported Easter commemoration celebrations passed without significant incident, the Government's concerns lay with the retrospective anxieties of sections of their own supporters and the related if distinct threats originating from the growth of extremist Protestantism as manifested in the sustained street politics of Paisley and rumours of renewed loyalist paramilitary forces. Activities with which Paisley and his followers were involved featured prominently in newspaper reports and debates in both the Northern Ireland House of Commons and Senate. In the Senate, Senator Nelson Elder, referred to the damage caused by the Paisley campaign which in his view was aimed at causing a split in the Unionist Party:

Let me say that there are individuals who have persistently criticised the Government. By their periodic emotional, uncontrolled, bigoted outbursts they assist in this persistent agitation. They are doing irreparable harm to the community...I think it can be said that no individuals and no groups existing in Northern Ireland at present will succeed in causing a divide either in the Government of the Unionist Party. They will most certainly fail.<sup>x</sup>

His colleague, Senator Norman Kennedy, called on the Government to take a stronger stance with such Protestant extremists:

It perturbs me that irresponsible elements are allowed to damage our image abroad. I appreciate that in any community there are a certain number of highly unbalanced fanatics, especially in the religious field. Events seem to prove that here they are more mentally sick than anywhere else. The time has come when a certain person who uses the collar of religion and mistakes his brand



of religion for Christianity should be brought to book. It is time the Government did something about this if we are to have a peaceful and prosperous country.<sup>xi</sup>

Despite such calls for action the Paisley-led challenge to the Prime Minister, that acquired new ballast in April through the actual nationalist parades and pageants, gained considerable momentum as the year progressed. As well as protesting at the Easter celebrations Paisley and his followers hosted a series of demonstrations throughout 1966 attacking both the Government and the ideas of ecumenism which they argued amounted to a Rome-led offensive on Protestantism. The newspaper and street campaign came to a head at the Presbyterian Church of Ireland General Assembly at Howard Street in Belfast on 6<sup>th</sup> June 1966 when Paisley and members of the Free Presbyterian Church picketed the General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church of Ireland, an apparently annual event. One of the speakers addressing the assembly that day was Jack Sayers, the politically influential liberal unionist editor of the *Belfast Telegraph*. His letters and correspondence are extraordinarily illuminating in terms of revealing how Paisley became the bogey or ‘Mad Mullah’ for reforming if paternalistic unionists at this time. Close to O’Neill and his senior civil servants, Ken Bloomfield and Harold Black, Sayers epitomises the concerns of middle class Unionism at this time and the nature of its distance from those who appeared to support Paisley. Preoccupied by the demands of modernisation, the pressures from London, however slight, and the lure of ecumenism they saw little hope for a Northern Ireland that failed to ‘move with the times’.

The Governor of Northern Ireland, Lord Erskine, already unpopular with Paisley’s circle after the incidents surrounding the naming of the Queen Elizabeth Bridge, was jostled on leaving the meeting at the General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church and name-calling and verbal heckling met the departing

dignitaries including Sayers. The protest had been preceded by a march from the Ravenhill Road, permitted by the RUC, which resulted in incidents between Catholic residents in Cromac Square through which Paisley and his supporters marched (See *Belfast Telegraph*, 7<sup>th</sup> June 1966). Paisley was eventually imprisoned as a result of those events outside the Presbyterian General Assembly on Howard Street for refusing to agree to keep the peace for two years (*Belfast Telegraph*, 6<sup>th</sup>, 18<sup>th</sup>, 20<sup>th</sup> July 1966). This seemed, however, further to strengthen Paisley's support and resulted in a series of violent disturbances in the Shankill and Crumlin Road areas (See *Irish News and Belfast Morning News*, 25<sup>th</sup> July 1966). O'Neill was in London with Brian McConnell, the Minister for Home Affairs, at the time of the protests at the Presbyterian General Assembly and was to call on Roy Jenkins the Home Secretary on Tuesday 7<sup>th</sup> June to give an account of what had occurred. The reason for the presence of O'Neill and McConnell in London was 'as a preliminary to the 'informal talks' on Northern Ireland affairs suggested by Mr Harold Wilson' (*News Letter*, 7<sup>th</sup> June 1966) The eyes of London upon local events, the jostling of the Governor General and the unseemly scenes outside the Assembly may well have pressed O'Neill, whose primary concern was for London opinion, to resolve to deal with Paisley for once and for all. Certainly the substance of Paisley's paper was unlikely to appeal to a London audience, nor did the anti-ecumenical anti-Papal posters look good for metropolitan consumption. Though the violence of 6 June may have originated in the actions of the residents of the Markets and the attempt to prevent the entry of the Paisleyite crowd into the area through the cordon of 200 people on the Albert Bridge, it opened up wider questions about 'recent incidents connected with street parades, which –like last night's – have received wide coverage on national television' (*News Letter*, 7<sup>th</sup> June 1966).

The air of tension that prevailed in Northern Ireland throughout 1966 as a result of both Easter commemoration celebrations and Paisley's subsequent protests was further heightened by references to the reformation of the Ulster Volunteer Force. As a result the chairman of the National Democratic Party, John Duffy, claimed that 1966 represented a time when Northern Ireland was "lurching once again into a period of bitterness, intolerance and violence" (*Irish News and Belfast Morning News*, 21<sup>st</sup> June 1966). Another statement that reflects the nature of events in 1966 came from the Lord Chief Justice at the time, Lord MacDermott, when he concluded that "the gunman is among us again" (*Irish News and Belfast Morning News*, 17<sup>th</sup> September 1966). The newly formed Ulster Volunteer Force issued a statement in May 1966 from Captain William Johnston, purporting to be the assistant adjutant of the 1<sup>st</sup> Belfast Battalion of the Ulster Volunteer Force. The statement declared:

From this day on we declare war against the IRA and its splinter groups. Known IRA men will be executed mercilessly and without hesitation...Property will not be exempted in any action taken. We are heavily armed in this cause (As reprinted in the *News Letter*, 29<sup>th</sup> June 1966).

It was reported that the UVF was reformed on this occasion amidst fears that the IRA was planning a renewed campaign either in December 1965 or at Easter 1966 (*Irish News*, 29<sup>th</sup> June 1966). At a court case later in 1966, one defendant referred in his statement to the formation of the Ulster Volunteer Force as a means to take reprisals against IRA activities (Belfast Telegraph, 18<sup>th</sup> October 1966). The *News Letter* reported in the week prior to the planned Falls Road commemorative processions that the UVF had made its first overt move in support of Paisley by announcing its plans to march in the then upcoming Paisley demonstration from Carlisle Circus. The paper

claimed that the militant Protestant group had been organising for some weeks and had 20 branches and 500 members in Belfast alone (*News Letter*, 15<sup>th</sup> April 1966). The relationship between Paisley's movement and the newly formed UVF was blurred, and despite Paisley's denials, O'Neill insinuated that there was a very clear link (See *Belfast Telegraph*, 30<sup>th</sup> June 1966). O'Neill referred to a statement by Paisley in the Ulster Hall on 16<sup>th</sup> June 1966. In this speech Paisley is reported to have referred to resolutions from a number of divisions of the Ulster Volunteer Force which pledged that they "were solidly behind Mr Paisley". The Prime Minister also referred at this point to a statement of thanks which Paisley extended to the UVF at a march on 17<sup>th</sup> April (See *Belfast Telegraph*, 29<sup>th</sup> June 1966; *Irish News and Belfast Morning News*, 30<sup>th</sup> June 1966). As will be illustrated below, O'Neill's statement banning the UVF in July 1966, in the aftermath of the murder of a bar man at Malvern Street, placed the activities of the UVF within the context of recent unrest associated with Paisley-led street protests. O'Neill clearly viewed the UVF and Paisley as part of the one extremist Protestant movement, as one and the same threat posed to the Government and to Northern Ireland generally. The basis for this is outlined in a RUC document (below) received by the Ministry of Home Affairs towards the end of June.

### *The 'Paisleyite Movement'*

The space which Paisley-led activities assumed in the columns of newspapers as well as those of the House of Commons and Senate debates were intensified by the UK wide television coverage that his street politics received. Worried, as ever, by London opinion the Cabinet sought police briefing. The RUC Inspector-General, A.H.

Kennedy, in a letter to J.E. Greeves in the Ministry of Home Affairs dated 22<sup>nd</sup> June 1966, marked secret and seen by the Prime Minister wrote:

As you will see from the attached list of incidents a serious situation would appear to be developing in Northern Ireland which is all too reminiscent of the mid-1930's when serious outrages occurred involving the deaths of a number of people by shooting , much damage to property by burning, looting and the infliction of personal injuries on many individuals .

Read together with the appreciation of the situation created by *the Paisley section* (our emphasis) which I sent you on 20<sup>th</sup> instant, I think it is not being unduly pessimistic to say that a real threat to the peace of the Province seems to be developing – a situation which could do immeasurable harm to Ulster if it is not checked. The police are doing what they can to keep control, but they cannot be everywhere at the right time and they have many other commitments. It seems to me that there is an urgent necessity for all persons in positions of authority to use all their influence to bring about a lowering of the temperature by pointing out on every suitable opportunity the dangers which exists and persuading those over whom they have influence to put the interests of the country first and to curb any words or actions which would have an inflammatory effect.

The more interesting comments as to where the 'threat to peace' originated followed:

While there is always the IRA and its splinter groups in the background ready to seize any opportunity to disturb the peace, the fact is that an equal or even greater threat is posed at present by extremist Protestant groups, many of whom are members of loyalist organisations. These are the people whom it may be possible to reach at meetings of the Loyal Orange Order and other similar bodies, and it may be that leaders of Protestant Churches could also play their part before it is too late.<sup>xii</sup>

The letter of 20<sup>th</sup> June, referred to here, is relevant. It purports to be an overview of what the RUC call 'The Paisleyite Movement'. It must be read with caution as it represents the views and professed intelligence of the RUC at the time. Clearly such material is partial, open to question and cannot be taken as a transparent representation of anything other than the views and intelligence of the higher echelons of the police at that time. Nonetheless as such it is a vitally important document in conveying what that section of the police believed or wished to represent themselves to the Government as believing. It is also important as it represents at least a section of the information available to the Government for the formulation of policy at that time. Its importance in both of these respects cannot be exaggerated. The information provided by the RUC to the Ministry of Home Affairs was as followed:

The Paisleyite Movement...came into being after the formation of the Free Presbyterian Church following the breakaway from the Presbyterian Church in 1951. The Free Presbyterian Church later installed the Rev. Ian R.K. Paisley as its moderator. He is regarded as an idealist and a professed enemy of the doctrine of Rome. He has been successful in increasing Church membership that he has now established Free Presbyterian Churches at the following places:-

<u>Belfast</u>	Ravenhill, Mountmerrion and Sandown
<u>Co Antrim</u>	Cabra, Rasharkin, Whiteabbey and Dunmurry
<u>Co Armagh</u>	Armagh City
<u>Co Down</u>	Crossgar and Portavogie
<u>Co L'derry</u>	Coleraine and Limavady

Paisley's protests against the Archbishop of Canterbury's visit to Rome in 1962 are outlined. According to the documents, Paisley had judged that the time was ripe to oppose the Prime Minister and the Government, given O'Neill's meetings of 1965 with the Taoiseach, Séan Lemass:

Following the O'Neill/Lemass talks which commenced in January, 1965, Paisley seized the opportunity to preach hate against the Prime Minister and members of the Government and accused them of selling Ulster down the drain. He objected in the strongest terms to any form of appeasement or collaboration with the Government of the Republic of Ireland. He called Mr Lemass a gunman and a murderer, and an enemy of loyal Ulster. In February last, Paisley and his followers became more prominent as a result of their protest regarding the naming of the new Lagan Bridge in Belfast. He attracted more attention and support as a result of a big protest march in Belfast on Sunday, 17<sup>th</sup> April, 1966, against the Government permitting Irish Republican Celebrations to be held in various parts of the Province to commemorate the 1916 Rising in Ireland...Arising out of his protests over the Easter Celebrations Paisley reckoned that he had at least a following of 20,000 in Belfast and the way appeared open to him to seize greater power.

The material goes on to detail what the police believe to be the exact steps taken by Paisley and his followers in creating a movement which in the view of the Inspector-General took the form of an umbrella movement of organisations which were affiliated and managed by a Central Executive Committee. Indeed it is clear from the statements by the Prime Minister that O'Neill believed a connection existed between the UVF and Paisley and this again is made explicit in O'Neill's statement banning the UVF on 28<sup>th</sup> June 1966 in which he refers to information which he had received in recent days (See below). He was presumably referring to the documents received from the RUC as referred to here. Those RUC documents elaborate on the 'Paisleyite Movement':

In collusion with his (Paisley) close confederates they decided to form a new extreme Protestant organisation. It would operate under different names and each branch or division would be

permitted to have one elected representative on the Central Executive Committee. For the present the organisation will be composed of the following:-

- (1) The Ulster Constitution Defence Committee
- (2) The Ulster Protestant Volunteer Division
- (3) The Ulster Volunteer Force
- (4) The Ulster Defence Corps
- (5) Ulster Protestant Action

Their aims and objects are:-

- (1) To resist the encroachment of Popery in this Imperial Province of Ulster
- (2) To denounce the treacherous underhand action of the Unionist Party
- (3) To provide an alternative political voice for the loyalist thinking people
- (4) To follow in the footsteps of our forefathers in maintaining our Protestant heritage for the coming generations.
- (5) To organise Divisions in every County to demonstrate our loyalty to the Crown remaining Protestant
- (6) To conduct meetings throughout Ulster warning the people of the Government's policy of appeasement
- (7) To have a Religious Service every Ulster Day, September 28<sup>th</sup>, in remembrance of the Covenant
- (8) To fight local Government and Parliamentary Elections in opposition to any Unionist or other candidate who does not conform to the ideals of the Ulster Protestant Volunteers.<sup>xiii</sup>

Most controversially the Inspector-General's report states that the Paisleyite movement had a militant wing and that the militant wing was the Ulster Volunteer Force which the report claimed was not only succeeding in recruiting from the Ulster Special Constabulary and Crown Forces but was also dependent on arms from these groups:



The Ulster Volunteer Force is regarded as the militant wing of the organisation and operates under great secrecy. Small divisions are known to have been formed in Belfast, Counties Antrim, Armagh and Tyrone. There is little doubt that a good number of personnel in the Ulster Special Constabulary are active members; indeed it is feared that some have been recruited from other branches of the Crown Forces and Government departments.

The aims and objects of this Force are:-

- (1) To counteract the IRA and other Nationalist organisations, if need be by force.
- (2) To keep the Government on its toes in regard to the constitutional position.
- (3) To keep a close watch on persons who are hostile to the Force, e.g., Mr Gerry Fitt and Messrs Sayers and Wallace of the Belfast Telegraph.

In the event of it having to revert to the use of force, it would be almost entirely dependent on the main supply of arms being provided from secret sources and sympathisers in the Ulster Special Constabulary and Crown Forces.

The militant sections' activities have been conducted so secretly that great difficulty is being experienced in establishing the true details as to their exact manpower and armaments. It is reasonable to assume that they can call on several hundred men to take up arms should the occasion arise for such drastic action. It is evident from the public speeches and utterances from the Paisleyite platforms that they have no regard for either the Government or the Royal Ulster Constabulary. Paisley and his clique gave every indication that they have no intention of relaxing their efforts to bring down the Government and speed the removal of His Excellency The Governor, Lord Erskine, from Northern Ireland.

The threat from the IRA then, according to this analysis, was an indirect one and it was clearly felt that if the activities and strength of this extremist Protestant movement could be curtailed so too would the threat from the IRA be neutralised:

The Police are fully aware that the IRA are busy operating behind the scene in getting members of their organisation to cause the occasional type of incident which will help to create a deeper sense of sectarian feeling throughout the Province. When the IRA think the time is ripe they

will step in and open another campaign of violence in Northern Ireland. The present political unrest is playing into the hands of the IRA and will provide them with an excuse to take action against the 'forces of occupation' and then claim they are protecting the Irish people.

In an appendix to the letter of 20 June Kennedy gave precise information which he claimed was available to the RUC at that time as to the members and organisation of the 'Paisleyite Movement' throughout Northern Ireland. According the 'Appendix B' the Ulster Constitution Defence Committee in Belfast had as its chairman the Moderator of Free Presbyterian Church, Rev Ian R.K. Paisley, Beersbridge Road, Belfast. Its vice-chairman was listed as Councillor James McCarroll, a building contractor from Ballylesson, County Down. The secretary was stated to be Noel Docherty, a printer from Dunmurry County Antrim. The Ulster Constitution Defence Committee was stated to consist of a number of named individuals. It was stated that in County Antrim various divisions of the Ulster Constitutional Defence Committee were being formed; that a Ballymena Division was at this stage in the course of formation under the guidance of a named painter from the town. Similarly it was said that a Carrick Division was in the course of formation and its secretary was listed in the RUC documents as being from Newtonabbey. A Lisburn-based division of the Ulster Constitution Defence Committee had also been established. Its members were listed. The Ulster Constitution Defence Committee was also stated to be involved in establishing a number of divisions throughout County Armagh. The formation of an Armagh City Division, Markethill Division and Portadown Division was underway. At that stage there were no divisions in counties Down, Fermanagh and Londonderry.

On the Ulster Protestant Volunteer Belfast Division the following information was supplied:

The divisions are named after Parliamentary Constituencies or local Government Wards in which particular members reside e.g. 1<sup>st</sup> St George, 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> St Anne's, 1<sup>st</sup> Pottinger, 1<sup>st</sup> Windsor, 1<sup>st</sup> Shankill and QUB Division. It is said that there are about 30 divisions in Belfast with an increasing membership of more than 500.

A Dunmurry Division of the Ulster Protestant Volunteers was in the course of formation in June 1966 and once again the secretary here was Noel Docherty of Dunmurry and its committee consisted of what appears to be four members of the same family also from Dunmurry. The Ulster Protestant Volunteers also had a branch in Tyrone. The makeup of the 1<sup>st</sup> East Tyrone Division's Committee appeared to suggest that the branch was concentrated in Pomeroy in the county. The Committee was said to consist of a number of listed individuals all of whom were said to be from Pomeroy. Interestingly, all those listed as members of 1<sup>st</sup> East Tyrone Division were, according to the RUC, members of the Ulster Special Constabulary.

Similar details on the Ulster Volunteer Force were included in the appendix. The details appeared to indicate a certain crossover of membership between the different divisions within the 'Paisleyite Movement', including the UVF. The secretary of the Ulster Defence Constitution Committee in Belfast, Noel Docherty, was also listed as the secretary of the Belfast branch of the Ulster Volunteer Force. An already named member of the Ulster Constitution Defence Committee in Ballymena and William Mitchell, also of Ulster Protestant Action, who were both of Newtownabbey, were said to form the committee of the Belfast-based Ulster Volunteer Force.

The Glengormley division of the Ulster Protestant Action had as its members a named individual from Newtownabbey; another man already named as a committee member of the Belfast Ulster Volunteer Force; and named committee members of the

Belfast Ulster Volunteer Force. The level of crossover between the different divisions of what the police called the 'Paisleyite Movement' is highlighted here.<sup>xiv</sup>

### *The Government's Response*

It was becoming clear by June 1966 that the O'Neill Government would have to respond to ongoing unrest that had become associated with the Paisleyite demonstrations in Belfast. The Government had been under pressure since the protests outside the Presbyterian Assembly in June to restrict Paisleyite processions. 12 Unionist backbenchers tabled a motion objecting to the Howard Street incidents and insisting that measures be taken to ensure they were not repeated (*Belfast Telegraph*, 14<sup>th</sup> June 1966). The murder of Peter Ward outside a bar on Malvern Street exposed the sinister nature of events in Belfast at this point (*Newsletter*, 27<sup>th</sup> June 1966; *Belfast Telegraph*, 28<sup>th</sup> June 1966). O'Neill returned from a Somme memorial event in France to make the announcement that the UVF was now an illegal force. His statement illustrates the connections which he made between events surrounding recent Paisley street protests, information that he had received in the past days and his decision to proscribe the UVF. He declared that "the events which we discussed in this House on June 15 - (the Howard Street and Cromac Square disturbances) – were, in all conscience, serious enough but what we have got to consider is far more grave and grim. Human life has been wantonly taken" (*Newsletter*, 29<sup>th</sup> June 1966). He referred both to 'a conspiracy of criminals' and to information which he had recently received:

We are confronted by terrible acts which have shown no mercy to youth, no respect for old age....Information which has come to hand in the last few days make it clear that the safety of law-abiding citizens is threatened by a very dangerous conspiracy...This we cannot and will not

tolerate...Let no one imagine that there is any connection whatever between men who were ready to die for the country on the fields of France, and a sordid conspiracy of criminals prepared to take up arms against unprotected citizens (*News Letter*, 29<sup>th</sup> June 1966).

At this point Paisley absolutely denied that his Ulster Constitution Defence Committee had any links with the now illegal Ulster Volunteer Force (*News letter*, 29<sup>th</sup> June 1966). He claimed that branches of his association throughout Northern Ireland were known as Ulster Protestant Volunteer Divisions and were not involved in any subversive activity. Paisley denied any knowledge of the Ulster Volunteer Force (*News Letter*, 29<sup>th</sup> June 1966). The *News Letter* confirmed that Paisley's movement was not affected by the new ban since, according to the paper, the Ulster Protestant Volunteer Corps/Divisions were a separate organisation (*News Letter*, 29<sup>th</sup> June 1966). O'Neill quickly refuted Paisley's denials of links with the UVF through reference to Paisley's earlier statements in which O'Neill claimed Paisley had welcomed the support of the UVF (*Belfast Telegraph*, 29<sup>th</sup> June 1966). It is quite clear that O'Neill viewed the series of events in Belfast as connected. O'Neill's statements on the UVF and Paisley together with his action in relation to both certainly indicate that he viewed these two problems (the reformation of the UVF and the increasingly vocal and active Paisley movement) as one and the same.

The Government had now taken action on the UVF but Paisleyite demonstrations and street violence continued throughout the summer of 1966 particularly in the aftermath of Paisley's imprisonment for his failure to agree to keep the peace in the aftermath of the protests at Howard Street in June. Protests at Paisley's imprisonment in Crumlin Road Gaol in July forced the Government to take action. On Saturday 23<sup>rd</sup> July Police used water-cannon to disperse a crowd which defied restrictions on a demonstration by Paisley's supporters. The march which was

some 4,000 strong (Bruce, 1986: 85) had been restricted, as a result of a decision taken jointly by the RUC and the Ministry of Home Affairs in the aftermath of the three nights of disturbances outside Crumlin Road Prison where Paisley and two other Free Presbyterian Church ministers had been imprisoned, to the Shankill (*Belfast Telegraph*, 23<sup>rd</sup> July 1966). Some looting and raiding resulted and extensive damage was caused to property in the area (*Belfast Telegraph*, 23<sup>rd</sup> July 1966). Despite Paisley's message from Gaol calling for the rioting to stop (Bruce: 1986: 86), politics in this period was very evidently played out on the streets. As a result the Cabinet met on the 25<sup>th</sup> July to consult on recent events in Belfast and to discuss further restrictions to the processions in the area. In a secret memorandum on the recent disorders in Belfast presented to the Cabinet by the Minister of Home Affairs, Brian McConnell, at this meeting on 25 July 1966, the Cabinet was urged to agree to a ban on further processions in Belfast:

...stern measures should be adopted to help the police in their task of maintaining law and order. The existing powers under the Civil Authorities (Special Powers) Acts and the Public Order Act of 1951 are adequate to meet most needs but, in present circumstances and with the unpleasant prospect of a continuation of rioting and looting, we should consider whether they should be further exercised or strengthened. It is possible under Section 2(2) of the Public Order Act (Northern Ireland) 1951 to impose a complete ban for a period of three months on all processions and public meetings within the County Borough of Belfast and a radius of 20 miles there from which have not received the specific approval of the Government on the recommendation of the police.

McConnell referred to the potential for additional unrest and suggested the Police ought to be empowered to deal with such circumstances:

One of the great dangers in the present situation is the gathering of small groups, perhaps initially in a peaceable manner, but which ultimately results in a disorderly assembly. It is true that the police under the common law have a right to disperse unlawful assemblies, but it might be well to confer upon them, under the Special Powers Acts, a specific power to disperse any assembly of three or more persons wherever there is reasonable belief that the assembly might lead to a breach of the peace.<sup>xv</sup>

At this Cabinet meeting, which was also attended by the Inspector-General and the Deputy Inspector-General of the RUC, the Cabinet consented to the Minister's request. While the Ministers "generally agreed that additional steps must be taken for the preservation of the peace and the protection of property" there were some concerns. It was felt that exceptional action would create an "exaggerated impression of the situation in Northern Ireland, by suggesting that it had been necessary to impose something close to martial law". Ministers also wanted "to avoid as far as possible an allegation that those responsible for the current disturbances were being treated more harshly than the organisers of Republican demonstrations. It was highly desirable to avoid any heightening of the sense of martyrdom which had stemmed from the imprisonment of the Howard Street demonstrators". The need to balance these concerns with the demands of public opinion was realised and some present argued in favour of "a prohibition directed at particular named organisations that, since the public know very well the sources of the current disorders, they would give the Government more credit for acting directly against those sources". In the end the Cabinet came to the following decision:

After further discussion, it was decided that the Minister of Home Affairs should make an Order under the Public Order Act (Northern Ireland) 1951 prohibiting, for a period of three months, the holding of any public procession or outdoor public meeting in any public highway, road or street

within a radius of fifteen miles of Belfast City Hall...In addition, the Cabinet agreed that a Regulation should be made under the Civil Authorities (Special Powers) Acts to provide that where, in the opinion of a District Inspector or Head Constable any gathering of three or more persons was calculated to lead to a breach of the peace or serious public disorder, or to make undue demands upon the Police Force, it would be an offence for the persons constituting such a gathering to fail to disperse, when called upon to do so by any police constable.<sup>xvi</sup>

Again the level of anxiety surrounding the activities of Paisley and his followers is evident here and reflected in the decision to revert to the use of the Special Powers legislation in response to extremist Protestantism.

As always O'Neill's concern was with the impression that Paisleyite demonstrations were making on opinions in Britain and in particular on the attitude of the British Government. On 10<sup>th</sup> October 1966, while Paisley was still imprisoned at Crumlin Road Gaol, O'Neill together with Captain Austin Ardill, MP, and Ken Bloomfield received a deputation of Ministers of the Free Presbyterian Church. The Ministers who attended were Reverend Cooke, Rasharkin, who was Acting Moderator; Reverend McClelland, Sandown Road, Belfast; Reverend Cairns, Cabra; Reverend Douglas, Portavogie. Also in attendance was Reverend Brian Green from London. The meeting appeared to come about through Captain Ardill who had been approached by a number of constituents. In the course of the meeting Reverend Cooke, who acted as the principal spokesman for the group, outlined to O'Neill and the others present the rationale behind the Paisleyite protests. According to the record of the meeting:

Reverend Cooke declared that this part of the United Kingdom would be sustained by Protestant votes. Their main enemy was the attitude, and the departure from the Protestant faith, of leading



denominations. In Northern Ireland the religious situation was very closely connected with the political. They felt bound to warn the Protestant people where their leaders were taking them.

Reverend Cooke stressed that the group was not only unhappy at the imprisonment of their colleagues but that their punishment had been much more severe than that received by organisers of certain of the 1916 demonstrations. They accused the Government of taking steps to silence the protests of their colleagues.<sup>xvii</sup> Responding to a request for an assurance that future demonstrations which were within the law would be permitted, O'Neill pointed out the possibility that such protests could lead to further disorder. The Prime Minister's words to the delegation revealed his preoccupation with British opinion:

He (the Prime Minister) was not suggesting that the adherents of the Free Presbyterian Church themselves were necessarily directly responsible for such disorders, but their demonstrations appeared from experience to attract an element which created disturbance and did Northern Ireland a great deal of damage...The Prime Minister said that we valued our place in the United Kingdom, and the benefits which this connection brought to the people of Ulster, including the supporters of those who were present. The plain fact was that Mr Harold Wilson and Mr Edward Heath had made it perfectly clear to him that not one MP at Westminster, of any Party, could support the speeches and actions of their followers. This had serious implications. His job as Prime Minister was to keep Northern Ireland a respected part of the United Kingdom, and a movement such as theirs – which did not have the respect of the overwhelming majority of the British people – could do us no good.

The Prime Minister said that the effect of their activities in London could not be denied. He recalled that the Belfast riots of the Thirties had been followed by Mr Chamberlain's decision to hand back the Treaty Ports. The post-War Labour Government, conscious of Ulster's contribution to the war effort, had resisted pressure from a strong group of backbenchers. Now a Labour Government was in office again, and again it was under pressure from its backbenchers.

It the situation in Northern Ireland were to deteriorate to the point where the United Kingdom Government said 'We won't have this in the United Kingdom', then there could be a very great threat to our constitutional heritage and to all the economic benefits which were at stake. Captain O'Neill said that he was well aware that he could seek the path of easy popularity by pursuing a narrow sectional interest. But his job was to keep Northern Ireland as a respected part of the United Kingdom. They lived in a world where wider issues could not be ignored... a continual parading led to scenes of violence which gave us a bad image in the eyes of the world and made it difficult for the Government to protect Northern Ireland's good name.

The delegation accused the Prime Minister of distorting the image of Paisley and his followers in Britain. O'Neill responded

by referring to the scurrilous remarks which the "Protestant Telegraph" printed about him. If the Paisleyites were so keen to ensure that their views were not misunderstood at Westminster, why did they not circulate this newspaper to Members there? This led to a moderately heated exchange with Reverend Green, who first of all said he would not want this paper to go to Westminster, and when pressed referred to technical difficulties in distributing it.<sup>xviii</sup>

O'Neill's profound anxiety about potential responses in Britain to disturbances in Northern Ireland acted as a motivating factor for the Prime Minister in dealing with events throughout 1966 (For the Labour Government's approach to Northern Ireland in this period see Rose, 2001; Warner, 2005). Indeed O'Neill's suspicions of British opinion generally were not unfounded. For example, the Prime Minister was informed in a letter from Stratton Mills, Unionist MP at Westminster, in November 1966 that

the Tory Party in the House of Commons (also at Highgate Young Conservatives, which I visited last week) [there is] a growing feeling of unease about events in Northern Ireland and this will have to be, I think, watched very carefully indeed.<sup>xix</sup>

## *Conclusion*

Paisley's protests against the 1916 Easter commemorations, his anti-ecumenical demonstrations, together with the civil disorder which continued throughout the summer of 1966 brought a new dimension to protests on the streets of Northern Ireland. The impression that Paisleyism emerged as a reaction to the demands of the Northern Ireland Civil Rights Campaign from 1967/8 onwards is disputed by this fact. Support for Paisleyism emerged as part of a growing level of resistance and unease at O'Neill's policies which were perceived as liberal and in many senses as threatening to Protestantism and Northern Ireland in general (Bruce, 1986: 89). The chasms within unionism in this period are reflected in Sayers memoirs (1995). The seemingly unbridgeable distance between O'Neillism, associated with modernisation and liberalism, and Paisleyism in 1966 presents the major focal point for examining unionism and politics in Northern Ireland in that year. The picture outlined by the RUC in the documents presented above illustrates the serious levels of perceived instability in Northern Ireland in this period. Other contemporaneous documents also confirm the unease, disquiet and uncertainty within the Unionist Party. For example, Robin Bailie's letter to O'Neill in the summer of 1966 refers to unease at what he saw as 'budding fascism which has been nurtured on the anti-catholic feelings that have continued to persist in the minds and attitudes of a very large section of the Protestant population and which have at best connived at and pandered to by those seeking popular political support'.<sup>xx</sup> According to this analysis the threats to public order and paramilitary support did not spring from outside the Unionist party but were nurtured in branches of the mainstream party, some of whom were seen to support UVF action.

The RUC material presented above provides a number of specifics relating to the RUC's position on the UVF in 1966 and their view of the relationship between Paisley and the UVF. The RUC documents clearly served to reinforce O'Neill's belief that Paisley and the UVF were part of the same extremist Protestant movement. However, it is important to record the questions that have been raised about the motives and interests of the RUC in 1966. Gusty Spence has, for example, maintained that the RUC and the Government in 1966 were deliberately trying to connect Paisley to the UVF in an attempt to discredit Paisley and cause those members in the Unionist Party involved with the UVF to disassociate themselves from that organisation (Garland, 2001: 66-7). Spence's claim that members of the Unionist Party were key to the UVF, particularly in the Shankill, is partly confirmed by Bailie's letter referred to above.<sup>xxi</sup> Spence also claims that "the brains behind this UVF were even at cabinet level" (Garland, 2001: 62).<sup>xxii</sup> Spence's assertion that the RUC and the Government were deliberately contriving a connection between Paisley and the UVF, however, remains unproven.

The RUC documents centrally deployed in this article offer a unique insight into the thinking of the police, the policy briefing of the Government and the basis on which security policy was formulated in 1966. They indicate the seriousness with which the security forces and O' Neill's Government viewed the threats presented by what they called the 'Paisleyite movement' and also illustrate the insecurity of the Northern Ireland state in the middle of 1966.

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#### Notes

<sup>i</sup> Document entitled 'Statement of Present Problem', no date but the document can be dated to sometime around September 1966, available at Public Records Office of Northern Ireland, File No. PM/5/31/23 Ulster Unionist Council: Annual Conference arrangements, business meetings, PM's Speech etc, 1966-9.

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- <sup>ii</sup> Speech by the Prime Minister (Capt O'Neill) at the Unionist Party Conference on Friday Evening (9:15) 28<sup>th</sup> April 1966, Public Records Office of Northern Ireland, File No. PM/5/31/23.
- <sup>iii</sup> In fact in the Northern Ireland House of Commons on the 16<sup>th</sup> February 1966, the Minister of Home Affairs, Brian McConnell, referred to additional revenue which he had needed in taking extra security precautions including the mobilisation of part-time members of the Special Constabulary in response to the threat of renewed IRA activity. See *Northern Ireland Commons Debates*, Vol. 62, Col. 1066, 16<sup>th</sup> February 1966. See also *Belfast Telegraph* 27<sup>th</sup> October 1966.
- <sup>iv</sup> See 'Memorandum for the Cabinet by the Minister of Home Affairs on the Revocation of Regulations made under the Civil Authorities (Special Powers) Acts (Northern Ireland) 1922-1943', 25<sup>th</sup> June 1965, Public Records Office, Northern Ireland, File No. FIN/18/8/52.
- <sup>v</sup> At a Cabinet Meeting on 3<sup>rd</sup> March 1966 the Minister of Agriculture expressed concern about security surrounding the Easter Commemoration celebrations, Public Records Office of Northern Ireland, File No. CAB4/1326/15.
- <sup>vi</sup> See letter from O'Neill on 5<sup>th</sup> April 1966 to Sir George Clarke, Grand Orange Lodge of Ireland, as agreed at a Security Committee meeting 4<sup>th</sup> April 1966. Public Records Office Northern Ireland, File No. CAB9B/299/1.
- <sup>vii</sup> See for example Nat Minford's contribution to a debate at the *Northern Ireland Commons Debates*, Vol. 63, Cols. 230-1, 24<sup>th</sup> March 1966.
- <sup>viii</sup> See file at Public Records Office of Northern Ireland CAB9B/299/1.
- <sup>ix</sup> Gordon, *The O'Neill Years*, p 68. For coverage of the incidents which resulted at Carlisle Circus see *Belfast Telegraph* 18<sup>th</sup> April 1966, *News Letter* 18<sup>th</sup> April 1966.
- <sup>x</sup> Northern Ireland Senate Debates 7<sup>th</sup> June 1966 Vol. 49, Cols. 902-3.
- <sup>xi</sup> Northern Ireland Senate Debates 7<sup>th</sup> June 1966 Vol. 49, Col. 900.
- <sup>xii</sup> Letter marked secret from A.H. Kennedy Inspector General RUC Headquarters Belfast 5, 22<sup>nd</sup> June 1966 to J.E. Greeves, Ministry of Home Affairs, Stormont, Public Records Office, Northern Ireland, File No. CAB9B/300/1.
- <sup>xiii</sup> Report on 'Paisleyite Movement' dated 20 June 1966 from Inspector General RUC referred to in letter marked secret from A.H. Kennedy Inspector General RUC Headquarters Belfast 5, 22<sup>nd</sup> June 1966 to J.E. Greeves, Ministry of Home Affairs, Stormont, Public Records Office, Northern Ireland, File No. CAB/9B/300/1
- <sup>xiv</sup> Report on 'Paisleyite Movement' dated 20 June 1966 referred to in letter marked secret from A.H. Kennedy Inspector General RUC Headquarters Belfast 5, 22<sup>nd</sup> June 1966 to J.E. Greeves, Ministry of Home Affairs, Stormont, Public Records Office, Northern Ireland, File No. CAB9B/300/1. See too attached appendices A and B, respectively entitled 'Incidents and Demonstrations in which Rev. Ian R.K. Paisley and members of the Free Presbyterian Church were concerned' dated 17<sup>th</sup> June 1966 and 'Paisleyite Movement' dated 20<sup>th</sup> June 1966.
- <sup>xv</sup> Secret Memo to the Cabinet by the Minister of Home Affairs R.W.B. McConnell 25 July 1966, Public Records Office, Northern Ireland, File No. CAB9B/300/1.
- <sup>xvi</sup> Conclusions of a Meeting of the Cabinet held at Stormont Castle on Monday 25<sup>th</sup> July, 1966 at 4:15pm, Public Records Office, Northern Ireland, File No. CAB9B/300/1.
- <sup>xvii</sup> Deputation from Ministers of the Free Presbyterian Church of Ulster Received by the Prime Minister in the Conference Room, Stormont Castle, at 11am, on Wednesday 10<sup>th</sup> October 1966, Public Records Office, Northern Ireland, File No. CAB9B/300/1
- <sup>xviii</sup> Deputation from Ministers of the Free Presbyterian Church of Ulster Received by the Prime Minister in the Conference Room, Stormont Castle, at 11am, on Wednesday 10<sup>th</sup> October 1966, Public Records Office, Northern Ireland, File No. CAB9B/300/1.
- <sup>xix</sup> Letter from Stratton Mills MP to PM Terence O'Neill 1<sup>st</sup> November 1966, Public Records Office, Northern Ireland, File No. CAB/J9/74.
- <sup>xx</sup> Document entitled 'Statement of Present Problem', no date but the document can be dated to sometime around September 1966, available at Public Records Office of Northern Ireland, File No. PM/5/31/23 Ulster Unionist Council: Annual Conference arrangements, business meetings, PM's Speech etc, 1966-9.
- <sup>xxi</sup> Document entitled 'Statement of Present Problem', no date but the document can be dated to sometime around September 1966, available at Public Records Office of Northern Ireland, File No. PM/5/31/23 Ulster Unionist Council: Annual Conference arrangements, business meetings, PM's Speech etc, 1966-9.
- <sup>xxii</sup> Claims made by Spence should be viewed in the context of an ongoing debate in the secondary literature that seeks to link or disassociate Paisley with the UVF. For example, Ed Moloney and Andy Pollak have pointed to the direct link between Paisley and the Ulster Volunteers in 1966 in the form of

one of Paisley's associates, Noel Doherty (1986: 140). Doherty was sentenced to two years in prison for his part in a conspiracy to procure arms for the UVF. Paisley escaped arrest in relation to this offence because the Attorney General felt a charge could not be sustained (Moloney and Pollak, 1986: 141). Doherty was a close colleague of Paisley's. He had joined Paisley's church in 1956. In 1964 Paisley selected him as one of four 'Protestant Unionist' candidates in the Belfast corporation election. Doherty had not only worked at the publication and printing of the *Protestant Telegraph* but had also suggested the establishment of the Ulster Defence Constitution Committee in April 1966 (Boulton, 1973: 31, 34). Moloney and Pollak have also referred to statements made by Hugh McClean, a member of the UVF in Belfast, who was convicted in connection with the Malvern Street killings in 1966. During questioning McClean expressed remorse at having listened to Paisley and at allowing himself to become involved with the UVF (Moloney and Pollak, 1986: 138), though he subsequently retracted this and stated that he had been 'verballed' by the RUC (See Garland, 2001: 67). Clifford Smyth has also intimated a connection between Paisley and the UVF, again because of his association with Doherty (Smith, 1987: 17). He has cast doubt over Paisley's denials that he did not know about Doherty's actions and more generally those of the UVF (Smith, 1987: 18). Dennis Cooke has referred to the fact that some of the individuals, for example Billy Spence, who were key to the formation of the UVF in 1966 had been closely associated with Paisley though their membership of the Ulster Protestant Volunteers which became a subsidiary to the Ulster Constitution Defence Association (Cooke, 1996: 147-8). Patrick Marrinan again points to the fact that Paisley acted as chauffeur to Doherty on his visit to the house of a Free Presbyterian, Robert Murdock, in Portadown where the discussion about the procurement of gelignite took place in questioning Paisley's denials of involvement (Marrinan, 1973: 98-101). Not only has Paisley denied any connection with the violence of the UVF but so too have those who were members of the UVF in that period (Moloney and Pollak, 1986: 139; Garland, 2001: 66-7). Bruce has cast doubt on the link between Paisley and the UVF. He has down-played the relationship between Paisley and those few in the Free Presbyterian Church and the Ulster Protestant Volunteers who were prepared to commit crimes to achieve their aims (Bruce, 1986: 80). However, the close relationship between Paisley and Doherty, for example, has already been referred to above. Bruce has further questioned the credibility of informers who claimed such a link between the UVF and Paisley and pointed to the fact that a jury decided not to accept their testimony (1986: 79). Bruce has also highlighted the statements by Spence denying any connection between Paisley and the UVF (1986: 80-1).

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