

*Reflections on 1969*  
*Lived Experiences & Living History*

*(Discussion 2)*

**Putting up, and taking down, the barricades**

*compiled by*

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# Introduction

**The Fellowship of Messines Association** was formed in May 2002 by a diverse group of individuals from Loyalist, Republican and other backgrounds, united in their realisation of the need to confront sectarianism in our society as a necessary means of realistic peace-building. The project also engages young people and new citizens on themes of citizenship and cultural and political identity.

Among the different programmes initiated by the Messines Project was a series of discussions entitled *Reflections on 1969: Lived Experiences & Living History*. These discussions were viewed as an opportunity for people to engage positively and constructively with each other in assisting the long overdue and necessary process of separating actual history from some of the myths that have proliferated in communities over the years. It was felt important that current and future generations should hear, and have access to, the testimonies and the reflections of former protagonists while these opportunities still exist. Access to such evidence would hopefully enable younger generations to evaluate for themselves the factuality of events, as opposed to some of the folklore that passes for history in contemporary society.

The subject of this publication is the *second* discussion – out of a planned series of six – which was held in the Irish Congress of Trade Unions premises in Donegall Street, Belfast, on 21 September 2019. The discussion was chaired by **Deirdre Mac Bride**, and **Jim McDermott** gave an overview before the discussion was opened up to all those present. Those attending represented a wide diversity of political backgrounds and allegiances, and most of them had either been participants in the events under discussion, or witnesses to them.

The theme of this second workshop was

***‘Putting up, and taking down, the barricades’***

Of necessity the wide-ranging discussion which ensued was edited slightly to fit into the space available in this pamphlet.

**Harry Donaghy** *Co-ordinator*, The Fellowship of Messines Association

## ***Putting up, and taking down, the barricades***

[**Deirdre Mac Bride**] Can I invite you now to hear Jimmy McDermott, who I'm sure is going to give us a very thoughtful presentation; and he will focus on September 1969, when the barricades erected in August were dismantled.

[**Jim McDermott**] What I am going and try and do is point out how much the period of September 1969 was confused for most people. Now, I am not setting myself up as an expert, unless as an expert in bewilderment, which is the main emotion I felt at that period. But I think that was very much a shared feeling. 1969 and the events during it, especially the terrible period from the 12th to 16th August, came as something of a shock, to *all* participants. Looking back, with historical hindsight, players are often very keen to engage in a bit of revisionism of the period: to say, 'Oh, everybody should have expected what happened' or 'It was very obvious that was going to happen.' I don't think so, I don't think people are ever prepared for new events, especially events which were so seminal and changed things so much.

In 1969 the Northern Ireland state was just under 50 years in existence, although the majority of its citizens were not 50 years old themselves. They weren't conversant with the events surrounding the state's formation, when in the region of 470 people were killed violently in Belfast. Then you had the Lancaster Street riots of 1935. These were localised but highly

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violent. There was an Orange parade, and blame as usual was attributed to one side by the other, there was a fair amount of shooting, there were allegations that republicans had been detained at Giles Quay, leaving a free hand for loyalist groups. It seems to have been a matter of what usually happens: it was a case of people sleepwalking into trouble, and then that trouble taking a life of its own. And over about three days [in 1935] there were nine people shot dead. There were something like 255 families moved; Glenard, in Ardoyne, was actually settled by people who were put out of their homes in York Street, and it was meant to be a mixed community. It had a big effect. But growing up I never heard it mentioned, I was unaware of it; indeed, I was totally unaware of how bad the twenties were.

When the Troubles broke out in 1969, I wasn't in Belfast, and when I came back to see what was happening it was like a dream sequence: everything had completely changed. The most recent violence visited upon Belfast had been the Divis Street riots in 1964. They were riots in which the participants were either the RUC or the Ulster Special Constabulary versus the local people of the Falls. They were not, strictly speaking, between Protestant and Catholic. And although they were violent enough and a lot of people were arrested, and there was trouble in places like Cromac Square and so on, there were no dead bodies to show for those riots. And although individuals like John Scullion and Peter Ward had been killed before 1969, people didn't really expect a sectarian clash in '69.

Both sides – and I mean those in the unionist and nationalist communities who would have been involved in the 1969 events – were overwhelmingly working-class people. Eight people were killed within five days, between the 12th and 16th August: five Catholics shot by the RUC, two Protestants shot by nationalists, and a Catholic teenager by loyalists. No-one expected that scale of deaths. 750 people were injured, 133 people received gunshot wounds, 150 homes were burned out, 275 businesses were burnt. This was all out of the blue. Admittedly, there had been the ongoing demands by the Civil Rights Association, and Civil Rights marches had been met by loyalist counter-marches.

At the time, all the old loyalties seemed very much intact. If anybody had gone to an Easter or republican parade in Newry they would have seen maybe 2000 people; in Derry 5000; in Belfast 5000. And in the Unionist community the Somme celebrations in 1966, commemorating fifty years since the Battle of the Somme, had been celebrated very enthusiastically. So it looked as if both sides were evenly matched, and, indeed, some thought that there must be a large IRA presence out there. In actual fact when the Troubles did take off they took everybody by surprise, including I would image all the participants. And, as I have already said, in that week of 1969 the trouble only happened in working-class communities, at their interfaces, it didn't happen in middle-class communities. The people who suffered the most, and the people who engaged the most, looking at those who later did time in jail, and looking at the geographical spread of incidents, were working-class people, who would have obviously shared a lot in common but were divided by ideology.

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In 1969, the two communities developed competing belief systems. On the nationalist side there was a fear that there was going to be a loyalist pogrom, an attempt to wipe out the nationalist community in Belfast. While within the loyalist community many thought they were on the cusp of a renewed IRA offensive. The historian Patrick Buckland points out that in the unionist community the fear of some sort of nationalist uprising is nearly always there. And what happened in 1969, the scale of the violence, and the setting up of barricades, had a knock-on effect.

Now, the barricades weren't up for a long time. But by the time they started to come down and the British Army came in, attitudes were starting to polarise even further. Communities moved apart, they physically moved behind those barricades, where for a while they felt safe. and whatever tribal loyalties existed were solidified. The people on the opposite side of these barricades largely became 'the other'. People who normally wouldn't have taken a political view, or expressed a political opinion, came out and did so. James Chichester Clark, who replaced Terence O'Neill as Northern Ireland Prime Minister in April 1969, claimed that it was the republican movement who were behind the Civil Rights campaign, whereupon Cardinal Conway, by no means the most radical of clerics, said that this was complete nonsense.

There is this claim that there were not enough weapons available to defend Catholic areas, although it is generally accepted that republicans on the ground did what they could. It is reckoned that there were about 120 active republicans and maybe 24 weapons, most of them pistols, some of them not functioning very well. Yet people had seen these big parades going up to Milltown cemetery and had assumed, erroneously, that protection would surely be at hand, that some sort of secret army was always there.

People like Paddy Devlin, Paddy O'Hanlon, Paddy Kennedy, who would have been very vociferous that the only way out of things was some sort of peaceful solution, nevertheless took themselves down to Leinster House in Dublin, demanding weapons. Irish Taoiseach Jack Lynch said on television "We cannot stand idly by" and ordered the Irish Army to set up field hospitals: Gormanston Camp accommodated 6000 people, who were getting out of Belfast. On the British side, the government sent the Army in, 17,000 of them.

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And there were a range of different opinions. And ever-changing opinions, by people like myself who were completely bewildered by events. It didn't even matter which paper you read, it was who you listened to last, and the 'rumour factory' was working overtime. Events were moving extraordinarily quickly, it was very difficult to keep up. And you lacked all context: you were unaware of what the RUC were like, unaware what deep-seated opinion in a different community was like. This varied with your age. If, for example, you were below twenty, not only would you not have gone to school with young people from the 'other side', you were unlikely to have met them socially either, which meant that it was easier to believe that the 'other' was in the wrong.

When the soldiers came into a Protestant area, for example, Eddie Kinner, from Dover Street, said his first thought was: "What's the Army invading *us* for? They're supposed to be on *our* side." He went on to join the UVF. And when Protestants saw Catholics moving out – they were actually fleeing to Andersonstown for safety – some of the Protestants thought: they must be clearing people out of the way, to allow the IRA to get into us. So all the small groups on the Shankill, like Woodvale Defence Association, the Shankill Defence Association, which hitherto had been reasonably small, found themselves expanding. This long-threatened republican assault that the government had warned about was now seemingly coming to pass.

On the Falls Road too opinions varied, and especially among republicans. Although Gerry Adams makes the point in one of his books that the IRA, despite the lack of weaponry, had secured the streets quite well, nevertheless a republican split in September became obvious, when some of the old leaders of the organisation, leaders from the fifties, returned, and repudiated the current Dublin leadership. The same events were being read differently by diverse groups of people.

From July civil defence vigilante groups had been set up in Catholic/nationalist areas – the CDCs, civil defence committees – and in Belfast there were 300 barricades erected in Catholic and Protestant working-class areas, behind which people sought safety. But they didn't know what the next step was going to be, they just felt vulnerable. Some people in Catholic areas felt that the problem lay with the Protestants: they were the people who had propped up a Unionist

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administration that had brought us all to this pass. People were frightened, and some said that the only way to stop ourselves being vulnerable was to change the nature of the state, completely. Indeed, for some republicans there was only one answer: obliterate the state. Such views were to help consolidate what later became the Provisional IRA.

Others said: look at all the people who have been killed: we're all from the same social and economic background, we don't need this – and they wanted a more nuanced approach. And the Civil Defence Committees also represented broad views, just as different barricades in different areas could also represent different views. For example, the clergy would have joined on the local committees. Businessman Tom Conaty would have been a chairman of the CDC. Jim Sullivan, an Irish republican, was chairman at another time.

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The British Army came in, and there was an interregnum: what line were they going to take? The inter-communal fighting gradually subsided by the 17th August. Who wanted the barricades down? The Catholic Church certainly wanted the barricades down in nationalist areas; their authority had been under threat, the clergy were no longer the main players. But people felt safe behind their barricades, and what happens when they come down? Who were they to rely upon? Should we rely on the Army? John Kelly from the New Lodge Road makes the point that some of the local soldiers gave them a gun lecture, on machine guns, for even the soldiers didn't know what way to go. Certainly they had to take a side but nobody knew which way it would be yet. They couldn't stay neutral, not with two antagonistic groups basically at war with one another.

And neither antagonistic group wanted to compromise, each wanted some sort of victory, and sometimes there was a demand not just for defence but for revenge. But all sorts of things were happening very quickly. From having once been a backwater of the UK, Belfast was now a place where the British Home Secretary James Callaghan was walking round apologising to ordinary people, shaking their hands, making promises. Reports were set up: the Scarman Report, the Hunt Report – 'Oh, this can't happen again, we will make sure it doesn't happen again.'

And if the barricades stayed up how could the emergency services, fire engines, ambulances and so on, possibly access people's homes? Most people had

milk deliveries in those days, and that couldn't continue, so there was a need to establish some sort of normality. The place was awash with ideas, but if the barricades *were* to come down they had to come down simultaneously with Army defences and peace-walls of some kind going up.

But after the barricades came down new questions arose. Whose side were the Army going to be on; were they going to be neutral? All these questions started to emerge and people didn't so much question as knee-jerk react, although I am sure some thought very deeply about things. But the palpable sense of fear marked both the erection, and the taking down, of the barricades.

As I say, there were 300 of them and their taking down was hotly disputed, depending on which group was in the ascendancy in each area, as to what should happen. And quite often people who had lived closely together as neighbours now found themselves on opposing sides of the new interfaces. The last barricade which came down was around the top of the New Lodge on the 17th September. September also saw the first sectarian shootings with a Protestant vigilante shot dead and four young Catholic men shot and wounded by a loyalist gang.

Opinions were hardening but people weren't sure what was to happen next. Even middle-class Protestants and Catholics who hadn't been directly involved in the violence became, perhaps to a lesser extent, polarised. And the polarisation was more or less complete when those barricades eventually came down.

People generally didn't know the background to the Troubles, even people from strongly republican or loyalist families had not prepared their children for such eventualities. The whole promise of the sixties looked as if it had been inverted. But one thing was sure: the withdrawal of support for the Unionist regime was almost absolute in nationalist circles, and to what extent that would solidify

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and be reinforced by subsequent events nobody knew, but people knew that *nothing could stay the same*. Certainly some people *had* a clear idea of what might now happen, but for most people it was a time of confusion. And yet both in the nationalist community and in the unionist community, people realised that things would never go back to the old status quo, something had to change.

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[**Deirdre Mac Bride**] Thank you, Jimmy, that was amazing. I will open it up now to discussion.

[**Padraig Yeates**] I won't say too much, as I wasn't here, I was in England. But the way it was seen in Britain was that it wasn't *unexpected*. But maybe that was because we were in the republican movement, and we had been educated, or indoctrinated, in a particular way. So it didn't come as a surprise in that sense. I think the bulk of the Irish population in Britain were immigrants from the South, and most people who came from the North tended to be Catholic and nationalist. There was a very emotive reaction to the unfolding events. Some republicans wanted to get guns and 'free the North' and all this. There was a very slanted perspective on it that saw it all in very simplistic terms, about getting back to finishing the business of 1921, '22. It was seen very much in those terms.

And talking to people from the South in the republican movement there was very much a macho gut reaction as well: now's the time to finish the job and to get it over with. That's how we saw it. It is interesting to hear Jimmy talk about confusion here, and in communities here, so the people actually going through it all obviously had a very different view of it, but we had no difficulty collecting money or getting a few members and sending stuff over here. There was a lot of enthusiasm for that.

Now, at that time we followed what became the Official Republican line, pursued by Cathal Goulding and others, not because we really believed it but because they were the leadership and so they were the people we should follow, and we were socialists after all and we were trying to establish working-class unity. We didn't see a contradiction between fighting for a socialist republic and a deepening sectarian conflict in the North, we just didn't understand it, or at least we didn't *want* to understand it, because it didn't fit our mindset or our emotive-set. We just wanted to do something and this was an inconvenient fact: okay, there were workers on both sides but we can get over that. And it was back to James Connolly and the 'false consciousness' argument that these poor Prods don't really know what they're doing and once they see the light we'll all be together. So that was very much the feeling where I was coming from.

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[**Deirdre Mac Bride**] I'm not sure actually why 300 barricades went up?

[**Various**] Safety. / Fear. / Defence.

[**Tim Smith**] You had the likes of Bombay Street and Cupar Street and some streets had barricades at different ends, dividing the Catholic and Protestant areas.

[**Deirdre Mac Bride**] And presumably these were often the same areas that had been subject to a huge amount of violence in the twenties?

[**Sean Murray**] It was the same areas. There were nine people killed in Clonard after the expulsions from the shipyards. So it was the same areas: Clonard, Ardoyne, Short Strand – those interface areas that suffered the consequences of any political turmoil. We put a barricade up on the 14th night. I remember watching from Clonard car park the houses burning. Total disbelief. You had expected *something*, but it was the scale of what happened which was overwhelming. And the sense of raw fear; I have never tasted that sense of raw fear since then. The areas were completely overwhelmed, overrun.

That's *why* barricades were put up, people were in fear of their lives, their homes were getting burnt, so they seen this as a means of slowing that down hopefully and stopping further invasions. It was a natural consequence for people to barricade areas off. And even a month after Bombay Street, Coates Street was burnt, and the British Army were on the street when Coates Street was burnt, and they [the Protestants] threw petrol bombs over the Army's wire barricades and burnt the houses. Coates Street is left out in many discussions, and many narratives. This was 25th September, three or four weeks after the first barricades went up. There was a Vanguard rally that night; they tried to get into Unity Flats; they couldn't get in so they came across... Coates Street was behind Haastings Street barracks, and they burned a number of houses in Coates Street that night.

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[**Liam Napier**] Jim was talking about 1935, but also in them days we had the 'Outdoor Relief' riots, where working-class people *marched together*. And the

Republican Congress in 1934 was trying to sort that out. But then you get the establishment ‘mixing’ and pitting Catholic and Protestant against one another. And you had the right wing of the republicans and the left wing of the republicans in the Spanish Civil war as another example of the split in Ireland. And that goes on through, right to 1969. Republicans weren’t really prepared for a defensive type of situation and when the B-Specials and the police stood back and allowed the pogroms on the Falls, and Farringdon Gardens, then you had the old fifties republicans at odds with the present-day socialist republicans. You had Billy McKee, who was regarded as a good Catholic Republican; you had Billy McMillan, a communist – you had all that in the mix that was going on. That’s where 1969 came about: you can trace events back to 1921, back to 1914, with the organising of the UVF and IRA.

Today I see an opportunity for the working class to overcome those old divisions. We had a meeting with David Ervine in 1992 and we talked about socialism. He regarded himself as a British socialist, and at the meeting there were four or five Irish Republican socialists: that’s the mix that was going on. But going back to 1935, Jim mentioned the Lancaster Street

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shootings; but what you also had going on during the thirties was the Shankill and the Falls marching together, looking for jobs and work.

[**Seamus Lynch**] Could I go back to the point, Jimmy, when you said that people weren’t expecting things to happen. I would go along with that to a certain extent; however, the general feeling within the Catholic population was that here we have the state abusing their power in one direction – jobs and housing and all of that – so you had this section of the community in Northern Ireland who felt aggrieved as to how they were being treated. But they all wouldn’t have been supportive of any armed action to try to dump the state or bring about this United Ireland. I remember in a Westminster election of the middle or late fifties, where the Sinn Féin candidate was in prison, and his election agent stood at the corner of Lepper Street with an orange-box register, asking people to vote for Sinn Féin. And they only got handfuls of votes in Belfast, whereas in Fermanagh/South Tyrone they had three MPs elected. So you had this group of people in urban and rural who

seen things somewhat different, and what you had then, after the 1956-62 campaign, was the ongoing discussion within the republican movement: this is another glorious failure, we are hammering away here at something that the people don't really want or support. Hence the formation of the Civil Rights movement and all that went with that, not necessarily to overthrow the state, but to give a bit of confidence to the Catholic people who wanted the same rights as all other people in the UK. It wasn't another military campaign, so I don't understand how the Protestant people could feel fear, or that there was going to be an overthrow of them, because that wasn't what the issue was about.

The early activities of the IRA could be put down with no problem by the state, especially as it was confined to Northern Ireland. But once the Civil Rights started and you had 5th October and all that, it went global, so that the British had a different animal at their feet. So, that's how that situation developed, and then obviously you had the formation of the groups you were talking about. But the barricades were all about defending your community, defending your family. And you had the situation of the republican movement being all over the place in '69, all over the place.

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**[Deirdre Mac Bride]** There is a view that if you look at how this society has traditionally thought about history and memory, that there are modes of memory which adhere to each community. If you take the Somme commemorations, for example, the powers-that-be, through speeches and writings, the media and the clergy, were immediately attaching to the Somme that you have to defend your country. And this idea of needing to defend was built upon memories coming from 1641 and onwards. Within nationalism there was a different sort of memory which was about you'll always be the martyr. So I am not so sure that to every action there is an equal reaction. The idea within unionism was that there *wasn't* a ready response to this, in terms of a tradition of thinking about this.

**[Jim McDermott]** I think what also has to be considered are people's responses to the welfare state, which was extended to here at the end of the war. There were different responses. Gerry Fitt pointed out that many people in the nationalist community were quite content with the status quo; the welfare state provided a

safety net. And the unionist community, who were starting to move forward, were asking, ‘Well, what *do* they want?’ Do they really want to go down the South?’ And that was part of the difference in thinking; the IRA’s ’56-’62 campaign was certainly not supported at all. I think that most people were content with the post-war recovery and the welfare state.

[**Sean O’Hare**] Just to go back to Jimmy’s point about 1933–35. There was a man lived in the same street as me, facing our house. He had been interned with my father in the forties, and he was handicapped. And I never knew why he was handicapped until about ten years ago, when I read his name in a book. He had been shot in the spine in the ODR [Outdoor Relief] riots when they opened fire. We lived in the same street yet never knew why he was handicapped. That’s how much it was forgotten about. Nowadays he could dine out on it all his life, but then it was forgotten. And we have to remember that the Falls Road was the bastion of *You have to remember too that people who were involved in Republicanism in 1969 thought of themselves as being part of a world-wide socialist revolution.* It’s hard for people who didn’t live through those days to understand that... maybe we were all naive, but we all thought there would be a world-wide revolution. Just to go back to the barricades, Jimmy, you said that... I would say that Protestant working people *were* influenced by [Desmond] Boal and middle-class people like that. And even upper-class Unionists who were party to weapons being brought in.

[**Jim McDermott**] I agree; what I said was that middle-class *areas* weren’t affected.

[**Sean O’Hare**] Right. My evidence of the barricades coming down: it seemed a lot longer, but when you hear now that they were only up a few weeks – you thought it was months! But, anyway, I was at the barricade at Bray Street, down near St Comgalls, a week or two after the barricades were erected, and I saw a man coming through the gate. He was a retired police sergeant from Ballymurphy. I

followed him and he went into the chapel to meet with Canon Murphy, and that was the start of Catholic middle-class interference. Then when the CDC was set up, members of the Catholic Church were sent in; Canon Murphy was the head of efforts to get this thing taken away from the locals, to get it into the hands of the 'proper' people, the Catholic middle class. And that was the beginning of the barricades coming down.

[**Peter Black**] Just an aside. It's really about history being rewritten. Different things are set in to suit history. In this conflict between workers, Catholic and Protestant, workers were manipulated by the state. The other thing, if there were no republicans around in '69 why was the Falls not burned out completely, why was Ardoyne not burned out? There was *somebody* protecting the area. My view is that there is a whole rewriting of history and different people are slotted in. There's a book about the SAS in Ireland; in the first edition my name is in it, in the second edition my name has been taken out and somebody else's name put in. Facts depend on who you are, and who is writing the history books. It is not the misinterpretation of history that worries me, it is the *re-writing* of history. The class struggle is completely wrote out of history, and left behind.

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[**Erskine Holmes**] I prefer to speak as an eyewitness rather than give analysis. I was there when I heard rioters on the Falls that night panicking at the thought that the Protestants were coming. Indeed, the very term they were using was 'The Protestants were coming'. And they would run to the corner of the street from the front of the Falls Road where the rioting was taking place in front of Conway Mill, where two firemen were set on fire. And they would run to the street corner and look up, and then come back and say: "No, they're not coming yet." So, they *expected* the Protestants to attack them, for what they were actually doing. Because they had a folk memory of it happening before.

Now, my other memory is of someone who was shot quite badly; they were in a house where their wounds were being dressed. I was with Paddy Devlin, and the view was that this man needed to be taken across the border. Now, if he had to be taken across the border, it was because he was a republican obviously, not

just some civilian who had been injured during the riot.

I also moved some people from the houses that had been burned to somewhere up the Falls Road, to a church hall I think it was. And my memory to this day is still of how impoverished the houses were that had been burned, and of the few belongings that these people were gathering together and putting into the back of my car. But then I went to teach on the Shankill Road, in Everton school in Ardoyne, in September following this. So I got quite used to seeing poverty on the Shankill Road as well as seeing it on the Falls Road. But I am still struck by that memory: houses were being burned out on either side and everything was pretty black and gloomy, but people still wanted to rescue their few possessions to take them with them, that's how bad it was. That explains the fear that drove the barricades up, not at that time but later, and you can't take the fear question away.

It's the fear as well that brought the guns in, and if you read Martin Dillon's book on the 'dirty war', you'll read that Frank Gogarty, the chairman of the Civil Rights Association, was associated with the arming of the defence committees. But the reason people wanted the guns in was a fear of having no means of defence whatsoever, in the event of their houses being attacked once law and order had broken down completely. But the bringing of those guns in was possibly the beginning of the strengthening of what became the Provisional IRA in the defence committees. But I do think that particular part of history will have to be examined, and there are other people who know more about it than I do. The barricades also empowered people. And you saw the same in the Protestant community: it gave people authority – 'you can't take that down, I put it up!' So that's another aspect to it. But it was a mirror image. Each working-class community was doing the same as the other.

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**[Deirdre Mac Bride]** You remind me that the Linen Hall Library started collecting leaflets that were being produced on each side of the barricade; and that people were writing down stuff even then.

**[Erskine Holmes]** From an eye-witness point of view I would say that I do remember being at Radio Free Belfast, which was obviously behind the

barricades, and I read since that a certain Gerry Adams was, as it were, the imprimatur, on what was going to be read out and said on the radio. And Radio Free Belfast seemed to be largely run at one stage by the People's Democracy. I also remember, from teaching the girls in Everton, that they too had their own radio station that they listened into as well. They listened into Radio Free Belfast, but they also listened to somebody called 'Orange Lil' in another free radio station. So there were two free radio stations: they were imitating each other in that.

And finally, when I was on school duty to sort out getting the kids home safely, the Army were there and this young officer, who was only recently into Belfast, said to me, because there were these two opposing crowds: "Which are the Catholics and which are the Protestants?" And I said, "That's the Protestants, that's the Catholics." And he said, "How can you tell them apart?" I said, "By which side of the road they are on." But he thought I had some magic formula to tell who was Catholic and Protestant; he was so unused to the situation he didn't realise that the middle of the Crumlin Road was a dividing line between the two communities.

*This young officer, who was only recently into Belfast, said to me, because there were these two opposing crowds: "Which are the Catholics and which are the Protestants?"*

[**Anne Devlin**] In answer to Deirdre's question 'why did the barricades go up?' ... I wasn't in Belfast, I was working in a pub in Ealing. But I saw it on the television and I came back. I think I felt how quite a lot of people did: they looked at this and it was a total surprise. The reason why I involved myself in events was because it involved my dad as well, as Paddy Devlin was the Member of Parliament for Falls, and the streets where my grandmother lived were burned out. She lived in 80 Conway Street, and it was burned out.

I also wanted to confirm the approach Erskine is taking, and which other people here have taken, about offering eye-witness accounts, because an eye-witness account is something you can at least stand over. And the way I found out about the events of the night that I missed, is that I began to read transcripts of the evidence presented to Scarman, which at one time were available in the Linen Hall Library. And I just wanted to point out that that is available to everyone. The reason I knew to go there was my father had submitted evidence to Scarman; and

it is really worth looking at. After reading my dad's evidence I began to read the other evidence to find out what everybody else living in those streets went through. One of the most powerful impacts on you is the language of the people giving the testimony and the language of the court. It's a huge shock, because there is a language of law – and I would describe it as an educated way of expressing yourself – and then there's the vernacular which is what everybody in the streets was expressing, including my dad.

Now, behind the barricades there was a Free Radio. I went and offered my services to be one of the disc-jockeys, but it was all secret, because you weren't supposed to know where it was – it was above The Long Bar, which doesn't exist any more. And nobody was supposed to know who was on it, although all my friends from school knew it was me. But the issue for me with the Free Radio was the fact that the music was terrible! This was the sixties, we were all into rock & roll and we got this terrible 'forty-shades-of-green' stuff – and we said we're not having that! So the first clash was over the music, which was, I suppose, a generational clash. The second clash was more troublesome. The scripts... there weren't any real scripts, and the language was very sectarian. It was a kind of an open mike, and what some people were saying was becoming so alarming that various historians stepped in and offered to write the scripts so that we didn't make things worse. The language with which we had been conducting ourselves politically was not in those scripts. So that was a big, big issue.

I also did night duty on the barricades. I spent a couple of nights being in and around the barricades and there was a kind of quietness around those streets at night, and you slept in houses where, it being the summer time, old ladies had gone away on holiday. "That house is available; you can sleep there after your stint at the Free Radio." Anyway, the buses were off, it was a curfew, nobody could go home from 6 o'clock every evening. If you were in the Falls and you lived in Andersonstown you couldn't get home unless you had a car, which none of us did. Very few people had cars then. There is a whole area in which things are forgotten.

But I also got the sense that things would never be the same again. And I agree with Sean: it felt longer than a couple of months, it felt like something

***What some people were saying was becoming so alarming that various historians stepped in and offered to write the scripts so that we didn't make things worse.***

extraordinary had just happened. And in order to find out how we had got to this, I also began to read the accounts of the preceding days. And one crucial event had been the killing of a child, Patrick Rooney, who had been shot in Divis Flats... even the editor of the *Evening Standard*, Max Hastings, made a submission to Scarman about that event. The death of this boy was a very extraordinary moment.

And so, in answer as to *why* the barricades went up, all the eye-witness accounts to Scarman tell you that it was to stop the police going down the small streets with tracers. And, indeed, this was witnessed from the top of Andrews Mill by the men on the night shift, and they were a mixed Protestant and Catholic workforce, it was not a sectarian issue. I feel very strongly about the fact that ... when you are talking about labour unity... it was perfectly obvious to all those in that mixed workforce, who were on night shift looking down as events unfolded, that this was the state doing this; this was the police, and they were afraid of the police. That was my most overwhelming experience of that understanding of what had gone on. Later on I wrote a short story about all this, called *Naming the Names*, because I think sometimes memory is so problematic that it is sometimes better to write fiction. Because people remember in so totally different ways.

[**Sean O'Hare**] Radio Free Belfast was all a PD influence and sometimes the republicans weren't always happy with it. And especially there was an English bloke who kept playing a record which he called *Rifles of the RIA!* and that really annoyed people. Anyway, just about the sectarian aspect. Although I was wounded in '69, I was dispatched to the top of Leeson Street to write all this stuff on the gable walls: 'Clark the Mad Major', 'RUC child-killers' ... all political stuff to make sure that 'Fuck the Prods' was not written up instead. So, there *were* anti-sectarian efforts made.

[**Peter Black**] I had nearly forgotten about the workers in Andrews Mill. Near the mill there were families who lived on top of a row of shops. And it was one of the Protestant workers, he was actually the leader of Woodvale Defence Association, who helped get Catholic families out. It was organised by Paddy Devlin, and they were brought into the Mill. These were Protestant workers who give Catholics sanctuary in the Mill. I seen that that night.

***One of the Protestant workers, he was actually the leader of Woodvale Defence Association, helped get Catholic families out. These were Protestant workers who give Catholics sanctuary in the Mill.***

[**Anne Devlin**] Yes, that is all confirmed in Scarman.

[**Seamus Lynch**] Two quick points. You are talking about the barricades coming down. That caused problems for the republican movement at the time, because there was a lot of criticism that they hadn't defended the areas, and there was still a great danger. The Free Radio was a way of alerting people to dangers about cars going through areas, and shooting into areas, and all that. So it was more than just playing rebel songs, it was a means of communication, which was very important in those days.

As for Sean's point about the role the Church played in the CDC. So here we had the barricades up, 300 of them or so, mainly in Catholic areas, and the British establishment used the Catholic Church to bring these barricades down. Now, the CDC was made up of representatives of all them areas where the barricades were up. The chair of the CDC was Jim Sullivan, who was in the republican movement, and when a delegation went to London to speak to the British government, you had Paddy Devlin, Tom Conaty, Father Murphy and Jim Sullivan. The British government wouldn't let Jim Sullivan into the meeting, and he was made to sit outside. And he left. So what you had was *unelected people, middle-class Catholics, talking about taking barricades down in areas that they didn't live in, and who weren't exposed to the dangers people faced.*

[**Jim McDermott**] In one book the author makes a good point about communal solidarity. One unforeseen consequence of the barricades was that people got to know one another better. In most streets many people had kept to themselves, but very soon everybody knew everybody else's name in their street.

[**Deirdre Mac Bride**] Fear is the overriding thing that people are talking about, it keeps reoccurring, but why did the situation not get worse than it did? What were the values that held this society together? Peter talked about people rescuing each other, and across the divide, and those are stories I have heard: people saying

“We were put out, because we didn’t toe the line in our area and we defended our neighbours who lived beside us.” And I am wondering if that is part of what people remember, and was it real, and were there values which held us together? Because, despite the Troubles, we didn’t get to the point where we bombed primary schools.

[**Sean O’Hare**] It is something I thought about before, and you tend to forget about it. In September ‘69 I lived in Bombay street but worked in Glencairn, and people find that strange. The shutters didn’t come down in ’69. On the way home from work I used to get out of our work van at the Mountain Tavern and walk down to Bombay Street, and the ones in the van used to say “He’s a Taig!”, but just for a laugh. And that happened. And me, Joe McCann, ‘Nasty’ Paddy, all republicans were working there, at Manuel McCue’s, working in Glencairn, and the Protestants knew where we were from. Internment was the main breaking point. People tend to think that in ’69 the two sides were completely shut off, but they weren’t. That came later.

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[**Eamonn Lynch**] Even about June 1970, the Chief Constable used to come down North Queen Street and come into St Kevins Hall. So there was this lull, until, as you say, Sean, Internment, and people said: here we go again. If they had’ve interned *both* sides it might have been seen as less sectarian.

[**Jim McDermott**] One of the things which must be said was that the republican focus was on the British Army presence and attacking them, rather than attacking Protestants. Also, later on loyalist paramilitaries who stood for elections tended to record very low votes, there was an ambiguous view of them: oh, yes, they are very important in case we are attacked, but that doesn’t mean that we want them there all the time. I think they would have suppressed any desire to do things like bomb schools and so on. I think a basic decency did still exist. The barricades were the product of a divided society, and certainly a very important one, but you’re right, as time went on things got more polarised. I worked in a mixed bar, and there were a lot of mixed relationships which still went on, and continued to go on. I don’t think it was ever going to be an Algerian type of situation.

[**Seamus Lynch**] I worked at the Docks at the time and was a shop steward in the Irish Transport Union and we got word that there was going to be an attack, because the dockers all had to go through the one main gate in the morning. But there was notice from the police that there was going to be a possible attack. Strangely, you had two sides to the docks in Belfast. You had what was known as the cross-channel boats that went to Liverpool, run by the Amalgamated Transport Workers which was predominantly Protestant. And we were the deep-sea end, where the boats came from all over the world, and we were the Irish Transport and General Workers Union. So you had these two different unions, and indeed, they were in two different parts of the docks. I remember trying to organise a meeting of our two committees and some of our own committee were the ones who had opposed it.

*So [in the Docks] you had these two different unions [one predominantly Protestant, the other predominantly Catholic].*

But, anyhow, the police had information that there was going to be an attack on the dockers.

There were about 1,500 dockers then at the deep-sea dock, and I would say that 99% of them were Catholic. The rest of the dockers weren't told about it, only the committee and the shop stewards, and we said: how are we going to handle this? We just didn't know what to do. How do you run around telling everybody that there is the possibility that there is going to be an attack at the dock gates when people are coming in to work? And we just had to appoint a couple of dozen people and tell them in confidence, and have them about the place, watching for strange cars or whatever, and the police done their bit as well. But that was the possibility, the police had hard evidence that that was being planned.

[**Peter Black**] I was involved in organising workers in 26 local authorities, and when I was going round organising, it happened in Belfast, they said to me: hold on, there is an agreement that the GMB have the Protestants and the Irish Transport have the Catholics. I was called into a room, there were all these full-time officers sitting in that room, and me and two organisers were called in and told we were rocking the boat, this is the agreement that exists. And I disagreed with it; I was in the Amalgamated, and I got a real hard time by union officials. I was on the executive of the Amalgamated Union and I was left really isolated. People wouldn't speak to me. We got it to court. And there were people in there, including from the CPI there, who kept their heads down, didn't say anything,

who were on the executive. So some trade unions were helping to create that divide by saying that there is a trade union for Catholics and a trade union for Protestants – and that did happen.

[**Tim Smith**] I was in Belfast City Council, I was a shop steward for the Irish Transport and General and then SIPTU and even there we had Catholic *and* Protestant. Now, the problem is that what you did get was that you had people playing the sectarian card, and trying to get people to leave unions, but that was certain people, it wasn't that all trade unionists were doing that.

[**Deirdre Mac Bride**] To what degree was this society very clearly sectarian, in the sense that people were aware of it, the words people used? I grew up knowing about bigotry, I did not know the word 'sectarianism'. I did know about a sense of decency, some sort of values.

*To what degree was this society very clearly sectarian, in the sense that people were aware of it, the words people used?*

[**Seamus Lynch**] In our areas, between North Queen Street and York Street, and the docks and that, it was clear that if you gave your address people knew exactly what you were. In Howard Street the top of the area was Catholic, and the bottom was Protestant. But we played football together and all. At election time you would have got a bit of aggro but other than that nothing much. But let me come back to the point of the barricades and the Troubles. If anything, and this is a by-product of the Troubles I believe, how it educated people politically. Some were starting to think that this is something that could be for the good, whereas others seen it as a big threat. And the main Protestant paramilitaries obviously saw it as a threat to the state, and if the police weren't doing anything about the behaviour of certain organisations, then *they* were going to do something about it, take it into their own hands. But if you take the education, particularly the young people coming through...

Jimmy alluded earlier to 1935 in Lancaster Street. There was a man, he and my father were great friends, he used to drink in our house at the weekends. He was one of the people arrested in Lancaster Street in 1935, so I had all them stories, when they got drunk and I had to listen to all of them. So, I have no doubt that the children of the period of '69 and all that, were listening to the stories of their parents and their family and their friends and all that. So the whole issue of injustice and civil rights has been embedded now more so than ever before. And

then you have the current situation with the young people, on same-sex marriage, abortion, all those issues, and look who is leading those campaigns, it is young people. And that was never the case before.

[**Anne Devlin**] I was always curious about – *why* barricades? Because we didn't have, as far as I was aware, a history of barricades. And I wondered about the 'May Events' in Paris in '68, and how much that would have impacted on our reaching for barricades?

[**Jim McDermott**] In 1964 there were barricades put up.

[**Martin Lynch**] There were also barricades in the thirties.

[**Anne Devlin**] I didn't know that.

[**Sean Murray**] I don't think there was any great politics involved; it was a practical way of stopping the invasion of your area, to prevent cars coming in with machine guns.

[**Sean O'Hare**] The barricades in the twenties and thirties... I have seen photographs of them and they looked weird to me, they were not that high off the ground. But then my father explained to me that the Whippets – or whatever they called the police vehicles at the time – if they drove in they could drive over one barricade, but if the wheels were hitting two they couldn't turn. And he said that the local men were out with tape-measures...

[**Jim McDermott**] There is an *Irish News* report of the most serious riot of all, the 'Black Friday' riots of July 1921, just before the truce. And they were digging *trenches* in Milan Street. And one reporter noted that it was a "curious echo of the trenches of the First world War."

[**Erskine Holmes**] Paddy Devlin was elected on the Falls Road and the election communication said: 'full British rights, full British citizenship'. And that same election address went out in the Falls Road and in other areas. The important thing is that the Falls Road elected him on that election address, because they saw it as a progressive way forward. They may have been voting tactically, they may have been voting against an old-fashioned Nationalist type like Harry Diamond, but that's how he

***Paddy Devlin was elected on the Falls Road and the election communication said: 'full British rights, full British citizenship'.***

was elected. The two seats that were held by the Northern Ireland Labour Party – the two Protestant seats, if you like: Woodvale and the Shankill and Victoria – were lost. But what they held was Oldpark and Pottinger. In both it needed an alliance of Protestant and Catholic workers to elect a Labour man. So we went through a period where that kind of progressive movement was developing from '58 to '69, and then once we had virtual civil war there was no future for the Northern Ireland Labour Party, they were gone.

[**Jim McDermott**] The irony is that O'Neill's first response was a fear of the Labour Party...

[**Erskine Holmes**] Yes, he targeted the Labour Party.

[**Harry Donaghy**] This is something worth delving into more, because in some of the recent discussions we have had in the Heritage, History & Memory project, Aaron Edwards explained that there had been a long Labour tradition within the Protestant community. And, at the start of this year, Padraig gave an excellent talk about the Engineering Strike, Belfast and Dublin, 1919. Connal Parr also gave a talk about the 'Rotten Prods'. And in the expulsions of 1922 it wasn't just the Catholic workers in the Shipyard and Sirocco who were thrown out. It was noted that leading members of the Unionist Party reminded the mobs "don't forget about the rotten Prods". So along with all the Catholic employees there were nearly 1,600 to 2,000 Prods targeted. This was the ghost which haunted the mind of 'big house Unionism': the coalescing of Protestant and Catholic workers. Apparently the strike in 1919 scared the living bejesus out of them. Because they were looking across the water to Glasgow, where martial law had been declared, thousands of troops, steel helmets, bayonets, tanks... and the entire leadership of the trade union movement and the infant Labour Party was arrested under drum-head court-martial by the military, not the authorities of the state. And one of Carson's last admonitions to the Unionist government during this time was: if we don't start treating Catholics fairly and decently we will build up something that will explode in our faces one of the days.

***One of Carson's last admonitions to the Unionist government during this time was: if we don't start treating Catholics fairly and decently we will build up something that will explode in our faces one of the days.***

[**Erskine Holmes**] There is a feeling that when most of us look back to the 1960s that things were looking good, and the fact that people in those constituencies could elect Northern Ireland Labour, but only with an alliance of Catholic and Protestant workers. We had councillors on the Falls as you know. But it was very difficult because we didn't have Proportional Representation to help us build a labour movement of Protestant and Catholic, and without PR it didn't matter how many labour votes you had, at the end of the day you would be out-voted by Unionists, or perhaps Nationalists – there was no proportionality. So that possibility of people uniting behind a non-sectarian party which was relatively neutral on the issue of Irish or British, couldn't develop. My wife Sally got 2,500 labour votes in the Ormeau constituency in 1967. 2,500 votes nowadays would get you onto the Belfast City Council. But you couldn't win seats in certain constituencies then because there was no PR.

***Without PR it didn't matter how many labour votes you had, at the end of the day you would be out-voted by Unionists, or perhaps Nationalists – there was no proportionality.***

Yesterday I was in the Ulster Museum and I made the point that in the room we were in you could see on the wall a marble panel about the setting up of the Museum and there's two labour men on that panel. One is Alderman Midgley, who was representing Dock Ward, and at one time in his career he would have described himself as a Connolly socialist. The other one is Sam Kyle, who wasn't a councillor, but was a Labour MP elected under Proportional Representation, before it was done away with in 1929.

[**Padraig Yeates**] Could I just say that the Engineering strike was a crafts versus general labour problem as well as Catholic versus Protestant, because the Engineering strike could have got more support, but they refused to let women join it because they said it wasn't fitting for women to engage in such activity. And they also refused to allow the Transport Union to support them because most of them were Catholics. So, there were deep divisions there, and it was a very complex issue. But there are a lot of lessons there about class unity and finding ways over the sectarian divide.

[**Michael Hall**] Talking about East Belfast: my family all came from there, and there was a group of streets there which had always been known locally as the 'Red Streets', because of the predominance of left-wing attitudes.

[**Jim McDermott**] Yes, there was a very strong labour vote in East Belfast after the Second World War, very strong left-wing radical, the backbone of the Communist and Labour parties. I worked in a bar in East Belfast, and there were people I met there from the Painters Union and they were staunch labourites, and could have conversed quite happily with you about anything, including things like the Spanish Civil War and such like.

[**Sean O'Hare**] Just regarding the early sixties and Northern Ireland Labour and the attitude of people. Where I lived in Ballymurphy there were four ex-internees living in the street, but they kept their heads down and didn't advertise the fact. There was also two ex-servicemen, one from the Royal Air Force, but they had that radical attitude coming back from the Second World War. When any City Council inspectors came out, they went out to talk to them, and said: you can't do this, you can't do that. They would have been powerful people in the area, and they were Northern Ireland Labour members.

And when you spoke to nationalist people, their attitude was... the Free State and Britain, the Family Allowance, the 'Brew' ... that was it. It was nothing to do with loving your country or wanting your country liberated. It was: where do you get the best money? And what about the Family Allowance? And that was the whole attitude. And that did flow into Northern Ireland Labour.

And in 1964 I was out giving out envelopes for the Republican candidates, to get collections to help pay for the elections, and I had to do the whole of Andy'town on my own. This was when McMillan was standing. But most of the people would have said, because I was so young: "Catch yourself on, son, get yourself away from that, you'll end up in jail, that's the road to no-town." That was the attitude.

The people did swing towards Northern Ireland Labour and Paddy Devlin was later elected. I was in England at the time, but I was told I voted for him anyway! But they were in trouble from '69, and as far as I am aware what finally finished them in nationalist areas was that a proposal condemning Internment failed to be passed.

***But most of the people would have said, because I was so young: "Catch yourself on, son, get yourself away from that, you'll end up in jail, that's the road to no-town."***

[**Erskine Holmes**] I think Gerry Fitt played that one up, if I remember.

[**Deirdre Mac Bride**] Given this discussion about Labour, Belfast had a high employment rate, although things were different in different places; the West for example, as was pointed out, would have voted more Republican than Belfast. Was the employment level higher in Belfast?

[**Seamus Lynch**] In those days it was important to differentiate between Republican and Nationalist, that was the big issue. Northern Ireland Labour didn't really do much when I was younger in North Belfast. Okay, it was a big achievement of Vivian Simpson, but behind Vivian there was nobody. Gerry Fitt came in and cleaned up that vote within the Catholic community so it became a straight sectarian thing – between the Unionist Party and Gerry Fitt's Republican Labour. But for me that was the start of all the skulduggery of elections and impersonating and all of that, and a lot of tension developing at election time.

I am not so sure that the Northern Ireland Labour Party would have won that seat in Falls if it hadn't been Paddy Devlin, he was a strong personality. Not to suggest that the Northern Ireland Labour Party didn't have a strong vote there. People must bear in mind that the nationalists beat the republicans out of West Belfast on one occasion, physically. The Northern Ireland Labour Party did make a lot of progress in East Belfast. But in Belfast, North, South, West and East all had their differences, it wasn't the same thing the whole way across. And then you had different problems in the rural areas. The turn-out even today in Fermanagh/South Tyrone can be 75-85% in some places.

[**Anne Devlin**] Paddy got his family to work for him at election time, from they were no height. I actually remember several times when he stood, before the Civil Rights period, where you knocked on the doors and they said: "What about the border?" And there was no way round that, for the NILP. But at the particular election of February 1969 which he won he only won that election because he had been one of the Civil Rights leaders. So the Civil Rights changed the whole nature of the whole thing, and it downplayed the division between nationalism and republicanism, it became immaterial. And people who didn't speak to each other for many, many years started speaking to each other again. So that was the difference really.

***I remember several times when ... you knocked on the doors and they said: "What about the border?" And there was no way round that, for the NILP.***

[**Sean O'Hare**] With regard to the West in the 50s the candidates, like Mitchell, were in jail and the vote was to get them out again, and the nationalist candidate stood down, so that wasn't necessarily a big republican vote in that area. It was a vote for 'your own', that was the attitude.

[**Anne Devlin**] The reason Paddy lost the '55 election was because the Catholic Church intervened. This was the height of the Cold War, and they made statements in the pulpit and he was called a communist and that was the end of him, he didn't stand a chance after that.

*The Catholic Church made statements in the pulpit and he was called a communist and that was the end of him, he didn't stand a chance after that.*

[**Jim McDermott**] One of my favourite stories by your father in *Straight Left* was when he went to try and canvas outside Clonard Monastery, and some people started shouting at him and calling him a communist! And he said, "How do you know I'm a communist?" "Because you look like one!"

[**Seamus Lynch**] I think that with regard to the period of the barricades and all of that, and why they came down, you can see the role of the Church... As happened so often throughout history, the people that mattered weren't consulted, they weren't the ones making decisions. Because when the barricades did come down the fear was still in those people in those areas, because there were still the fear of cars coming in, there was still the possibility of streets being burned out. And it illustrates again the strength then of the Catholic Church and how the Church has lost that strength now through other issues. That's why I make the point that learning from history is so important. Who made all those decisions in the past which helped to create many of these problems? And, again, I didn't understand where the fear was coming from within the Protestant community, for the Civil Rights Association – albeit republicans were behind it – were saying: 'well, let's have the basic rights initially and we'll see where it goes from there'. They weren't calling for the overthrow of the state.

[**Jim McDermott**] The industrial development of Belfast occurred coterminously with many other industrial cities in Britain – there is no similar place elsewhere in Ireland. But it was almost designed for sectarian division. The segregation of housing was never ever approached. When there was a problem of divisions within the workforce, the only attempted remedy was to create different

exits in some of the factories. For example, in Comb Barbour's, where 40% of the workforce of 1,200 were Catholic, there were two different entrances/exits, that's why there was no trouble there.

[**Seamus Lynch**] The republican movement was dead in the water, and weren't a threat to any society. Historically, the state could cope with beating people into the ground in certain circumstances. But when people adopted a different approach in relation to Civil Rights the establishment couldn't cope with that.

[**Jim McDermott**] Seamus, I think the point has to be made that the Civil Rights movement was a totally broad-based thing, it wasn't a republican front.

[**Erskine Holmes**] I would tend to disagree with that. But, anyway, on the question of the Church, what the Church was afraid of was Communism, not so much Republicanism. Communism and Republicanism allied together would have been their worst nightmare. So I think, relating this back to the barricades, that's what their fear was, that a communist-orientated republican movement would take over in areas and districts, and they looked to people like Tom Conaty to become popular heroes to replace other less-desirable people. And there was a battle at one stage to get Tom Conaty elected to the Northern Ireland Civil Rights Association. But there was already a struggle going on there in which the Republican movement and the Communist Party between them were determined to gain control of the Civil Rights Association, from 1970 onwards, and they did control it. So, I think this is worth looking at, in terms of not just saying that the Catholic Church was anti- this or anti- that; this was their political analysis of what was going on. I would imagine that Father Murphy, or whoever it was, was afraid of what he called 'Reds under the bed'.

***[To the Catholic Church] Communism and Republicanism allied together would have been their worst nightmare.***

[**Seamus Lynch**] One reason he was so afraid was that the republican movement had been agitating against flats being built at Divis Flats, the construction of which was supported by the Catholic Church. So you had the development of that area, with people all stuck up in high-rise flats, and people thought they were great because they had hot water and bathrooms and all of that. But as it turned out they were a disaster, and I had an argument about this with Gerry Fitt. Gerry thought it was great because it was keeping his voters in the constituency.

[**Tim Smith**] On what you were asking, Seamus, about what was the fear of the Unionist establishment, I feel that their fear of the Civil Rights movement wasn't just a fear that there were Catholics involved in it, but that Protestant people and all were involved. Working-class people were starting to realise: hold on a minute, it doesn't matter whether we are Catholic or Protestant, we are getting treated something similar, we are getting treated as second-class citizens. And they were starting to come out onto the streets demanding 'one man, one vote', and I think that made the government then turn round and say we've got to do something.

***Working-class people were starting to realise: hold on a minute, it doesn't matter whether we are Catholic or Protestant, we are getting treated something similar, we are getting treated as second-class citizens.***

There is a book that came out recently: it tells you how some of the stuff happened at the start of the Troubles, regards to certain people using people within the areas to burn Catholics out of their pubs around the Shankill, creating problems, to get the thing agitated, to go against the Civil Rights thing as well. And when they used the Shorland armoured cars, with machine guns on them, they were just shooting at the flats and killed that young boy.

[**Harry Donaghy**] One loyalist said to me recently; why do you think they are no pro-Parachute Regiment banners up the Shankill Road? Because what happened to them in that locality is still an open wound, when the Paras ran amok over there.

[**Seamus Lynch**] That should educate that community as to what the Paras done in Derry and elsewhere, and how people in those areas feel about them. And certain other regiments.

[**Eamonn Lynch**] The Catholic Church always had the final say and that's why they totally disliked the emerging socialism in the republican movement. The republican movement in the thirties, the army council of seven people, were going to vote on whether or not to have socialism as their main objective. And it was defeated. But it wasn't defeated in the mid-sixties: for the first time in its history we had the republican movement declaring itself socialist. And that didn't go unnoticed by people in the Church.

**[Erskine Holmes]** I would have gone to civil rights meetings and found that the local school-master was chairing the meetings. And if it wasn't the local school master it was the priest, so that was the way Catholic society was organised.

**[Deirdre Mac Bride]** I think it is time now to bring this discussion to a close. Can I thank Jimmy again for his presentation, and thank you everyone for your contributions and for the fascinating debate.