A Short Guide to Elections for the Londonderry Corporation 1920-1967

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Introduction

It is difficult to imagine any aspect of Northern Ireland's political history which has suffered so much from misinformation as the electoral arrangements for the Londonderry Corporation, more formally known as the Londonderry County Borough Council. The term "corporation", referring to a local council, has rather fallen out of use in the UK since the 1970s, but before that it was regularly applied to the local authorities in Belfast and Londonderry. This paper will hopefully act as a work of reference to correct many of the misunderstandings and misrepresentations. It should also be helpful to those with a general interest in local government elections in Northern Ireland before councils were stripped of most of their powers in 1973. Finally, because Labour candidates provided the main source of contested elections, this paper should be of some interest to students of Labour politics outside Belfast.

Sligo Comes to Londonderry

Our story begins just before 1920 with a cynical piece of political manipulation, but not in the way you may have been led to expect. The British Government was concerned about the rise of Sinn Fein in the Southern counties of Ireland, which were still at this point all within the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Ireland. It was particularly worried that, in a first-past-the-post election, Sinn Fein would sweep the board in local elections for the Southern counties. Sinn Fein influence in the six counties which were to become Northern Ireland was limited.

The British Government was tempted to impose a form of proportional representation (PR) which very few people in Ireland wanted, after studying the new arrangements in Sligo. The Sligo Corporation wanted additional powers to raise rates (a local property tax). This required an Act of Parliament, which started life as the Sligo Corporation Bill. It would be local legislation, which would apply only to Sligo. The Ratepayers Association wanted to be assured it would have sufficient representation on the council before it would agree to such a move. A Mr Webb, in addressing a meeting of the Association, saw merits in a system of proportional representation in local elections to be held every three years [1].

The Sligo Corporation Act received royal assent in August 1918 and an editorial in a local paper pointed out that "For the future the elections in the Borough will be carried out on a scheme of Proportional Representation, a provision which is not in force in any other municipality of either Great Britain or Ireland" [2].

The next local elections in Sligo were held in January 1919 and it was reported that "As had been anticipated the system of election by Proportional Representation has worked out most satisfactorily in the Sligo Borough, and the three groups of candidates – representative of Sinn Fein, the Ratepayers, and Labour – have all secured representation on the Council. From an analysis of the lists we find that the new Council will be composed of seven representatives of Sinn Fein, eight representatives of the Ratepayers Association, five representatives of Labour, and four independent members" [3].

The effect of this experiment in proportional representation (PR) was not lost on the British Government. Although such an electoral system would have been unacceptable in Great Britain, the government saw it as a convenient way of diminishing Sinn Fein's impact in

elections. PR was to be introduced for local elections throughout Ireland, where there was a similar distaste for this method of election. The Local Government (Ireland) Bill began its progress through Parliament in March 1919 [4].

Unionists opposed the measure from the start and later made it clear that when Northern Ireland had its own parliament, PR would be abolished. The *Northern Whig*, a moderate Unionist newspaper, summed it up like this:

"The Attorney-General, who is in charge of the measure, admits that the Nationalists do not want it. The Ulster representatives certainly have no desire for it, and as far as the Sinn Fein opinion is known, Mr De Valera's followers have no liking for it. What body of opinion, then, is behind the proposal? Outside the ranks of the Government only two Irish members have voted for the Bill. Sir Maurice Dockrell and the Attorney-General are the only Irish members who have spoken in its defence. Lieutenant-Colonel Walter Guinness has been a fervid champion of the change, but though an Irishman, he does not sit for an Irish constituency. It is an absurd and incongruous situation that the electoral machinery of Irish local government should be turned upside down to please three Irish members." [5].

The Irish opposition was ignored and hence it was that the Londonderry Corporation (also known as the Londonderry County Borough Council) faced its first PR election in January 1920.

The Road to 1920

The Londonderry County Borough Council, together with Belfast, was what today would be called a unitary authority. It was responsible for all local government services in its area. Urban and rural district councils had to share responsibility for delivering services with their local county council.

Before 1920, Londonderry had operated a five ward electoral scheme which had been approved by the Westminster Parliament as part of the Londonderry Improvement Act 1896 [6]. The five wards coincided with the five polling districts earlier drawn up for Parliamentary elections. The scheme would give Nationalists representation on the Corporation for the first time [7].

The number of Unionist and Nationalist voters at this point was fairly equal, but Nationalist electors tended to waste votes by building up excessive majorities in areas like the Bogside. The more evenly distributed Unionist voters had a majority in three of the five wards, which translated into a 24-16 majority on the council [8]. In modern terminology, Unionists would be said to have exhibited greater vote efficiency. Thus "vote efficiency bias occurs where one party's votes are more efficiently distributed across the wards than are its opponent's" [9]. In 1896, Nationalists declined to put up any candidates in the Unionist North and East Wards [10].

Local elections throughout this period, up to and including 1967, were based on a ratepayers' franchise. The ratepayer and the ratepayer's spouse could vote, but other adults in a household could not. This type of franchise operated in Great Britain for local government elections until the Representation of the People Act 1945, but it continued after that date in Northern Ireland [11]. Women got a ratepayers' vote on the same basis as men in the Local Government (Ireland) Act 1898 [12].

The same Act had set the normal date for county borough elections as 15 January. One third of councillors would retire each year to submit themselves for election, thus raising the prospects of many polling days in the teeth of winter. Later, the Local Government (Ireland) Act 1919 provided for triennial elections (an election for the entire council every three years).

The Londonderry Corporation proposed a four ward scheme for the first PR election to be held in 1920 [13]. This scheme was approved with minor changes to the number of representatives assigned to each ward. Some of the criticisms of the Catholic Registration Agent, Michael McDaid, were accepted and the number of councillors for the West Ward went up from 7 to 8, and in the North Ward it was reduced from 12 to 11 [14]. There were still to be a total of 40 elected representatives on the Corporation.

The 1920 Election Results

The number of councillors returned for each ward in January 1920 was as follows. The Votes are first preference votes. There was no contest in the West Ward. There were simply not enough Protestant voters in and around the Bogside for Unionists to have any hope of winning a single seat.

Table 1: Londonderry County Borough Elections January 1920 [15]

Ward	**Nationalists**		**Unionists**	
	Votes	**Cllrs**	**Votes**	**Cllrs**
West	**-**	**8**	**-**	**0**
North	**1297**	**4**	**1923**	**7**
South East	**1809**	**6**	**2035**	**6**
Waterside	**960**	**3**	**1613**	**6**
Total	**4066**	**21**	**5571**	**19**

The votes total understates the Nationalist position because of there being no contest in the West Ward. The Unionists did get more first preference votes than the Nationalists in the South East Ward, but not quite enough to win a seventh seat. It should however be noted that Unionists had a majority of first preference votes in three out of the four wards. Under a first-past-the-post system they would have won a larger majority of the council seats (32-8). Under PR, the Nationalists had a slender majority (21-19).

A point of interest in this election was the voting recommendations provided by each party. The Nationalists' advice was more conventional, telling their supporters to vote 1 for their first choice of candidate, 2 for the second etc. [16]. The Unionists, perhaps wanting to keep this first attempt at a strange voting system as simple as possible, took a different approach. In the North Ward, for instance, Unionist voters were told they "may mark the ballot paper in the order of their choice, but we recommend them to put the figure 1 before the name Ballintine; the figure 2 before the name Deane; 3 before the name Gilliland..." [17]. The idea here was to work from the top to the bottom of the ballot paper, choosing Unionist candidates in alphabetical order.

The effect of this was to leave the first Unionist on the ballot paper with almost all the first preference votes, which would cascade down the list as each candidate's surplus was redistributed. Thus Ballintine received 1687 first preferences, and Unionist candidates following him on the ballot paper got 20, 21, 33, 67, 35, and 60. All were elected with a quota set at 269 [18]. One benefit of this approach was that, according to the Dublin-based Local Government Board regulations, the candidate in each area with the most first preference votes would be designated as an alderman [19]. At this stage, the title was simply about status rather than power. Later, aldermen would be directly elected in separate elections from councillors.

A peculiarity of this PR election is that there was only one unsuccessful candidate in each of the contested wards. This person was a Nationalist in the North and Waterside Wards and a Unionist in the South East Ward. The Unionist was clearly alphabetically disadvantaged. Each party estimated its voting strength so precisely that the contest essentially came down to a contest for the last seat in each ward. If we take the example of the South East Ward, where there were 12 seats, the Unionists were confident of winning six seats and the Nationalists five. The Unionists put up seven candidates and the Nationalists six, each hoping to win the twelfth seat. In the end it went to the last Nationalist candidate, leaving the last Unionist unsuccessful.

After the 1920 election, the process of counting the number of Catholics and Protestants on the electoral register as a reliable indication of how people would vote in Londonderry Corporation elections began to break down. The intervention of various types of Labour candidates in later elections created what I have called the Cameron Credibility Gap. Lord Cameron headed a committee of inquiry which reported in 1969, and unwisely committed himself to the proposition that Nationalist electoral majorities could be predicted by counting the number of Catholics and Protestants on the electoral register [20]. The gap between predictions based on this assumption, and the true majority achieved in actual elections, particularly in the 1960s, is what I have called the Cameron Credibility Gap [21]. More on this later.

PR and the Northern Ireland Parliament

The Government of Ireland Act 1920, which set up two parliaments in Ireland, had decreed, in the face of Unionist opposition, that PR would be used in elections to those bodies, but this provision could be removed after three years. James Craig made it clear during the Westminster debate on the Government of Ireland Bill, that this option would be exercised [22]. The first occasion on which this could have been done was 1924, three years after the formation of the Northern Ireland Parliament. Preparations were being made to draw up single member constituencies, and the Northern Ireland Government could have stayed in office until May 1926 to see through this reform. An editorial in the *Northern Whig* urged the government to take this extra time so that the next parliamentary election would not be under PR [23].

However, an election to the Northern Ireland parliament was called almost immediately. Another *Northern Whig* editorial stated, "We note that Sir James [Craig] repeats the assurance that the abolition of proportional representation is only postponed. While most Loyalists will, we are convinced, share our regret that the establishment of the system of single member constituencies was not effected during the lifetime of Ulster's first Parliament, the announcement that the Government recognises the pledge to be still binding, and is determined to honour it, will be welcomed by all who realise – and what intelligent and unbiased observer does not? – that proportional representation, after a fair trial, has been found wanting" [24]. PR was abolished in time for the next Northern Ireland Parliamentary elections in 1929.

Before we return to the local elections, this would be a convenient point to clear up a confusion about the Northern Ireland Parliamentary constituencies in Londonderry. There was a rather infamous pamphlet called *The Plain Truth*, produced by the Catholic pressure group, the Campaign for Social Justice. It stated "There was a separate seat for the City of Londonderry in the early years of the Stormont parliament. Because of the preponderance of Catholics the constituency returned an anti-Unionist member (Nationalist). In order to neutralise the seat the electoral division was re-arranged. The city itself was cut in two,

Foyle returning a Nationalist. The boundary of the 'City' was stretched eight miles into the country" [25].

The authors had obviously become totally confused. In the early days of the Northern Ireland Parliament, which did not sit at Stormont until 1932, there was just one constituency covering the whole of County Londonderry which returned five members by PR. In the 1921 and 1925 elections, three of these were Unionist and two were Nationalist. There never was a separate City of Londonderry seat in these early days.

What the authors may have had in mind is the Londonderry City seat for the Westminster Parliament, which existed up to the General Election in November 1922, when it was abolished. It returned a Nationalist by a narrow majority (315 in 1918) [26]. Up to that point, the six counties which were to form Northern Ireland had been allocated 30 seats at Westminster, with three of these in County Londonderry. The British Government decided that as Northern Ireland would have its own Parliament, it did not need so many MPs at Westminster. Its allocation was reduced from 30 to 13. There would be just one Londonderry constituency, which took in the city and the county.

As we have seen, when PR was abolished, Northern Ireland was divided into single member constituencies in time for the 1929 elections to what was soon to be known as the Stormont Parliament. There would be 52 seats, and County Londonderry's share of that would be five, just as it had been under PR. In 1929, three of the single member seats in County Londonderry were won by Unionists and two by Nationalists. There was no change there.

Having cleared up that confusion, the question then arises as to whether the Londonderry City Westminster seat, which featured in elections before the formation of the Northern Ireland state, would have provided a fair and reliable guide to the drawing up of the Stormont constituencies. The key consideration here is that at Westminster, County Londonderry had three seats; in the Northern Ireland Parliament it would have five seats. Using comparable post-1918 and pre-1928 figures, the Westminster constituency of Londonderry City had 16,736 voters in December 1918 (after the extension of the franchise) whereas the County Londonderry Stormont seats in 1921 had 62,111 electors [27]. Allocating the City of Londonderry one seat would have left it with roughly 27% of the voters but only 20% of the seats. Of course, in 1928, women aged 21 or over acquired the vote in both Westminster and Northern Ireland Parliamentary elections, and the electorates were no longer comparable to an age without universal adult suffrage.

The solution with regard to the Northern Ireland Parliamentary constituencies was to create two seats, Foyle and the City of Londonderry, each of which took in part of the city and part of the adjacent Londonderry Rural District Council area. Foyle (which included the rural Liberties area) became a safe Nationalist seat and the party distribution of MPs in County Londonderry did not change. The two new city constituencies had their population (number of voters not available) coming from the following areas:

Table 2 Population Figures for the Northern Ireland Parliamentary Constituencies 1929 [28]

Constituency	From the County Borough	From the Rural District
City of Londonderry	22,383	4,940
Foyle	22,595	3,816

All Change for 1923 in Local Government

There was no time restriction on removing PR in local elections. When Northern Ireland got its own parliament in 1921, no time was lost in getting rid of PR in electing councils, as it was viewed as an electoral system which had been imposed on the people by a cynical British Government. In 1922 a Local Government Bill was introduced, and Unionists presented a series of reasons why PR had to go.

Mr Megaw, Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Home Affairs, said that there had been little popular demand for PR; it was hard to understand; it encouraged voters to stay at home; and the electoral areas had to be too large, meaning that some candidates, not being local to many of the electors, were unknown to them. Mr Lynn told the Northern Ireland House of Commons that there was no mandate for PR [29].

Speaking in the Northern Ireland Senate, Lord Londonderry stated that Belfast found that PR was twice as expensive as the previous system to administer and some smaller councils were in financial difficulties because of the cost. "The people of Great Britain had hitherto steadfastly set their faces against the principle of proportional representation, and although some enthusiasts still cried out for it, it had been clearly manifested in the discussion which took place in the Imperial House of Commons some weeks ago that what was considered good enough for Ireland was certainly not good enough for England" [30].

The various branches of Unionism had been writing to Sir James Craig, the Northern Ireland Prime Minister, encouraging his government to abolish PR. The City of Derry Branch of the Ulster Unionist Labour Association had forwarded a motion passed by its branch. It said of the PR legislation, "This Act, which the British people refused to have anything to do with, was forced on Ireland without any demand from the recognised Political Parties in this Country, and has placed local affairs in Londonderry City and other Districts in Ulster under the control and domination of the Sinn Fein Organisation, the Representatives of which have no real stake or interest in the City or Districts" [31].

Behind the scenes, Winston Churchill tried to frustrate the will of the people of Northern Ireland by threatening to refuse to submit the legislation to the monarch for the required Royal Assent. "The Prime Minister indicated that Mr Churchill was withholding the Royal Assent to the Local Government Bill on the grounds that the change from Proportional representation in County Council Elections was a matter affecting the whole of Ireland and therefore one in which the Imperial Government were justified in withholding their Assent". By the end of July 1922, the Northern Ireland Cabinet, meeting at Londonderry House in London, was already deciding that it would resign if the legislation was blocked [32].

Churchill's argument was spurious. The real reason was outlined in a message from him to Craig on 31 August 1922. "We have received a further formal protest from Cosgrave [then the Chairman of the Provisional Government of the Irish Free State], claiming this Bill prejudices the Treaty settlement" [33]. By this time, the fledgling Free State authorities had concluded that PR was helpful to Nationalists in certain parts of Northern Ireland, and were treating it as something of a bargaining counter in negotiations with the British Government over a settlement for arrangements in the South and West of Ireland.

However, perhaps realising that he was skating on very thin constitutional ice, Churchill finally informed W.T.Cosgrave on 11 September 1922, "I told General Collins in my last letter to him that after exhaustive examination of the Constitutional issues I had come, though most unwillingly, to the conclusion that the Local Government (Northern Ireland) Bill could not be vetoed...After full discussion we came to the unanimous conclusion that for us to veto a measure clearly within the powers delegated to the Parliament of Northern Ireland would form a dangerous precedent". The King's Assent to the Local Government Act was given on 14 September 1922 [34].

In October 1922, the Nationalists on Londonderry Corporation put forward a motion criticising the new arrangements. The vote was tied, but was passed on the casting vote of the Nationalist Lord Mayor [35]. At the November meeting of the Corporation, a letter from the Ministry of Home Affairs was read out. It confirmed that Londonderry would revert to the five ward system operating from 1896-1920 But there would be a small adjustment in the number of representatives in the North Ward (up from 8 to 10) and the East Ward (down from 8 to 6). As these were both Unionist wards, there would be no overall effect on the balance of power. The other wards would be the South Ward, the West Ward and the Waterside Ward. The two successful candidates with the most votes in each ward would become aldermen [36].

Even before this formal confirmation of arrangements, Nationalists operating under the name of the South Ward Club (essentially Sinn Fein) had met to decide that not only should Nationalists abstain from contesting the local elections in January 1923, but the meeting resolved to "declare our determination to prevent any Catholic or Nationalist who goes forward in the South Ward from being elected" [37].

The abstentionist view prevailed, although a *Londonderry Sentinel* editorial drew attention to some Catholic disquiet over this policy [38]. When nominations closed, no candidates at all had put their names forward in the South and West Wards. The Nationalist *Derry Journal* reported that "The attitude of the anti-Partition labourists is that it would be unfair and invidious to nominate candidates for the South and West Wards, where Nationalist predominate without contesting the other three wards where the Partitionists have the majority" [39].

The caveat was that eight Nationalists who had previously served on the Corporation in the old West Ward under PR were deemed re-elected provided they made the declaration of allegiance to the King, required of all councillors from this time onwards [40]. Only Councillor William Logue did so. He had served as President of the Derry Trades and Labour Council and was on the more Socialist wing of Nationalism [41].

Although the law did say that, where there were no nominations in a ward, the existing councillors could be deemed re-elected, in this case it did require a generous interpretation of that law. The West Ward under PR in 1920 was not exactly the same as the West Ward in elections before and after that date.

James Gallagher had been elected as a Nationalist to the South East Ward in 1920. In written evidence to the Irish Boundary Commission in 1925, he claimed that "I, in common with my colleagues, did not allow myself to be re-nominated as a member of the Corporation, but as there were no nominations I was declared deemed to be elected for the South Ward for a further term of three years. I refused, however, to take my seat for the term above stated" [42]. Because the boundaries of the South East Ward in the PR election and the South Ward were completely different, this required an even more generous interpretation of the "deemed re-elected" provision.

Rarely in Londonderry were there to be no nominations at all in a ward, not least because Labour candidates were often happy to step into the potential vacancies which Nationalists might create. In some rural areas, the "no nominations" phenomenon was not unusual. Councillors, typically of a Nationalist persuasion, who were too lazy to submit nomination papers, relied on the rule that they would be deemed re-elected in the absence of other candidates. For instance, in the Omagh Rural District Council election of 1936, where every candidate was returned unopposed, all of the 21 Unionists submitted nomination papers. However, only 10 of the 18 Nationalists bothered to do likewise. In the wards of Aghafad, Carnderry, Crockanboy, Fallagh, Fintona, Sluggan, Tattymoyle, and Lifford, Nationalists had to rely on being deemed re-elected [43]. This depended on "the other side" behaving like perfect gentlemen in not nominating a candidate in an area where they were in a minority.

Surprisingly, this usually worked. One of the exceptions was a Tyrone County Council contest for the Coagh electoral division in 1936. "Coagh has a Nationalist majority and was represented by Mr Patrick McVey, who, for some reason or other failed to lodge a nomination paper. Shortly before the time fixed for the close of receipt of nominations on Tuesday papers were lodged on behalf of James E.Johnston [a Unionist], High Street, Omagh as nominee for the Coagh division. It may be stated that in accordance with the regulations the failure of Mr McVey to have himself nominated did not forfeit his right to the seat. In the absence of any other nominee for the division he would have been deemed to be re-elected...No nomination has been received for Dromore, and D.McCrossan (Nat.) is deemed to be re-elected" [44]. The kind of ungentlemanly behaviour exhibited in Coagh was rare.

Back to Annual Elections

The arrangements arrived at in 1923 envisaged that there would be triennial elections (polls every three years). However, Londonderry Corporation decided in due course that it preferred the system which operated before 1920, where one third of councillors would retire each year, thus providing for annual elections. This approach would be familiar to large parts of present-day English local government, although it tends to operate on a four year cycle.

In December 1924, the Corporation passed a motion asking the Ministry of Home Affairs to make an Order, as provided for in the Local Government Act 1922, to restore the pre-1920 election timetable. No boundary changes were involved [45]. A *Derry Journal* editorial had discussed the respective merits of triennial and annual elections back in 1898 and had concluded "there is room for intelligent difference on the question" [46]. It does not seem to have been a matter of great party political controversy.

In June 1925 the Ministry of Home Affairs made the relevant Order to bring effect to these changes [47]. The fact that the North and East Wards had been given different numbers of representatives for the 1923 election presented a minor complication. It would have been difficult to get one third of eight councillors in the North Ward to retire each year (the other two representatives were directly elected aldermen). Later in the year the East Ward Unionists drew attention to a decision to restore the previous position whereby there were to be eight representatives for each ward [48]. Only six of these would be councillors, and that number could be divided by three to facilitate a third of councillors retiring each year. The down side of this decision was that the Unionist North Ward became somewhat under-represented in relation to the number of electors it contained (it had more voters than the other wards), and this position was not corrected until the 1936 ward revisions in Londonderry.

It did, however, simplify the organisation of future elections, beginning in 1926. Each ward would have two aldermen and six councillors, elected in separate contests. The successful aldermanic candidate in each ward with the higher vote would serve for six years, and the other successful alderman for three years. Among the candidates for the position of councillor, the two successful councillors with the least votes in 1926 would retire and stand for re-election in 1927; those with the third and fourth most votes would retire in 1928; and the two councillors with the most votes would serve the full three years until 1929 [49].

This unorthodox arrangement was necessary to get the system moving. Thereafter, those elected as councillors in 1927, 1928 and 1929 would each serve for the full three years before retiring, and that would provide for annual elections.

The Emergence of Labour Candidates in 1926

The Nationalists were to continue their boycott of the Londonderry Corporation until 1931. This did create opportunities for Labour candidates to win seats, particularly in the mainly Catholic South and West Wards. The driving force in 1926 seemed to be the Trades and Labour Council, which arranged for the nomination of Labour candidates in all five wards. The *Derry Journal* made a point of noting that the candidates in the three Unionist wards were Protestant trade unionists [50]. Former Nationalist councillor, Patrick Meenan, now reappeared as a Labour candidate for alderman in the West Ward. W.J.Bradley, who had previously been elected as a Nationalist councillor for the South East Ward in 1920, was an Independent Labour candidate for the South Ward in 1926.

At one of the Labour election meetings, it was reported that "Mr Callaghan, Glasgow" was one of the speakers [51]. Frank Callaghan was to become a key figure in Londonderry Labour politics. On polling day, the *Derry Journal* was not openly hostile to the Labour candidates, but alongside a reminder of the people who were standing for election, it published a letter from "an old-time Nationalist". He was described as "a respected citizen, who has taken part in Derry electioneering activities for more than a quarter of a century" but preferred to remain anonymous. This citizen recommended that people "Have nothing to do with the election that is taking place" [52].

In four of the five wards, the aldermen were elected unopposed, the exception being the South Ward, where the Unionists contested both seats. In the election for councillors, the Unionists most unusually nominated candidates in all wards. This was unusual because it hasn't happened again for over 90 years, and is no longer likely.

The Unionists won 24 seats and Labour 16. The full results can be viewed in Appendix A. Although the system of voting used in this election is usually referred to as the first-past-the-post, it is actually first-n-past-the-post where n is the number of representatives to be elected. Under such a system, each elector is given n votes. If there were six councillors to be elected in a ward, then a voter could mark the ballot paper with up to six Xs.

This contrasts with the electoral system operating in Northern Ireland since 1973 under which no elector is allowed more than one vote. That vote may be transferable, but the voter is only ever able to influence the election of at most one candidate, even when several councillors are being elected. English local government voters are likely to find this modern Ulster system quite strange.

The first-n-past-the-post system means that the number of votes cast is often greater than the number of electors. Some parties do not put forward as many as n candidates. Thus, in 1926, Labour fielded only one candidate in each of the elections for six councillors in the East, North and Waterside Wards. It is therefore necessary to find a fair method of working out how many people voted for each party (rather than looking at the aggregate vote, which is distorted where one party fields more candidates than another). As a rough measure of the parties' respective strengths, it is possible to add together the votes of the most successful Unionist and Labour candidates in each ward. Using this method, the Unionists received 5469 votes and Labour 5976 [53].

There was a by-election for an alderman's position in the North Ward in July 1926 on the death of the Unionist, Sir John McFarland. Captain J.M.Wilton beat off the challenge of the Labour candidate, William Pollock, by 1787 votes to 809 [54]. This meant that there was a vacancy for the North Ward councillor's seat which Wilton had won in January. Sir Basil McFarland was elected unopposed for this ward [55].

Labour as a Flag of Convenience?

With the Nationalists officially maintaining their boycott of Londonderry Corporation until the 1931 elections, Labour became just about the only channel for electoral opposition in the city. It was known that there were Nationalists who wanted to contest elections and sit on the council. Before too long the question arose as to whether some of them had chosen to adopt the Labour banner as a flag of convenience without being heavily committed to the kind of Socialist programme which other Labour candidates believed in.

As local Labour people were typically anti-partition, it was possibly easy to imagine that standing for Labour was just another way of continuing to fight for Catholic and Nationalist interests. The fault lines within Labour ranks were exposed most clearly in 1929 with a series of expulsions and resignations. The year started quietly enough with Unionist and Labour candidates being returned unopposed in their respective wards, but then things went downhill [56].

An incident which seems to have opened up the fault lines was, surprisingly enough, a discussion at a special meeting of the Corporation about the appointment of a sanitary sub-officer. Applicants were required to have the certificate of the Royal Sanitary Institute or the Royal Institute of Public Health. The only candidate from within the city, Robert Mulholland, did not have the necessary qualification. It is clear from the debate that he was a Catholic. An earlier meeting heard that three other applicants were qualified but two did not comply with the Corporation's age requirements. That left one eligible candidate, William Harris of Belfast. However, the Corporation agreed to give the job to Mulholland, and decided that he be allowed six months to qualify. This was subject to Ministry approval [57].

The more controversial special meeting of the Corporation took place just over a week later. The Ministry had by then sent a reply. It said that the Council "in making an appointment, should abide by the conditions laid down in the advertisement, requiring applicants to possess one or other of the certificates referred to. It was observed that in proposing to appoint Mr.Mulholland, a person with no qualification, the Council did so in spite of the fact that there were three other candidates who hold the certificate of the Royal Sanitary Institute, one of whom also complied with the condition laid down by the Council as regards age." However, it did also say that "In this connection the Ministry considered the age-limit of thirty years too low, and likely to limit unduly the number of qualified persons who might apply" [58].

In terms of modern HR practice this was very uncontroversial. The Corporation took on board the Ministry's comment about age limits and decided to re-advertise the post with an age limit of 33 (the Labour preference) as against a rival proposal to raise the age limit to 40 [59]. Labour Alderman Patrick Meenan accused the Unionists of wanting the higher age limit because "the other side had a man of thirty-five ready for the job". Labour Councillor Frank Callaghan said that in seconding the Labour proposal he was not going to touch on religion. Meenan was reported as saying "better say it here than out on the street" [60].

The *Derry Journal* account reports Callaghan as saying that "He did not make any reference to anybody's religion". Meenan's statement was said to be emphasised by his striking the desk with his fist. At which point Callaghan was heard to say that "he hoped they had arrived at the time when they could get away from that" [61].

After re-advertisement, William Harris was appointed as a sanitary sub-officer. Any member of a modern HR department would have advised them to do that in the first place [62].

Expulsions and Resignations

There are gaps in the evidence, but on 11 February 1929 a statement from the Derry Labour Party was published saying that its monthly meeting had passed a resolution to "publicly repudiate Alderman Meenan, as he has failed to be subject to the constitution and discipline of the Party in acting contrary to the Party programme". He would no longer be recognised as leader of the Derry Labour Party. Meenan replied that "he did not recognise the Party and had refused to be bound by its constitution or its decisions. They had pilloried him before for attending a meeting in support of Mr George Leeke MP, in County Derry, and since then he had not bothered with them". In case anyone had forgotten, the *Derry Journal* added "Three members of the Labour Party in the Corporation are non-Catholics – Alderman Turner and Councillor Algeo who represent the West Ward, and Councillor McGahey, who represents the South" [63].

The *Derry Journal's* "Chronicle and Comment" column, written by "Onlooker", played the green card again a week later. "Who was the member of the Labour Party who proposed that Alderman Meenan be expelled? And who seconded it? Is it a fact that both proposer and seconder are non-Catholics, and that though in a minority, non-Catholics at present control the policy of the party? The position is one which self-respecting members of the organisation cannot much longer tolerate" [64].

Patrick Meenan had been a Nationalist member of the Corporation and was comfortable once more being a Nationalist member. He was not really concerned with Labour constitutions and policies. He was just there to do his own thing. George Leeke was one of the Nationalist MPs for County Londonderry in the Northern Ireland Parliament (at this stage elected by PR in a county wide constituency). It did not strike Meenan as strange that he would be criticised for supporting the representative of another party. To him, it is likely that Leeke and Londonderry Labour formed part of the same cause.

Frank Callaghan was from a completely different background. He had moved over from Scotland, where he had served as a Labour councillor while working in the shipyards, although he described himself as a native of Co.Armagh [65]. Callaghan was a local full-time organiser with the British-based National Union of General and Municipal Workers, which was to evolve into the present day GMB union [66]. Part of his job was to negotiate with local councils about the wages and conditions of their manual workers. It was reported that he said, in a Corporation meeting, "that of all the Corporate bodies he met in his perambulations, the Derry Corporation seemed to be the most obstinate in connection with an increase in their employees' wages" [67]. These days we would say that his dual role probably involved a conflict of interest, but no-one seems to have raised the issue.

He was to be a member of the Northern Ireland Labour Party's Executive Committee [68]. Frank Callaghan had become a Labour councillor on the Londonderry Corporation in January 1928 and made an immediate impact [69]. Although he was, from the *Derry Journal's* point of view, of the appropriate religious background, his preference was to get away from constantly referring to people's religion, whereas Meenan was more likely to see himself as a defender of Catholic and Nationalist interests.

The local Labour Party's falling out with Meenan had a domino effect. "Another member of the Derry Labour Party – Alderman W.J.Bradley – has been notified of his expulsion from the body. His offence is that he has decided to support the Nationalist cause in the forthcoming election for the Parliament of Northern Ireland. Alderman Bradley is a voter in the Foyle Division, and he is a member of the Committee selected to further the candidature of Mr.J.J.McCarroll....it is understood that six or seven more Catholic members are to be dealt with as the penalty which espousal of the Catholic or Nationalist cause involves" [70].

Interviewed by the *Derry Journal*, Bradley stated "I never sought membership of their party. They repeatedly urged me to join; deputation after deputation approached me, and at last I consented, but I did not attend many of their meetings, and did not take much part in their business. This letter is their reply to my statement that I would not take in any meetings in support of a Labour candidate in opposition to a Nationalist". It was reported in the same article that Councillor Patrick Healy, the Branch Secretary, had verbally resigned from the Labour Party, and Councillor Michael McMenamin had decided to sever his links with Labour. The *Derry Journal* appealed to Catholics' social conservatism by running the article under the sub-heading "NO DICTATION FROM COMMUNISTS" [71].

Bradley had been elected as a Nationalist member of the Corporation in 1920, and clearly felt that his role was to continue promoting Catholic and Nationalist interests under a new banner. It probably did not occur to him that he was obligated to support only Labour candidates. It is believed that Frank Callaghan took over as Labour group leader on the Corporation at this point [72].

Over the coming weeks and months, five of the eight Labour representatives elected in the West Ward in 1926 jumped ship or were pushed. Meenan was the first and, after serving out their original terms of office, Hugh McGrellis, Patrick Healy, Michael McMenamin, and William Quigley were re-elected, this time as Nationalist councillors, in the period 1931-33 following the end of the boycott of the Corporation. In the South Ward, W.J.Bradley had been elected as a Labour alderman in January 1929 for a six year term. This became seven years when a Northern Ireland-wide change in election date delayed local contests by a year. He was re-elected unopposed as a Nationalist in 1936 [73]. To complete the merry-go-round, Patrick Healy resurfaced as an unsuccessful Labour candidate in 1938 [74].

It was probably not a coincidence that those who parted company with Labour were mainly from the West Ward. In 1926, the Unionist candidate won only 104 first preference votes in this ward, showing that a negligible number of Protestants lived there. There had always been pressure from the *Derry Journal* for Catholic and Nationalist representatives in this area, even if they temporarily used the Labour label. There was little electoral incentive to reach out to Protestants. In the South Ward there was a significant Protestant minority, and Labour candidates there were more used to appealing to voters on both sides of the religious divide.

The ease with which many politicians switched from Nationalism to Labour and back again suggests that they were just using a flag of convenience during the years when there was an official Nationalist boycott. Those who remained after the expulsions and resignations were more committed to some variety of Socialism.

The Abstention Years

Until the Municipal Corporations Act 1926, Belfast and Londonderry were the only borough councils. They were entitled to elect a mayor and aldermen as well as councillors. Urban district councils had to make do with a chairman. In Northern Ireland, under legislation very much encouraged by the town of Bangor, it was decided that urban districts with a population of more than 10,000 could apply for a charter so that they would become borough councils. Newry and Ballymena immediately became interested [75]. It is not recorded whether Londonderry mourned this partial loss of its exclusive status.

After the excitement of the 1926 election, with its multiple contests, things returned to a more sedate level of electoral inactivity. In 1927, with a third of councillors retiring, the Unionists were returned unopposed in the North, East and Waterside Wards, as were the Labour candidates in the South and West Wards [76]. The next year, with another third of councillors due to be elected, the Unionist Party and Labour again restricted themselves to putting up

candidates in the areas where they had previously secured victories. There was no contest in four of the five wards. In the North Ward, three Unionists competed for two seats.

The *Derry Journal* repeated its usual complaint by including the sub-heading "ANOTHER NON-CATHOLIC FOR WEST WARD". It referred to the Labour candidate, William Algeo, who was apparently a native of Co.Sligo. To this newspaper it was a running sore that Protestants were representing an overwhelmingly Catholic ward [77].

Later, another fault was found with Algeo. He was "in the service of the Northern Government" [78]. Algeo was to be heckled about the same issue at a Labour meeting in the Londonderry Guildhall in May 1929 [79]. The point here is that Nationalists generally saw a job in the Northern Ireland civil service as being disreputable, because it supported a state which they wished to see overthrown. They wanted its people forced into a 32 county Irish state against the wishes of the majority. Patrick Shea, a Catholic who later became a senior civil servant at Stormont, said of people like himself , "It was my experience that some Catholics, and especially those in Belfast where, I had been told, the Bishop had advised them against seeking Government employment, looked with suspicion on Catholic civil servants. We had joined the enemy; we were lost souls" [80]. This Nationalist hostility has to be borne in mind when there are claims of Catholic under-representation in the Stormont civil service.

In 1929, one alderman and three councillors from each ward had to stand for election, but there were no contests, in what was becoming a predictable pattern [81]. In 1930 it was a case of same again, but this time there were just three vacancies for councillors in each ward. "No opposition and no interest marked the nominations for membership of the Derry Corporation on Monday" [82].

The period from 1926 to 1930 provided significant opportunities for Labour candidates to acquire experience of the work of the Corporation without facing Nationalist electoral competition. They had survived the expulsions and resignations of people who were not really Socialists at all, but they were electorally weakened. Outside of Callaghan's candidature in the South Ward, it took a few years to mount a challenge across more than one ward in post-boycott Londonderry.

The Deselected Unionists and Disqualification

Before we progress to the official return of Nationalist councillors to the Londonderry Corporation, it may be interesting to highlight a small number of examples between the two World Wars in which Unionists found themselves deselected, and on a couple of occasions chose to fight an election as Independent Unionists against the officially approved candidate(s).

As mentioned briefly above, three Unionists competed for two seats in the North Ward in 1928. In this year Councillors Mr D.E.B.McCorkell and Mr H.N.Greenway were due to retire and both wanted to seek re-election. Another person, Mr D.A.Mooney also expressed an interest [83]. Local Unionists seem to have come to the conclusion that they could accommodate all three. A sitting councillor, Frank Gilliland, was believed to have been disfranchised (deemed no longer to be a valid voter in the Londonderry Corporation area), which would soon require him to resign. McCorkell and Mooney were selected to contest the two vacancies, with an apparent offer to Greenway that he could later replace Gilliland [84]. This was not to Greenway's liking and he stood as an Independent Unionist. He was unsuccessful with the votes cast being McCorkell (Unionist) 1396; Mooney (Unionist) 1291; Greenway (Independent Unionist) 860 [85]. It was subsequently reported that Councillor Gilliland had found a way to become a qualified voter in the borough, and he would not need to resign after all [86].

A more successful challenge to an official Unionist candidate was made a few years later in the Waterside Ward in the election for a single alderman. In 1932, the retiring Alderman James Blair was deselected in favour of one of the councillors for the area, Samuel Cochrane. The electors did not share the opinion of the ward officials, because Blair, standing as an Independent Unionist, was returned by 1215 votes to 742 [87]. Both Blair and Cochrane were to die two years later and were replaced in the Waterside Ward by Gilbert Young (alderman) and John Lowry (councillor) [88].

Sometimes potential deselection rows can be resolved more amicably. In 1934, R.J.Finlay had been chosen in preference to the Lord Mayor, Senator Sir Dudley E.B.McCorkell (who featured in the 1928 controversy) to stand as a councillor in the North Ward. However, Finlay later withdrew his name, allowing McCorkell to be re-selected [89]. Robert Finlay's patience was rewarded, because he was returned unopposed for the North Ward in January 1935 on the death of Councillor David Caldwell [90]. Finlay had served his political apprenticeship by being the sacrificial lamb candidate for the West Ward in 1926.

To conclude this section, it is worth mentioning the case of Mrs Margaret Simms (sometimes referred to as Catherine), who was elected to the West Ward as a Labour candidate in 1926 [91]. Under the rotation system, she retired in 1927 and was then re-elected for three years [92]. In 1929, Labour Councillor McMenamin (before he had severed his links with the party) told the Corporation that a year earlier, "She was told distinctly in the Revision Court [which ruled on who was a valid voter] that she was disqualified owing to her husband being out of town. Therefore she did not take her seat" [93].

This presumably affected her right to a vote as the wife of a ratepayer, but the legal position is unclear. The precise relationship between disfranchisement and the right to remain as a councillor is equally unclear, and is something that a keen researcher into early public administration might clarify. What is not in doubt is that during 1929 the Corporation made no attempt to question Simms' membership of the council, and eventually she was disqualified as a councillor under another rule which applied to those who had not attended a Corporation meeting for twelve months.

At the meeting which made that decision, the Town Clerk, Sir Henry Miller, said that "The procedure is that it is my duty to draw your attention to three points that may create a vacancy in a ward – absence, death or bankruptcy". The newspaper report continued "The Town Clerk said he had nothing to do with whether people were qualified or not: he was only concerned with the three points mentioned" [94]. Bernard Doherty was elected unopposed as her Labour replacement in the West Ward [95].

Margaret Simms and Margaret McGlinchey (Labour, 1926-29) were to be the last women who were elected to the Corporation for forty years. The Nationalist, Mary Harrigan, won a seat in 1967 [96]. Women had acquired the right to be elected to any kind of Irish council in the Local Authorities (Ireland) (Qualification of Women) Act 1911, a few years before they could stand in Parliamentary elections as a result of the Parliament (Qualification of Women) Act 1918.

The End of Abstentionism

An early indication that the Nationalist boycott of the Londonderry Corporation was coming to an end arrived with news of a conference on 28 December 1930. "It was summoned by the Derry Catholic Registration Association in response to representations from various quarters that steps should be taken to organise a Party to represent Catholic and National interests in the Corporation". A Nationalist Association was formed and "A committee of laymen,

representative of the five wards of the city (with the priests as ex-officio members) was appointed" [97].

In a 3 January 1931 editorial, the *Londonderry Sentinel* taunted its Nationalist opponents by saying that "one of the objects in view evidently is the rooting out of the representation of the South and West Wards, so far as the new Association are concerned, of the Protestants who were returned on the Labour ticket for these Wards" [98]. In response, the *Derry Journal* stated that "For our part we have no quarrel with Labour, provided it is Catholic and National in its outlook" [99].

As the nominations were received, the first thing that stood out was that Labour had given up on the West Ward. Between 1931 and 1936 (after which there was a new ward scheme) it declined to put up any candidates in this ward. Of the two retiring Labour councillors in 1931, Hugh McGrellis had defected to the Nationalists, and William Algeo did not put his name forward.

In the South Ward, it was Frank Callaghan's turn to resubmit himself for election. He came in for some special treatment from the *Derry Journal*. He was said to be "opposing the official Catholic candidates, Mr James Bonner and Mr Fred C.Towers. Mr Callaghan is one member of the Corporation who has been conspicuous by his repeated declarations that a man's religion does not concern him; in other words, that he puts socialism before religion, and consequently has declined to attack the gross injustice to which Catholics are subjected for reasons which are common knowledge in the North-East. It is this situation which has given rise to the necessity of procuring representation in accord with true Catholic ideals" [100]. Callaghan was to be the sole Labour nominee in these elections.

Apart from intra-Unionist squabbles over deselection, elections in the three Unionist wards were to be rather uneventful, and the Unionists did not put up candidates outside these three wards. Until 1936 there was no Nationalist or Labour challenge in the Unionist wards, and you may recall that there had been no such challenge since 1926. This lack of effort in opposing Unionist candidates has to be taken into account in assessing claims that opposition parties did not have sufficient opportunities to win control.

The upshot was that, even with all three parties in the field, 1931 saw just one contested election, in the South Ward. Callaghan did quite well. The result was Towers (Nationalist Association) 1299; Bonner (Nationalist Association) 1260; Callaghan (Labour) 960 [101]. The *Derry Journal* accused the Labour candidate of having an election team which was 75% Unionist (by which it meant Protestant).

It estimated that 1714 Catholics cast a vote in this ward and 612 Protestants, and that on the electoral register there were 2049 Catholics and 991 Protestants [102]. Not for the first time, counting Catholic heads would be a poor predictor of the Nationalist vote. The conditions which allowed a precise prediction of the Nationalist vote in 1920 no longer obtained. Applying the Cameron Report approach of analysing the electoral register would have suggested a 1058 Nationalist majority. Ultimately it turned out to be a methodology based on smoke and mirrors, which rarely came up with the right answer during the period we are looking at.

As previously mentioned, 1932 saw the deselected James Blair contest the alderman's seat in the Waterside Ward with no interference from Labour or the Nationalists. Once more, Frank Callaghan was the sole Labour nominee, standing in the South Ward. This time the competition for the two seats was even closer. When votes were counted the result was Grant (Nationalist) 1260; Doherty (Nationalist) 1204; Callaghan (Labour) 1161 [103].

The official Unionist position, advertised in the *Londonderry Sentinel*, had been that "Unionist Voters in the South Ward are advised to refrain from taking any part or recording

their Votes on behalf of any Candidate at the Election tomorrow" [104]. This advice was quite obviously widely ignored, as Callaghan must have attracted a significant number of Protestant votes. The *Derry Journal's* opposition to him was low key, being restricted to printing some critical letters. One, published on election day, said "Mr Callaghan cannot blow hot and cold. He must either be a Unionist or Nationalist" [105].

The following year, the *Derry Journal* sprung something of a surprise in reporting "It is understood that in the hope of avoiding in present circumstances a contest in the South Ward, it is not proposed to offer any opposition to the candidature of Mr Frank Callaghan, who is going forward again in the Labour interest". The Nationalists would nominate just one candidate, Bernard Doherty, although there were two vacancies. Perhaps they feared being defeated at the polls. It is difficult to tell without firm evidence. The newspaper report was anticipating that Labour Councillor Charles McGahey, who was retiring after a three year stint in the South Ward, would stand in the East Ward [106].

As is often the case, this attempt to choreograph a result did not quite work. When the nomination deadline passed, Charles McGahey had been nominated to fight the South Ward as an Independent Labour candidate, thus forcing an election. The *Derry Journal* mischievously described him as an Independent Unionist, no doubt provoked by the fact that he was a Protestant, although it did correct this after the result was announced. McGahey's nomination papers had been signed by William McNulty, a Londonderry Labour councillor from 1926-32 and Matt Gallagher of the tailors' trade union [107].

The South Ward result was as follows: Callaghan (Labour) 1344; Doherty (Nationalist) 1148; McGahey (Independent Labour) 1002 [108]. It was something of a high point in terms of Labour electoral politics in Londonderry. McGahey almost took the second seat. The *Londonderry Sentinel* reckoned that there were 2089 Catholics and 1006 Protestants on the South Ward electoral register at that time [109]. How Lord Cameron and those who embraced his methodology would have predicted this result is difficult to say.

Although Frank Callaghan had re-joined the Corporation, and his personal electoral threat had been removed for three years, it did, on paper, look as though the Nationalists were there for the taking in the South Ward in the following year. It therefore comes as something of a surprise to read that Labour nominated no candidates at all in 1934 [110], nor in the Corporation elections postponed from 1935 to 1936 [111]. Only a serious student of Labour history would be able to explain that anomaly.

A new ward scheme was approved during 1936, with the result that the 1937 Corporation elections, at which Frank Callaghan was due to retire and seek re-election, were postponed until 1938. As nominations were being received, Callaghan wrote a letter to the *Derry Journal* from his new address at Belmont Church Road in East Belfast. He said "I have had several invitations to let my name to go forward at this time, but owing to my change of residence, and my multifarious duties arising from my position as a trade union official, I feel I would not be justified in accepting nomination" [112]. Callaghan's work had meant a relocation to Belfast, and he was to remain at the Belmont Church Road address until his death in 1960 [113].

The 1936 Ward Scheme and Allegations of Gerrymandering

There would normally have been a set of local elections in 1935, but the Local Government Act 1934 moved the normal date for all future local elections from 15 January to 15 May. The legislation, coming late in the year when January elections were almost upon municipalities, postponed the next set of elections to 15 May 1936 [114].

For 40 years, the Londonderry Corporation had conducted a rather long experiment in operating a council with 40 members. It concluded that it was unwieldy and inflated in comparison with other places in Ireland with a similar population. In March 1936, the Corporation approved a new scheme consisting of three wards which would be used to elect 24 representatives. It had effectively come around to the view of a former local Nationalist MP at Westminster, Vesey Knox, who had argued in 1896 that "the members of the Corporation should consist of twenty-five instead of forty as proposed in the Bill [the Londonderry Improvement Bill] as it now stood. There was no Corporation of a borough of the size of Londonderry that had so many as forty members" [115]. Stephen Lowry, King's Counsel (KC) for the Unionist Corporation was to acknowledge that "It has been said that the people who increased the members are the people who now want to reduce them. They have learned in the interval. They were not as wise 40 years ago, a most deplorable state of affairs" [116]. The scheme would need to be the subject of a government inquiry before it could be implemented. It would be the last change to the ward boundaries until 1973.

In May 1936, the normal local elections were held after the year's delay, with one alderman and two councillors standing down in each ward. Initial indications were that all nominees would be elected unopposed. For instance, the *Derry Journal*, just four days before nominations closed, declared "There is considerable ground for believing that no contests will take place in connection with the Derry municipal election on 15th inst." [117]. However, it was later reported that:

"A dramatic surprise was caused in Derry yesterday evening by the last-minute nomination of Mr Patrick Maxwell, solicitor, to contest the North Ward in the municipal elections....Nominations were received yesterday at the Guildhall till five o'clock, and as that hour approached it was found that just three had been nominated for each Ward, and the prospects of a fight were thought extremely improbable. A few minutes before five o'clock, however, Mr Maxwell, with one of the Nationalist registration officials, Mr James Gallagher, arrived and handed in his nomination papers. Five o'clock was striking as they left the Guildhall" [118].

It was a perfect ambush. Maxwell submitted five sets of nomination papers just to be on the safe side. On the first of them he was proposed by no less a person than the Catholic Bishop of Derry, Most Reverend Doctor O'Kane. One of a number of surprises was that Maxwell, who was to become quite a showman, was already a sitting Nationalist councillor for the South Ward. He said that he would relinquish that seat if elected in the North Ward [119]. Normally, news that seats were to be contested would be signalled or leaked well in advance, and with just 10 days between the close of nominations and the election day, it left little time for the Unionists to organise a campaign in support of their two candidates, Robert Finlay and Sir Robert McFarland.

Another surprise was that "The Nationalists, for the first time since the five-Ward scheme was adopted in Londonderry, have decided to contest the North Ward" [120]. For many years they had avoided such confrontations, but now they wanted to protest about the revised ward scheme, which would not leave them in control. This appeared to be the sole criterion by which Nationalists judged the acceptability of a ward scheme.

The result in the election for two councillors (and hence each elector could cast up to two votes) was as follows: McFarland (Unionist) 2392; Finlay (Unionist) 2381; Maxwell

(Nationalist) 2040. The turnout was 92% [121], which was surprising as this election was fought on a relatively old register, and some voters must have died in the intervening period. Given the predilection at this time for personation (impersonating someone to steal their vote), it is likely that some of the dead filled in a ballot paper.

Frank Curran

Frank Curran, one-time editor of the *Derry Journal*, wrote a book called *Derry: Countdown to Disaster*, which makes a number of references to Londonderry's electoral arrangements [122]. Those unsympathetic to Unionism have quoted it uncritically. The book is notorious for not containing any citations or references. We are presumably just meant to take the author's word for the statements he makes. In the table below I set out a number of Curran's misleading or untrue allegations, together with an appropriate correction from myself.

Table 3: Frank Curran's Allegations

The Allegation	The Correction
In 1895 "Town Clerk, Henry Miller....decided that the weapon the times demanded was the gerrymander, that is, ward rigging to ensure a Unionist majority in future Corporation elections, the parliamentary dyke having been breached. He produced a scheme which increased the number of electoral wards from three to five." (p.6)	What Curran omits to mention is that under the electoral arrangements prior to the Londonderry Improvement Act 1896, Catholics had no representatives on the Londonderry Corporation. The five ward scheme introduced in 1896 ensured Nationalist representation on the council for the first time - in two of the five wards. This is made clear in the report of the parliamentary debate contained in the *Londonderry Sentinel* 18 June 1896.
There is a passing reference to a gerrymander in 1919 (p.6) "Sir Henry Miller....masterminded an ingenious scheme directed at winning 21 of the 40 Corporation seats for the Unionists" (p.7)	The Corporation drew up a temporary ward scheme to cover the short time in which it was forced to endure proportional representation (*Londonderry Sentinel* 30 August 1919). The idea of a cunning plan to win 21 seats was contradicted by the fact that Unionists fielded only 20 candidates compared with the Nationalists' 23 in the 1920 elections. The temporary scheme produced a 21-19 Nationalist majority, in spite of the fact that the Unionists won the most first preference votes in three of the four wards. (*Londonderry Sentinel* 20 and 22 January 1920).
"Stormont also approved, in 1922, of the third Unionist-proposed rigging of Derry's electoral wards, so that when the Nationalist-Sinn Fein Corporation's tenure ended in 1923, the Unionists were poised to resume control." (p.9)	All that happened in 1922 was the repeal of the proportional representation legislation, as it related to local government, which had been imposing on Ireland by a cynical British government, Londonderry simply returned to the 1896 ward boundaries. The North Ward got two extra seats to reflect its size, and the

	East Ward two less seats. This did not affect the pre-1920 political balance at all (*Londonderry Sentinel* 21 November 1922). Curran's attempt to create the impression that boundaries were constantly changed is misconceived.
"In 1936, a by-election in the North Ward resulted in a Unionist majority of only 352. Another gerrymander was imperative, and the Unionist party duly applied to Stormont for ratification of a new ward change scheme." (p.10)	The election referred to was not a by-election, but the normal annual election in which two councillors retired each year (*Derry Journal* 19 May 1936). The sequence is incorrect. The Corporation approved a new ward scheme in March, and the election was not held until May 1936 (*Derry Journal* 30 March 1936).
"only eight seats for the Nationalist South Ward, which contained more voters than the other two wards together." (p.10)	The statement about the number of voters in each ward is completely untrue. According to the *Derry Journal*, the number of voters in the three wards proposed by the Corporation was as follows: North Ward 6780 South Ward 6533 Waterside Ward 3632 (*Derry Journal* 7 October 1936)

One of the inferences readers have sometimes drawn from Curran's book is that the Unionist paper majority in the old North Ward was disappearing. Even Sydney Elliott, who has done some sterling work on Northern Ireland's electoral arrangements, fell into this trap. He was presumably overwhelmed by the constant repetition of this claim [123]. The evidence from the Derry Catholic Registration Association's (DCRA) meticulous records does not support this belief. The DCRA Annual Report for 1934, presented in January 1935 (referring to the electoral register on which the 1936 North Ward election was fought), said of the local government electors "We gain 8; they gain 22" [124]. In other words, there were eight additional Catholics and 22 extra Protestants since the last revision of the register.

In the DCRA Annual Report for 1936, delivered in January 1937, it was reported that in the North Ward, there were 2191 Catholic local government voters (an increase of 32) and 2654 Protestants (an increase of three) [125]. The electoral register was therefore subject to very minor ebbs and flows, and the last two analyses before the new ward scheme came in showed that there was a net reduction of only 15 in the North Ward Protestant paper majority. This was significant only in that it displayed that there was little change occurring in the community balance of the voting population.

Eamonn McCann's book, *War and an Irish Town*, is another work without citations or references [126]. Much of it consists of personal reminiscences, but sometimes he makes bald statements of fact without supporting evidence. "In one of the wards carved out in 1922, the North Ward, the Protestant majority had steadily decreased , from 618 in 1922 to 406 in 1928 and, in a by-election in May 1936, to 352" [127].

The fact is that there were no contested local elections in 1922 and 1928, and the Nationalists boycotted Corporation elections until 1931, so it is a mystery where McCann's majorities

came from. If he is talking about Protestant paper majorities on the electoral register, it can be seen from the previously mentioned DCRA analysis that the paper majority stood at 463 in 1936, which rather suggests that it was an increase on McCann's 1928 figure. At the public inquiry into the ward scheme, John McGonigal, Kings Counsel for the Catholic electors, claimed that the North Ward paper majority in 1936 was 492 [128].

In his written evidence to the Irish Boundary Commission in 1925, the DCRA registration agent, James Gallagher, at that time operating under its previous name of the Derry Nationalist Registration Association, estimated the Protestant paper majority in the North Ward to be 538 [129]. If the Protestant paper majority really had been declining at a rate of seven per year between 1925 and 1936, it would have taken another 66 years for it to disappear.

Examining the Ward Scheme

Another examination of the 1936 ward scheme can be found elsewhere [130].

The emotional discomfort about the 1936 ward revision which has been apparently felt by many academics is, I would maintain, often underpinned by one or both of the following invalid arguments.

1. A fairer method would have been to anticipate the political outcome in terms of parties' overall votes, and then draw the ward boundaries in order to bring about the "right" result in terms of seats.
2. Any fair division of the Londonderry County Borough into wards would have meant that Nationalists would have won a majority of seats. Similarly, the fact that Nationalists did not win a majority of seats was conclusive evidence that the ward boundaries had not been drawn fairly.

The first argument probably represents a culture clash between those interested in politics and public administration. The politician would like a "satisfactory" outcome. The right side should win. Irish Nationalists argued that there were 9406 Catholic local government voters and 7536 Protestant voters in the Londonderry Corporation area, and that they therefore "deserved" to be in control [131]. With Labour having gone missing around this time, if Nationalists and Unionists had actually contested every ward (and that is a very big "if"), it is likely that the Nationalists would have won more votes across the entire borough.

However, fiddling ward boundaries to make sure that one party wins is not a scalable solution. It involves decisions which a politician might make in haste, leaving the public administrators and possibly the courts to clean up the mess. Modern boundary commissioners would probably see it as an example of political corruption. In developing modern British standards for first-past-the-post elections, it has never been thought sensible to politicise the process of drawing up ward boundaries. Instead, the classic British solution has been to develop a set of objective criteria for grouping electors in wards, and then live with the outcome that is produced by applying the criteria.

A typical approach is that adopted by the Local Government Boundary Commission for England (LGBCE). Its objective criteria include grouping people according to whether they have a community of interest, and whether councillors throughout a local authority represent roughly equal numbers of voters. Under this system it is absolutely forbidden for a boundary commission to take account of any possible political outcomes [132]. This is a scalable solution which is based on common standards.

It implies that fiddling boundaries to bring about a pre-determined outcome is always wrong because it is likely to violate established British standards of procedural fairness. The LGBCE guidance states that "If you are making a submission to the Commission, you should ensure

that the wards and boundaries you propose reflect, as far as possible, the interests and identities of your area's communities.... The best evidence for community identity is normally a combination of factual information such as the existence of communication links, facilities and organisations along with an explanation of how local people use those facilities" [133].

Examples of things which will be taken into account by the LGBCE are:

"**Community groups –** Is there a residents group or any other local organisation that represents the area? What area does that group cover? What kind of activities do they undertake and are there any joint-working relationships between organisations that could indicate shared community interests between different geographical areas?

Shared interests – Are there particular issues that affect your community which aren't necessarily relevant to neighbouring areas that might help us determine where a ward or division boundary should be drawn?" [134].

As Protestants and Catholics tended to use different social and religious facilities and send their children to different schools, the transfers of voters between wards proposed by the Corporation in 1936 were very much in accord with the community of interest principle. Similar areas were, as far as possible, grouped together.

This brings us to the second argument that any fair division of the Londonderry County Borough into wards would have meant that Nationalists would have won a majority of seats. This would only be true if council-wide proportionality were the ultimate criterion. By this I mean that if, for instance, a party gets 55% of the votes across a council area it should get 55% of the seats. But, in the absence of PR, this will not occur naturally. It may well involve a manipulation of boundaries that has no objective justification in terms of the communities which are located within wards, or any geographical logic. The situation was complicated further by the fact that Unionists and Nationalists simply refused to put up candidates against each other in most wards, so council wide proportionality in actual elections was almost impossible to calculate.

A system of council wide proportionality is clearly not operating in countries such as England which have firmly rejected PR. A boundary commission like LGBCE, which presides over first-n-past-the-post elections, has developed alternative criteria of fairness based on objective standards. It does mean that getting the "right" winner is sometimes likely to involve drawing boundaries unfairly in that they have little independent justification. Sometimes it just is the case that the boundary lines are in the right place, but a party's supporters are inconveniently distributed.

The use of independent, objective standards such as the community of interest principle and councillors representing roughly equal numbers of electors does not always produce the "right" winner, but it is better than turning boundary revision into a never-ending political battle. Londonderry in 1936 had ward boundaries drawn by politically interested people, but what we can do, looking back on this era, is to decide whether they were fairly drawn according to modern objective British standards. A common accusation is that boundaries were gerrymandered.

A good definition of gerrymandering is provided by Webster's Third New International Dictionary:

"To divide (a territorial unit) into election districts in an unnatural and unfair way with the purpose of giving one political party an electoral majority in a large number of districts while concentrating the voting strength of the opposition in as few districts as possible."

The key phrase is "unnatural and unfair". It is quite possible that a natural and fair application of objective criteria will leave one party with its strength concentrated in a minority of wards.

The most common reason is that there are historical concentrations of population which have grown up over many years where people overwhelmingly support one party. In Londonderry, the Bogside was the obvious example. Few Protestants lived here. Applying the community of interest principle, it would be unnatural to divide up this area. It formed a natural community. It follows that it may only have been possible to achieve what Nationalists regarded as the "right" result by unnatural and unfair methods, but such methods are impermissible under modern British standards. It is a simple misunderstanding of the English language to believe that a local authority with electorally inconvenient concentrations of population should somehow automatically be regarded as gerrymandered if the "right" party is not left in control.

Electorally, the down side of such concentrations of population was that Nationalists wasted votes building up a huge majority in the Bogside, located up to 1936 in the West Ward. As we have seen, this phenomenon has come to be known as vote inefficiency, and this is not uncommon in first-n-past-the-post elections [135]. Protestants and Unionists, being more spread out, displayed greater vote efficiency. The evidence that these were natural concentrations of population, going back generations, is presented later in this paper.

Grouping voters geographically according to natural community affinities in adjacent areas (applying modern British standards) was always going to favour Unionists in Londonderry. So what happened in 1936?

By 1936, this situation had arisen:

Table 4: The Old Wards and the Number of Voters in Each [136]

Ward	Voters	Seats	Voters per Seat
North Ward	4810	8	601
East Ward	2117	8	265
South Ward	3117	8	390
West Ward	3269	8	409
Waterside Ward	3632	8	454

Figure 1: Londonderry Corporation Ward Boundaries Prior to the 1936 Revision [137]

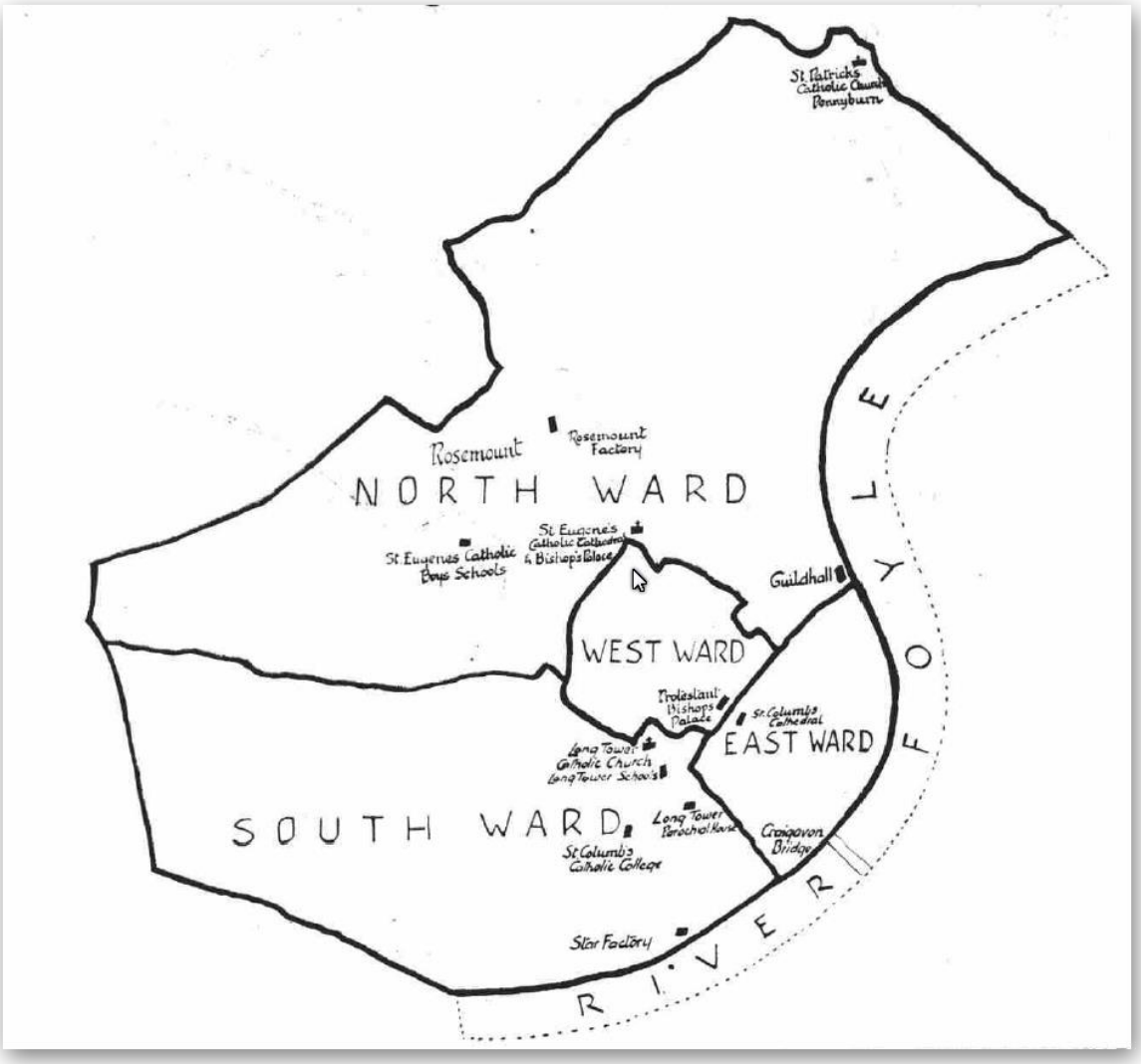


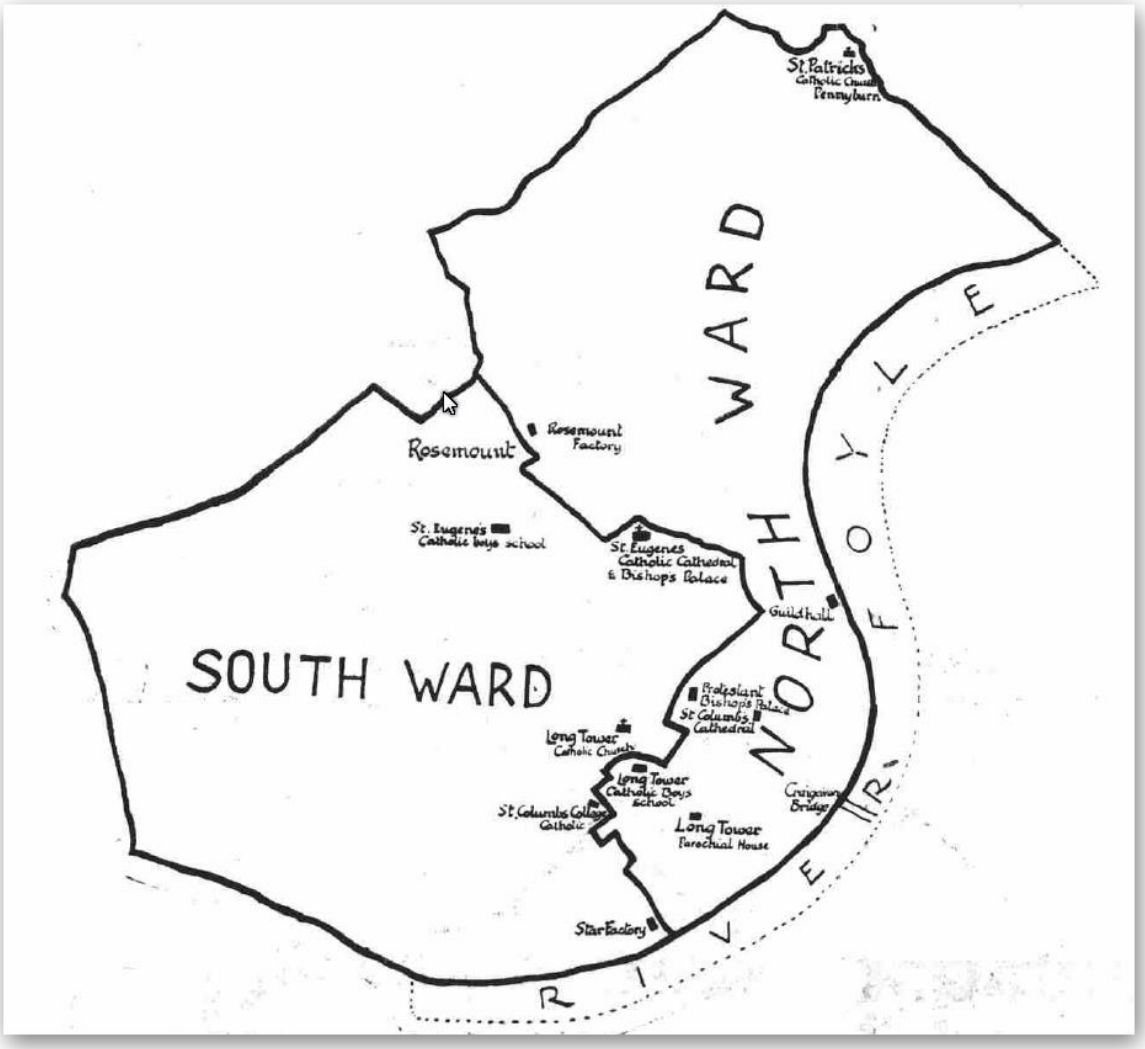
Figure 1 shows just the four wards on the West Bank of the Foyle. The Waterside Ward, on the East Bank, was never the focus of controversy. You will recall that the North Ward had its number of representatives reduced from ten to eight in 1926 to make it easier for one third of councillors to retire each year. This meant it was much bigger than the other wards, but had the same number of representatives.

"The Derry Unionists find increased difficulty, as is felt in other areas, in getting suitable people returned to the Corporation, and therefore they are promoting a scheme for the alteration of the wards and reducing the number of members" [138]. To achieve a more slimline council, the Unionists basically proposed to amalgamate the North and East Wards to form a new North Ward, and the old South and West Wards would combine to become a new South Ward. This would create a scheme where the North and South Wards would have roughly the same number of voters per elected representative, meeting a modern British standard. The proposal to leave the Waterside Ward on the East Bank with eight representatives was a bit cheeky, being based on an argument that this was the fastest growing part of the city. The number of representatives was reduced to four after the Government Inspector, Vice-Admiral Archdale, had reported.

Table 5: Londonderry Corporation Proposed Ward Revision March 1936 [139]

Ward	Voters	Seats	Voters per Seat	Valuation (£)
North Ward	6779	8	847	115,398
South Ward	6534	8	817	53,491
Waterside Ward	3632	8	454	35,079

Figure 2: Londonderry Corporation Proposed Ward Scheme March 1936 [140]



Some Protestant businessmen told the public inquiry, in effect, that because they paid most of the rates, their political representatives should be in control. However, the Corporation's proposed ward scheme does not seem to have been influenced by any consideration of rateable value. Stephen Lowry KC, for the Corporation, argued that "As the matter stands, the proposed Wards, first of all in acreage they are equal. They are practically equal in electorate and the valuation is a matter that is in favour of the people for whom my learned friends claim to appear. We are not putting forward the principle that because valuation may be high the owners of these places should have more votes. In fact the striking point is that eight members

are only demanded for this £100,000 valuation in the new North Ward and the same number is allocated in respect of the £54,000 valuation in the new South Ward" [141].

The near equality of voters in the North and South Wards was achieved by making two further adjustments. A predominantly Catholic area of the old North Ward around and to the south west of St.Eugene's Cathedral was transferred to the new South Ward and was thus linked with adjacent Catholic areas. James Gallagher, the Catholic Registration Agent told the public inquiry that there were 1007 Catholic voters in this transferred area and 650 Protestants [142]. A predominantly Protestant area around Ferguson Street, Barrack Street and Dark Lane was moved from the old South Ward to the new North Ward. James Gallagher estimated that there were 456 Catholic and 843 Protestant local government voters in this area [143]. That placed it together with the adjacent Fountain area, with which it had affinities under the community of interest principle.

Finally, "The transfer of voters within the Walls of Londonderry from the old West Ward to the new North Ward was politically neutral. James Gallagher thought there were 99 Catholic and 110 Protestant voters in the transferred territory" [144].

The relatively small Unionist electoral majority in the old North Ward was substantially due to the fact that when it had been formed in 1896, no regard had been taken of the community of interest principle which is so important to modern boundary commissions. Different communities had been lumped together. The Corporation's adjustments or corrections in 1936 provided a scheme based much more closely on the community of interest and equal representation principles.

A barrister for the Corporation at the public inquiry, Stephen Lowry KC, argued for the community of interest principle while the Nationalists put forward variations of the arguments "We deserve to be in control" and "We don't trust your motives". Witness this exchange at the public inquiry into the ward scheme between Lowry and the prominent Nationalist, J.J.McCarroll:

Mr Lowry: Will you agree that people with a community of interests as far as possible should be in the same Ward?
Mr McCarroll: These principles are excellent in the abstract, but they are not being applied here.

Mr Lowry: Would you agree with the principle that people with a community of interests should, as far as possible, be in the same Ward?
Mr McCarroll: The principle is quite all right, but I am dealing with facts.

Mr Lowry: Would you say that people situated in the North Ward have a community of interest?
Mr McCarroll: What I say is that at the moment that is so. If to gerrymander Derry you wanted to discard that arrangement you would quickly discard it. [145]

And then

Mr Lowry: ...doesn't that old West Ward and old South Ward put together contain people who have a community of interest?
Mr McCarroll: The Ward is not created for that. It is because of their religious persuasion.

Mr Lowry: If their community of interests coincides with their religious persuasion doesn't that show their community of interests?
Mr McCarroll: They are herded in that Ward because of their particular faith.

Mr Lowry: But they have a community of interests, nevertheless?
Mr McCarroll: They are being put there and that extraordinary boundary is created because you don't want to give them the representation to which they are entitled.

Mr Lowry: Leave aside the reasons for creating this line. Those inside it have a community of interest in their means of livelihood?
Mr McCarroll: They are largely Catholic.

Mr Lowry: And in addition they have a similarity of pursuits?
Mr McCarroll: Again I say that is not the basis you are operating on. [146]

Councillor James Bonner summed up the Nationalist position. "The only scheme that will satisfy us is one that will give us a majority to which we are entitled by population and votes" [147]. This, of course, represented a complete rejection of the application of objective criteria to the drawing of ward boundaries. It was the Unionist Corporation which was applying the most modern British standards in drawing up the new ward boundaries on the West Bank of the Foyle.

Stephen Lowry KC noted that "If it were not for politics and religion, and if it were not for the existence of that unfortunate Senator of Massachusetts, Senator Gerry, who lived over a hundred years ago, I don't know what my learned friends [barristers for the Nationalists] would have left to say" [148].

There was nothing special about this being a three ward scheme in terms of determining whether there would be a future Unionist majority. If the two main corrective measures (the movement of the area around and to the south west of St.Eugene's Cathedral, and the area around Ferguson Street, Barrack Street and Dark Lane) had been applied to the five ward scheme, Unionists would still have had comfortable majorities in three of the five wards as per Table 6 below.

Table 6: What If the Londonderry Corporation Had Used a New Five Ward Scheme?

Ward	Catholic Voters	Protestant Voters	Total Voters
North	1152	2001	3153
East	1099	2317	3416
South	2704	771	3475
West	3120	149	3269
Waterside	1334	2298	3632
Totals	9409	7536	16945

The proposed boundary between the new North and South Wards largely followed the boundary between the Foyle and City of Londonderry constituencies for the Northern Ireland Parliament. After the public inquiry, the Ministry of Home Affairs changed the local government boundary to coincide precisely with the Parliamentary boundary. This had the effect of returning the predominantly Protestant area around Ferguson Street, Barrack Street and Dark Lane to the new South Ward [149].

The Minister felt he had a legal duty to take valuation (rateable value) into account and to make the North and South Wards less unequal in that respect. This legal duty arose from the provisions of the Local Government Act 1922. The relevant section of Schedule Part II Section 2 Sub Section (3) said that "electoral divisions shall be arranged with a view of the population of each division being, so nearly as conveniently may be, equal, regard being had

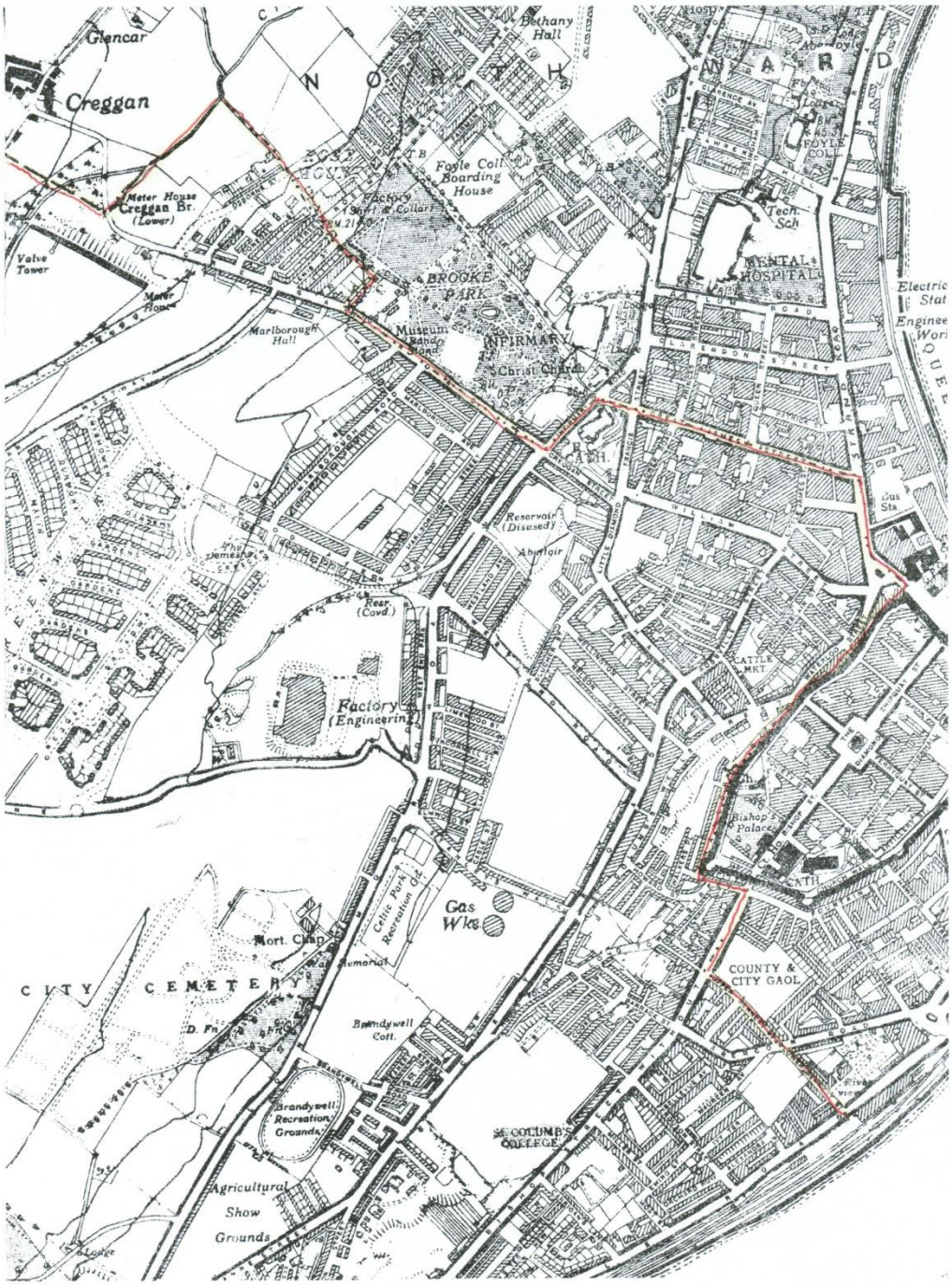
to a proper representation both of the rural and urban population, and to rateable valuation" [150]. This was not a new requirement. It was simply a continuation of previous practice. The Town Improvements (Ireland) Act 1854 par.XV had introduced the requirement that the amount of rates each ward would be paying was to be taken into account in arranging appropriate representation. Bear in mind that councillors at that time were known as town commissioners. The Lord Lieutenant was to make an appointment and

"the Person so appointed to divide the Town into Wards shall also apportion among the several Wards of such Town the Number of Commissioners appointed for the Town by the Lord Lieutenant; and in assigning the Number of Commissioners to each Ward, such Person shall, as far as in his Judgment he may deem it practicable, have regard as well to the Number of Persons rated to the Relief of the Poor in each Ward, as to the aggregate Amount of the Sums at which all the said Persons shall be so rated, and such Apportionment of Commissioners shall be subject to the like Approval of the Lord Lieutenant and Privy Council" [151]. The number of ratepayers and the amount of rates they were paying was to be taken into account. The amount of rates someone paid was dictated by the valuation (rateable value) of their property.

Table 7: Londonderry Final Ward Revision December 1936 [152]

Ward	Voters	Seats	Voters per Seat	Valuation (£)
North Ward	5469	8	684	105,824
South Ward	7844	8	980	63,065
Waterside Ward	3632	4	908	35,079

Figure 3: Londonderry Corporation Final Revised Boundary Between the North and South Wards December 1936



The Northern Ireland Government's final decision departed from modern British standards more than the Corporation's original scheme (with the exception of the number of

representatives in the Waterside Ward). It was, however, more favourable to Nationalists, in that a predominantly Protestant area was moved back to the new South Ward and reduced the potential Unionist majority in the new North Ward. It should be noted that Patrick Buckland got this the wrong way round. He wrote of the Unionist controlled Corporation, "By taking into account only valuation in order to justify a Unionist majority on the council of 2 to 1, the scheme completely ignored the prime determinant of electoral areas – population" [153]. In fact, the Corporation had selected population (or rather the more relevant number of electors) as the key determinant of their scheme. The numbers of voters in the proposed North and South Wards were pretty much equal, while the valuation figures differed to a great extent. The Unionists could not be blamed for the fact that Catholics were distributed in such a way that resulted in vote inefficiency. It was the Northern Ireland Government which was compelled to consider the legal requirement to take valuation into account. Hence its adjustment of the original scheme.

Buckland had apparently been led astray by a Northern Ireland Government official's six page memorandum in the archives of PRONI [154]. This is a particularly unsatisfactory piece of work which perhaps exposed the tensions which sometimes exist between officials at different levels of government. The official writes that he told the Londonderry Unionists "it may be taken as agreed that the Unionists have a majority of 2 to 1 in valuation [they paid two-thirds of the rates]. I pointed out that, having regard to these figures, the scheme was open to the general objection that, in giving a majority of 2 to 1 on the Corporation to the Unionists, it ignored entirely population and the number of Local Government electors and based representation simply and solely on valuation" [155]. The official had made a schoolboy error in reasoning as follows:

1. Unionists pay two-thirds of the rates.
2. The proposed ward scheme gives Unionists two-thirds of the seats.
3. Therefore, the scheme must be based on an argument about valuation.

It was a complete non-sequitur and showed a poor grasp of what had happened. The fact that, in the original proposal, the North and South Wards had about the same number of electors, but vastly different valuations, showed that the number of electors was the dominant factor in the Corporation's scheme. This was made clear in the Ministry of Home Affairs letter to the Corporation accompanying the Order describing the boundary between the wards on the West Bank of the Foyle. It said "The principal factors to be considered by the Ministry are the valuations and populations of the various wards taken in conjunction with their representation, but the Corporation appear to have entirely overlooked the necessity for any such basis for their proposal. Thus, while the populations of the proposed North and South Wards would be approximately equal, the valuation of the former would be almost double that of the latter" [156].

The Northern Ireland Government actually accused the Corporation of not taking valuation into account and came up with a revised scheme that made the valuations less unequal. The Ministry letter said of valuation in its revised scheme that "while there would still be an appreciable disproportion, it would be nothing like so great as under the original proposal, as the lower population in the North Ward is balanced by a higher valuation, and the higher population in the South Ward is balanced by a lower valuation" [157]. This must have left the writer of the memorandum which led Buckland astray with a red face.

During the scrutiny process of the 1936 ward scheme, Nationalists did not bring forward an alternative scheme, which they were entitled to do. An obvious reason for this was that it was very difficult to slice up the Londonderry County Borough in any credible way which would have left Nationalists in control. This was borne out when, in time for the 1973 local government elections to the new Londonderry City Council, a universal adult franchise was introduced, the company and business premises votes were abolished, ward boundaries were

redrawn by an independent body, the voting age was reduced to 18, PR was introduced, and the boundary was extended to take in all of the adjacent Londonderry Rural District Council area. Even under such supposedly unfavourable conditions, the Unionists were the biggest group in three out of the five electoral areas [158]. More details of this will be given later.

When all the histrionics had passed, in the cold light of day the new ward scheme could be seen as a blessing to Nationalists and a curse to Labour for equal and opposite reasons. The old South Ward had been classic Labour territory. There were insufficient Protestants in the ward to convince the Unionists that it was worth standing. On the other hand, the Protestant minority was large enough to encourage Labour to believe that it could, with no Unionist competition, get votes from both communities. This strategy had been successful in 1933 which saw the election of Frank Callaghan, with Charles McGahey coming very close to success. For these reasons, Nationalists were always nervous of the Labour challenge. It was a blessing to Nationalism when the old South and West Wards were basically amalgamated to form a new South Ward. In this new ward, with its much smaller proportion of Protestants, Labour would poll quite well from time to time, but would never again threaten to win a seat from the Nationalists.

The Community of Interest Principle

It may be profitable just to take a moment to discuss the community of interest principle and, in particular, just how radical it is. It is not altogether clear when people started using this term in relation to the drawing of election boundaries. However, we do know that in 1884, Charles Dilke, President of the Local Government Board, wrote to the Home Secretary to ask him to appoint commissioners to conduct parliamentary boundary reviews in the lead up to the passing of the Redistribution of Seats Act 1885. He referred to people in areas adjacent to boroughs and asked the commissioners to decide whether such people "either from community of interests with the borough or from other circumstances, form part of the borough proper" [159].

In the same schedule of the Local Government Act 1922 quoted previously, account had to be taken of "the distribution and pursuits" of the population [160]. This was the same wording as in the Local Government Act 1898, which had been passed at Westminster to govern councils in Ireland. One way of respecting this requirement was to employ the community of interest principle.

In the inquiry which considered a new ward scheme for Omagh Rural District Council in 1923, Mr.W.E.Orr, who represented ratepayers proposing such a scheme, argued that some of the old electoral divisions had no community of interests [161]. In 1935, during the revision of the Omagh Urban District ward scheme, Unionists argued that the Fairmount area did not have a community of interest with the rest of the South Ward [162]. The argument was, therefore, fairly well established when John Lowry KC used it in support of the Londonderry Corporation's scheme.

They were perhaps not to know that the community of interest principle would come to dominate the drawing of boundaries under a first-past-the-post system in England and thus become the nearest thing to a British standard, which is, after all, what key sections of the "civil right" movement claimed they were looking for.

In 2005, the Office of Deputy Prime Minister Housing, Planning, Local Government and Regions Committee produced a report for the House of Commons about local government Ward Boundaries. One of its conclusions was that "Evidence we received suggested two things: that too much weight is given to the criterion of 'equality of representation' and not enough attention is paid to the 'interests and identities of local communities'" [163]. As the 21st century dawned, the community of interest principle was becoming more popular, not less.

The United States has quite different electoral traditions, but the Brennan Center for Justice identified 24 states which required the community of interest principle to be taken into account by those who decide on boundaries [164]. Helen Fulcher has discussed the concept in an Australian context [165].

But why is the community of interest principle so radical? Primarily because it makes most criticisms levelled against the Londonderry Corporation ward scheme quite irrelevant. Under modern British standards, community of interest is taken into account; and the rough equality of voters per representative is taken into account. However, a modern boundary commission like LGBCE is not permitted to take into account any possible outcomes of an election. Thus, arguments such as "We got more representatives under PR", "We deserve to be in control", "We think we have more supporters on the electoral register", and "They had bad motives" are all irrelevant and impermissible.

This may be genuinely shocking to readers brought up on a Northern Ireland political literature which shows little or no awareness of modern British standards when it comes to boundary formation for first-past-the-post elections. An experienced academic, John Whyte, suggested that a method of demonstrating unfairness was to compare results obtained under PR in 1920 with those obtained in later elections [166]. Setting aside for a minute the problem of actually finding contested local government elections in Northern Ireland, the conclusion must be reached that this is confused thinking [167].

PR and the first-past-the-post system have different strengths and different weaknesses. When the people of England throughout history rejected PR in local government, they implicitly rejected the primacy of strict council-wide proportionality in electoral outcomes. Strict proportionality here would mean that a party which obtained 55% of the vote across an entire council area should get 55% of the council seats. They did not choose the first-past-the-post system because it produced better proportionality. Other things were deemed to be more important. They therefore developed alternative criteria for assessing the fairness of boundaries under a first-past-the-post system, and felt it sensible not to offer any special protection to groups which had poor vote efficiency. It is those criteria which probably need to be applied to the Northern Ireland boundaries under a similar system of voting prior to 1973.

Fairness thus becomes a question of whether certain criteria are met in drawing up the boundaries. Electoral outcomes are not an issue, and neither is the motivation of politicians. If the criteria are met, it does not matter that people may want the right thing done for the wrong reasons. Modern British standards are realistic in that they accept that politicians are self-interested. As long as the criteria are met, this does not matter.

English local government throughout history, and Northern Ireland councils from 1923 up to 1973, both used the first-past-the-post system. It seems quite sensible therefore to assess the fairness of the Northern Ireland electoral arrangements by applying standards which the LGBCE uses. Nationalists, of course, rejected all objective standards in the 1920s and 1930s. The only good result was one which left them in control. Unionists, perhaps guided by good lawyers, were a little more sophisticated. Possibly to the surprise of some of them, the changes which they made in Londonderry in 1936 were a good example of the use of the community of interest principle and would make perfect sense to a modern boundary commission. Unionists were lucky rather than malevolent, in that the application of objective criteria produced results with which they were happy.

British Standards and the Problem of Motivation

Political parties tend to be self-interested. They prefer electoral arrangements which favour their party. Some historians have agonised about the motivation of Unionists in the 1920s and 1930s. Back in 1934, one communication to the Northern Ireland Prime Minister, Lord Craigavon said "if proper steps are taken now, I believe Derry can be saved for years to come" [168]. Craigavon himself, in December 1936, wrote "With regard to the re-distribution in Derry, of course I am not familiar with all the details, but if the action taken does not realise our hopes, surely it would be possible to make a further attempt later on. You may rest assured that all of us have the one aim in view, and that is to maintain the integrity of the Maiden City [Londonderry]" [169].

It was hardly surprising that Unionists wanted to keep control of Londonderry. Nationalists opposed the continued existence of the Northern Ireland state. The period of Nationalist control from 1920-23 had not inspired confidence in Unionists. Some of the Nationalist councillors during that period and long thereafter had displayed a barely concealed support for IRA terrorism. Historically, Londonderry has a special place in the hearts of Unionists. Some 10,000 Protestants lost their lives during the Siege of Londonderry 1688-89 to secure the Glorious Revolution, which led to William and Mary taking the throne and a transition from absolute monarchy to parliamentary democracy.

Opponents of Unionism also displayed self-interested motives. Recall that Nationalist Councillor James Bonner had said "The only scheme that will satisfy us is one that will give us a majority to which we are entitled by population and votes" [170]. At the public inquiry into the new ward scheme, JJ McCarroll had steadfastly rejected the community of interest principle if its application did not result in Nationalist control. Both parties had their own political interests, and whatever decision had been made, someone's political interests would have been realised and someone's would have been frustrated.

The answer to this problem is provided by modern British standards. It is simply to make motivation irrelevant. The latest standards separate the concepts of motivation and justification. A ward scheme is justified if it meets certain criteria, such as community of interest and a roughly equal number of voters per representative. It does not matter who is in government or what their motives are. If the scheme meets the criteria it is justified. Turning this into a public administration issue diffuses the political issues. Applying 21st century first-past-the-post election standards to the 1930s provides a way of establishing justification without adjudicating between competing self-interests.

The Pre-War Re-emergence of Labour

The Corporation elections due in 1937 were postponed by the Local Government (Urban Elections) Act until 1938, partly to avoid a clash with the coronation of King George VI in May 1937 [171]. Under the new three ward scheme, Labour candidates finally re-entered the fray.

What follows is the first of a series of tables (Table 8) which calculate what I have called the Cameron Credibility Gap. Lord Cameron, the Scottish judge who headed a committee of inquiry in the late 1960s, reproduced an analysis of the Londonderry local government electoral register in 1967, classifying people as Catholic Voters and Other Voters (by which was meant Protestants) [172]. Based on this and similar (unpublished) analyses of electoral registers he was led to make the claim that there were "ward areas in which Unionist representatives were returned by small majorities, whereas Non-Unionist [Nationalist] representatives were returned by very large majorities" [173]. This conclusion was not based on the study of any election results, but purely on an analysis of electoral registers. The claim

therefore was that counting the number of Catholics and Protestants on a register was a reliable indication of the actual electoral majorities which would be achieved by Unionists and Nationalists. We have already had some reason to question this.

The difference between the results produced by the Cameron Report's method (analysing electoral registers) and a study of actual majorities obtained in real live elections is the Cameron Credibility Gap (shortened to "Cameron Gap" in the tables). A positive result (+) indicates that, in an election, a party did better than would be expected from applying the Cameron method; a negative result (-) shows that it did worse than would be expected using the Cameron approach.

A small number (positive or negative) indicates that the actual election majorities were close to those which the Cameron approach would suggest; a large number demonstrates that there is a dramatic difference. The larger numbers undermine the credibility of Cameron's method for calculating majorities.

The "Caths" and "Prots" columns indicate the estimated number of Catholic and Protestant local government voters according to the Derry Catholic Registration Association (DCRA). James Gallagher, a veteran worker for the DCRA, outlined his role in written evidence provided to the Irish Boundary Commission in 1925. "In the course of my duties as Registration agent I come into daily touch with practically every household in the city and I am aware of their religious beliefs and political leanings. It is part of my duty to attend the annual Revision Sessions to instruct the solicitor of the Association and submit a marked copy of the Register showing who are Nationalists and who are Unionists" [174]. The DCRA started life as the Derry Nationalist Registration Association but switched from Nationalist to Catholic within a year of the Irish Boundary Commission sitting, and from then onwards it counted Catholics [175].

To return to the figures produced by the DCRA and shown in the tables which follow, the difference between the two communities' totals is what is here described as the Cameron Paper Majority. This is what the electoral majority should be, on paper. Each party usually put forward multiple candidates, some of whom would attract more votes than others. Labour would not necessarily nominate as many candidates as there were vacancies. The "Actual Majority" figure in the tables therefore compares the votes given to the successful party's top candidate with the number of votes won by the top Labour candidate. In each of the contests referred to in these tables, Labour candidates challenged Unionists in wards with a Protestant majority, and Nationalists where there was a Catholic majority. Nationalists generally refused to put up candidates against Unionists, and vice versa.

The Cameron Credibility Gap is indirectly a measure of how well a party got its target group to vote for it. A large negative Cameron Credibility Gap figure would indicate either that Nationalists were not as good as expected at attracting the Catholic vote, or that Unionists were not able to attract solid support from Protestants. There are other metrics which indicate the same phenomenon, and these are described elsewhere [176]. As is clear from the following tables, it was unusual for all three Londonderry wards to be contested in the same year. The new South Ward referred to from now on is broadly an amalgamation of the old South and West Wards. Similarly, the new North Ward is a combination of the old North and East Wards.

Table 8: Londonderry County Borough Elections 1938: The Cameron Credibility Gap [177]

	Caths	Prots	Cameron Paper Majority	Actual Majority	Cameron Gap
North Ward	2021	3515	1494	1275 (Un.)	-219
South Ward	6227	1590	4637	2159 (Nat.)	-2478

The actual Unionist majority in the election for councillors in the North Ward was reasonably close to the Cameron method of prediction, indicating that Unionists were good at attracting Protestant support, and few in their Protestant target group defected to Labour. The very large Cameron Credibility Gap in the South Ward suggests that many Catholics voted Labour, and that the Nationalist vote could not be predicted by counting Catholic names on a register. For the full 1938 results, see Appendix B.

Table 9: Londonderry County Borough Elections 1939: The Cameron Credibility Gap [178]

	Caths	Prots	Cameron Paper Majority	Actual Majority	Cameron Gap
South Ward	6143	1572	4571	1282 (Nat.)	-3289

In 1939, there was a contest in only the South Ward. Normally only two councillors would have been due to be elected under the rotation system, but the Anti-Partition councillor, Barry McCafferty, who had not been due to retire that year, died a few months earlier. Rather than hold a separate by-election, the Corporation decided to elect three candidates on the normal May election date. Barry McCafferty was replaced by his son, William [179]. The full results can be found in Appendix C.

The huge Cameron Credibility Gap figure reinforces the electoral evidence from the previous year. The paper majority bears no relation to the actual Nationalist majority in this ward. The War was to delay the next set of local elections until 1946.

J.J.Campbell

With the arrival at the Second World War, this will be a convenient point at which to turn aside and discuss briefly the likely influence of James Joseph Campbell (usually just known as JJ) on the conclusions of the Cameron Report, which gave rise to the Cameron Credibility Gap. Campbell, together with Lord Cameron and Sir John Biggart, made up the Cameron Commission. Biggart was a Professor of Pathology at Queen's University, and an able administrator [180]. Campbell was head of the Education Department at the now defunct St.Joseph's College of Education, which trained male Catholic teachers until its amalgamation with St.Mary's College. In December 1968, just before he was appointed to the

Cameron Commission, Campbell became Director of the Institute of Education at Queen's University [181].

J.J.Campbell's political story, however, begins in 1943. In that year, a rather intemperate booklet called *Orange Terror* was published anonymously under the pseudonym Ultach. Eamon Phoenix and others name Campbell as the author of this publication [182]. *Orange Terror* was banned for a time by the Northern Ireland Government. Its publication in the middle of the war was probably seen as a rather cowardly attack on the Northern Ireland state by people who supported the Irish Free State's neutrality and were intent on fomenting unrest which would undermine the war effort.

Ultach wrote of "the persecution which is the dominant feature of life" in Ulster [183]. He described the Home Guard as "a third armed instrument of Orange oppression" [184]. Of Northern Ireland, Ultach states that, "Established twenty-two years ago, before the march on Rome, before Hitler's phenomenal rise to power, it nevertheless presents an almost perfect example, within its limitations, of what we know as the totalitarian state" [185]. He omitted the inconvenient fact that Northern Ireland was enthusiastically fighting a war against the totalitarian states in Italy and Germany, but the Irish Free State and Northern Catholics were less than enthusiastic.

In response, the Dean of Belfast, William Kerr, wrote *Slanders on Ulster: Repy to "Orange Terror"*, shortly before he became the Church of Ireland Bishop of Down and Dromore. This was originally published in the Dublin cultural magazine, *The Bell*, but was also printed as a booklet. He asked, "If the existences of Belfast Roman Catholics are so full of barbarous suffering and terrorism why are they flocking to live here and their numbers increasing so rapidly?" [186].

He went on "Ultach's whole case is vitiated by his concealing the real reason for Government action in interning Roman Catholics and police searching of persons and houses and examining identity cards. It is simply because of a great military organisation [by the IRA] to overturn the State by criminal methods" [187]. "It is one thing to be in political opposition to the Government. It is another thing to belong to an 'Army' operating by outrages to overturn the State" [188]. We now know that the IRA was trying to reach a deal with Hitler's Germany during the Second World War, as well as conducting a terrorist campaign. The IRA's Chief of Staff, Sean Russell, died after he became ill on a German U-boat transporting him back to Ireland [189].

Ultach's approach would be very recognisable in the 1960s. He wrote "I would have anyone who is reading this take note that there was no Sinn Fein or even 'Nationalist' tradition in our family...I do not belong to any political party or organisation" while going on to make a very traditional Nationalist attack on Northern Ireland [190].

In the 1960s Campbell was closely associated with a group of Catholics wanting to take positions of responsibility which his community had historically deterred its members from accepting. The *Derry Journal* accused them of being "assiduous exponents of a policy of appeasement of the Stormont Government" [191]. Under such circumstances it would be easy to assume that by the 1960s Campbell and his associates had adopted a more positive attitude towards the Northern Ireland state.

There are other possible explanations of this change of tactics. Many middle class Catholics were frustrated that they were being encouraged by their own community to turn down positions which would give them power and status. Others, perhaps impressed by the story of the Trojan Horse, felt that it would be better to undermine the Northern Ireland state from the inside.

J.J.Campbell was a smooth operator who was familiar with all the classic Nationalist arguments against Unionism. The medical man, Sir John Biggart, was unlikely to have received an effective political inoculation against such arguments. It would not have been difficult for someone like Campbell, supported by the many Nationalist submissions to the Commission, to insert traditional Nationalist propaganda dating from the 1920s onwards into the Cameron Commission's thinking.

Post-War Elections

After the Second World War the Stormont Government passed the Elections and Franchise Act 1946, which brought an end to annual local government elections. In introducing the Bill, the Minister of Home Affairs, Edmond Warnock, said "For a long time past the period of office of a Local Authority has been three years. In the vast majority of cases all the members were elected together and went out together, but in seven or eight out of approximately 100 Local Authorities the system of one-third of the members retiring annually was in operation. We propose now that all bodies shall be elected for three years and they shall all go out together. This involves the cessation of annual elections and gives us a miniature General Election for Local Government services every three years" [192].

Regulations later in the year fixed the date of the next Londonderry Corporation election as 16 October 1946 [193]. Thereafter the triennial election date would revert to May. Aldermen would be elected for six years and councillors for three.

The Elections and Franchise Act also provided a legal framework for the continuation of the ratepayers' vote in local elections in Northern Ireland. It had been abolished in Great Britain as a result of the Representation of the People Act 1945. The Belfast Corporation passed a resolution requesting a universal franchise in local government for those 21 or over [194]. Various Labour organisations also campaigned for the same policy [195].

The Minister of Home Affairs argued in the Stormont Parliament that all adults contributed to the Exchequer through income tax or indirect taxes, and hence all should have Parliamentary votes. However, "The great bulk of the moneys expended by the local government bodies was provided by the occupiers of premises by the striking of a rate....There was no indirect taxation in local government, and again the principle had been adopted that the persons who provided the moneys for the upkeep of the services of a city were the proper persons to elect the representatives who expended it" [196].

The Minister also pointed out that conditions in Great Britain, which had been the subject of conscription, were different. It would be a huge practical difficulty to prepare a ratepayers' register there when five or six million men had been drafted into the armed forces and would take some time to be demobilized. Many others had had to move as a result of the bombing campaign. "Some register had to be found, because it was important that local government elections should be resumed, and the basis of the national register was adopted and adult suffrage was the only possible alternative in Britain. If the same conditions had prevailed in Northern Ireland we would probably have been faced with the same difficulty....The introduction of adult suffrage in local elections was not introduced in Great Britain on the basis of reason, but because circumstances compelled the Government to adopt it, there being no real alternative in the circumstances" [197]. A universal franchise for local government was eventually approved by the Ulster Unionist Party in May 1969 [198] and the legislation was passed by the end of the year, in good time for the next planned elections [199].

The Northern Ireland Government accepted an amendment to safeguard the voting position of the smaller number of demobilised members of the armed forces in Northern Ireland, and those bombed out of their homes [200]. Another agreed amendment would "provide for a return

to the system of by-elections in place of co-optations for casual vacancies in county borough and borough authorities, including Belfast and Londonderry....It had never been the practice to have by-elections for casual vacancies in rural authorities and the position there would not be changed" [201].

When the bill was passed, the Ulster Unionist Council placed a paid advertisement in local daily newspapers, providing a legally precise definition of who was entitled to vote (see Figure 4 below). A "resident occupier" in Figure 4 is effectively a domestic ratepayer. In local government, there was a limited company vote, which had originally been introduced in the Representation of the People Act 1928 [202]. The only estimate I have seen of the religious breakdown of limited company nominees is in a DCRA document from 1964. It says that throughout the Londonderry County Borough there were 256 Catholic company voters and 902 "Others" [203]. That would indicate a significant lack of entrepreneurial spirit in the local Catholic population. The company vote was abolished in the November 1968 reform package [204].

There was also a business premises vote, which was available to business owners ("occupiers of business premises") who did not live in the local government area and hence did not have a residential ratepayers vote. The business premises vote, unlike the company vote, operated throughout the UK until it was abolished by the Representation of the People Act 1969.

In Australia, the company/corporation vote in local elections has survived into the 21st century in the states of South Australia, Western Australia, Victoria, New South Wales and Tasmania. All of these states also provide for the equivalent of Northern Ireland's business vote for non-residents who own or occupy property in a local government area [205]. Local authorities in the state of Victoria, which includes the City of Melbourne, had a ratepayers' franchise until 1982 [206], long after Northern Ireland agreed to move to universal suffrage for local elections in 1969.

Figure 4: Ulster Unionist Advertisement Pointing Out Voting Qualifications, June 1946 [207]

UNIONISTS! UNIONISTS!

THE NEW REGISTER OF VOTERS

is now in course of preparation.

LOOK AFTER YOUR VOTE FOR

NORTHERN IRELAND PARLIAMENT

and

LOCAL GOVERNMENT ELECTIONS

(which will be held next September and October).

PARLIAMENTARY QUALIFICATIONS.

(1) British subjects, 21 years of age and over. If not born in Northern Ireland must have seven years continuous residence in U.K. and during three months ended 31st January, 1946, must have resided in the Co. Borough or County in which their residence is situated.

(2) OCCUPIERS of business premises (other than dwelling houses) Valuation £10 and over, for the same qualifying period, and the husband or wife of a person so qualified; provided that such persons have not a residential qualification for the same constituency.

LOCAL GOVERNMENT QUALIFICATIONS.

(3) RESIDENT OCCUPIERS of dwelling houses qualified as (1) above; and a husband or wife of a person so qualified.

(4) OCCUPIERS of business premises qualified as (2) above; provided such occupier is not qualified as a resident occupier in the same *electoral area*.

(5) LIMITED COMPANIES can claim to have registered such persons (not exceeding six) as are specified in the claim, one for each multiple of £10 of the valuation of premises occupied as in (2) above.

(6) Persons married after 1st September, 1939; ex-members of the Forces; and blitzed persons who were registered as L.G. Electors on 1939 Register; who are qualified as Parliamentary Electors and not otherwise entitled to be registered as L.G. Electors must lodge a claim with the Electoral Officer, if they wish to be registered as L.G. Electors.

(7) Members of the Forces or Merchant Seamen are entitled to be registered as Parliamentary and L.G. Electors *only* if they have made the required declarations before the 31st January, 1946.

The List of Electors can be inspected from 30th May at any Post Office, Police Barracks, or inquire from the Unionist Agent in your district, and see if your name appears thereon.

If your name or the names of any other Unionists with whom you are acquainted, and who are entitled to the Vote, are not on the Lists, please call or send particulars (including your National Registration Number) to the OFFICES OF THE UNIONIST ASSOCIATION in your Division, or to the SECRETARY, ULSTER UNIONIST COUNCIL, 3 GLENGALL STREET (Phone No.: Belfast 24601-2-3) so that claims may be lodged.

The 17th JUNE is the LAST DAY for lodging Claims.

It is the duty of every Unionist to attend to this matter at once.

Graves, Bee Hives and Stable Stalls

The requirement that businesses must have a rateable value of £10 or more to qualify for a business premises vote mirrored the provision in Great Britain, to exclude people who just occupied property like an allotment or owned a grave plot, which had a minimal rateable value [208].

In the absence of such a provision, John Keenan, an enterprising Catholic registration agent in Enniskillen, had claimed an occupier's vote on the strength of his owning a grave in the town.

Some 80 other Nationalist voters were employing the same argument and were waiting for the outcome of this test case at the Registration Court (sometimes referred to as a Revision Session), which was a body appointed to adjudicate in disputed cases about who was entitled to a vote. A newspaper reported that the Revising Officer ruled as follows.

"After some legal argument, Mr Hanrahan, in giving judgement, said he was quite clear that Mr Keenan was the owner of the plot of ground, but the only occupation of a grave could be by a dead body, as a grave could not be occupied by anybody or anything except a corpse. He would therefore disallow this claim and all the others dependent upon it" [209].

The loophole was closed in the Local Government (Franchise) Act 1923, which set the minimum rateable value to qualify for a business premises vote as £5 (increased to £10 in 1946). In the debate on the legislation, further examples of previous abuses were given. James Cooper, one of the MPs for Fermanagh and South Tyrone, "in supporting the Bill, referred to an instance in which he said that the owner of a beehive purchased the square yard of land on which it stood, thus securing for himself a vote as tenant. In a second instance there were twenty-five stalls in a stable at the rear of a Roman Catholic church and people attending the church and drove there on Sundays secured tenancies for the stalls from the priest, entitling them to twenty-five votes. In a case where a monthly fair was held the stalls in the market place were rented and seventy-five votes were secured. In other cases a number of votes had been obtained from tenancies of hen-houses" [210].

When the bill was passed to the Northern Ireland Senate, "Viscount Massereene said that in one urban district it was established that the local council had let potato plots to a considerable number of people, and on the ground of that occupancy the people in question had been admitted to the franchise...Another instance brought to the notice of the Minister of Home Affairs was where over fifty votes were obtained out of small bog plots of practically negligible value, the owners of those plots actually residing and having votes in other areas" [211].

Labour and the Constitutional Issue

The War had delayed local government elections last held in 1939, but new elections took place in October 1946. From this time onwards Labour organisations began to fracture over the constitutional issue. It had been optimistic to believe that the question of whether it was a good thing for Northern Ireland to be part of the United Kingdom could be avoided indefinitely.

In the Northern Ireland Labour Party (NILP), its Chairman, Harry Midgley, had tried to force the issue on the constitutional question in November 1942. He produced a Declaration of Policy which he invited the NILP to support. It began with the words "We accept the present political position in Northern Ireland and are prepared to work for a government in this area which will co-operate with Great Britain and the British Commonwealth of Nations" [212].

"Leeburn and Thompson – both executive members - probably shared Midgley's view that Northern Ireland's future was bound up with Britain and that Ulster Labour could only benefit from the closest possible ties with the British Labour movement. Both men, however, desired the NILP to retain an appeal to both sections of the community, and to avoid being given a sectarian label" [213]. Midgley's view did not prevail against those who preferred to sit on the fence, and he resigned from the party. He also had the distinction of being expelled at the same time [214].

The fact that the Irish Free State had remained neutral during the Second World War opened up divisions. Those with Nationalist sympathies in Northern Ireland were at best unenthusiastic about prosecuting the war, and at worst openly hostile. Conscription was never

extended to Northern Ireland because of widespread Catholic opposition to serving in the British Army.

On 14 November 1945, a convention in Dungannon had agreed to form an Anti-Partition League with the object of "securing the removal of the Northern Ireland-Eire border and the re-establishing of good relations with Great Britain", although the second goal was of very much less importance [215]. For some years, Nationalists would stand under the Anti-Partition banner.

By October 1946, Labour supporters who were supportive of the Anti-Partition League's policy reached an electoral pact with the city's Nationalists. With the abolition of annual elections, the full complement of aldermen and councillors was to be elected. As neither the Nationalists nor the Labour Nationalists had any intention of contesting the wards in which Unionists were in a majority, the pact applied only to the South Ward. Each group was allocated one alderman and three councillors, standing as Anti-Partition and Derry Labour Party candidates. At the time of candidate nominations, the *Londonderry Sentinel* described the latter group as "Nationalist-Labour" [216]. The local branch of the Northern Ireland Labour Party put up candidates in the South and North Wards. In the local press they were often referred to as belonging to the Londonderry Labour Party [217].

The contest was at its most bitter in the South Ward, with great care being taken to distinguish between the different flavours of Labour candidate, who attracted support from different quarters. "At a meeting of the Union of Post Office Workers (Londonderry Outdoor Section) it was unanimously decided to support the official Londonderry Labour Party in the elections" [218].

A *Derry Journal* editorial praised "the Derry Labour Party which, as befits the spirit of its members, refuses to take either its orders or its inspiration from any alien, anti-national or anti-Catholic source" [219]. The Nationalist Alderman, Frank McCarroll, levelled a damning charge against the coalition's opponents in the South Ward. "The Londonderry Labour Party had made it clear that it favoured Partition. The people's duty was obviously to vote for the candidates opposed to Partition" [220]. In fact, at this time the NILP was still sitting on the fence over the constitutional issue.

For the NILP, the trade unionist Stephen McGonagle said that "the people who represented them [South Ward electors] on the Corporation in the past were property owners, speculative builders, and highly paid professional men whose conception of public needs was at all times attuned to their selfish interests....On social issues they never had a policy. The fact that this Nationalist set-up had confined its attentions to the South Ward – to the Catholic ghetto which they themselves had created, meant that there had been conceded the right of the Unionist Party to have control in the North and Waterside Wards". The NILP speakers stressed their non-sectarian approach [221].

At a rally in support of the Anti-Partition candidates, A Mr.F.McAuley denounced his opponents as Midgleyites, referring to Harry Midgley, who had favoured a pro-Union position within the NILP [222]. At another Anti-Partition meeting a Mr Thomas Doherty claimed of his opponents that "They are not Communists, but I say they are being used to introduce a Red doctrine to the people of Catholic Derry" [223].

As expected, the six coalition candidates were elected. Those standing for the Derry Labour Party came first, third and sixth. The voters clearly saw them and the Anti-Partition candidates as one bloc, with the six candidates' votes ranging from 3751 to 3538, followed by the four people standing for the NILP, who attracted between 1238 and 1093 votes. The Unionists beat off the NILP challenge from their four candidates in the North Ward [224]. See Appendix D for the full results.

Table 10: Londonderry County Borough Elections 1946: The Cameron Credibility Gap [225]

	Caths	Prots	Cameron Paper Majority	Actual Majority	Cameron Gap
North Ward	1935	3673	1738	1956 (Un.)	+218
South Ward	5870	1593	4277	2515 (Nat.)	-1762

In Table 10 the pattern of voting in the elections in the late 1930s is repeated in that the Unionists did well in mobilising the Protestant vote, but the Nationalist coalition's majority over the NILP could not be predicted from an analysis of the electoral register.

By the time the next set of Corporation elections came around in 1949, a great deal had happened which would have an impact on Labour groups' participation in future contests. Given that Unionists and Nationalist were never again to put up candidates against each other in Londonderry Corporation elections, Labour was the main hope of forcing any contests at all. The fortunes of Labour were bound up with the constitutional issue and how their members and potential voters reacted to it.

On 8 September 1948, the *Belfast Telegraph* reported that the Irish Prime Minister, John Costello, had indicated during a speech in Ottawa that the Executive Authority (External Relations) Act 1936 would be repealed [226]. This sounded very technical, but it meant that the Irish Free State was about to declare itself a republic. When the Southern counties of Ireland had been granted a large measure of independence in the 1920s, they remained part of the Commonwealth, and the King continued as the head of state. The Executive Authority (External Relations) Act had removed some of the links with the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, but once it was repealed, the break would be pretty much complete.

Costello introduced the Republic of Ireland Bill into the Dail (Irish Parliament) on 17 November 1948 in order to repeal the legislation which was often referred to, in its shorthand version, as the External Relations Act. It would create a republic with a President as the head of state, and Ireland would leave the Commonwealth [227]. This did not affect Northern Ireland directly, but there was always a certain amount of nervousness when constitutional issues were raised.

Ulster was therefore reassured when the British Prime Minister, Clement Attlee, made two statements about its position within the United Kingdom. On 28 October 1948, Attlee told the House of Commons, "The view of H.M. Government of the United Kingdom has always been that any change should not be made in the constitution of Northern Ireland without Northern Ireland's free agreement" [228]. This assurance was repeated by Attlee in the House of Commons on 25 November 1948 [229].

The Northern Ireland Prime Minister, Sir Basil Brooke reported on a meeting he had with Clement Attlee at Chequers. He had "received the fullest assurance from Mr Attlee that the question of a Republic in Southern Ireland would have no effect whatever on the constitutional position of Northern Ireland as an integral part of the United Kingdom" [230]. In 1949, the British Government introduced the Ireland Act, which began its passage through

Parliament on 3 May [231]. Section 1(2) said "It is hereby declared that Northern Ireland remains part of His Majesty's dominions and of the United Kingdom and it is hereby affirmed that in no event will Northern Ireland or any part thereof cease to be part of His Majesty's dominions and of the United Kingdom without the consent of the Parliament of Northern Ireland" [232].

It was the events surrounding these changes and assurances which finally persuaded the Northern Ireland Labour Party to adopt a more definite position on the constitutional issue. Official confirmation of a change by the NILP Executive Committee did not come until mid-December 1948 with a statement to the press. It said that the Executive had met on Sunday 28 November 1948 and had been asked what position should be taken on a forthcoming Nationalist motion at Stormont. It stated that "the decision reached without a dissentient vote by the Executive Committee was 'That our Parliamentary representatives be instructed to state that the Northern Ireland Labour Party endorsed fully Mr Attlee's statement in regard to the constitutional position of Northern Ireland'....This statement was made in the Northern Ireland Parliament in accordance with the Executive decision. Therefore, the Executive Committee, on behalf of the Party, had made it perfectly clear that we were at one with Mr Attlee and the British Labour Government in regard to the constitutional position of Northern Ireland" [233].

An earlier newspaper story had spoken of the NILP's wish to develop closer links with the British Labour Party, and one option was to become a regional council of that party [234]. On this subject, the NILP Executive Committee statement said "No obstacle could be seen on the question of closer relationship with the British Party, seeing that our whole industrial and economic stability is bound up with Britain, where a Socialist Government is in power" [235].

Before this statement, the resignation of the Party Secretary, Joseph Corrigan was reported [236]. He objected that the Executive Committee's actions were unconstitutional but, as someone who had some Nationalist sympathies, he would not have welcomed statements which cemented Ulster's constitutional position or orientated the NILP more towards the British Labour Party rather than its Irish counterpart.

In a letter to the *Northern Whig* after the official statement from the NILP Executive, Corrigan wrote "In regard to the acceptance of Mr Attlee's statement, I should point out that at a special conference held in February 1947, two resolutions supporting Partition and two opposed to it were discussed and all were rejected, thus leaving the party without a definite policy on the subject, and this has not been altered by a Party conference" [237].

Robert Getgood had apparently resigned as Chairman of the NILP on Sunday 12 December 1948, but it took a few days for this to become public [238]. This issue of the propriety of the Executive Committee's actions could only be decided by a party special conference, which would be held in April 1949. Its hand was strengthened by the actions of the Irish Labour Party. The NILP's Irish counterpart held a meeting in Belfast on Sunday 23 January 1949, and passed a resolution which read "This conference, taking note of the general desire for the creation of an all-Ireland political Labour organisation resolves to co-operate in this aim, and with this object in view, it is decided to set up a provisional committee to formulate the necessary scheme for extending the activities of the Irish Labour Party throughout the 32 counties". The *Belfast Telegraph's* sub-heading was "Eire Labour Declares War on Ulster Socialists" [239].

An anonymous leader of the NILP "pointed out that there is in existence – or was until recently – a Joint Committee of the Northern Ireland and Eire Labour Parties which meets periodically to discuss matters of mutual interest. That committee had a meeting about two months ago, just before the secession from the Northern Ireland Labour Party of several members on the partition issue" [240]. One of these members was Stephen McGonagle, who

became Chairman of the local branch of the Irish Labour Party in Londonderry [241]. Within a month, the NILP had withdrawn from the Joint Consultative Committee with the Irish Labour Party [242].

On 9 April 1949 the NILP held a special conference and the *Northern Whig's* headline announced, "Party comes off the constitutional 'fence' – Ulster Labour Will Back the Union" [243].

The resolution, presented by the party's Executive Committee, read "The Northern Ireland Labour Party will maintain unbroken the connection between Great Britain and Northern Ireland as part of the Commonwealth. To implement this it hereby instructs the Executive Committee to proceed at once to take all necessary steps to seek the closest possible means of co-operation with the British Labour Party". This was passed on a card vote (which included the trade unions' block votes) by 20,000 to 700. It was ironic that it should be William Leeburn of the Amalgamated Transport and General Workers Union (ATGWU) who proposed the special conference motion in 1949 which belatedly echoed Harry Midgley's ideas [244].

This created problems for the party in places like Londonderry where there was a lot of anti-partition feeling, and explained, to a significant extent, its failure to mount another challenge in Corporation elections for almost 20 years. Thus, it was the Irish Labour Party which contested the local elections for the Londonderry Corporation in May 1949. The Derry Labour Party (Nationalist Labour) pact with the Nationalists, which had operated in 1946, came to an end. The one exception was that Patrick Fox, elected as a Derry Labour Party alderman in 1946, was not opposed in 1949 when he switched to the Irish Labour Party.

In a now familiar game of musical chairs, the following candidates changed their affiliation between 1946 and 1949:

Table 11: Labour Candidates Who Changed Their Affiliation Between 1946 and 1949

Candidate	1946 Affiliation	1949 Affiliation
William Barr	Derry Labour Party (Nationalist Labour)	Nationalist
James Deeney	Derry Labour Party (Nationalist Labour)	Irish Labour Party
Patrick Fox	Derry Labour Party (Nationalist Labour)	Irish Labour Party
George Hamill	Northern Ireland Labour Party	Irish Labour Party
Stephen McGonagle	Northern Ireland Labour Party	Irish Labour Party
John Sharkey	Northern Ireland Labour Party	Irish Labour Party

The 1949 elections, as can be seen below in Table 12 and in Appendix E , continued to demonstrate that Unionists received solid support from Protestants, whilst many Catholic votes leaked to the Labour candidates.

Table 12: Londonderry County Borough Elections 1949: The Cameron Credibility Gap [245]

	Caths	Prots	Cameron Paper Majority	Actual Majority	Cameron Gap
Waterside Ward	1481	2724	1243	1684 (Un.)	+441
South Ward	6273	1604	4669	2618 (Nat.)	-2051

The Demise of the Irish Labour Party in Londonderry

After the 1949 election (the full results are in Appendix E), there followed a fallow period for the local Labour organisations. They were not to put up another Corporation candidate in Londonderry until 1967. The local Irish Labour Party tore itself apart. In 1951, Alderman Patrick Fox, who had been elected for six years on the Derry Labour Party (Nationalist Labour) ticket in 1946, and then moved to Irish Labour, chaired a meeting which passed unanimously a resolution to disaffiliate from the Irish Labour Party [246].

The following year, just before the local elections, a statement "signed by Mr J.Sharkey, secretary of the Foyle Branch of the Party, and Mr J.Campbell, secretary of the City Branch, said that at a joint meeting of the two branches it was unanimously decided, after discussion of the state of the Party general, and with special reference to the position in Belfast [where there had been expulsions], that affiliation to the [Irish Labour Party] Administrative Council be not renewed". Two other officers, Stephen McGonagle and William Green, said there would be a reorganisation of the local party, but little seems to have come of it [247].

McGonagle then concentrated on his trade union activities in Londonderry's substantial shirtmaking industry, famously leading many members of the National Union of Tailors and Garment Workers into a breakaway Clothing Workers Union [248]. This was to become the Clothing Section of the Dublin-based Irish Transport and General Workers Union [249]. He stood as an Independent Labour candidate in the Stormont elections for the Foyle constituency in 1958 and 1962. On the first occasion he ran the sitting Nationalist MP, Eddie McAteer, pretty close. Foyle included the Corporation's South Ward plus the Upper, Middle and Lower Liberties Wards of the Rural District. McGonagle seems to have been respected, but not always loved, by many in the Ulster Unionist community for his campaigning on social and economic issues. This earned him a personal profile in the *Londonderry Sentinel* in the 1960s [250].

There were to be no more contested Corporation elections until 1966, and that constituted something of an electoral drought. The Northern Ireland Labour Party's problem had been that it had a constant struggle to keep together those who had different views about whether Northern Ireland should remain part of the United Kingdom. Its new pro-Union stance alienated many of its Catholic members and removed it from Londonderry Corporation elections for a couple of decades.

Cecil Davis Milligan

It would be appropriate at this stage to say a few words about C.D.Milligan, one of the outstanding figures of Londonderry Unionism. When he died in September 1956, he had been editor of the *Londonderry Sentinel* for 25 years, at a time when the local newspaper was a major force in local politics [251]. He took over in 1931 from the previous incumbent, J.C.Orr, who had been editor since 1893 [252]. Milligan was succeeded as editor of the *Sentinel* by Sidney Buchanan.

Surprisingly, C.D. enjoyed only brief spells on the Londonderry Corporation. He was co-opted onto the council in May 1945 to represent the North Ward on the death of James Hamilton [253]. This would have been one of the last co-options before the Elections and Franchise Act 1946 ruled that vacancies in the county boroughs must be filled by means of by-elections. He did not let his name go forward in the October 1946 elections. C.D.Milligan was then elected unopposed for the North Ward in May 1955, but he died the following year [254].

Outside of the corporation and journalism, he had been a member of Sir Edward Carson's Ulster Volunteer Force. Later he served on the Ulster Unionist Council and its Standing Committee. C.D.Milligan was a founder member of Derry City Football Club when it was formed in 1929, and sat on its Board of Directors. For 25 years he was the Secretary of the North-West Cricket Union [255].

The *Belfast Telegraph* noted that "He was one of the most proficient shorthand writers in journalism and taught for a period in Londonderry Technical College, and temporarily filled a post on 'Hansard' staff in the then newly established Northern Ireland Parliament" [256]. When someone was needed to undertake the tedious job of making a verbatim record of oral evidence to the public inquiry into the 1936 Corporation Ward Scheme, C.D.Milligan was chosen for the task.

Those interested in the history of Londonderry will know him as the author of a number of publications, the best known being his *History of the Siege of Londonderry* (published by the Londonderry Corporation in 1951) and *The Walls of Derry: Their Building, Defending and Preserving* (two parts published in 1948 and 1950). The former book is, in many people's opinion, the finest account of the Siege, and the Apprentice Boys of Derry association has to

be commended for keeping this volume in print. C.D.Milligan had been a member of the Apprentice Boys' governing body, the General Committee. The book about the Walls was reprinted by the Ulster Society in one volume in 1996.

Residential Segregation in Londonderry

As Northern Ireland entered what became known as the "civil rights" era in the 1960s, there arose two issues which had a bearing on election outcomes. We have already seen that Catholics were much more concentrated in certain areas and this resulted in vote inefficiency. One charge against Unionism was that the residential distribution of Catholics was largely a result of recent public sector housing policy and they were in some sense forced to live in certain segregated areas against their wishes in order to achieve a Unionist electoral advantage. In fact, the basic residential patterns had been established long ago. The second issue of boundary extension will be dealt with in the next section.

The Plantation of Ulster took place in the seventeenth century. Anglican domination meant that "large numbers of both Scottish Presbyterians and Irish Catholics were prevented from living within the city walls area, leading to many Presbyterians settling in the 'Wapping' area outside the walls and the growth of a Catholic populations in the vicinity of the Bogside and ultimately beside the Long Tower church. Therefore the plantation would lead to the origins of both the Fountain and Lower Bishop Street areas and impact on the lives of the citizens for generations to come" [257]. "1786 also saw the opening of the new Long Tower Church as a result of the relaxation of the penal laws. This saw the natural congregating of a large number of Catholics in the vicinity of the church. At this time their accommodation would have mainly comprised of small cottages in a similar vein to the accommodation in the Fountain area" [258].

"The social geographer, Alan Robinson, found that by 1835 a number of clearly defined areas outside the Walls had appeared. Edenballymore to the north was largely Presbyterian. This was where the merchants and better off people lived. It was the basis of the North Ward. To the east was a Protestant working class area called 'the Wapping', later known as the Fountain (through which runs Wapping Lane). The 'Bogside and Wells' district to the south was where the Irish Catholics lived" [259].

Michael Poole used the dissimilarity index of Massey and Denton to measure segregation in Londonderry. A figure of 0 indicates no segregation and 100 is total segregation. In 1991, Londonderry was sitting at 78 (at the micro-level using sub-areas averaging 200 households each), which Poole sees as "a very high figure". In 1911 it was 53 [260]. An index score of 53 still indicates a high level of segregation. In 1911 "four adjacent sub-areas west of the city walls which were all 98 per cent or more Catholic, extending from Rossville Street south to the Long Tower" [261]. This area would have taken in the Bogside, which was not a creation of modern housing policy. Even in 1869 a report of the commissioners into the cause of rioting says that "the Bogside, which is occupied by the humbler classes, may be regarded as peculiarly a Catholic quarter" [262].

Poole concluded "Clearly, segregation in Derry is neither a product purely of twentieth century social divisions nor simply some landscape survival revealing continuity from the seventeenth-century plantation: instead it appears to have had its real genesis in the Victorian era" [263]. It was, of course, in the Victorian era, which went up to January 1901, that Home Rule Bills were presented in the British Parliament. This created constitutional uncertainly for Ulster Protestants and an aggressive optimism among those who wanted to take the whole of Ireland out of the United Kingdom. Inevitably this resulted in tensions between communities who were defined to a significant extent by their attitudes to remaining British. Tension and inter-community violence tend to drive residential segregation.

There was no council funded housing programme in Londonderry before the Second World War, but some "subsidy houses" were erected by the private sector with Northern Ireland Government subsidies. The Nationalist Mayor, Hugh O'Doherty, said in 1920 that he would have liked the Corporation to build houses but "not only was the money provided by the Treasury insufficient, but they had not water for the houses they had" [264]. There was more generous Government funding for housing after the Second World War, but by then patterns of segregation were well established.

On 28 February 1961, the Londonderry Corporation unanimously agreed an outline redevelopment scheme presented by the Northern Ireland Housing Trust (NIHT), involving the rehousing of 5000 people and the demolition of 1000 houses in the Rossville Street/Lecky Road area of the Bogside [265]. If Catholics really had been coerced into living in this area, the redevelopment scheme would have provided an ideal opportunity to say that they wanted to be rehoused elsewhere.

There were two public inquiries into the redevelopment, the first of them being the most important. It opened in June 1961. The scheme involved some maisonettes and multi-storey flats. "Mr.C.A.Nicholson QC, for the Corporation, felt that 'If there was anything undesirable about the maisonettes then it is a very small sacrifice to make, in order to get everyone re-housed in the same area where they now live' " [266.] Local Catholics did not dispute the fact that it was desirable that they be rehoused in the same area. A recent critical essay on the Rossville Flats confirmed "the wishes of residents to stay in the local area" after the redevelopment [267].

When houses were built at the Creggan by the NIHT, on behalf of the Corporation, it was not surprising that the accommodation would be favoured by Catholics as it was adjacent to the Bogside. The site of the Creggan estate was the last large area of building land available in the Londonderry County Borough, which covered an area of just four square miles. There really was nowhere else where up to 2000 houses could be built. They were almost all allocated to Catholics. Protestants, who received little more than a quarter of public sector houses, were accommodated in smaller estates built by the Corporation, such as that at Irish Street (sometimes referred to as Lisnagelvin) in the Waterside [268]. The effect was to create large numbers of Catholic ratepaying voters [269]. The pattern of housing allocation simply built on a history of voluntary residential segregation going back over a century.

Mary Holland regretted Catholics being concentrated in the Creggan. "But the [Catholic] Church, seeing the advantage of keeping its flock together, around its chapels and its schools, accepted the plans. In return it got control of the area. No Unionist would dare to interfere with what the Church thought fit for the people of the Creggan" [270]. Recall that the Labour activist, Stephen McGonagle, complained that the "Nationalist set-up had confined its attentions to the South Ward – to the Catholic ghetto which they themselves had created" [271].

The controversial adoption of the term "civil rights" by political activists in the 1960s was, of course, meant to tap into sympathy for a movement in America's Deep South where there was statutory racial segregation of many services provided to the public. It was convenient for Nationalist activists to portray Catholics as equivalent to black Americans. Catholics had apparently been forcibly segregated in the South Ward. The Campaign for Social Justice noted "the tendency, widespread in Northern Ireland, of both the Corporation and the Housing Trust to segregate the people into religious 'ghettos'" [272]. By the 1960s, a new generation of Nationalist activists had come to realise that the pattern of Catholic residential occupation was politically disadvantageous. Nationalist voters were too concentrated in certain areas, and this resulted in vote inefficiency.

But the activists had a problem. Large numbers of ordinary Catholics liked living in areas which were overwhelmingly Catholic, and there was no evidence of a demand for the

religious desegregation of the Bogside and the Creggan. In order to meet their political objectives and keep ordinary Catholics happy, activists manufactured one of their most offensively sectarian claims. Protestants didn't need houses. When it came to allocating public sector houses by the Londonderry Corporation or the Northern Ireland Housing Trust (NIHT), it was claimed that it was really only Catholics who were in housing need.

The Catholic pressure group, the Campaign for Social Justice (CSJ), was associated with Conn and Patricia McCluskey. In 1965, a CSJ publication made two statements about the housing situation in Londonderry: "Catholic councillors tell us that there are upwards of 2,000 Catholic families still waiting to be housed" and "There are practically no Protestants unhoused in Derry" [273]. The definition of "unhoused" is not provided, but statements such as this led inevitably to the belief that Protestants didn't need houses.

The poor state of much of Protestant working class housing showed this to be patently untrue but, in terms of community belief at street level, it helped to resolve the contradiction of a political demand for the desegregation of one community and continued residential segregation for the other. If Protestants did not need houses, there was no case for them being allocated accommodation in Catholic areas, whereas those who were in need (and by definition Catholic by religion) had a valid claim on houses in areas which were traditionally Protestant.

Both Protestants and Catholics suffered from poor housing conditions. Bogside activist, Paddy Doherty, was honest enough to concede that "the small houses of the Protestant enclave of Fountain Street weren't much different from the houses in the Bogside, and the conditions in which their inhabitants lived were only marginally better" [274]. In Londonderry, the Catholic Bogside was redeveloped during the 1960s by the NIHT at the request of the Corporation. Much of the poor housing stock was thus swept away. It took a further decade before the adjacent Protestant Fountain area got similar treatment.

The Londonderry Corporation's Executive Sanitary Officer carried out a survey of 217 houses in the Fountain at the end of the 1960s. Some 76% of the houses had no inside toilet, 70% had no hot water supply, and 83% had no bathroom [275]. Over in Belfast, the 1971 Census showed that in the Protestant Sandy Row area (St.George's Ward), 58.2% of houses had no hot water supply, 88.6% had no fixed bath or shower, and 87.5% had an outside flush toilet only [276]. Priority in the 1960s had been given to the redevelopment of the Catholic Cullingtree Road area of West Belfast [277]. Sandy Row, just like the Fountain, had to wait another decade before its turn came [278].

Ivan Cooper was a Protestant factory manager who went on to play a prominent role in the "civil rights" movement, and became a founder member of the SDLP. He was elected to the Stormont Parliament in February 1969 for the Mid Londonderry constituency as an Independent. He was clearly troubled by the belief among a significant proportion of Nationalist voters that Protestants didn't need houses. He told a meeting in Tamnaherin, County Londonderry, "We cannot run away with the idea that all Protestant people are living in good conditions, because this is just not the case....In the course of the past few weeks I have visited many Protestants living in absolutely horrible conditions" [279].

Later, people were to adopt a more realistic attitude towards residential segregation and its causes. Charles Brett had served as Chairman of the Northern Ireland Labour Party and had supported the "civil rights" movement. He went on to become a Board member of the Housing Executive from 1971, and its Chairman from 1979 to 1984. In 1986, he wrote, "Visiting politicians of all parties find the sectarian divisions in the housing estates of Northern Ireland incomprehensible. A surprising number of them (again of all parties) appear to believe that, by tolerating segregation of the two communities, the Housing Executive is itself guilty of perpetuating such divisions. Indeed, some of them are so naïve as to believe

that, if all Catholics and all Protestants were compelled to live in mixed estates, the fears and antagonisms of the past three centuries would immediately disappear. Would that it were so simple!" [280].

The Housing Executive subsequently designated certain estates as Catholic or Protestant. Brett concluded that "Practically nowhere, and practically never, does the possibility exist of encouraging, still less imposing, integrated housing in the public rented sector" [281].

One thing was noticeably missing. The more realistic attitude towards residential segregation and its causes from the 1970s did not seem to stimulate a re-examination of criticisms of the housing allocation policies of Unionist councils and the NIHT in the 1950s and 1960s. The allocation of houses to Protestants in Protestant areas and the allocation of houses to Catholics in Catholic areas was seen as pragmatically sensible in the 1970s and 1980s. It was driven by popular demand. Why then was the same phenomenon seen as explicable only in terms of a political conspiracy in the 1960s?

Boundary Extension

The Londonderry County Borough covered a relatively small area. The 1961 Census believed this was 2,200 acres (53,762 people at 24.44 persons per acre) [282]. A very much earlier estimate had the Londonderry Corporation covering 2,579 acres, which is four square miles [283]. Whichever is the more accurate figure, this was not a huge amount of territory to contain a population of 55,000 by 1968 [284]. The Londonderry Rural District Council, which encompassed the County Borough on all sides, was responsible for an area of 82,904 acres (22,384 people at 0.27 people per acre) [285]. That is 130 square miles.

By the end of the 1960s there was little building land left within the borough. The question of extending the boundary was politically contentious because it would bring in voters from the adjoining Londonderry Rural District Council area, and would provide more land to build on, potentially increasing the numbers entitled to a ratepayers' vote.

Boundary extension has been traditionally recorded as a Nationalist demand in the "civil rights" era, but this is misleading. In the Nationalist context the charge was that Unionists were opposed to boundary extension because it would allow more houses to be built, and those houses would be occupied by Catholics, although the basis for that assumption is not always clear. If it were true, boundary extension would lead to an increase in the number of Catholic local government voters, thus allegedly upsetting the electoral balance.

Before we can investigate further, it will be necessary to make clear what boundary extension involved. It was a legal mechanism whereby territory would be transferred from the jurisdiction of one council to another. It was just one way of extending a boundary, another being a reorganisation of local government.

It has to be said that boundary extension was, in many ways, easier to achieve in the years preceding the founding of the Northern Ireland state. At that time, the alteration of council boundaries could only be achieved by promoting at Westminster a local act of Parliament (a piece of legislation which would apply to one particular place, in this case Londonderry). In order to get their money's worth, so to speak, local authorities like Belfast and Londonderry tended to include a range of diverse measures in such acts, many of which were of a largely technical nature. The main point, however, is that if the British Parliament passed such legislation, it could overrule the objections of adjacent authorities, who may be aggrieved at having their territory annexed as a result of a boundary extension.

Unionism twice tried to take advantage of this window of opportunity by proposing bills in the Westminster Parliament which included proposals to take in significant areas of land from

the Rural District. The Londonderry Improvement Act 1896 included measures to take over what was said to be 30 square miles of land mainly on the West Bank of the Foyle in the area of the Rural District known as the Liberties.

Nationalists fought tooth and nail to oppose the plan, and it was eventually dropped. The local Nationalist MP, Vesey Knox, had said that "there was plenty of room for expansion, without extending the present limits....the Corporation proposed to take in no less than 30 square miles of surrounding rural country. There was not an acre of that area which could be properly described as urban in character. Not a single acre, not a single townland in the area proposed to be taken, included so much population as one person to the acre. It was, therefore, the most grotesque scheme for extension ever proposed by a Corporation to the House - a proposal to take in an enormous and entirely rural area solely for political purposes. The object of taking in this great area, greater than the City would grow to in the course of 20 generations, was because the population outside the present boundaries was mostly Unionist, and it was hoped that thus the Catholic votes might be swamped under any system of voting" [286].

A *Derry Journal* editorial complained that the "historic Liberties of Derry [was] where the loyal sons of the Union had taken up residence" and the political effect of bringing such an area into the Corporation was undesirable [287]. It did no more than give support to the sentiments of a petition drawn up by a "Public Meeting of Catholic Citizens" held in St.Columb's Hall on 20 January 1896 and chaired by the Catholic Bishop of Derry.

This rather long petition complained that the boundary extension would increase the Londonderry Corporation area to nine times its existing size. "In no single townland to be included is the population as much as one person per acre, and no part of the area outside the present municipal borough is in any sense urban in character. The proposed extension could not, therefore, be to the advantage of the people, either inside or outside the present boundary, nor can it serve any honest purpose of municipal government". Incidentally, the same petition claimed that "These five wards are so designed that the Catholics could not hope to secure any representation in more than one" [288]. In fact, Nationalists were to win all the seats in two of the five wards.

Sidney Elliott, in his most informative doctoral thesis about electoral arrangements, has the additional area as 25 square miles [289]. At 640 acres to the square mile, Londonderry had therefore missed the opportunity to expand by somewhere between 16,000 and 19,200 acres. This no doubt caused some Nationalist blushes in later years.

A further Unionist attempt to effect a boundary extension was made in 1919. This was a more modest proposal, suggesting that about 3,000 acres be taken in from the Liberties and 500 acres from the Rural District on the Waterside. It was estimated that this move would add about 2,000 people to Londonderry's population (and hence probably just a few hundred local government voters). In those days they had a slightly different idea of the orientation of the city, because contemporary accounts talk about land on the North and South banks of the River Foyle, whereas in later years these would be seen as the West and East banks [290].

In promoting the Londonderry Corporation Bill towards the end of 1919, Unionists had simply suggested adding the two parcels of Rural District land to the North and Waterside Wards, to which they were adjacent [291]. However, in January 1920 the Corporation came under Nationalist control after the hotly contested decision of the British Government to introduce proportional representation throughout Ireland but not, of course, in England, where it was unacceptable.

The Nationalists did agree that the additional land should go into the North and Waterside Wards, but then wanted to embark on a more complex redrawing of the ward boundaries. These new proposals were submitted to Mr Whitley, the Chairman of the committee at Westminster which was dealing with the detailed submissions relating to the legislation.

"After some time the Chairman said to the Corporation's Parliamentary agent that, having regard to the petition lodged, the Committee did not see their way to allow the Bill to pass unless clauses 1 and 2 were eliminated or restored to the shape in which the Orange Corporation – as he had called them – had drafted them" [292].

Clauses 1 and 2 related to the extension of the boundary and its effect on the wards. The Westminster Parliamentary Committee did not see the Nationalist ward scheme as fair, and the choice therefore was to go back to the original, simpler, proposal put forward by the Unionists in 1919, or scrap these clauses altogether. The Nationalists responded by withdrawing the clauses relating to boundary extension. The rest of the bill, dealing with more technical matters, was allowed to proceed [293].

There was also opposition from the Londonderry Rural District Council to the scale of the boundary extension, which was expressed at a meeting of the Londonderry County Council. It wanted to open negotiations with the Corporation, but that aspect of the problem was overtaken by events [294].

It represented a second lost opportunity. Mr Whitley had expressed the view that the Corporation was probably not asking for enough land. He may therefore have been open to Parliament steamrolling the Rural District's objections [295]. Gilt-edged chances to expand the Corporation limits had been missed.

When the Northern Ireland Government was formed in 1921, boundary extensions could no longer be dealt with by local acts of Parliament. They had to be by agreement between the councils concerned. The economic interests of the more rural council did not usually lie in giving up valuable suburban land on which houses could be built. That would mean sacrificing the rates income from those houses.

This can be seen later in the case of the Castlereagh Rural District Council which, while looking forward to the reorganisation of local government in the 1960s, pointed out that it had one ward with 217 local government electors (which was not unusual for a single member rural district ward), and one with 6,000 [296]. What had happened was that parts of the Castlereagh Rural District had become an attractive suburban location for housebuilding. The Northern Ireland Housing Trust had built estates like Cregagh and the Braniel in this area, and the private sector had also made a significant contribution. Castlereagh was not in the least bit inclined to have its territory annexed by the neighbouring Belfast Corporation.

This reminds us that a major issue to be borne in mind in the 1960s, when the issue of boundary extension became such a hot topic, is that Ulster was about to embark on a programme of local government reorganisation. In December 1967, the Northern Ireland Government published a White Paper containing a Statement of Aims setting out some principles relating to the future of local government. There would be a smaller number of larger councils and "the area councils would be based on boroughs and towns but would embrace rural districts within each area" [297].

This would naturally provide for an extension of boundaries by grouping urban and rural councils together in time for the next local elections which were, at that time, due in 1970. The changes were later delayed due to the suspension of local democracy in Ulster. For the moment, the White Paper placed a halt on any further boundary extensions because they would cut across the process of reorganising local government [298].

In Londonderry, the fact that the Corporation and the Rural District would be treated as one unit had been known for some time. The *Derry Journal* on 26 October 1965 gave details of the Minister for Development, William Craig's speech to the Londonderry Chambers of Commerce. He is reported as saying "It was useless to think of Derry City alone for the kind of broad, long-term planning he had in mind." He had previously met the Londonderry

Corporation's Finance Committee on 18 October 1965 and outlined his plans for the three local councils to work together for strategic planning purposes. Londonderry Unionism agreed this was a good idea and the Londonderry Corporation (on 22 November 1965) [299], the Londonderry Rural District Council, and the Londonderry County Council all appointed representatives to a Londonderry Area Steering Committee, supported by the James Munce Partnership, a firm of consultants. They jointly published a comprehensive planning document called the *Londonderry Area Plan* in March 1968.

The Londonderry Corporation and the Londonderry Rural District Council were suspended in April 1969 and replaced by an unelected Londonderry Development Commission. This immediately provided an extension of the boundary and the Commission implemented a ready-made plan for the wider area which had been prepared by the local councils and their consultants.

The Nationalist opposition to boundary extension earlier in the twentieth century had been echoed by Gerry Fitt, then of the Republican Labour Party, when he came to Londonderry to give a speech in the Foyle Street car park. He claimed that Unionists would not give up the city. "They are going to extend the city boundary – they are going out into the country and bringing in pockets of Unionist voting strength" [300]. Nationalists in Armagh City had put forward similar arguments when they opposed a boundary extension in 1946 [301].

There were mixed views on the Unionist side of the fence. In 1964 the Middle Liberties Unionist Association had asked that their area be absorbed by the Londonderry Corporation [302]. A year later, the veteran Unionist, Sir Basil McFarland, was telling the Minister of Development, William Craig, that the Corporation boundary should be extended to the border [303]. This was effectively the 1896 idea of bringing the whole of the Liberties area into the Londonderry County Borough. Teddy Jones, the City of Londonderry MP, on the other hand, opposed boundary extension, fearing a harming of relations with the Londonderry Rural District Council [304]. There was therefore a confused picture, with people on both sides of the Unionist-Nationalist divide taking up positions for and against boundary extension. There was no Unionist conspiracy, and the extension of the boundary was soon to be achieved by local government reorganisation.

Unionism's Battles in the 1960s

Apart from 1936, most of the excitement in Londonderry Corporation elections had been created by Labour's skirmishes with the Nationalists in the old South Ward. Between the elections in 1920 and 1973, the 1936 contest in the North Ward was the only occasion in 53 years on which Nationalists confronted Unionists in a Corporation election. If readers were expecting a history of intense Nationalist attempts to win seats held by Unionists, they will have been sadly disappointed. Nationalists shirked the challenge, and Unionists reciprocated by not putting up candidates in traditionally Nationalist wards after 1926.

There was something of a false start in May 1964, the date of the triennial election. It was rumoured that two candidates would stand as Independents in the North Ward. Raymond Wolseley, Chairman of the Londonderry Junior Chamber of Commerce, and Winifred Haslett, who could probably best be described as liberal Unionists, had got as far as submitting nomination papers, but they then withdrew from the contest. The *Belfast Telegraph* reported claims of threats and intimidation [305].

The two specific things mentioned by the newspaper were that because Haslett was Chairman of the local branch of a cancer charity, collectors (presumably Unionist) would refuse to collect for the campaign if she stood in the election. The other example was that Mrs Haslett's husband was said to have been told "you have sold the house to the Papishes" [306]. These

appear to be more like expressions of displeasure and robust criticism rather than intimidation.

It seems that Wolseley was making the allegations, but their credibility was undermined when Winifred Haslett wrote to the Lord Mayor, Albert Anderson. Her letter read "I was astonished to read in the newspapers the very much exaggerated statements made to the Press by Mr Wolseley....there was no pressure put on me by any source, by telephone or otherwise" [307].

Then, after 17 years of having no contested elections for the Londonderry Corporation, things suddenly burst into life with a North Ward by-election in 1966, followed one year later by a set of elections in which all three wards were contested. Londonderry voters must have thought that a famine had been followed by a feast. To give the story some context, it will be well to start with the General Election for the Northern Ireland Parliament on 25 November 1965 in the City of Londonderry constituency. This seat covered the North and Waterside Wards from the County Borough, and some parts of the Londonderry Rural District on the East Bank of the Foyle. The City of Londonderry constituency had not been contested since 1949 [308].

Edward (Teddy) Jones had become the MP for this seat in a 1951 by-election when he was the sole nominee. By the 1960s he had become the Attorney General, but he gave up the seat in May 1968 on his appointment as a High Court Judge. Albert Anderson won the ensuing by-election comfortably in a straight fight with Janet Wilcock of the NILP (9122 votes to 3944) [309].

The end of 1965 and the first half of 1966 constituted a completely different moment in time for Londonderry Unionism. That moment had passed by May 1967.

In November 1965, Jones was opposed in the City of Londonderry seat by Claude Wilton, a Protestant solicitor who stood as a Liberal Party candidate. Claude Austin, a liberal Unionist who ran the Austins department store with his brother, Campbell, was apparently approached about standing against Jones. He had "been nominated by a local group of business and commercial people" [310]. He later withdrew from the race when Claude Wilton put himself forward, even though there were supposed to be about 100 people in a group backing his candidature. He said "My opinion is unchanged that what is needed is a massive vote of censure against Mr Jones and those few who selected him when it was widely felt in the constituency that we should be represented by a local man. There is only one way in which this can now be done and that is by voting for Claude Wilton". Claude Austin's brother, Campbell, was also approached about standing but he said, "I cannot stand because I live on the wrong side of the border" [311]. As a footnote, John Hume decided not to accede to requests to stand in the adjacent Foyle constituency, telling the *Derry Journal*, "I have no wish to become involved in active politics" [312].

When the votes were counted, Jones held the seat by 8432 votes to 7418. The opinion of the *Derry Journal* was that "An after-count assessment of the situation strongly suggests that Mr Wilton drew sizeable Unionist support in the city apart from the solid vote of the Nationalist section of the electorate. A Liberal Party spokesman said afterwards that Mr Jones's victory could be largely attributed to the solid Unionist support he received in the rural areas of the constituency" [313]. It would have been surprising if Wilton's support among urban liberal Protestants did not carry over into the Corporation by-election in the following May.

The central issue in the City of Londonderry election had been Teddy Jones voting with the Northern Ireland Government to confirm Coleraine, rather than Londonderry, as the main campus of what was to become the New University of Ulster. Many Unionists felt that Londonderry was being neglected. Jones explained that, as the Attorney General, and hence a member of the government, he had to support their choice. He had fought for the university to be sited in Londonderry, and when he was unsuccessful, had managed to get degree awarding

powers for Magee College, which would become a campus of the new university [314]. There was a general view at that time that local politicians could make any decision they wanted. Subsequent consideration of the archive evidence showed that the English academics on the Lockwood Committee, who considered the location of the university, simply applied the criteria set out by the UK's University Grants Committee (UGC). A British Government would never provide finance for a university by overruling the UGC. Londonderry did not meet the criteria, a fact of which Londonderry politicians seemed to be blissfully unaware [315].

The North Ward By-Election

In 1966, Alderman Campbell Austin resigned his seat in the North Ward. He was a prominent liberal Unionist in the city. Austin was replaced as an alderman by Albert McCartney, who was one of the ward's councillors. This left a vacancy for a councillor, and it would be that seat which was contested in a by-election in May 1966 [316].

Initially the *Londonderry Sentinel* thought that the Unionist candidate would be James Boal, the father of the Unionist MP for the Shankill, Desmond Boal. It speculated that his opponent would be Ruth Morrow, the fashion buyer wife of Arthur Morrow, who was the managing director of McKinley & Co, a drapers in The Diamond [317].

It was wrong on the first count. The Unionist candidate was to be John (better known as Jack) Allen, a wine and spirit merchant, and a member of the Young Unionists. Ruth Morrow did go forward as an Independent Unionist, effectively representing certain liberal business and professional interests. A more serious threat, however, was the nomination of Claude Wilton as an Independent, following his strong showing in the City of Londonderry Stormont election. This time, Wilton chose John Hume as his election agent, and this would signal to Catholics that the candidate was worthy of their vote. At the same time, Wilton had impeccable Unionist ancestors, being a nephew of the late Sir James Wilton, former Lord Mayor of Londonderry. He was well known in sporting circles, having played rugby for the City of Derry and Coleraine clubs, and football for Cliftonville, Derry City and Distillery [318].

Mrs Morrow, in an election meeting, outlined the standard complaints. The Unionists in control were against development and a boundary extension. There were few new firms coming to Londonderry. Not enough houses were being built [319]. The issues of boundary extension and the reorganisation of local government have already been explained.

What of the question of attracting new industry? Londonderry was a peripheral area with additional time and costs involved in importing raw materials and exporting manufactured goods. The Northern Ireland Economic Council concluded that "Londonderry is located at the periphery of industrial Britain. That is basically its handicap. Industry tends to be drawn to the centre and to congregate there" [320].

When Terence O'Neill, then Northern Ireland Prime Minister, visited Londonderry with Ted Heath in October 1965, he said that "if a firm will come out to the north-west the Ministry of Commerce will give it more favourable incentives than if the firm were to go to the greater Belfast area. But very often the dreadful moment arrives when the firm says that if it is not allowed to go to the greater Belfast area it would go to Scotland" [321]. Brian Faulkner was to remark about Michelin, "We specifically offered them one million pounds extra government assistance if they went to Londonderry", but they chose Ballymena [322].

A decade earlier, there is evidence that Teddy Jones was concerned about the development of Londonderry. One of his concerns was that some development only benefitted one side of the community. Lord Brookeborough's diaries in 1956 note that Jones was part of a delegation that was "anxious that we should not get an invasion from the other side", meaning that he feared significant Catholic immigration from the Irish Republic [323]. In a "minute" (briefing

document) sent to the Northern Ireland prime minister before the meeting, Jones thought that 590 out of 650 employees at the government funded BSR factory (later to be Monarch Electric) were "non-Loyalists" [324]. Local vetting of new industry plans, which Jones proposed in the 1950s, was a blunt instrument which was never going to be viable. Brookeborough later made it clear that "no government can stand idly by and allow possible expansion not to develop" [325]. If there were people who were concerned about the constitutional implications of greater development, it is clear from subsequent events that they had minimal influence on Northern Ireland Government policy. Many new Londonderry industries were supported by Stormont in the 1960s [326].

It was agreed that there were not enough houses, but the Londonderry Corporation only had powers to build within its boundaries. Its four square miles of land were soon built up. Although building did not stop altogether, it slowed down dramatically as building land was exhausted. By the end of the 1960s, Gobnascale was the only significant outstanding building project in the city, except for redevelopment schemes which did not result in a net increase in houses. Having been denied an extra 30 square miles of land by Nationalists at the end of the previous century, the Corporation had few options.

The planning consultants, the James Munce Partnership, recommended a decrease of 10,000 in the number of people living in the city to reduce overcrowding, and all future major areas of new housing were to be outside the County Borough. Initially, the consultants identified Ballyarnett-Shantallow, Drumahoe, Eglinton, New Buildings and Strathfoyle as areas for building houses [327].

Claude Wilton, in a newspaper advertisement, also complained that the Londonderry Corporation had not supported a boundary extension [328]. However, as we have seen, by this time the Londonderry Area Steering Committee had already been set up and was clearly going to be the basis for a larger council under local government reorganisation. Wilton referred to "a Unionist Junta in Kennedy Place [the Londonderry Unionist HQ] which pulled the strings in the Guildhall", but these were people who were democratically elected by Unionist Party members [329]. It probably amounted to a complaint that liberal Unionists who were more to Claude Wilton's liking could not win a majority for their point of view.

It has been seen that Unionists had usually been very good at mobilising the Protestant vote in Londonderry Corporation elections. The DCRA analysis of the 1964 North Ward electoral register (which was not updated again until February 1967), showed that there were 4355 Protestant voters and 2356 Catholics at the time of the by-election [330]. In February 1967 there were 3937 Protestant and 2523 Catholics [331].

On polling day, the turnout was 70.8% [332]. I have previously argued that on a turnout of x%, if Unionists attracted a vote equivalent to x% of the number of Protestants on the electoral register, they were doing well in mobilising their target group [333]. This calculation, based on a turnout of 70.8% and the DCRA estimate of the number of Protestant local government voters in 1966, would suggest that Jack Allen should have attracted 3083 votes. He fell short of that figure.

When the votes were counted, the following result was announced: Allen (Unionist) 2462; Wilton (Independent) 2021; Morrow (Independent Unionist) 256. A *Londonderry Sentinel* editorial pointed out that the turnout at the last North Ward election in 1946 had been 80%. It claimed that the Unionist turnout was down 20% on that figure (and therefore presumably around 60%). It thought that few Protestants voted for Claude Wilton, although that seems unlikely [334]. It is, however, possible that many Unionists simply voted with their feet by staying at home as a protest. The *Londonderry Sentinel* also suggested over-confidence or apathy. An examination of the election results for the following year doesn't necessarily support these conclusions.

Elections in 1967

May 1967 saw all three Londonderry Corporation wards contested, and Labour candidates appeared for the first time in eighteen years. First, let us look at the North Ward. The turnout was 71.7%, which showed a very small increase on 1966 [335]. We can take the number of Protestants from the new electoral register in February 1967 as estimated by the DCRA and make a similar calculation to the one we made previously. There were 3937 Protestants, and a 71.7% turnout suggests that 2822 votes for a Unionist candidate would have been a good result.

There were six councillors' seats to be filled in the 1967 election in the North Ward and five of the six Unionists reached this target figure of 2822. The six candidates' votes ranged from 2908 to 2768. The six Labour candidates polled between 1434 and 1228 votes. Campbell Austin, standing as an Independent, and effectively representing the liberal Unionist faction, finished last on 1227.

It is theoretically possible that, in 1967, the Protestant turnout went up and the Catholic turnout went down, and these two events cancelled each other out. A more straightforward explanation would be that a significant number of the 1227 people who cast a vote for Campbell Austin voted for Claude Wilton in 1966. This goes some way to explaining the difference between Wilton's 2021 votes and the highest Labour vote of 1434 a year later [336].

The results of the 1967 Corporation elections, and the comfortable Unionist win in the City of Londonderry Stormont by-election in May 1968, suggest that the liberal Unionist fury of 1965 and 1966 was substantially spent. Supporters of that faction did vote for Campbell Austin in 1967, but very likely, they also gave their five other votes to the official Unionist candidates.

What of the Cameron Credibility Gap? Obviously, in the very special circumstances of the 1966 Corporation by-election, the Protestant paper majority of 1999 on the electoral register proved to be no predictor of the outcome. However, by May 1967, in this respect as with others, the results returned to what one would expect (see Appendix F).

Table 13: Londonderry County Borough Elections 1967: The Cameron Credibility Gap [337]

	Caths	Prots	Cameron Paper Majority	Actual Majority	Cameron Gap
North Ward	2530	3946	1416	1474 (Un.)	+58
Waterside Ward	1832	3697	1865	1718 (Un.)	-147
South Ward	10047	1138	8909	1991 (Nat.)	-6918

The Cameron Report, published in 1969, referred to "the extraordinary situation in 1967" with reference to Londonderry. It did so without taking account of the Corporation elections which took place in that year, and foolishly committed the report to the conclusion that there were "ward areas in which Unionist representatives were returned by small majorities, whereas non-Unionist representatives were returned by large majorities" [338]. The reality can be seen from Table 13 above.

What the figures show is that the Nationalist majority in the South Ward was falling in the 1960s, and the Cameron Credibility Gap was becoming huge. At the same time, Unionists in the North and Waterside Wards were very successful in attracting the Protestant vote, and the Protestant paper majority was a good predictor of the actual Unionist majority in an election. The usual Nationalist practice was to avoid contested elections wherever possible, but they were forced into electoral contests by Labour candidates who came in different flavours. Some were more closely associated with organisations committed to the Union than others.

There is some variability in the Cameron Credibility Gap as between 1938, 1939, 1946, 1949 and 1967. However, it is always very large in Catholic wards, ranging from -1762 to -6918. In Protestant wards, the range is much smaller, from +441 to -219. Remember that the negative values refer to cases where candidates did worse than would be expected by doing a religious analysis of the electoral register. The obvious conclusion is that, in the Londonderry Corporation's more recent history, the Catholic paper majority in a ward had provided no reliable estimate of the actual Nationalist majority in an election, but the Protestant paper majority was usually a good indicator of the Unionists' electoral majority. These conclusions hold good regardless of the ideological flavour of the Labour candidates providing the opposition.

The Catholic paper majority in the South Ward was increasing. However, the actual majorities in the Unionist and Nationalist wards were becoming more similar, indicating an increased tendency of Londonderry Catholics to refuse to vote for the Nationalist Party.

"This should not be surprising. In his 1968 Loyalty Survey of 1500 households in Northern Ireland, Professor Richard Rose of Strathclyde University found that only 51% of Catholics supported Nationalist candidates (such as the Nationalist Party and Republican Labour). A further 27% said they identified with the Northern Ireland Labour Party, and 5% were Unionists. If the 11% of Catholics who said they had no party affiliation or answered 'Don't Know' are eliminated, then still only 58% of Catholics with a definite affiliation said they supported Nationalist parties" [339].

How Does Your Electorate Grow?

The estimates of the religious composition of the Londonderry Corporation electorate in 1936 vary slightly, depending on whether you take the published estimates in the *Derry Journal* for March or December of that year, or whether you prefer to use the official DCRA figures. In 1967, there is a choice between the Cameron Report and DCRA estimates. All are very similar. In Table 14 below, the DCRA figures from 1936 and 1967 have been used.

Table 14: Increase in the Londonderry Corporation Local Government Electorate 1936-1967 (DCRA figures) [340]

	1936	1967	Change	% Increase	% of Total Net Increase
Catholics	9543	14343	+4800	50	81
Protestants	7618	8751	+1133	15	19

The question then arises as to why the Catholic local government electorate was increasing so quickly. This topic is dealt with in more detail elsewhere [341]. For our present purposes, it is important to avoid the obvious error of saying "population growth". Under a ratepayers' franchise, the electorate does not increase just because the population increases. The local

government electorate increases because there are more ratepayers, and that can essentially only happen if there are more houses and apartments on which rates are paid.

It is true that under this system of voting "No house = no vote". But it is also generally the case that "If you got a vote, you must have got a house" [342]. If Catholics were acquiring more votes than Protestants in the 31 years from 1936 to 1967, this was only because they were acquiring far more houses and apartments. The figures suggest that 80% of the net increase in dwellings (both public and private sector) went to Catholics, who made up 62% of the adult population at the 1961 Census [343]. If Unionists were indeed trying to prevent Catholics acquiring houses and local government votes, they must have been making a terrible job of it.

Who Dares to Speak of '73?

As we have seen, elections to the new Londonderry City Council in 1973 saw a universal adult franchise introduced, the company and business votes abolished, ward boundaries redrawn by an independent body, the voting age reduced to 18, PR introduced, and the boundary extended to take in all of the adjacent Londonderry Rural District Council area. These changes embodied key demands of the "civil rights" movement. If the stories about the dramatic unfairness of the Londonderry Corporation's electoral arrangements had been true, then Nationalists should have won this election by a landslide. In fact, the SDLP, the Nationalist Party and the Republican Clubs (Sinn Fein in disguise) between them won just 14 of the 27 seats (see Appendix G for a full summary).

At the time of writing this paper in 2021, the Alliance Party could be said to be constitutionally agnostic, but this was not the case in 1973. Effectively there had been a split in unionism (with a small "u", meaning those who were in favour of the Union between Great Britain and Northern Ireland). In launching the party in 1970, an Alliance statement said "We have succeeded in creating a province wide political organisation of the moderate people, which is firm on the constitutional issue, provides a viable alternative to the existing splintered Unionist Party" [344]. Although it sought to embrace Catholics as well as Protestants, it was largely the party of the liberal Protestant middle class.

There had been some speculation that Unionist cabinet ministers like Roy Bradford might join. Alliance Party leaders told a press conference "We do not want those members of the Unionist Parliamentary Party who have shown in the past and are showing today their honest determination to implement reforms in the face of severe opposition, to resign the Whip if by doing so it would imperil the reform programme" [345]. The *Belfast Telegraph* reported that "The new party would support the Government so long as it continued to implement its reform programme" [346].

In a newspaper advertisement, under the heading *The Alliance Party Stands For*, were included these points [347]:

- Full backing for the Government's reform programme
- Support for the Constitutional link between Northern Ireland and the United Kingdom

In these early days, Alliance was essentially representing one strand within unionism.

It was not entirely surprising, therefore, that, in 1973, the pro-Union vote in Londonderry was split between the United Loyalist Group (nine seats) and the Alliance Party (four seats) [348].

The United Loyalist Group (ULG) topped the poll in three of the five electoral areas, and the combined ULG/Alliance vote was well in excess of the combined SDLP/Nationalist Party/Republican Clubs vote in those three areas. Across the whole City Council, the ULG and the Alliance Party between them won 51.3% of the first preference votes [349]. Under a

first-past-the-post system there would have been no Nationalist control of Londonderry. So what went wrong? Where was the Nationalist landslide victory?

At the end of the day, the use of religious analyses of the electoral register at this point in history turned out to be a smoke and mirrors argument. Making projections from an actual set of Londonderry Corporation election results in 1967, I predicted that, if Unionists and Nationalists had contested all three wards, the Nationalists would have won a handful of votes more than the Unionists across the borough [350]. This is because, as we have seen, Nationalists had only modest success in attracting the Catholic vote. My own research has shown that the same pattern was repeated in the Omagh Urban District [351].

Those parts of academia which have addressed the complaints of the "civil rights" movement about electoral arrangements have displayed an alarming aversion to studying actual local government election results from the 1960s. They had an opportunity to redeem themselves by daring to speak of '73. They could have looked at the 1973 local election results as a test of whether "civil rights" accusations against Unionism were justified. Their failure to do so undermined Unionist confidence in the ability of many academics to ask the difficult (but obvious) questions.

After 1973, of course, ethnic cleansing of Protestants due to intimidation and IRA terrorism proceeded at an accelerated pace. The Protestant population on the West Bank of the Foyle fell by at least 10,000 [352]. The Unionist voters in the old North Ward and the more recent electoral areas D and E largely disappeared. The problem of the greater vote efficiency of the Unionist population was "solved" by its voters being "persuaded" to leave the West Bank. There was a similar movement of Protestants out of the city altogether, and by the time of the 1977 local government elections, the pro-Union share of the first preference vote in Londonderry had fallen to 44.4% [353].

Appendix A – Londonderry Corporation Elections 15 January 1926 [354]

West Ward

Aldermen (Two seats – elected unopposed)

J Turner (Labour)

P.Meenan (Labour)

Councillors (Six seats)

Candidate	Affiliation	Votes
M.McMenamin	Labour	2070
P.Healy	Labour	2060
H.McGrellis	Labour	2047
H.McCormick	Labour	2037
W.Quigley	Labour	2011
Mrs.M.Simms	Labour	1894
R.Finlay	Unionist	104

East Ward

Aldermen (Two seats – elected unopposed)

H.Babington (Unionist)

J.Mark (Unionist)

Councillors (Six seats)

Candidate	Affiliation	Votes
W.Bigger	Unionist	1055
J.Magee	Unionist	1055
J.Welch	Unionist	1040
J.Burns	Unionist	1038
J.Hamilton	Unionist	1038
H.McCay	Unionist	1038
C.McGahey	Labour	565

* Because three successful candidates had the same number of votes (1038), they drew lots to decide who should retire by rotation after one year

North Ward

Aldermen (Two seats – elected unopposed)

Sir J.McFarland (Unionist)

M.Moore (Unionist)

Councillors (Six seats)

Candidate	Affiliation	Votes
Captain J.Wilton	Unionist	2076
D.Caldwell	Unionist	1854
D.McCorkell	Unionist	1808
H.Greenway	Unionist	1777
S.Sherrard	Unionist	1774
F.Gilliland	Unionist	1739
W.Algeo	Labour	981

South Ward

Aldermen (Two seats)

Candidate	Affiliation	Votes
T.McGlinchey	Labour	1381
J.Campbell	Labour	1350
M.Kerr	Unionist	829
J.Smyth	Unionist	768

Councillors (Six seats)

Candidate	Affiliation	Votes
W.Bradley	Independent Labour Nationalist	1413
W.McNulty	Labour	1383
Mrs.M.McGlinchey	Labour	1362
H.Kelly	Labour	1352
J.Rooney	Labour	1302
R.Shields	Labour	1273
W.Little	Unionist	835

A.Strange	Unionist	794

Waterside Ward

Aldermen (Two seats – elected unopposed)

D.Thompson (Unionist)

J.Blair (Unionist)

Councillors (Six seats)

Candidate	Affiliation	Votes
W.McIlroy	Unionist	1399
A.Dunean	Unionist	1367
J.Corbett	Unionist	1355
S.Cochrane	Unionist	1336
A.Anderson	Unionist	1308
J.Walker	Unionist	1305
W.Pollock	Labour	947

Appendix B – Londonderry Corporation Elections 15 May 1938 [355]

North Ward

Aldermen (Two seats – elected unopposed)

Sir J.Wilton (Unionist)

J.Mark (Unionist)

Councillors (Six seats)

Candidate	Affiliation	Votes
J.Hamilton	Unionist	2715
R.Finlay	Unionist	2691
D.McCorkell	Unionist	2673
Sir B.McFarland	Unionist	2656
F.Simmons	Unionist	2602
J.Welch	Unionist	2597
C.McGahey	Labour	1440
Mrs.T.Finnegan	Labour	1380

South Ward

Aldermen (Two seats)

Candidate	Affiliation	Votes
T.McGlinchey	Anti-Partition	2725
J.McCourt	Anti-Partition	2614
P.Meenan	Independent Nationalist	2556
P.Healy	Labour	1305

Councillors (Six seats)

Candidate	Affiliation	Votes
P.Maxwell	Anti-Partition	3418
D.Harvey	Anti-Partition	3076
B.McCafferty	Anti-Partition	2944
G.McDowell	Anti-Partition	2787
D.Barr	Anti-Partition	2767
J.McGeehan	Anti-Partition	2753
J.Doherty	Independent Nationalist	2187
H.Gillespie	Labour	1259
P.Fox	Labour	1001

Waterside Ward

Aldermen (One seat – elected unopposed)

W.Little (Unionist)

Councillors (Three seats – elected unopposed)

S.Orr (Unionist)

J.Walker (Unionist)

W.Webb (Unionist)

Appendix C – Londonderry Corporation Elections 15 May 1939 [356]

North Ward

Councillors (Two seats – elected unopposed)

F.Simmons (Unionist)

J.Welch (Unionist)

South Ward

Councillors (Three seats)

Candidate	Affiliation	Votes
D.Barr	Anti-Partition	2987
W.McCafferty	Anti-Partition	2943
J.McGeehan	Anti-Partition	2869
P.Fox	Labour	1705
H.Gillespie	Labour	1627
A.Bateman	Labour	1546

Waterside Ward

Councillors (One seat – elected unopposed)

S.Orr (Unionist)

Appendix D – Londonderry Corporation Elections 16 October 1946 [357]

North Ward

Aldermen (Two seats – elected unopposed)

T.Cooke (Unionist)

S.Kennedy (Unionist)

Councillors (Six seats)

Candidate	Affiliation	Votes
J.Hamilton	Unionist	3203
G.Glover	Unionist	3200
S.Dowds	Unionist	3195
J.Hill	Unionist	3188
Sir B.McFarland	Unionist	3180
A.McGowan	Unionist	3148
A.Halliday	Northern Ireland Labour Party	1247
J.Campbell	Northern Ireland Labour Party	1220
F.Moorehead	Northern Ireland Labour Party	1159
M.Mulhearn	Northern Ireland Labour Party	1132

South Ward

Aldermen (Two seats – elected unopposed)

P.Fox (Derry Labour Party)

F.McCarroll (Anti-Partition)

Councillors (Six seats)

Candidate	Affiliation	Votes
W.Barr	Derry Labour Party	3751
T.Doherty	Anti-Partition	3730
J.Deeney	Derry Labour Party	3727
D.Barr	Anti-Partition	3727
P.Downey	Anti-Partition	3675
W.Mullan	Derry Labour Party	3538
S.McGonagle	Northern Ireland Labour Party	1236
G.Hamill	Northern Ireland Labour Party	1233
J.Sharkey	Northern Ireland Labour Party	1099
W.McCleery	Northern Ireland Labour Party	1093

Waterside Ward

Aldermen (One seat – elected unopposed)

W.Little (Unionist)

Councillors (Three seats – elected unopposed)

R.Graham (Unionist)

H.MacLaughlin (Unionist)

S.Orr (Unionist)

Appendix E – Londonderry Corporation Elections 18 May 1949 [358]

North Ward

Aldermen (Two seats – elected unopposed)

T.Cooke (Unionist)

S.Kennedy (Unionist)

Councillors (Six seats – elected unopposed)

S.Dowds (Unionist)

G.Glover (Unionist)

J.Hamilton (Unionist)

J.Hill (Unionist)

Sir B.McFarland (Unionist)

A.McGowan (Unionist)

South Ward

Aldermen (Two seats – elected unopposed)

P.Fox (Irish Labour Party)

F.McCarroll (Anti-Partition)

Councillors (Six seats)

Candidate	Affiliation	Votes
W.Barr	Anti-Partition	3960
M.Coyle	Anti-Partition	3936
James Doherty	Anti-Partition	3791
P.Downey	Anti-Partition	3748
J.Hegarty	Anti-Partition	3650
Thomas Doherty	Anti-Partition	3605
J.Deeney	Irish Labour Party	987
John Doherty	Irish Labour Party	976
S.McGonagle	Irish Labour Party	881
J.Campbell	Irish Labour Party	816
F.Farren	Irish Labour Party	676
J.Sharkey	Irish Labour Party	668

Waterside Ward

Aldermen (One seat – elected unopposed)

W.Little (Unionist)

Councillors (Three seats)

Candidate	Affiliation	Votes
W.MacLaughlin	Unionist	2493
S.Orr	Unionist	2483
S.Cochrane	Unionist	2470
P.Bradley	Irish Labour Party	809
L.Hegarty	Irish Labour Party	778
G.Hamill	Irish Labour Party	771

Appendix F – Londonderry Corporation Elections 17 May 1967 [359]

North Ward

No elections for Aldermen this year

Councillors (Six seats)

Candidate	Affiliation	Votes
W. Beatty	Unionist	2908
J.Canning	Unionist	2907
J.Whyte	Unionist	2906
A.Wallace	Unionist	2877
R.Stewart	Unionist	2832
J.Allen	Unionist	2768
H.Doherty	Northern Ireland Labour Party	1434
I.Cooper	Northern Ireland Labour Party	1328
Mrs.J.Wilcock	Northern Ireland Labour Party	1324
G.Stewart	Northern Ireland Labour Party	1289
R.Foster	Northern Ireland Labour Party	1258
E.Cowan	Northern Ireland Labour Party	1228
E.C.Austin	Independent	1227

South Ward

No elections for Aldermen this year

Councillors (Six seats)

Candidate	Affiliation	Votes
James Doherty	Nationalist	4692
P.Fried	Nationalist	4624
James R.Doherty	Nationalist	4552
E.O'Hare	Nationalist	4437
Mrs.M.Harrigan	Nationalist	4293
T.McDonnell	Nationalist	4282
Joseph Doherty	Northern Ireland Labour Party	2701
P.Grace	Northern Ireland Labour Party	2402
B.McLaughlin	Northern Ireland Labour Party	2396
C.Grant	Northern Ireland Labour Party	2286
J.Mallet	Northern Ireland Labour Party	2244
E.Campbell	Northern Ireland Labour Party	2145

Waterside Ward

No elections for Aldermen this year

Councillors (Three seats)

Candidate	Affiliation	Votes
L.Hutchinson	Unionist	2834
J.McFarland	Unionist	2763
A.Anderson	Unionist	2740
J.Hinds	Northern Ireland Labour Party	1116
M.Roddy	Northern Ireland Labour Party	1088
J.Hutchinson	Northern Ireland Labour Party	1057
D.Colclough	Independent	234

Appendix G – Londonderry City Council Election 30 May 1973: Summary of First Preference Votes [360]

Electoral Area	A	B	C	D	E	Total	Seats
Party	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
United Loyalist Group	4147	4368	-	1041	2927	12,483	9
SDLP	2660	1373	2480	1784	2711	11,008	10
Alliance	1011	1274	675	594	1376	4930	4
Nationalist Party	142	324	1076	504	804	2850	3
Republican Clubs	214	163	802	384	528	2091	1
Independent	-	-	-	-	242	242	0
Community	-	-	-	67	116	183	0
NI Labour Party	88	-	-	-	-	88	0
Independent Republican	-	-	-	71	-	71	0
Totals	8262	7502	5033	4445	8704	33,946	27

Area A: Banagher, Prehen, Claudy, Faughan, Eglinton, Enagh. **Area B:** Alnagelvin, Caw, Ebrington, Clondermot, Victoria.
Area C: Crevagh, Creggan South, Creggan Central, Beechwood, Westland. **Area D:** Diamond, Riverside, Brandywell, St.Columb's, Waterloo.
Area E: Strand, Rosemount, Springtown, Pennyburn, Shantallow, Culmore.

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