

The Orange Establishment, 1950-63

James Craig, John Andrews and Basil Brooke (Lord Brookeborough) were the only three individuals to lead Northern Ireland between 1921 and 1963, reflecting the high degree of stability of the Stormont regime. The Ulster Protestant political elite was organically linked with the Order from which they had built their stock of political capital and learned their communal traditions. Hence Craig remarked in 1934 that 'I am an Orangeman first and a politician...afterwards'.¹ Andrews, meanwhile, served in the Order as Grand Master and Brookeborough as Fermanagh County Master. A hallmark of rebel Orangeism is its willingness to break with this traditionalist Unionist elite of upper echelon Orangemen and UUP executives. A prominent incident in this regard took place in 1935 during a period of intense sectarian rioting in Belfast. Home Affairs minister Dawson Bates initially banned an Orange parade in order to get a grip on the security situation. However, Belfast County Master Sir Joseph Davison threatened to parade in defiance of the ban, and Orange pressure led to its reversal after just four days. Davison's actions were rebellious, but his policies were facilitated by his position as a Senator, firmly located within the established social order.²

Dominic Bryan suggests that Orangeism was an inherently volatile political tool for the Unionist elite, which was always susceptible to 'independent' militant Protestants or labour leaders, many hailing from Antrim and Belfast. This is particularly true of periods of quiescence (i.e. 1930s, post-1945) when few pressing issues were available to unify elites and masses around a common Protestant political project. At times such as these, notes Bryan, the economic interests of the Protestant elite and the expressive desires of the Protestant urban masses pulled in opposite directions. The result was a rise in 'rough' parading, a decline in support for the UUP and Grand Lodge elite and heightened expressions of populist political dissent.³

Bryan's remarks are broadly correct. They must, however, be qualified by the fact that there has been an important post-1940s trend toward greater tolerance of dissent by the Order's leadership. The internal discipline of the Orange Order was maintained to a remarkable degree into the 1960s and the leadership was able to handle challenges from the grassroots in a relatively authoritative manner. Grand Lodge reports show few

rebellious resolutions from private and district level until the 1950s. Where the Order opposed the government, as in the 1946 Grand Lodge debates surrounding the new Education bill, it did so as a united body. Moreover, the tone adopted was generally one of respectful disagreement with the government since basically all government ministers were Orangemen. The Prime Minister's attendance at the 1946 Grand Lodge sessions was symbolic of the strong link between Orangeism and the state, and successive speakers stressed that while they wished to see policy change, they did not wish to tarnish or 'hurt the Prime Minister'.⁴

In 1951, Harry Midgley, the Minister of Education and naturally an Orangeman like the Prime Minister, made a similar appearance at Grand Lodge. Midgley downplayed the concerns of senior Orangemen - which reflected sentiments arising from county resolutions - that Catholic teachers might be appointed to Protestant schools, contending that there had been just two instances of this and that 'the Government had to legislate for the entire community [i.e. both Protestants and Catholics] and not for any particular [i.e. Protestants only] section of it'. This statement was accepted and ended debate on the matter.⁵

The growing visibility of independent Unionism in the 1950s, whether from the left (as with the Northern Ireland Labour Party) or from militant Protestant figures like Ian Paisley and Norman Porter, injected a renewed vigour into the ranks of Orange dissenters. The challenge from the left was most evident in Belfast. A 1952 resolution from lodge 655, district 5 (Sandy Row) asked that strong measures be taken to deny permission for speakers to wear Orange regalia on political platforms except in exceptional circumstances. This was directed against the ruling Official Unionist Party, forerunner of the Ulster Unionist Party (UUP), whose politicians monopolised the platforms to the exclusion of labourites and independents. However, this resolution met with the opprobrium of the Orange leadership on Central Committee. Senator Joseph Cunningham asked that the resolution be clarified while Grand Master John Andrews, the past Prime Minister of Northern Ireland, replied that the Official Unionist Party had, since the Home Rule period, 'nobly assisted Ulster...and eventually made her present status possible. He could not see how, thanks to this action, our connection with the [Official] Unionist Party could be severed'. The Socialist Party, noted Andrews, 'had not

assisted Ulster in any way', and he opposed any loosening of the historic UUP-Orange link.⁶

The following year, Grand Lodge felt confident enough in its position to 'call upon every member of the Orange Institution to vote for and support...the [Official] Unionist candidates, and thus to ensure a successful return of a Unionist Government with a triumphant majority'.⁷ This blatant assertion of UUP-Orange comity did not meet with unanimous approval, however. Speaking for the Belfast County Grand Lodge, Sam Campbell, supported by several Belfast Central Committee members, opined that many 'Labour men were good enough Unionists'.⁸ The challenge from militant Protestants, by contrast, was centred in Antrim, and was religious as well as political. The Orange Order first moved to censure Ian Paisley's breakaway Free Presbyterian Church in October 1951, when, at the urging of clerical Orangemen it formed county committees to vet the credentials of clerical brethren from non-mainstream denominations. This was done despite the worries of one senior Orangemen who advised caution in the matter due to Paisley's rising popularity. Several months later, a resolution went out advising that Orange halls were not to be used by non-approved denominations like the Free Presbyterians.⁹

Paisley's bombastic response thirsted after controversy, accusing the Order of ecumenism and moral lassitude: 'Are we to take it that those who stand outside both the World and British Council's [sic] are not recognised as religious bodies by Grand Lodge? Perhaps the Grand Lodge feel that the cause of Protestantism is better served when their halls are used for the consumption of alcoholic liquors than for preaching the pure gospel of Jesus Christ...if we receive nothing further from you, we will not hesitate to make known [our] position in this matter'. The Central Committee incorrectly felt that Paisley's challenge would ultimately abate and saw no reason to change their policy.¹⁰

Paisley's chance for action was not long in coming. Controversy first crystallised over the Longstone Road parade confrontations in County Down after 1952. This Orange parade was banned by the liberal-minded Minister for Home Affairs, Brian Maginness. This action led to local discontent, but did not spark any grassroots resolutions. Indeed, there is no mention of Longstone/Annalong at all in either the Grand Lodge, Central Committee or even the County Down central committee minutes of 1952-53! This

contrasts sharply with the furore created by the so-called Dungiven incident in the predominantly Catholic town of Dungiven, Co. Londonderry, in June 1953. The Dungiven parade was a Coronation Day parade through a Republican area led by a Catholic priest in which no Unionist emblems were allowed and the Bovevagh Orange lodge's flute band was banned from taking part. Initially, no resolutions pertaining to the incident were received by Grand Lodge from County Londonderry or anywhere else. Indeed, the only resolution that June from Londonderry concerned the more general issue of the flying of the Tricolour in Northern Ireland as well as complaints about the payment of National Assistance to citizens of the Irish Republic.¹¹ The issue then lay dormant for months, coming to the attention of both Grand Lodge and County Londonderry only in September.

The sudden upsurge of publicity surrounding the Dungiven Incident and its proximity to the October 1953 election bears out Henry Patterson's theory that the issue had been politically manufactured by Independent Unionists. Yet this process seems to have quickly caught the imagination of the Unionist grassroots. Many in the Unionist community maintained that the Unionist government had capitulated to Nationalists by failing to provide police protection for the Bovevagh Orange band in its bid to parade at Dungiven. In so doing, the government was viewed as failing to uphold the symbolic dominance of Protestants over all parts - even Nationalist-majority ones - of the province.¹² As the Prime Minister lamented in his diary after the dismal election results in October, 'Our people still believe the yarns about Dungiven when the IRA was supposed to have held the town'.¹³

At Orange Central Committee, those present at the October special meeting understood that Dungiven had become a major issue both in County Londonderry and elsewhere. Discussion was heated, and members agreed with Senator Cunningham that 'the situation had become intolerable' and that an immediate deputation should be raised to see the Prime Minister and Home Secretary. The key issues to be discussed were: a) the flying of the tricolour in Ulster; b) the removal, on occasion, of the Union Jack; and c) Nationalist gatherings. In this sense, Dungiven crystallised concerns which had been brewing over these symbolic issues in spots like Ballycastle (Antrim), where a resolution on flags was tabled in early 1953.¹⁴ This tension between Order and Party did not alter

the Grand Lodge's political stance, though, for less than a week later it issued an appeal to all brethren to vote for Official Unionist candidates in the upcoming elections, once again illustrating the power of the corporatist elite paradigm still operating at this point.¹⁵

A month later, the Central Committee met to report on discussions with Prime Minister Basil Brooke (Lord Brookeborough). At the meeting, Brookeborough was conciliatory. He noted that all 'government men' from the Unionist party were Orange members. He assured Grand Lodge that 'there would be no repetition of the [Dungiven] incident concerning the taking-down of the Union Jack. That flag was our symbol of Loyalty and would be fully protected wherever flown'. However, the Irish Tricolour, lamented Brookeborough, had now been recognised by the British government and hence must be accredited - though it could not be flown in a 'provocative' manner and the government was looking into 'tightening up' this problem. With regard to restricting Nationalist gatherings, the PM cited the Public Order Act, but added that if Nationalist gatherings were not political, it was almost impossible to take action. On Dungiven, he claimed that the government received no report on the incident until September, and that he would personally be making a statement on the matter in the House of Commons that day. As evidence, Brookeborough furnished a copy of the statement to Grand Lodge. At the end of the meeting, Grand Master Andrews thanked the PM and his Ministers for their sympathetic hearing.¹⁶

The meeting reveals that while relations between Party and Order were cordial and drew on shared themes of Unionist 'unity', the government had to pay close attention to Orange concerns. Any policies which trended in a liberal direction had to be legitimated through reference to external actors and pressures: usually the British government or British public opinion, but occasionally the Americans and world opinion. At this point, Grand Lodge seems to have acquiesced in this, though Orangeism's accommodating attitude would fade in the decades to come. This is not to say that there was harmony between the UUP and the Order. Though the UUP had the support of Central Committee, the Grand Lodge clearly was moved to put pressure on the government to account for its actions and ensure that a similar situation did not arise again. The Party establishment had its most prominent voice in the person of Senator Cunningham, who said that 'we must accept the statement of the PM' and that it was

important not to give sanction to those who were out to embarrass him. Sam Campbell of Belfast was less willing to toe the party line, claiming that the PM had been misinformed and that Belfast County Orangemen were dissatisfied.¹⁷

At a special meeting of Grand Lodge on 9 December, those present noted the Prime Minister's claim in his speech that a leading Dungiven Orangeman, local businessman and flight lieutenant William A. 'Billy' Douglas, under influence from the press, had expressed his thanks to the police after the incident. Douglas, who was present, refuted this version of events, suggesting that the RUC had generated this account of the meeting between Douglas and the District police Intendent at which the DI had warned Douglas that he would hold him responsible for any trouble. Minutes from this emergency meeting show that representatives of the County Londonderry Order questioned the Prime Minister's version of events. There is a suggestion from these representatives that the Prime Minister either was responsible or was misinformed and that a full investigation was required from the government. The police claim that firearms were brandished (hence requiring the imposition of restrictions on the Orange band on public order grounds) was dismissed as unfounded. H. F. Clark of Londonderry also remarked upon the problems at Swateragh, where he claimed that it 'was impossible to use the main road...with loyal emblems'. This was unfavourably contrasted with 1938, when a similar incident 'was firmly dealt with' by the Unionist authorities.

At this stage, Nathaniel Minford, a County Londonderry M.P. and also of course an Orangeman, intervened to make the government case. Pressure had come from the local police superintendent, he said, who feared that violence would ensue. In explaining the government position to the Central Committee, Minford argued that he 'had to have the support of the police' or he would not continue in (political) office. He added that 'the loyalty of the Orangemen was expected' and warned of the dangers of a split within the ranks.¹⁸ The meeting closed with a promise of a full investigation. In the meantime, Grand Lodge affirmed its 'confidence in the PM' and wished him a speedy recovery from his illness. Here we see the time-honoured Unionist elite tactic of invoking Protestant 'unity' in order to quell dissent on its flanks. We also see how elite figures from Grand Lodge exercised moral authority to manage grassroots dissent and bookmark potentially explosive issues.

The next special meeting took place in March 1954, and featured a full report from County Londonderry. In it, County officers wrote that they had secured a 'generous' agreement from the Minister of Home Affairs to hold a public inquiry. However, the proposed independent witnesses - a clergyman, a school master and three 'ladies' - who were supposed to have testified about the Nationalist I.R.A. crowd bearing arms, now made different claims or refused to give evidence before the proposed Inquiry. Faced with this, Dungiven Orange leader William Douglas and the rest of Londonderry County Lodge expressed their satisfaction with the process. The matter was now declared closed and both the Londonderry County Lodge and Central Committee expressed a vote of confidence in the Prime Minister as well as Minister of Home Affairs George Hanna. They also went further, praising the Flags and Emblems Act as evidence of the 'determination' of the Prime Minister to uphold the principles of the Union. Expressing his relief at the aversion of a split within the Orange ranks, the Grand Master went so far as to thank the Minister of Home Affairs for his 'honesty and facing of the facts...we will remain loyal to him'. Fermanagh M.P. T.C. Nelson continued in support of the government, claiming that the whole affair was 'based on lies and rumour'.¹⁹

This statement pushed the Orange establishment's luck too far. Nelson's attempt to slander the Dungiven populists was greeted with cries from the Grand Lodge backbenches of 'withdraw'. In turn, Nelson retorted that the incident was 'made by the Independents' and that there was no evidence that anything had happened at Dungiven. 'This Grand Lodge should be above bringing the Prime Minister and Minister of Home Affairs here to answer questions', he continued. This intervention proved wildly unpopular and received a rebuke from a number of high-ranking Grand Lodge speakers. Reverend R. H. Faulkner, for instance, suggested that there were no 'rumours' and that the Dungiven statements were not published until after the election and hence could not have been manufactured. R. J. Magowan accused the government of appeasement. Rev. John Brown criticised the policy of the previous Minister of Home Affairs (Brian Maginnis) and proposed an amendment to the resolution which would insert the words, 'public' in front of the statement 'an inquiry is not necessary'. In effect this suggested that many unanswered questions remained and that the government could not be so easily absolved of responsibility.

James Baillie of Antrim went further, charging that the witnesses were frightened due to the lack of government protection while Rev. A. J. Finch opened up distance between the Party and the Order:

The Orange Order exists to defend the cause of Protestantism and not to defend a particular Political Party and we have a right to criticise our Ministers. The public have got to be considered - are we faithfully leading them. Those who did not come forward perhaps had good reasons for their attitude.

Rev. John Glass agreed, exclaiming that 'If some of the things said by the proposer and seconder [i.e. Andrews and Nelson] were said in certain areas, they would be torn to ribbons'. Glass went on to provide a neat summary of how the Order needed to balance the UUP's concern for 'unity' and loyalty with the populist concerns of the grassroots:

This amendment [from populist Rev. John Brown] will save this Grand Lodge and if we accept it, it will do a service to the Orange Order in the Country - things are not happy in the country. The amendment will ensure that the matter is still within the confines of the Orange Order. We want to save the Orange Institution in Northern Ireland.

Glass's statement about the Order nicely reflects a concern which has driven Orange policy most of the time in locations as diverse as Glasgow, Belfast and Toronto: the need to stay near the centre of gravity of Protestant opinion and to chart a middle ground between militant Protestants and liberal accommodationists. Clearly the Order did not wish itself to be identified with the liberal side of the equation but preferred for this division to run within the Orange Institution.

At this point in the special meeting, the momentum had swung in the rebels' direction, illustrating how events had temporarily spun out of the elites' control and both Grand Master Andrews and T.C. Nelson, M.P. accepted the amendment to their motion. Sensing the new mood, Thomas Glazier of Dublin appealed for unity and support for the Government in view of what had happened to Protestants in Eire. Grand Master Andrews

then complimented the County Londonderry Grand Master, laying the groundwork for Minister of Home Affairs Hanna to speak. Hanna acknowledged that 'things did happen' in Dungiven, but that Brian Maginness knew nothing about Dungiven beforehand. He also defended the Prime Minister's decision not to attend a loyalist meeting at Ulster Hall, saying that the Prime Minister was only prepared to consult with three bodies: Parliament, the Unionist Council and, significantly, the Grand Orange Lodge. Hanna then proceeded to play the unity card and to externalise the forces of liberalism:

Every action we take must not be misinterpreted in other parts of the world. In the USA the efforts of our opponents are being intensified. While preserving our Constitutional position we must give the other side no reason to blacken us in the eyes of the world. We are part of the United Nations and they have their declaration of Human Rights which could be used against us if we deviate from our duty as a Government. The good name of Ulster, I will defend, but I must have some semblance of truth on which to stand.

Hanna suggested that each Orange district should form a committee to consult with the authorities to discuss parade routes. This was accepted by Grand Secretary Harry Burdge, though, importantly, the motion stipulated that the Minister could only contact the Orange district committees if an application was made for *new* parade routes. Traditional routes were to remain inviolate.²⁰

The events of 1953-54 took a considerable toll on the Orange-UUP status quo, and the first casualty was Grand Master John Andrews. Andrews had first submitted his resignation on 13 October 1953 after a year of conflict with rebels over Orange support for the Official Unionist Party and Dungiven. Encouraged by gestures of support from Grand Lodge delegates, he had agreed to continue, but the challenge from Orange populists in March 1954 pushed him to step down. Andrews' resignation marks an important turning point. An increasingly restive Nationalist community, not shy of flying its tricolour or defending its turf, had sparked an Independent Orange reaction which was prising the Unionist grassroots away from the UUP elite. This caused a severe crisis for the Orange elite, with its dual loyalty to Party and Order.

A month after Andrews' resignation, Central Committee met to consider the challenge posed by a self-appointed 'Orange and Protestant Committee', an Independentist grouping inspired by the conflicts over parading and emblems. This committee had circularised the Orange membership to advertise its proposed meeting of 31 May 1954. Grand Master Andrews, still nominally in the chair, suggested that action might be taken in the press to distance the Order from the O & P Committee, but Senator Cunningham advised caution. Rebels noted that there was 'dissatisfaction in the Country' and that the rank-and-file were not convinced that the Order was doing anything, or that the Government were keeping their promises. In the end, it was decided to adopt a 'wait and see' attitude rather than attempting to warn off the O & P ringleaders and the mass membership. This demonstrates that the Grand Lodge was sensitive to the insecure mood among Unionists in the Province which had been generated by the growing assertiveness of the Nationalist community over issues of flags and Orange parades in Nationalist areas.²¹

A high point of rebellious Orangeism was reached on the 31 May, 1954, when 1400 dissatisfied Orange souls turned up at a meeting in Wellington Hall, Belfast. The resolution called on the 'leaders' of the Order (i.e. Grand Lodge and especially Central Committee) to 'return' to the religious principles of the institution. The resolution deplored the fact that Twelfth platforms were being used by Unionist politicians and concluded with a warning to the Orange elite:

If our leaders are not prepared to restore the Order to its former position and bring us back to our foundation principles, we pledge ourselves, come what may, to take very determined action which will put an end to this traitorous policy which is at the present helping the advance of Romanism....We desire unity because it is strength but unity as a result of appeasement is fatal. The common ground of our unity is the Bible...and loyalty to our Protestant faith is the only essential.²²

The Committee were questioning the UUP establishment's consensus and putting fundamentals of faith and ethnicity above party loyalty. The geography of the O & P leadership is interesting. O & P leaders consisted of sixteen individuals, four from

Belfast, six from Down, two from Antrim, three from Co. Londonderry and one from Omagh. The background of these individuals suggests that when it came to rebellious Orangeism, local conflicts at Annalong and Dungiven were paramount in helping to mobilise discontent. Thus four of the six Down Orange rebels hailed from towns along the main South Down road from Kilkeel through Annalong, Castlewellan and Newcastle. In addition, two of the three Co. Londonderry leaders were from Dungiven, including William Douglas, who had claimed that the Prime Minister and Minister of Home Affairs had lied to the media about Douglas' role in the Dungiven Incident. But what is also interesting is the geography of those with no obvious local connection to the conflict: four from Belfast, two from Carrickfergus (South Antrim), and two from North Down.²³ These are all heavily Protestant areas in which a relatively small proportion of the Unionist population are members of the Orange Order. Unlike residents of the border counties, these individuals had less experience of Nationalist symbolic threats. As we shall see, this regional pattern remains in force today. It partly reflects Belfast working-class and Antrim tenants-rights radicalism and also suggests that Orangeism in heavily Protestant, low-Orange contexts is more of an expression of militant Protestantism than is the case in strongly Orange (but mixed-faith) border areas where the Order serves a more communal and convivial function.

Antrim's Independentist tradition emerged in a series of resolutions considered at the 4 June 1954 meeting of the Central Committee. The County Antrim lodge passed two resolutions. The first blamed the policy of the Ministry of Home Affairs for incidents like Dungiven and requested that the Grand Lodge secure a clear statement of policy change from the Prime Minister. The second called on Grand Lodge to take disciplinary action against Minister of Home Affairs Hanna for revealing private lodge matters to the public (something which Hanna publicly admitted doing). Lodge 1070 in Carnmoney, Antrim issued a resolution of no confidence in the PM and the previous Minister of Home Affairs, Brian Maginness, because of the Dungiven incident. Lodge 134 in Carrntall continued the attack, asking that steps be taken by Grand Lodge to inform the PM and his cabinet that 'we, as loyal Protestants, are absolutely disgusted'. District 6 (Lisburn) Lodge in Antrim warned in its resolution of the threat to Orange civil and religious liberties [i.e.

parades] posed by the events at Rasharkin, Pomeroy, Longstone Road, Derrymacash and Dungiven.²⁴

Antrim's resolutions were backed by James Baillie, the leading Antrim representative on the Central Committee. Yet this was not enough to alter the elite consensus within Grand Lodge, and the printed reports of December 1954 (circulated to all members) continued to mask the level of dissent within the ranks, noting only that 'five resolutions re flying of tricolour [were] received 4th June 1954'. By contrast, the full text of the elite Eldon lodge (LOL # 7, Belfast) resolution condemning the O & P circular had been duly printed in the June reports.²⁵ The Antrim resolutions were not acted upon, but, on the advice of Grand Secretary Burdge (Earl of Enniskillen and thus a pillar of the landed elite), merely taken as read. This was passed by those present with James Baillie dissenting. In justifying his position, Grand Master Andrews claimed that certain brethren were trying to exploit the Annalong and Dungiven incidents and that while unity was essential, 'we could not bow down to those who were acting against us'. Later in the meeting, Senator Cunningham declared that Orangemen who declared themselves 'Labour' and were opposed to the Unionist party 'were not genuine Orangemen'.²⁶ This kind of statement represented a parting shot from a paragon of old school loyalism - a traditionalist paradigm which would steadily crumble in the decades to come.

The challenge of the O & P Committee catalysed the leadership of Grand Lodge. In Grand Secretary Burdge's words, 'firm action was necessary' to discipline the rebels. He recommended that the O&P resolution be ignored and the signatories called before Grand Lodge to be charged with breaching an Orange statute which prevents individuals outside Grand Lodge from speaking publicly for the organisation as a whole. Central Committee vice-chairman Senator Cunningham, along with Edwin Liddle, the deputy Grand Master, Sam Campbell and John Murray backed this proposed course of action and A. Fred Colhoun accused the O & P Committee members of using the Order as a vehicle for their own political ends. On the other hand, four individuals, Richard Thornton, J. L. Haslett, Samuel Colhoun and Rev. Canon Uprichard, spoke in favour of more sympathetic action so as to maintain unity, so the Central Committee adopted a compromise resolution which summoned members of the O & P Committee to defend their actions in front of Central Committee.

In the discussions, Rev. A. J. Finch, who together with James Baillie was one of the rebellious voices on Central Committee, said he had attended two O & P Committee meetings and believed their resolution represented the views of the rank and file. He stressed that the Order should be separated from politics. This assertion was brushed aside by Senator Joseph Cunningham, the strongest establishment voice, who proffered that 'We must be connected with a Party, and that Party must of necessity be the Unionist Party - we [have] no alternative'. At this point, R. J. Magowan affirmed Cunningham's opposition to the O & P and the fact that 'we must support a party', but cautioned: 'Do not let the Party use the Order. Let us hear every expression of opinion'.²⁷

The first skirmish in the contest between the rebellious O & P Committee and Grand Lodge's Central Committee elite took place when the O & P secretary, G. W. Dunn, questioned why the Central Committee had summoned the O & P members individually and not as a collective. Grand Secretary Burdge responded that Central Committee would not recognise any committee not duly appointed by the Orange Institution. Next, Dunn sent a letter saying that the O & P members could not attend the hearing on the date proposed (23 June) since they 'were all working men', and proposed an alternative evening date. This assertion of class-consciousness suggests that class and ideology were intertwined in the Independent Orange consciousness. But this cut little ice with Harry Burdge, who sent a reply stating that the date for the meeting was finalised and could not be altered. At the 23 June hearing, those Central Committee men present unanimously endorsed a motion sponsored by Cunningham and Liddle commending Burdge's action and handling of the matter. It was then announced that the ten ringleaders were waiting in an anteroom and it was agreed to admit them to testify. Already, the Central Committee had asserted its political superiority by an appeal to tradition: invoking legal precedent and the Order's multi-layered democratic structure.²⁸

At the hearing, Grand Master Andrews (still presiding at this point) sounded a conciliatory note, but stressed that all should work towards the same end, namely the unity of the Order. Tom Richardson, responding for the accused, claimed that the meeting was necessary in order to 'safeguard our [Unionist] position'. He added that the O & P's direct approach was needed because previous resolutions from private lodges had 'not received the attention they deserved'. He condemned those who allowed the Order to be

politicised - undoubtedly a reference to the pro-UUP resolutions of October 1953 - and said that 'a member who voted Labour was...as good an Orangeman as those who voted Unionist'. Richardson proceeded to accuse the Prime Minister of lying about the Dungiven incident and claimed that the Order's leaders had 'gone off the track'. Richardson finished by saying that the O & P members were all working men and that the meeting should have been arranged for a Saturday.

William Douglas of Dungiven appeared next to complain about the Manifesto issued by the Order in the 1953 election. He decried the political nature of speeches on the platform and referred to previous resolutions that had been 'scrapped' by Grand Lodge without explanation. He completed his testimony by saying that the O & P committee merely sought to defend Protestantism and that they had no other avenue to vent their complaints. G. W. Dunn built on Douglas' testimony, referring to the 'ground being taken from [our] feet'. Dunn cited a parade ban in East Belfast 'several years ago' and the election Manifesto which was particularly galling for those in his district since the Official Unionist candidate was not an Orangeman while his Labour opponent was (a point which Labour sympathiser Sam Campbell had raised in Central Committee prior to the issuing of the Manifesto of 1953). Several other speakers referred to the Manifestoes of 1951 and 1953, and all emphasised the need to take a firm stand against Catholic agitation. Here we see an intertwining of labourite and militant Protestant themes.

Grand Secretary Burdge enquired as to why there was a delay in making the facts of the Dungiven incident known. Douglas responded that he waited until the election was over before issuing his circular, but that he had mentioned the matter privately on the Twelfth to two MPs, E.W. Jones and Nathaniel Minford. This response indicates that while Dungiven was a genuine grievance, it was also a resource manipulated to some effect by Independents. At this point, O & P stalwart Tom Richardson could no longer contain himself, delivering an attack on the Prime Minister and his cabinet for their misleading speeches. 'Brookeborough of Fermanagh is a liar', exclaimed Richardson.

At this statement, Edwin Liddle leapt to the Prime Minister's defense, saying that his words had been taken out of context and that the PM had proven himself in war and peace and deserved their support. He referred to 'counter organisations' - presumably the O&P or Paisleyites - as weakening the Loyalist position. Grand Secretary Burdge

supported his colleague and asked Richardson to withdraw his statement or face the consequences. Richardson then withdrew the word 'liar' and substituted 'accurate statements not made by the Prime Minister'. The rebels had been forced on the defensive, and S.C. Colhoun, one of the members of Central Committee more sympathetic to the O & P, intervened to say that he knew both sides of the dispute and that there was real dissatisfaction throughout the country that needed to be acknowledged.²⁹

Grand Master Andrews now took the floor. He stated that the accused brethren had erred in claiming that the Order was undemocratic since the multi-layered structure of the Order allowed individuals to be annually elected by subordinate lodges. He added that while the Order was essentially religious, 'we must stand for the Constitution'. Dungiven and Kilkeel (Annalong) were 'old troubles', he said, and had been thoroughly dealt with by Grand Lodge. Andrews next gave a stamp of approval to the Unionist administration, asking that the new Minister of Home Affairs (Hanna) and his new measure (Flags and Emblems Act) be given a chance. Andrews also spoke of the 'wonderful record of service to the Loyalist cause' of PM Brookeborough and condemned statements to the effect that the PM and Orange leaders would sell Ulster. Speaking 'with considerable emotion', the aged Andrews asked, 'Would I as Grand Master in the evening of my life ever think of selling Ulster?' Once the O & P men had left, Senator Cunningham strongly voiced the opinion that 'we must not recognise this Orange and Protestant Committee in any way'. The decision on the fate of the ten men would now be postponed until October.³⁰

At the October meeting, John Andrews officially stepped down as Grand Master. Senator Cunningham complimented the Grand Master for leading the Order through tough times. No doubt reflecting upon the rise of rebellious new elements in the organisation, Cunningham opined that 'Matters were more difficult to-day than they were some years ago'. Cunningham then proceeded to nominate two establishment figures, the Earl of Caledon and the Earl of Enniskillen (Burdge) as replacements for Andrews. Among the other names put forward were Sir William McCleery, M.P. (proposed by James Baillie of Antrim) and H. Archdale Porter of Fermanagh. In this situation, most of those proposed withdrew their names - including the two Earls proposed by Andrews - or had their names withdrawn by those who knew they would not wish to serve. One reason

for withdrawal was insufficient age, as in the case of Porter, and it is clear that many of the Orange elite were well advanced in years.³¹ In the end, therefore, McCleery was left with the job. Overall, this changing of the guard carried a less elite flavour than it had when Andrews was appointed in 1948 and the only serious candidates included the Earl of Belmore and Lt.-Col. S.G. Haughton, M.P.³²

There was one other important matter to conclude, of course, namely the fate of the O & P leaders. Speaking as a departing figure, Grand Master Andrews abandoned his usual conciliatory tone. He declared that the Central Committee had a serious problem and that action was necessary. The phrase 'Orange and Protestant', claimed Andrews was merely a synonym for 'Independent' and it was clear that the O & P Committee were out to create a split within the Order. Cunningham supported the need for action to 'maintain our position' and reiterated the need for the Order to be involved politically. Sam Campbell concurred, noting that too much appeasement had already been extended to the O & P. Grand Secretary Burdge supported Andrews while H. Archdale Porter, a relative newcomer to the Central Committee, sought to get at the heads of the O & P and expel them. Armagh's Walter Gracey and Fermanagh's Richard Thornton felt that firm action would undercut support for the O & P. Those who opposed action were from the right of the Central Committee: James Baillie and S.C. Colhoun. These figures warned that the O & P commanded deep support among the grassroots and Baillie, reading from the 'Qualifications of an Orangeman', backed the O & P claim that the Order should be above politics, a statement Sam Campbell rebutted by claiming that this was not possible in Northern Ireland. A resolution was then proposed by Cunningham which charged the leaders of the O & P with violating Orange statutes and placed the onus on them to show why they should not be 'dealt with'. It passed 11 votes to 4, signaling the continued domination of traditionalist loyalism on Central Committee.³³

The leaders of the O & P were suspended and - despite a last-ditch attempt to disrupt the Belfast Twelfth platform in 1955 - the movement died away. Still, the challenges of 1953-54 had shaken the foundations of the Order's *ancien regime*. The clubby atmosphere so obviously in evidence within Central Committee during Andrews' appointment to the Grand Mastership in 1948 had been jarred by the time Andrews left office in late 1954.³⁴ The relationship with the Government also did not emerge

unscathed. Though the Order had never been shy of calling the government to account, it did so with courtesy and could be 'talked down to' by forceful politicians like Harry Midgley in 1951 or Nathaniel Minford in 1953 who invoked external pressures or egalitarian arguments to legitimate concessions to Nationalists. In 1954, this was no longer clear: Minister of Home Affairs Hanna had to tread extremely carefully before Central Committee and even then, his words failed to placate a large wing of Orangeism. It seems that Senator Cunningham was correct to assert that 'Matters were more difficult to-day than they were some years ago'.

The Rt.-Hon. Sir William McCleery, an Antrim M.P., took the wheel from Andrews in late 1954. McCleery's term as Grand Master began with continued lodge level agitation on both the tricolour issue and socioeconomic issues. LOL# 1339 in Clifton St. district of Belfast raised the matter of a £300,000 government grant for the building of a new Catholic school, St. Patrick's. In response, a letter was read from the Ulster Unionist Council relating that the Prime Minister and Minister of Finance had considered the matter. The origins of the new school were magistrate-driven, the letter explained, and that the duty of providing accommodation for pupils fell to local authorities who - in tandem with the government - were required to provide a standard of accommodation in accordance with, but not in excess of, that obtaining in other schools. The Grand Master reported that the Government was merely following what was required by Statute and that 'accommodation will be equal for Protestants', while 'inspection will be in safe hands and carefully applied'. The GM also noted with disdain that the use of the word 'chapel' by the crafter of the private lodge resolution (a Rev. George Thompson, whose words were later reported in the press), was designed to 'create trouble amongst our Unionist people'.³⁵

Here we see that McCleery, an M.P., continued the venerable tradition of defending the government against grassroots pressure and legitimating concessions to Catholics in external terms (i.e. magistrate decree, Statute) rather than for intrinsic liberal reasons. Even so, it must be said that there was some scope for egalitarian sentiment, as when even the relatively populist James Baillie stated that the Government had 'an obligation to build the School'.³⁶ Likewise, another prominent Orangeman, the Bishop of Down (Dr. Kerr) said that 'it should be clear to all fair-minded people that they

[Catholics] needed a place for their own clergy to minister to them'. Nonetheless, Minister of Home Affairs Hanna reassured his Orange audience that while a school would be built, the government would ensure a constant regime of inspection. He also claimed that his government had turned down a British offer to build a swimming pool since neither he nor the minister of finance deemed this 'necessary' in light of the financial 'squeeze' being placed on Northern Ireland at the time.³⁷

The Order also cooperated with the government on a number of other fronts, notably the staffing of government bureaus (Stormont and Ministry of Agriculture) as well as nursing permits. On the former issue, Senator Cunningham (re Stormont) and the agriculture ministry informed the Grand Master that they could not get qualified Protestants to apply but were receiving numerous applications from well-educated Catholics. This suggests that, as with the case of Tyrone Protestant Housing applicants failing means tests, past discrimination against Catholics had shrunk the pool of Protestant competitors.³⁸ The nursing permit issue, meanwhile, had been brought up by County Armagh Grand Lodge and R. J. Magowan suggested that Armagh would do all they could to help Protestants from Eire in this regard.³⁹ Several months later, the Grand Master and Grand Secretary reported that they had met with the Ministry concerned and were satisfied with the steps being taken.⁴⁰ Evidently the government and Order were working closely in order to ensure that the existing corporate arrangements maximised the degree of Protestant benefit subject to the strictures of external pressure and a rudimentary egalitarianism.

It is important to stress the role of the Orange elite in moderating the more blatantly sectarian grassroots impulses. Developments in Scotland in the late 1950s illustrate how the Northern Ireland Order strove to check militant Protestants on its right flank and how this more moderate approach distinguished it from its Scottish counterpart. The Rev. Alan Hasson, a mercurial firebrand preacher and a Grand Chaplain of the Scottish Orange Order visited Northern Ireland and was instantly viewed as a troublemaker by Grand Lodge. Likewise, his Orange-sponsored Scottish organ, *The Vigilant*, was the target of Grand Lodge of Ireland opprobrium. The Central Committee refuted the *Vigilant's* outlandish claims that 'Senior Service' brand cigarettes subsidised the Pope and pointed out that 'County Grand Lodges should not invite Rev. Hasson to

speak at any demonstrations'. Grand Lodge need not have worried: the *Vigilant's* 1958-59 subscriber list shows that no more than about 10 percent of the 250-odd subscribers were from Northern Ireland.⁴¹ It is noteworthy that Ulster condemnation provoked divisions within the clearly more militant Grand Lodge of Scotland. Though the Grand Lodge of Scotland agreed to apologise and pay compensation to the affected tobacco firm, Alan Hasson remained both editor of the *Vigilant* and an influential Orange chaplain and became Grand Master of Scotland the following year.⁴²

Hasson's activity and that of other ultras on the *Vigilant* led to a split between the *Vigilant* and the Scottish Orange Committee assigned to oversee it, but the militant forces gained the upper hand, and it is evident that the small size of the Scottish Order and its limited political responsibility allowed for a more radical ideology than was the case in Northern Ireland.⁴³ We see this a year later in the midst of the second Dungiven parade controversy of 1959, when Hasson openly criticised Minister of Home Affairs W.W.B. Topping at the platform at Finaghy in 1959. When pressed to apologise to both Belfast County organisers and Topping for his heckling, Hasson responded with an aggressive message to the Order's headquarters in Dublin Road, Belfast. Later, the Grand Lodge of Scotland's executive committee warned the Ulstermen to drop the charge against Hasson or face a serious inter-jurisdictional rift within Orange ranks. This was acceded to by the Grand Lodge of Ireland, and represented such a low point in relations between the two branches that one Ulsterman remarked that it would be unpleasant to go to Scotland in 1961 for the Triennial Council meetings.⁴⁴

During the late fifties, Grand Lodge continued to act as a brake on grassroots militancy. Injecting a dose of the wider geopolitical reality into the situation, the new Grand Master, Sir George Clark, suggested that a resolution regarding the employment of Catholics in government 'was badly worded and should be re-drafted and brought before the December meeting when the PM would probably be present'.⁴⁵ The Antrim resolution never saw the light of day. Meanwhile, two Tyrone resolutions from 1957 demanding an end to Commonwealth Preference for Eire and asking the government to investigate the political activities of all applicants for government service seems to have merely been acknowledged as 'received' but prompted no action.⁴⁶ Likewise, a resolution from lodge 687 in Fermanagh urging the government to treat employees of the Sligo, Leitrim and

Northern Ireland Counties Railway as generously as employees resident in the Irish Republic simply resulted in 'no action taken'.⁴⁷ In April, 1958, Lord Brookeborough replied to these concerns and Central Committee merely passed this on to Fermanagh without further comment.⁴⁸

One area where resolutions were taken seriously was the BBC. The media had been a bugbear of the Order since the Order's Press Committee was formed in 1922. An Antrim resolution decrying the 'popish' tendencies of the BBC prompted the Grand Secretary to arrange to see 'the powers that be' as early as 1951.⁴⁹ But by 1957, pressure from lodges in Co. Londonderry, Belfast and Antrim excoriating what they saw as disproportionate Catholic air time and poor Twelfth coverage led to a more concerted response. A special committee was formed to investigate whether a 'guild' of pro-Catholic activists had taken root at the BBC and how the Order could get better press. The Rev. John Brown went further, urging 'our people to use the "fan mail" method and send such a flood of letters of denunciation [that] it would bring results'.⁵⁰ The 'high politics' route was also followed via the UUP and BBC board, though Grand Master Clark and Grand Secretary Burdge conveyed the disappointing contents of a letter from the UUP's Brian Faulkner and stressed that despite the UUP's trouble, 'no useful purpose had been served'. Edwin Liddle mentioned that Harry West, M.P. had taken up the matter up and it seems that Central Committee dropped the issue at this point.⁵¹ Soon after, Grand Lodge officially commended the BBC for its coverage of the Twelfth.⁵² Two years later, the BBC returned the compliment and relations seemed extremely cordial.⁵³ This indicates that while the Order's elite served as a powerful lobby for Protestant interests in the media as in other spheres, it was also able to manage grassroots dissent.

Dungiven II: The Sequel

The years after the retirement of John Andrews had largely been good ones for the Orange-UUP 'corporation'. The decline of the O & P splinter movement, the enactment of the Flags and Emblems Act and a successful Longstone Road parade in 1955 seem to have helped return things to the *status quo ante*. In 1958, the Bovevagh Band marched through Dungiven, escorted by 200 specially drafted policemen. This may have restored

faith in the establishment, but it caused immense Catholic resentment which could not be contained indefinitely. The calm would be broken in 1959. This time, Home Affairs minister Topping banned an Orange band parade that was slated to proceed through Dungiven to mark the visit to Northern Ireland of Princess Margaret. A few days later, the Bovevagh Band (the main Orange band in Dungiven) tried to organise another parade, which was banned.⁵⁴ The reason provided by the authorities was that increased IRA activity on the border - part of the IRA's new border campaign of 1956-62 - made it problematic to pin down forces in Dungiven. There was also a government fear that a Dungiven march may lead to outbreaks of violence there and in other districts.⁵⁵

The response from militant Protestant populists was swift. Ian Paisley's Ulster Protestant Action (UPA) movement had come of age, and, together with leading Independent Unionist Norman Porter, was ready to cause trouble for the Unionist establishment. This was first expressed at a parade and rally at a Belfast shipyard and forcefully emerged at the Twelfth Platform at Finaghy in Belfast where Topping was heckled by UPA supporters who handed out leaflets. Meanwhile, on the Orange platform in Coleraine, there was an attempt to submit a resolution protesting the government's actions.⁵⁶

Grand Lodge viewed Paisley and the UPA as a major threat. At an emergency meeting of Central Committee on 29 July 1959, the Grand Master reported that the clergy of the main Protestant denominations as well as other Protestant notables in the town opposed the decision of the Bovevagh Band to march. The reasons given by these local elites for opposition included the possibility of rioting and bloodshed as well as damage and/or boycotting of Protestant businesses. The Grand Master also recorded that the leader of the band was Billy Douglas, master of LOL# 260, though he did not seem to make the connection that this was the same individual who had been instrumental in stirring up the first Dungiven controversy and was one of the ten 'most wanted' O & P ringleaders of 1954.

Information on Ulster Protestant Action (UPA) suggested that this was a new group with four branches, three in Belfast and one in Coleraine. Belfast County officers, including John Bryans, County Grand Master, pinned the blame for the Finaghy Twelfth disturbances squarely on UPA, who had been present in the field from an early point and

had coordinated the agitation. Alfred Lee, Grand Secretary of County Londonderry, made similar points with respect to Dungiven, contending that Bovevagh band leader Douglas was obviously receiving his instructions from Belfast and had no idea a week before the parade that his band was going through Dungiven.

Discussion turned next to Ian Paisley. Antrim Grand Master Baillie, while acknowledging Paisley's theological background, showed sympathy for Paisley's rebel position by reiterating the Order's religious, non-political basis. The Grand Master then stepped in to re-focus the meeting on the troublemakers and to emphasise the need to deal firmly with lack of discipline in the lodges. Harry Maguire, J.P. continued by attacking Paisley's attendance record in Antrim, claiming that he had never once attended his lodge in no. 9 district (West Belfast) after transferring in from district 6 (Ballymacarett). Maguire concluded by arguing forcefully for penalties against such defaulters. The Grand Master now solicited comments from 'provincial brethren', perhaps aware that border Unionists would back a tough line. He was not disappointed: Fermanagh representatives Archdale Porter and Edwin Liddle favoured the expulsion of troublemakers and thought it the primary duty of Central Committee to express its support for Minister of Home Affairs Topping. Though James Baillie counselled caution, this groundswell resulted in a resolution, proposed by Robert Webb (Down), and seconded by John Bryans (Belfast) and Senator Cunningham in which:

The Central Committee of the Grand Orange Lodge of Ireland, at a special meeting held in Belfast, unanimously desire to place on record their highest appreciation and warmest thanks for the outstanding service the Rt. Hon. W.W.B. Topping, Minister of Home Affairs has rendered, and continues to render in connection with the defence of our Imperial Province. We warmly endorse his recent action, whereby he approved a decision of the police authorities in ensuring that no breach of the peace occurred in Dungiven.⁵⁷

The resolution was unanimously agreed and passed, indicating that the consensus of support for what Dominic Bryan refers to as 'respectable' Orangeism held firm. The Grand Master asked Belfast County Master Bryans to discourage his county and district

officers from attending 'splinter' demonstrations and there was a general appeal for a wave of disciplinary action at county level.⁵⁸ This course of action, which privileged the 'respectable' concerns of the Dungiven bourgeoisie over those of the populists, did not go down well with the grassroots - especially outside the border counties. In Belfast, though two individuals were suspended for two years, there was not enough local agreement for them to be expelled. Instructions to seven Belfast lodges whose members were said to have participated in disturbances at Finaghy asking for the names of troublemakers came to naught, illustrating the limited reach of Orange executive power at grassroots level. As Sam Campbell of Belfast admitted, this was 'a difficult matter' to deal with.⁵⁹

Meanwhile, the events of 1959 had sharply divided the Protestant community in Dungiven. The Church of Ireland rector, J. H. Kingston, an Orangeman, had written a letter to Limavady district (in which Dungiven was located) complaining that Bovevagh Orange band members were strongly instructed by their lodge to cease attending Bovevagh Parish Church and even had church materials in their possession confiscated. Kingston claims to have tried to speak with the Dungiven lodge master William Douglas, but he had responded to Kingston with an aggressive torrent of abuse. 'The boycott is still going on', Kingston claimed, though 'it has been ruthlessly condemned by the large majority of the Bovevagh parishioners'. Kingston appealed to Limavady district Orange lodge to deal with this 'un-christian' and 'un-Orange' situation.⁶⁰

In Limavady, an otherwise largely Protestant district in County Londonderry, the district officers backed the stance of Grand Lodge, noting that 'as far as [we] are concerned, we are unanimously of the opinion that no such parade should ever have been contemplated'. However, district-level officers were clearly aware that grassroots sentiment may have been different. District Secretary Harbinson noted that while 'we are definitely not in favour [of the band]...there would seem to be a very strong following in favour, and if the Boveva people would have the support of 12 lodges out of 14 I do not see what we could do'. Harbinson wanted to know from Grand Lodge if the district 'should be allowed to pass any resolutions and what attitude we should adopt'.⁶¹ Grand Lodge directed Harbinson to raise the procedural matter with Londonderry County Lodge, but in the end, as we shall see, Limavady district could not be prevented from discussing the matter.⁶²

Support for Grand Lodge was also forthcoming from John Cameron, an officer of Coleraine District Royal Arch Purple chapter, who was anxious for information on whether the Dungiven lodge had minuted their decisions properly and had sound finances. He likewise believed that the Bovevagh Band was composed of a significant proportion of non-Orangemen.⁶³ This correspondence is fascinating. It indicates that the support base for 'respectable' Orangeism rested among established district officers and those with higher Orange degrees - effectively a class divide that cut across geographical boundaries.

A month later, the threatened mass meeting was held in County Londonderry, and led to the populist election of William Douglas as Limavady District Master for 1960 and the removal of established 'respectable' candidates from the positions of Secretary, Treasurer and even Chaplain. This indicates that grassroots sentiment, especially among Orange activists, favoured the Band and had successfully challenged the existing district-level hierarchy. While this hierarchy may once have been able to exercise moral authority to ensure that its preferred candidates were elected to district (and higher) office, the 1959 Limavady elections dented the old paradigm to the advantage of the populists. Strong tensions now existed between the district lodge and the clergy (especially the Church of Ireland rector, but also his Presbyterian counterpart) in the town over the marching issue. Meanwhile, the newly constituted officers of Limavady district issued a district lodge resolution protesting the Central Committee's recent actions, condemning Minister Topping and vowing to resist any future attempts to 'curtail [their] liberties' to march.⁶⁴

In this new conflict, the County Londonderry Lodge elite played a mediating role between the Orange elite (Grand Lodge plus local churchmen/businessmen) and the Orange populists. For instance, Joseph Cunningham's offer to send an advisory letter from the Grand Master and Grand Secretary to Limavady officers was rejected by Alfie Lee, the Co. Londonderry secretary, no doubt due to the fact that it would smack of elite interference in county affairs.⁶⁵ One of the County Lodge's first tasks was to investigate the situation on the ground in Dungiven. Alfie Lee formed a committee which interviewed Minister Topping and William Douglas and also surveyed the Protestants of Dungiven by questionnaire. In their report, the subcommittee concluded that, in view of

the dangers to security and public order, the police were correct to ban the Bovevagh Band from Dungiven. More damaging, the report claimed that a 'plebiscite of Protestant householders' in Dungiven showed a 'definite majority' opposing the march. Protestant businesses had been hit hard by a boycott after the 1958 march and feared a further loss of trade to incoming Catholic merchants. Protestant clerics in Dungiven and vicinity, Presbyterian and Church of Ireland alike, found their congregations divided on the issue, rendering church work more difficult. Nevertheless we may presume from rector Kingston's remarks and the survey results that most opposed the band.

The subcommittee proceeded to consider the situation within Limavady's Orange ranks and, after attending the district meeting, reported similar bitter divisions. Given this evidence and the fact that Limavady district council was under Nationalist control, the subcommittee felt that the Protestant community could ill afford the kind of division which the march had produced. The committee therefore recommended that the Bovevagh Band abandon its quest to parade until such time as the 'present strife and agitation' died down and there was general support for a band parade.⁶⁶ Despite the divisions running through church, lodge and community, it is interesting that local Orange opinion was to the right of the churches and the community as a whole on the marching question. The County Grand Lodge's decision thus reflected its identity as a representative not only of Orangeism, but of the Protestant people more broadly construed. Had the County Lodge subcommittee been faithful to its purely Orange democratic mandate, it may well have backed the Band.

Londonderry County, together with the Central Committee of Grand Lodge, paid considerable heed to the views of non-Orangemen, especially those in the 'respectable' classes of parishioners, businessmen and property holders. Nonetheless, the county subcommittee was at pains to point out that Central Committee had exceeded its remit by supporting Topping without first consulting with William Douglas, Limavady district or Londonderry County. The report accused Central Committee of acting in a high-handed manner which aggravated the situation and gave the impression that they were 'more concerned to defend the Minister than to consider...the rights...of Orange Brethren...' The county subcommittee therefore suggested that in future, parade refusals be dealt with by the lowest level of lodge authority (i.e. district) possible.⁶⁷ Evidently the county needed to

distance itself somewhat from Central Committee, suggesting that populist currents were beginning to buffet the formerly unproblematic legitimacy of the Grand Lodge elite.

At the next Central Committee meeting, the response was generally favourable. The Central Committee elite felt that their support for Topping had been vindicated, though they understood their critics' case. At the meeting, County representatives Alfie Lee and Brian Clark suggested that band leader and the new Limavady district master William Douglas would impose order on his band and would serve as a source of healing rather than trouble in his district. A conciliatory note had been struck, but before the matter was finally forwarded to Grand Lodge, Grand Secretary Burdge, along with Edwin Liddle, made the point of insisting that Central Committee had been correct - thereby reasserting Central Committee authority and legitimacy. No real changes to procedure were adopted as a result of the Londonderry report.⁶⁸

Limavady was not the only district in which controversy reigned. Three further Londonderry districts, Ballyronan (7), Magherafelt (3) and Tobermore (11) in the Southeast corner of the county, backed the Limavady rebels, while none spoke out against them. Thus almost 40 percent of the county membership were linked to districts which actively opposed the Central Committee over Dungiven.⁶⁹ Bearing in mind the quietist nature of many Orange districts, this indicates that Limavady district probably had the backing of a majority of the Londonderry rank-and-file.⁷⁰ A related pattern prevailed in County Down. As elsewhere, Dungiven was a topic of discussion. Three rural districts in different parts of the county, Lecale (2), Mourne (6) and Gilford (13) had introduced anti-Government/anti-Central Committee resolutions, and Rev. A.J. Finch, one of the rebels of Central Committee, proposed the motion at the County Down Lodge meeting. However, he met significant opposition from traditionalist county-level Orangemen like J. W. Lindsay and the County Grand Master. The former asked for a 'sensible' outlook on this question as a parade was opposed by business and clerical interests and could lead to trouble. The vote, which went 35-14 against Finch, showed a majority of moderates at county level.⁷¹ As in the Londonderry case, county-level officers were able to neutralise agitation from the private/district-level grassroots before this discontent could break at Grand Lodge/Central Committee level and cause public embarrassment.

In Antrim, things were different: the county leadership did not identify with the quasi-aristocratic 'governing' mission of the Orange elite and instead identified with its mass base. As a result, Antrim's populist county officers were less willing to 'play ball' with Central Committee. At district and private lodge level, numerous resolutions were adopted which criticised the Central Committee for its support of Topping and stressed the religious basis of the Order - a clear expression of discontent with the UUP-Orange status quo. Furthermore, Antrim appointed a special county committee to address the membership's concerns. This favoured a wholesale reorganisation of Central Committee, a major challenge to the establishment. The new proposals wished to devolve power away from Central Committee to the counties and Grand Lodge 'backbenches'. This was to be effected by a threefold reform of Central Committee through: a) reducing the number of ex-officio (honorary, unelected) members; b) banning any paid Grand Lodge official from membership, and c) increasing county representation. Antrim also wished to see stronger oversight from Grand Lodge of the Central Committee's activities. Finally, the Antrim committee reiterated its claim that the Orange Order was a religious institution and that 'such political action as it may take from time to time should be primarily for the defence and promotion of Protestantism'. Platform proceedings should, therefore, be restricted to religious services.⁷²

Central Committee's response to the Antrim report differed markedly from its generally positive reception of the Londonderry report. Central Committee threw the report back at Antrim, asking it to withdraw its introductory reformist paragraph, which, according to Central Committee, constituted a vote of no-confidence that infringed Orange statute.⁷³ Antrim met to consider Central Committee's amendments and its response conveyed a feisty challenge: 'under no circumstances would the County...withdraw its first resolution...the Central Committee has no right, in any case, to refuse to consider the other 3 resolutions, or to attempt to impose terms or conditions in connection therewith'.⁷⁴

Central Committee gave short shrift to Antrim's democratic reforms. Sensing a challenge from this troublesome county, Edwin Liddle proposed that the entire report be re-sent back to Antrim. This was seconded by Liddle's Fermanagh counterpart, Archdale Porter, but Senator James Baillie, County Grand Master of Antrim, cautioned against

doing this. When asked who was behind the resolutions, Baillie said trouble started with the Central Committee resolution supporting Topping over Dungiven. Though Baillie was not part of the sub-committee set up by Antrim's Grand Lodge to look into this matter, he agreed to forward their report and undoubtedly sympathised with it.⁷⁵ At the meeting, Baillie came under attack from no fewer than four members of Central Committee. In particular, he was taken to task over a letter from County Antrim describing a meeting between Baillie and the new Grand Master, Sir George Clark, in which Clark had become quite 'heated'. At this point, Burdge and others forced Antrim to withdraw the letter.⁷⁶

At the meeting, six Antrim private and district lodge resolutions were tabled covering everything from protests against the removal of the Union Jack from Cookstown (Co. Tyrone) polling station to the advantage which the teaching of typing and shorthand in Catholic schools conferred on the Nationalist community. Central Committee's response was to unanimously agree to take no action on any of the proposals: a punitive reply.⁷⁷ In the printed reports for December, Rev. John Brown of Antrim tabled his resolution containing the spate of reforms (of Central Committee structures) proposed by his county. These were raised again the following June when no action was forthcoming. Grand Lodge agreed to study the proposals, but averred that no officers elected by Grand Lodge were paid officials.⁷⁸ At the September meeting of Central Committee to consider the Antrim reforms, the votes told the story. Antrim's first amendment was defeated 13 to 2 with 2 abstentions while the second fell 11 to 2 with 4 abstentions.

In the discussion over the second resolution, which sought a major overhaul of the composition of Central Committee, Brown said that the rank-and-file in Antrim was not content with the present structure which gave disproportionate weight to Belfast. Grand Secretary Burdge, in a combative mood, remarked that he had not heard of any dissatisfaction in other counties. John Bryans asked why Antrim had no confidence in its elected representatives. Finally, Grand Master Clark added that Brown should be very thankful for the 'tolerance' shown by Central Committee toward those 'pressing their particular theories'.

Discussion then moved on to the powers of Central Committee. Once again, Brown was the lone voice contesting Central Committee power as specified under Law

48. Grand Master Clark said that the Central Committee's powers had been built up over many years and should not be confined to routine business. Grand Secretary Burdge then came to the point, declaring that the whole reform was a reflection of the Dungiven affair and that Law 48 had 'served us well' as constituted. Here we see how the appeal to Orange law, custom and tradition was used by traditionalists to counter rebel fundamentalism. Having conceded substantial ground, Rev. Brown turned to his next grievance, the 'killing' of private and district lodge resolutions by Central Committee - as had occurred at the December meeting. This common practice was in fact a favoured tool of Central Committee, often used to brush potentially embarrassing populist challenges under the carpet. But Central Committee portrayed this as a procedural matter, with Clark arguing that most of these resolutions should have been dealt with at County level and would not have reached Central Committee had this been the case. Throughout, Brown of Antrim appeared conciliatory and anxious not to offend while the Central Committee establishment carried the offensive.⁷⁹

In the end, Central Committee's appeal to tradition won out over Brown's democratic reforms, apart from a minor concession and a willingness to print all resolutions not approved by Central Committee in the reports of proceedings issued to members. The other Antrim proposal adopted was to increase the number of county representatives on Central Committee, which Clark and others acceded to quite readily in the hope of ensuring better county attendance. Brown resubmitted his amended, stripped-down motions in June 1961. Once again, apart from his Antrim stalwart, Sen. James Baillie, Brown's motion got nowhere against those who claimed that the existing laws had served the Order well in the past.⁸⁰ The net effect of Antrim's Dungiven-inspired reform agitation was minimal, illustrating how a 'Dissenting'-style appeal to fundamental principles generally foundered on the Order's accumulated web of 'Anglican' traditions and laws.

In the early sixties, some of the challenges to Grand Lodge authority subsided, but this did not leave the government unscathed. Resolutions concerning traditional puritan mores were a distinguishing feature of the more 'respectable' border county lodges, in contrast to the rebellious political resolutions emanating from Antrim and Belfast. For example, Armagh County Lodge had raised the issue of seven-day entertainment licenses

in early 1961, with the full backing of Grand Lodge. Minister of Home Affairs Brian Faulkner's reply to Armagh was that there were 'insufficient grounds' for introducing amending legislation. This was deemed unacceptable by Armagh County Lodge and Central Committee broadly agreed to pursue the matter further.⁸¹ At the December meeting, Armagh was clearly not satisfied, but still maintained a respectful tone, with Captain Armstrong of Armagh noting that while, 'it was not for him to tell the Minister how to change it [the law]', he was most disappointed in the Minister's refusal to contemplate making changes to the law. Grand Master Clark agreed and resolved to have a 'further word' with Faulkner. In December, Faulkner's reply made it clear, remarked Clark with little fanfare, that there was little that could be done.⁸² Once again, a policy concession was narrated by the Orange elite as an inevitability caused by legal or external exigencies, and this was accepted by county representatives on behalf of the rank-and-file, thereby maintaining the Orange-UUP consensual system.

Another field of policy which brought the Order into contact with party politics was the issue of dialogue with Catholics. George Clark had received many resolutions of praise from the grassroots for his Scarva speech on 13 July 1959 against the admittance of Catholics into the UUP.⁸³ But a prominent UUP official and Unionist figurehead like Clark could not avoid engaging with Catholics. Nationalist Senator James G. Lennon's challenge to meet Clark put Clark in a difficult position. Any contact with a member of the 'other side' was likely to elicit disapproval from the grassroots. On the other hand, Clark felt that if he didn't meet Lennon, 'there would be a good deal of criticism'. In an echo of today's climate, Clark said that he was 'always conscious of the Orange Order being held up as bigots'. Clark continued in a relatively liberal and open-minded vein that: 'we must live together in a more Christian attitude' though Lennon, added Clark, had to recognise Northern Ireland's constitutional position. Looking ahead, Clark warned that 'in the next decade we might be embodied into a European community', thereby providing further justification to meet Lennon, something Clark seems to have been keen to do. Clark stressed that he would not make any proposals to Lennon, but merely hear him out in such a way as not to divide the Order. He also agreed to submit his report of the meeting to Grand Lodge and that his statement would be carefully prepared so as not to be misconstrued by the press.⁸⁴

Clark and Lennon's discussions revolved around the irreconcilable differences between the two. Their 'you jump first' attitude is particularly relevant to the post-1998 Peace Process: Clark insisted on guarantees regarding Northern Ireland's constitutional position while Lennon wanted to begin by addressing Catholic economic grievances. Clark received praise from the Presbyterian Church for his willingness to debate with Lennon, but was extremely leery of igniting the fears of the Orange masses. Thus Clark stated that 'in view of the feelings of the [Orange] brethren on this particular matter...we should go no further in these so called "talks" '. Clark also guarded his right flank by proposing that the wording of his reply to Lennon again be put before Grand Lodge. In mentioning that the matter was 'too big for Central Committee', he reflected his experience of having been burnt by populist manipulations of the two Dungiven crises.⁸⁵ The matter ended with a cautious statement from Clark to Lennon which concluded: 'We ask simply - Recognise the Constitution and then the better relations that we both seek must surely follow on'.⁸⁶ Once again we see that Clark had little encouragement to take risks in the cause of inter-communal goodwill, but instead had to tread carefully to avoid being outbid by rebel Unionists.

Central Committee continued to press its case in cultural battlegrounds like the content of school textbooks, school closures and the resourcing of voluntary technical colleges. The Watch Committee of Grand Lodge was able to meet with the Minister of Education and obtain serious changes including the deletion of a school textbook, 'Britain under the Tudors and Stuarts', deemed to be misleading in its coverage of the Protestant martyrs.⁸⁷ Meanwhile, all private lodges were circularised regarding their perception of bias in the religious programming of the BBC after a number of resolutions complained of this. When no replies were received from lodges, the matter was dropped, but the question of BBC coverage would repeatedly resurface in Grand Lodge and Central Committee proceedings and Grand Lodge officers met BBC representatives on an annual basis to discuss coverage of the Twelfth.⁸⁸ Border Orangemen, meanwhile, focused on socio-economic issues like land and property sales from Protestants to Catholics (Tyrone), school closures and the threat to close the Belfast-Derry railway (Derry city).⁸⁹

On the political front, relations with the party occasionally proved contentious in this period. The appointment of Senator Robert Webb as the replacement for the recently

deceased Harry Burdge on the UUC's executive council was rejected by the UUP, prompting Orange consternation. Grand Master Clark gave a lengthy statement on this, described himself as 'personally perturbed' by the decision, and vowed to register his protest through the proper channels and write a letter to the secretary of the UUC requesting an explanation.⁹⁰ Little more was heard from the UUC, suggesting that Clark's intervention resolved the matter in favour of Webb. Paisley's increasingly high-profile militancy had also raised the stakes and Rev. Brown of Co. Antrim stated that whilst 'we wish to disassociate ourselves from "Paisleyites"', he felt the PM's recent remarks regarding incidents on the Orange platform at Dunloy, Antrim had 'caused some disquiet and dissatisfaction in the community'.⁹¹ This agitation proved a prelude for further divisions occasioned by the ascent of Captain Terence O'Neill as Prime Minister in 1963.

¹ Kennedy, Billy, *Belfast News Letter*, 03/03/05, p. 8

² Bryan, *Orange Parades*, pp. 66-7

³ Bryan, *Orange Parades*

⁴ GL 12/46, pp. 48-55

⁵ GL 12/51, pp. 26-7

⁶ CC 06/06/52

⁷ CC 13/10/53

⁸ CC 04/12/53

⁹ CC 10/51; GL 12/51

¹⁰ CC 08/10/52

¹¹ GL 06/53, p.13

¹² Bryan, *Orange Parades*, pp. 75-6

¹³ Patterson, Henry. 1999. 'Party versus Order: Ulster Unionism and the Flags and Emblems Act,' *Contemporary British History*, Vol. 13, No.4 (Winter), pp. 109, 122

¹⁴ GL 06/53; CC 07/10/53

¹⁵ CC 13/10/53

¹⁶ CC 17/11/53

¹⁷ *Ibid.*

¹⁸ CC 09/12/53

¹⁹ CC 16/03/54

²⁰ CC 16/03/54

²¹ CC 14/04/54

²² O & P Committee resolution in CC 31/05/54

²³ The lone Omagh representative was one of the last signatories and was not considered by Grand Lodge to be among the eleven main ringleaders.

²⁴ CC 04/06/54

²⁵ GL 06/54, p. 13, 12/54, p. 26

²⁶ CC 04/06/54

²⁷ CC 09/06/54; GL 06/54, p. 10

²⁸ CC 23/06/54

²⁹ *Ibid.*

³⁰ *Ibid.*

³¹ In this vein, the obituaries section of Grand Lodge minutes was always relatively full of recently departed brethren holding high office in the Institution.

³² GL 09/48, pp. 33-35; CC 06/10/54

³³ CC 06/10/54

³⁴ GL 09/48, pp. 33-35

³⁵ CC 12/10/55

³⁶ Ibid.

³⁷ GL 12/55, p. 29

³⁸ CC 12/54, 01/12/55

³⁹ GL 06/56, pp. 10-11

⁴⁰ CC 10/56

⁴¹ CC 27/03/57; *Vigilant* Subscriber List 1958-59 (GOLS archives)

⁴² McFarland, Elaine, *Protestants First: Orangeism in Nineteenth Century Scotland* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 1990), p. 215

⁴³ McCracken, Gordon A. 2002. 'Scottish Orangeism in the Twentieth Century,' paper presented at conference on 'Orangeism and Protestant Politics,' University of Ulster at Jordanstown (Belfast); GOLS 06/57, 06/58, 12/58

⁴⁴ CC 29/07/59, 16/10/59, 03/12/59, 30/12/60

⁴⁵ CC 07/06/57

⁴⁶ GL 06/57, p. 10

⁴⁷ CC 07/06/57; GL 12/57, p. 26

⁴⁸ CC 02/04/58

⁴⁹ CC 08/06/51

⁵⁰ GL 12/57, p. 28; CC 11/12/57

⁵¹ CC 02/04/58

⁵² GL 12/58, p. 31

⁵³ CC 09/12/60

⁵⁴ Note that this was a non-traditional parade which therefore required notification of the police, which was not the case for traditional parades like the 12th.

⁵⁵ Londonderry County Grand Lodge subcommittee report, 05/11/59, pp. 3-4

⁵⁶ Bryan, *Orange Parades*, p. 76

⁵⁷ CC 29/07/59

⁵⁸ Ibid.

⁵⁹ CC 16/10/59

⁶⁰ Letter of 15/08/59 from J. H. Kingston to Limavady district secretary Thomas Harbinson

⁶¹ Letter from Limavady district secretary Harbinson to Grand Secretary Harry Burdge, 07/08/59

⁶² Letter from Assistant Grand Secretary to Thomas Harbinson, 10/08/59

⁶³ Letter from John Cameron to Grand Secretary Harry Burdge, 14/09/59

⁶⁴ CC 16/10/59

⁶⁵ Ibid.

⁶⁶ Londonderry County Lodge subcommittee report, 05/11/59, pp. 4-5

⁶⁷ Ibid., p. 5

⁶⁸ CC 03/12/59

⁶⁹ Districts 3,6,7 and 11 had roughly 2400 of the county's 6600 members in 1960. (County Londonderry report of proceedings, 1960)

⁷⁰ County Londonderry Report of Proceedings, 1959; Letter from District no. 7 Secretary George Stewart to County Londonderry Grand Secretary Alfred Lee, 09/11/59; Letter from District 11 Master David Campbell and Secretary Samuel Boone to Grand Secretary Alfred Lee, 15/10/59; Letter from District no. 3 representatives Joseph Wylie and David Leacock, 07/10/59

⁷¹ Co. Down Grand Lodge minutes, 12/11/59

⁷² Report of Antrim Special Committee, convened by John Brown, 07/09/59

⁷³ Letter from Grand Master Clark and Grand Secretary Burdge to Antrim Grand Secretary Robert Anderson, 19/10/59

⁷⁴ Letter from Antrim County Secretary Robert Anderson to Grand Secretary Burdge, 19/10/59

⁷⁵ As indicated by his previous populist comments at Central Committee and by the fact that his omission from the Antrim committee was a suspicious breach of procedure undoubtedly caused by tension between his twin roles of county master and central committee member.

⁷⁶ CC 09/12/59

⁷⁷ Ibid.

⁷⁸ GL 12/59, pp. 30-31, 06/60, pp. 12-14

⁷⁹ CC 30/09/60

⁸⁰ GL 06/61, p. 9

⁸¹ CC 09/06/61

⁸² CC 02/12/61

⁸³ CC 09/12/59

⁸⁴ CC 21/09/62

⁸⁵ CC 23/04/63

⁸⁶ GL 06/63, p. 9

⁸⁷ Letter from G. Thompson to Ivan Neill, Minister of Education, 04/06/63; GL 06/63, pp. 10-11; GL 12/63, p. 8; GL06/64, p. 11

⁸⁸ CC 21/09/62, 27/09/63, 04/12/64

⁸⁹ GL 06/63, p. 11, 12/63, pp. 34-5

⁹⁰ CC 26/04/63, 27/09/63

⁹¹ Ibid.