

List of principal meetings and other events  
connected with the Paisleyite movement during the month of October 1968.

1. On Monday, 7th October, the Joint Action Committee against the suppression of Human Liberties (Non Political) gave notice that a parade of students would be held from Queen's University to Belfast City Hall at 2 p.m. on Wednesday, 9th October. The route given was via Elmwood Avenue, University Road, Bradbury Place, Shaftesbury Square and Great Victoria Street, returning by the same route in reverse. It was estimated 1,500 persons were to take part in the parade.

On the following morning it was announced on the B.B.C. news bulletin that Rev. Paisley intended holding a meeting in Shaftesbury Square at 2.00 p.m. on Wednesday, 9th October, as a counter demonstration to the students proposed march through Shaftesbury Square. On Wednesday, 9th October, from 1.00 p.m. onwards about 1,000 supporters of Rev. Paisley congregated at Shaftesbury Square and from the tone of his meeting it was evident that if the students marched via Shaftesbury Square violence between the rival factions could not be prevented. Police served a notice under Section 2 of the Public Order Act (N.I.) directing the students to march via Ormeau Road, thereby avoiding Shaftesbury Square. The students adhered to the route laid down although the police order was greeted with boos and catcalls. While the parade was making its way towards the City Hall Rev. Paisley and his supporters left Shaftesbury Square to re-assemble at the City Hall where they held another meeting. It was clear there would be a clash at the City Hall between the two groups and the police had no alternative but to stop the students at the junction of Linenhall Street and Donegall Square South at the rear of the City Hall. A large crowd had gathered in Donegall Square South carrying Union Jacks and singing party songs and when the students saw they were going to be prevented from completing their march to the City Hall they sat down in Linenhall Street and remained there until approximately 6.45 p.m. when they returned in groups to the University. When Linenhall Street was clear of students at about 7.00 p.m. the loyalist supporters also dispersed.

Rev. Paisley's part in the events of the afternoon were prefaced the previous day by a visit with Mrs. Paisley to the City Commissioner. They referred to the resentment which they claimed was held by a number of citizens to students being permitted to march through Shaftesbury Square. Mrs. Paisley, who is a Councillor for St. George's Ward, particularly stressed the strong feelings in the Sandy Row area at the idea of the parade crossing Shaftesbury Square. It was impressed on Rev. and Mrs. Paisley it was their duty as responsible citizens to do everything in their power to preserve the peace, and they assured Mr. Shillington that anything they did would be peaceful and within the law.

A special edition of the Protestant Telegraph was on sale during the afternoon of Wednesday, 9th October, and this included a large stop press notice as follows:-

"Stop Press. S.O.S.  
Government bows to student defiance.  
Protestants to be banned from meeting in  
Shaftesbury Square to-day, Wednesday, at  
1.00 p.m. Parade in support of I.R.A.  
violence to proceed under Government patronage. "

It seems probable this special issue was printed at the time of Rev. Paisley's visit to the Commissioner and the purpose of his visit may in fact have been to draw some comment which could have been construed as indicating his meeting in Shaftesbury Square would be banned (as stated in the stop press). No such indication was given and the notice in the paper was wholly untruthful. The stop press notice was omitted from a further issue of the Protestant Telegraph, which was otherwise similar in content, and was on sale during the afternoon. The law officers have studied the stop press notice and gave as their opinion that the wording did not warrant further action.

2. On Thursday, 10th October, the People's Democracy movement gave notice of a march to be held on Saturday, 12th October, from Elmwood Avenue to Belfast City

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Wall via Shaftesbury Square. This was immediately countered by supporters of Rev. Paisley who gave notice that the Ulster Constitution Defence Committee would hold two parades in Belfast on Saturday, 12th October, as counter demonstrations to the students' march. One parade was to form up in Sandy Row area and march to the City Hall, the other was to march from Tennent Street through the City centre to Shaftesbury Square. The times and routes of the two parades were such that a clash with the students was inevitable. On Friday, 11th October, the People's Democracy decided not to hold their march on Saturday, 12th, and later in the day, following an interview with the Minister of Home Affairs, Rev. Paisley announced the cancellation of the counter parades.

3. On Saturday, 19th October, a parade and meeting was held at Hillsborough, Co. Down, under the auspices of the Ulster Protestant Volunteers. About 120 persons, with two bands, took part in a procession from Ballynahinch Road, Hillsborough, to Hillsborough Square at 2.30 p.m.

Mrs. Paisley unfurled a new bannerette for the 1st Iveagh Division, Ulster Protestant Volunteers. The Rev. Paisley, who was the only speaker, referred to the departure of Lord Erskine and said it was time there was a change - that the Protestant people of Ulster did not want anyone who besmirched the name of Carson. The remainder of his address consisted of attacks on Mr. Harold Wilson, Captain O'Neill and others. The event passed over without incident.

4. The Londonderry Citizen's Action Committee made arrangements to hold a "sit-down" Rally in Guildhall Square, Londonderry, at 3.30 p.m. on Saturday, 19th October. Notice was then given to the police by a body styling itself "The Loyal Citizens of Ulster" of its intention to hold a meeting in Londonderry on the Walls of the ancient City at Guildhall Square to coincide with the "sit-down" Rally. The holding of the loyalist meeting was likely to lead to a breach of the peace and in order to ensure that peace was maintained steps were taken to close that portion of the ancient Walls lying between Magazine Gate and Shipquay Gate to the Loyal Citizens of Ulster or to any public use whatsoever. The Rally took place on Saturday, 19th October. It was orderly and well marshaled. It ended at 4.30 p.m. with the song "We shall Overcome". As this was being sung a few loyalists assembled under Shipquay Gate sang "God save the Queen". Marshals moved between the groups and no incident developed.

5. On Tuesday, 29th October, Patrick Roxy McSHANE, [REDACTED], Belfast, who has taken a very prominent part in the students' activities, was invited by the Head Master of Methodist College to speak to sixth formers at the College during the afternoon. Rev. Paisley was in touch with the "Belfast Telegraph" to lodge a protest against McSHANE being allowed to do so. Unobtrusive police attention was given to the College during McSHANE'S presence but nothing untoward took place. His subject was "Student Unrest in the World" and he made only passing reference to the Civil Rights Campaign in Northern Ireland.

2nd December, 1968.