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# The Roots Of Bloody Sunday

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**THE ROOTS OF BLOODY SUNDAY**

by

**JAMES CAMPBELL**

**THESIS**

Submitted to the Graduate School

of Wayne State University,

Detroit, Michigan

in partial fulfillment of the requirements

for the degree of

**MASTER OF ARTS**

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MAJOR: HISTORY

Approved by:

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Advisor

Date

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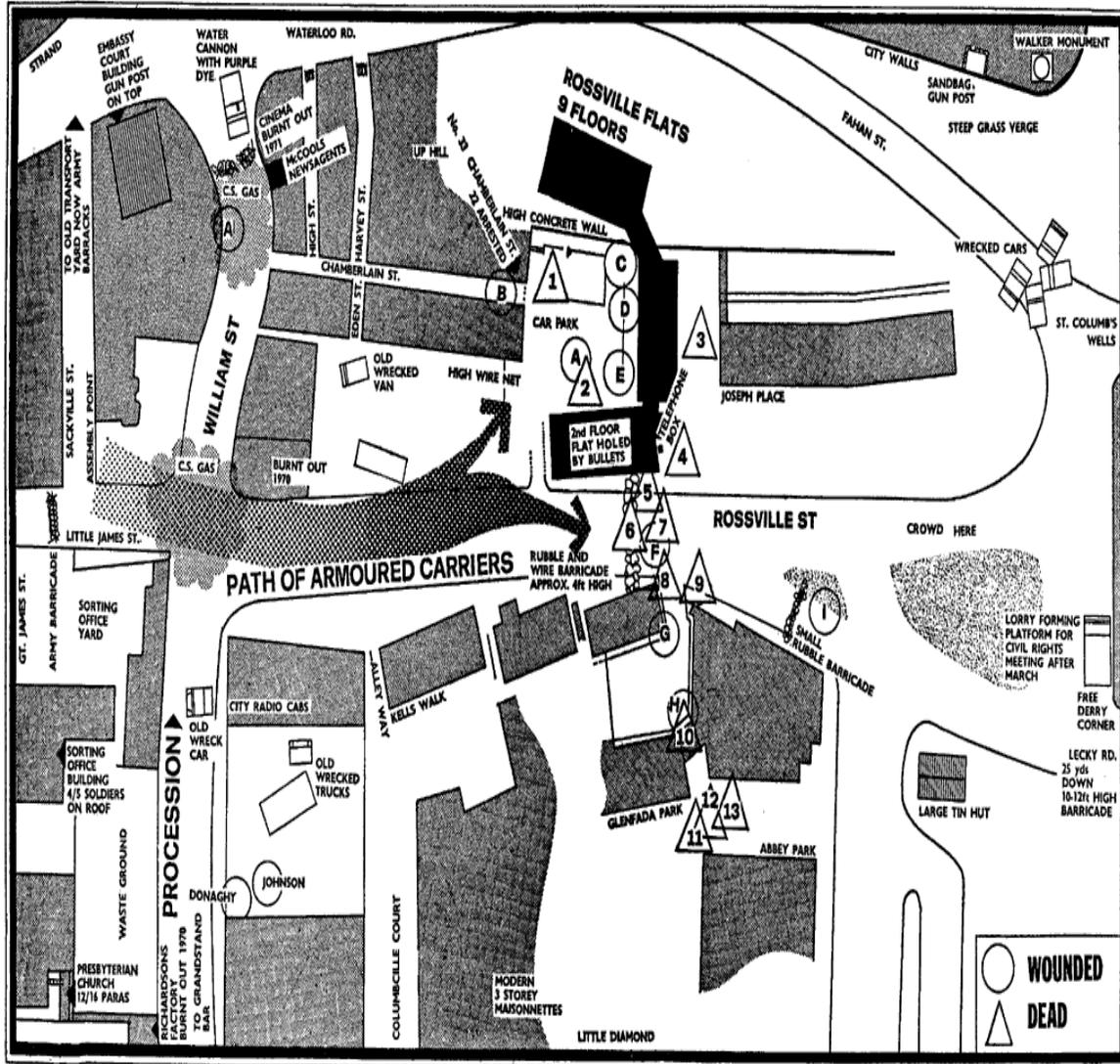
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Figure 1

The scene of Bloody Sunday—a sketch map for following the Widgery Tribunal

Drawn by John Butterworth, in Derry



- Dead (triangles)**
- 1 Jack Duddy, 17
  - 2 Kevin McElhinney, 16
  - 3 Patrick Doherty, 21
  - 4 Bernard McGuigan, 41
  - 5 Hugh Gilmore, 17
  - 6 William Nash, 19
  - 7 Michael McDaid, 17
  - 8 John Young, 17
  - 9 Michael Kelly, 17
  - 10 James Wray, 23
  - 11 Gerald Donaghy, 17
  - 12 Gerald McKinney, 35
  - 13 William McKinney, 27

- Wounded (circles)**
- A Michael Bridge, 25
  - B Margaret Deery, 37
  - C Patrick McDaid, 24
  - D Michael Bradley, 22
  - E Alana Burke, 18
  - F Alex Nash, 52
  - G Paddy O'Donnell, 40
  - H Joseph Friel, 20
  - I Patrick Campbell, 53

**Other Wounded**  
 Damien Donaghy  
 John Johnson

<sup>1</sup> John Butterworth, [http://www.lrb.co.uk/assets/edillus/sayl01\\_2413\\_01.gif](http://www.lrb.co.uk/assets/edillus/sayl01_2413_01.gif).

## **Introduction**

There has been much debate about the root causes of Catholics' protest movements in Northern Ireland during the late-1960s to early-1970s, especially the killing of thirteen protestors in what became known as the Bloody Sunday Massacre of January 30, 1972. Some arguments focus on the IRA's role in the struggle against Great Britain throughout the twentieth century and claim that the events of Bloody Sunday marked an intensification of violence in the conflict, but treat the incident as one of many in a long struggle. Others concentrate on the armed struggle between the IRA and the British. Another group examines the rise and fall of leaders and policies that helped shape the struggle in Northern Ireland and focuses on the political factions fighting for dominance in Belfast and London. Finally, some contend that Bloody Sunday occurred as a result of the social interactions, including religion, economics, and education, of the different communities and groups within Derry.

In this paper I will build upon this social climate thesis. While accounting for the influence of social interactions, I argue it was television that linked them all together and provided the spark that ignited the movement. The growth of television in 1960s Northern Ireland permitted the Catholics to see coverage of the civil rights movement in the American South, of Vietnam War protests in France, and of rebellion against tyranny during the Prague Spring in Czechoslovakia. Television coverage of these events and of the growing protest movement within Northern Ireland educated the people and provided them with the ability to see how others around the world were fighting back against perceived injustices. While the deep divide among the people in Northern Ireland, driven by anti-Catholic policies enacted by the

Stormont Government, was the basis for the protests, it was television that pushed people into action.

The focus of this project will be on television's impact on how protestors expressed their grievances with the British and Stormont governments and not on the governments' reasoning for their actions. It is worth mentioning that the British and Stormont governments viewed the protestors as separatists who were trying to undermine and bring down those in power. Viewing the "troublemakers" as a small group, the British and Stormont governments, in their view, enacted many policies, such as the use of internment under the Special Powers Act, to provide the police and army with the ability to maintain peace and safety for the majority of population.

### **Literary Review**

This project will place Bloody Sunday's causes in a global perspective. The challenge in examining Bloody Sunday is the temptation to focus in on the divides within the Northern Irish communities and to discount the external influences. Bloody Sunday marked a convening of global social, economic, and cultural trends from the 1960s, especially the protest movements of 1968. By viewing the conflict through a global historical lens, these external influences become more apparent. Immanuel Wallerstein, considered by many to be the foremost authority on world history and World Systems Theory, believes the World System should be emphasized over nation-states and that history needs to be viewed through the *longue duree* and through broad examinations, not the specialized disciplines that are prevalent in universities today. Wallerstein argues that World Systems eventually end and are replaced by a new one, and that the current World System, dominated by centralist agendas, began in 1848. The events of 1968 put this

System into crisis, which he defines as something that “cannot be resolved within the framework of the system” and can only be overcome by going outside of the existing framework.<sup>2</sup> To him, the mass movements of 1968 could signal the demise of this current World System as it is being undermined by these far-left and far-right movements.<sup>3</sup>

Like Wallerstein, Sidney Tarrow believes the World System framework will be challenged by reformers who perceive flaws in it. Unlike Wallerstein’s assertion that the old structure will be replaced by a new one, Tarrow believes that, in response to these movements, the structure will first modify then reassert itself. Tarrow concentrates on social movements to argue that a successful crusade can inspire additional ones to believe that they can cause change as well. In regards to 1968, Tarrow contends that television provided a faster, more effective mode of disseminating ideas among the masses than radio or newspaper had. He also agrees with Wallerstein that gaining a fuller understanding of history requires the incorporation of more disciplines.<sup>4</sup>

Wallerstein’s impact can also be seen in political-scientist Lorenzo Bosi’s work. Bosi believes that events need to be viewed long-term using the time-space context and that topics should be investigated using a multi-disciplinary approach. He contends that mass media’s growth led to international pressures affecting domestic policy, causing “De-insularisation.” In regard to the situation in Northern Ireland, he argues that “The world was getting smaller and

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<sup>2</sup> Immanuel Wallerstein, *World System Analysis: An Introduction* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2004), 78.

<sup>3</sup> For more see *Ibid.*

<sup>4</sup> Sidney Tarrow, *Power in Movement: Social Movements and Contentious Politics* 2<sup>nd</sup> Edition (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998).

smaller and international attention could be raised in order to undermine Unionist sectarian forms of power.”<sup>5</sup> Dennis Redmond also builds off of Wallerstein’s work by discussing the impact video has on the World System. Redmond argues that video provides the “user” with the tools to make their own interpretations and decisions and that this ability can assist the “user” in challenging the World System by allowing them to think through it.<sup>6</sup> He also believes that, coming out of the 1960s counterculture and the 1968 movements, video culture is “really and truly multinational” and “to read video works means to read multinationally or, more precisely, to read the patterns of multinational history encoded in the work of art.”<sup>7</sup> He sums this belief up by saying that video around 1968 was “the zero hour of the multinational” and like other events of 1968, video’s technological advancements and usage challenged the status quo. An example is the comparison between students rising up to challenge those in power at universities and video’s development rising up to challenge the status quo of those in charge of the cinema. He also states that these advances, such as in editing techniques and streamlined distribution procedures allowed it to break out of the cinema mold and to morph itself more readily into different forms, like home videos.<sup>8</sup>

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<sup>5</sup> Lorenzo Bosi, “Explaining the Emergence Process of the Civil Rights Protest in Northern Ireland (1945–1968): Insights from a Relational Social Movement Approach,” *Journal of Historical Sociology* 21, Issue 2-3, (June/September, 2008), <http://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/10.1111/j.1467-6443.2008.00337.x/full>.

<sup>6</sup> Dennis Redmond, *The World is Watching: Video as Multinational Aesthetics, 1968-1995* (Carbondale: Southern Illinois University Press, 2004), 4.

<sup>7</sup> *Ibid.*, 1-2.

<sup>8</sup> *Ibid.*, 11.

Finally, there are two more authors who support the claim that the 1968 movements grew out of media's rise. In his book *1968: The Year That Shocked the World*, Mark Kurlansky maintains that television was key to uniting the 1968 movements through its new ability to broadcast live, which limited the amount of editing a government could do, and through its ability to spread new ideologies around the world. He believes that, on a world level, television's ability to do these two things made the world smaller and more connected.<sup>9</sup> In *The Global Revolutions of 1968*, Jeremi Suri shares similar thoughts to Kurlansky. Through interviews, Suri uses the voices of the protestors to demonstrate how ideas from around the world were able to meet, share, and inspire.<sup>10</sup> Tarrow, Bosi, Redmons, Kurlansky, and Suri each uses Wallerstein's theory as the basis for his arguments and expounds on it by including the effect television and the media have on the World System. Using this discussion as a basis, the following works fit nicely into a rounded investigation of Bloody Sunday.

Much has been written on the Bloody Sunday Massacre and Northern Ireland during the late-1960s to early-1970s period. Many of the works focus on the role of the IRA in the struggle against Great Britain throughout the 20<sup>th</sup> century and argue that Bloody Sunday marked an intensification of violence, but they treat the event as one of many in a long struggle.<sup>11</sup> J. Bower Bell in *The Secret Army: The IRA* emphasizes the IRA's involvement in the push for unification,

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<sup>9</sup> Mark Kurlansky, *1968: The Year That Shocked the World* (New York: Random House Publishing Group, 2004).

<sup>10</sup> Jeremi Suri, *The Global Revolutions of 1968* (New York: W. W. Norton & Company, 2007).

<sup>11</sup>See J. Bowyer Bell, *The Secret Army* (London: Anthony Blond, 1970); Brendan O'Brien, *The Long War* (Syracuse: Syracuse University Press, 1999); Brian Rowan, *Behind The Lines* (Belfast: The Blackstaff Press, 1995); M.L.R. Smith, *Fighting for Ireland* (London: Routledge, 1997); Kevin Toolis, *Rebel Hearts* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1996).

starting with the proclamation of the Irish Republic April 24, 1916 through The Troubles. Kevin Toolis' *Rebel Hearts* is another book that focuses on the IRA's involvement in the Nationalist versus Loyalist conflict. While Bell and Toolis both argue that The Troubles were part of an extended campaign, Toolis concentrates more on the personal aspects of IRA members and their reasons for involvement. Another selection arguing that Bloody Sunday was part of a longer struggle, *The Long War* by Brendan O'Brien, follows the IRA and Sinn Fein from their creation through The Troubles by stressing the military aspect of the group, such as its strategies and campaigns. A final example is M.L.R. Smith's *Fighting for Ireland?*, which also centers on the military strategy of the Republican movement from the Easter Rising through The Troubles.

Other writers concentrate not only on the armed struggle between the IRA and the British, but also on the political factions fighting for dominance, both in Belfast and in London, by examining the rise and fall of leaders and the policies that helped shape the struggle in Northern Ireland.<sup>12</sup> Frank Burton delves into the social aspect of the struggle in *The Politics of Legitimacy*. Burton's research for the book involved living in a Northern Ireland Catholic area for a time to examine how the political and military actions of the British Government and the IRA affected people's daily lives. Another selection, Henry Patterson's *The Politics of Illusion*, emphasizes more the political push for unification within the IRA and its political party Sinn Fein. Patterson's description of the many political avenues taken by the IRA, which included courting workers unions and the Nazi party, to garner support for its cause highlights the non-

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<sup>12</sup> See Frank Burton, *The Politics of Legitimacy* (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1978); Henry Patterson, *The Politics of Illusion* (London: Hutchinson Radius, 1989).

military aspects of the reunification movement. While he does discuss the military actions taken by the IRA, the majority of the argument revolves around political aspects.

There are some works that try to examine why Bloody Sunday occurred by focusing on the social interactions of the different communities and groups within Derry. These authors go beyond an IRA versus Great Britain argument to examine other causes, such as religion, economics, and education that led to Bloody Sunday.<sup>13</sup> *The Evolution of the Troubles 1970-72* by Thomas Hennessey stresses how social changes in Northern Ireland led the struggle from an “ethno-state conflict” into a battle for independence. He achieves this by concentrating on how political decisions and policies impacted the general population. Phillip Jacobson and Peter Pringle approach *Those Are Real Bullets, Aren't They?* by constructing a social survey of the community through an extensive narrative of the day's events. They accomplish this through interviews with not only the main characters of Bloody Sunday, but also with those who were not active participants. The authors' interviews of people on both sides of the issue, along with discussions of policies, provide a deeper understanding of the communities' mindset leading up to the event. Eamonn McCann follows a similar path in his book *Bloody Sunday in Derry*. He conducted interviews with those involved in the movement and Bloody Sunday to illustrate how the British were at fault for the attack and how that event created a support movement for the IRA and reunification by any means.

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<sup>13</sup> See Thomas Hennessey, *The Evolution of the Troubles 1970-72* (Dublin: Irish Academic Press, 2007); Philip Jacobson and Peter Pringle, *Those Are Real Bullets, Aren't They* (London: Fourth Estate, 2000); Eamonn McCann, *Bloody Sunday in Derry* (Kerry: Brandon Book Publishers, 1992).

Each author's argument played a role in the development of a civil rights movement in Northern Ireland; however it was a combination of these ideas, not one or the other, that helped to develop Northern Ireland Catholics' protest movement. The deep cultural and religious divide within Derry, especially in Bogside, served as the basis for most of the disorder that occurred. Another important aspect was Northern Ireland's Stormont government and its policies against the Catholic majority. Many of Stormont's policies, such as the Special Powers Act, were responsible for creating and reinforcing much of the distrust and dislike between the Nationalists and the Unionists. In addition, international influences, which arrived thanks to the growth of television, played a large role in the development of the protestors' ideology and actions. Finally, the destabilizing of the region as a result of the PIRA and the British Army actions led to the escalation of the violence that consumed the area for many years.

This project will not only include these topics to help explain the events leading up to Bloody Sunday, but it will also emphasize the role that television played in introducing new ideas and in mobilizing the civil rights movement and its participants. This will be done by arguing that television provided the catalyst for mass mobilization in Northern Ireland. Television's ability to disperse news and ideas quickly and to allow people to see what was occurring as opposed to just hearing about it provided television with a growing importance as the 1960s progressed. This was especially true with coverage of the Vietnam War and the civil rights movement in the American South, as these events provided inspiration for many throughout the world. Many of the 1968 protestors, be it the student movement in France, the anti-Vietnam protests in Berkley, or those pushing for reforms during the Prague Spring used television not only to get their message across, but also to see how other parts of the world were

reacting to similar conditions. The progress of broadcasting technology allowed for news to be viewed around the world the same day it occurred, allowing the students in Berkley to see what the student protestors in Paris were doing and how the French Government was responding. The massive movements around the globe in 1968 were in some regards a result of television's ability to spread messages and to unite the movements.<sup>14</sup>

This project will also link television's coverage of the American Civil Rights Movement with the rise of the movement in Northern Ireland.<sup>15</sup> As will be discussed shortly, Ireland had a history of civil uprisings against the British. After the separation of Ireland and Northern Ireland, these movements shifted from battles for independence to battles to reunite the country. These uprisings began to wane during the mid-1900s as people in Ireland began focusing on developing their industry and political system, with the hope that reunification could be achieved through political actions. The Catholics in Northern Ireland felt abandoned by their brethren in the South as support dwindled. Although Northern Catholics continued to face discrimination in education, housing, and employment opportunities, the number of protests and demands for change shrank. As television spread throughout Northern Ireland in the early to mid-1960s, this began to change. The viewers were able to see reports from the American South and to see that a group of people who were facing similar discrimination were standing up for themselves. This

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<sup>14</sup> See James Coleman and Bridgette Rollet, *Television in Europe* (Exeter, England: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1978); Sidney Tarrow, *Power in Movement: Social Movements and Contentious Politics* (New York: Cambridge University, 1998); Richard Rose, *Governing Without Consensus* (London: Farber and Farber, 1971); Carole Fink, Philipp Gassert and Detlef Junker, *1968: The World Transformed* (Washington, D.C.: German Historical Institute, 1998); Mark Kurlansky, *1968: The Year That Shocked the World* (New York: Random House, 2004).

<sup>15</sup> See Brian Dooley, *Black and Green: The Fight for Civil Rights in Northern Ireland and Black America* (London: Pluto Press, 1998).

interaction with television raised the public's awareness of the problems they faced and provided a method for addressing their concerns.

In addition to the literature that has been mentioned, information gathered by the author for this project came from autobiographies, speeches, and interviews, both newspaper and television, with people who lived through the beginnings of The Troubles and who experienced Bloody Sunday firsthand. Additionally, many of the specifics of the day were provided by court testimony and transcripts from both the Widgery Inquiry and the Saville Inquiry. Finally, government documents in the form of correspondence between the Stormont government of Northern Ireland and Great Britain, official government laws and acts, and government releases served to provide much of the information used in this project.

### The Day's Events

“The Army ran amok that day. It was sheer unadulterated murder. Nearly all the dead were shot in the back.”<sup>16</sup> These killings occurred in the early afternoon of January 30, 1972 in Derry, Northern Ireland when what started as a peaceful march protesting internment, or the arrest of Nationalists without charges, ended with thirteen people killed and many more injured at the hands of the British Army in what became known as Bloody Sunday. To understand Bloody Sunday fully, it is important to review not only how but why it occurred. A thorough examination of the social, political, and religious climate of Londonderry (Derry), Northern Ireland will accomplish this. By studying these different topics, the societal strains that culminated in Bloody Sunday will be easier to view and to understand. The first step to understanding Bloody Sunday is to conduct a thorough examination of the day's events.

Despite the threat of violence, the NICRA march to protest internment began with demonstrators displaying a positive attitude. Dr. Raymond McClean, a local Catholic doctor, attended the march and stated that “the atmosphere was so relaxed and cheerful that I decided to leave my medical bag in my car.”<sup>17</sup> The protest march was making its way through the Bogside area of Derry, despite the fact that protests and marches had been banned by the Stormont

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<sup>16</sup> Father Edward Daly, video interview with BBC, January 30, 1972,

<http://video.google.com/videoplay?docid=6011524456321799973&ei=eYqISfCDYL8rgLvmbi0BA&q=%22Father+Daly%22&hl=en>.

<sup>17</sup> Quoted in Philip Jacobson and Peter Pringle, *Those Are Real Bullets, Aren't They?* (London: Forth Estates 2000), 9.

government.<sup>18</sup> On the day of the march, police and British troops were stationed at barricades around Bogside, with instructions from the government to contain the march. In addition, the decision was made by the Stormont government to have the 1<sup>st</sup> Battalion Parachute Regiment (Paras) onsite to conduct an arrest operation.<sup>19</sup> The Paras were notorious throughout Northern Ireland for their harsh and violent tactics when dealing with protesters. The demonstrators, who numbered in the thousands, moved towards the Paras location at the Williams Street barricade. The march leaders instructed everyone to proceed down Rossville Street, a side street, to avoid confrontation with the soldiers. Most of the protesters followed the directions and moved away from the barricade, but a few hundred continued towards the Paras.

These protesters seized the opportunity to express their frustrations at the Paras by hurling insults, bottles, and rocks at the soldiers. While these missiles were not a threat to the soldiers' lives, they provided the soldiers with a reason to fire rubber bullets and to turn the water cannon on the protesters, which was successful in dispersing most of them. As the first group of Paras crossed the barricades to commence the arrest operation, the protesters turned and ran. Within three minutes, the soldiers had opened fire on the fleeing protesters. Within thirty minutes, thirteen civilians were dead and many more injured.<sup>20</sup>

Both the protesters and the army agreed on the narrative of events until the Paras crossed the barricades. Once the Paras crossed the barricade, the two groups' versions of what occurred

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<sup>18</sup> William Craig, "Public Order Act (Northern Ireland) 1951," October 3, 1968, [http://cain.ulst.ac.uk/proni/1968/proni\\_HA-32-2-30\\_1968-10-03.pdf](http://cain.ulst.ac.uk/proni/1968/proni_HA-32-2-30_1968-10-03.pdf).

<sup>19</sup> British Irish Rights Watch, "Bloody Sunday - Submission to the United Nations," January 1994, Section 3, <http://www.cain.ulst.ac.uk/events/bsunday/birw.htm>.

<sup>20</sup> *Ibid.*

became dramatically different. The protesters argued that the army used live ammunition and fired upon unarmed people who were running away. This story was told most famously by Father Edward Daly. Father Daly, who was in the area to ensure that the many elderly people living in the area were alright, testified that he heard two or three single shots fired from a different area of Bogside prior to the Paras crossing the barricade. Soon after, a few people approached Father Daly and informed him that two men had been shot and he was needed to go to see them, but when he arrived two other priests were already there. He returned to Rossville Street and, while he was talking with the residents, noticed several armored cars moving at high speed towards the Williams Street barricade. At the same time, he noticed all the people on Williams Street running towards him and away from the barricade. Seeing the soldiers and armored cars coming towards his position, he ran with the rest of the people, all of whom kept looking back to see if the soldiers were still advancing.

When Father Daly reached the courtyard, he noticed a young boy running beside him, smiling. When they arrived at the middle of the courtyard, Father Daly heard a gunshot and saw the boy running beside him struck. Father Daly thought that the soldiers were firing rubber bullets at them and continued to run. The path he planned to take was blocked by panic-stricken people also trying to escape. At this point Father Daly heard a burst of gunfire, which he was certain were live rounds. He thought that all of the shots seemed to be coming from the area where the armored cars were but did not notice any shots being fired at the soldiers. Once there was a lull in the shooting, Father Daly, waving his white handkerchief, ran to the side of the

fallen boy. He was soon joined by another man who tried to stop the bleeding. At this point Father Daly administered the Last Rites to the boy as gunfire started again.<sup>21</sup>

While Father Daly and the other man were lying on the ground trying to help the boy and avoid the gunfire, another man ran past them. Father Daly described him as “hysterical” and thought he was yelling at the soldiers to shoot him. Father Daly was certain that the man had nothing in his hands as they were being waived above his head. However, a soldier stepped out, took aim, and fired at the man. Father Daly was certain that the man was hit, yet the man was able to run off out of sight. As the gunfire died down, a few more men appeared and helped to carry the boy off to seek medical help. As they began to move, Father Daly noticed a man run up to the wall along side of them and fire a few shots from a handgun. This is the only civilian report of someone firing upon the soldiers, and it occurred well after the soldiers opened fire. There was only one mention of a civilian with a



weapon on the Paras’ radio log as well: a person with a pistol.<sup>22</sup> Father Daly led the way for the men, waving his now bloody handkerchief in front of him. This image was captured by one of the few reporters in the area and became the lasting image of Bloody Sunday.<sup>23</sup> After getting the boy, whose name was John Duddy and who later died, out of harm’s way, Father Daly returned

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<sup>21</sup> Father Edward Daly, Testimony for Saville Inquiry, [http://webarchive.nationalarchives.gov.uk/20101103103930/http://report.bloody-sunday-inquiry.org/evidence/H/H\\_0005.pdf](http://webarchive.nationalarchives.gov.uk/20101103103930/http://report.bloody-sunday-inquiry.org/evidence/H/H_0005.pdf).

<sup>22</sup> Jacobson and Pringle, 142.

<sup>23</sup> Father Daly Picture, [http://news.bbc.co.uk/olmedia/685000/images/\\_685362\\_daly3002.jpg](http://news.bbc.co.uk/olmedia/685000/images/_685362_daly3002.jpg).

to the Rossville Street area. Along the way, he gave the Last Rites to many people, all while continuing to dodge sporadic gunfire. He was approached for an interview by John Bierman, a British Broadcasting Company (BBC) reporter, who had been on location to cover the march. The BBC reporter and his cameraman had the only working camera in Bogside, as the rest were damaged when the soldiers used the water cannons on the protesters. During the interview, Father Daly told the reporter that, at the time the soldiers opened fire, the protesters had done nothing to cause the soldiers to shoot:

There was nothing fired at them, positively nothing fired at them whatsoever. There weren't even stones fired. The people ran in all directions when they opened fire. Most people had their backs to them when they opened fire at the time.<sup>24</sup>

After the gunfire had stopped, Father Daly testified that returned home, in shock over the events that had just occurred.<sup>25</sup>

While the civilians' account had the Army firing on unarmed people who were running away, the official Army stated that the soldiers were protecting themselves from attack. Every British soldier claimed that he had fired in self-defense, as each person killed had a nail bomb, a petrol bomb, or a gun and was threatening the soldiers' lives.<sup>26</sup> Lt. Col. Derek Wilford, commander of the Paras, also spoke to John Bierman and told him that the troops had come under fire from guns and bombs along with having acid poured on them.<sup>27</sup> According to the

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<sup>24</sup> Daly, video interview with BBC.

<sup>25</sup> Daly, Testimony for Saville Inquiry.

<sup>26</sup> Her Majesty's Stationary Office, "Report of the Tribunal," Part 3, Point 62, April 1972.

<sup>27</sup> Daly, video interview with BBC.

British Government's version of the events, the police and soldiers were there to contain the protest and to maintain peace. The only exception to this was the deployment of Paras to conduct an arrest operation, since the march was violating the ban on demonstrations. They were to use a water cannon, which contained purple water, to disperse the crowd if there was trouble. Once the situation calmed, they would arrest those who had participated, as their clothes would have been turned purple by the water cannon. According to the soldiers, they were briefed to expect gunfire once they crossed the barricades.<sup>28</sup> The area that they were going to enter had been a 'no-go' for British troops for two years. The people in Bogside were accustomed to the police forces or soldiers pursuing to a certain point but not beyond that. Lt. Col. Wilford summed up his soldiers' mindset as they moved into action: "When we moved on the streets we moved as if we in fact were moving against a well-armed well-trained army."<sup>29</sup> In addition, the Paras' radio operator reported that the previous night their lieutenant told them, "Let's teach these buggers a lesson – we want some kills tomorrow." The operator said that this statement put them in "high spirits."<sup>30</sup> The Army believed that the rally would be perfect cover for the IRA to blend in with and then to attack the troops using bombs and guns. The march planners had been assured by the IRA that it would not cause any trouble. However, the Paras prepared for a battle as they were sent in to commence the arrest operation.

The most important question of the incident remained whether the Paras were firing in self-defense or not. While all soldiers claimed that they were in danger and only fired on

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<sup>28</sup> British Irish Rights Watch, "Submission to the United Nations," Section 3.

<sup>29</sup> Ibid.

<sup>30</sup> Quoted in Jacobson and Pringle, 13.

perceived threats, none of the deceased was found to have any bombs or firearms, and all of the civilian witnesses, over one hundred, agreed that none of the victims had any weapons. The only exception was one man who was found to have nail bombs in his pockets when he arrived at the hospital. However, when he was examined by two doctors and several civilians on the street and in the car ride to the hospital, no nail bombs were observed.<sup>31</sup> To add to the confusion, the commanders of the operation were at a loss over what had occurred. When questioned by BBC reporter John Bierman, General Robert Ford, Commander of Land Forces in Northern Ireland, had little information on the events of the day. Bierman stated that “He seemed to have very little idea about what had actually occurred, which – to say the least – seemed to me surprising.”<sup>32</sup>

Immediately following the incident, the British government launched an inquiry to discover why the soldiers had fired on the protestors. The Widgery Report, named after the Lord who was the sole investigator and who filed the report eleven weeks after Bloody Sunday, exonerated the soldiers in what has been called a “white-washing” of the incident by most observers.<sup>33</sup> Father Daly’s comments on the Widgery Report reflected the view of most in not only Derry, but in both Ireland and Northern Ireland: “He found the guilty innocent and the innocent guilty. It was the second atrocity. I felt very let down.”<sup>34</sup> The outrage over the event

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<sup>31</sup> *Ibid.*, 4.

<sup>32</sup> John Bierman, “The Reporter’s Story,” BBC News, March 24, 2000  
[http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/in\\_depth/northern\\_ireland/2000/bloody\\_sunday\\_inquiry/681424.stm](http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/in_depth/northern_ireland/2000/bloody_sunday_inquiry/681424.stm).

<sup>33</sup> Julia Stuart, “Fr Edward Daly,” *Independent (London)*, sec. People, January 9, 2002,  
<http://www.independent.co.uk/news/people/profiles/fedward-daly-father-dalytroubles-662556.html>.

<sup>34</sup> *Ibid.*

and the perceived lack of justice led many in Bogside and the greater Derry area to join the IRA and to fight to remove the British from Northern Ireland. Gerry Kelly, the current president of Sinn Fein, was one of these people. In his speech commemorating the thirtieth anniversary of Bloody Sunday, Kelly told the crowd that before Bloody Sunday he has been unsure if he could do what the IRA would ask him to do, but after Bloody Sunday he felt that “Whatever doubts I had about my intentions ... the events of that day certainly had a profound effect on my decision.”<sup>35</sup> The IRA responded with a massive bombing campaign, with violent conflicts between the two sides continuing into the 1990s. Bloody Sunday was a defining moment for many in Northern Ireland and launched a new, more violent stage in the fighting. However, as important as it is to see what occurred because of Bloody Sunday, it is just as important to look backwards from the event to examine the causes that led up to this incident.

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<sup>35</sup> Gerry Kelly, “30<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Commemoration of Bloody Sunday,” (January 30, 2002), <http://www.sinnfein.org>.

## A History of Conflict

To understand the tensions that exploded on Bloody Sunday fully, it is necessary to examine the history of conflict between the Catholic population of Ireland and the Protestant leadership of the British Empire. Even before Ireland officially became part of the British Empire in 1801, there existed a major divide between the Catholics and the Protestants. After Great Britain took control of Ireland in the twelfth century, Protestants were able to enact laws and policies that segregated Catholics socially and excluded them politically. One of the most damaging actions that accomplished this, the passing of the Penal Laws in 1691, banned Catholics from holding office and severely limited their routes to education. According to Landon Hancock, author of Northern Ireland: Troubles Brewing, these laws cemented the hatred between the two groups and glorified violent action by one group in the name of “protecting” oneself from the other.<sup>36</sup>

By the early twentieth century, growing violence and rebellions forced Great Britain to consider giving “home rule”, or limited self-government, to the Irish. Foremost among these rebellions was the Easter Rising of 1916. While it lasted for only seven days before being put down, its importance was that it reintroduced the idea of using force to gain independence to Irish politics. After the Easter Rising, Ireland saw Sinn Fein, the political arm of the IRA, move to the front of Irish politics and saw the declaration of the establishment of the Irish Republic, which the British Government refused to acknowledge. This denial led to the Irish War of Independence from 1919 to 1921, fought as a guerrilla war by the IRA. The fighting ended with

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<sup>36</sup> Landon Hancock, “Northern Ireland,” (1996), <http://www.cain.ulst.ac.uk/othelem/landon.htm>.

the Anglo-Irish Treaty in 1921, which granted Ireland self-rule with the condition that Northern Ireland could opt out of the treaty and remain within the British Empire, which the Protestant-controlled government in Northern Ireland elected to do.

The distrust between the Catholics and Protestants remained after Ireland was split. In Northern Ireland, Protestant segregation and discrimination of Catholics dominated daily life, with Catholics' struggles against these policies resulting in sporadic violence. Segregation limited the interaction between the two communities. The fact that most Protestant and Catholic youths received religious-based education through the church added to this culture of separation. Families attempted to live close to their churches because of this and because churches served as centers for social activities, causing further isolation between the two. This insulation allowed for old feelings of distrust to remain and produced tight-knit communities where there was much conformity.<sup>37</sup> This created an atmosphere of togetherness and an "us-against-them" attitude for both the Catholics and the Protestants.

One of the major causes of the continuing distrust between the Nationalists and Unionists in the twentieth century was the Civil Authority Act of 1922, better known as the Special Powers Act. The Act was meant "to empower certain authorities of the Government of Northern Ireland to take steps for preserving the peace and maintaining order in Northern Ireland," or in other words, to give the government the power to combat the IRA.<sup>38</sup> While the power of the Act was given to the Minister of Home Affairs of Northern Ireland, he was allowed to delegate any or all

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<sup>37</sup> Hancock.

<sup>38</sup> "Civil Authorities (Special Powers) Act (Northern Ireland), 1922," <http://cain.ulst.ac.uk/hms0/spa1922.htm>.

of his authority to any police officer. In reality, this gave the power of the Act to every officer in Northern Ireland. The Act stated that officers could “take all such steps and issue all such orders as may be necessary for preserving the peace and maintaining order.”<sup>39</sup> In the years preceding Bloody Sunday, the Act allowed the Stormont government to suspend any basic liberty immediately, such as habeas corpus and freedom of the press. It also allowed arrests on suspicion, searches without warrants, and bans on marches and meetings.<sup>40</sup> The most significant use of the Act was the internment, or imprisonment without trial, of Nationalists.

The Unionists also attempted to maintain political control, despite the fact that they were the minority. To accomplish this, the Unionists used their power in the government to set up conditions that would be favorable for them. One of the main ways they accomplished this was through the Derry City Corporation (DCC), an organization in charge of the building and distribution of housing in Derry. By controlling housing allocation, the DCC could control where people lived. For example, even though Catholics were the majority in Derry, they only received one-third of the housing units built post-World War Two. There were also instances when the DCC allocated subsidized housing to a Unionist bachelor or family without children, instead of to a large Catholic family that had a greater need.<sup>41</sup> These actions, which forced the Catholics into the Bogside slums, prevented a shift in the narrow voting margin balance of the city’s gerrymandered electoral wards which provided the minority Protestants with control.<sup>42</sup>

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<sup>39</sup> Ibid.

<sup>40</sup> Jacobson and Pringle, 36.

<sup>41</sup> Hancock.

<sup>42</sup> Kevin Toolis, *Rebel Hearts* (New York: St. Martin’s Press, 1996), 298.

Derry, along with the rest of Northern Ireland, was a very poor area with a high unemployment rate. Unemployment rates had been steadily dropping throughout the rest of the United Kingdom since 1951, but remained around 7.2% in Northern Ireland. Those lucky enough to find work faced wages that were 16% lower in Northern Ireland than in Great Britain.<sup>43</sup> New employment opportunities were especially scarce in Derry. Despite it being the second largest city, in between 1945 and 1966 only two of 224 new industries started in Ulster County were located there.<sup>44</sup> After being assigned to Bogside in 1962 and living there for a few years, Father Daly described it as a “world of its own within the parish and the city. It had its own particular culture and way of life.”<sup>45</sup> One positive event for the poorer residents of Northern Ireland was the passing of the Education Act in 1947. This act gave everyone the ability to gain an education “to the limit of his or her potential.”<sup>46</sup> Before this, many children’s educations were limited by their family’s finances. This act gave every child the opportunity to pursue an education that had previously been out of reach, as long as they could pass an exam at the age of eleven. It also provided financial assistance to voluntary Catholic schools, something previously unimaginable to most working class families at the time. Between 1946 and 1952, the enrollment at Northern Ireland secondary schools doubled.<sup>47</sup> By the mid-1960s, the first group of children to benefit from the Education Act graduated from Queen’s University in Belfast.

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<sup>43</sup> Richard Rose, *Governing Without Consensus* (London: Farber and Farber, 1971), 67.

<sup>44</sup> Jacobson and Pringle, 19.

<sup>45</sup> Father Edward Daly, *Mister, Are You A Priest?* (Dublin: Four Courts Press, 2000), 101-102.

<sup>46</sup> *Ibid.*, 119.

<sup>47</sup> Dooley, 33.

Initially, this new educational avenue provided the youth of Derry with some hope for the future. But with the existing high unemployment, there were not many employment opportunities for them. The Unionists in control made it very difficult for these youths to find jobs, as they encouraged businesses to hire only Protestants. These new, educated youths became the voice of Derry. Their education allowed them to air the grievances of the Catholics in an effective and articulate way. They also played an important role in communicating with the international media following Bloody Sunday. But because of their background, they were just as comfortable speaking with the lower classes as they were with the media and officials. This would be important in rallying support for the IRA's cause in Derry as they were able to convince many that everyone was fighting for the same things. Father Daly believes that this group has had a major and radical impact on the community since this time.<sup>48</sup>

As more youths were able to continue their education, enrollment at the university grew, creating a need for another one in Northern Ireland. Residents of Derry, as the second largest city in Northern Ireland, believed that they would receive the new university. The Catholics in Derry were especially hopeful as a new university would create many jobs in a high unemployment area. The government put an English academic in charge of the committee deciding where the new university would be built. When word leaked that the university might not be built in Derry, the Catholic population came out and lobbied the committee to reconsider. Their efforts were unsuccessful, and Coleraine, a small, prosperous, and overwhelmingly Protestant city east of Derry, was selected as the site for the new university.<sup>49</sup> The Catholics

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<sup>48</sup> *Ibid.*, 119.

<sup>49</sup> Jacobson and Pringle, 19.

viewed this as another example of the Protestants in power trying to ensure that Catholic-dominant Derry remained a second-class city. Soon after the announcement, information was released, including a letter sent from a staff member at Magee University College in Derry to MP Evelyn King, making clear that several prominent Unionists in Derry had pushed for the university to be built elsewhere. In this letter, Reverend Dennis Coles spoke on how part of the staff who worked with him at the college rallied against “development in Derry because it would benefit the Catholics.”<sup>50</sup> This caused outrage among the Nationalists, and Father Daly commented that relations within the community were not the same after this event.<sup>51</sup>

By the mid-1960s, the Northern Irish Catholic community’s frustrations reached a high point. After suffering discrimination and what they viewed as forced separation from the rest of Ireland, Catholics longed for a change. As they continued to suffer from high unemployment enhanced by anti-Catholic policies enacted by the Stormont government, the citizens searched for answers to their problems. They began to receive potential answers thanks to a new invention with a growing role in homes throughout the world.

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<sup>50</sup> Dennis Coles, “Letter to E. King, Labour MP,” February 20, 1965, [http://cain.ulst.ac.uk/proni/1965/proni\\_CAB-9-D-31-2\\_1965-02-20.pdf](http://cain.ulst.ac.uk/proni/1965/proni_CAB-9-D-31-2_1965-02-20.pdf) .

<sup>51</sup> Daly, *Mister, Are You A Priest?*, 122.

## **The Impact of Television**

Northern Irish Catholics were not the only group searching for answers to their problems during the 1960s. Across the globe, certain groups that felt discriminated against began to rise up against their perceived oppressors. These movements reached a pinnacle in 1968 as protests against a variety of issues swept across the world. This chapter will briefly discuss these protests, focusing on the Prague Spring, and will connect these movements with those in Northern Ireland by focusing on television's role in creating, linking, and sustaining these movements. While radio and print remained an important source of information, it was television's rapid development that had the greatest influence. This sped the introduction of new ideas and tactics from around the globe, which played a major role in many of the 1960s movements.

The 1960s were a turbulent time throughout the world, featuring the growth of both domestic and international protest movements. As 1968 approached, protest movements spread across the globe. In Northern Ireland, much like activities in other parts of the world, domestic influences combined with television coverage of international events fueled the struggle for equality, whether it was for housing, education, or employment. The United States experienced massive civil rights protests in the South and anti-Vietnam War activities across the country, especially on college campuses. Latin America's protests featured students and workers joining together to speak out against poor living conditions. Japanese students rallied against the stationing of American troops in Japan. In Europe, there were movements not only against the Vietnam War, but also against governments that were viewed as oppressive. No place was this more apparent than in Czechoslovakia during the Prague Spring, a period from January to

August 1968 that featured reforms enacted to liberalize the government in an attempted to modernize the Soviet Union's doctrine. The Soviet Union responded by sending in troops and tanks to crush the "Prague Spring" and to reassert its doctrine.

Although many protests appeared to sprout up in 1968, most were ongoing movements that simply reached their highpoint in that year.<sup>52</sup> It was television's coverage of the events that pushed these movements to new heights and brought them into the public's consciousness. Throughout the 1960s, televisions became more affordable and began to appear in more homes throughout the world. While people had been able to get current events and news on their radios, television allowed them to *see* what was happening. Sidney Tarrow, professor of political science and sociology at Cornell University, argues this point in his book *Power in Movement*. Tarrow states that television was able to "encapsulate complex situations in compressed visual images" and that this ability "brought about a revolution in movement tactics."<sup>53</sup> It accomplished this, he asserts, by allowing long-ignored grievances to be presented to large numbers of people, by helping the cause of the suppressed by showing their peaceful goals and actions versus the violence they faced, and by allowing those within a movement to spread their message to supporters and to provide guidelines of what to do. For example, leaders within the civil rights movement in the American South were able to share their goals for the movement and, whether it was video of a sit-in at a lunch counter or of a peaceful march, to show others how to push for these goals. This argument is supported by Mark Kurlansky, a former foreign

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<sup>52</sup> See "The Revolt Against the Establishment" by Stuart Hilwig and "The Third World in 1968" by Arif Dirlik in *1968: The World Transformed* (Washington: German Historical Institute, 1998).

<sup>53</sup> Tarrow, 115.

newspaper correspondent, who states that two of the factors that led to the mass protests of 1968 were the examples set by the American civil rights movement, because of its new and original actions, and television's coming of age. He contends that television was still new enough that it had not become "controlled, distilled, and packaged the way it is today. In 1968 the phenomenon of same-day broadcast from another part of the world was in itself a gripping new technological wonder."<sup>54</sup>

Television's coverage of protests helped to unite many of these worldwide movements by spreading their various ideologies and tactics. In *1968: The World Transformed*, the editors argue that the events of 1968 were a global phenomenon because of mass media. They stress that television created a culture that linked the different groups together, giving them the impression that they were all part of a "united political front," which was fighting for similar causes, namely against social repression and in support of "personal emancipation" and "true participatory democracy."<sup>55</sup> Television's growth provided another avenue for the spreading of this information and ideology. Advancements in broadcasting enabled information to be sent instantaneously across the world, allowing people to see not only local current events but global ones as well.<sup>56</sup> For regions that were isolated, whether by location or by choice, this was an important step in bringing new ideas and showing alternatives to their current situations.

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<sup>54</sup> Kurlansky, xviii.

<sup>55</sup> Carole Fink, Philipp Gassert, and Detlef Junker, eds., *1968: The World Transformed* (Washington, D.C.: German Historical Institute, 1998), 2.

<sup>56</sup> Richard Rose, *Governing Without Consensus* (London: Farber and Farber, 1971), 51.

Television's role in the growth of an uprising can be seen in 1968 Czechoslovakia. There are many similarities between the rise of the Prague Spring in 1968 and the rise of the protest movements that led to the beginning of The Troubles in Northern Ireland. Television in Czechoslovakia was state-run and controlled under the Soviet system. However, the wave of support to allow more openness on the air grew. In 1967, Jiri Pelikan, head of Czechoslovakia state television, stated that:

So far it's been the case that every word stated on television is taken to be an official opinion, and that ties the hands of our television journalists ... television first and foremost needs to make space for a personal approach and for the right to make mistakes ... for individuals who would be able clearly to formulate their own opinions ... I believe that we have such people but they need the opportunity to express themselves.<sup>57</sup>

Pelikan's statement was a precursor to the liberalization that would occur under Alexander Dubcek, who became First Secretary of the Communist Party of Czechoslovakia in January 1968. Under Dubcek, restrictions on media, speech, and travel lessened. With limitations reduced, the freer television and media provided a pathway for many of the changes that occurred within Czechoslovakia in early 1968. Exposure of the injustices that occurred under the hardline Communists in power helped create a national debate over what should be done.<sup>58</sup>

The growth of television's freedom brought two main changes in the Czechoslovakian population, in addition to broadcasting coverage on protests from around the world. First, it helped to eliminate most of the public's distrust of the media. Television was no longer seen exclusively as an organ of the political machinery of the Soviets; it now featured the voice of the people. Viewers could see "two parallel monologues: the monologue of the official public

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<sup>57</sup> Quoted in Paulina Bren, *The Greengrocer and His Television* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2010), 21.

<sup>58</sup> Kurlansky, 241-2.

opinion and that of genuine but private opinion finally come together.”<sup>59</sup> This growth also awoke people’s political consciousness as the coverage of political meetings grew. One of the main features of the relaxed television restrictions was the growth of talk-based shows highlighting political discussions, a taboo subject under hardline regimes. These shows often featured everyday people, not intelligentsia or political figures, which encouraged the public’s growing trust of information on television. The shows also jump-started political conversations on the streets. A taxi cab driver remarked that he and his fellow drivers no longer had time to discuss football at the pub because politics dominated the conversations.<sup>60</sup> Former Secretary of State Madeleine Albright summed up the impact of the open press coverage by stating that:

To have information is to have power. So long as a small group of people maintains a monopoly over all information and can determine the quantity and quality to be dispersed to the masses, they have the means for maintaining tight political control. Once the monopoly is broken, however, everyone armed with information has the possibility of becoming a politically conscious, active participant in the political process.<sup>61</sup>

Political discussions on television that led to more open discussions in public helped Dubcek garner support for his more moderate policies. Students and workers pushed for a furthering of liberalization. Dubcek was careful to maintain his support of the Soviet Doctrine while arguing that his policies simply modernized the Soviet Doctrine to the needs of the current world situation, to have “socialism with a human face.” The reforms were carefully watched by the Soviets, who demanded reassurances that the Czechoslovakians were not trying to push for

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<sup>59</sup> Bren, 23.

<sup>60</sup> Ibid., 24.

<sup>61</sup> Quoted in Robert Giles and Robert Snyder eds., *1968: Year of Media Decision* (New Brunswick: Transaction Publications, 2001), 96.

democracy. Others were watching Czechoslovakia as well as broadcasts of Prague Spring activities sent “shockwaves” throughout the world, especially in other communist countries. As seen with other movements during this time period, Prague students felt like they were part of a liberating world peace movement thanks to the television coverage.<sup>62</sup>

As support grew both within Czechoslovakia and within other Eastern Bloc countries for the Prague Spring, the Soviets, still sensitive to anyone stepping out of line following Hungary’s uprising in 1956, decided that the movement needed to end. Coalition troops entered Czechoslovakia in August to end the reforms. The Soviets claimed that they were asked to come in by the Czechoslovakian people to help rid the government of anti-Communist elements. One of their first moves was to reassert control of the television stations and to shut down television broadcasts out of Czechoslovakia. Protesters took to the streets to try to stop what they felt was an invading force moving in. Images and reports of the violence thrust upon the protesters were smuggled out of the country and broadcast around the world. Others set up cameras on the Czechoslovakian border and were able to film the activities of the Soviet forces. All of these reports and images contradicted the Soviet claim that they were asked by the Czechoslovakians to put down counterrevolutionaries and garnered international support for the Czechoslovakian people.<sup>63</sup> Other countries pressured the Soviets to remove their troops and to end the violence. This pressure succeeded in that the Soviets agreed to start removing the troops, but the Prague Spring ended with Dubcek removed from power and with the reforms he had put in place revoked.

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<sup>62</sup> Kurlansky, 37.

<sup>63</sup> *Ibid.*, 294.

### Television's Role in Northern Ireland

The Prague Spring is one example of how television influenced the development and advancement of reform movements and protests during the late 1960s and early 1970s. Many of these influences can be seen in the Northern Ireland protest movements as well. In Czechoslovakia, television was important as it provided a new pathway for information to be disseminated among the people. This was equally important in Northern Ireland where television's ability to introduce new ideas into isolated communities was paramount in the development of organized protests. Father Daly expresses how the close-knit Catholic communities did not trust outsiders, which led to a lack of knowledge of what was occurring outside of their local area. The introduction of television in the early to mid-1960s, however, allowed the residents of these tight-knit communities to compare their lifestyles to others throughout the world.<sup>64</sup>

Television's ability to introduce new ideas influenced people in Ireland as well. John Doyle grew up close to the Northern Ireland border and described his hometown of Nenagh as a place that was predominately Catholic and ignorant of the outside world.<sup>65</sup> He also shared Father Daly's view concerning the impact television could have on communities. Doyle believes that television "would break through all the layers of habit and conformity" within the communities.<sup>66</sup> Both men argue that television provided the Catholic populace with a glimpse into how life could be, much like the people of Czechoslovakia experienced as the government

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<sup>64</sup> Daly, *Mister, Are You A Priest?*, 125.

<sup>65</sup> John Dolye, *A Great Feast of Light* (New York: Carroll & Graf Publishers, 2007), 20.

<sup>66</sup> *Ibid.*, 20.

controls over broadcasts were relaxed. Richard Rose expounds on this by arguing that the mass media can challenge the political attitudes of adults by presenting views that a person would not normally hear. This was especially true for Northern Ireland where the two government-funded television stations, the BBC and Ulster Television, were required by the British Government to present balanced political viewpoints.<sup>67</sup> The requirement to present balanced viewpoints had a similar effect as the relaxing of restrictions in Czechoslovakia did in that both allowed for new beliefs and thoughts to be broadcast to the people. While the BBC in Belfast tried to present both sides of the story, they remained highly sensitive to pressure to not stray far from the vision of the province endorsed by the Unionist elite.<sup>68</sup>

In Northern Ireland, the growth of the protest movements coincided with the growth of television. The United Kingdom required the purchase of a television license to watch the broadcast channels, with the funds assisting in the stations' operation. BBC began broadcasts in Northern Ireland in 1954 to only 10,000 customers. By 1962, Ulster Television had started operating and the number of television licenses sold rose to 194,000.<sup>69</sup> Another way to view this data is by examining the number of people per television during this time frame. In 1955 there were about 57 people per television in Northern Ireland. By 1963 that figure shrank to about 7

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<sup>67</sup> Rose, 343.

<sup>68</sup> Andrew Hill, "Northern Ireland and pre-Troubles BBC Television Drama," *Media History* 12, Issue 1, (April 2006), <http://ehis.ebscohost.com/eds/detail?sid=f24e379a-c159-4dc7-844b-d16c4c15190c%40sessionmgr111&vid=8&hid=4&bdata=JnNpdGU9ZWRzLWxpdmUmc2NvcGU9c2l0ZQ%3d%3d#db=ufh&AN=21507345>.

<sup>69</sup> Brian Dooley, *Black and Green* (London: Pluto Press, 1998), 28.

people per television.<sup>70</sup> In 1966, the news accounted for 8 hours of broadcasting each week on BBC. The 6pm newscast reached an audience of four to six million viewers across the United Kingdom, which ranked first or second among all programming. The 8:50pm national news drew 13.5 million, equal to the joint circulation figure for the three biggest newspapers in the world.<sup>71</sup>

The news broadcasts in the early to mid-1960s featured stories and coverage of the civil rights protests in America, allowing their viewers to watch the actions of both the protesters and the police. Doyle tells of his family watching the news before dinner each night: “The TV news, especially the BBC had been reporting on the civil rights movement in America ... the pictures of the police with whips and attack dogs shocked us all.”<sup>72</sup> The ability to view the protesters in America, especially the non-violent actions of Martin Luther King, Jr., inspired the people of Northern Ireland to stand up for their own civil rights.<sup>73</sup> Martin Luther King, Jr. understood the international role that the civil rights movement held when he stated that it was “part of a world-wide movement. Look at just about any place in the world and the exploited people are rising against the exploiters.”<sup>74</sup>

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<sup>70</sup> Chris Hand, “Television Ownership in Britain and the Coming of ITV: What Do the Statistics Show?” <http://staffnet.kingston.ac.uk/~ku32101/tvownership.pdf>

<sup>71</sup> Desmond Taylor, “Letter to the BBC Northern Ireland Advisory Council,” September 1966, [http://www.bbc.co.uk/northernireland/archive/chronicle/popups/1960s/document2\\_image1.shtml](http://www.bbc.co.uk/northernireland/archive/chronicle/popups/1960s/document2_image1.shtml).

<sup>72</sup> Doyle, 161.

<sup>73</sup> Fink, Gassert, and Ungle, 16.

<sup>74</sup> Quoted in Kurlansky, 110.

Many future leaders of Northern Ireland's protest movement credited the coverage of the American civil rights struggle with providing inspiration, motivation, and tactics for conducting their own civil rights campaign. British media coverage of the American South civil rights movement in the early 1960s meant the Northern Irish viewer watched reports of

sit-ins at segregated eating facilities, the Freedom Rides of 1961 aimed at integrating public transport in the American south, thousands of people on protest marches and – most dramatically – the brutal treatment of non-violent protestors by some police forces.<sup>75</sup>

Gerry Adams, leader of Sinn Fein, contends that television coverage of the American movement helped to politicize the Northern Ireland populace and stated that “Courtesy of the television, we were able to see an example of the fact that you didn't just have to take it, you could fight back.”<sup>76</sup> Lorenzo Bosi argues that

CRM (Civil Right Movement) leaders drew inspiration from televised accounts of the wider global movement of the 1960s: the Black civil rights campaign in the USA, the Prague Spring in Czechoslovakia, the anti-Vietnam war campaign and the students' movements all around the world.<sup>77</sup>

This sentiment was echoed by Doyle as well when, discussing the BBC coverage of the protests in America, he states that “it was obvious to anyone that those same television reports had inspired the Catholics in Northern Ireland.”<sup>78</sup> Especially telling were the thoughts of Northern

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<sup>75</sup> Dooley, 28

<sup>76</sup> Gerry Adams, *The Politics of Irish Freedom* (Dingle: Brandon, 1998), 10.

<sup>77</sup> Bosi, Part 5.

<sup>78</sup> Doyle, 161.

Ireland students who spoke to Brian Dooley. They assert that all young Catholics were influenced by the images of the American civil rights movement on the television broadcast.<sup>79</sup>

Michael Farrell, one of these students at Queen's University in Belfast, later became a leader of the People's Democracy organization. He told Dooley that

all young Catholics ... were very influenced by seeing on television the American civil rights movement ... by the beginning of the 60's, you were beginning to have the American civil rights struggle on television and I think there was a very general identification with it.<sup>80</sup>

In addition to the testimony from many involved in the protest movement, there were specific cases and protest that drew directly from the American South movements. In 1963, protesters against poor housing conditions in Dungannon found inspiration in television news reports on Martin Luther King lead protests in Alabama. The participants in Dungannon identified with those in Alabama, using some of their slogans and techniques. Dooley states that this march, consisting of mostly women "marched up and down the pavement, American-style, carrying placards with slogans such as 'Racial Discrimination In Alabama Hits Dungannon' and (in reference to an earlier US civil rights campaign) 'If Our Religion Is Against Us Ship Us To Little Rock.'" <sup>81</sup> A newspaper photo of different protest in Dungannon featured two young boys. One had his face blacked-up and carried a sign that said, "We are pals from Alabama/Where they say we can't agree/Is there really that much difference/When you look at him and me."<sup>82</sup>

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<sup>79</sup> Dooley, 28.

<sup>80</sup> Ibid.

<sup>81</sup> Ibid., 29.

<sup>82</sup> Ibid., 31

Protests in Derry also drew inspiration from the American South movement. Derry residents, living in an old military camp that housed American soldiers in the early 1940s, complained of the poor living conditions there. Their protest in 1964 identified with a similar protest in Little Rock, Arkansas, using banners declaring “Derry’s Little Rock Calls For Fair Play.”<sup>83</sup> At the beginning of the Northern Ireland protest movements, the television news would show beatings in the street and police violently breaking up the marches. Doyle reports that “On television, we’d seen them marching in the thousands in Belfast and Derry, singing ‘We Shall Overcome,’ just like the black people in the South of America.”<sup>84</sup> After seeing this on the broadcast, Doyle tells how everyone wanted to watch the news to follow the protest movements.<sup>85</sup> An interesting note on television coverage of the movements revolves around the stations that were being watched. Doyle lived in Ireland, a few miles from the Northern Irish border. He was able to watch the two Northern Irish channels, the BBC and Ulster TV, along with the Irish station RTE. When covering the riots around Bogside, each station provided a different take on the situation. RTE, which was sympathetic to the Catholics, reported that Protestant gangs were trying to drive Catholics from their homes. According to Protestant-aligned Ulster TV, police were trying to calm the situation. The BBC’s reports fell in the middle as they reported that they were just riots, not caused by one side or the other.<sup>86</sup>

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<sup>83</sup> *Ibid.*, 29

<sup>84</sup> Doyle, 161.

<sup>85</sup> *Ibid.*, 164.

<sup>86</sup> *Ibid.*, 168.

These are but a few examples of how Northern Irish protesters mimicked the American South civil rights movement. Not only did they take the American leaders' messages to heart, they also installed the American leaders' tactics, including their slogans, chants, and actions. In a 1985 speech at the University of Massachusetts, John Hume, a Derry-born leader in the civil rights movement and later a Member of Parliament who was instrumental in bringing the IRA and British Government to the negotiation table, told the crowd that "The American civil rights movement gave birth to ours. The songs of your movement were also ours."<sup>87</sup>

The reoccurring theme throughout these statements concerns the role television broadcasts played in the Catholic communities' social awakening. Images of American protesters walking arm-in-arm, singing as they went, allowed the Catholic community to see how others facing similar discrimination were rising up to challenge those responsible for the discriminatory policies. Coverage of the marches and protests provided a blueprint on how they could speak out against the discrimination they felt subjected to. In addition to providing tactics that the NICRA would use in their movement, the images of black civil rights marches in America struck a chord with the Catholics in Northern Ireland as they identified with the marchers' struggles. Fergus O'Hare, a young civil rights activist from West Belfast supports this by saying:

In the 1960s, especially the late 1960s, youth revolution or youth culture was growing internationally. Television had just become common in a lot of people's houses and we began to know more about what was going on internationally. There were things such as the Vietnam War and the anti-war demonstrations which influenced us; there were things such as the civil rights movement in America which influenced us; there were things such as the uprising in Paris, in

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<sup>87</sup> *ibid.*, 117

1968, which influenced us. We were seeing all of that on television ... It was in that kind of environment that we began to demand our rights and it was through the articulation of those demands that people learnt about the depth of sectarianism in the State.<sup>88</sup>

This ability to identify with and to model themselves after the American civil rights marchers ignited the NICRA and the civil rights movement in Northern Ireland.

The coverage of international protests was a major catalyst for the growth of the Northern Ireland protest movements. One explanation for television's impact is given by Richard Rose who explains that television broadcasts of "news of discord," such as riots in major world cities, made it difficult for those in power to suppress the information.<sup>89</sup> Television also allowed people to learn that their experiences were similar to others around the world and to see the tactics that were being used to fight against perceived injustices. An example of this is television's coverage of the police beatings of protesters outside of the 1968 Democratic National Convention in Chicago. The images of the protesters chanting "the world is watching" and yelling to each other to not fight back because "the world could see" who was committing the violence while being beaten by the police force were described as "so new and startling at that the time that no one who had their television sets on has ever forgotten."<sup>90</sup> The protesters' actions, and similar actions by the civil rights protestors in the American South, inspired Northern Irish Catholics. John Hume stated that "the civil rights movement's strategy of non-violence was greatly influenced by Martin Luther King's philosophy. Don't retaliate, let the world see who the real

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<sup>88</sup> Quoted in Bosi, Part 5.

<sup>89</sup> Rose, 344.

<sup>90</sup> Kurlansky, 282.

aggressor is – that was our fundamental message to our fellow marchers when we were attacked by baton-wielding police.”<sup>91</sup>

Television also limited the power of rumor which, because of a distrust of what the “established authority” said, was the way most news traveled within the Northern Ireland Catholic communities. Catholics had learned to be suspicious of radio reports and newspaper accounts, thus relying on rumor to disseminate information; television coverage of events helped to weaken this distrust. Important to this was the ability to have same-day reporting on events around the world. The Tet Offensive was the first major storyline to be broadcast live by all three American networks, thanks to advances in satellite technology. Live television broadcasts limited governments’ ability to control what was being reported, allowing more unfiltered information to be aired. By losing the ability to control the reports, from the war in this case, governments were no longer able to control the “public image” of the event.<sup>92</sup> Much the same as in Czechoslovakia, the availability of unfiltered information in Northern Ireland provided a new sense of trust in television. In a 1968 survey that Rose conducted, when asked what their best source for news was, 55% of the responders said television and radio, 24% chose newspapers, with only 9 % choosing private conversation.<sup>93</sup> In addition, when asked if they made a point to listen to news or current events programs on television or radio, 77% of Protestants and 70% of

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<sup>91</sup> Quoted in Bosi, Part 5.

<sup>92</sup> Kurlansky, 52.

<sup>93</sup> Rose, 344.

Catholics said yes.<sup>94</sup> Rose contends that these findings revealed a growing confidence in the freedom of the media to report the news.

Television coverage of international events was not the only way it affected the Catholics' civil rights movement. In addition to importing new ideas and paths of action from America and elsewhere, television was instrumental in garnering support for the movement through the coverage of the early protests in Northern Ireland. While the images from America were crucial in initializing support within the Catholic communities for the civil rights movement, television coverage of the protests and marches in Northern Ireland, including the strong reaction by the anti-protest groups, proved key in increasing support among fellow Catholics. Doyle tells of how week after week everybody, in the North and Ireland, followed the movement in Northern Ireland through television news reports and how the people in Ireland were proud of the movement.<sup>95</sup> The television coverage was important as it provided a face and voice to the movement that had not been available before. In discussing how the television cameras had given the demonstrators publicity, which they could have never received through printed words, protestor Michael Farrell said that "we would learn that marches had been batoned off the streets of Derry regularly in the 1950s, but there had been no TV there then."<sup>96</sup> This statement shows an important difference between the previous protests and the ones in the late 1960s: while the previous ones had occurred in obscurity, only known by those close to

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<sup>94</sup> *Ibid.*, 490

<sup>95</sup> Doyle, 164.

<sup>96</sup> Dooley, 108.

them, the new wave of protests were being broadcast over the airwaves directly into people's homes throughout the country and the world.

While previous protesters faced harassment and beatings at the hands of Protestants and police, there was not daily video of these confrontations being broadcast across Ireland and the United Kingdom. Video's power was in its ability to *show* people what was happening instead of them only *hearing* about it. The visual images of the violence the protesters faced were much more powerful than people discussing it on the radio or in the streets. Television's ability to bring the violence into people's homes and to sway people's opinion on the protest movements was discussed as part of the Cameron Commission, which was set up by the Northern Ireland government in January 1969 to investigate the reasons and causes of the rash of protest movements in Northern Ireland. In the final report issued in September 1969, a protest in Derry on October 5, 1968 was discussed. The Commission concluded that:

One of the consequences of the breakup of the demonstration in Duke Street was that the press and television reports ensured that some very damaging pictures of police violence were seen throughout the United Kingdom and abroad. This produced a violent reaction of feeling in many places and led directly to the formation ... of a protest movement.<sup>97</sup>

In this facet, television played an important role both internationally and domestically. As previously discussed, television coverage of worldwide protest movements, especially the American civil rights movement, was instrumental in demonstrating to the Catholic population that others were facing the same perceived injustices but were fighting back. Walter Cronkite

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<sup>97</sup> "Disturbances in Northern Ireland: Report of the Commission appointed by the Governor of Northern Ireland," 1969, <http://cain.ulst.ac.uk/hmsocameron.htm>, Chapter 4.

was well aware of television's power to influence world events when discussing the rise of protests worldwide when he stated that:

You can't put that as the only reason they were in the streets; demonstrations took place before television, but this was an added incitement to demonstrate. Particularly as television communities in the world showed then that this was successful in different communities, they obviously felt, well, that's the way you do it. And so it was epidemic around the world.<sup>98</sup>

As the violence and protests increased towards the end of 1969, BBC Belfast increased their local news coverage to an hour.<sup>99</sup> BBC producers faced a dilemma on how and what they should show on the news reports. Programs about racial battles in the American South and student demonstrations in Paris broadcast without any concern that they could inflame viewers and make the situation in Northern Ireland worse. However, debate erupted on how to broadcast the strife occurring domestically. While having the BBC Belfast station "opt-out" of airing potentially inflammatory reports was discussed, the BBC instead agreed to edit the footage and interviews to prevent as much incendiary items from broadcasts as possible. The news was to be given "fully and impartially as always, but – as one Editor put it – 'clinically', in a way which would not worsen the situation in any avoidable way. In other words, film of emotional outbursts, and inflammatory and violent accusations should not be screened; their substance should be read by the newsreader."<sup>100</sup> In response to critics' claims that the BBC did not fully report the situation in Northern Ireland, the BBC responded by saying:

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<sup>98</sup> Quoted in Kurlansky, 102.

<sup>99</sup> Waldo Maguire, "Deteriorating Situation - Controller's Report – BBC Northern Ireland Advisory Council Minutes," October 1969, <http://www.bbc.co.uk/northernireland/archive/chronicle/1960s/document9.shtml>.

<sup>100</sup> *Ibid.*

That is for the viewers to judge. The truth is that we have made an honest attempt to report and illustrate fully and fairly, the facts as we know them, the significant developments, the claims and counter-claims; and to reflect the attitudes of both sides - and of the moderates in between. We have been accused of bias by both sides, and especially by the extremists of both sides; and of irresponsibility by the moderates for giving air time to the extremists<sup>101</sup>

Despite editing out some of the more extreme violence and language, domestic coverage of local protest movements, especially coverage of the brutality the protesters faced, galvanized Northern Ireland communities and convinced more people to lend their support to the protesters. As both Adams and Dooley point out, the television coverage of the Northern Ireland activities served to “wake-up” the Catholic communities and to push them towards action. The coverage not only assisted in garnering support within Ireland, but much like the American civil rights movement and the Soviets’ move to end the Prague Spring, it helped raise awareness of the Catholics’ issues internationally. Images of police beating peaceful marchers or spraying them with water-cannons were being exported out of Northern Ireland, bringing sympathy to the protesters and putting pressure on the United Kingdom government to respond. Dooley speaks of his teachers’ and students’ belief that, since the world was seeing the events in Northern Ireland, the government would have to give Catholics their civil rights.<sup>102</sup>

Ken Ward addressed this in an in depth analysis of American television news coverage from 1969 thru 1979 and concluded that coverage of the Northern Irish protest movements reached an estimated 57.5 million Americans in 1969 alone. His report also determined that American television coverage of the Northern Irish movements was sympathetic to the

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<sup>101</sup> Ibid.

<sup>102</sup> Dooley, 165.

protesters. ABC filed a report in January 1969 that made explicit comparisons between the civil right movement in Northern Ireland and the American South, including reporter Bill Beutel noting that “some observers have compared the plight of ghetto residents in Northern Ireland to ghetto residents in this country.” NBC filed a sympathetic report on the ‘Battle of the Bogside’ in August 1969 that presented the Catholics as under attack from outside aggressors. Anchorman Chet Huntley summed up the report by saying “The white Catholics in Ulster are the same as blacks in the United States; they’ve been deprived of their rights, hurried into slums, and denied jobs ... And like the blacks they’ve revolted.”<sup>103</sup>

Jeremi Suri summarizes television’s role in the protests of 1968 and the years that followed by arguing that television coverage of protests and riots had a “grapevine effect” on students and workers elsewhere. They saw what was occurring elsewhere and that influenced their mood, leading to disturbances. The media’s coverage and emphasis on the violence added to the intensity and length of the disturbances. The same also tended to invoke sympathy among like-minded students and workers elsewhere and helped to convince them that their views were correct; if others were protesting and facing hardships in order to stand up for their beliefs, then they should too.<sup>104</sup>

The growth of television and of protest movements in the 1960’s and 1970’s is linked together. Television allowed for ideas and procedures to be spread quickly around the globe, helping to provide a blueprint for many protest movements from the civil right marches in the

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<sup>103</sup> *Ibid.*, 109

<sup>104</sup> Suri, 231.

American South, to the push for a relaxation of Communist doctrine in Czechoslovakia, to the demands for equal treatment in Northern Ireland. The ability to introduce new ideas into previously isolated locations and to broadcast events the day they occurred was paramount in developing and linking many movements. Television coverage of protesters standing up for what they believed in educated the people of Northern Ireland and showed them new avenues to follow in their attempt to improve their lives.

### The Course is Set

As a result of the “new education” people received from television coverage of the unrest within Northern Ireland and around the world, the Catholic community believed that mobilization and action would be necessary to reach its goal of equal treatment. Members agreed to model themselves after the civil rights protesters in the American South and to use non-violent protest in their push for equal rights.<sup>105</sup> As their movement grew, television coverage of their actions continued to garner support for their cause within the North and Ireland. This chapter will examine the activities of the protesters, with the NICRA and PIRA at the forefront, and the actions of the Stormont government which led up to the confrontation of Bloody Sunday. The actions on both sides resulted in an escalation of protests and eventually violence.

At the head of this quest for equal rights in the late 1960s was the NICRA, which was comprised of Catholics and a few liberal Protestants. The NICRA constitution stated that its objectives were to “assist in the maintenance of civil liberties, including freedom of speech, propaganda and assembly.” It continued by saying that the NICRA would take the necessary steps to ensure that these measures were met.<sup>106</sup> In addition to pushing for equal rights, universal suffrage, and the protection of civil liberties, the NICRA sought a repeal of the Special Powers Act. Unlike the IRA, the NICRA wanted to make changes through the state system, not

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<sup>105</sup> Daly, *Mister, Are You A Priest?*, 127.

<sup>106</sup> “Northern Ireland Civil Rights Association Constitution and Rules,” [http://cain.ulst.ac.uk/proni/1968/proni\\_HA-32-2-28\\_1968-nd.pdf](http://cain.ulst.ac.uk/proni/1968/proni_HA-32-2-28_1968-nd.pdf).

withdraw from it.<sup>107</sup> In 1968, the NICRA began its policy of peaceful demonstration in hope of getting more support from the Catholic communities, in addition to raising awareness of its goals. The first march proceeded without incident, but the police violently broke up the second march. A few months later, the NICRA planned another march from Belfast to Derry. This time the police and Unionist supporters broke up the march and followed the protesters into Derry, destroying homes and businesses. By the summer of 1969, the violence was growing out of control.<sup>108</sup> Before 1968, Derry was famous for its low crime rate. While there had been smaller protests for years, the riots that occurred in the summer of 1969 were the first major riots in Derry in thirty years.<sup>109</sup> After 1969, however, it became a place where rioting occurred almost daily.

Surprisingly, this growth in violence was missing a key element: the IRA. The IRA had received most of its support from working-class Catholics in Northern Ireland. However, in the mid-1960s, the IRA began concentrating more on political activities in the South rather than supporting the Catholics in the North. With the growth of Loyalist attacks in 1969, the Catholics in Northern Ireland were suffering from “widespread unemployment and poverty, a large and fortified security force lording over them, and the constant fear and threat of Loyalist attack.”<sup>110</sup> Fear peaked in 1969, as Loyalists violently disrupted Nationalists’ protest marches and began burning down Catholics’ homes and businesses. When the people in the North looked to the

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<sup>107</sup> Hancock.

<sup>108</sup> “Provisional IRA: War, Ceasefire, Endgame?,” BBC News, [http://news.bbc.co.uk/hi/english/static/in\\_depth/northern\\_ireland/2001/provisional\\_ira/](http://news.bbc.co.uk/hi/english/static/in_depth/northern_ireland/2001/provisional_ira/).

<sup>109</sup> Frank Burton, *The Politics of Legitimacy* (London: Routledge and Keagan Paul, 1978), 16.

<sup>110</sup> Brendan O’Brien, *The Long War* (Syracuse: Syracuse Press, 1999), 20.

South for help, it did not come. When it became apparent that the IRA was not going to help, some of the Northern Catholics formed the PIRA. This group was dedicated to using violence to force the British out of Northern Ireland. Its members also pushed for self-reliance and self-protection so they would never be forced to depend on someone else. They believed that the British would “wilt” under constant bombings and shootings.<sup>111</sup> In their drive to recruit new members, they argued that to succeed the membership needed to be “organized, trained and disciplined until you can chase that cursed Army away” and “trained to fight so that they could go out and destroy the British Army for ever and ever.”<sup>112</sup>

An important part of the civil rights movement story in Northern Ireland is the lack of influence the IRA had on this region beginning in 1969. During the 1960s, membership in the IRA was dropping in Northern Ireland. The IRA ended a campaign for secession in 1962 and renounced military activity - not because of police interference, but because of the apathy of the Catholics.<sup>113</sup> It was not until 1969, with Loyalist attacks and the formation of the PIRA, that widespread support for action started to return. Hancock argues that people started supporting the PIRA at this time not because of the hatred between them and the Unionists, but because of the Catholics’ rising frustration over discrimination. Others argue that there was little support for the PIRA in 1969 and 1970. M. L. Smith agrees with this argument in his book, stating that the Nationalists did not flock to the PIRA at this time because they had faith that the British

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<sup>111</sup> O’Brien, 21.

<sup>112</sup> Thomas Hennessey, *The Evolution of the Troubles 1970-72* (Dublin: Irish Academic Press, 2007), 105.

<sup>113</sup> Hancock.

Army would continue to protect them from Unionist attacks.<sup>114</sup> The army had been successful in protecting them and had allowed the barricades that were built around Bogside to keep the Loyalists out to remain. The army did not enter these areas, creating the “no-go” areas discussed above. By staying out of these zones, the army allowed the Nationalists to control them.

While these actions by the British Army created an initial feeling of good will with the Catholics, that quickly ended on October 11, 1969, when the Army returned fire on a PIRA protest and killed two people. The commander of the forces, Brigadier Cowan, stated that this “first ever return of fire” in Derry “instantly turned the Catholic community from benevolent support to complete alienation,” and led to an increase in violence against the British Army.<sup>115</sup> Many believed that the increase in violence was the result of a campaign conducted indirectly by the PIRA to stop the Nationalists from supporting the army and to drive them into its ranks.<sup>116</sup> But the PIRA claimed that it did not want to challenge the army head-on yet. One member stated that “I would dearly love to have a go at the British Troops. We will go on the offensive at the right time. Our policy at present is not to take the initiative.”<sup>117</sup> By October 1970, the PIRA felt prepared enough to initiate its offensive operation, which greatly increased the violence. In response to this increase in hostilities, the Northern Ireland government, once again using the Special Powers Act, launched an internment campaign and began arresting Nationalists. It hoped that catching the people responsible for the violence would decrease the

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<sup>114</sup> M.L. Smith, *Fighting for Ireland* (London: Routledge, 1997), 92.

<sup>115</sup> Quoted in Hennessey, 101.

<sup>116</sup> Smith, 92.

<sup>117</sup> *Ibid.*, 95.

fighting.<sup>118</sup> Internment began on August 9, 1971, with 342 men locked up with no charges or arraignments. Three months later that number had climbed to 882.<sup>119</sup>

The government's belief that the arrest operations would disrupt the PIRA network proved incorrect. By this point the PIRA was too large and organized for the arrests to disrupt it, and after the start of internment the PIRA's enrollment actually began to grow.<sup>120</sup> The selection of the army to carry out the arrest operations within Bogside, combined with the arrest of many innocent people, further angered the people and intensified support for the PIRA.<sup>121</sup> In addition to the arrests, the number of deaths from street violence rose dramatically after internment began. From January 1971 to the start of internment in August, thirty-four people died. From the start of internment till the end of the year, 139 people died.<sup>122</sup>

As anger grew, more Nationalists started to believe that violent protests might be necessary. According to Father Daly, after internment began the numbers of bombings and riots increased.<sup>123</sup> While marches and protests were still banned by the government, the NICRA went ahead with plans to protest internment. During the week of January 23, 1972, a protest march was held in front of an internment camp just outside of Derry. Approximately 300 soldiers broke

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<sup>118</sup> "Provisional IRA: War, Ceasefire, Endgame?," BBC News.

<sup>119</sup> Eamonn McCann, *Bloody Sunday in Derry* (Kerry: Brandon Book Publishers, 1992), 16.

<sup>120</sup> "Provisional IRA: War, Ceasefire, Endgame?," BBC News.

<sup>121</sup> Toolis, 110.

<sup>122</sup> Henry Patterson, *The Politics of Illusion* (London: Hutchison Radius, 1989), 137.

<sup>123</sup> Daly, *Mister, Are You A Priest?*, 166.

up the demonstration using what protestors described as “extreme violence.”<sup>124</sup> Witnesses such as John Hume accused the soldiers, especially the Paras, of severely beating protestors to the point that the soldiers had to be physically restrained by their own officers.<sup>125</sup> The way the soldiers broke up the demonstration caused the NICRA much concern, as it had a much larger rally planned in Bogside on January 30. Fearing a repeat of the week before, the NICRA went to the PIRA and was given assurances that it would not be involved in the rally on the 30<sup>th</sup>. With this promise from the PIRA, the NICRA hoped to have a peaceful rally.<sup>126</sup>

On the Thursday before the rally, PIRA members killed two police officers. Adding to the tension created by these deaths was an announcement by the Democratic Unionist Association (DUA) of Derry, a Loyalist organization, that it would be holding a rally on the 30<sup>th</sup> as well and that this rally would take place at the same location where the NICRA’s rally was scheduled to end. The DUA’s vice president told the press that “the civil rights march is not legal. Theirs, [the DUAs], would be. The authorities will have to keep their word and stop the civil rights march and give us protection.”<sup>127</sup> However, on the morning of the 30<sup>th</sup>, the newspapers ran a report that the DUA’s rally was called off. According to its vice president,

We were approached by the Government and given assurances that the Civil Rights march would be halted - by force if necessary. We believe wholesale riot and bloodshed could be the result of the Civil Rights activities tomorrow and we

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<sup>124</sup> British Irish Rights Watch, “Submission to the United Nations,” Section 2.

<sup>125</sup> Martin Melaugh, “The Civil Rights Campaign – A Chronology of Main Events,” <http://cain.ulst.ac.uk/events/crights/chron.htm>.

<sup>126</sup> British Irish Rights Watch, Section 2.

<sup>127</sup> *Ibid.*

would be held responsible if our rally takes place. We have appealed to all loyalists to stay out of the city centre tomorrow.<sup>128</sup>

Even with the DUA's rally called off, the NICRA's demonstration began with a threat of violence, which was well known to both the demonstrators and to the soldiers. Loyalist leaders pressured the authorities to "make the civil rights marchers rue the day they defied Stormont" by threatening "all manners of mayhem" if the British failed to do so.<sup>129</sup>

An interesting question is why Bloody Sunday stood out and garnered international attention while other protests did not. This occurred because of two factors. The most important was the presence of the media, specifically the reporter and cameraman from the BBC. The two of them had a few fortuitous breaks. First, they managed to be at the exact location where the fighting occurred. Second, they somehow succeeded in protecting their video equipment from being damaged by the Paras' water cannon while all other media had their video equipment rendered inoperable. These two facts permitted them to record what was happening on videotape, which allowed for quick dispersal of the footage. Their success in capturing and broadcasting the footage demonstrates the importance television had during this time. Not only was it important in importing ideas and tactics to the Northern Irish Catholics for use in their growing movements, but it was equally important in exporting their struggles, gaining them support from within Ireland and around the world. The second important factor was the actions of Father Daly. The image of him using a bloody handkerchief to lead a group of men carrying a wounded boy towards safety quickly spread across the world, bringing sympathy to the

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<sup>128</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>129</sup> McCann, 15.

Nationalists and galvanizing their movement. Father Daly became the face of Bloody Sunday and on many occasions its voice. After the attacks, Father Daly and the other local priests stated that:

the Army were guilty of willful murder. We accuse the Army of shooting indiscriminately into a fleeing crowd, gloating over casualties, and of preventing spiritual and medical attention reaching the wounded and dying. We clearly stated that none of the dead or wounded was armed.<sup>130</sup>

The priests' statement echoed the thoughts of the Nationalists, not just in Bogside, but around Ireland. For many Nationalists, Bloody Sunday was the turning point in their support for the PIRA. The atmosphere of shock and grief soon became one of fierce anger.<sup>131</sup> Gerry Kelly expressed this belief in a speech at the Thirtieth Anniversary of Bloody Sunday by stating that the day was not just an isolated incident, but it was a "line in the sand, not just for me but arguably for a whole generation of youth."<sup>132</sup> Like many others, he joined the PIRA days after the attack, believing that they were fighting for equal, civil, cultural, and national rights. He also discussed the long term effects on the people's determination to not allow this to happen again: "There was an eruption of emotion and reaction but there was also a quite gradual, sometimes glacial determined movement, which has become unstoppable."<sup>133</sup> The belief that change could be accomplished through peaceful measures was severely damaged as a result of Bloody Sunday. Because of the television reports and first-hand accounts of the British and Northern Ireland

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<sup>130</sup> Daly, *Mister, Are You A Priest?*, 204.

<sup>131</sup> *Ibid.*, 206.

<sup>132</sup> Kelly, "30<sup>th</sup> Anniversary."

<sup>133</sup> *Ibid.*

governments' use of violence, the message of the PIRA started to resonate with the people.

Kelly contends that the Unionists and British were trying to send a message that day:

It was a simple message: get off the streets, stop protesting or we will kill you and as the life drained out of those lying on the streets being comforted by their stunned and shocked neighbours and friends, life drained out of the notion that peaceful protest could bring change, to the sectarian, apartheid statelet in which we lived.<sup>134</sup>

Thirty years later, Kelly and others who supported the IRA and Sinn Fein were still trying to make sure that people did not forget what occurred on Bloody Sunday. While there had been a relatively long stretch of peace, since early 2009 there has been a rash of attacks by those pushing for reunification. The message of Kelly and others is not to forget what the British were trying to accomplish on January 30, 1972:

The British government not only permitted their troops to kill innocent civilians, they encouraged them to do so. And these troops did so in the clear knowledge that they had immunity. They had in fact a license to kill. And let us be clear about this. The violence that was visited on you thirty years ago was not mindless, was not irrational, was not spontaneous, nor the actions of an individual commander in the British Army. The killing of innocent civilians was well thought out. This violence was methodical and it was politically cleared and approved at the highest level. Its purpose was to terrorise the nationalist and republican people. It was designed to intimidate us, to frighten us, not only off the streets but to abandon our quest for civil rights and for national rights. It was aimed at forcing us to stay indoors, to peak from behind curtains, to cower in the face of injustice. That was what the British government did all over its empire - unfortunately it was not new. That is what they tried to do here on these streets thirty years ago.<sup>135</sup>

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<sup>134</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>135</sup> *Ibid.*

Others blamed the internment campaign for the deaths that day. One of the people who support this is Margaret Bradley, whose brother Jim Wray was killed on Bloody Sunday. She contends that without internment, this tragedy would not have occurred:

If those men had been arrested and taken before a judge and jury and sentenced, people would have not been on the streets of Derry that day. But no reason was given to the people so we were justified in going on the streets to say, No, you can't come in the middle of the night and take our people out of their beds for no reason and lock them away for six months or a year or more without telling us the reason you are doing this.<sup>136</sup>

However, with the growing tensions within the region before the start of internment, it is likely that a similar event would have occurred at some point. The Catholics' demands for an improvement in their civil rights, which had been ignored by the government, were reaching a point where confrontation seemed inevitable. The situation had reached a point where only a spark was needed to ignite the flames.

Another lasting legacy of Bloody Sunday was the loss of innocence and the disillusionment of the people of Derry. Sean Collins, who was ten when Bloody Sunday occurred, described how he used to look at the British soldiers as protectors and heroes, protecting Catholics from Loyalist violence. He states that Bloody Sunday changed everything for him:

Up to that day I believed that the British Army were the good guys. All of my innocence in that regard was lost. I had no illusions about what the British were like and I had no sympathy when I heard subsequently about British soldiers being shot.<sup>137</sup>

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<sup>136</sup> McCann, 36.

<sup>137</sup> Hennessey, 309.

Collin's belief is similar to the thinking of many Catholics who experienced the events of Bloody Sunday. The British Army, who the Catholics believed were sent to protect them from attack and harassment, instead turned on them. This led many Catholics in the North and Ireland to support the PIRA and its attempts to violently remove the British from Northern Ireland.

## **Conclusion**

The killing of thirteen protesters on January 30, 1972 made a direct and lasting impact on the course of Northern Ireland. Widespread violence continued for more than two decades before a ceasefire between the IRA and British Government was reached. The wave of recent car and building bombings has shown that many of the underlying issues that existed in 1972 are still there. Bloody Sunday was not an isolated incident, but a continuation of a struggle that had been ongoing for centuries. The circumstances surrounding Bloody Sunday were based on deep divides between the Nationalists and the Unionists, which caused distrust and animosity between the two groups, with conditions worsening after the creation of Northern Ireland in 1920. The distrust and dislike of each other were made worse by the policies enacted by the Unionists' Stormont government.

The increasing animosity between the two groups during the 1960s paralleled growing tensions around the world. Whether it was anti-Vietnam War protests in Berkeley, Paris, and Tokyo, students and workers joining together to fight for better living conditions in Latin America, the struggle for civil rights in the American South, or resistance against oppressive regimes in Czechoslovakia, movements connected with one another and spread their messages to the world because of television. The growth of television and improvements in broadcasting, especially the ability to send live broadcasts around the world, were paramount in the development of protest movements during the mid to late 1960s. Northern Irish Catholics watching coverage of the civil rights marchers in the American South learned techniques and strategies that they used in their own protest movements. Media's ability to send live reports limited the amount of control the government could place on the information being relayed. This

was especially true about Vietnam, where same-day broadcast of events circumvented the American government's control and allowed viewers to see that conditions in Vietnam were much different than the government's version.

Television's ability to disseminate information quickly to all corners of the globe proved key in the mobilization of many protest movements. In Northern Ireland, the Catholics used coverage of the American civil rights protests and of other movements such as the Prague Spring to awaken their communities. As the Northern Ireland Catholics received a "new education" from these television reports, they realized changes were needed. When they tried to follow the example set in the American South to protest against discrimination, the government and Unionist population responded with violence. When the PIRA was created and inserted itself into the situation, the violence grew and the path toward conflict was set. The internment without trial program, which was intended to help curb the violence, increased it instead, setting the stage for the violent struggles that were ahead. Bloody Sunday was a culmination of these events, a point when the tensions between the two groups reached a boiling point. Bloody Sunday was able to capture the attention of the world as a result of media coverage and media's ability to quickly transmit information around the world. Not only did Bloody Sunday introduce the plight of the Nationalists to the world, but it also changed to path of resistance from a non-violent path to a decidedly violent one.

## Epilogue

In 1998, Prime Minister Tony Blair initiated a new inquiry into the events of Bloody Sunday. Prime Minister Blair appointed Lord Mark Saville of Newdigate to oversee the proceedings. Unlike the Widgery Report investigation, which lasted six weeks, the Saville Inquiry persisted for twelve years, included 2500 witness statements and 922 oral statements, and cost over 195 million pounds. Finally, on June 15, 2010 the Saville Report, announcing the results of the inquiry, was released to the public. The report laid blame for Bloody Sunday's events "unequivocally" on the Army's actions.<sup>138</sup> The inquiry found that no warning had been given before the soldiers opened fire, none of the soldiers as responding to petrol bombers or stone throwers, the soldiers fired on people who were fleeing or helping those injured, those killed did not provoke the soldiers and were not posing a threat, many of the soldiers lied about their actions on that day, and the actions of Bloody Sunday were not premeditated.<sup>139</sup>

The report was greeted with celebration in Bogside and among Nationalists. On the day the findings were announced, crowds retraced the steps of the original marchers while others gathered in Derry to listen as the decision was broadcast. On September 22, 2010, the British government announced it would offer compensation payment to the families of those wounded or killed on Bloody Sunday. While some of the families entered into discussions with the government on compensation, other families refused to discuss financial terms. Instead they are

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<sup>138</sup> BBC News, "Bloody Sunday Report Published," June 15, 2010, <http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/10320609>.

<sup>139</sup> *Ibid.*

calling for criminal charges to be brought up against the soldiers responsible.<sup>140</sup> Linda Nash, whose brother was killed on Bloody Sunday, shared her views on the government's offer by saying that, "It is repulsive. Offensive. Not now, nor at any time will I accept money. I've already told me legal team I want to go forward with prosecutions."<sup>141</sup>

Although the Saville Report exonerated the protesters, it did not provide closure for many. People like Linda Nash did not see the Saville Report as a final chapter in the events of that day; instead they viewed it as correcting the wrong done by the Widgery Report. To them, the Saville Report opened the door for what they had been waiting forty years for: a chance for justice through the prosecution of the soldiers. Others viewed the Report as validating the protesters and their actions during the march. Many of the same distrusts that were evident in Derry and Northern Ireland in 1971 are still there today. The calls for a united Ireland continue, as does violence associated with it. The Saville Report may have cleared the names of those who perished on Bloody Sunday, but it did not and could not heal the wounds of those whose lives were touched that fateful day.

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<sup>140</sup> Shawn Pogatchnik, "UK to Pay Victims Over 1972 Bloody Sunday Massacre," September 22, 2011, [http://old.news.yahoo.com/s/ap/eu\\_nireland\\_bloody\\_sunday#mwpphu-container](http://old.news.yahoo.com/s/ap/eu_nireland_bloody_sunday#mwpphu-container).

<sup>141</sup> *Ibid.*

**APPENDIX A**

*DCC* Derry City Corporation was Protestant controlled and responsible for the building and allocation of housing in Derry.

*IRA* Irish Republican Army. The IRA's goal was to force the British to leave Ireland using either political violence or negotiation.

*Loyalist* The term for a Protestant who strongly, and often violently, opposed a united Ireland.

*Official IRA* The Official split from the Provisional IRA in 1969. They declared a ceasefire in 1972 and have played a very limited role in the conflict in Northern Ireland since then.

*Provisional IRA* Split from the IRA in 1969. The Provisionals soon eclipsed the Official and is now synonymous with the IRA.

*Nationalist* The term for a member of the Catholic population who pushed for a united Ireland through non-violent means.

*NICRA* Northern Ireland Civil Rights Association organized many of the protests in the early 1970's, especially in Derry.

*Republican* A supporter of a united Ireland, usually synonymous with a supporter of the Provisional IRA.

*Sinn Fein* The legal political wing of the IRA.

*Unionist* A Protestant who wanted Northern Ireland to maintain a political union with Great Britain.

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**ABSTRACT****THE ROOTS OF BLOODY SUNDAY**

by

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There has been much written on the Bloody Sunday Massacre and Northern Ireland during the late-1960s to early-1970s period. Many of the works focus on the role of the IRA in the struggle against Great Britain throughout the 20th century and argue that the events of Bloody Sunday marked an intensification of violence in the conflict, but treat the event as one of many in a long struggle. Some writers choose to focus on the armed struggle between the IRA and the British. Others examine the rise and fall of leaders and policies that helped shape the struggle in Northern Ireland by concentrating on the political factions fighting for dominance in Belfast and London. There are additional works that examine why Bloody Sunday occurred by focusing on the social interactions of the different communities and groups within Derry. These pieces go beyond an IRA versus Great Britain argument to examine many different causes that led to Bloody Sunday, such as religion, economics, and education.

To understand Bloody Sunday, it is important to review not only how it occurred, but also why it occurred. Was it as simple as Protestants attacking Catholics? Was it a result of government policies recently enacted? Why did the march on January 30th end in mass killings while no other protests had? In order to answer these questions, the social climate of Derry needs to be examined to determine how the area was divided and what caused the tensions to build. While each of the reasons listed above played a role in the events that led to Bloody Sunday, it was television that linked them all together and provided the spark that ignited the movement. The growth of television in Northern Ireland in the 1960s allowed the Catholics to see coverage of the civil rights movement in the American South, of Vietnam War protests in France, and of rebellion against tyranny during the Prague Spring in Czechoslovakia. Television coverage of these events and of the growing protest movement within Northern Ireland educated the people and provided them with the ability to see how others around the world were fighting back against perceived injustices. While the deep divide among the people in Northern Ireland, driven by anti-Catholic policies enacted by the Stormont Government, was the basis for the protests, it was television that pushed people into action.

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James Campbell is a M.A. student of World History with a concentration in Modern East Asia at Wayne State University. He received his B.A. in History from Wayne State University in 2007, finishing with a 3.86 GPA.