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### The Protestant working class in Belfast: education and civic erosion - an alternative analysis

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## The Protestant working class in Belfast: education and civic erosion – an alternative analysis

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This paper explores and reassesses the issues of social decline, educational underachievement and civic erosion in relation to the Protestant working class in Belfast. Prior to the 'Troubles' the Protestant working class in Belfast had at its heart a civic-mindedness which was in tune with working-class communities across the UK at the time. This civic-mindedness encouraged the growth of extended communities and placed an importance on church attendance and educational achievement; something which has been conveniently ignored in most analyses. Owing to population movements in Greater Belfast which followed the violence that followed the introduction of internment without trial in August 1971 Protestant church congregations dwindled and school attendances dropped significantly. The paper ultimately seeks to provide a 'long view' of the Protestant working-class experience in order to assist those who are concerned with the problems facing it in the current era.

**Keywords:** Belfast; Troubles; Protestant working class; loyalism; education; churches; youth subcultures; violence; civic-minded; community; white working class

I also remember coming home from school along Foreman Street with my books and hearing the odd remark from people standing at their doors: 'The young ones are getting the learning now alright. Look at the books under his arms!'<sup>1</sup>

### Introduction

For a number of years the issues of social decline and educational underachievement in Protestant working-class areas of Belfast have vexed concerned parties from community workers<sup>2</sup> to policy makers.<sup>3</sup> It is generally thought that the problem has origins in two key areas. The first of these was the gradual decline, from the late 1950s onwards, of the traditional industries in Belfast such as shipbuilding and the ropeworks which would have provided employment for generations of working-class Protestant males who resided in inner-city areas that were close to these hubs of labour. It has often been considered that ease of access to these jobs for Protestant males led to education becoming an afterthought, and a potential path of progression which was regarded as being of little importance. In a May 2011 Northern Ireland Assembly debate on Protestant working-class educational attainment the DUP MLA for North Down, Alex Easton, in introducing the motion stated that

I also believe that, due to the impact of the period that is commonly referred to as 'the Troubles', we missed a huge opportunity to rebuild and rejuvenate society. Prior to those

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events, which are largely believed to have started in 1969, we saw the death of our local industries. The shipyard, Shorts and many other noteworthy local industries declined, leaving a huge gap in the labour market. As those industries declined, many Protestants who were traditionally employed in them lost their job and their way with no one to help them.<sup>4</sup>

Subsequently the second key factor which has affected Protestant working-class educational achievement was the arrival in the late 1960s of communal strife in Northern Ireland. The 'Troubles' led to the emergence of loyalist paramilitaries in Protestant working-class areas. The paramilitaries who claimed to be defenders of their areas against republicans are often charged with having contributed to Protestant working-class areas becoming 'sink estates' which are characterised by unemployment, lack of aspiration, poverty and the breakdown of the family as a unit. In 2004 a Northern Ireland Department for Social Development Task Force survey entitled 'Renewing Communities' drew attention to the problems affecting Protestant working-class areas of inner-city Belfast such as Sandy Row, Shankill and The Village. Orr has highlighted how the report diagnosed 'low educational attainment, low aspirations, physical and mental problems and apparent acceptance of economic inactivity', drawing attention to 'fragmentation within the community' and 'an absence of strong, benign and effective local leadership'.<sup>5</sup>

There can be little doubt that these deleterious elements have conspired to negatively affect perceptions of education among young Protestant males in particular. In March 2011 Dawn Purvis, then MLA for East Belfast, and the Working Group on Educational Disadvantage and the Protestant Working Class consisting of academics and community activists issued a document entitled 'A Call to Action: Educational Disadvantage and the Protestant Working Class'.<sup>6</sup> Many of the key findings of the working group were intriguing, particularly the observation that community and cultural factors have affected how Protestant families perceive education and participation in schools.<sup>7</sup> Elaborating on this point, the authors of the report suggested that the collapse of the long-term inter-generational labour markets and the move towards a 'consumerist, service driven economy has, to a degree, left elements of the Protestant working class stranded with redundant skill-sets and abilities'; essentially many in the Protestant working class feel grounded by 'social fatalism' and 'out of sync' with the contemporary requirements of 'low wage employment, insecure casualised work, feminised labour and benefit dependency' as well as under-valuing and under-appreciating education.<sup>8</sup> Of particular pertinence in the report was the following observation:

Accompanying this educational and labour 'vacuum' has been the loss of positive role models, community stability and the post-ceasefire rise of organised criminal groups, often closely tied to paramilitary organisations, that offer short-term status, 'kudos' and profit through illegal activity.<sup>9</sup>

The authors are correct and there is evidence that this problem is the manifestation of a steady process of civic decline which has its origins in the late 1960s and early 1970s when violence erupted on the streets of Northern Ireland.

It shall be the aim of this article, then, to provide a 'long view' of the current malaise evident in the morale of Protestant working-class communities. An attempt shall be made to suggest that although the Protestant working class may have relied on the traditional industries for employment they were no different in this respect to other industrialised communities in parts of the UK.<sup>10</sup> While education may not have been a priority, there is evidence that a progressive attitude to education existed and would perhaps have flourished to a certain extent in the wake of deindustrialisation had it not been for the onset of ethnic conflict. Examples shall be provided of schools, educationalists and families within the Protestant working class who, prior to the Troubles, viewed educational

achievement – whether it be vocational or academic – as being important in creating and sustaining morale and aspiration within their communities. Educational achievement and encouragement created the same sense of morale, community and self-worth as other civic structures such as the church and its associated uniformed organisations. These institutions allowed the Protestant working class, even when industry was beginning to decline, to feel part of a wider British social and civic experience. It shall be suggested that the onset of violence, religious fundamentalism and street politics mixed with continuing deindustrialisation in the late 1960s and early 1970s negatively affected the influence of these civic structures and thus crucially Protestant working-class attitudes to education and social progress and ambition; ripples of which are still keenly felt in the present day and which have contributed to the ‘social fatalism’ described in ‘A Call to Action’. This has led to the Protestant working class being cut adrift from the current peace process as well as their part in wider British society which they feel as of right to be a part of. The article appeals for an ‘East–West’ perspective on the Protestant working class in order to demonstrate some of the complexities of that community’s angst in the light of a historical conflict and an ever-changing definition of ‘Britishness’.<sup>11</sup>

### **Industry and education: the Protestant working class in Belfast prior to the Troubles**

There has perhaps been a perception that the unionist government eased the path to employment for the Protestant working class in Northern Ireland in the forty or so years between the inception of the state and the outbreak of the Troubles in the mid-1960s. While this theory holds in certain historical narratives, others have challenged the notion outright. For example, Graham Walker has suggested that those working in shipbuilding in Belfast were no better off than their counterparts in industrial outfits in Clydeside, Merseyside or Tyneside. These workers were components of the wider British community which the Protestant working class in Northern Ireland saw themselves as being part of.<sup>12</sup> Indeed, the Somme episode<sup>13</sup> and unionist contributions to the Second World War campaign in particular had resulted in what Tom Paulin has referred to as the ‘ossification of unionism’<sup>14</sup> and implicitly the Protestant working class’s self-imagining of itself as an important component of the British industrial community. It is in this reflection of the Protestant working class (with workers in other industrialised cities in the UK) that they would have questioned the term ‘labour aristocracy’ which has often been applied to them.

There were those who visited Northern Ireland during the early 1960s who made reference to the shipyards and presented an argument that the industrial backbone of Belfast was not the safeguard against poverty and unemployment which would have led to Protestants ignoring education or safely regarding themselves as being in a better position than Catholics. In her book *My Ireland*, which was published in 1962, the Limerick-born writer Kate O’Brien recalls visiting Queen’s Island in Belfast the day after she had seen a production of Sam Thompson’s illuminating and, at the time, highly controversial, play *Over the Bridge*.<sup>15</sup> Thompson, a Protestant who had plied his trade in Belfast’s shipyard, drafted the play which was concerned with exposing the sectarian schism that existed in the mainly Protestant workplace where Catholics were in a minority. It is important to note the social context in which the play was brought to the public’s attention. Thompson’s script caused much concern in the political echelons of Northern Irish society. The overriding mood in the months leading up to the first staging of the play in early 1960 was one of outright indignation among unionist backbenchers. They viewed the concept of the play as offensive and a spurious mistruth about industrial life and religion in the country which they governed. Indeed, so incensed was Unionist Party

member William James Morgan (Oldpark) that in May 1959 he asked Terence O'Neill, then minister of finance, about funding for Thompson's play:

Is it not the opinion of the right hon. and gallant Gentleman that public funds spent on these wild and indecent plays, which are entirely out of fashion, would be better spent on the art of music for what is intended, say, at the musical festivals that are held all over Northern Ireland, where possibly we would get more natural genius?<sup>16</sup>

Although Morgan found it impossible to take a step back and observe the social realities of life in the shipyard, Sam Thompson had first-hand experience of working in the yard and he wrote eruditely from bitter experience about the negative aspects of industrial working life. Kate O'Brien congratulated the play and wrote about *Over the Bridge* shortly after watching the production in Belfast in the early 1960s. Her curiosity about the play's origins and Thompson's inspirations led her to visit 'the yard' and she later wrote with gravitas about the workplace which had been the backdrop to Thompson's script. Although she hailed from the Republic of Ireland, O'Brien recognised the subtleties of the ebb and flow of the shipbuilding marketplace and the pressures that were increasingly being put on trade. She came to the conclusion that those who were employed in the shipyard enjoyed a far from settled and secure lifestyle from that which has often been depicted:

Queen's Island, over the Bridge, is where in the past hundred years Harland and Wolff have built their famous ships. It is, or at least has until recently been, I believe, the most important shipyard in the world. It is therefore a field of drama always, industrial and personal; yielding regular work for about twenty thousand souls – or suddenly not yielding it, or threatening uncertainty, or hinting at sudden marvels – it is forever a grey, hard centre of anxiety, great anxiety and great hope, for the poor man, and a theatre of stress and competition for tycoons. Wars, markets, trade routes, imperial and national ups and downs – these make the tides of good and bad fortune for Belfast.<sup>17</sup>

O'Brien's commentary demonstrates the often uncertain nature of employment for a shipyard worker. While the work provided by the yard may have been allocated to a majority of Protestants, the erratic market in which they operated meant that employment security was not always guaranteed. McAuley and McCormack have rescinded the notion that the Protestant working class constituted a 'labour aristocracy' in Northern Ireland and have noted that 'By the mid-1950s . . . it had become clear that the traditional industrial base of shipbuilding, textiles and engineering could not guarantee a viable and prosperous economy.'<sup>18</sup> In this environment a lack of education could have proved fatal to the aspirations of the Protestant working class.<sup>19</sup> For many it was precisely this fissure that made Protestant working-class males prone to a social and economic disparity with their Catholic counterparts who by the late 1960s had begun to see the progression of a first generation of adults who had benefited from the Education (Northern Ireland) Act of 1947.<sup>20</sup> The fact that the Troubles were on the horizon meant that any misery endured by the Protestant working class through the process of industrial decline would only be compounded by the problems which civil unrest brought.

Did the Protestant working class, then, enter the Troubles as a community that was disengaged from education? In a letter to Dawn Purvis dated 10 December 2010, regarding the report 'A Call to Action' mentioned above, Sir Ian Hall stated that

there seemed to be a heavy, complacent trend amongst the white working class population of sons following their fathers into 'trade union protected' jobs. This often produced a perception of a lack of need to gain qualifications. I predicted that these jobs would disappear as technology improved and that youth unemployment in the Protestant white working class boys sector would rise as a result of these changes. Some twenty years later, I find it personally sad that your report seems to confirm my earlier observations.<sup>21</sup>

While Hall's observations are illuminating and correct it is often forgotten, or perhaps conveniently overlooked, that because many of the jobs taken up by Protestants in the yard meant that much of it comprised a skilled and semi-skilled workforce, it was in fact necessary in many instances for workers to have attended a college or technical school; or perhaps, as is more likely, to have learned the skill on the job through vocational training. While the latter may not comprise educational experience in the academic sense it is still a valuable asset that many young Protestant males would have availed themselves of. Indeed, many of these skilled occupations would have led Protestants to join trade unions, meaning that a link was maintained with workers across the UK. The trade unions, like many schools and churches in Protestant working-class communities of the pre-Troubles generation, played a valuable role as a civilising influence on the skilled and semi-skilled Protestant workforce. While Hall rounds on the notion of 'trade union protected jobs' it is worth remembering that these trade unions and their representatives in many cases provided a reasonable voice from within the Protestant working class prior to the Troubles.<sup>22</sup> When the industries began to decline the strength of this connection with UK trade unions and Labour representatives in Westminster was severely tested. By the early 1970s the trade unions in Belfast were often reflecting the increasingly militant fabric of society, constituting as they did some key members of loyalist paramilitaries as union leaders.<sup>23</sup> The unskilled shipyard and engineer workers had historically never really been part of any trade union organisation<sup>24</sup> and sectarianism which had always thrived in this unprotected atmosphere<sup>25</sup> would expand further and more vociferously with the deindustrialisation and violence of the late 1960s and early 1970s.

### **John Malone and Orangefield Boys' Secondary School**

There were educators, even in the industrial heartlands of Protestant working-class Belfast, who felt that an educational ethos could co-exist quite comfortably with the expectation that young men enter the yard or other industries. John Malone, a member of the Victoria branch of the Northern Ireland Labour Party, was the head teacher at Orangefield Boys' Secondary School in East Belfast throughout the 1960s. Malone devoted a great deal of his time to working with and moulding the abilities of the individual rather than dictating by rote to the collection of pupils under his and his teachers' tutelage. Malone's task at the time was an unenviable one given that the MacBeath report on education in 1955 had stated that 'the great majority of pupils at secondary-intermediate schools probably are not intellectually equipped to pass any worthwhile examination'.<sup>26</sup> The MacBeath report appeared to sound a blunt death knell for the aspirations of working-class children in general and those from the Protestant working class in particular. Malone was, however, far from an obsequious part of the traditional educational system and his regime ushered in a positive era for education in Northern Ireland that has often been overlooked or ignored completely.

In an appraisal of Malone, his friend Maurice Hayes highlighted the gold standard that Malone set in his quest to make school appealing for boys who may otherwise have gone without a proper formal education. Hayes has stated that:

John Malone was one of the really great educators. A member of an old Downpatrick family, he had become headmaster of Orangefield, a new intermediate school catering for the east of the city. John set about transforming this into a comprehensive school in all but name. In doing so he set new standards for secondary schools in Belfast, and more widely.<sup>27</sup>

Stewart Parker, the renowned Belfast playwright who created dramatic masterpieces such as *Pentecost* (1987)<sup>28</sup> and *Spokesong* (1975),<sup>29</sup> had been taught by Malone in the 1950s



when he was a pupil and Malone a teacher at another East Belfast school – Ashfield Boys. The genesis of Malone's ethos was evident at this stage and was born from an eclectic array of influences. In a memorial lecture delivered by Parker at Queen's University Belfast in June 1986 he evangelised about the aura that lay behind his former drama teacher:

He was a true zealot for the emancipation of the mind and imagination, and for an educational system which would afford the greatest nurture to the least naturally endowed child in the most wretched environment in the land. It was a zeal which drew its force from such diverse traditions as Northern Irish Protestant radicalism, a particular brand of Christian socialism, and a Cambridge Leavisite aesthetic. It was a quietly crusading zeal which instinctively fixed on anything and everything within its ken as a potential learning resource . . .<sup>30</sup>

Malone's approach may have been unique but it is worth highlighting as an example of what occurred and what possibilities lay ahead in the future in terms of Protestant working-class attitudes to education and civic society. Testimonies of Malone's greatness pose searching questions of those who dismiss the Protestant working class in Belfast as an uneducated amalgam whose only role in society was to man the traditional industries. Malone was renowned for marshalling his underachieving charges to believe that they were the best schoolchildren around. This conviction that each boy was a unique individual with potential – whether academic or vocational – cuts against the analysis that young Protestant males from the inner city were automatons of the surrounding industries. Under Malone's guidance Orangefield was respectful of the 'yard' and other industries in the area. Ken Stanley, who taught in the school under John Malone and later became vice-principal under Malone's successor Brian Weston, remembered that Malone was keen to involve local business with Orangefield. Many of the houses within the school were named after nearby industries – a tradition that was maintained until 1974. Davidson House was named after Davidson Sirocco Works, Hughes House after the Hughes Tool Company, Musgrave after the Musgrave Company (later renamed O'Neill when Musgrave went bankrupt) and Bryson House after the Spence, Bryson and Co. Weaving Company.<sup>31</sup>

During Malone's tenure as head teacher of Orangefield he demonstrated his enthusiasm for educating his inner-city pupils in fresh and innovative ways. One of the most popular and significant aspects of Malone's 'alternative curriculum' was to bring pastoral care to an almost entirely new level. If the world of Orangefield's pupils was centred primarily on their immediate urban area then it was the aim of Malone and his teachers to broaden their worldview and immerse the boys in a completely different environment, away from the insularity of Belfast – something he considered crucial in their education and personal development. Malone began this process by bringing his pupils on annual trips to Shimna House, the Churches Youth Welfare Council's centre in Newcastle, County Down. This allowed the boys to experience the widely renowned scenery that was the 'Kingdom of Mourne'.<sup>32</sup> After Shimna House was sold in 1963<sup>33</sup> the school bought a house in Annalong which had been originally built in 1924 by the Belfast Water Commissioners to house the Contractor's Chief Engineer while the iconic Silent Valley reservoir near Kilkeel was being constructed.<sup>34</sup> It was this house, called Whinlands, which was eventually purchased by Orangefield in 1965 with the aid of a £5000 grant from the Carnegie Trust.<sup>35</sup> Whinlands was officially opened on 28 October 1967 by Prime Minister Terence O'Neill.<sup>36</sup> Neither Malone nor O'Neill, two liberals, were perhaps fully aware of how quickly society in Northern Ireland was about to change and affect their respective progressive-minded projects. Sections of the local press in the Mournes lauded Orangefield's use of Whinlands as being a unique scheme 'initiated by the staff and pupils of a boys' school in the heart of industrial Belfast'.<sup>37</sup> Trips to Whinlands

let the young boys from Orangefield see that there was life beyond the declining shipyards and deeply embedded sectarian attitudes in some parts of inner-city Belfast. Thompson Steele, another of the teachers who worked under Malone, has written that ‘it is also true that an important part of the education of children from an urban industrial environment is getting first hand understanding of life in a rural area’.<sup>38</sup>

The alumni of Orangefield pay an enduring tribute to the fact that education did play an important part in Protestant working-class communities and demonstrates the possibilities of what could be achieved with the right attitude on the part of educators. Van Morrison was a pupil when Malone was head teacher and the influence that this period had on him can be heard in the famous song ‘Orangefield’<sup>39</sup> as well as other recordings such as ‘Got To Go Back’<sup>40</sup> and ‘On Hyndford Street’.<sup>41</sup> Other past pupils who would go on to make their mark in society were the poet Gerald Dawe, the writer Brian Keenan and the late Ulster Volunteer Force member and Progressive Unionist Party leader David Ervine who encouraged loyalists to support the peace processes of the 1990s. An example of Malone’s positive relationship with his pupils can be seen in his success at encouraging Brian Keenan to return to Orangefield after he had previously left to begin a perhaps more typical pursuit of partaking in an apprenticeship as a heating engineer.<sup>42</sup> Dawe, recalling his days at Orangefield, wrote:

Orangefield was an extraordinary school; managed by John Malone in the heartland of east Belfast ... We were taught Keats and Shakespeare, Tennyson, and Wilfred Owen. Our history was mostly military; our geography geological and our sense of who we were was based exclusively on the city of Belfast that spread out before us like the palm of a hand.<sup>43</sup>

It would be erroneous to state that every pupil who passed through Orangefield’s doors during Malone’s tenure as head teacher found his progressive ethos positive or enlightening. The journalist Walter Ellis regarded a clear distinction between the grammar stream and A–D stream. Malone had set up the grammar stream to nurture the academic aspirations of those more bookish pupils who attended Orangefield but Ellis himself wrote in his autobiography of the “no-hoppers” who continued to make up the bulk of his (Malone’s) pupils’. Ellis remembers that the A–D stream had a ‘relentless diet of woodwork, metalwork and football – alleviated by self-help projects and occasional weekends at the school’s country cottage’.<sup>44</sup> Ellis’s recollections are at odds with the majority of accounts of the school at the time and, despite his misgivings, he previously admits in his autobiography of an admiration for Malone and several teachers who shared his vision.<sup>45</sup> While Ellis is quick to recount the monotony of woodwork and metalwork it is worth noting an anecdote about Malone which was remembered by Ken Stanley – a teacher at Orangefield from 1957 until 1990. Stanley recalls a pupil, when asked by Malone what he would like to do for a living, claiming that he would like to make magnificent trophies such as the FA Cup. Malone encouraged the boy to concentrate on metalwork classes. The boy in question went on to become a prominent silversmith in Belfast city centre as an adult.<sup>46</sup>

It was not only in the east of the city, at Orangefield, where this positive attitude existed among working-class Protestants towards education. In putting Malone and Orangefield forward as a case for an alternative perspective, compelling examples of a positive attitude towards education in Protestant working-class families can be brought to the fore and traced to other parts of the city in the decades before the Troubles.

### **Biographies of Protestant working-class attitudes to education prior to the Troubles**

While there may be a historical tendency to suggest that many of the contemporary problems in Protestant working-class communities have come from a lack of interest in



education attainment, there are testimonies from working-class Protestants who were educated prior to the Troubles, while the traditional industries thrived, which challenge this analysis. Although Orangefield had a progressive ethos there is evidence that this positive attitude towards education, arguably tied to an overall sense of civic pride, existed within the Protestant working class even before Malone's influence was felt in any earnest way. Henry Sinnerton, who would become a teacher at Orangefield during the Malone era and who also wrote an acclaimed biography of that other Orangefield alumnus David Irvine, recalls growing up in West Belfast in a staunchly working-class family whose parents put a strong emphasis on education over the traditional path into industry. Sinnerton strongly refutes the allegation that education was never taken seriously by those in the Protestant working class, stating that:

According to the thesis I should have gone into Mackies ... my mother and father would have fought tooth and nail to keep my brother and I out of Mackies. They didn't want us to be anywhere near Mackies, or the shipyard or whatever; and yet we lived in the shadow of it [Mackies] – in fact the bloody soot fell on my mother's washing virtually every Monday morning! She took us away from Springfield Primary School to the Model. My family life demolishes that thesis.<sup>47</sup>

Baroness May Blood, a prominent community worker on the Shankill Road and Member of the House of Lords, remembers growing up in Belfast during the 1940s and 1950s with a father who advocated education, and languages in particular, as means of progression. Unlike Sinnerton, Blood had a definite ambition to become a teacher and her disappointment at not being able to get a place at the school of her choice led her to retreat from formal education. Blood's attitude to school suggests a person who was ambitious but perhaps in a narrow sense. She remembers:

My father wanted me to go Grosvenor High and learn language – he said the future of the world was in language. I wanted to be a schoolteacher. I hated school, but I thought the teacher had some power and I wanted some of that. Grosvenor High accepted ... and because Grosvenor had offered me a first place, Methody couldn't. I said to my dad 'Well if I can't go to Methody, I'm not going anywhere' and I went to a wee school in Sandy Row and wasted the next four years of my life. I think most of my contemporaries would have done the same thing.<sup>48</sup>

Despite her father's encouragement to learn a language May Blood decided to reject Grosvenor and went to Linfield Secondary School in Blythe Street.<sup>49</sup> Linfield was a school situated beside a well-known mill in a staunchly loyalist area of South Central Belfast. Compellingly Blood's father was encouraging her to develop a broader world view which he obviously felt would be of benefit to her employment opportunities. By encouraging his daughter to focus on the potential that learning a language could offer to both her social progress and worldview, it is evident that he saw a life beyond the traditional industries for her. At the same time she had aspirations of her own to become a teacher; no matter how narrow the origins of those aspirations may appear. It is something which may seem incongruous given her eventual career as a mill worker; a job she, like many of her contemporaries, stayed in for a long period of time. Blood was actually later afforded an education when as a shop steward she joined the Transport and General Workers' Union, which dispels the notions that education and industry have been mutually exclusive in the Protestant working class.<sup>50</sup>

In the early to mid-1980s Graham Reid, a Protestant playwright from the Donegall Road area of South Belfast, had a series of his plays commissioned for television by BBC Northern Ireland. These plays famously became known as the 'Billy Plays' and are remembered fondly to this day. The plays were set in a Belfast Protestant working-class

community and the narrative is based around the relationships of a family and their close friends. It has been argued that for the first time these plays portrayed the Protestant working class in a manner in which they themselves would recognise their own lives on television.<sup>51</sup> Although filmed and set in the period from the republican hunger strikes to the Anglo-Irish Agreement in the early–mid-1980s, there is a tangible perception that Reid was writing about both the present and the past in the Protestant working-class community in which he had grown up.<sup>52</sup> In a 1984 article for the cultural magazine *Fortnight* Reid mused upon the filming of the Billy Plays in the tight-knit streets around Belfast's Donegall Road –

old neighbours approach me. They smile and congratulate me; they say I've put Coolderry Street on the map. Do they know why I've put Coolderry Street on the map – do they see what I see, hear what I hear, when I watch my 'Plays for Today' ... that they are all about yesterday?<sup>53</sup>

In the last of the Billy Plays, *A Coming to Terms for Billy*, which was broadcast in 1984, one of Billy's young sisters admonishes her Uncle Andy, saying 'My teacher says that language is a tool that should be properly used.'<sup>54</sup> A community such as that depicted in the Billy Plays which is set in the Protestant Donegall Road, despite having suffered throughout the Troubles and experiencing a loss of jobs due to the changing nature of the labour market, had at its core a strong network of churches, schools and trade unions. These were all crucial facets which would prove to be vital when a moderating voice was required from within the Protestant working class. Elements of this can be seen in the Billy Plays, and education is central to this. Indeed, interviewed years later about the plays, Kenneth Branagh stated that they symbolised the 'end of a kind of working class life'.<sup>55</sup>

Community and family networks were crucial in maintaining a sense of civic mindedness in the Protestant working class, and even those who failed the Eleven Plus examination were encouraged to embrace the opportunities that education afforded. Failing the Eleven Plus was not always seen as the end of the line which many view it as being today. John Crossan became head teacher of Mount Gilbert Community College which, before its closure in 2007 due to a declining intake, was the last secondary school in the Shankill area of Belfast. He had failed his Eleven Plus at Grove Primary School in North Belfast in 1964 and so instead of being able to take a place at his preferred option of Belfast Royal Academy he became a pupil at Dunlambert Secondary School (now Castle High School). He maintains that the general attitude which prevailed at the time both at home and in the school was to 'get stuck in ... work hard ... it was "if you get knocked down, pick yourself up and make it twice as hard for them to knock you down again" ... just old-fashioned hard work'.<sup>56</sup>

Crossan recalls that in 1964, when he couldn't get into the grammar school, the perception might have been that young men and women could go to the secondary school where the best they might hope for would be to get a job in the mill on leaving. This perception led to a feeling among young men like Crossan that they had been labelled as failures and that their destiny was to be a labourer in the mill and nothing more. Crossan's father, however, was an ex-regimental sergeant major in the army during the Second World War who later became a supervisor in York Street Flax spinning mill and then when the flax and the linen died away became a supervisor in Gallaher's tobacco factory. He supplemented his employment experience by attending the technical college in order to gain further education. Crossan's father, empowered by his own self-development, said 'No son of mine is gonna work in the mill!' Crossan's father advised him to 'Get into your room and study hard and work hard and see where you can get.'<sup>57</sup> Ken Reid, the political

correspondent for Ulster Television Live, attended Forthriver Primary School in the Shankill area. Like Crossan, Reid was a child of the 1960s when the aura was one of increasing societal geniality and educational progressiveness. Unlike Crossan, Reid passed the Eleven Plus while attending Forthriver Primary in the Shankill area in 1966 and he remembers the emphasis put on education by the aspiring Protestant working class in which he grew up just as the Troubles were on the verge of fulminating. He recalls that there were two Primary Seven classes in Forthriver and that in his class thirty out of thirty-one pupils passed the Eleven Plus. Such a statistic would appear anathematic to those in 2011 who claim that industry was the prop which held the Protestant working class together in lieu of a social culture in which educational achievement was valued. Reid states:

Now that was '66 so that was three years before the upheaval of the Troubles where the whole socio-economic fabric of that area changed but there was no doubt education was a very high priority. My parents wanted me to go to Methody, which I achieved – there were about four or five others went there as well. Many went to BRA and also a school like the Boys' Model at that time was a comprehensive in that it had a grammar stream and a lot of people went there and did particularly well.<sup>58</sup>

These biographical observations regarding positive attitudes to education in Protestant working-class communities before the Troubles are recollections which have been conveniently overlooked in recent analyses of Northern Ireland's post-war and Troubles history. By neglecting these testimonies a simplistic narrative has been allowed to develop regarding the urban Protestant working class and their relationship with, and attitude to, education. While these experiences were by no means universal they demonstrate that within many Protestant working-class schools, families and communities education was viewed as being a 'step up' in the world and a means by which to improve both the self and society generally. Raising awareness of these biographies and experiences provides a sense of the kind of civic momentum which was being charged within Protestant working-class communities prior to the Troubles.

### **The onset of the Troubles: the erosion of civic structures and detrimental effects on schooling in the late 1960s and early 1970s**

Malone's continuation of Orangefield's links with local industries demonstrates that although education was considered to be important, industry was valued and was regarded as an integral focus point for many social activities within the Protestant working class in the post-war and pre-Troubles era. Indeed, it often appeared that industry was a kind of social glue that held Protestant working-class communities together. Interestingly the mills where Catholics and Protestants worked side by side offered an opportunity for people from different religious backgrounds to co-exist on a social basis. Nelson McCausland, the DUP MLA for North Belfast has stated that:

there's a strong argument that it was the loss of those mills in the early 60s, where Protestants and Catholics from the Shankill and the Falls worked together, which enabled the situation to arise in the late 60s where you had the Troubles, because people who did not previously live together, and certainly weren't educated together, at least worked together ...<sup>59</sup>

The social activities provided by the mills and described by McCausland developed the sense of 'across the divide' working-class camaraderie which became submerged with the onset of the Troubles.

Schools and education, like other institutions such as the aforementioned industries, and the Churches and their associated uniformed organisations, would be brutally affected by the detrimental onset of the violence which arose in Northern Ireland throughout the

late 1960s and early 1970s. Localised experiences of intimidation, violence and population movement would see the civic worlds of many Protestant working-class communities turned upside down. There was a tangible concern very early on in the conflict that education would suffer due to the increasing levels of violence, and in January 1970 John Malone was temporarily seconded from his position as head teacher at Orangefield to investigate the contribution that schools might make to improve community relations. The report that Malone penned was published in 1972 and was entitled 'Schools Project in Community Relations'.<sup>60</sup> Though the report was not intended to be an appraisal of his own efforts, the reportage of pre-1969 schooling demonstrated the contribution which he himself had made in at least attempting to turn the tide in a more positive direction in Protestant schools.

The comparison of the years leading up to conflict with those which followed in the early 1970s makes for depressing, if predictable, reading. Malone reported that 'Prior to 1969 there were signs in "Protestant" schools of greater openness to Irish history, literature, dance and music.'<sup>61</sup> While this change in mood might partly have reflected a more general sense of openness that was pervasive in Britain at the time, and which was being spearheaded by an explosion in pop culture, in 1960s Belfast – culturally at least (not entirely unique in its historical context) – it does perhaps reflect the trend that was growing in some Protestant educators' minds towards an integrated system. This was regarded by some as the medicine which might have cured Northern Ireland's social and institutional ills. Malone's observation supports the image of Northern Ireland in the 1960s as developing into a more open and liberal society than perhaps existed previously. John Crossan, who attended the Protestant school Dunlambert College in North Belfast during the mid-1960s, remembers a similar mood:

We used to have the girls over from Dominican College when we were in Sixth Form to try and learn a bit of Irish, so that even though we might not have agreed with the politics ... the argument being 'if you're going to disagree, disagree from a point of knowledge, rather than a point of this is just the way you've been brought up'.<sup>62</sup>

Northern Ireland in general and Belfast in particular had, however, borne witness to sporadic episodes of inter-communal violence for years, and the old traditional sectarian enmities were never far beneath the surface in neighbouring Catholic and Protestant communities. Throughout the mid- to late 1960s there was an undercurrent of Protestant fear and paranoia at the ecumenical and modernising moves being made by the Ulster Unionist leader and prime minister of Northern Ireland Captain Terence O'Neill.<sup>63</sup> These fears were inflamed by the rise of the Reverend Ian Paisley who used his evangelical rhetoric to persuade Protestants that the year 1966 would see a republican insurgency to celebrate the fiftieth anniversary of the 1916 Easter Rising.<sup>64</sup> This sour mood was exacerbated by the agitating of disenchanted backbenchers in O'Neill's cabinet who felt that the prime minister's progressive actions were undermining what was previously regarded as being a solidly Protestant state. The emergence of the modern Ulster Volunteer Force in 1966 represented the calcification of this negative atmosphere.<sup>65</sup> By the early 1970s the spirit of integration which many had considered to be growing in Protestant schools during the 1960s, according to Malone, had been 'overlaid ... by the recrudescence of traditional antagonism and suspicion'.<sup>66</sup>

Malone's report suggests that it was not only the highly charged influence of the fledgling loyalist paramilitaries that was having a negative effect on Protestant school children but that political influences were also at work with large numbers of children walking out of school to attend meetings and rallies that corresponded with school hours.

Mentioning a starkly changing trend from earlier more positive observations, Protestant school teachers had, by the early 1970s, begun to sense emotional frustration emanating from their pupils who had by this stage begun to demand commemorations for soldiers, just as the IRA dead were being commemorated in nationalist areas. Malone bemoaned the sudden eradication of tolerance and understanding in schools and made direct mention of the Vanguard movement which he supposed had contributed to 'much more aggressive militant attitudes' being displayed by pupils at the time.<sup>67</sup> Graham Reid, the writer behind the popular Billy Plays, has written about the malignant effect that paramilitaries have had on Protestant working-class young people's attitudes to education and social mobility. Reid's experiences tie in with Malone's observations. David Grant, for example, has observed that

The sense of betrayal felt by working-class protestants was also at the heart of Graham Reid's *The Hidden Curriculum*. Two recent school leavers return to visit their former teacher and one of them proceeds to educate him about how little he really knows about the lives of his pupils, dominated as they are by paramilitary repression . . .<sup>68</sup>

Intriguingly, Malone highlighted the most general and widespread effect of the outbreak of conflict to be, in his opinion, an explosion of what he termed 'peer sub-cultures'.<sup>69</sup> There can be little doubt that Malone was referring to the Fianna groups which had begun to appear in republican areas and the Tartan gangs of similar ilk in loyalist districts. There has been no consensus on how the Tartans got their name. Mainly young Protestant males from working-class estates in Belfast, they dressed in tartan scarves and trousers. This was either in homage to three young Scottish soldiers from the Royal Highland Fusiliers – brothers John and Joseph McCaig and Dougal McCaughey, who had been murdered by the IRA in March 1971 – or it was an attempt to copy the Scottish pop group of the time, the Bay City Rollers. It is likely that the tartan fashion was a nod to both of these things. It would be careless to underestimate the importance of the Tartans in Protestant working-class areas at the time, and indeed the effect that they had on young working-class males. Realistically, the main reason why many youths joined the Tartans was to meet up with other like-minded working-class males in large groups and fight turf-wars with each other and their Catholic counterparts before marching to Windsor Park to watch Linfield Football Club on a Saturday. The environment which they originated from is, however, important. Unlike other many other socially and culturally motivated youth gangs in cities across the UK such as Glasgow and London, the Tartans provided young loyalists in areas such as East Belfast and Rathcoole a collective voice for their frustrations at the changing nature of society in Belfast throughout the early 1970s. In this respect many of their activities went far beyond the normal counter-cultural behaviour of youth groups in the rest of the UK.

*Time* magazine ran an article entitled 'Teddy Boys with Tartans' on 29 May 1972 that made specific mention of how the mood in Northern Ireland was contributing to the aggressive psyche of the Tartans:

In another era, the Tartan gangs would be written off as adolescents bored with the drabness of back-street Belfast, much like Teddy Boys of London in the mid-'50s. But Ulster's political chaos has turned them into defenders of the faith who have the tacit approval of many adult Protestants.<sup>70</sup>

Whereas this 'angry young man' syndrome would have contributed to a cultural grouping such as the Teddy Boys, or later the 'mods and rockers' phenomenon in the UK, the Tartans in Northern Ireland often saw their aggression utilised by the older men in the paramilitaries to produce new recruits for organisations such as the Ulster Volunteer Force



and the Ulster Defence Association. Tartans often marshalled the large Vanguard political rallies which were organised by William Craig around Northern Ireland in the early 1970s and created a climate of fear in their own communities. Darby and Morris have noted this:

An example of what can happen when a community becomes polarised through intimidation and mass hysteria is seen in the Rathcoole Cinema meeting called in mid-October 1972 to discuss intimidation and other problems of the Estate. At this meeting there was an eruption of youth frustration which resulted in the Tartan element venting their antagonism against local council members. The meeting ended in disruption.<sup>71</sup>

The prevalence of this reckless behaviour must have affected young Protestant males' attitudes towards formal education. Darby and Morris continue:

The importance of gangs has increased, especially in Protestant areas where absenteeism is common-place and where gangs, especially Tartan gangs, have often been responsible for the intimidation of families. It is difficult however to assess how many of these changes were the result specifically of intimidation as distinct from the general violence in Northern Ireland.<sup>72</sup>

It is certain that the emergence of groups such as the Tartans and the arousal of ethnic passions at the time caused many young Protestant working-class males' interest in education, and commitment to organisations such as the Boys' Brigade, to fall by the wayside. This process eroded any previous civic culture and distanced the Protestant working class from those industrial communities in the UK to which they had felt akin to for so many years previously. The effects of this disengagement can still be seen in the problems which affect the Protestant working-class communities mentioned in 'A Call to Action'.

### **The effect of violence and population movement on education and civic structures in Protestant working-class areas during the early 1970s**

Events in 1971 conspired to harden attitudes on both sides of the community in Northern Ireland. For the Protestant working class the possibilities for congeniality that had emerged in the early 1960s, and which were embodied by John Malone's educational ethos, began to fall rapidly by the wayside. On 9 August 1971 internment was introduced by the Brian Faulkner-led Stormont government, despite the reservations of the British military forces. An overwhelming majority of those interned were from Catholic working-class areas and many were uninvolved in republican paramilitary activities, leading to a violent backlash, particularly over the space of the two days following 9 August. The ferocity of the violence at interfaces, particularly in North Belfast, led many Protestants to feel unsafe in the areas they had inhabited for many decades.

The *News Letter* in Belfast reported that on the night of Sunday 8 August, a van had toured the 'mixed' streets of Ardoyne and over a loudspeaker warned Protestant families that if they did not leave they would be burned out of their homes.<sup>73</sup> On 10 August 1971 the *Belfast Telegraph* carried stories which suggested that there were factors behind the events of 9 and 10 August which ran deeper than immediate fears over republican violence in the aftermath of internment. Some articles provide straightforward coverage and indicate that people in interface areas instinctively moved to save themselves from the lingering fear of reprisals from bitter republicans: 'There were reports today that Protestant families in Alliance Avenue began leaving their homes this afternoon. Men hi-jacked lorries and vans on the main Shankill Road to carry away furniture and other belongings. First estimates said that 50 families were involved.'<sup>74</sup>

Other news stories demonstrate how the curious mixture of fear and cynicism at the violence emanating in Catholic working-class areas following internment was affecting Protestant mind-sets in North Belfast. For example, in its coverage of events



the *Belfast Telegraph* reported that 240 houses in Farringdon Gardens, Cranbrook Gardens and Velsheda Park had been set on fire by outgoing Protestants while families fled the New Ardoyne. According to a colourful report in the paper:

A Protestant man, who also lost all his possession [*sic*], including a television set, a radiogram and records, seemed to think the burning of the houses was the right thing to do. Mr Basil Houston said that if Catholics wanted houses they should build them and pay a proper rent, and not get cheap rents in the area.<sup>75</sup>

The sentiments expressed by Houston were perhaps indicative of how the mood was changing among working-class Protestants who had been living in areas which had been affected by or were close to the increasing levels of republican violence. This 'devil may care' attitude to the destruction of property in the face of imminent inward Catholic movement was arguably indicative of a larger psychological malaise which was taking place within certain working-class Protestant communities at this time. The burning of the houses in the area in which Houston had lived was evidence of a soberly orchestrated campaign carried out by Protestant extremists to ensure that Catholics would not take up residence in the houses that had been vacated by Protestants. What otherwise might have been regarded as criminal behaviour in previous decades by working-class Protestants in this particular area was now seen as a just act under the prevailing circumstances.

The authors of the *FLIGHT* report which was commissioned later in 1971 by the Community Relations Commission Research Unit estimated that 70% of the outbound movement from New Ardoyne was by Protestant families, eighty of whom sought sanctuary in the Ballysillan estates of Silverstream, Benview and Tyndale, with another fifty-six families moving to Glencairn and with further Protestant migration to areas such as Woodvale and Shankill, along the Shore Road, out to Glengormley, Rathcoole and Monkstown and across to East Belfast, in particular to Dundonald.<sup>76</sup> The authors of the *FLIGHT* report concluded their study with an attempt to rationalise the events of the previous August. Looking beyond the populist proclamations of the politicians and commentators on each side, the report tried to provide a sober analysis of the events of August 1971 and argued that

What may be explained as a sinister attempt by Protestant extremists to evict Catholics and evacuate Protestants prior to some desperate paramilitary adventure may also be explained as a rational attempt by Protestant street militants to rehouse Protestant families from the margins of Catholic areas where tension is getting too high.<sup>77</sup>

Darby and Morris, in a 1974 research paper, described the 'dramatic effects'<sup>78</sup> that the unrest and population movement caused by the introduction of internment had on the character of an area in North Belfast called 'The Bone'. In August 1971, according to Darby and Morris, 140 families left the area and only 61 moved in. Protestants, alarmed at the escalation of violence, left Catholic streets. Catholics living in Protestant areas such as the nearby Ballysillan estates moved out as Protestants moved in. Catholics returned to 'their' part of The Bone with the result being that

the Catholic Bone became seriously overcrowded and the Protestant Bone contained many empty houses. In a matter of weeks the Catholic ghetto spread across the Oldpark Road for the first time into the area known as the Ballybone. Autumn and winter 1971/1972 saw further fluctuations in the population of The Bone. Protestants began to leave the area around the Ballybone ...<sup>79</sup>

One of the dramatic effects that the population movement in North Belfast had at this time was on children's schooling. A case in point is the example of Finiston Primary which was at the time a Protestant school in the Bone area in the middle of the Oldpark Road.

When Protestants left the streets in the Ballybone and the Bone during the autumn and winter of 1971/1972, the ability of Finiston to attract new children was drastically affected by the increasing polarisation and threat of sectarian violence which had emerged along the Oldpark Road, which was now complexly divided on sectarian lines. Figures provided by Darby and Morris at the time for school enrolment in areas of North and East Belfast are a stark demonstration of how the education of both Protestant and Catholic children was affected during this tumultuous period. The detrimental effect that the violence had on enrolment to Finiston Primary demonstrates how the Protestant population in specific areas of North Belfast had declined dramatically over a relatively short period of time (see Table 1).

Anthony Bailey, a journalist with *The New Yorker*, wrote an article in 1973 about Finiston Primary School and the Protestant community of the Oldpark Road in general. It was entitled simply 'On the Oldpark, Belfast'. Bailey interviewed teachers and children from the school which by 1973 was doubling up as a British army barracks. One Primary Seven pupil, called Christine Lavery, wrote in a school essay dated 16 May 1973 that:

Our school is not very big and there are not very many people in it. We have soldiers taking over the front of it. Not long ago a rocket hit the side of the building and though no one was hurt, lots of mothers took their children away to another school, afraid of what might happen next time. There is around 250 at our school that is half the amount that used to be at our school before the trouble started.<sup>80</sup>

Bailey's article suggests that even when the disintegration of normal society had already begun in earnest, children in what was an extremely deprived area of North Belfast were actively engaged by the positive perspective that education could provide them with in their day-to-day life. Indeed, Bailey observed that

The children do a lot of work in project books, compiling essays, pictures, maps, and photographs on subjects that interest them: Florence Nightingale; Finiston School; the shipyards of Belfast. Russell (the head teacher at Finiston) says 'Many of the children don't know the date of Waterloo, or even the name of the Prime Minister. But they can tell you what a medieval Japanese costume looked like, because they've just finished a project on Japan.'<sup>81</sup>

It is perhaps remarkable that in the context of the security situation in North Belfast during the early 1970s there remained attempts to apply much of Malone's ethos to children's education:

In P-7, Hutton has pinned up a traditional-looking timetable allotting various hours to various subjects, but he treats this as a very rough guide. More often than not, one group in his class will be studying sets while another is model-making, another is writing poetry, and another is working on a project connected with a trip to Scotland. Lectures by the teacher and textbooks have been a good deal replaced by 'discovery methods' – groups working on joint activities that may bring together in various ways aspects of traditional subjects, with each of the children pursuing his own strongest interests.

Bailey notes that the headmaster Russell was at the time unsure of 'the new methods'<sup>82</sup> in education. Aside from that criticism, Bailey's article demonstrates that despite the depressing statistics on enrolment provided by Darby and Morris, there was evidence of a school fighting against a very immediate and damaging tide of violence and poverty.

Table 1.

	Sep 1970	Sep 1971	Sep 1972	Jan 1973
Children Enrolled	438	345	266	236

It is not unreasonable to suggest that had the Troubles not emerged with such ferocity in the late 1960s and early 1970s, schools such as Finiston would have had the opportunity to develop a new and dynamic learning ethos which would have invigorated and empowered the Protestant working class, thus leaving that community less prone to the problems which were wrought by deindustrialisation and the associated problems of unemployment and poverty. With the rise of gangs such as the Tartans and the increasing influence of the loyalist paramilitaries in tandem with the decline of the influence of the church and reasonable trade union voices, this 'damaging tide' would only increase in ferocity.

### Conclusions

For the root causes of some of the problems that persistently blight urban Protestant working-class communities in Belfast it is crucial to engage in historical analysis. While it would be easy to draw a distinct line between education and industry to explain some of the employment and educational problems which faced the Protestant working class in the post-Belfast Agreement phase, more scrutiny is needed to explain the nuanced problems which the Protestant working class have faced from 'pre-Troubles' to 'post-conflict'. The loss of industry may have been traumatic but there are factors to take into consideration when attempting to understand the current problems faced by the Protestant working class. In the early 1970s the community spirit of the Protestant working class that was evident prior to the conflict was consigned to the dustbin of history. The destruction and decimation of a previously solid network of working-class communities which often had at their core a sense of civic pride was spurred by the terrorist campaign of the IRA. In tandem with republican violence there was and continues to be the stranglehold with which loyalist paramilitaries hold the urban Protestant working-class communities from which they evolved. The civic-mindedness that was lost in the early years of the Troubles has thus never been allowed to recover properly. For those who succeeded in education and lived through the rapid changes experienced by the Protestant working class in the early 1970s there was a keen sense of a civic world which was lost in the midst of the violence. Ken Reid, who was educated on the Shankill and grew up in Rosebank Street on the nearby Crumlin Road in North Belfast during the late 1960s, has described his perception of how the early period of the conflict deeply affected working-class Protestant communities. Reid recalls that the paramilitaries became the dominant force at a time when hundreds of people were being killed on the streets of Belfast as sectarian assassinations increased.<sup>83</sup> Reid perceives that at this point, in the early 1970s, '... the Protestant working class community actually broke down and became like an underclass controlled by the paramilitaries, and education wasn't a factor'.<sup>84</sup>

The decline of civic structures, of which education was a major casualty, has been due in large part to the effect of the Troubles on the Protestant working-class community which in the early 1970s was also experiencing dramatically irreversible industrial decline. Population movements in Greater Belfast which followed the violence that accompanied the introduction of internment without trial in August 1971 meant that Protestant church congregations dwindled and school attendances dropped significantly. Another trauma experienced by the loss of the civic fabric that existed in the era prior to the Troubles was that the Protestant working class became cut adrift from the wider working-class communities of the UK. Previously the Protestant working class could see their day-to-day hopes and aspirations, and struggles and disappointments reflected in the experiences of the working-class communities in similar industrial cities in the rest of the UK. When the Troubles were visited on society in Northern Ireland the ordinary

experiences that had previously been shared with the industrial working classes across the UK incrementally fell by the wayside and the Protestant working class in Belfast began to feel alienated from the constitutional arrangement that had been a source of increasing succour in the years following the Second World War. As this link was weakened so was the Protestant working class's ability to engage in the evolution of notions of Britishness – a debate which is still contemporaneous. Given this isolation from debates over the changing nature of British identity, it can be of little surprise that often commentators such as Bruce have observed that 'when Ulster Protestants talk about being British, it is clear that the Britain they have in mind is no more recent than the 1950s, and often their points of reference are positively Victorian'.<sup>85</sup>

Despite the erosion of a sense of unity with the industrial working class in the UK, during the Troubles the Protestant working class managed to appear vigorous and unified on a number of occasions in order to demonstrate unionism's opposition to political changes which were felt to be disadvantageous to the wider Protestant community. In May 1974 the loyalist paramilitaries, backed by an increasingly militant trade union presence, underpinned a large-scale front against the Sunningdale Agreement and the resultant power-sharing executive at Stormont. While the day-to-day running of the May 1974 strike might have resurrected a sense of community and camaraderie within the Protestant working class it is debatable whether this represented a re-visitation of a previously existent civic culture. Despite being a strong demonstration of Protestant working-class solidarity, the 1974 strike does not constitute anything more significant than a counter-demonstration against the contemporary political situation. Although the UDA and the other loyalist paramilitaries which were involved in the strike managed to maintain a vaguely respectable veneer so as not to alienate those from within the Protestant middle class<sup>86</sup> who were also opposed to Sunningdale, their very presence in society at all suggests that a severe authority vacuum had formed within Protestant working-class communities since the start of the Troubles. The civic culture in its truest sense which had existed prior to the conflict had been formed around networks of families, churches, trade unions, schools and youth groups. It was these networks which by the mid-1970s were becoming obsolete, and their absence continues to blight the Protestant working class in the current political era.

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### Notes

1. Simms, *Farewell to the Hammer*, 107.
2. Langhammer, 'Cutting with the Grain'.
3. Northern Ireland Assembly Committee for Education. Official Report (Hansard), 14 December 2011. <http://www.niassembly.gov.uk/Assembly-Business/Official-Report/Meetings-of-Assembly-Committees-Minutes-of-Evidence/Committee-for-Education--Educational-Disadvantage-and-the-Protestant-Working-Class-A-Call-to-Action/>.
4. Northern Ireland Assembly Official Report (Hansard), 31 May 2011. <http://www.niassembly.gov.uk/record/reports2011/110531.htm#3>.
5. See Orr, *New Loyalties*, 5.

6. 'A Call to Action: Educational Disadvantage and the Protestant Working Class' (2011). [http://www.nicva.org/sites/default/files/A-Call-to-Action-FINAL-March2011\\_0.pdf](http://www.nicva.org/sites/default/files/A-Call-to-Action-FINAL-March2011_0.pdf).
7. Ibid.
8. Ibid.
9. Ibid.
10. See, for example, the interview with the UDA-linked Ulster Political Research Group's spokesperson Frankie Gallagher in Gallagher, *After the Peace*, 71. Gallagher states:
 

It isn't unlike any country in the world where if your father was a coppersmith or your father was a welder, you would want your son [to do the same]. I mean, look at the steel industry and all the rest of it. Or the motor industry. You know, you have six, seven generations of kids there. We were no different.
11. Howe, 'Mad Dogs and Ulstermen'.
12. Walker, 'Loyalist Culture, Unionist Politics'.
13. The loss of life, particularly among men from the UVF-linked 36th Ulster Division, at the Somme battle during the First World War had a major impact on the Protestant and unionist community and the manner in which it commemorates its war dead.
14. 'Literature's Loose Cannon', *The Guardian*, 23 March 2002.
15. Thompson, *Over the Bridge*.
16. Northern Ireland Assembly (Hansard), 14 May 1959.
17. Craig, *The Belfast Anthology*, 71.
18. McAuley and McCormack. 'The Protestant Working Class in Northern Ireland since 1930 – A Problematic Relationship', in Hutton and Stewart, *Ireland's Histories*, 118.
19. For a good contemporary example of the temperamental and often unfair nature of shipyard work in the 1960s see Sams and Simpson. 'A Case Study of a Shipbuilding Redundancy in Northern Ireland', 267–82.
20. See Edwards, "'Unionist Derry" is Ulster's Panama', 365–6.
21. 'A Call to Action'.
22. Langhammer, 'Cutting with the Grain'.
23. See Boulton, *The UVF*, 137.
24. Devlin, 'A Hard Labour', 17.
25. McAuley, *The Politics of Identity*, 16.
26. Sinnerton, *David Ervine*, 17.
27. Hayes, *Minority Verdict*, 90.
28. Parker, *Plays 2*.
29. Parker, *Plays*.
30. Parker, 'Dramatis Personae'.
31. Author interview with Ken Stanley, 2 April 2007.
32. Steele, 'Whinlands, 1965–92', 4.
33. Ibid.
34. 'Whinlands Field Centre (Annalong)', pamphlet produced by school – date of publication unknown, possibly 1990.
35. Ibid.
36. Steele, 'Whinlands, 1965–92', 6.
37. 'Unique Scheme at Annalong', *The Outlook*, 4 March 1966.
38. Steele, 'Whinlands, 1965–92'.
39. Features in the album *Avalon Sunset* (1989).
40. Features in the album *No Guru, No Method, No Teacher* (1986).
41. Features in the album *Hymns to the Silence* (1991).
42. Hayes, *Minority Verdict*, 90.
43. Dawe, 'Finding the Language', 15.
44. Ellis, *The Beginning of the End*, 78.
45. Ibid., 72.
46. Author interview with Ken Stanley, 2 April 2007.
47. Author interview with Henry Sinnerton, 5 April 2007.
48. Author interview with Baroness May Blood, 15 August 2006.
49. Blood, *Watch My Lips*, 11.
50. Author interview with Baroness May Blood, 15 August 2006.

51. Walker, 'The Fragmentation of Ulster Unionism', in Busteed, Neal, and Tonge, *Irish Protestant Identities*, 367.
52. Reid had moved to London by the time the plays were broadcast.
53. Reid, 'Growing Up in the Cradle of the Cherry-picker', 30.
54. *A Coming to Terms for Billy*, BBC Television, 1984.
55. BBC Northern Ireland, 19 December 2006.
56. Author interview with John Crossan, 24 April 2008.
57. Ibid.
58. Author interview with Ken Reid, UTV, 28 April 2008.
59. Author interview with Nelson McCausland, DUP, 5 July 2006.
60. Malone, 'Schools Project in Community Relations'.
61. Ibid., 2.
62. Author interview with John Crossan, 28 April 2008.
63. O'Neill, *The Autobiography of Terence O'Neill*.
64. Paulin, 'Paisley's Progress', in Paulin, *Ireland and the English Crisis*.
65. Boulton, *The UVF*.
66. Malone, 'Schools Project in Community Relations', 2.
67. Ibid.
68. Grant, 'Theatre – the Playwrights and their Plays', in Carruthers and Douds, *Stepping Stones*, 37.
69. Malone, 'Schools Project in Community Relations', 3.
70. 'Teddy Boys with Tartan', *Time*, 29 May 1972.
71. Darby and Morris, *Intimidation in Housing*, 88.
72. Ibid., 86.
73. *News Letter*, 10 August 1971.
74. *Belfast Telegraph*, 9 August 1971.
75. *Belfast Telegraph*, 10 August 1971.
76. *FLIGHT*.
77. Ibid.
78. Darby and Morris, *Intimidation in Housing*, 39.
79. Ibid., 40.
80. Bailey, 'On the Oldpark, Belfast', in Bailey, *Acts of Union*, 5.
81. Ibid., 25.
82. Ibid.
83. Dillon and Lehane, *Political Murder in Northern Ireland*.
84. Author interview with Ken Reid, Ulster Television Political Correspondent, 28 April 2008.
85. Bruce, *Paisley*, 256.
86. Anderson, *14 May Days*, 148.

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