• Paisley the only person in modern European history to establish and lead both a church and a political party
• His message was grounded in both the politico-religious traditions of evangelical Ulster Protestantism and hard-line Ulster unionism, and a distinctly modern anti-establishment stance
• Ulster unionism was not a homogenous religious monolith - 1926 census
  o 31.5% of the state Presbyterian
  o 27% Church of Ireland (Episcopalian)
  o 3.9% Methodist
  o 4.1% other Protestant denominations
• The Orange Order a very important group in terms of unionist unity
• Key member in the founding of the Presbytery of the Free Presbyterian Church of Ulster - membership stabilised at around 12,000 by the 1990s
• The electoral face of Paisleyism fought under the banner of the Protestant Unionist Party (PUP) - which, with the inclusion of disillusioned ex-Unionist Party members, was later expanded and rebranded as the DUP in 1971
• The difficulty of selling a reform agenda to the grassroots of unionism highlighted just how far beyond the Paisleyite fringe the tentative liberalism of O’Neill was being rejected
• Paisleyism’s stated belief that CRA (Civil Rights) = IRA fitted in with many unionists’ belief that the prominence of republicans in NICRA proved that behind the slogans regarding the franchise and housing stood the traditional enemy in new clothes
• The counter-demonstrators to the civil rights movement were routinely described as Paisleyites, reflecting the undoubted prominence of Paisley and his supporters, as well as the lack of organisation or unity amongst the remainder of the unionist right
• Paisley successfully grabbed at the opportunity to become the public face of unionist opposition. The media shorthand became Paisleyism versus NICRA; or was personalised as: Paisley versus Bernadette Devlin
• Paisley’s willingness throughout the decade to engage in such demonstrations raises a general paradox about his attitude towards public order. Often Paisleyite rallies were held in the clear knowledge of the potential for trouble, and occasionally such demonstrations were illegal and against the wishes of the police; yet Paisley continued to warn of the need for increased security measure and oppose the threats to law and order he saw emanating from the CRM

Assimilation versus Segregation: Unionist Strategy in the 1960s - Marc Mulholland

• The middle class and the residual landed elite were more O’Neillite than the working class - in the Crossroads election (Feb 1969), the division between classes - workers and rural petit-bourgeoisie on the one side, middle class and gentry on the other - was as marked as the geographical divide between east and west
• Issues such as O’Neill’s leadership skills, local government reform, infrastructure and other ancillary issues bulked large in 1966, when almost half of O’Neill’s parliamentary party called for his removal
• By 1969 these subsidiary issues had fallen away and the divide in Unionism had reconfigured
5. Counterinsurgency theory has been unable to account for the relative success of the Northern Ireland peace process.

How far was the British Army responsible for the escalation of violence between 1969 and 1972?

Why did the British Army lose the goodwill of the Catholic population so quickly?

Why was the ‘hearts and minds’ strategy announced by the British Army in 1970 such a failure?

‘No army, however honourably it conducts itself, is suitable for police work.’ Discuss with reference to the record of the British Army in Northern Ireland between 1969 and 1972.

Why did violence escalate rather than diminish following the arrival of British troops in 1969?

Why did British troops open fire on unarmed demonstrators on 30 January 1972?

What were the principal motivations behind British policy in Northern Ireland between 1972 and 1994?

The Sunningdale Agreement

Sunningdale: An Agreement Too Soon? - Sean Fanning

- Addressed the issues central to a resolution - relationships between the communities in the North as well as relationships between North and South. Proposing a partnership, power-sharing government for the region and a Council of Ireland to address all-island relationships - it also dealt with the constitutional status of NI, human rights and prisoner releases, as well as policing and judicial matters on an internal northern and all-Ireland basis.
- SA made up of two separate but essentially related agreements
  - The first negotiated between the NI Assembly parties in October 1973
  - The second negotiated at Sunningdale involving the same parties and the British and Irish governments in the following December
- Comprehensive as its provisions were, because of its circumstances and, particularly, because of the failure to make sufficient progress on a number of key issues that might have changed some of those circumstances, its early collapse was all but inevitable.
- Prorogation of NI Assembly in March 1972 saw urgent search for new political arrangements led by William Whitelaw - the NI Secretary of State - the search aimed at restoring devolution on a basis that would have the widest possible support, implying support from both the unionist and nationalist communities.
• The Irish government, the SDLP and the Alliance Party in NI had determined that restoring devolution to the region would only take place on the basis of a community or ‘power-sharing’ government
• Whitelaw determined that the IRA was not for turning on its central aim and effectively abandoned his contacts with its representatives - thereafter he devoted almost all of his efforts to getting agreement between the political parties - but neither the IRA nor the loyalists abandoned terrorism

The Sunningdale Agreement: Lost Opportunity or an Agreement Too Far? - Gordon Gillespie

• “The British government of the day backed down to the Ulster Workers Council strike instead of standing firm as they should have done. In my opinion, it would not have meant using any force... Unfortunately this political cowardice of the government was a disaster, because extreme unionism or loyalism was encouraged in its belief that it could henceforth resist and jettison any British policy for Northern Ireland which involved conceding power to the minority. By so vindicating the unionist approach or exclusivity, the British served to underwrite the maintenance of sectarian solidarity and negativism as the basic method of Unionist politics” - Hume 1996
• Common misconception illustrated here - not true that without the UWC strike the agreement would have prospered
• The nationalist SDLP sought a strong North-South body with the potential to develop into an all-Ireland administration, major reform of the RUC and the swift ending of detention without trial
• Most Unionists wanted exactly the opposite: no tampering with the RUC, strong security measures (including the retention of internment), and no ‘interference from the South in the administration of Northern Ireland
• Three days before the Sunningdale Conference was due to take place Whitelaw was replaced by Francis Pym - the impact of this change in personnel leaves the open question whether Whitelaw would have provided a restraining influence on Heath’s pressuring of the Unionists into signing an unsellable deal
• It is doubtful whether the Sunningdale communiqué can accurately be called an agreement since there were more areas of disagreement or, at best, agreement to disagree, with many issues set aside for further study and future discussion - one area in which agreement was reached, however, was on the make-up of the Council of Ireland though even here it’s powers remained vague - hardly surprising that attention focused on the area which had been decided (the structure of the Council of Ireland) and, fatally, this was also the area most likely to antagonise unionists
• Disagreement over extradition - UK and Irish governments said different things
• Faulkner’s resignation as leader of the Ulster Unionists ended the moral legitimacy of the Sunningdale deal and killed Sunningdale as an effective political package
• Those who attribute the success of the strike only to weak government and bully-boy tactics are misreading the situation - given the background against which the stoppage took place, even if the strike had failed, the most likely outcomes were either a continued leaking of support from Faulkner and his eventual resignation, or a head-on confrontation between loyalists and the security forces leading to casualties