

Curriculum links: Politics and society in Northern Ireland, 1949-1993 - from Brookeborough to O'Neill
Key personality: Terence O'Neill

RTÉ Archives, Online exhibition: Violence in Northern Ireland 1969 - One man, one vote

Access the online exhibition [here](#).

Under pressure from British Prime Minister Harold Wilson, the prime minister of Northern Ireland, **Terence O'Neill**, introduced a number of reforms in November 1968 in response to the demands of civil rights movement. The reforms however did not include the key demand for '**one man, one vote**'.

Following tense discussions, the Unionist Party eventually agreed to introduce local government franchise. The vote was passed by a narrow margin of 28 votes to 22. The tight result, along with continuing divisions within the Ulster Unionist Party over O'Neill's leadership, led to the resignation of O'Neill as prime minister on 28 April 1969.

Activity 1

Listen to the [first minute](#) of the RTÉ news report, 'What Now?' (1969)

1. How did the debate over the introduction of 'one man, one vote' lead to another rift developing within the Unionist Party?

2. O'Neill 'appealed to all sections of the community to stay off the streets'. Based on your knowledge of events in Northern Ireland in 1969, why do you think this plea was necessary?

3. On what grounds would O'Neill resign his position as prime minister of Northern Ireland?

4. What was the reaction of civil rights leaders to the vote?

Activity 2

Class discussion:

Later in the clip, the reporter describes the reaction of various groups to the vote and says that 'nobody has been thoroughly appeased'. What do you think the reporter means by this? Do you agree with his assessment of the situation?