

## PREFACE - MARCHING THROUGH 1996

This report was written between January and March 1996 as the new marching season drew near. Interviews and conversations that we had with parade organisers, bandsmen, residents groups, the police and those involved in promoting mediation or cross community dialogue, indicated that no progress had been made since the autumn of 1995. There appeared to have been little contact between any of the opposing parties since the previous summer, and in most cases there seemed to be little in the way of either hope or expectation that dialogue would move the debate forward. There was no public talk of compromise, if anything positions had hardened. Individuals and groups seemed to be digging in for another summer of 'angry voices and marching feet'.

The 1996 marching season began badly with a fourteen hour stand-off at the Ormeau Bridge on Easter Monday, after the Apprentice Boys had been banned from parading along the lower Ormeau Road. The attacks on the police, by a small section of the crowd protesting the ban, were at least as violent as at any similar confrontation last year. The responses were largely predictable. The media expressed outrage. The parade organisers washed their hands of any responsibility for what happened. Politicians wrung their hands. Some blamed the 'hangers-on', others appealed for calm, for dialogue, for compromise. The suggestion of an independent tribunal to oversee the disputes was briefly mentioned. The story remained prominent for a few days and then quietly disappeared.

But the problem of contested parades will not go away simply by ignoring it. The riot at the Ormeau Bridge did not mark the beginning of this year's marching season. The first contested parade was held on March 3 in Lurgan. Nationalists wanted to hold a rally in the town centre on a Sunday afternoon. As with last July loyalists protested and the RUC restricted the parade to the end of Edward Street. The march and rally passed off peacefully but a massive police presence was maintained. In response to the police ban, nationalists have protested at two band parades in Lurgan which passed through the Wakehurst estate. This was once a loyalist area but is now largely nationalist. To their credit the bandsmen did reach a compromise with the police. They restricted their parade through the estate to three local bands and they also provided more comprehensive stewarding through the town centre than at many similar events.

However the Nationalist Right to March group still question why they continue to be excluded from the town centre on a Sunday afternoon while loyalist parades are allowed through nationalist areas. And why loyalist parades are permitted to occupy the town centre two weekends in a row.

Apart from the ongoing dispute in Lurgan, there has also been clashes following a band parade at Crossgar on April 19, and another stand-off on the Ormeau Road after the Orange parade to the Orange Widows service in the Ulster Hall, on April 28, was re-routed.

Not all has been negative however. We have already mentioned the compromises made by bandsmen in Lurgan. Following the disturbances at Crossgar, it was reported in the press that local bandsmen met with the police to ensure similar events did not occur in future. The band parade in Castlederg (April 27), which ended in violence last year, passed off peacefully this year. Sinn Fein voluntarily re-routed their Hunger Strike Commemoration parade (May 5) away from both the Suffolk estate and Donegall Pass. The Ballynafeigh

District centenary parade (May 8) passed off quietly and with a minimum of policing.

Nevertheless there are still many parades that will provoke objections and protests in the forthcoming months. Some of these will involve a return to the disputes of last year, Bellaghy, Derry, Portadown and Rosslea have all made the news already. Other protests will be made at parades that occur on a non-annual basis, Dunloy and North Belfast have already been mentioned.

The variable nature of the disputes suggest that the issue will only be resolved through a mixture of local compromises and some recognition of wider principles about rights to parade and rights not to suffer parades. However there has been little in the way of sustained discussion about the way to move the issue forward. A range of individuals have suggested that an independent tribunal may have some value. Church of Ireland Primate Robin Eames, the RUC Chief Constable Sir Hugh Annesley, the Alliance Party, Mary Harney, leader of the Progressive Democrats, the LOCC and the SDLP have all expressed some form of interest in the proposal since Marjorie Mowlam, the Labour Party Shadow Northern Ireland Secretary, first mentioned the issue this year. However, as we detail in the report, an independent body was suggested by Sinn Fein's Barry McElduff in May last year. It was also suggested by the then Chief Constable of the RUC, Jack Hermon, in 1986. In ten years things have not moved very far. The idea of an independent tribunal has received no support from Unionist politicians, but they have offered little in the way of alternatives.

At the time of writing, in early May, the idea of a tribunal has not progressed much beyond the realm of a sound bite. There has been little in the way of serious discussion about what it might involve, how it might be introduced and what sort of problems need to be overcome. Besides the tribunal sound bite the only recurring idea is for parade organisers to be more responsible for the totality of events and individuals involved in the parades they organise. Again there has not been any elaboration as to what this might entail in practice.

This document has been produced with three aims. First to provide some of the background to the organisational structure of the parade organisers, why they organise parades and when. Second to review the events of last year, to suggest some of the complexities and interconnections of those events and to review the attempts that were made to resolve the issue. Finally to review some of the attitudes to parades and the ideas that have been expressed to us about possible ways forward. We are not advocating a blueprint to resolve the issue of the right to parade we offer a range of suggestions which might help move the issue forward. At the very least we offer them as ideas to move the debate forward.

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May 1996.

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## **PART ONE - PARADES, an overview.**

There is a long history of pseudo-military parades in the British Isles. In Ireland throughout the eighteenth century the government held annual parades to commemorate the Williamite revolution, but it was also common for formalised groupings such as the Freemasons, Journeyman associations and later the Volunteer Companies or irregular bands of citizens, Jacobite supporters and agrarian secret societies to parade themselves in public. Amongst the diverse group we now broadly define as the Protestant community, the right to bear arms in defence was in part seen as fundamental to their position as subject and citizen. Whilst in the rest of the British Isles there has been general agreement as to the nature of the state and the position of the subject within the state, the populous of Ireland has not shared in that security. As such, there have been social and political reason for the continued banding together of interested parties. The custom of holding parades is therefore not unique to Ireland but it has been extenuated by political circumstances. The political identity of the two dominant communities in the north of Ireland have thus become closely linked to the development of an extensive range of anniversaries marked by a parade (section 3.1).

The huge difference in the number and continuity of parades between the two communities can be partly understood in terms of their relationship to the state. Early Orange parades, at the end of the eighteenth century were effectively encouraged by the state in order to oppose the rise of the United Irishmen. Until the 1870s the banding together of groups, Protestant and Catholic, resulted in frequent sectarian clashes and were consequently seen as a threat to the state. Parades were, at least officially, discouraged, re-routed or banned. After 1870 the Orange Institution became more extensively patronised by both the landed classes and the Belfast bourgeoisie and it was used to mobilise opposition to the campaign for Home Rule and to create a distinctive British identity. The increased popularity and respectability allowed Orange parades to flourish whilst similar events which supported Home Rule, particularly in Ulster, were opposed. Even with the expansion of the nationalist Ancient Order of Hibernians at the start of the Twentieth century the dominant position of Orange parades remained. Put simply, the number of places in which Orangemen were able to parade was always far higher than those open to nationalist parades. Any attempt by nationalists to parade in areas with anything less than a large Roman Catholic majority was quickly stopped.

This process reached fruition with the formation of Northern Ireland. Both the northern and southern states developed a collective identity which was based upon the single dominant ethno-religious group. Commemorative events which reflected this political identity was enshrined by the state while others were opposed. Orange parades in the south became increasingly difficult to organise as they came under threat from local IRA groups. In the north the Twelfth effectively became a ritual of state and it was nationalists that were restricted to marching in a limited number of areas. In towns such as Lurgan, with a mixed population, nationalist parades often caused disturbances. Any Unionist politician that attempted to restrict an Orange parades came under enormous political pressure so that by the late 1950s there were even Orange parades taking place through, the almost exclusively Roman Catholic Dungiven.

The relationship of the state to public expression in the form of parades has provided the environment for loyalist parades to flourish, whilst nationalist or republican parades have

been restricted. This in itself goes a long way to explaining why loyalist parades are so numerous and apparently carry so much 'tradition'. They have so many 'traditional routes' simply because they have, certainly until the fall of Stormont, been in the political position to continually reassert those routes. The claim of 'tradition' is therefore closely linked to the historical power relations in Northern Ireland. But, as will show, there is a strong decentralist and democratic tradition within the Protestant community. Many of the more parochial parades are important expressions of local identity, reasserting the social and political relationships within that community. This has perhaps been made more significant by the increased geographical dispersal of the population. The profligate number of small parades can therefore be understood in terms of the localised nature of the loyal orders and the social relationships they have within their particular communities, as well as by examining the broader political environment.

In the following sections we will begin with an overview of the structure of the loyalist parading bodies. This will be followed by a typological description of their parades. We then consider the annual cycle of parades or the 'marching season' and discuss some of the local variations in parading practice. Finally Section Three offers an brief overview of the changes in parading culture over the past ten years.

## SECTION ONE - LOYALIST PARADING ORGANISATIONS

There are four main players involved in organising loyalist parades:

- (1) The Orange Institution (the Orange Order or 'the Orange').
- (2) The Royal Black Institution ('the Black').
- (3) The Apprentice Boys of Derry.
- (4) Marching bands.

As well as this there are three less prominent bodies who organise regular parades:

- (5) The Independent Orange Institution.
- (6) The Junior Orange Institution (juveniles).
- (7) The Royal Arch Purple Institution.

Collectively these groups are responsible for approximately 2500 parades held each year. The three main bodies and the bands are responsible for the overwhelming majority of the parades. Parades organised by the Orange, the Black and the Apprentice Boys ('the loyal orders') are mutually exclusive, in that only one institution can be officially present at each parade. However many individual are members of more than one of these organisations and therefore the separation of personnel in different parades is not so clear cut.

### 1.1 The Orange Institution

In terms of both the size of the Institution and its political status, the Orange is the most important of the loyal orders. At its peak during the earlier part of this century it could probably boast 100,000 members, although in recent years membership has probably shrunk to nearer 40,000. There is scarcely a townland, or village in Northern Ireland with a significant Protestant population that does not have an Orange lodge. Most villages have at least one, and sometimes more than one, Orange hall. With a few notable exceptions nearly all senior Unionist politicians since the 1870s have been members of the Institution. The Institution also has support from a significant number of the clergy in the larger Protestant churches and, until recently, was patronised by employers and large landowners. It is therefore fair to say that the Orange Institution has played a considerable role in the social, political and economic life of Northern Ireland (Kennedy 1990, 1995).

The basic organisational structure, established at the Order's formation in 1795, was strongly influenced by Freemasonry (Dewar, Brown and Long 1967). Each member joins a local lodge at the invitation of members in that lodge. They are asked to meet the standards set by the 'Qualifications of an Orangeman'. These state that an Orangeman should have 'sincere love and veneration for his Heavenly Father ... a humble and steadfast faith in Jesus Christ ... believing him to be the only Mediator between God and man'. An Orangeman should 'cultivate truth and justice, brotherly kindness and charity, devotion and piety, concord and unity, and obedience to the laws; his deportment should be gentle and compassionate kind and virtuous'. He should 'diligently study the Holy Scriptures ... love, uphold and defend the Protestant religion' and 'strenuously oppose the fatal errors and doctrines of the Church of Rome, and scrupulously avoid countenancing (by his presence or otherwise) any act or ceremony of Popish worship'. An Orangeman should 'by all lawful means, resist the ascendancy of that Church ... ever abstaining from all

uncharitable words, actions, or sentiments, towards his Roman Catholic brethren'. His conduct should be guided `by wisdom and prudence, and marked by honesty temperance and sobriety: the glory of God and the welfare of man, the honour of his Sovereign, and the good of his country, should be the motive of his actions'. However in Northern Ireland, joining the Institution is a political decision, as well as a religious one, and for most Orangemen parading in public is the focus of their membership.

There are about 1400 private lodges in Ireland, each with its own warrant number, its own particular history and to an extent its own character. Some lodges are based upon location, a particular village or district, or even upon an area where members used to live, such as lodges in Belfast that connect to the counties of Fermanagh, Tyrone or Donegal. Others are based upon occupations or even specific places of work, although such specific lodges are now less common. Some lodges are based upon a church, a bible class or perhaps a temperance or abstinence group, while others are named after and commemorate individuals, events or groups that have significant local historical bearing. There are also some, such as Eldon LOL No.7 in Belfast which are seen as elite lodges. Each member is expected to pay annual dues and most lodges have regular monthly meetings which are often notoriously poorly attended. Many members remain in their original lodges even though they now live some distance away, this can allow them to continue to identify with the area where they grew up.

Every lodge elects a number of officers annually. The most important are the Master, Deputy Master, Secretary, Treasurer and Chaplain. They are charged with looking after the social, financial and spiritual welfare of the lodge. This includes organising local parades and church services, the transport and catering at the Twelfth and other major events, and the hiring of a band. A lodge may well have a close relationship with a particular band although some lodges find it difficult to hire the sort of band they would like and therefore parade without one. The hiring of a band, the transport to parades, and especially the replacement of the lodge banner can all impose great expense upon private lodges which generally have relatively little money.

Each private lodge sends six representatives to one of the 126 District Lodges in Ireland. The District Lodge also elects officers and is charged with the care of the private lodges within it, the upkeep of a District Orange Hall, and the organisation of parades at district level, particularly a mini-Twelfth. Most districts host the main Twelfth parade, and therefore entertain the surrounding Districts, on a regular cycle.

The District Lodge sends between 7 and 13 members to one of the 12 County Grand Lodges. As the next level of authority they can arbitrate on disputes and they help in the general liaison in the organisation of the Twelfth parades within their area. Belfast, which has nine districts, has a single Twelfth parade which is organised by County officials. Districts also have their own character and often maintain a friendly rivalry as to who is the biggest, best, or smartest. There is a well known rivalry in Belfast between the two largest Districts, Sandy Row, District No.5 and Ballymacarrett, District No.6.

Finally the Grand Lodge of Ireland is made up of 250 representatives from the County Lodges and other elected Officers. According to a recent leaflet produced by the Grand Lodge, 86% of Districts are represented in some way in the Grand Lodge. All officers of the Grand Lodge are elected except for 2 Assistant Grand Masters, whose appointment is

in the gift of the Grand Master, and 6 Deputy Grand Masters who are nominated by their County. Any major rule changes have to go through the Grand Lodge and they are the final arbiters of any disputes within the organisation, such as the disciplining of members. The Grand Lodge meets in full twice a year but also works through a number of committees, including the Education Committee, the Rules Revision Committee and the Press Committee. The Grand Lodge only organises parades occasionally, for anniversaries such as the Tercentenary of the Battle of the Boyne in 1990.

Historically, divisions between 'the rank and file membership' and the Grand Lodge are not uncommon and they can significantly influence Unionist politics in general. The Institution is a complex and disparate organisation with authority existing at numerous different locations. To understand disputes over particular parades it is important to understand the role they can play in the internal politics of the Orange Institution. Central control over the other parts of the Institution is limited, County and District Lodges have a strong sense of local identity and will look to the Grand Lodge as the guardian of the Institution's image rather than for authority. This means that the Grand Master is often publicly defending the Institution over incidents and events which in truth he has relatively little control. However, the nature of the hierarchy means that a Grand Master's position is a relatively safe one, his re-election often being rubber stamped each year. Even in 1995 when there was clearly great dissatisfaction amongst a significant number of Orangemen with the role Martin Smyth played in the parading disputes, there was little chance of him not being re-elected.

One must also acknowledge the relationship between the Orange Institution and the Ulster Unionist Party (UUP). The Orange Institution has a large representation on the Ulster Unionist Council, and many other delegates are also Orangemen. The majority of the Ulster Unionist MPs at Westminster are Orangemen. Whilst this relationship remained unproblematic for much of this century the divisions within Unionism from the early 1960s onwards has made the relationship more complex. The significant overlap between senior members of the Orange Institution and the Ulster Unionist Party has meant that, at least at the top, the Institution has closely reflected the policies of the UUP. However, many Orangemen are supporters of Ian Paisley's Democratic Unionist Party (DUP). Paisley himself left the Orange Institution in 1962 after a number of disputes, and in particular over the restriction on Free Presbyterian Church ministers from becoming chaplains within the Institution (Moloney and Pollock 1986). Paisley is at present a member of the Apprentice Boys of Derry and he regularly speaks at the Twelfth organised by the Independent Orange Order. Nevertheless, he retains significant power within the Orange Institution. He is regularly invited to lodge events such as the opening of arches and he has involved himself in some of the parading disputes that we will discuss. He effectively led the negotiations at Drumcree, he made the best received speech at the rally at Drumcree, and he was able to calm the crowd to some extent whilst negotiations proceeded. Whilst the Grand Master, Martin Smyth, left things to local Orange representatives and to the local MP David Trimble, Paisley was there in person. That situation said much about the Orange Institution and the disparate authority structure within it.

## **1.2 The Royal Black Institution**

The relationship between the Royal Black Institution and the Orange Institution is so close

that it is debatable whether one can see them as separate organisations. The Black can trace its routes almost as far back as the Orange. The early Orange Institution developed within it a series of 'degrees' through which members could proceed. Some of these, such as 'the Arch Purple', were officially sanctioned by the Grand Lodge. But others degrees were banned since membership of them effectively offered routes to power which those in the Grand Lodge found difficult to control. Nevertheless, these alternative degrees continued to exist in some areas. One such degree was 'the Black'. In the 1850s after some debate, the Royal Black Institution was officially constituted in its own right (McClelland 1968).

Individual members group together in Preceptories and the organisational structure in many ways mirrors that of the Orange Institution, to such an extent that some lodges and Preceptories contain largely the same personnel. Members of the Black are known as 'Sir Knights' and to be able to join one must already be a member of the Orange Institution. The Black is probably best differentiated from the Orange by being more religious and more 'respectable' and it is characterised as being more middle-class. The Black Institution is less overtly political and its banners and regalia reflect its religious bias, particularly through displays of Old Testament imagery (Buckley 1985-86). The institution is strongest in Counties Down and Armagh but Black parades take place in all six counties of Northern Ireland although there is no major Black parade in Belfast. In general a Black parade has few 'blood and thunder bands' and more kilty, silver and accordion bands. This is partly because the Institution has a more rural base and as a rule county parades are generally not as 'rough' as parades in Belfast. The Black Institution is therefore best understood as reflecting the more middle class, rural, religious, respectable, even elite, elements of Orangeism. It is the more conservative face of the Orange, the more Conservative face of Unionism.

### **1.3 Apprentice Boys of Derry.**

The Apprentice Boys are the smallest of the three loyal orders and have an estimated 12,000 members, however it is the most important such group in Londonderry. The organisation is independent from the other loyal orders, although many Boys are also members of the Orange Institution. In the past the Apprentice Boys have had institutional connections with the Official Unionist Party but now they are independent of all political parties. A number of leading unionist politicians, of both main parties, are members of the Boys. The main purpose of the Apprentice Boys is to hold parades to commemorate the two principal events of the Siege of Derry: the closing of the city gates by the apprentice boys in December 1688 and the relief of the siege with the arrival of the Mountjoy in August 1689. These two events have been commemorated in the city in some form since the late 17th century.

The heart of the organisation is the eight Parent Clubs which are based in the Memorial Hall in Londonderry. Six of these are named after leaders of the siege: Baker, Browning, Campsie, Mitchelburne, Murray and Walker, the other two being the Apprentice Boys of Derry Club and the No Surrender Club. The first Apprentice Boys club was established in 1714 but the present organisation dates to 1814. The Baker Club was formed in 1927 and the Campsie Club as recently as 1950, the other five clubs were founded in the 19th century (Tercentenary Committee 1989). Membership of the eight Parent Clubs varies in size but their total membership is estimated at between 4-500 men. The Apprentice Boys do not have a junior organisation and have no female members.

Besides the Parent Clubs the organisation consists of around 200 Branch Clubs across Northern Ireland, in Scotland, England, the Republic and three in Canada. Each Branch Club is established through, and affiliated to, a Parent Club. Branch Clubs in each area are also linked together by an Amalgamated Committee which function as sub-committees of the main organisation. There are eight Amalgamated Committees in Northern Ireland, one in Scotland and one in England. The Northern Irish Amalgamated Committees organise a parade on Easter Monday, the English and Scottish Amalgamated Committees also hold annual parades.

Overall organisation and management of the Apprentice Boys is controlled through the General Committee. This has 44 members in total and meets five times a year. Each of the eight Parent Clubs has four representatives on the General Committee, usually drawn from their officers. The remaining members of the General Committee are representatives of the Branch Clubs acting as officers of the Amalgamated Committee. All officers are elected annually, but retiring officers may be re-elected. The officer posts and their responsibilities are similar to those of the Orange Order. The General Committee also has a Chief Marshall and each Parent Club and each Branch Club is responsible for providing two marshals for parades. The overall structure means that the membership based in the city of Londonderry always has ultimate control over any decisions that are made, even though most Apprentice Boys live elsewhere.

#### **1.4 The Bands**

The common factor to all parades is the presence of marching bands. Historically, most parades have had some sort of musical accompaniment. In the middle of the last century music was provided by informal 'drumming parties' involving large Lambeg-style drums and fifes. After the legalisation of parades in 1872 organised accordion, flute, and silver bands became prominent. Some bands, particularly in Belfast, were funded by factories and were of high quality, but drumming parties and rougher local bands always played a part in events, even if they were not approved of by senior Orangemen. From the end of the nineteenth century bands began to travel over from Scotland and these often had a reputation for being loud and enthusiastic. During the sectarian riots in Belfast in 1934, it was a Scottish band that was implicated in a number of incidents in the Docks area. Accordion bands were for a long time the most popular style but since the war flute bands have grown in number.

Bands have always been a vital part of the parades and they play a central role in creating the mood of the event. This has been particularly obvious since the middle of the 1960s when what are known as 'blood and thunder' or 'kick the pope' bands have emerged (Bell 1990). These bands are often based in a particular street, district or village and their membership is predominately working class. Some bands have their own hall where they practice others use Orange halls or other local facilities. Running, and particular financing, a band involves considerable organisation and most bands have an formalised organising committee with elected officers such as band captain, secretary and treasurer. Major decisions, on such matters as new uniforms, are taken by vote among the entire band.

The majority of bands have no formal allegiance to any of the loyal orders although individual members may often belong to one or more organisation. They are independent,

self-organising, bodies. At the same time a number indicate support for the loyalist paramilitary groups. This is often revealed through style of dress, and paramilitary symbols displayed on the uniforms, the bass drum and on flags. The loyal orders have made some efforts to control which sort of flags appear on their parades but the prominence given to the historical UVF in unionist sympathies means that UVF flags commonly appear at Orange parades. While the popularity of the Orange Institution, particularly amongst the young, and in Belfast, has declined the popularity of bands has increased. The bands offer an alternative, less official, social network, and their involvement in parades is in many senses more 'active', and therefore more attractive, to younger and more alienated groups.

## **1.5 Other Parading Bodies**

### **The Independent Orange Institution**

The Independent Orange Institution was formed in 1903 as a breakaway from the Orange Institution. To begin with it was politically radical and drew support from the working classes in Belfast, who were demanding labour reforms, and tenant farmers in Antrim who were demanding land reforms. Although some of the early leaders held liberal views on the national question, many others were Protestant fundamentalists who campaigned strongly for keeping the sabbath and restricting the consumption of alcohol. This fundamentalist element, largely based in north Antrim, came to dominate the organisation and by the 1920s the new institution's popularity had waned in Belfast (Boyle 1962-63, Morgan 1991, Patterson 1980).

The significance of the Independent Orange Institution was, and still remains, that it is not affiliated to any particular unionist party. This has meant that it can attract those who are disenchanted with the Ulster Unionist Party. In recent years, Ian Paisley, who is a member of neither institution, has always given a speech at the Independent Orange Twelfth. This allows him to remain distant from the Unionist Party yet still symbolically appear close to Orangeism. There has been a small growth of new Independent lodges in recent years, most significantly in Portadown in 1976 as a result of a disagreement with officers of the Grand Orange Lodge. Whilst they are not strong in numbers they do organise regular parades and they can be outspoken on the parading issue in general.

### **The Junior Orange Institution**

Junior Orange Lodges appeared during the last century but it was not until 1925 that they came under the control of the Grand Orange Lodge of Ireland. In 1974 a Junior Grand Orange Lodge was formed and in recent years there has been an increase in interest in the organisation and a corresponding increase in the number parades organised. The Junior Institution takes boys up to the age of 16 when they pass into the senior lodge. Junior lodges are always closely connected to a senior lodge and as many adults attend the junior events and they use the same bands, it is not always obvious when one is watching a juniors parade.

### **The Royal Arch Purple**

The Royal Arch Purple is even more closely tied to the Orange Institution than is the

Black. The first meeting of the Grand Royal Arch Purple Chapter of Ireland was in 1911. As with the Royal Black Institution it developed out of a series of Orange degrees and most Orangemen move rapidly into the Purple and Arch Purple degrees. The Purple has its own organisation which reflects its close association with the Orange Institution, the order holds a number church parades but does not have a major parading date (Research Group nd).

## **SECTION TWO - VARIETIES OF PARADES**

This section offers a typology of parading based on the purpose of the parade rather than based on the group organising the event. It is impossible to offer detailed numbers of the parades within each category as no statistical details are available, however an attempt is made to indicate the importance of each type of parade. Loyalist parades can be broken down into nine relatively discrete categories:

- (1) Main Commemorative Parades
- (2) Local Parades
- (3) Feeder Parades
- (4) Church Parades
- (5) Arch, Banner and Hall Parades
- (6) Social Parades
- (7) Occasional Parades
- (8) Competitive Band Parades
- (9) Commemorative Band Parades

### **2.1 Main Commemorative Parades**

These are few in number but they are regarded as the most significant events of the marching season. Within this category are the Orange and Independent Orange Institution parades held each year on the Twelfth of July, the Black Demonstrations at Scarva on July 13, in County Fermanagh in early August (which marks the battle of Newtownbutler), and the six Last Saturday parades at the end of August, finally it includes the Apprentice Boys Relief of Derry parade on or near August 12.

These few dates form the heart of the parading calendar and constitute what most people understand as basis of the loyalist parading culture or tradition. They form only a small percentage of the total parades but they attract the largest numbers of both marchers and spectators. While all these parades have symbolic significance among the Ulster Protestants, the Twelfth of July and the Relief of Derry parades are the principal dates of the Marching Season.

The Boyne anniversary parades are always held on the twelfth of July itself and Scarva the day after, unless the day falls on a Sunday in which case they are held a day later. The Twelfth of July is a public holiday in Northern Ireland and has been since 1926. All the other parades are held on the nearest Saturday although as recently as 1986 the Relief of Derry parade was held on the anniversary itself. The change to a Saturday was apparently made because many people found it difficult to attend on a week day.

Part of the significance of these events is their longevity as public celebrations. These anniversaries are all well established and their continuing commemoration is integral to the sense of a Protestant identity. The Orange Order has held parades to commemorate the Twelfth of July since the year after its formation in 1795, however the anniversary of the Battle of the Boyne was by then already a long established public event. The custom of holding a parade to remember the Boyne victory began in Dublin in the early 18th century and was taken up in Ulster by the 1770s.

Parades were often the cause of violent disturbances during the nineteenth century. Repeated attempts were made to impose legal restrictions in the early decades the nineteenth century but these were largely unsuccessful. However, between 1849 and 1872 the Party Processions Act was utilised to suppress most parades, including the Twelfth. Since the repeal of this legislation, in 1872, and despite occasional violent outbursts, the Twelfth has never been banned. Parades have been held every year, except 1916 and during World War Two, when parades were voluntarily cancelled.

In the contemporary parading calendar the Twelfth is marked by 19 main parades across Northern Ireland (although the number of feeder parades, boost the total number of parades on the day). Eighteen of these parades are organised by the Orange Institution and one by the Independent Orange Institution. Belfast and Ballymena each host a parade each year while the venues for the remainder are rotated. Some areas follow a regular cyclical pattern in which the Twelfth visits a town or village every 4, 7 or 11 years, others follow a more irregular rotation. The decisions about the location of Twelfth parades is made at either district or county level of the Institution but the cycles appear to be largely ordered by tradition. The 17 venues outside Belfast are divided as follows:

County Antrim.....	6
County Armagh.....	1
County Down.....	4
County Fermanagh.....	1
County Londonderry.....	2
County Tyrone.....	3

The largest of these parades are those held in County Armagh, where Orangeism originated and has remained prominent, and in Belfast. Twelfth of July parades are largely local events at which the Orangemen parade through their home districts and counties, although substantial numbers of Orangemen and bands come over from Scotland for the day. After a morning parade, the men assemble at 'the field', where a religious service is held and, in many areas, leading Unionist politicians make speeches from the platform. In the afternoon a return parade completes the day's events.

In contrast, the main Apprentice Boys anniversary, the Relief of the Siege of Derry, is marked by a single parade in the city. This event attracts members and bands from across Northern Ireland and beyond. Apart from the parade, the main event is a service in St Columbs Cathedral in the morning which is largely restricted to the members of the Parent Clubs. There is no public platform and there are no political speeches during the celebrations. The Relief of Derry has been commemorated with a parade of some sort since the early 18th century while the anniversary has been organised by the Apprentice Boys clubs since they were reformed in the early 19th century. Until early this century the anniversary was still largely a local affair but the growth of the rail network made it possible for people to come from all over the north to attend the parade. Newspaper reports suggest that the Relief celebrations have been growing in popularity and in importance since the 1950s and the anniversary now attracts crowds comparable to the Belfast Twelfth.

The original route of the parade seems to have been largely restricted to a circuit of the city walls but as the scale of the proceedings increased so too did the length of the route. Since

the end of the Second World War the parade route has been regularly extended because of the numbers of people walking. One year it took in parts of the cityside area and the next year it would cross over onto the Waterside. Violent clashes at the event in 1969, and the subsequent arrival of British troops in the city, is widely accepted as marking the beginning of the Troubles although earlier attempts to hold civil rights parades in the city had already led to violence and raised tension. In 1970 the Relief parade was included within a blanket, six-month, Ulster-wide ban on parades. When the anniversary was commemorated the following year the city walls had been closed, the parade was forced to accept a new route which took it away from the Cityside and kept it largely on the Waterside.

The Black parades are more recently established. The Sham fight at Scarva and parades to mark the battle of Newtownbutler in County Fermanagh can be traced back to the 1830s but they only became associated with the Royal Black Institution after the end of the First World War. Newspaper reports suggest that it was only at this time that the Black began to grow in popularity and to organise its own parades.

The Black Institution is strongest in the eastern part of Ulster and in the rural areas. In general it has an older membership and their parades are more gently paced, with a predominance of melody, pipe and accordion bands. However, the Belfast Black parades, with larger numbers of blood and thunder bands and a younger membership has more of the atmosphere of the Orange Twelfth. The main Black event is held on the last Saturday (Black Saturday or Last Saturday) in August when six separate county parades are held across the North. Belfast Blackmen parade through the city in the morning but their main parade is held in either County Down or County Antrim. These last Saturday parades were only fully established in the inter-war years and they have traditionally marked the end of the Marching Season.

## **2.2 Local Parades**

This category includes the Orange mini-Twelfth parades, which are held from mid-June through into early July, and an increasing number of Somme Commemorations which are held on, or near to, July 1. It also includes the celebrations to mark the landing of King William at Carrickfergus in early June; the Black parades in Bangor in July and in Belfast in mid-August; and the Apprentice Boys Closing of the Gates parade in December and the Apprentice Boys Amalgamated Committee parade at Easter. Although not all of these parades mark specific anniversaries, all of these events have become an important part of the wider commemorative cycle. They often function as a prelude to the main parades. They are more localised demonstrations of strength and support and they incorporate routes, areas and districts that are not included on the main parade routes into the larger cycle.

Some of these parades are well established, the anniversary of the Closing of the Gates in Derry, at the end of which the figure of Lundy is burnt, was celebrated in the 18th century. Many of the others are much more recent. Despite popular perceptions, the Somme parades, as annual events, only date back to 1950s, rather than to the immediate post-war years. However, in the early years of this century it was quite common for small parades to be held in a wide diversity of locations on or around July 1, which was the original anniversary date of the Boyne prior to 18th century calendrical changes. The parade held by the Apprentice Boys Amalgamated Clubs on Easter Monday and the Junior Orange

parade on Easter Tuesday both date back to the 1930s. They do not mark any anniversary, but were originally held to counter the Republican parades held the day before, on Easter Sunday. The parade to mark William's landing at Carrickfergus has only been re-established in recent years.

The mini-Twelfth and Somme parades appears to be a category that is on the increase, although they still account for only a small proportion of the total number of parades. More mini-Twelfth parades seem to be held each year especially in the areas outside of Belfast, a factor which has increased the overall visibility of Orange parades in the build up to the Twelfth. For instance Portadown District introduced a mini-Twelfth parade in 1991 (???) and each year the event is focused on a different theme of Ulster Protestant or Orange history. The mini-Twelfths are significant in so far as they bring all the district lodges together as a preparation for the Twelfth itself and this is also the only occasion, apart from the Twelfth, at which all the lodges regalia and banners are displayed. As the mini-Twelfths may well be the only substantial Orange parade in many towns, and as they are usually held on a Saturday or on a weekday evening these parades often attract substantial numbers of people onto the streets.

In Belfast, where the custom has become well established, the mini-Twelfth parades begin in early June with a parade in North Belfast and this is followed by parades from Clifton Street, the Shankill Road, Sandy Row, Ballymacarrett (both on July 1) and finally in Ballynafeigh in early July. On these occasions the Orangemen and their bands walk a circuit which begins and ends at the local Orange Hall. Participation is largely, although not exclusively, restricted to lodges that are based at the hall. The mini-Twelfth parades from the Ballynafeigh and Shankill Road Orange halls have both been subjected to protests in recent years. The Blackmen from Sandy Row and Ballymacarrett organise similar local parades prior to the Last Saturday demonstrations in August.

### **3.3 Feeder Parades**

These are small parades held on the day of the Main Commemorative parades. There would be numerous such parades on the Twelfth of July, in towns and villages across the north when lodges parade locally before taking a bus to the main venue or, in the case of the larger towns and Belfast, parade from their local Orange Hall to the start of the main parade. A similar range of parades is held at the end of the day as lodges return to their halls. Feeder parades are therefore often (a) very small (b) held over very short, localised routes and (c) often held early in the morning, but they make up a substantial proportion of total numbers. The number of feeder parades on the Twelfth may well boost the total numbers from the nineteen large parades to well into three figures.

As a category, feeder parades can be divided into two distinct groups, those that lead directly to a main parade in the same location and those that are held prior to a parade held elsewhere. Both types are held on the lower Ormeau Road. The parade from Ballynafeigh Orange Hall to the City Hall on the morning of the Twelfth is an example of the first type. In this case the Orangemen state that they are taking both the most direct route and the traditional route in order to join up with the main body of men. The Apprentice Boys parades at Easter and in August fall into the other type in which the Belfast Walker Branch Club parade from the Ballynafeigh Orange Hall along the Ormeau Road before boarding a bus to another town. The custom of parading to a bus before departing to a main venue

seems to have its origin in an earlier era when lodges met at their local hall and then paraded together to a railway station to take the train to another destination. When buses and cars became a more popular mode of travel, the parade from the hall was retained although it now took a shorter route to meet the waiting transport.

The argument for tradition informs the logic of both of these parades from Ballynafeigh when they have been challenged. The Orangemen and the Apprentice Boys both argue that they have been walking the same route for many years and they will continue to do so to uphold their traditions. However while the claim that the route along the Ormeau Road on the Twelfth is the most direct and obvious one to take is certainly true and strengthens their argument, it does not justify the argument of the Apprentice Boys. The use of a bus or cars to go to a parade elsewhere makes many of these feeder parades unnecessary except as a ritual display.

## **2.4 Church Parades**

All of the loyal orders hold a number of church services on a range of Sunday afternoons throughout the marching season. On these dates a lodge assembles at the local Orange Hall before parading to the appropriate venue. Some parades and services involve only a single lodge while other dates are events which are recognised across the entire institution. The main services for the Orange Order are the Somme memorial service held in late June, the Boyne anniversary service on the Sunday prior to the Twelfth and the Reformation Day services in late October. The City of Belfast Black Chapter have a collective service on the Sunday preceding the Last Saturday demonstration. The main service for the Apprentice Boys is held in St Columbs Cathedral as part of the August and December celebrations.

An individual lodge or a District may attend services in a number of different churches in the course of the year and therefore be involved in a number of distinct, but still traditional, routes. Although the church parades are numerous they are usually small and again they are predominately local affairs: the Boyne anniversary services, for example, are organised on a lodge basis. However there are larger scale gatherings such as the Loyal Orange Widows Fund charity service which is held in the Ulster Hall in late April and is attended by members from all Belfast Orange districts.

In the main church parades receive little attention: in part this is because they are held on Sunday afternoons, in part because they lack the colour of the other parades and in part because there are usually only one or two bands present and the music that is played is usually religious rather than party tunes. Church parades have little of the appeal of the larger commemorative parades and attract few spectators. However they can still have a symbolic significance as the events after the Drumcree church service last summer illustrate only too well.

## **2.5 Arch, Banner and Hall Parades**

These are held on the occasion of the opening of an Orange Arch, an Orange Hall or at the unfurling of a new banner. There are always a number of such parades organised by Orange lodges in late June and early July and by Black Preceptories in August. They seem to be most common in smaller towns and rural areas. Some arch opening ceremonies have been incorporated into mini-Twelfth parades, if they are not they afford the occasion for a small

parade. Banner unfurlings are an occasional event which are held to mark the purchase of a new lodge banner. A banner can last upwards of 25 years if it is properly cared for and so these are rare events for an individual lodge, they may be held perhaps only once in a generation. All of these are small and localised events and there will rarely be more than one or two lodges present, although at least one band will be used to accompany the new banner as it is paraded through the area for the first time. Senior political figures are usually invited to these occasions: to help in the ceremonies, and to say a few words to the assembled constituents, but often they are used as a platform for rallying the party faithful. As such they contribute both to the general build up to the Twelfth and re-affirm the political allegiances of Orangeism.

## **2.6 Social Parades**

This is little more than a catch all category to accommodate the few remaining parades held by the loyal orders. Within this group can be included the (increasing) range of parades held by the Junior Orange Order and the occasional parade organised by the Women's Orange Institution. The Belfast area juniors hold a parade on Easter Tuesday and a number of other districts hold parades at other times of the year. On each occasion a short parade is held from the Orange Hall to a waiting bus and then the district usually goes to a coastal town, where, after another short parade, the boys have a day by the sea. Although organised under the auspices of the Junior Orange Institution there are usually as many adults on the parade accompanying the boys and playing in the bands.

## **2.7 Occasional Parades**

There are also occasions when parades are held as a one off event, sometimes as a special commemoration and sometimes as part of the broader political process. In 1990 the Orange Order held a special parade in Belfast to mark the Tercentenary of the Battle of the Boyne. In November 1994, shortly after the two paramilitary ceasefires had been called, the Orange Order paraded to a convention in the Botanic Gardens in Belfast. Here prominent members spoke on the theme of "British Citizens demand British Rights". In 1995, Orangemen held parades to mark the 50th anniversary of VE Day in May, and throughout the year a number of events were held to mark the Bicentenary of the Order itself, culminating in a series of parades and a rally in Loughgall, County Armagh, in September.

## **2.8 Competitive Band Parades**

As well as taking part in all the above categories of parades the bands participate in an extensive range of parades which are organised by other bands. Band parades have become extremely numerous in recent years. They are held on most if not all Friday evenings, Saturday afternoons and Saturday evenings from the beginning of the marching season at Easter until the end of September. Many of the well-established bands have an regular date for their parade and new bands may find it difficult to find a suitable date in the main part of the marching season. This has led to an extension of the marching season and on many weekends band parades may be held at a number of locations. The parades are primarily social events although there is also a competitive side to them. A range of trophies are offered by the host band who then judge the visiting bands on a number of different categories of their appearance, their deportment and their musical abilities as they parade their way around the host town.

The success of a parade depends heavily on reciprocity. If a band wants to attract a large number of visiting bands to its own parade it must in turn travel to a good number of other parades. The largest band parades can easily attract 50 or more bands and these are therefore second only to the Main Commemorative parades in their scale and in the numbers of people who turn out to walk. These parades often dominate a small town from early evening until midnight and draw substantial numbers of young spectators into town and onto the streets, they therefore also generate a good trade for publicans, shopkeepers and diverse food stalls.

Many of the bands do not take the competitive element very seriously but the parades have become a prominent part of their social life. Some bands will parade at 3 or more such events in a weekend, week in week out throughout the season. Some bands may only need to go a few miles to attend a parade but others are prepared to hire a bus and travel across the province regularly. These band parades build up and consolidate an extensive network of social relations which is connected to, but distinct from, the more established networks of the loyal orders.

## **2.9 Commemorative Band Parades**

These appear to be similar to the competitive band parades in so far as they are largely made up of the marching bands but they are held as anniversary commemorations. There are two varieties of these parades. One would include the parades held to mark the battle of the Somme in July or Armistice Day in November. On these occasions the bands and representatives of the loyalist paramilitary groups lay wreaths at local commemorative plaques or murals. Such events may be held at the same time as official events that are taking place elsewhere.

Another type of commemorative parade has begun to be held to mark the anniversary of the death of loyalist paramilitary figures who have died in the Troubles. Although small in number they can attract large substantial numbers of bands and spectators. Once again wreaths are laid against murals or against commemorative plaques. Members of Orange Institution and representatives of the paramilitary groups may both take part in these ceremonies.

## **SECTION THREE - AN AVERAGE PARADING YEAR**

The widely expressed importance given to the concept of tradition, and the emphasis placed on traditional parades would suggest that a fairly consistent formal or regular pattern would underpin the parading year or marching season. But what exactly constitutes an average marching season? While there is a consistency at the heart of the loyalist parading calendar, it is difficult to be precise about what would constitute an average year. Most people would base such a year around the large traditional parades held on the Twelfth of July or the celebrations to mark the Relief of Derry, but these anniversaries constitute only a small proportion of the parading year. Furthermore, there can be a great deal of variation in the number of parades from year to year and from place to place.

There are number of ways that this issue can be approached. One way would be to consider an overview of the year through the calendrical cycle and describe all the anniversaries and commemorations that are marked by parades. Such a process would have to balance the general details that are applicable to all areas of Northern Ireland as well as note the regional variations. No two towns or villages, counties or districts, or even areas of towns or cities are the same as regards the overall parading calendar. Each town has its own traditions and its own customs and local parades which are organised in parallel with the more widely known major events. The local parading calendar may also vary from year to year depending on whether a town is to host a major parade, such as the Twelfth, or the Last Saturday of August parades. Some places will always have significantly larger numbers of parades than others. The total number of parades is boosted by a large number of small social parades which only continue, and may increase in number, in response to the enthusiasm of the participants and organisers, rather than through the dictates of tradition.

A second would be to consider the marching season from the position of the various participants: a single individual, an Orange lodge, a Black Preceptory and a marching band will all have a different perception of what constitutes an average year. The first part of this section describes the main events on the parading calendar as a chronology of an average year. The second part considers some of the variation in different towns and villages, while the third part considers the marching season from the perspective of a number of marching bands. Another approach, which will be considered in Section 4, would be to focus on the total number of parades and consider how the parading calendar and the number of parades varies. This might help to identify changing patterns and raise questions as to why the patterns are in fact changing. This in turn will raise questions about the issue of tradition: how long does a parade have to be held before it becomes 'traditional'? How regularly does a parade have to be held for it to remain 'traditional'? How much variation can be imposed on a parade route before it loses its 'traditional' character?

### **3.1 Chronology of the Main Parades**

This chronology focuses on the parades organised by the loyal orders. Running parallel with these events is the band parading calendar which begins in April and includes at least one parade most Friday evenings, Saturday afternoons and Saturday evenings until the end of September.

EASTER - Some Orange lodges hold church parades on the Sunday nearest to St Patrick's Day, March 17, and Larne Juniors parade to church on Palm Sunday, but for most the Marching Season begins on Easter Monday when the Amalgamated Committee of the Apprentice Boys hold their parade. The organisation rotates among the several local committees and therefore the venue changes each year. Members from all parts of the Province assemble for this parade. The following day, Easter Tuesday, the Belfast and South Antrim lodges of the Junior Orange Order have their annual parade, usually at a coastal town. The final large gathering is held on a Sunday afternoon at the end of April the Belfast Orange Lodges attend a charity service in the Ulster Hall, in aid of the Belfast Loyal Orange Widows Fund.

MAY - This is a quiet month. There are no major parades, although a number of church parades are held, including annual services in County Cavan and County Monaghan. The Scottish Apprentice Boys hold their annual parade around the middle of the month. At the end of the month the Junior Orangemen from Armagh, South Tyrone and Fermanagh hold their annual parade - again at a coastal town.

JUNE - In June the Marching Season begins to get fully under way. The first Orange mini-Twelfth parade is held on the first Friday in June in north Belfast and the Belfast Branch Clubs of the Apprentice Boys parade on the first Saturday. On the second Saturday King William's landing is commemorated in Carrickfergus, and Portadown District Orangemen hold their mini-Twelfth parade. Mini-Twelfths are held in north Belfast on the following weekend and a week later in west Belfast and in the Sixmilewater District of south Antrim.

JULY - The first of July, the anniversary of the beginning of the battle of the Somme is second only to the Twelfth in the Orange calendar. Church parades are held on the nearest Sunday and on the first itself, parades and wreath laying ceremonies are held across the north. In 1995 long established parades were held in south and east Belfast, and others were reported in Armagh, Ballyronan, Castleberg, Cloughmills, Dromore, Dunmurray, Killylea, Lisburn, Lurgan, Markethill, Omagh, Poyntzpass, Rathfriland and Stewartstown on either June 30 or July 1.

On the first Wednesday after the Somme parades, Belfast's Ballynafeigh District hold their mini-Twelfth parade; and, on the Saturday before the Twelfth itself, Orange parades are held in Rossnowlagh, County Donegal and at a number of venues in Scotland. The following day, the Sunday before the Twelfth, or on the Twelfth itself, if it falls on a Sunday, the Boyne anniversary church service is held at venues across the north.

The Twelfth of July is the highlight of the Marching Season for most people. The nineteen parades are held at locations across Northern Ireland. Apart from Belfast and Ballymena, a different range of venues are used each year. Twelfth parades have been held at over 130 different locations since 1968. The Twelfth is the climax to the series of small parades that have been taking place for the previous few weeks and it also marks the end of the Marching Season for the Orange Institution (with the exception of the Reformation Day church services in October).

The following day the first major Royal Black Institution parades are held at Scarva and Bangor in County Down. Scarva is the traditional venue for the main parade of the County Down and County Armagh Preceptories. It is also the occasion for the Sham Fight, which

is held near a tree under which King William reputedly rested on his way south. The Lurgan District Blackmen go to the seaside for the day.

AUGUST - The Twelfth traditionally marked the beginning of the two week holiday period and no major parades are during this time, although band parades may take place at the weekends. There is a gap of almost a month before the next important parade, which is broken only by minor parades. The East Belfast Junior Orange lodges have an annual outing to the seaside at the beginning of August and some District Black Preceptories have their annual church parades at this time.

Parading restarts in earnest on the Saturday nearest August 12. On this day the Apprentice Boys parade through the city to celebrate the Relief of Derry, and the County Fermanagh Blackmen parade, at a rotating venue, to mark the battle of Newtownbutler. The Fermanagh parade attracts members from across the border, but the Londonderry parade draws people from all areas of Northern Ireland and beyond. The parade is second only to the Boyne anniversary as the major event of the season.

The second half of August is dominated by Black parades. Local parades are held in south and east Belfast as a prelude to the main County Black parades on the Last Saturday. On this day parades are held in Counties Antrim, Down and Londonderry and in both east and west Tyrone. The Belfast County preceptories alternate their parade between a venue in County Down and one in County Antrim.

SEPTEMBER AND OCTOBER - The Last Saturday formally marks the end of the commemorative marching season, but the band parades continue through September although by the end of the month the evenings are too short, and often too cold, to make parading attractive either for large numbers of bands or spectators. The last official Orange Institution parade of the year is held on the last Sunday in October on the occasion of the Reformation Day services. In Belfast all Orange Districts independently parade to St Anne's Cathedral for the service.

DECEMBER - The final parade of the year is held on the Saturday nearest December 18 in Londonderry, to mark the anniversary of the Closing of the Gates in 1688, the event that led to the Siege of Derry. This parade is much smaller than the August parade in the city and is largely of local interest. The climax of the day is the burning of the 18' high effigy of Lundy in the late afternoon.

This chronology shows that the three prominent parading orders, the Orange, the Black and the Apprentice Boys have different and distinct parading calendars. The parades organised by the Orange Institution are largely held in the period of June to mid-July, although there are church parades both before and after these dates. From July 13 through to the end of August the parades are organised by the Royal Black Institution, an organisation with a strong rural base and a more respectable and less popular character to it. In contrast the three main Apprentice Boys parades are almost equally spaced across the year: they begin the loyalist Marching Season at Easter, provide a second, popular climax in August and bring the cycle to an end in December. Although the main anniversaries, the Twelfths of July and August, Scarva and the Last Saturday are focused on one or more main parades, each day is also the occasion for numerous small parades by Orangemen, Blackmen and Apprentice Boys as they parade in their home localities before moving on to

the main event. It becomes almost impossible therefore to document the marching season in its entirety or in its full complexity. This will be clear when we consider the overall scale of the parading calendar and the increase in parades over recent years.

### **3.2 Local Variations**

The above chronology has been biased towards parades held in Belfast, but there does appear to be more parades, held on more dates, in the city than in other locations. In part this reflects the strength of the loyal orders among the Belfast working class but it is also in part due to the desire not to have an overlap of parades in different areas of the city. The Belfast marching season is therefore the most extensive in so far as it is spread over more weeks than in other areas: mini-Twelfth parades are held regularly from early June to mid-July and when band parades and Black parades are included, there is probably a loyalist parade of some kind in Belfast on most, if not every, weekend during June, July and August.

This extensive sequence includes both 'Orange' and band parades. The 'Orange' parades are in turn based on the numerous Orange Halls throughout the city. The decentralised structure of the loyal orders means that nobody is necessarily aware of the scale of the broader picture across the city. The same is true of the smaller towns and villages where once again the emphasis is on very localised traditions and practices. Even confirming the details of the range of parades from a single hall can prove difficult. The number may vary according to the number of Orange lodges and Black Preceptories based at a hall, and whether there are also Junior lodges, women's lodges, Purple Chapters and Apprentice Boys clubs or even affiliated bands who parade from a particular hall.

The Ballynafeigh district parades have proved the most contentious in recent years and there has been considerable uncertainty of the total number of parades which has added to the suspicions and mistrust on both sides. Claims of 17 or more parades along the Ormeau Road each year, put forward by members of the Lower Ormeau Concerned Community, have been strongly denied by the Orangemen. The fact that parades from Ballynafeigh were opposed on eight occasions seems to contradict the LOCC claim but whereas those parading argue that a single parade includes both outward and return legs, the residents group define this as two separate parades through their area since they occur at two distinct times of day. What are eight parades for the loyal orders would be seen as a up to sixteen parades to the residents. Changes to the return route of some of the parades in recent years has also helped to confuse the issue.

The information we have suggests that 11 annual parades leave Ballynafeigh Orange Hall, although special anniversary parades may increase this number. There is also an annual band parade unconnected to the 'Orange' parades. Eight of these parades seek to walk the length of the Ormeau Road. These include four Orange, two Black and two Apprentice Boys parades. Two others, the mini-Twelfth and a junior Orange parade, have, in the past, followed a similar route but they have now been re-routed. The Boyne Anniversary church parade remains in the Ballynafeigh area. In recent years the return route of the main parades have been diverted away from the lower Ormeau area so that last year the loyal orders had intended to walk the length of the road 12 times on eight different days, beginning on Easter Monday and ending at the end of October.

This would seem to be the average number of parades that one might expect to find leaving each of the five main Orange halls in Belfast, although the smaller halls would probably have less. Outside the Belfast a similar variety exists between those small halls at which only one or two lodges are based and the larger district halls. In Saintfield the district Orange lodge holds a Boyne church parade and a mini-Twelfth annually and hosts the Twelfth in rotation with a number of other districts. Individual lodges may parade only three or four times a year. Residents report a similar small number of parades through the nationalist village of Bellaghy, the local loyal orders holds two annual church parades and they also parade the main street before departing for both the Twelfth and Last Saturday parades which are only occasionally held in the village. These small parades appear to cause little friction but there is strong opposition to the larger mini-Twelfth band parade in early July.

In Larne there are eleven parades from the Victoria Orange Hall between late March and the end of October. These are the responsibility of a wide range of bodies: four parades are organised by the Orange Order and two each by the Black, the Apprentice Boys and Junior Orange Order while the local Royal Arch Purple Chapter has a single church parade. As in all areas there will also be a range of one off parades for the unfurling of banners, lodge anniversaries and for women's church services. A similar pattern emerges from Portadown where there are at least 12 parades each year from the Carleton Street hall. These include five Orange parades, including three church parades, three Black, three Apprentice Boys and one Junior Orange parade. As in Belfast there will be other parades leaving each of the town's Orange halls and as well as this there are three annual band parades in the town.

Over the marching season it is not unusual for a town to host a parade every 2-3 weeks on average, although these will be the responsibility of several different organising bodies and few individuals will necessarily have a view of the overall picture. Despite these large numbers of different parades, most individual members of the loyal orders are unlikely to parade more than half a dozen times each year and many will wear their sash even less. However, more senior figures and officers at the district level and above, may be expected to turn out on many more occasions, especially those who belong to two or more of the orders. Most members of the loyal orders will only parade in the area they live or the area in which they grew up, and, apart from those men who travel some distance to the Apprentice Boys parades, they will only rarely be involved in parades outside of their home county.

### **3.3 Band Parading Practices**

Although the loyal orders are most clearly identified with the tradition of parading members of the numerous bands attend more parades than do members of the loyal orders. While bandsmen often do not have any formal connection with any of the loyal orders they will parade at Orange, Black and Apprentice Boys parades. Many bands have established a regular contract with a particular lodge, preceptory or club and will lead them on parade year in and year out. This relationship may be with a lodge close to the bands own base but some bands regularly parade away from their home areas at the big parades. This diverse connections with each of the different orders means that the bands parade in a much wider range of locations than do members of the loyal orders and they parade at a

greater number of parades overall. Where an Orangeman may only walk on the mini-Twelfth, the Twelfth and one or two church parades and in his own area, a bandsman may cover a dozen or more parades as a bare minimum, they may travel the length and breadth of Northern Ireland in the process, and include occasional trips to Scotland as well.

Although the bands seem to be a support act at those parades which are organised by the loyal orders, for many of the spectators, it is the bands that provide both the entertainment and the spectacle at these events. As one person told us - 'No-one is going to stand on the street to watch a few hundred Orangemen walk by, unless there are a few bands and some music as well'. Members of the loyal orders and newspaper reports also regularly judge the scale of a parade by the number of bands present rather than members of the organising body.

The marching bands themselves can be group into a number of discrete categories. The most popular form is the flute band. These comprise a bass drum, four or more side drums and anything from a dozen to thirty or more flautists. The marching flute bands can in turn be divided into 'blood and thunder' and 'melody' styles. The former play a single keyed flute, the latter use a five keyed instrument, however, it can be difficult to discern the difference on the parades. Flute bands are predominately male, but girls often form the colour party. In contrast, women and girls often play a prominent role in the accordion bands, who play a less raucous music based on accordions, side drums and a bass drum. Pipe bands, silver bands and full music flute bands also take part in some parades, particularly Black parades and those in rural areas. Many of the blood and thunder and melody bands parade regularly in competitions throughout the marching season, but the most important events remain the commemorative parades. The quality of a band is determined not so much by the number of trophies they win in competition but by the ease with which they get booked to attend the big parades.

A brief sample shows the range of parades attended by different bands. All the bands are blood and thunder except Band B which are a melody flute band. All competed in numerous band parades last year except Band A which were re-structuring and training new members. Bands A and B are based in north Belfast, while C and D are from south Belfast area. Band E is from Co Down, F from Co Tyrone and G and H from Co Armagh.

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PARADE	BAND							
	A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H
AB Easter	Y	Y	Y	Y			Y	Y
Juniors		2				Y	Y	
Mini-Twelfths	4	3	4	2	1	2	3	2
Church					5			
Twelfth	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y
Scarva					Y	Y		
Relief of Derry	Y	Y	Y	Y		Y	Y	Y
Last Saturday	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y
Loughgall	Y	Y	Y			Y	Y	

Loyalist Ceasefire	Y	Y	Y		Y		Y	Y
Armistice Day		Y			Y			
AB December	Y		Y	Y		Y	Y	Y
Band Competitions	1	16	c40	c20	c25	c25	40+	c30
Other	2	2	2		2	2		
Total	14	30	c50	25+	c30	35+	c60	40+

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While the bands display a considerable range in the total number of parades they attend, even a band that barely parades except at 'Orange' events is out more often than the vast majority of Orangemen. The blood and thunder bands concentrate on the main commemorative events and few of them play at church parades, where accordion or silver bands are more widely used. There is also less demand for blood and thunder bands in the rural areas, where traditional bands are preferred and lambegs are still often used to accompany a lodge. This can be illustrated by a comparison of the two Black parades held on July 13 1994. The Lurgan town preceptories who paraded in Bangor were accompanied by 10 blood and thunder bands, 2 accordion bands and a single traditional flute band, whereas at the county parade in rural Scarva there were 20 accordion bands, 19 flute bands, 18 pipe bands and 12 blood and thunder bands. Blood and thunder bands also dominated the recent Apprentice Boys Closing of the Gates parade in December 1995, which included only one accordion band and two traditional flute bands among the 22 who paraded the city. Only five of these bands were based in Derry. Although other bands had come from nearby villages like Burntollet and Newbuildings, six bands had travelled from the Belfast area and others were from Antrim, Castledearg, Garvagh, Markethill and Millisle.

When travelling to 'Orange' parades the bands may have their costs covered by the lodge they accompany, but they also travel extensively to band parades and it is the seemingly ever increasing numbers of band parades that provide the main social occasion for the bandsmen. It is these events that the networks of friendships and rivalries between bands are built and sustained. But, they must be worked on to be maintained and so bands must constantly attend other parades if they want bands to attend other parades. A few examples to illustrate this point: the Red Hand Defenders parade in Downpatrick, held at the end of the marching season in September, drew 19 bands. Many of these were from nearby: Crossgar, Killyleagh and Inch but others came from further afield: Banbridge, Belfast, Bessbrook, Kilkeel, Lisburn, Newtownards, Rathfriland and Waringstown. Some of the big band parades in Belfast attract 40 or more bands from as far as Ballymena, Castledearg, Coleraine, Londonderry, Markethill, Portadown and smaller places in between. The biggest parades in recent years in Ballymena and Markethill, draw bands from a similar broad area. One Belfast band had travelled to Antrim, Ballymena, Ballymoney, Clogh Mills, Craigavon, Crossgar, Donaghadee and Maghera last year as well as playing at numerous parades in the Greater Belfast area, while one of the Portadown bands played at completions in Belfast, Enniskillen and Londonderry and numerous places nearer to home.

The growth in numbers of blood and thunder bands and the parallel development of band parades marks a 'new wave' in the loyalist parading culture. At the same time the

heightened visibility of bandsmen in often elaborate uniform and the frequent adoption of paramilitary insignia and symbols on their regalia have made the bands an easy target as the 'cause' of problems and violence at parades. However as we indicate in Part Two band parades themselves only rarely provoke protests or degenerate into violence. Band parades are less easily cloaked in the idea of tradition and have therefore been more readily restricted under public order legislation. Most band parades are kept away from nationalist areas and only in isolated cases have bands demanded the right to march into the centre of marginal or mixed areas. This is not to suggest that individual bands or bandsmen do not increase tension or animosity by playing party tunes or playing louder at particular places but that this largely happens at parades organised by the loyal orders.

## SECTION FOUR - OVERVIEW OF PARADES, 1985-94.

The only statistics on parade numbers are those published in the RUC Chief Constable's Annual Report each spring. These give bare figures on the total numbers of parades held by each community in the previous year, and the number of parades which had conditions imposed on them or at which trouble occurred. They can also be used to illustrate changes that have occurred over recent years. Prior to 1985 no figures of the numbers of parades were published in the report.

### 4.1 Ten Year Overview

Table 4.1 lists the numbers of parades that have been recorded in Northern Ireland from 1985 until 1994. Some explanations are required with regard to the figures and terms in the table:

- (i) The terms Loyalist and Republican are those used by the RUC. There is at present no way to sub-divide these gross numbers in terms of the body organising the parade.
- (ii) The figures in brackets refer to illegal parades, ie those parades that refused to seek formal permission from the RUC under the terms of the 1987 Public Order (NI) Order. Under this legislation organisers of parades were required to give seven days notice of the intention of holding a parade and give information regarding participants and the route to be taken. In the first year of the legislation a relatively high number of parades were deemed to be illegal. Between 1992 and 1994 there were no illegal parades.

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TABLE 4.1 Total number of parades in Northern Ireland, 1985-94.

	Total	Loyalist	Republican	Rerouted	Disorder/ Conditions
				Imposed	
1994	2792	2520	272	29	
1993	2662	2411	251	12	
1992	2744	2498	246	16	
1991	2379	2183 (2)	196 (2)	14	1
1990	2713	2467 (1)	246	10	1
1989	2317	2099 (1)	218 (1)	14	5
1988	2055	1865 (4)	190 (4)	10	21
1987	2112	1863 (49)	249 (47)	11	18
1986	1950	1731	219	9	
1985	2120	1897	223	22	

Source: RUC Chief Constables Annual Report and RUC Information Department.

These figures show that the re-routing of parades has been a consistent problem for the RUC. At the same time, those parades that have been re-routed account for only a small percentage of the total number of parades. In 1994 there were more parades re-routed than in any other year and yet they still accounted for only just over 1% of all parades. The relatively high numbers of re-routed parades in 1985 are linked to the disputes at Portadown which have been analyzed in Bryan, Fraser and Dunn (1995). They also show two distinctive features that require explanation: first the large increase in the number of

parades over the 10 year period, and second the large difference between the numbers of Loyalist and Republican parades. We have suggested some of the reasons why parading is so prominent within the Ulster loyalist community: the historical background to loyalist parades, the connections to the Stormont state, and the importance of local parades to re-assert the idea of Northern Ireland as a Protestant state. These matters all require more detailed presentation than can be presented in this report, although consideration of the broader social, political and historical background is available elsewhere (Bryan 1994, Bryan and Officer 1995, Bryan and Tonkin in press, Jarman 1992, 1993, 1995, in press). Here we will concentrate the general increase in parades in recent years.

#### 4.2 Growth in Parade Numbers

The average number of parades each year has increased substantially in the past ten years, from a low of 1950 in 1986 to a high of 2792 in 1994. This is a gross increase of over 43%. However this growth has been neither consistent nor steady but instead seems to have developed in two stages, giving three distinct average periods. In the first four years, from 1985 to 1988, the gross figure varied between 1950 in 1986 and 2120 in 1985 with an annual average of 2059. In both 1989 and 1991 the figures rose to over 2300 while in 1990 there was an even larger number of parades (2713). However, this figure was boosted because 1990 was the Tercentenary of the Battle of the Boyne and the Orange Institution held a series of extra events over the year. The average numbers of parades for the last three years, 1992-4, has now reached 2732, which is greater than in the Tercentenary year.

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Table 4.2 Average figures in each of the three periods.

Years	Average Total	Average Loyalist	% Tot Republican	Average	% Tot
1992-94	2732	2476	90.6	256	9.4
1989-91	2469	2249	91.1	220	8.9
1985-88	2059	1839	89.3	220	10.7

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This table shows that the average number of loyalist parades has increased steadily over the three periods. In contrast, the average number of Republican parades was steady between 1985-91 and has only increased in the final period, between 1992-94. Furthermore not only have Loyalist parades increased in real terms they have also increased in percentage terms. Loyalist organise a large proportion of the parades than they did in the late eighties, and they now account for 90.6% of the total number of parades. Over the total period of 1985-94 the annual average number of parades increased by 32.7%; but the annual average number of Loyalist parades increased by 34.6% whereas the annual average number of Republican parades increased by only 16%.

Accounting for this increase is another problem. It would be more readily addressed if a greater range of information was available from the RUC, and if this gave some indication of the numbers of parades in each of our typological categories, or by organisation. The

jump in figures in 1989 and 1990 is probably largely due to the Tercentenary anniversaries of the Relief of Derry and the Battle of the Boyne respectively. On both occasions extra effort was put into marking the anniversaries. The Chief Constable's Annual Report acknowledges the significance of the Tercentenary but suggests that the increase in 1989 was due to elections that took place that year. If the increase was purely for such specific one-off reasons one would also expect parade numbers to drop in subsequent years which has not happened.

The reason for the continued increase since 1992 is not so readily apparent. There is an increase of over 45% in loyalist parades between the number held in 1986 and the number held in 1994. A period when an extra 789 parades were recorded. In terms of the wider debate over the issue of parading these figures are significant with regard to the importance of the concept of tradition which is especially widely invoked by loyalist groups. On these statistics alone the idea of an unchanging and consistent tradition is seriously challenged. However, some scepticism has been expressed over the scale of loyalist parades with suggestions that the increase may be due to changes in the ways in which parades are counted or statistics processed rather than reflecting a real increase.

Nevertheless, one might speculate that a large proportion of the general increase would be taken up by two specific categories of loyalist parades: the small feeder parades and competitive band parades. Band parades have been growing in popularity in recent years and probably do account for a part of the overall increase, but it is unlikely that they count for most of it. Instead it is likely that an increasing number of feeder parades are held prior to the main events. In talking with members of the loyal orders it is apparent that many Orangemen may be involved in 3 or more parades on anniversaries such as the Twelfth. First parading from a Master's house to the Hall, then from the hall to the transport, then perhaps at a district assembly point before arriving at the main venue. Each parade would require separate permission. Duplicated among the hundreds of lodges on parade on the Twelfth would boost the total numbers dramatically. It has also been suggested that the police may class the outward and return legs of a parade as two parades in the same way as the residents of the lower Ormeau Road area, whereas Orangemen would regard the outward and return route as a single parade. Some of the increase may be due, therefore, to differing interpretations as to what constitutes a parade.

### **4.3 Republican Parades**

However it should be noted that over this period the average number of Republican parades has also steadily increased, whereas it had remained stable over the previous two periods.

There are three groups within the nationalist community who hold regular parades, the Ancient Order of Hibernians, the Irish National Foresters and the Republican movement. The Hibernians and the Foresters are similar in organisational structure to the loyal orders and both have their origins in the brotherhoods and Friendly Societies which were popular in the nineteenth century. Both were also prominent in the nationalist campaign for Home Rule in the 1880-1914 period and were prominent in maintaining a nationalist tradition of parading during the Stormont years. They have been eclipsed by the republican movement in this area since the beginning of the Troubles. The AOH hold their main parades on St Patrick's Day, March 17, and on Lady Day, August 15. These are often held in smaller

towns and villages but in recent years they have paraded in Derry, Downpatrick and Newry. The INF hold their annual parade in early August usually in County Armagh or County Down. Both organisations also hold a number of local church parades and occasional banner unfurling ceremonies. The main anniversaries would attract about 15 bands and divisions (the largest recent parade in Derry in 1995 drew 33 bands) and they would therefore be classed as small by the standards of loyalist parades.

The republican movement has become more prominent in holding commemorative parades, the Easter Rising is the main anniversary with numerous parades held on Easter Sunday across Ireland. Under Stormont, Easter parades in the north were often stopped and at best were confined to strongly nationalist areas, but some form of public commemoration was usually held. Since the Troubles republicans have established major parades to mark the anniversaries of Bloody Sunday - the end of January in Derry; the Hunger Strikes - early May in Belfast; and Internment - early August in Belfast. Smaller annual commemorative parades are held elsewhere in the north, particularly to honour the local IRA Volunteers.

Some of the increase, in what the RUC classify as Republican parades, is probably due to this growing number of commemorations to the republican dead, but another part is probably due to the increased confidence, and determination of nationalist and republican groups, to claim their rights to parade and hold public rallies in major centres. It was only in 1993, that the annual Internment Commemoration in August, was allowed to parade into Belfast city centre and hold its rally in front of the City Hall. The same year, the Ancient Order of Hibernians held their first ever parade in the city of Derry. The city has long had one of the largest AOH Divisions but during the Troubles the organisation had been reluctant to parade there for fear of provoking violence. This desire to parade in the neutral commercial centres of towns with a substantial nationalist population underpinned the disputes in Castlederg and Lurgan in the period under consideration.

#### **4.4 Summary**

While much of the emphasis has been placed on the significance of tradition and traditional parades, the statistical material published by the RUC suggests that this is not enough to explain the significance of parading in the popular culture of Northern Ireland. While long standing parades may form the basis of the annual cycle of the marching season, the steady but persistent increase in overall numbers indicates that parading is intimately related to contemporary concerns and is not simply indicative of a people trapped in their past.

Parades have always been a part of the broader political process in the north, even when they have been glossed as no more than religious or cultural events. This is not to suggest that they are not religious or cultural events but that the political dimension can not be excluded. Northern Ireland has always been a deeply divided society; power and authority have not been equally shared, civil and political rights have not been equally shared, wealth and access to the sources of wealth have not been equally shared. The right to parade has been one other area in which one community has been favoured in relation to the other. Parading has long been a source of antagonism and has often served to increase tension if not open conflict in a number of areas. In the past parades have often served as a surrogate, low level warfare and, with the arrival of the ceasefires in 1994, the issue of parades became a prominent and highly visible means of displaying and mobilising behind traditional political demands and an alternative site of conflict. In 1995 the Troubles continued to the

sound of the beating drum and marching feet.

## **PART TWO - PARADES IN CONFLICT - 1995**

This section offers a chronological overview of the major disputes involving parades in 1995. Although the background focus of the report has been on loyalist parades, this overview includes all the parades that were contested or provoked trouble during the year, both loyalist and republican. If one is trying to obtain a fuller picture of the events of the year, and attempting to show how one dispute can affect another then, it is impossible to ignore one part of the equation. For analysis we have divided the 1995 parading year into four distinct periods:

The first period, discussed in Section Five, includes the build up to the beginning of the marching season at Easter, and the first parades, which are mostly small and localised events, in April and May.

In Section Six we focus on the main Orange Order parades which begin in June and continue until the Twelfth of July. This is an intense period especially in the immediate build up to the Twelfth itself. After the Twelfth there is a break in the main parading calendar until marching recommences in late July.

In Section Seven we discuss the period from the end of July until the Apprentice Boys parade on August 12. This event marks a second climax to the marching season.

Section Eight considers the period from late August until the end of October which again is marked by many smaller parades, but also includes many of the parades organised by the Royal Black Institution.

Finally Section Nine gives a summary overview of the events and links them back to some of the themes addressed in Part One of the report.

Connecting all the events of 1995 were the parades that were planned to go along the lower Ormeau Road in Belfast. In all 14 parades were disputed on the small stretch of the road between the Ormeau Bridge and Donegall Pass. Twelve of these were loyalist parades (eight organised by the Orange Order, two by the Apprentice Boys and two by the Black Institution), two were organised by republican groups. Only two parades were allowed to pass along the route: on the Twelfth of July and on the anniversary of the Relief of Derry, August 12. The dispute on the Ormeau Road never generated a major reaction on the scale of the events that occurred at Drumcree in July and in Derry in August, it was a more localised and less symbolically powerful dispute. However without the persistence of the Ormeau Road dispute over the conflicting 'rights to parade' and 'rights not to suffer parades' it is doubtful whether the major disputes would have developed and been managed in the way they did.

This chronology has been written from two principal sources. The first source of information has been the extensive reports that have appeared in the local press in Northern Ireland. The second source has been personal attendance at many of the disputed parades throughout the 1995 marching season. This afforded the opportunity for conversations with many of those either parading or protesting. Such conversations are not identified explicitly, some were brief, others continued over a range of such events. Further clarification of certain details has been made at subsequent interviews.

## **SECTION FIVE - BUILD UP TO THE PARADE DISPUTES**

### **5.1 Background to the Ormeau Road dispute**

On Saturday February 18 1995, members of the Lower Ormeau Concerned Committee (LOCC) put up a series of mock road signs, indicating 'No Orangemen on this road', on lamp posts along a stretch of the lower Ormeau Road. This move graphically relaunched the public campaign to have loyalist parades re-routed away from the lower Ormeau area. A campaign which had begun after the Orange mini-Twelfth parade in July 1992.

The lower Ormeau had formerly been a Protestant area, and the mini-Twelfth parade incorporated the once continuous loyalist communities of Ballynafeigh, Ormeau Road and Donegall Pass on its circuit. However, population movements during the Troubles have meant that the lower Ormeau area is now a nationalist area. The loyalist parades were no longer as welcome as they once were, and even before the events of 1992 they had provoked protests by residents.

At the 1992 parade, nationalist protestors were confined to side streets to allow the parade to pass by. As the Orangemen passed the bookmakers shop, where five people had been killed by the UFF the previous February, a number of those marching made disrespectful gestures and taunts to the protesters. These actions were widely seen on television and provoked widespread outrage. The Northern Ireland Secretary, Sir Patrick Mayhew, stated that their behaviour would have "disgraced a tribe of cannibals" (IN 11-7-92). The Orange Institution acted swiftly and disciplined a number of individuals. The following year, after some pressure, the mini-Twelfth parade was voluntarily re-routed so that it did not cross over the Ormeau Bridge, instead it went up the road and around the Rosetta area.

After the events of 1992, residents from the lower Ormeau area formed the LOCC with the single aim of having all loyalist parades re-routed away from the lower Ormeau Road. In 1994, protesters clashed with police as they tried unsuccessfully to stop the Twelfth feeder parade along the road, and again as they protested against a Reformation Day parade in the October. This led to decision to make a more concerted attempt to stop the parades in 1995 (BT 12-7-94).

The appearance of the road signs in February 1995, brought an angry response from Belfast County Grand Master of the Orange Order, Robert Saulters, who called them both 'provocative' and 'offensive'. He demanded that the authorities remove the signs within 48 hours, while rejecting calls for Orange Order to keep out of lower Ormeau area (SL 19-2). The Grand Master of the Orange Institution, Martin Smyth, claimed that only a small group of people were against the parades and the majority of the Catholic community had no problems with Orange parades along the Ormeau Road. He said that the "real problem there has been the advent of people who are developing the Nazi fascist approach of ghettoism" (IN 7-3).

Some effort was made to resolve the dispute before the first parade, which was due on Easter Monday, but there was no real progress. Initially, a group called the Peace Committee was accepted as a mediator and a meeting, attended by representatives of the LOCC and Ballynafeigh District Lodge, was held on January 18. However, in early March LORAG (Lower Ormeau Residents Action Group) and LOCC announced that they

though the Peace Committee's offer "would be a waste of time" and instead they proposed holding face to face talks with the Orangemen to try to reach an agreement. The Orangemen ruled out any direct contact at this time. An acrimonious exchange of letters in the press, in which both side accused the other of failing to respond to overtures, illustrated the distance between the two sides (SL 26-2, 5-3, IN 8-3, BT 15-3).

In mid-April, as the first parade approached, relatives of those killed in the bookmakers shop issued an open letter to the marchers:

We, the relatives of those murdered and injured in the attack on Sean Graham's bookmakers, wish to make the following plea to the Orange Order, the Black Preceptory and the Apprentice Boys.

We are making this appeal at this time as we feel the situation has gone on too long. What we are asking is quite simple; we are asking that these organisations find alternative routes for their marches which avoid the Lower Ormeau.

We are asking for this because we feel it will make a great contribution to the peace process, but more importantly it will allow us and our families to get on with our lives without the tension and fear which these parades generate every year.

We are not seeking this from a spirit of revenge or malice, but because we believe these parades are a serious hindrance to the reconciliation which we all seek. We do not wish to impose our views on anyone, nor to restrict people's right to express their culture in whatever way they wish. All we ask is that they take the views and feelings of others into consideration while they do so.

We hope the Orange Order etc can accept this and also that they will accept it when we tell them that their parades over the past three years have caused deep hurt to us and our families. We hope that they will now end that hurt.

This letter produced no formal response from any of the loyal orders.

## **5.2 Easter: The marching season begins**

The issue was brought to a head for the first time when the Belfast Branch of the Walker Club of the Apprentice Boys, was prevented from parading along the Ormeau Road on Easter Monday, April 17. They had planned to follow their normal route to meet other Belfast branches at Linenhall Street, before taking a bus to the main parade in Ballymoney. About 200 protestors gathered at the Ormeau Bridge, and the RUC forced the Apprentice Boys and their band to board their bus on Annadale Embankment, in order to prevent "serious public disorder". William Oliver, treasurer of the local Apprentice Boys club said: "Our civil rights have been violated. We have walked along this route for 90 odd years and we are not breaking the law". The Governor of the Apprentice Boys, Alistair Simpson, claimed that the RUC decision to re-route the parade had turned the clock back two decades and had raised tension both among Protestants on the Ormeau Road and among the Apprentice Boys (NL 18-4-95). Local politicians were also quick to offer their opinions on the issue. Ian Paisley had already protested to the RUC at mere rumours that the parade was to be re-routed. Chris McGimpsey (UUP) accused the RUC of "caving in" to the

demonstrators, and Jim Rodgers (UUP) described the protest as part of a co-ordinated Sinn Fein plan to disrupt Orange parades throughout the summer. However Philip McGarry (All) pointed out that as the main parade was being held in Ballymoney, there was no need to parade along the Ormeau Road and the Sinn Fein representative Sean Hayes, welcomed the decision and called for the re-routing of Orange parades from nationalist areas across Ulster (BT 13-4, 20-4, NL 19-4-95). These positions were to be repeated throughout the summer.

The first Orange parade, to a charity service in the Ulster Hall, was due along the Ormeau Road on Sunday, April 23. In the preceding week, LOCC argued that it was irresponsible for the RUC to leave the issue unresolved until just before the parade was due. They claimed that this only served to increase tension and raise the risk of confrontation. Gerard Rice, spokesperson for LOCC, said that they did not want any trouble at the parade and if there was a disturbance it would be due to the police failing to make a decision early enough. This argument was to be put on a number of occasions through the summer. However Assistant Chief Constable Bill Stewart said a decision "could not be given at this stage" but he appealed for "good will and common sense" (BT 20-4, 22-4, IN 22-4).

On Sunday April 23, an estimated 600 people blocked the Ormeau Bridge three hours before the parade arrived. The police informed the protest organisers that the parade was being re-routed just five minutes before it was due at the bridge. ACC Bill Stewart said the decision was taken "in the interests of maintaining the peace". The 60 Orangemen, accompanied by 150 supporters carrying a banner stating "Ballynafeigh - No to Rerouting", were met by a wall of police Land Rovers at the bridge. The Orangemen refused to take an alternative route to the Ulster Hall, and instead held an impromptu service where they stood. Robert Saulters said that parity of esteem did not seem to apply to the Orangemen. He pointed out that the organisers had deliberately not booked a band, in order to try "to accommodate the residents by walking quietly and reverently" but this appeared to have had no effect on the RUC decision (NL, IN 24-4). ACC Stewart denied that the RUC decision meant that there would be no further Orange parades along the road, but he affirmed that "each parade is judged on its individual merits" (NL 24-4). In a later statement he added:

The lower Ormeau issue sums up in many ways the problem facing all of us. There are people with deeply-held convictions about their right to march peacefully. There are other people with equally firmly-held views that such marches are offensive. If we as a community accept that both traditions have a valid viewpoint, then surely the time has come to face up to the fact.

Following the re-routing of the parade, Ian Paisley had another meeting with senior RUC officers. He claimed the decision to stop the parades was political and was influenced by the government in Dublin. He also noted that the decision only encouraged people "to come out on the streets and to threaten violence and a breach of the peace in order to stop legally constituted parades and events. The clear lesson that will be drawn from the police action is that it pays to have mob rule". Ian Paisley Jr added that "the people who sit down in the road were the law-breakers, not the people attempting to pass through the area" (BT 25-4, NL 25-4, 3-5).

### **5.3 VE Day and other Belfast parades**

Two parades were due to pass along the Ormeau Road at the beginning of May. Ballynafeigh Orangemen planned to join the VE Day commemorations outside City Hall on Thursday 4 and a Sinn Fein parade was planned to leave the lower Ormeau area to walk to the Falls Road for the Hunger Strike commemorations on Sunday 7. In the build-up the newspapers reported that tension was rising in the area and that confrontation was expected at both parades (BT 3-5, NL 1-5, 3-5).

A new residents group, ACORD (A Community Organisation's Response to Despotism), based on the Donegall Pass announced that they planned to block the republican parade in retaliation at the campaign against the Orange parades. Sinn Fein responded by announcing that it would voluntarily re-route their march along the Ormeau because of the ongoing protests by LOCC and the opposition from ACORD. They also called on the Orangemen to do likewise and to begin talks with LOCC (IN 3-5). An attempt to hold a last minute meeting between the RUC, LOCC and the Orangemen to try to resolve the issue of the VE Day parade, failed. Once again the RUC blocked the parade at the Ormeau Bridge and once again the Orangemen held a service in front of the police cordon. District Chaplain, William Hoey, warned that "while we are a law abiding people and support the forces of law and order, we may be pushed too far". Gerard Rice, LOCC, again criticised the RUC tactics and warned that they could lead to a confrontation between loyalists and the police in the future. He said that while LOCC were willing to talk to the Orange Order, there should be no more parades until early July, and all future parades in the area should be re-routed. Michael McGimpsey (UUP) said LOCC had backed out of a meeting, which it was hoped would resolve the dispute over VE day, and he accused them of raising sectarian and communal tension by their protests. He suggested that their actions were "in danger of bringing us back to 1969 again" (BT 5-5, NL 5-5).

Although the Ormeau Road protest passed off peacefully on VE Day, there was serious rioting in east Belfast late in the evening, when an estimated 200 loyalists returning from the commemorations clashed with the RUC near the Short Strand. Petrol bombs were thrown at police in the Dee Street area and an off-license was looted (BT 5-5). Tom Haire, Belfast County Grand Secretary, said that in spite of these disturbances the rest of the marching season was not in any doubt, although he admitted that the Order would have to "review our stewarding". He said that there had been "an exceptionally big turn out" in Ballymacarrett, but "as far as I am aware none of our own membership...was involved in anything". He said that there had been a lot of frustration when the Ballynafeigh District had been prevented from joining the VE Day service at the City Hall and suggested that if a resolution to the dispute on the Ormeau Road could be found it would take the heat out of the marching debate. He added that "when you consider the number of times that Orangemen have paraded that particular area (the Short Strand), there are very few incidents of the magnitude of last night". However, Joe O'Donnell (SF) said that the rioting had now raised the question of Orange parades in the area and "it is now time that the question of re-routing these sectarian marches away from the Short Strand area should be seriously looked at" (IN 6-5).

An editorial in the Irish News stated that "there is an onus on the RUC, Sinn Fein and organisers of loyalist parades to review their respective positions". It argued that the RUC should take a firm and binding decision on the Ormeau issue to prevent tension from rising and people from gathering on the streets before each proposed parade: "Many loyalists

feel a sense of outrage when they are prevented from walking along a "traditional" route for their demonstrations. However..(the Orange Order) lost whatever rights they might have had to demonstrate on the Ormeau Road on the infamous night in July 1992." It suggested that Sir Patrick Mayhew and the RUC should announce that similar marches will no longer be allowed along the road, and, as with the Tunnel parade route in Portadown, loyalists would eventually accept that times have changed (IN 6-5).

Following the VE Day protests, residents in Suffolk demanded that the annual republican Hunger Strike march, from Twinbrook to the Falls, be re-routed away from the loyalist estate. Local woman Betty Ewing said "We do not want any coat trailing by Republican IRA supporters past our estate. This is not a traditional parade and could do a lot of harm". An unnamed RUC officer said "This will be a nightmare summer over the parades issue" and another added "we could be in for a tit-for-tat blocking all over the place throughout the summer" (SL 7-5). Minutes before the parade set off, on Sunday May 7, the RUC served a re-routing order on the organisers, and used 40 Land Rovers to keep marchers and protesters apart. After a 25 minute stand off which involved a sit down protest, but no serious trouble, the marchers took an alternative route, along Suffolk Road and Doon Road, to the rally in Dunville Park. Sinn Fein councillor Anne Armstrong told the crowd: "This march has been going on a number of years...there has never been a major incident and this march was always well stewarded. Nothing has been re-routed here since Bobby Sands funeral 14 years ago. We don't want to go back 14 years". Alex Maskey, (SF), claimed that the "decision has been dictated by the DUP and Orange Order, and has been taken simply because of Orange parades which have attracted publicity in recent weeks. Today is not intended to be offensive". However, John Hume urged Sinn Fein to rethink their policy of street demonstrations, while Steve McBride (All) accused the Sinn Fein of adopting "aggressive, confrontational and fundamentally sectarian" tactics on the issue (IN 8-5, NL 8-5). The following day, republicans were blamed for damage caused to 12 cars which were attacked in the Suffolk estate overnight. It was assumed that the attacks were in response to the re-routing of the earlier Hunger Strike parade (BT 8-5).

The RUC responded to the four days of parades, protests and violence, by restating their calls for calm and restraint and a spokesman warned against inflammatory predictions of "a long hot summer". In Dublin, the Tanaiste, Dick Spring, suggested that there should be a halt to all parades in the north during the "so-called marching season", to encourage the peace process (IN 10-5). Labour's shadow Northern Ireland Secretary Marjorie Mowlam also announced that she would welcome a voluntary decision, by both communities, to abandon marches this year (NL 12-5). An editorial, in the Belfast Telegraph, agreed with Dick Spring that a moratorium on parades would help the peace process, but then added "his call stands no chance of being heeded...(his) comments display a remarkable ignorance of the realities of life in NI. The best that can be hoped for is that organisers of parades and demonstrations show some sensitivity towards their neighbours" (BT 10-5). Unionist politicians had no sympathy for Spring's proposals. Nigel Dodds (DUP) had already claimed that the NIO was in collusion with Dublin in suppressing "traditional, peaceful and legal" Orange parades, while Ian Paisley Jr. said the Tanaiste's speech indicated "that the pan-nationalist front are attempting now to construct a climate where it will become illegal to express a cultural identity other than Irish nationalism". Martin Smyth said Orange marches were "not sectarian" and the Order would not surrender to "the bully boys" (NL 9-5, 11-5).

Later the same week, it was reported that plans for face to face talks between the Ballynafeigh Orangemen and LOCC, which had been mediated by the Quakers, had broken down when the Orangemen objected to Gerard Rice being a member of the Ormeau delegation because he had been imprisoned for republican offenses. The Orangemen said they would be happy to continue with the talks if Rice was replaced, but LOCC refused to change their delegation: they would not be dictated to by the Orangemen and, that after the scenes outside Sean Graham's in 1992, "it is not for them to now present this holier-than-thou attitude to us". Noel Liggett, District Secretary of Ballynafeigh LOL confirmed that they would not be prepared to meet with Gerard Rice, but he left the way open for a future meeting: "trust and respect have to be built up" he said. The Irish News editorial described the decision of the Orangemen as "deeply depressing", and the paper restated their opinion, first that the RUC should make a definite ruling on the issue of parades in the area, and second that future parades should only be allowed on the lower Ormeau with the agreement of all sections of the community (BT 12-5, IN 12-5, 13-5, NL 12-5, SL 14-5).

#### **5.4 Disputes in Castlederg**

While most attention was on the parade protests in Belfast there were disputes at three parades in Castlederg Co. Tyrone in the period between April 30 and May 28. On the first occasion the RUC re-routed a march organised by Saoirse, a republican organisation which campaigns on the issue of prisoners. They had planned to parade from the nationalist Hillview estate, through the centre of the town and back to the estate, to publicise their campaign. However, the parade, which was due to take place on a Sunday afternoon, was re-routed in the morning because of the fear of "serious public disorder". When the marchers reached the police cordon they held a short sit-down protest in response before dispersing (NL 1-5). More serious trouble occurred a week later and two days after the rioting following the VE Day parades Belfast, on the evening of Saturday May 6. This time there was trouble at the annual band parade of Castlederg Young Loyalists. Newspapers report that as the parade passed the Ferguson Crescent area, members of one of the leading band broke ranks and clashed with a group of nationalists standing outside a bar. Police then intervened to keep the two sides apart. Two people were arrested and four RUC officers were injured. Cllr Thomas Kerrigan (DUP) complained of the "provocative flying of tricolours" in the area, while Cllr Charlie McHugh (SF) contrasted the recent re-routing of a Saoirse parade with the way police were willing to allow loyalist bands to parade through a nationalist area (SL 7-5, Tyrone Constitution 11-5).

The third dispute occurred three weeks later. After the Saoirse parade was banned early May, a Nationalist Rights Committee was formed to take up the cause of access to the town centre for nationalist organisations. This group was permitted to hold a rally in the Diamond on Sunday May 28 when an estimated 1000 people paraded from the Hillview estate into the town centre. A number of loyalist protestors scuffled with the police but they were unable to prevent the rally from being held, however afterwards they were allowed to hold their own parade in the town, to symbolically reclaim it for themselves (An Phoblacht 1-6). As a result the nationalists felt they had achieved what they wanted and they had established their right to parade in the town centre, but at the same time they did not push the issue and they did not hold any more during the year. However tension continued in the town, especially on parading days, and this eventually culminated in a night of street fighting which caused thousands of pounds worth of damage following the Last Saturday parades in August (Section 8.2).

## **5.5 Summary**

The dispute over parading rights remained relatively low-key through the early weeks of the marching season. The main interest was on the Ormeau Road, where the RUC appeared to have comfortably controlled the first three loyalist parades, none of which had been allowed along its intended route. However, warnings signs were clear. The police were regularly criticised for refusing to make a decision until the last minute which, it was claimed, only served to raise tension and bring people out on to the streets. The police replied that they could only re-route a parade if there was a threat of serious public disorder and this threat could only be judged by the number of people who came onto the street. The importance of this argument was not lost on Ian Paisley, who argued that this logic only led to mob rule. It would prove to be a significant factor in the escalation of the parading dispute in future months.

Furthermore, there was a small but perhaps significant difference between the police tactics adopted in Belfast and those adopted in Castlederg, which does indicate that there was some scope in policing strategy. In Belfast the decision to re-route the loyalist parades was always made at the last minute, whereas in Castlederg, the Saoirse parade on April 30, was re-routed some hours before it was due to start. It could be argued that taking the decision earlier, rather than later, reduces the potential for conflict between the opposing groups because it attracts less people onto the streets and encourages the issue to be considered through force of argument rather than force of numbers. The police always acknowledged that they were not responsible for adjudicating the moral rights of a parade merely responsible for policing matters. After the violence at the parades on the Ormeau in July and August, the remaining parades were re-routed several days in advance of the event and few people turned out to protest.

There were also early indications of the knock-on effect of parade disputes and the connections between various disputes. The rioting in the Short Strand on VE Day was attributed to anger among loyalists at the decision to prevent the Ballynafeigh Orangemen from parading to the main rally. The loyalist protests at republican parades on the Ormeau and at Suffolk were also in response to objections raised to Orange parades on the Ormeau.

Political figures were often ready with suitable sound bites, but few suggestions were made that did anything other than restate existing positions. Politicians from both sides pointed out that their parades did not intend to cause offence, unionists retreated behind the shield of tradition, while republicans emphasised the importance of equal rights. When suggestions were made as to how the broader issue of the right to march should be dealt with, they were either dismissed out of hand, as per Dick Springs's suggestion of a moratorium or they were ignored. There was no broad debate on the issue, even local level negotiations were proving difficult to arrange. Although attempts had been made to bring the parties to the dispute on the Ormeau Road together, these had not been fruitful. Suspicion and mistrust dominated public exchanges.

## **5.6 Possible Ways Forward**

While negotiations between the main parties on the Ormeau Road remained at stalemate, a contrasting range of options had been suggested as possible ways to deal with the issue.

An anonymous group of Belfast Orangemen, who felt that the Order had been pushed around too much, suggested that it was time to make a stand and assert their traditional rights, and if necessary, the entire Belfast Twelfth parade should walk along the Ormeau Road. Bishop Brian Hannon of Clogher, used the platform of the General Synod of the Church of Ireland to call for restraint from all sides at Orange parades. He said that the right to walk on every street had to be measured against the right of the community as a whole to be protected from murder and mayhem. Meanwhile Barry McElduff of Sinn Fein, criticised an RUC decision to allow a loyalist parade through the predominately nationalist village of Pomeroy, and called for an independent commission to be set up which could deal impartially with applications to hold parades in disputed areas (SL 14-5, IN 16-5, NL 19-5).

These three possible means of resolving the disputes can be categorised as (1) No Compromise, (2) Voluntary Restraint and (3) External Adjudicator. They would be voiced repeatedly throughout the coming weeks by a variety of political figures. They formed the basis of strategies of action for different groups concerned with the issue. The active participants, both parade and protest organisers, tended to adopt the No Compromise strategy, the media, the police and many politicians continued to appeal, usually unsuccessfully, to peoples civil duty and for restraint. The suggestion that there should be an external commission to oversee protests, was regularly restated but was largely ignored both by those actively seeking to retain their traditional rights and by those seeking change. Both groups perhaps feared that they would be forced to compromise and therefore would be seen to lose out in some way.

Although versions of each of these options was repeated with regularity there was little if any impetus to find either a compromise or a working solution. The problem was largely left to those with most personal interest in the issue who were rarely willing to meet each other, let alone discuss possible compromises. The focus of attention was at the local level with little interest in what the effects the issue might have on a wider scale. Less involved parties uttered wise words but remained on the sidelines. While mutual tolerance was repeated, mantra-like, its meaning was interpreted in different ways. To unionist writers and representatives tolerance meant that residents should accept Orange parades as a cultural event, while for their nationalist counterparts tolerance meant that Orangemen should acknowledge the validity of the objections and re-route their parades. There was to be little movement from these entrenched positions.

## SECTION SIX - THE ORANGE MARCHES

### 6.1 From Belfast to Bellaghy and Back

In spite of a four week break in the parading calendar in Belfast, no agreement had been reached by the time that the fourth loyalist parade was due on Ormeau Road on Sunday June 18. This parade was different from the previous three in so far as it involved Orangemen from the Sandy Row District Lodge whose return route from church included a short section of the Ormeau Road. The Orangemen planned to attend a service in All Saints Parish Church on University Street and to return to Sandy Row via the Ormeau Road and Donegall Pass. The secretary of the District Orange Lodge, Billy McBride, said that three different groups from the lower Ormeau area have said they want nothing to do with the protests and he added: "The parade has followed the same route, every year for 98 years. We are going to church and coming home from church and we don't see anything wrong with that" (SL 18-5).

The LOCC insisted that the parade be re-routed, and asked why it could not return from church by the outward route and thus avoid the Ormeau Road area entirely. LOCC claimed that the RUC regarded this parade as different from the others, because it would not pass Sean Graham's shop and it would only be on the Ormeau Road for five minutes. A spokesperson also said that they had been warned by the RUC that they could be arrested if they protested against this parade (IN 14-6, 15-6). The LOCC later said that the Orange Order had made an offer, via the Quakers, to re-route this parade if the Ballynafeigh District Twelfth parade was allowed through. However the Orange Order quickly responded by denying that there had been any attempt to do a deal over parades (SL 18-5). Concern was also expressed about a leaflet which had been distributed in the lower Ormeau area in the days preceding the parade. The anonymous leaflet quoted a Biblical analogy for the current dispute in the story of the Amorite King Sihon. It pointed out that when Sihon refused the Israelites access through his land: "Israel smote him with the edge of the sword, and possessed his land". The leaflet continued "Their request was similar to that of the Ballynafeigh Orangemen" and claimed "too many roads and towns have been lost already". Noel Liggett, of Ballynafeigh LOL, said he did not know who was responsible for the leaflet and he said that another leaflet had been circulated which had criticised the Orangemen for negotiating with the LOCC (BT 16-5, IN 17-5).

On Sunday May 18, about 200 protesters gathered on the Ormeau Road as the Orangemen attended their service. As they left the church the Orangemen were informed by RUC that their return route had been changed and they would not be allowed onto the Ormeau Road. Two dozen Land Rovers were used to block University Street and despite furious protests and a symbolic march to confront the police lines, the 150 Orangemen and their two bands were forced to return along University Street. Lodge official Cecil Dunwoody claimed police had given in to a "gang of troublemakers who don't even live on the Ormeau Road" and lodge leader, Robert Saulters, said "Catholic objections have now reached the point of absurdity. The RUC may as well be Ulster's gardai". In response Gerard Rice said "The Orange Order have to realise they are unacceptable in this area". He called for a moratorium on all marches in the area for the remainder of the marching season, to give time to allow all sides to address the issues concerned. He also suggested that the Order could bring Orangeism into the area in a different form to show that it was not "simply sectarianism, bigotry and a coat trailing exercise" (BT 19-5, IN 19-5, NL 19-5).

On following Saturday, June 24, the focus of interest shifted to west Belfast. Between 100-200 nationalist demonstrators staged a sit-down protest at the junction of Ainsworth Avenue and Springfield Road to try to prevent the north Belfast mini-Twelfth parade from walking up the Springfield Road to the Whiterock Orange Hall. This area has long been an interface between the Falls and the Shankill and was divided by a peaceline early in the Troubles. In recent years the parade has been opposed by Sinn Fein, the SDLP and others from the nationalist community. Serious rioting broke out in the Shankill area in 1993 after a member of the UVF was killed by a grenade he was holding as the parade made its way along Ainsworth Avenue.

The parade of about 300 Orangemen and a dozen bands passed peacefully after intervention by Alex Maskey and Billy Hutchinson helped to calm fraying tempers. However, as the RUC removed the nationalist protestors to allow the parade to pass, one officer was stabbed in the back and one person was arrested. On the Shankill side, loyalist "hard men" blocked both sides of the road in Ainsworth Avenue and prevented people following the parade from getting near to the police lines at the peaceline. A spokesman said: "We didn't want any drunks or troublemakers getting down to the gates at the peaceline...Any violence would be just the excuse the republicans wanted to try and justify their outrageous campaign to get marches rerouted". Sinn Fein said it was "reprehensible" that the parade should be allowed through a vulnerable nationalist area. Alex Attwood (SDLP) agreed that the Whiterock parade should be re-routed away from the Springfield Road and, that residents have a right to protest if the parade is not re-routed. But he criticised both Sinn Fein and the RUC for the way the protests at the mini-Twelfth parade had been handled. He said it was up to the Orange Order, police, political leaders and residents to ensure that such confrontations were not repeated on the Twelfth or on the weeks leading up to it (SW 25-6, SL 25-6, IN 26-5, 27-5, NL 26-5, 27-5 Andersonstown News 1-7).

Opposition to parades was also being mobilised elsewhere. A newly formed group calling itself Bellaghy Concerned Residents said that it had met with senior RUC officers in a bid to prevent a mini-Twelfth parade in the village and they would also protest against other forthcoming parades in the "80% nationalist village". In Portadown, the Garvaghy Road Residents Group, announced that they had asked for a meeting with the local Orange Order to request that they re-route two parades expected along the road in July. When they did not receive a response from the Orangemen, the residents issued a statement saying that they would hold a protest on July 9 as the first of these parades returned from Drumcree Church. At a press conference on July 4, spokesperson Don Mercer confirmed that the protest would be peaceful and explained why it was necessary. He said that during the parades nationalists "become virtual prisoners in their own area" and this "creates a siege mentality and our people no longer accept this". The parades "harken back to the days of power and privilege of the old Stormont regime" and "have more in common with the displays of fascism witnessed in Europe over 50 years ago than with any folk festival".

There was also speculation that organised protests at parades would spread more widely through Belfast. Cllr Jim Rodgers (UUP) suggested that nationalists may be planning to attempt to disrupt both a Somme parade in east Belfast and the main Twelfth parade itself in the city. Although there was no evidence to support this claim it was widely reported at the time and it was repeated at a later date. In response to the general raising of tension

over parades the Mid-Ulster branch of the UVF and the Combined Loyalist Military Command in Belfast announced that they would be monitoring the issue in future weeks (BT 23-6, 29-6, 30-6 IN 8-6, SL 2-7, 5-7, Mid Ulster Observer 29-6, Portadown Times 30-6).

July began with a report in the Newsletter that the RUC had drawn up contingency plans for an increase in confrontation in the run-up to the Twelfth and this included a strengthening of Divisional Mobile Support Units. An editorial in the paper criticised, what it called, the Sinn Fein 'rent-a-mob' tactics, and said "to some extent the Orange Order is caught in the middle as hardliners on both sides adopt a 'not an inch' approach to marches, which in a more enlightened society, ought to be able to take place without causing offence or disturbing the peace". While calling for 'tolerance on all sides' it said that republicans were being unreasonable in objecting to Orange parades which it insisted were "a colourful, cultural and above all peaceful procession" (NL 1-7). The same week, an editorial in the Andersonstown News argued for the need for talks between the organisers of parades and the residents "before these blood and thunder marches actually take place"; it continued: "Could both sides not develop the concept of an independent panel which would bring residents and march organisers together to discuss proposed routes and parades? Such a panel could draw up a marcher's charter which would lay down basic principles in the organising of parades and even select agreed neutral areas - outside the City Hall, for example - where parades should be encouraged" (AN 1-7). These two editorials again illustrate the gap between the thinking on the unionist and the nationalist sides. The unionists continue to insist that all protests are a Sinn Fein front and that nationalists are being unreasonable and intolerant in objecting to peaceful parades. They do not accept that the objections of residents are in any way genuine. While the nationalist position argues that there should be face to face discussion over the issues, it ignores or disbelieves the importance of parades as a local cultural event for the loyalist community. Each side can therefore, safely ignore the other's position as being unrealistic.

With three parades due along the Ormeau Road in the first two weeks of July the protests looked certain to continue and possibly escalate, when Ballynafeigh District Lodge rejected proposals to resolve the issue put forward by LOCC. Their package proposed an 18-month suspension of all parades, loyalist and nationalist, along the lower Ormeau, but it would allow the Twelfth parade to go through, and other parades could pass as long as they had the mutual agreement of both sides. LOCC also said that they would be prepared to host photographic displays and debates either about Orangeism or involving Orange Order representatives, to further mutual understanding. Gerard Rice said "the parade organisers must take into account the feelings of the residents of the areas the parade will pass through" but he also agreed that "we as a community have a responsibility to look beyond past hurts to recognise the potential for improved future relationships". He confirmed that the Orange Order had made their own proposals under which they would retain all their traditional parades but they would not ask for any new ones. Rice said that these proposals were unacceptable to LOCC and, although, negotiations had broken down, LOCC was open to further talks. The Ballynafeigh Orangemen in turn rejected the proposals made by the LOCC, which they said were "pure blackmail". They added that community relations could not be improved through the repression of a legitimate expression of culture (IN 30-6).

The first of the three July parades, and the fourth from Ballynafeigh since Easter, was held

on Sunday July 2. The Orangemen planned to parade to a Somme memorial service but were again stopped at the Ormeau Bridge by RUC. Some 300 protestors, including a number of Sinn Fein councillors had gathered on the lower Ormeau side of the bridge. The Orangemen held a short religious service at the bridge, and then returned to Ballynafeigh. In response to the blocking of the parade, George Dawson, a spokesman for the Independent Orange Order, called on Orange leaders to organise mass movements and diversionary tactics to help keep all parade routes open (IN 3-7, NL 3-7).

Three days later, on Wednesday July 5, with widescale disturbances and violence in nationalist areas of Belfast and elsewhere following the release of Lee Clegg on July 3, the first violence erupted on the Ormeau Road. Ironically, the mini-Twelfth parade was not intended to cross the bridge since it had been voluntarily re-routed after the events in 1992. However, at the junction of Annadale Embankment and the Ormeau Road, a number of the bands made a gesture to turn to cross the bridge before continuing their march in the opposite direction up to the Orange hall. These actions encouraged a number of loyalist supporters, who were following the parade, to attack the police lines blocking the bridge. The violence was short lived, however, and involved only a small percentage of those present. A few demonstrators climbed on the police vehicles and waved flags at the residents of the lower Ormeau area. A few bottles and other missiles were thrown, but the events scarcely justified the inflammatory front page headlines in the Newsletter which described it as the 'Battle on the Bridge'. Eleven police and two civilians were injured, 10 RUC Land Rovers were damaged and 4 people were arrested at the clashes (BT 6-7, NL 6-7).

There were also clashes in Bellaghy the same night where "rival factions traded insults as loyalist bands paraded through part of the 80% nationalist town". Members of Bellaghy Concerned Residents had gathered a petition signed by 200 local people and had met with senior local police officers in a bid to have a mini-Twelfth parade, organised by the local Orange lodge Bruces True Blues, re-routed away from the centre of the village. When this failed to have any effect they planned to hold a sit down demonstration on the parade route, but the RUC issued a banning order on the protest shortly before the parade was due to start. Forty RUC Land Rovers and over 200 police were called in to control the events and the protestors were confined to the sides of the road. Forty bands paraded through the village during the evening. Five people were arrested as missiles and insults were exchanged by republicans and loyalists (BT 6-7, Mid-Ulster Observer 29-6, 13-7).

In the run up to the Twelfth and with tension and speculation mounting, the focus of media attention remained on the Ormeau Road and in particular on how the Orangemen would re-act to the threat of re-routing. Statements and rumours issued from various levels of the organisation. The local Orangemen insisted that they would continue to follow their traditional parade route. The Ballynafeigh District Orangemen reaffirmed that it considered that the package offered by the LOCC, to allow the Twelfth of July parade through on condition that there were no more parades through the area until the end of 1996, was "pure blackmail". Speculation continued that the Ormeau Road would be the site of a major Orange demonstration on the Twelfth. Some rank and file members were demanding that all 10 Belfast districts should converge on the Ormeau Road in protest at police tactics to block parades. They suggested that because it was the beginning of the holiday period: "Thousands of Orangemen could stand there for days if necessary to prove our point". Belfast County Secretary, Tom Haire, said the Orange Order were not ruling out taking

20,000 marchers down the Ormeau Road on the Twelfth: "We are monitoring the situation from day to day". In turn the Grand Orange Lodge of Ireland accused the RUC of giving in to an orchestrated campaign to deny the legitimate expression of Orange culture. The RUC "have allowed the threat of republican violence to be used to prevent peaceful legal parades along traditional routes" they said in a statement. There was also speculation that the Order was planning to take the RUC to the Ulster High Court to ensure they would be allowed to walk down the Ormeau Road on the Twelfth. Amidst such speculation, a Sunday World editorial argued that it was time for the Orange leaders, "James Molyneaux, MP, Martin Smyth, MP, and the likes of Willie Ross, MP - Orangemen all - to tell their members to respect the rule of law and order". It said, that the politicians should be in Portadown today, and at the Ormeau Bridge on the Twelfth, and tell their members "to respect and obey the RUC" (BT 6-7, NL 7-7, IN 8-7, SW 9-7). There was no response from the unionist political leadership.

## **6.2 The Siege of Drumcree**

While most attention remained trained on the Ormeau Road, the Orangemen's frustration, at what they perceived to be the constant attacks on their culture and traditions, erupted in Portadown on Sunday July 9. Portadown has long been perceived as the heartland of Orangeism but in the past decade parades through the nationalist Tunnel and Obins Street area had been vigorously opposed by residents. As a result of the protests, all Orange parades had been re-routed from the area after 1986 and had been sent down the Garvaghey Road instead. But as this was also a predominately nationalist area these had also provoked opposition. Initially this was co-ordinated by the Drumcree Faith and Justice Group but in 1995 the protest was organised by the Garvaghey Road Residents Group who included representatives from a wide range of local organisations.

When members of the Portadown District left Drumcree Church at midday, they were advised by the RUC that their safety could not be guaranteed if they paraded along the Garvaghey Road, where 300 residents were staging a street protest. Rather than take an alternative route back into town, or dispersing at Drumcree, the Orangemen decided to wait where they were, until they were able to follow their traditional route back into town. It soon became clear to the Orangemen that the police were planning neither to clear the protestors nor to force the parade through, but they determined to remain where they were until allowed along the Garvaghey Road. As the stand off continued through the afternoon and evening, the numbers of Orangemen and supporters, at Drumcree, swelled. At the same time, demonstrations of support were displayed elsewhere: there were gatherings and protests in a number of other towns, and calls were made for a mammoth show of support in Portadown on the evening of Monday 10, if the issue had not been resolved. Local MP, David Trimble, who had been at Drumcree for the service, announced: "I am here supporting the right of Portadown District to march their traditional route, the route they have taken for the last 188 years". Ian Paisley, donned his Apprentice Boys collarette and arrived late on Sunday evening, to negotiate with the police, claiming as his mandate his position as an MEP. However, ACC Freddie Hall insisted that the Orangemen had only two choices: to disperse at Drumcree and go home, or walk back the route they had come (BT 10-7, IN 10-7, NL 10-7).

The stand off continued through Monday. Tension increased as thousands of Orangemen and supporters arrived for the rally in the evening. They occupied the fields around

Drumcree Church while thousands more supporters occupied the streets of Portadown. Ian Paisley was one of the main speakers at the rally and he insisted that: "There can be no turning back on this issue - we will die if necessary rather than surrender". While large numbers of Orangemen listened to the speeches, elsewhere some of the crowd were getting restless and tried to break through the police lines. The RUC responded to the assault by Orangemen with plastic bullets. The Newsletter headline the next day call it the "Battle of Drumcree". Eventually, after extensive discussion and mediation, involving the Orangemen, led by Paisley and Trimble, the Garvaghy Road residents, and the RUC, the Portadown Orangemen were allowed to parade down Garvaghy Road on Tuesday morning. Under the 'agreement' only the local Portadown District Orangemen were allowed to walk the route and David Trimble and Ian Paisley met them at the town end of the road. The parade was quiet as there were no bands accompanying them, although this was because the bandsmen had gone home to change rather than part of any agreement, according to officers of Portadown District LOL. The Garvaghy Road residents lined the route to make a silent protest (see Jones et.al.(1995) for the Orange Order's discussion of these events).

Brendan McAllister, of the Mediation Network, said an agreement had been reached whereby the church parade would be allowed to complete its route, on condition that the Twelfth feeder parade, the following day, would take another route. However, David Trimble immediately disagreed with this understanding. He said "there is certainly no agreement by the District Lodge to reroute the Twelfth parade". While Trimble denied any compromise had been made, RUC ACC Freddie Hall also stated that the Orange Order would not be marching down Garvaghy Road on the Twelfth morning. The RUC also praised the Mediation Network for their work in helping to resolve the issue (IN 12-7, NL 12-7).

At the same time as the rally began at Drumcree on Monday evening, all major roads into the port of Larne were blockaded by Orangemen in support of the men in Portadown. Protests in solidarity were made in a number of towns and villages during the 'siege at Drumcree' but those in Larne had the most impact because of the disruption caused to trade and tourists. Articulated lorries were used to block the main Belfast to Larne road and bonfires were built in the middle of others. The blockade caused huge tail backs of traffic which extended for several miles. East Antrim MP Roy Beggs said he "wholeheartedly" supported the protest, which he claimed was peaceful but many freight businesses and travellers were not so happy at the events. Ferries sailed largely empty from the port. However, the police made no attempt to clear the blockade, and it was only lifted on Tuesday morning, when the dispute in Portadown had been resolved (IN 11-7, 12-7, Larne Gazette 13-7).

### **6.3 Agreement on the Ormeau?**

While attention switched to Portadown, negotiations continued to try to resolve the immediate issue of the parade along the Ormeau Road. An agreement, between the Orange Order, the Royal Black Institution and the LOCC, appeared to have been reached late in the evening on Monday 10, as a result of mediation by the Quakers. This agreement, which was witnessed by representatives of the RUC and by members of the Quakers, consisted of a preamble and five clauses:

The Ballynafeigh District Orange Lodge believes in democracy and in everyone's

right to enjoy civil and religious liberty. This means that all sections of the community must be free to express their religious and cultural traditions. The Lower Ormeau Concerned Community likewise accepts that all have a right to express their religious and cultural identity. Both parties, however, recognise that, in the exercise of these rights, all sides must be sensitive to the wishes and concerns of others. It will take time for the deep wounds suffered by many living along the whole of the Ormeau Road to heal; both parties are committed to assist that process.

Accordingly the Lower Ormeau Concerned Community and the Ballynafeigh District Orange Lodge agree that:

- 1) The Ballynafeigh District Orange Lodge will walk down the entire length of the Ormeau Road on the morning of 12th July 1995.
- 2) The Ballynafeigh Black Preceptory will walk down the entire length of the Ormeau Road on the morning of 26th August 1995.
- 3) In future, parades of any description will take place along any part of the Ormeau Road between the Ormeau bridge and the railway bridge only where agreement has been made beforehand between the parade organisers and the people of the lower Ormeau Road. Only an open, public meeting of Lower Ormeau residents can give such agreement on behalf of the people of the Lower Ormeau Road.
- 4) The Lower Ormeau Concerned Community and the Ballynafeigh District Orange Lodge will either initiate or strongly support moves to improve appreciation and understanding of the culture and traditions of the people living on the Upper and Lower Ormeau Road.
- 5) This agreement has been satisfactorily verified in the presence of the Quaker representatives and representatives of the RUC.

However, after the events at Portadown, Gerard Rice requested further confirmation of Clause 3 from the Orange Order, in order to reassure the residents of the lower Ormeau that the agreement would be honoured. Rice said that the appearance of the Ballynafeigh Orange banner at Drumcree, meant the LOCC could not trust the Orangemen without further confirmation and, with no confirmation forthcoming, he felt the agreement had collapsed. Robert Saulters, representing Ballynafeigh District responded by saying that he had no intention of clarifying any part of the agreement. A public meeting was then held among residents of the lower Ormeau at which a consensus was reached to hold a protest with the aim of blocking the planned parade (IN 12-7, NL 12-7).

The Sunday World (16-7) later claimed the breakdown of the agreement was for three reasons:

- 1) A video shown at a meeting of lower Ormeau residents showed the Ballynafeigh banner at Drumcree.
- 2) Statements made by Ian Paisley and David Trimble at Drumcree, and the rioting during the protest, affected peoples attitude.
- 3) Sinn Fein objected to agreement at the last minute, because they felt it would show the RUC in too good a light.

Members of the LOCC have confirmed the importance of the Ballynafeigh banner at

Portadown and the attitude of Paisley and Trimble in the failure of the residents of the lower Ormeau to confirm the agreement but they also emphasised the refusal of Ballynafeigh Orange lodge to publicly accept the third clause. These they felt were the key elements in the breakdown in the discussions.

On the Twelfth itself, there was a good deal of uncertainty as to what might happen at both the Garvaghy Road and on the lower Ormeau. In the end the parades in Portadown passed off peacefully. The eight Portadown country lodges and their accompanying bands "voluntarily" re-routed themselves away from the nationalist Garvaghy Road area. District officers have said that this decision was taken by the lodges concerned only on the Twelfth morning after they had assembled at Corcrair Orange Hall and discussed the matter among themselves. Their traditional route into town had been along Obins Street, rather than the Garvaghy Road, so when they left the hall the men walked a short distance along the Dungannon Road, as a symbolic gesture to tradition. They then made a U-turn and paraded via Charles Street to Carlton Street where they joined the main body of Portadown lodges. The District lodge issued a statement insisting that the re-routing had been undertaken voluntarily and that there had been no compromise deal agreed on Tuesday (NL 13-7).

On the lower Ormeau Road, the RUC decided to allow the Orangemen to join the main body of the parade at the City Hall. The nationalist residents were hemmed in to the side streets by up to 500 RUC officers wearing riot gear so that "a few dozen Orangemen" could parade along the road. Supporters of the Orangemen were stopped at the bridge, and not allowed to walk with them. The parade itself, passed "peacefully" despite noisy protests by the residents, but after the Orangemen had passed by the residents staged a sit-down protest in the road which lasted until the evening. The returning Orange parade was diverted away from the lower Ormeau by the police and the Orangemen walked via Botanic Avenue, Agincourt Avenue and the Stranmillis Embankment before crossing the Ormeau Bridge. Martin Smyth said he was pleased that the Ballynafeigh lodges had been allowed to parade their traditional route. But Gerard Rice of LOCC, complained that the residents had been placed under curfew for the day. This theme was taken up by Gerry Adams (SF), who said that there was a direct comparison between the events at Drumcree and the Ormeau Road: "It has to do with that triumphalistic element of Orangeism which wants to show the Catholics in that area that the Orangemen are still in charge". In explaining their decision to allow the parade to follow its traditional route and the apparent change in tactics, the RUC said that the parade was permitted because of the ambiguity in the agreement between LOCC and the Orange Order. A police spokesman said the as LOCC had given a public assurance that there would be no violence at their protest, there was, therefore, "no likelihood of public disorder". He added that "the Orange Order said that they had agreed to all the conditions regarding future parades, and while the local community organisation did not reject the agreement, they expressed concern as to whether they could trust the Orange lodge". He also explained that the six previous parades, which had been re-routed had been local events whereas the Twelfth parade "a major event" and "if the parade had been re-routed, it could have had an effect everywhere in Northern Ireland" (IN 13-7, NL 13-7).

Although the LOCC rejected, or at least questioned the validity of the agreement, the RUC acted as if it was still binding on all parties. Accordingly the police accepted the insistence of the LOCC that they would not provoke any violence, whereas at the previous parades it had been the threat of "serious public disorder" that had led to parades being re-routed.

This may explain why the Twelfth parade was allowed through and why several subsequent parades would be re-routed some days before the event, whereas the pre-Twelfth parades were only re-routed at the last minute. The RUC continued to work to the terms of the agreement: future parades except those specified would only take place within a broad consensus. This strategy might work up to a point, but it failed to take into consideration the position of the Apprentice Boys, who were not party to the agreement and therefore were not constrained by its terms. Their parade was subject to differing policing considerations, which were related to events in Derry. The violence that would occur on that day appears to have been instrumental in encouraging the Black Preceptory to cancel their parade on the last Saturday, which would have been allowed under the July agreement.

In Dublin, both the Irish government and Fianna Fail leader Bertie Ahern expressed concern with the way in which the RUC appeared to have taken sides on the Ormeau Road in contrast to the more even handed approach adopted at Portadown. Fine Gael MEP, John Cushnahan, a former leader of the Alliance Party, repeated the call for the establishment of an independent commission to oversee any parade disputes. He said there was a need for a quasi-judicial body whose decisions would be binding to avoid an annual repetition of the recent events. Shadow Northern Ireland Secretary, Marjorie Mowlam, said it was necessary to build trust between the two communities and broker some form of community agreement before the next flash point arose (BT 13-7).

#### **6.4 Arson and Vandalism**

Although the other Twelfth parades passed peacefully, residents in the Short Strand area of east Belfast claimed they had been stoned by loyalists on the way back from the parade. Police admitted that they had fired several plastic bullets during the trouble and four officers had been injured. Joe O'Donnell (SF) called for all Orange parades to be moved away from the nationalist area because of violence following this parade and the rioting after the VE Day parade. He suggested the marchers should be re-routed along the Sydenham by-pass instead of using the Newtownards Road (BT 13-7, IN 14-7).

There was also an escalation of sectarian arson attacks and vandalism, which had begun in the run up to the Twelfth and now continued in the days following the parades. One of the earliest reported incidents had been on the evening of July 1, when a Roman Catholic Church in Killyleagh, County Down, had a number of windows smashed, some hours after a loyalist Somme parade had passed through the village. It was the second attack on the church in a fortnight and it foreshadowed a spate of such attacks, on property belonging to both communities, over the next few weeks (IN 3-7). Between July 11 and July 13 Orange Halls in Belfast, Belleek, Dungannon, Keady, Rosslea and South Fermanagh were either damaged or destroyed. In the same few days a number of private houses and public buildings were also attacked, these included Catholic churches in Belfast, Cullybackey and Dundonald and the Protestant church at Drumcree. While these attacks were not directly linked to parades, they were clearly a result of the escalating tension that the disputes over parades had helped to generate. Sporadic attacks on Orange Halls continued through the remainder of July, but the intense wave of retaliatory attacks died away soon after the Twelfth, during the hiatus in the marching season (BT 18-7, NL 14-7, 20-7, 31-7).

However, the recommencement of the marching season in late July, was shadowed by a

resumption of arson attacks which continued throughout August. An Orange Hall in Newtownhamilton, County Armagh was badly damaged on August 8, and Lambeg Orange Hall was gutted, a few days after the protests against the Apprentice Boys Relief of Derry parade, erupted into violence. This was the twenty-first attack of Orange Halls in 1995. While there was widespread speculation at IRA involvement in the attacks, Sinn Fein denied any republican involvement and Cllr Annie Armstrong publicly called for an immediate end to all sectarian attacks on both property and individuals. Although the attacks ceased for a while there was another final round of damage in late August when the Corcrain Hall in Portadown and others near Lisburn and in Tyrone were damaged (BT 9-8, 15-8, 17-8, 19-8, 22-8, 30-8, IN 16-8, NL 17-8, 31-8).

## **6.5 Summary**

As might have been expected, given the persistence of the parading disputes since Easter, July witnessed a dramatic increase in the scale of the problem. However, most people were probably surprised by the force of the reaction to the re-routing of the Drumcree Church parade. This surprise soon turned to concern, if not fear, as the dispute escalated and as numbers of people involved increased, especially as the Twelfth itself loomed large. For a short while, there was a real possibility that the whole thing could get out of hand. The crisis in Portadown focused people's minds and ensured a peaceful solution was reached, but it was only a short term and localised solution. The events at Drumcree in turn served to antagonise the dispute on the Ormeau Road and undermined the attempts at a negotiated settlement. The interconnection between these events, and the wild card introduced by the rioting that followed the release of Lee Clegg, illustrates the problem of trying to deal with each dispute as an isolated and self contained problem.

For the Orangemen each parading dispute was seen as part of a broader threat and challenge to their traditions, their culture and their rights. The mass mobilisation of Orangemen had been widely predicted, and threatened, in the run up to the Twelfth, but most people foresaw the Ormeau Road as the critical location. The stand-off at Drumcree was both a response to the preceding events of the 1995 marching season, but also a reaction to the ongoing local dispute in Portadown, which had been largely quiescent in recent years.

Once the crisis had been dealt with, and the Twelfth had passed for another year, there seems to have been something of a retreat to entrenched positions. There was no public debate of possible long term practical solutions to the problems of parades passing through areas where they were opposed. The negotiations on the Ormeau Road had produced a detailed possible agreement, but this seemed to disappear without trace. It was not used as a possible blueprint for other disputes even though the RUC seemed to regard it as the basis of operational decision making. Suggestions that a neutral commission should be set up, to mediate on parade disputes, was once again floated, but once again, it was ignored. Unionist politicians, while quick to condemn protests against the parades, seemed unwilling, or unable, to suggest any form of compromise solution. The persistent, low-level violence that continued through the lull in the marching season, indicated that a more positive, pro-active approach was necessary from both sides if the issue was to be resolved.

## SECTION SEVEN - LURGAN and DERRY

### 7.1 Sinn Fein in Lurgan

There are few parades in two weeks following the Twelfth, and the only reported incident was a minor dispute as a crowd of loyalists protested in the Belmore Street area of Enniskillen when a Saoirse parade was held through the town on July 16 (IN 17-7). When the marching season recommenced in earnest, at the end of July, there was a dispute and confrontation in yet another location: Lurgan. Sinn Fein announced their intention of holding a march and rally in the town on Sunday July 30, one of a number of similar events calling for all-party peace talks and the disbandment of the RUC. The DUP and the Orange Order both lodged complaints with the RUC and then local loyalists decided that they would hold a counter-rally at a similar time, with the intention of preventing Sinn Fein from marching through the town (BT 27-7).

Announcing a counter rally to prevent nationalist or republican parades and rallies in Ulster is a long standing loyalist tactic, which dates back to the late nineteenth century. In more recent times the practice was adopted by Ian Paisley to counter civil rights marches in the 1960s. The usual result in such cases has been for both marches or rallies to be banned, but it can have more serious consequences. The announcement of an Apprentice Boys parade over the same route as a planned civil rights rally in Derry in 1968 led the Stormont government to ban both parades. The organisers of the civil rights parades determined to try to hold their march, and the ensuing clashes between police and demonstrators marked the build up to the Troubles (Bardon 1992, McCann 1980).

The loyalist opposition in Lurgan was stirred, not so much by Sinn Fein's demands, but that they should wish to express them in the town centre. David Trimble called the march "provocative" and he described it as a "wholly unprecedented plan by Sinn Fein to march into Lurgan centre...to cause confrontation". He also justified the opposition, by pointing out that Lurgan town centre had only just been rebuilt, following the devastation caused by an IRA bomb, three years previously. Although the population of Lurgan is almost equally balanced between Protestants and Catholics, it had witnessed "no serious disturbances since 1972". However, the town has been described as virtually segregated into two distinct parts, which are separated by "an 'invisible line' which divided Catholic from Protestant Lurgan". This line is said to run across Market Street, near to the public toilets (O'Dowd 1993 p 52, SL 30-7, 15-10). It was here that the loyalists planned to hold their rally. They were adamant that the republican marchers would not be allowed go beyond, what was described as 'the traditional "back of the church" demarcation line for nationalist marches at the end of Market Street'. All previous nationalist parades in the town, had either accepted this limit or they had been re-routed by the RUC (SL 30-7, 15-10).

On the day of the planned parades, the RUC cordoned off the town centre. A crowd of some 1500 loyalist protesters, threw a range of missiles as they clashed with the RUC dressed in riot gear. Due to the threat of "serious public disorder" the republican rally was then re-routed by the police. The Sinn Fein supporters paraded from the Francis Street area along Edward Street but they were stopped by RUC from entering either Church Street or Market Street because of the risk of violence. The marchers held a sit down protest and rally in front of the police lines, before dispersing peacefully. The loyalists protesters, in turn, were joined by David Trimble and Peter Robinson, deputy leader of the

DUP. At their rally, Robinson justified their opposition by claiming that there was no comparison between the events at Drumcree and those at Lurgan, because, he said, there was no such thing as a traditional 'IRA route' into the town. David Trimble declared that their action was a victory for peaceful protest. In contrast Sinn Fein Cllr Brendan Curran said "It is ironic that David Trimble and the DUP's Ian Paisley who a few weeks ago were demanding their right as Orangemen to march through a nationalist area are now demanding that nationalists are not allowed to march into a nationalist area" (BT 31-7, IN 31-7, NL 31-7). While Sinn Fein accepted the re-routing and dispersed peacefully, subsequent events have shown that they would not be content with a continuation of their exclusion from the centre of Lurgan. They have made a number of subsequent, but so far, unsuccessful attempts to hold rallies or pickets in the town centre.

## **7.2 Walking Derry's Walls**

In early August, attention began to be focused on the forthcoming Apprentice Boys' Relief of Derry celebrations. This anniversary is marked by two parades. In the morning, the parent clubs of the Apprentice Boys, those who are based in the city of Londonderry, parade in the old city. Until 1969 this parade had completed a circuit of the city walls, but since 1970 the walls have been closed and subsequently the Apprentice Boys had been restricted to parading within, rather than on, the walls. In the afternoon the full membership of the organisation, with numerous bands, parade from the Waterside, across the Craigavon Bridge and around the Diamond before recrossing the bridge whence they return to their buses and trains.

In early August, Alistair Simpson, the Governor of the Apprentice Boys, said that an application had been made to walk a full circuit of the walls, which had recently been completely re-opened to the public, although he admitted that the RUC had yet to make a decision on whether it would be allowed. He said that their application was not unusual, because they had applied for permission to walk around the walls every year since 1969, and in recent years they had been permitted to walk a small section of them. But he denied that the route could be seen as provocative, and insisted that the Apprentice Boys had never been the cause of violence, even in 1969. This sentiment had earlier been voiced by William Ross MP, who insisted that the march would not infringe on nationalist areas of the city. In response, Sinn Fein claimed that any attempt to walk the area of the walls which overlooked the nationalist Bogside would be provocative and it could easily spark trouble. Their Northern Chairperson, Gerry O hEara, called on the Apprentice Boys to withdraw their application to walk the full circuit of the walls. The SDLP called for all parties to exercise restraint and invited the Apprentice Boys to discuss the matter of the parade with them. This failed to produce a positive response from the Apprentice Boys. They also refused an invitation from the Mayor of Derry who wanted to discuss both their proposed route and his own suggestion for a three year moratorium on all parades in the city centre (BT 9-8, IN 4-8, 5-8, 8-8, 10-8, NL 15-7).

In Belfast there was opposition to another parade along the Ormeau Road. The Belfast Walker Club wanted to walk from Ballynafeigh to meet their bus which would take them to Londonderry. Sandy Geddis, DUP councillor and president of the club, reiterated their claim that they did not want to cause offence: "We have been walking that route since 1907 and we never had any problems...We don't even carry a Union Flag". However the residents of the lower Ormeau were still said to be "very angry" over the behaviour of the

RUC on the Twelfth of July, and they said they would continue to oppose parades along the road (IN 8-8).

In a surprise move, which received widespread publicity but was also quickly, and widely, condemned, the County Down Amalgamated Committee of the Apprentice Boys threatened to blockade Roman Catholic churches in protest at the continued banning and rerouting of Orange parades. Martin Smyth and Alistair Simpson both voiced opposition to this proposal, which it was said was nothing more than a suggestion for possible action and had not been adopted by the Apprentice Boys (BT 8-8, IN 9-8, NL 9-8).

In spite of much discussion and speculation, no decisions were made about whether either the Derry parade, or the Ormeau Road parade, would be allowed along their proposed routes until the last minute. The RUC would only confirm that negotiations were continuing in an attempt to ensure that all the Apprentice Boys' parades passed peacefully. Acting Deputy Chief Constable Ronnie Flannagan repeated the RUC's assertion that the police do not give permission for parades to take place, although he agreed that they had power to impose conditions if justified in law. Once again the police appealed for people on both sides of the community to remain calm (IN 11-8).

On the Ormeau Road, the residents announced that they would be holding an all night street party on the eve of the parade, as part of their week long festival, and therefore they expected that there would be more people on the streets than usual when the Apprentice Boys arrived. In Derry a Bogside Residents Group was formed following a public meeting and the members announced that they would oppose the parade in a non-violent manner. On Friday afternoon members of the group occupied a section of the city walls over the Butcher's Gate, and announced that they would stay there to block the parade the following day. Attempts to reach an agreement continued until late into the night. The Apprentice Boys suggested a number of concessions and constraints that they would impose on themselves while walking the walls but these proved to be insufficient to defuse the protest. The RUC still refused to say if the parades would be allowed to take place or not. It was claimed that this only served to raise the tension in both cities. The uncertainty also increased speculation about what actions supporters on each side might take if they did not get their way.

The issue was confronted first on the Ormeau Road. At about 8am the police began to remove protestors from Ormeau Bridge to allow the 20 Apprentice Boys and the Lord Carson Memorial Band to parade along the road. As the protestors resisted, officers in riot gear moved in to clear the road. The violence was short lasting but brutal and left 12 RUC and 11 civilians injured, one man was wounded by a plastic bullet. Residents from the lower Ormeau blocked the road in the afternoon in protest at the morning's events, but there was no trouble. The Apprentice Boys took a different route back to Ballynafeigh from their outward parade (SL 13-8, SW 13-8, IN 14-8, NL 14-8).

At 9am on Saturday morning the centre of Derry was full of RUC officers and vehicles. These were concentrated on the approaches to Butcher's Gate where an estimated 200 residents from the Bogside had remained on the walls overnight. Outside the Memorial Hall there were a small number of Apprentice Boys, bandsmen and others. No-one knew what was going to happen. The thirty metres between the nationalist protesters and the Apprentice Boys was occupied by a few police officers and numerous journalists. In an

interview, Paul Durcan (SDLP) suggested that a deal, trading the lower Ormeau parade for the circuit of the walls had been offered but not accepted. Around 9.30, Martin McGuinness was interviewed immediately in front of the Memorial Hall. This produced jeers and abuse from the loyalist crowd and a number of women shouted to police nearby "why was he allowed on the walls when we're not". Shortly after 9.30 the police moved in on the protesters, initially containing them on a small section of the walls above the Butcher's Gate, and then carrying and dragging them from the walls. At the Memorial Hall, cheers went up from the loyalist crowd with the expectation that the parade would be allowed to go ahead. This was the first time that the general air of uncertainty and confusion had changed. At 10am the barriers were removed and members of the General Committee made their way onto the walls. The first man on to the walls waved his arms in the air and cheered, but most moved quietly into position. The parade set off down towards the Guildhall. The four bands, from Glasgow, Derry, Portadown and Burntollet initially marched to the accompaniment of a single drum beat. Beneath the walls, in front of the youth hostel near Butcher's Gate the nationalist protesters were surrounded by RUC officers. They stood quietly with their backs to the parade and with their right arms raised giving a clenched fist or a 'V for Victory' sign. The wall was lined with police overlooking the protesters but the marchers ignored the silent demonstration. As the first band reached the part of the walls that were shielded from the Bogside by the buildings of Waterloo Street they struck up in full tune, each of the three following bands followed the same procedure. As the parade crossed the section of walls overlooking the Guildhall Square they were jeered and barracked by a small number of people below, but otherwise there was no response from beneath the walls. The city centre was very quiet, few shops had bothered to open. After completing the circuit and laying a wreath on the War Memorial, the procession continued to the Cathedral. Many of the Apprentice Boys went into the service, some remained outside as stewards, others went to the initiation of new members in the Memorial Hall, a few went to a nearby bar.

The main parade began on the Waterside at 1pm. Trouble started late in the afternoon when a band from Portadown arrived in the Diamond. They began to play loudly at a crowd of nationalists nearby and soon missiles were being thrown from both sides. The police moved in to clear the nationalist demonstrators away from the Diamond down Butcher Street and Shipquay Street. After a stand off the police attempted to force the demonstrators further back out of the walled city. In response the police were attacked by an assortment of missiles and petrol bombs. This began a riot that lasted for several hours and caused tens of thousands of pounds worth of damage (SL 13-8, SW 13-8, IN 14-8, NL 14-8). The trouble was brought under control late in the evening. The Ancient Order of Hibernians held their annual parade through the city centre on Lady Day, Tuesday 15, there was no trouble, nor any protests but the parade stayed well clear of the loyalist Fountain estate. The following Saturday nationalists held a parade through the main streets to 'reclaim the city for the community', comparable to the loyalist parade through Castlederg in May, and this marked the end to an intensive week of public demonstrations.

The Pat Finucane Centre in Derry published a detailed report on the events of August 12 shortly afterwards. It was extremely critical of the RUC a) in allowing the parade onto the walls, b) on making the decision so late and c) in the treatment of the protestors. The report made the following recommendations relating to future parades in the city:

- 1) The Apprentice Boys should not be allowed to parade on the west wall

unless with the agreement of the residents of the Bogside and adjoining areas.

2) The Apprentice Boys should only be allowed to parade in the City centre following satisfactory agreement concerning the stewarding of the parade and the behaviour of the Apprentice Boys. This agreement should be brokered by party leaders on Derry City Council and should involve the General Committee of the Apprentice Boys of Derry, the Chamber of Trade and the Bogside Residents' Group.

3) Political parties, the media and all other organisations involved in the civic life of this city should commit themselves urgently to facilitating good community relations where the different traditions are respected on the basis of tolerance and equality.

4) Plastic bullets should be banned immediately. The continued use of this lethal weapon is in breach of the ceasefires.

5) As a matter of urgency the crisis in policing must be resolved. No single incident in the past year has demonstrated that urgency clearer than the avoidable events of 12 August 1995.

This report was produced only two weeks after the events in Derry, but as with all the other recommendations for future action or possible solutions to the issue of parading disputes, the suggestions were pigeonholed as part of the larger nationalist agenda and largely ignored.

### **7.3 Protests Elsewhere on the August Twelfth**

As well as the violence in Belfast and Derry, there were minor disturbances in several other places later in the day. There were clashes between bandsmen and local people in two predominately nationalist villages, Dunloy and Rasharkin, after they had returned from the main parade in Derry. In Dunloy, the bandsmen were attacked with stones and bottles as they paraded the village. Five people were injured in the resulting scuffles. In Rasharkin, a number of bandsmen broke ranks and attacked people on the streets after a verbal exchange with local youths. At least eight people were assaulted before the Apprentice Boys' marshals were able to restore order. Although this was a relatively minor dispute in Rasharkin, it raised concerns among local people that trouble would flare up again at a band parade that was planned for the village the following week. In the event this parade seems to have passed peacefully. SDLP representative Sean Farren, once again raised the question of why nationalist villages should have to witness Orange parades throughout the summer (Ballymena Chronicle 17-8, BT 19-8, IN 17-8). In County Fermanagh, there was a dispute in Roslea, as a crowd of 150 protestors gathered to prevent members of the local Black Preceptory from parading through the town on the same evening. Eventually a compromise was reached and, on the advice of the police, but under protest at the change to their traditional route, the Blackmen agreed to hold a short parade directly to their hall (Fermanagh Herald 16-8). Finally on the following day, Sunday August 13, a small group of loyalists attacked a republican Internment Commemoration rally with stones and bottles as it passed the bottom of Divis Street on the way to the City Hall. Republican supporters chased after the loyalists and the RUC eventually came between the two sides. The main body of the parade continued its way. This seems to have been nothing more than a tit-for-tat response to the protests and rioting in Derry the previous day.

## 7.4 Summary

Despite two major outbursts of confrontation which had been provoked by the issue of parading, and recurrent violence at events across the province, there was still no agreement on a way forward. Each of the three main parties involved, the police, those parading and those protesting were blamed as contributing to the problem. All sides continued to pass the blame and nobody was prepared to make a serious attempt to confront the issue. There was extensive condemnation of the violence at the parades in both Derry and Belfast, but there was less clarity and no agreement as to what should have been done. The editorials in the three local daily papers illustrate these diverging views. For the Irish News, it was clear that the only solution was to keep loyalist parades away from the Ormeau Road and to restrict the Apprentice Boys to a section of the city walls. The paper contrasted the violent police treatment of protestors, and the use of plastic bullets on the Ormeau Road, with the restraint that was shown to loyalist protestors at Lurgan and Larne in July (IN 14-8). The Newsletter was content to blame the Sinn Fein strategy of creating a "summer of confrontation" for the trouble. It contrasted "the ferocity of the nationalist protests" with the "relatively peaceful parade of Apprentice Boys" (NL 14-8). The Belfast Telegraph editorial was headed "Taking Decisions: a new approach is needed". Here it was argued, that a better form of decision making was required "so that the police would not be enforcing their own decisions", although it was admitted that it would be "too late to take effect this summer". While the paper suggested that a tribunal might be set up to adjudicate on these matters, it also believed that there would be a problem in getting a "balanced tribunal, whose opinions would be respected and obeyed". As an alternative, the Secretary of State could take the decision to ban marches but this, it admitted, would also be fraught with difficulty. In the meantime it was the duty of parade organisers "to stand back and consider the consequences, for Northern Ireland as a whole, of attempting to march in areas where deep offence is taken...The right to march has never implied a right to march everywhere" (BT 15-8).

The RUC tactics in Derry, and especially the recourse to plastic bullets, was seen as a major blow to their community relations in the city, just as the rioting and violence was a blow to the image of both the city, and the province as a whole. However, the RUC were in a difficult position with regard to the Apprentice Boys parades. The city of Derry has a particular symbolic significance for the Protestant community and the Relief parades attracts people from all over the north, once the request to parade the complete circuit of the walls had been made public, there seemed little scope for the Apprentice Boys to accept less, without it appearing as another compromise on their claimed rights. There were rumours of either a Drumcree style stand-off, or a Larne style blockade being imposed if either the parade in Belfast or the main one in Derry were not allowed to go ahead. This threat seems to have been instrumental in the decision to allow both parades to take place without any conditions being imposed on them. While there was always a real possibility of violent protests if these parades were allowed to take place, this seems to have been accepted as the lesser evil. Once again, the failure to make a public decision on the issue until the last minute, or to impose a compromise, may have served to inflame the situation. This is not to blame the RUC for the events in Derry, they were left somewhere in the middle ground between two parties who were unwilling to negotiate a compromise.

Although the Twelfth of July and the Relief of Derry are the two major events of the parading calendar, they are far from the end of the marching season. Despite the pessimism

of the Belfast Telegraph editorial in suggesting that it would be too late to change approach to the parades this late in the summer, there were some subtle changes in the way in which the parades were dealt with in the remainder of the marching season.

## **SECTION EIGHT - THE BLACK PARADES**

### **8.1 Black on the Ormeau**

The parades in the second half of August are dominated by those organised by the Royal Black Institution. They hold a number of church and other local parades in advance of the main parade on the last Saturday of the month. Two Black parades were planned to pass along the lower Ormeau Road. On the Monday following the violence at the Apprentice Boys parade, the LOCC announced that they planned to seek a judicial review over the forthcoming Black parade. They said that they would argue before the high court, that any loyalist parade on the road would inevitably end in violence and thereby violate the 1987 Public Order (NI) Order. Two days later, the Ballynafeigh Black Preceptory announced that it had decided to re-route both of its planned parades, one to a service at the Presbyterian Assembly Hall, on Sunday 20 August and the other, a feeder parade to the Last Saturday demonstration in Holywood, on Saturday 26 August, away from the lower Ormeau.

The Belfast Grand Master, the Rev. Victor Ryan, said the Preceptory did not want a repeat of the serious violence that had marked the Apprentice Boys parade, or any further confrontation, especially on the way to a Christian service. However, he also said that some of the Preceptory's membership were "very vexed" at the decision and he criticised the lack of a willingness to compromise on the part of the LOCC. Noel Liggett, of Ballynafeigh Orange Lodge, said he supported the suggestion of the Black Preceptory for a wider forum to discuss the parading issue, and he suggested it should include "loyalist orders, local politicians, wider representatives and church leaders". Sir Hugh Annesley, Chief Constable of the RUC, also welcomed the decision as "courageous and truly responsible" and a "very significant contribution to the general stability within the Province". He also restated the police view, that it was up to the "people and their political and community representatives to decide how to best reconcile the 'right' to march with the 'right' to protest". The LOCC gave a cautious welcome to the Black Institution's decision. Gerard Rice said it had been a courageous, if overdue, step. He also defended his right to speak on behalf of the lower Ormeau community and said that a recent petition "showed 85% of people in favour of re-routing these marches". He urged the Orange Order and the Apprentice Boys to follow the example of the Black and cancel any parades that they had planned before the end of the marching season (IN 17-8, 19-8, NL 17-8, 18-8). However Sinn Fein's representative in South Belfast, Sean Hayes, claimed that the Black Preceptory had been forced into re-routing their parades by the RUC, as a result of the decision of the LOCC to seek a judicial review in the high court. He said Sir Patrick Mayhew was not prepared to defend his decision to permit the parade in court and therefore the marchers were given the choice of either re-routing it themselves or having the parade banned (IN 25-8).

### **8.2 Provincial Protests**

In the event there was no trouble on the Ormeau Road at either of the two parade dates. However, there were disturbance at, and following, other Black parades on the Last Saturday, August 26. In Bellaghy, there were minor scuffles as police broke up a protest by residents as they tried to block the route of the local Black Preceptory and its band as they paraded through the village on their way to main parade in Derry. The residents had

appealed to the Blackmen to cancel their demonstration and thereby "show the courage and respect that their counterparts in Belfast had displayed" and they had also asked the RUC to re-route the parade. Both requests were ignored and instead demonstrators from Bellaghy Residents Group were forcibly removed from the road as the parade was escorted through the village (Mid-Ulster Observer 31-8, IN 26-8, SL 27-8). There was also trouble in Castleterg, but which flared up several hours after a County Tyrone Black parade had passed through the town. Disturbances, between "rival sectarian gangs", began in the Ferguson Crescent area in the early hours of Sunday morning and it took the RUC over two hours to restore order. Missiles were thrown by both sides and the police responded with plastic bullets. Twelve police officers and several dozen civilians were injured. Sinn Fein representatives in the town, claimed the riots were a follow on from the earlier parade but local unionists strongly denied any links between the parade and the rioting. They claimed that all those who had been involved in the parade had gone home long before the trouble began (NL 28-8, Tyrone Constitution 31-8).

In spite of the re-routing of the Black parades away from the Ormeau Road, the Ballynafeigh Orangemen were angry when the RUC announced, on Wednesday September 6, that they would not be allowed to march along the Ormeau Road to a bicentenary service at St Anne's Cathedral on the following Sunday. Sinn Fein however, welcomed the RUC decision, Sean Hayes said that they had willingly re-routed their parades away from loyalist areas and he urged the organisers of loyalist parades to show "similar goodwill" and to engage in dialogue with the affected communities. The LOCC were also pleased with the RUC decision but they also said that this was still only a short term resolution to the problem. In contrast Ian Paisley said the police decision only sent another clear message of encouragement to the IRA (IN 7-9, NL 7-9). On the day of the proposed march, members of Ballynafeigh District LOL handed a letter of protest into the local RUC station, and then paraded to the bridge. This time they did not hold a service there but instead drove to the cathedral. A small group of loyalists jeered the Orangemen as they left and continued to protest against the re-routing until the early evening (NL 11-9). A few days later, on Wednesday September 13, members of a new group calling itself ORDER (Ormeau Residents Demand Equal Rights) held a demonstration outside Ballynafeigh Orange Hall. Led by Ian Paisley jr, the 200 people marched to the local RUC station and delivered a letter protesting at the continual re-routing of Orange parades. A small group of the protestors then tried to continue the march into the lower Ormeau, but the road was blocked by police Land Rovers and the crowd was persuaded to disperse by Paisley (NL 14-9).

On the evening of Sunday 10, there had also been more trouble in Dunloy, County Antrim, when Orangemen returning from bicentenary service in the town's Presbyterian church were attacked by a crowd of 150-200 people who had just returned from a hurling match in Belfast. In the disturbances, a gun was stolen from an RUC officer, but the trouble was soon brought under control. Ian Paisley blamed republicans for the violence, but SDLP Cllr Charlie Kane, played the affair down and said that only about half a dozen people were involved, his colleague Sean Farren repeated calls for the establishment of a commission to oversee parading disputes (Ballymena Chronicle 14-9, NL 11-9, NL 12-9).

On Friday September 22, the evening before the Orange Order's Bicentenary Rally in Loughgall, County Armagh, there were minor disturbances at a band parade in Downpatrick. On the Wednesday before the planned parade, the RUC re-routed it away

from Church Street and the town centre "to prevent serious public disorder or serious damage to property", just as they had in previous years. The parade organisers, the Red Hand Defenders Flute Band, protested against the re-routing and throughout the two hours of the parade each of the 19 bands marched up to the barriers across the end of Church Street and played party tunes directly at the police. The music was greeted with volleys of assorted missiles and fire-crackers which were thrown at the police by members of the watching crowd. The event rarely looked like getting out of control and although one man was arrested and 2 policemen were slightly injured, the evening ended quietly after the bands had finished parading (IN 21-9).

In early October Sinn Fein announced that once again it would attempt to hold a rally in the centre of Lurgan, this time on Sunday 8. The DUP immediately announced that it would hold a counter demonstration against Sinn Fein at the same time which would be addressed by Ian Paisley. As a result of the DUP action the RUC imposed constraints on both parties, restraining them from entering the town centre (NL 6-10, SL 8-10). Extra RUC were drafted into Lurgan to control the rival republican and loyalist gatherings. The town centre, between the two police lines was deserted and both demonstrations passed peacefully (IN 9-10, NL 9-10). The following Saturday, two people were arrested when a crowd of about 100 republican supporters tried to complete the parade route which had been banned the previous week and walked in single file around the island at the 'nationalist' end of the main street. The police seemed surprised at first but eventually broke up the demonstration. A police spokesperson said "we simply moved them out of the centre where they are not welcomed by the vast majority of decent respectable people, nationalist and loyalist" and he accused Sinn Fein of "continuing to provoke confrontation" in the town. Sinn Fein responded by accusing the RUC of using "brutal" tactics. Another minor clash occurred two weeks later, when Sinn Fein once again tried to hold a peaceful demonstration in the town centre and the RUC insisted on moving them on, once again a number of arrests were made (SW 15-10, IN 30-10).

### **8.3 The season draws to a close**

The final scenes of a long marching season were again largely played out in Belfast in late October. On October 13 loyalists held a massive rally in Belfast city centre to mark the anniversary of the Combined Loyalist Military Command ceasefire. Four parades converged from different areas of the city but organisers made it clear well in advance that they did not plan to go anywhere near the lower Ormeau. The scale of support took most people by surprise but the event was well stewarded and caused no trouble (BT 14-10, IN 3-10, 14-10). But objections continued at other parades. The republican prisoners support group, Saoirse, planned to hold a parade from the Markets to the lower Ormeau to unveil a mural on Sunday October 22. However residents and members of ACORD from Donegall Pass claimed that the march was "deliberately provocative". In response to the protest the RUC said the proposed route was unacceptable and suggested that the Saoirse parade walk along the Lagan towpath as an alternative. A Saoirse spokesperson said the idea of using the towpath was ridiculous, and announced that they would re-route their parade to avoid confrontation. In the end the parade began from McClure Street beside the railway bridge rather than in the Markets, and the crowd walked peacefully to the mural at Dromara Street (IN 21-10, 23-10, NL 20-10). On the same day a republican parade was held in north Belfast to mark the second anniversary of the death of IRA volunteer Thomas Begley. This created widespread anger on the Shankill Road as Begley had died planting

the bomb that destroyed Frizzell's fish shop and killed nine other people. The parade, from the Antrim Road to the Ardoyne, was organised by the Carrick Hill Flute Band, of which Thomas Begley was once a member. As a result of the reaction among loyalists in west Belfast, the Tanaiste, Dick Spring, was forced to cancel a meeting with members of the Progressive Unionist Party which they had planned to hold on the Shankill Road and which was instead relocated to the Europa Hotel (IN 23-10, NL 24-10). The final Orange parade planned for the Ormeau Road, on Sunday October 29, was banned by the RUC on Thursday 26, after members of the LOCC had again announced that they would seek permission to hold a judicial review in bid to stop the Reformation Day parade to St Anne's Cathedral. In response to the re-routing, it was reported that the Ballynafeigh Orangemen had put out an unofficial appeal for mass support. According to a senior figure in the Orange Order: "They want a Drumcree style demonstration of support". However only about 100 people turned up for the protest service and rally at the Ormeau Bridge. Although the police maintained a large presence in blocking the bridge there was no counter demonstration on the other side (IN 26-10, 27-10, NL 28-10, 30-10, SL 29-10).

#### **8.4 Summary**

There were no major disputes over parades after the rioting in Derry in August but ominously, minor disputes occurred in a wider range of locations than previously. In particular, the persistent clashes in Castlederg and Lurgan, and to a less extent the disputes in Bellaghy, Dunloy and Rasharkin may suggest a broadening of the dispute in the future. It is therefore interesting to note the change in tactics on the Ormeau Road by all three principal parties. The LOCC decided to take legal action over the heads of the police. They appealed directly to the Northern Ireland Office and demanded that the parades be banned in advance. They argued that recent events meant that any parade along the road would produce "serious public disorder". However, they were never able to test their case before the high court because of the actions of the Black Preceptory and the police. In the first instance, the Black Preceptory announced that they were voluntarily re-routing their two parades. They claimed that as a Christian organisation, they had no wish to provoke violence. However, in response, Sinn Fein claimed that pressure had been brought to bear by the RUC, that the Black had the choice of voluntarily re-routing, or being banned. There has been no confirmation of this. The Orange Order offered no such concessions with regard to their final two parades, but in both cases the RUC ordered a compulsory re-routing away from the lower Ormeau. A relatively low key attempt to attract outside support for their cause fell on deaf ears, and few people outside of the local lodge turned up on the Ormeau Road. It has been claimed that the RUC decision to ban the parade some days in advance was a response to the appeal for a judicial review lodged by the LOCC. However, the police decision also follows the logic that they were acting as if the agreement between the Orangemen and the LOCC, agreed in July, was still in place. This had stated that there would be no Orange parades through the lower Ormeau after the Twelfth of July. At the same time it was likely that the violent clashes at the two parades which were pushed through the lower Ormeau would be repeated if any other parades were allowed. These two parades therefore became the standard to judge the opposition to loyalist parades. Whatever the reason behind the changed response, the final re-routed parades passed off peacefully. The LOCC did not need to mobilise large numbers of supporters on the streets and most members of the Ballynafeigh Protestant community were not significantly angered to protest.