Ulster Loyalism after the Good Friday Agreement

History, Identity and Change

Edited by
James W. McAuley and
Graham Spencer

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Also by Graham Spencer:

THE MEDIA AND PEACE (2005)

THE STATE OF LOYALISM IN NORTHERN IRELAND (2008)

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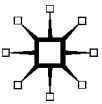

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For Karen and Stephanie

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Abbreviations

BNP	British National Party
CGP	Consultative Group on the Past
CLMC	Combined Loyalist Military Command
CTI	Conflict Transformation Initiative
DUP	Democratic Unionist Party
EACTF	East Antrim Conflict Transformation Forum
EBHCS	East Belfast Historical and Cultural Society
ECHR	European Convention on Human Rights
EPIC	Ex-Prisoners Interpretative Centre
GFA	Good Friday Agreement
IICD	Independent International Commission on Decommissioning
IMC	Independent Monitoring Commission
INLA	Irish National Liberation Army
IRA	Irish Republican Army
LVF	Loyalist Volunteer Force
NIWC	Northern Ireland Women's Coalition
PIRA	Provisional Irish Republican Army
PSNI	Police Service of Northern Ireland
PUP	Progressive Unionist Party
RHC	Red Hand Commando
RUC	Royal Ulster Constabulary
SDLP	Social Democratic and Labour Party
TUV	Traditional Unionist Voice
UDA	Ulster Defence Association
UDP	United Democratic Party also Ulster Democratic Party
UFF	Ulster Freedom Fighters
UPRG	Ulster Political Research Group
UUP	Ulster Unionist Party
UVF	Ulster Volunteer Force
WiP	Women into Politics

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Neil Southern graduated with First Class Hons from Queen's University Beflast with a BA in Politics and was awarded the Lemberger-Mettrick Prize for Politics. He completed his PhD on religion and politics with particular reference to the Democratic Unionist Party and has written widely on Northern Ireland.

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Introduction: Politics, Identity and Change in Contemporary Loyalism

Graham Spencer and James W. McAuley

Enter any mainstream bookshop in Northern Ireland and the image of loyalism that confronts the browser is ostensibly one of criminality and individualism. Publishers of books on loyalism seem to take particular interest in acts of violence and murder perpetrated by those who gain reputations not so much for their thinking, but for their actions. Accounts of this behaviour, through dramatic emphasis on menace and brutality, mean such books tend to sit better on the shelves of crime fiction, rather than politics or social history.

Though in recent years serious studies of loyalism reveal an image which moves beyond this stereotype by demonstrating a considered engagement with peace process politics and social change in Northern Ireland (McAuley 2010; Spencer 2008) and although there have been important previous examinations of loyalist paramilitarism, both from academic (Bruce 1992, 1994; Crawford 2003; Nelson 1984; Wood 2006) and journalistic perspectives (Cusack and McDonald 1997; McDonald and Cusack 2004; Taylor 1999), it is the criminal portrait which dominates popular understanding of loyalism and therefore which shapes the public imagination about what loyalism means and the 'realities' of being a loyalist (for examples of this, see Adair 2007; Caldwell and Robinson 2006; McDowell 2008).

Moreover, the image of mafia type criminality and irrational behaviour that pervades modern accounts of loyalist activity finds no real comparison in the world of republicanism, where public relations awareness and political and communal emphasis combine to promote an image of seriousness, consideration and purpose. The loyalist image can only help magnify these differences, reinforcing the intelligence and sophistication of the republican project while underlining loyalism's apparent lack of structure and obstructing its social and political relevance in the process.

While acknowledging the criminality of loyalism and the destructive role that loyalist paramilitarism has played in the Northern Ireland conflict, this collection of essays goes some way to challenging the criminal stereotype by considering the social, historical, political and cultural forces

that shape loyalist history and identity and it relates that combination of forces to how loyalism is adapting to the complex shift from conflict to tentative peace.

In that sense, the collection is an attempt to interact with a range of influences and concerns that impact on loyalist thinking and help determine subsequent responses to change. But, to do this, the editors believe it is important to draw not only from academic interpretation and assessment, but also from the experiences and actions of loyalists themselves, as well as those who work with them, to understand how loyalist communities function. Hopefully this combination of academic and practitioner approaches to what we might think of as 'the loyalist condition' will help the reader to appreciate the range of tensions and pressures which are being faced in the post-conflict Northern Ireland climate by loyalists, and contribute towards a timely understanding about how those tensions and pressures are being dealt with.

Significantly, the conflict provided a sense of resistance and purpose for loyalists that acted to define paramilitary identity and galvanize communities through a protectionist psychology, often referred to as a 'siege mentality'. This, to a large extent, offered some stability and definition in an otherwise unstable and violent society. But the end of violence does not mean the end of those communities who were engaged in such violence.

Rather it tends to correspond with a change of meaning (perhaps a crisis of meaning), a questioning of identity (perhaps a crisis of identity) and a reappraisal of history and purpose (perhaps a crisis of history and purpose) which can cause problems for those seeking to maintain cohesion in a climate which encourages movement away from traditional positions and convictions (sometimes leading to further resistance, violence and conflict by those fearful of losing status, authority and control, or by those who see the end of conflict as throwing into doubt personal loyalties, costs and reasons for suffrage).

As is well known, unlike republicanism, loyalism has not been able to establish a political project, which has gained public understanding, sympathy or credibility. Those within loyalism who have shown and continue to show considerable political ability and skill have been hamstrung by perceived associations with paramilitarism, which connects with broader negative Protestant unionist imaginations about loyalism itself. In Protestant unionist society more generally loyalism has struggled unsuccessfully to overcome such imaginations, and because of lacking evident social or political legitimacy has been unable to cultivate even marginal recognition that loyalists have important contributions to make to political and social stability (recent popular books about turf wars, gangs and criminal underworlds merely confirm this perceived illegitimacy).

Yet, as this collection seeks to show, the possibility for contributions in both spheres is not only possible but also crucial for maintaining the

transition from conflict to non-conflict society and entrenching the non-conflict attitudes to support such transformation. To view loyalists as little more than criminals is to overlook the importance of loyalism in the transition process and risks ignoring the influence of communities who have the ability to reactivate conflict. This by itself is reason enough to take loyalists seriously and not exclude them from the wider social benefits of peace and stability.

In examining the meaning and nature of loyalism today this book sets out interrogate history, identity and change within loyalism since the peace process took hold (McAuley 2004c) and gained cross-party support with the Good Friday Agreement (GFA) of 1998. However, in order to understand identity and its complexity it is also necessary to account for the historical influences and precedents of identity formation and construction.

The opening two chapters of the book do this by exploring relations between British, Ulster and Irish identity influences on the loyalist consciousness. In Chapter 1, Thomas Hennessey brings to light variations in regional, national and patriotic points of identity and moves us towards comprehending the loyalist condition as infused by clusters of regional and national identities. Looking at the connection between an allegiance to notions of patriotism, Irishness and Britishness as factors, which shape the loyalist imagination, Hennessey opens the book with a direct challenge to any preconceived idea that loyalism functions only as a reactive presence sustained by a single desire to protect the Union.

This is followed in Chapter 2 by Leigh-Ann Coffe's assessment of southern loyalists and their historical tendency (1921–37) to support more inclusive adaptations in loyalist identity. Here, Coffe explores shifts in political ties between Britain and Britishness and highlights the relationship which came to shape comprehension of both British values and the Free State. What this chapter clearly reveals is an historical dimension within loyalism in Ireland, which sought to reconcile multiple influences rather than reinforce simplistic and narrow definitions of loyalist identity.

In Chapter 3, Roger Mac Ginty considers the significance of international actors on loyalism throughout the peace process. Looking at the negligible influence of America on loyalism Mac Ginty indicates that it is precisely because loyalism was not subject to international pressures (unlike republicanism) that it was able to show greater agency in the transition process. Importantly, Mac Ginty notes how dominant narratives of the peace process have tended to accept the role of international players rather too easily and uses the example of loyalism to challenge this assumption.

From here, in Chapter 4, Kevin Bean focuses on how loyalism has lost at the expense of the growing republican project. Bean considers how public images of sectarian loyalist action such as Drumcree and Holy Cross serve to reinforce nationalist prejudices, which have been used to support the credibility and importance of political republicanism. This chapter therefore

raises important questions about how actions by loyalists reinforce imaginations about sectarianism, which their political opponents use and capitalize on.

Bean's analysis finds an interesting comparison with Chapter 5 where Graham Spencer interviews former Ulster Volunteer Force (UVF) volunteer, turned Progressive Unionist Party (PUP) representative and community worker Billy Hutchinson. In this chapter, Hutchinson talks about engagement in political negotiations, the politicization of paramilitary loyalism and the moves towards UVF transformation, which resulted in the decommissioning of UVF weapons in July 2009. Hutchinson details an important inside account of the transformation process, which the UVF has gone through and signifies the primacy of political engagement in order to bring about change.

Further elaboration of this area is dealt with in Chapter 6 where former trade union official, now clergyman, Chris Hudson describes his involvement with the UVF since the early 1990s. Hudson acted as an intermediary between the UVF and the Irish government throughout the most sensitive period of the peace process and provided an important link between the UVF leadership and the Irish. In providing a personal account of his involvement with the UVF and its transformation, Hudson produces a picture, which develops a number of points about transformation made by Hutchinson in the previous chapter. Hudson's narration brings us up to date with recent decommissioning and gives an invaluable explanation of how the UVF has slowly moved from paramilitarism to recognizing the value of politics and social change.

Chapter 7 by Lyndsey Harris looks at what she calls the 'strategic environment' of loyalist paramilitarism and how the leaderships of both the UVF and the UDA have taken variable approaches to transforming their paramilitary worlds. How strategy has been adopted and carried out requires examination of how loyalist leaderships have engaged with their respective communities and grassroots and Harris does this here.

In Chapter 8 by Aaron Edwards and Stephen Bloomer, attention is given to the internal dialogues and debates conducted inside the UVF and how the authors themselves assisted with the development of each. In highlighting the work of key UVF figures that drove the transformation process, Edwards and Bloomer also invite us to think about the role of the academic as facilitator to conflict transformation initiatives and in doing so invite us to more critically evaluate the function and use of academic enquiry in such a contentious and delicate area.

In Chapter 9, Andrew Mycock, Jonathan Tonge and James W. McAuley investigate relations between loyalism, Orangeism and Britishness. In particular, the authors are interested in how Britishness in this relationship draws on patterns of nationalism while absorbing civic and ethic values of exclusiveness. They explore how Orange identity interacts with British

nationalism and outline how commonality and difference function through and within this nationalism.

Chapter 10 by Catherine McGlynn and James W. McAuley tackles the neglected study of the roles that women have played in the loyalist paramilitary campaign. Concluding that there is little evidence of gender equality in the involvement with paramilitary activity, McGlynn and McAuley explain how women come to be part of paramilitarism and they connect this relationship with the broader patriarchal nature of Northern Irish society and the social structure of the Protestant working-class communities within which paramilitarism is embedding.

The relationship with wider social forces also preoccupies Philip Orr, who in Chapter 11 reflects on the relationship between loyalism and the Protestant churches. Orr is very much concerned with the working class/loyalist drift away from churches but also acknowledges the work carried out by loyalists who have a religious conviction. Looking at the involvement of transformative projects by individuals such as Billy Mitchell (former UVF volunteer and prisoner) Orr interrogates the tendency for Protestant self-criticism and views eroding support for the church as representative of an important underlying identity shift.

Having established historical and identity-based influences on loyalism the remaining chapters of the book address more specifically loyalist reactions and attitudes towards change and transformation. Chapter 12 looks at the problems faced by ex-prisoners trying to integrate with society and draws from the experiences of the ex-prisoner group, Ex-Prisoners Interpretative Centre (EPIC), and its director Tom Roberts to explain what those problems are and what needs to be done to help overcome them. Roberts highlights the marginalization and exclusion faced by ex-prisoners, who are themselves crucial for developing and facilitating conflict-prevention projects. Though acknowledged by the GFA, ex-prisoners remain dislocated from many of the social advantages and opportunities provided by peace and Roberts talks about the consequences of this dislocation.

An interesting comparison to this chapter is provided by Independent Monitoring Commission (IMC) Commissioner John Grieve, who in Chapter 13 explains how the IMC goes about monitoring paramilitarism as part of a remit to monitor the wider transition to democratic politics and institutional normalization in Northern Ireland. Grieve explains how the IMC operates and uses extracts from a series of Reports produced by the IMC to show how official monitoring functions as an important part of intelligence assessment in the process of change. The difference in style and presentation of this chapter is representative of the formal approach necessary while the IMC stills exists and produces its Reports. Grieve's contribution is reflective of the IMC itself and the construction of the chapter must complement the legal obligations and expectations of the Commission while it continues to operate. The reader is asked to accept the rather formal nature of the chapter

structure in this light. This is the first time the IMC has published such an explanation of how it monitors, recommends and Reports on areas such as paramilitarism. For this reason, it provides vital information about how such an official agency operates in the transformation of Northern Ireland.

In Chapter 14, Neil Southern explores the relationship between political violence and decommissioning. Southern is interested in the extent to which republican violence has impacted on loyalism and concludes that the lack of a loyalist political project (and so political transformation and gains), along with the continued existence and actions of dissident republicans, made loyalist decommissioning especially difficult and that this was an act which should be recognized in that light.

Returning to this difficulty and the internal tensions and difficulties that persist, Chapter 15 consists of an interview between Graham Spencer and south Belfast UDA leader Jackie McDonald. In this interview McDonald explains the tensions and obstructions, which the UDA leadership have sought to address over recent years as well as arguing for a conclusive and decisive end to paramilitary structures and intent. Once a hardened paramilitary himself, McDonald now symbolizes the extent to which, at leadership level, there is a strategic aim to shift the UDA from a focus on community defence to a preoccupation with community politics.

The difficulty of shifting UDA consciousness from military to political strategy inevitably involves coping with new challenges for understanding memory, past loyalties and the cultivation of new organizational identity. The question of what role memory might play in a new Northern Ireland is elaborated in Chapter 16 by Kris Brown who seeks to frame memory as a space which allows for the re-negotiation of identity but only if related to the imperatives of the peace process. Notably, Brown explores how ceremony and murals tend to reinforce conflict identity and addresses this tendency in relation to the possibility of rethinking the function of memory not as dominated by the past but reoriented to the possibilities of the future.

In Chapter 17, Graham Spencer examines loyalist relations with the past by looking at loyalist attitudes towards apology, regret and change. Drawn from interviews with a number of loyalists, Spencer finds significant resistance to apology but a determination to avoid a return to conflict. This raises questions about the relationship between regret and lack of regret and points towards the need to think carefully about how open displays of regret can bring shame and other destructive consequences. Spencer suggests here that works towards peace, on the other hand, provide a far less contentious demonstration that attitudes have changed and perhaps have stronger and more significant impact for peace than a verbal articulation of sorrow.

Overall, this collection offers an introduction to the complexity of concerns, aspirations and influences, which effect loyalism in the post-GFA phase. The chapters challenge the simplistic, narrow, often depoliticized representations of loyalism that dominate the public mind and show loyalism

not as a static monolith, but as a dynamic system of beliefs and attitudes that move with the flux of political and social change. Given the absence of rewards and gains that Sinn Féin has been able to acquire because of a very different reception within the wider republican–nationalist community, perhaps we might acknowledge that what loyalists have done is even more remarkable, while recognizing that this has come at the expense of unquantifiable levels of pain and suffering that have been both perpetrated and received.

Chapter 1
Historic Loyalism: Allegiance, Patriotism, Irishness and Britishness in Ireland

Thomas Hennessey

In Ireland the term 'loyalism' has been deployed in many guises – too many in fact. In the late twentieth century, by the climax of the conflict known as the Troubles, the term came to embody anyone who was part of, or linked with, Protestant organizations that used pro-state terrorism against Roman Catholics in Northern Ireland. But, less than a generation earlier, the term could equally apply to those who were 'traditional unionists' and opposed the reformist policies of Stormont governments. In this way the Reverend Dr Ian Paisley began political life as a 'loyalist' before entering the electoral mainstream and becoming a 'unionist'.

Yet, away from the definitional muddles of contemporary Northern Ireland, loyalism has been, at its core, a loyalty to the Crown: but, not necessarily the British Crown, rather the English Crown, the Irish Crown and, finally, the British Crown. This allegiance formed the basis the very of basis of not merely Irishness, but Englishness and, later, Britishness, itself. And, in Ireland, it was a key element of nationalist identity as well as unionist identity.

Loyalism in Irish history

The basis of historic loyalism is the fact that the Kingdom of Ireland and its successors (the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Ireland, and the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland) were, and are monarchical states. Republicanism was an alien form of government introduced into Ireland in 1798; indeed it was a minority sport until 1916.

In medieval terms it was the fact of being a kingdom, or some lesser, but effective unit of government, and of sharing a single law and government which promoted a sense of solidarity among its subjects and made them describe themselves as a people, irrespective of any relationship that can be traced between the medieval 'people' and its kingdom on the one hand, and the modern 'nation' on the other. The difficulty with avoiding 'national' in medieval contexts is the lack of an adjective derived from 'kingdom'.

Reynolds therefore adopts the word 'regnal' to describe that which pertained to a kingdom or kingdoms.

Reynolds describes race (largely translated *gens*) not as race, nor as tribe, but as 'a people'. A people might also serve as a neutral translation of both *natio* and *populus*. There is, argues Reynolds, no foundation for the belief that the word nation was seldom used in the middle ages except to describe the *nationes* into which university students were divided. Reynolds suggests that the term was used much more widely and often as a synonym for *gens*. Like a *gens* or *natio*, a *populus* was thought of as a community of custom, descent and government; a people.

One of the most important political developments for the centuries after 900 was that in many areas the loyalties of kingship came to coincide with the solidarities of supposed common descent and law. Kingdoms came to be seen as identical, not inevitably but sufficiently often, for the coincidence of the two to seem normal to contemporaries. People, that is, groups, which perceived themselves as communities of custom and descent, were perceived everywhere, at every level, interlocking and overlapping. Whenever a king maintained or increased his authority over legislation and law enforcement his subjects would tend to feel themselves to be a people: being under a single law meant being a people. The elements of descent myths, political and legal ideas, the prestige of kingship, and the practice of law and government, were gaining in force from their association with the others (Reynolds 1984: 260–1).

The English presence in Ireland was a result of military conquests. The legal authority of both the Irish executive and legislature was therefore based on powers delegated to them by the English crown. Sovereignty was not invested in an Irish crown in parliament but in the English crown as established by the Irish parliament in the 1541 act, which made Henry VIII King of Ireland (MacMillan 1993: 52).

The main constitutional struggles in Ireland, from the fifteenth century until the Act of Union, centred on whether or not the authority of the Anglo Irish executive, legislature and judiciary was independent of the English king in council, later of the King in parliament (Macmillan 1993: 28–30). The original source of legal authority exercised by the English Crown in Ireland derived from the papal bull Laudabiliter, in which the papacy granted Ireland to the English king, Henry II.

The creation of the title King of Ireland emphasized that the constitutional ties between the Crown and Ireland were sovereign in nature, that by making Ireland into a Kingdom, Henry VIII, and his successors, would be kings of all its inhabitants, and not just overlords of the English living in Ireland. The contract between ruler and people extended to all the individuals in Ireland, and enunciated the idea of a single Irish political community. The declaration also meant that the King was no longer merely overlord, with its implication that his title was subordinate and limited

to the papacy on the basis of the twelfth-century grant (MacMillan 1993: 32–5).

When Irish Parliaments were established they too pledged their loyalty to the King of Ireland. Even, when following the Glorious Revolution in England and the deposing of King James II, of England, Scotland and Ireland, loyalism remained central to the Irish constitutional mind. Tory churchmen were reluctant to concede that resistance had occurred, and alleged by the behaviour of James, that James had released his subjects from their Oath of Allegiance. By assaulting life, property and the established religion, by disarming Protestants, by subjecting his crown to a foreign power, and by repealing the oath in the Jacobite Parliament of 1689, he had made it impossible, physically or morally, for his Irish subjects to discharge their obligations to him. He had thereby '*Unking'd* himself', according to Edward Wetenhall, Bishop of Cork, in a pamphlet endorsing submission to King William and Queen Mary.

As to the charge that they were rebels by guilt of association with their '*Bretheran in England*', Wetenhall had two answers. The first was that the doctrine of non-resistance could be disregarded by a nation, though not by private persons, and that James's flight had left Parliament with no option but to make provision for the regulation of the state, though he was unclear as to whether the English had actually engaged in rebellion in securing William's accession. The second answer was that in accepting William's protection both English and Irish Protestants had submitted to the victor in a just war. Irish Protestants were responsible neither for the cessation of allegiance to James nor for their rescue from tyranny by a foreign sovereign; the '*Prince of Orange* was no Subject, and therefore could not be *a rebel*', providently guided to wield the sword in 'a most just' cause. And in submitting to their deliverer they were in conformity with traditional Christian doctrine (Eccleshall 1993: 52–3).

The period, during the Protestant (Anglican) Ascendency, when the Irish Parliament gained legislative independence from the British Parliament, in 1782, was when the triumph of the Protestant Patriots reached its zenith. Protestant patriotism has been seen as representative of colonial *nationalism*. But it remained *loyalist* and was a form of *loyalist nationalism*. The Irish Parliament and its Irish subjects in the Irish Protestant nation remained a loyal part of the British Empire. The threat posed by their volunteer militia that forced a Britain, whose army was engaged in the war against the American rebels, to grant legislative independence, was not for separation from Britain but a demand for equal treatment with the sister kingdom.

As an address from the Volunteer Committees of Ulster and Connaught declared, the 'magnanimity of Britain, forgetting all ancient prejudices, has obliterated every source of jealousy, by an act of ample and unequivocal justice ... let us embrace our sister kingdom with renovated affection, and evince, that freedom is the strongest cement of union and liberality is the

firmest basis of power'. The address went on to insist that the 'distinction between Englishmen and Irishmen is no more; we are now one people; we have but one interest, one cause, one enemy, one friend, and we trust that the same spirit which grasps at liberty and spurns at usurpation, is equally alive to the impressions of friendship, of kindness, and of generosity'.

The Volunteer Committees viewed with 'wonder and exultation' the tide of good fortune which had poured in upon the Irish nation and the empire at large, and called upon the Volunteers not to relax their military discipline for 'we now have a Constitution as well as property to defend against the common enemy' – France. The change in His Majesty's measures and ministers in Ireland seemed the 'harbinger of prosperity and indissoluble union to both kingdoms; and ... the people of this country will ... assure his Majesty, that while England adheres to the principle manifested in her present conduct, no constitutional question between the two nations will any longer exist, which can interrupt their harmony' (Seward 1801, 1: 261–5).

Following the French Revolution and, once more, war with France, Protestant dissenters – more often than not identified with the 1798 rebellion– pledged their loyalty 'humbly', trusted that their conduct would 'on every occasion' demonstrate 'our affectionate and steady attachment to the person, family, and government of our most gracious Sovereign' (Seward 1801, 3:125–6).

Unionism

In the aftermath of the 1798 rebellion the British Government resolved on a Union of Ireland and Great Britain into one United Kingdom. Irish supporters of the Union, such as Lord Castlereagh, rejected the argument that Union would reduce Ireland to the status of a colony. Castlereagh described a colony as something resembling the present state of Ireland, in 1800, enjoying a local legislature, but without any power entrusted to that legislature – for although the Irish Parliament had *legislative* power it did not have *executive* power – having no authority with respect to regulating the secession of the Crown, having an executive administered by the minister of another country, and not in any way responsible to the colony for his acts or his advice.

Nor, Castlereagh pointed out, could an act of the Irish Lords or Commons pass into a law unless the Great Seal of England be affixed to it. And Castlereagh warned that the Protestant interest, without Union, would face 'the Catholic, relying on the argument of physical force, who would Endeavour to assert his claims against the establishment of a minority, and there appeared to be no hope of a termination to distrust, jealously and alarm'.

But, according to Castlereagh, the Union would allow the Protestant to feel secure on the broad basis of an Imperial establishment, where his

property would have due weight and the mass of the Protestant population would include him. The cause of distrust being removed, the claims of the Catholic might be temperately heard and calmly discussed before an impartial tribunal, the Imperial Parliament, which would decide on the question divested of the local circumstances which served to irritate and inflame (*Parliamentary Register* 5/6 February 1800: 26).

The sectarian attacks on Protestants by Catholics, in southern parts of the Kingdom, made Union with Britain more appealing to members of the Church of Ireland than ever before. Despite the controversy over how reluctant Irish MPs were persuaded, or bribed, to vote for the Union, in ideological terms it was possible for Irish Protestants to adopt, psychologically, to incorporation within the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Ireland because, apart from the loss of their Parliament, the building blocks of the Union remained similar to those that constituted the Kingdom of Ireland: allegiance to the Crown; a willing membership of the British Empire; and protection of the Protestant interest. Just as in previous British wars, the Protestant Irish had taken their part.

In 1797, James McCay, a Church of Ireland clergyman who had witnessed the horrors of the Rebellion, realized that the security of Protestant Ireland rested upon the power of Great Britain:

> But now, by dropping all national distinction, on both sides, we have obtained our purpose indeed – one of the greatest, and most independent countries in the world, has been made still greater, and more independent – and we have been raised with her into the same – dignified condition.
>
> We were low and inconsiderable, as a distinct nation; and could have no possible honour as such, that we did not derive from our great friend and protectrix; but now we may be truly said to be our own protector; the Armies of Great Britain are now our Armies – her Nay – is our Navy – and her Glory is directly ours. (McCay 1803: 13–15)

In his *Address to the People of Ireland*, the Reverend James Gordon, author of *The Rebellion in Ireland*, warned his readers that while France was endeavouring to subdue all Europe under her power, and while Ireland's government was engaged in war to prevent this conquest, many among the people had entered into a conspiracy with the French to make them masters of the country: 'I can see no reason why you should not be more attached in national affection to the English than the French, for the history of your country informs you that you are mostly of the same blood as the English' (Gordon 1803: 3–13).

On St Patrick's Day 1803, the year of a further rebellion, in a speech to the Benevolent Society of St Patrick, the Earl of Moria called on the people of

Ireland to embrace the new national sentiment which should spring from the Union: 'Only one sentiment ought now to prevail throughout the whole Empire, that of forgetting and forgiving all past quarrels, of dropping all distinctions, except those of English, Welch, Scotch, and Irish, which ought always to exist, not as grounds of jealously, but as the division of an army into different regiments tends to excite emulation, affords opportunities of distinguishing different kinds of merit, and marking more distinctly to whom just rewards belong' (Earl of Moria 1803: 20–2).

And the new unionists had their own heroes in the war against the French, witness the poem, by J. Bertridge Clarke, in 1817, commemorating the death of the Right Hononrable John Hilpot Curran, who had fought with his fellow Irishman in the decisive battle of the Napoleonic War:

> And shall I pass without the tribute due, the pride of Earth, the Lord of Waterloo?
>
> Green Erin's eagle, Freedom's strongest shield, Champion of Truth, and star of each red field;
>
> Valour's proud boast, and Glory's brightest sun, Th' illustrious, high, unconquer'd Wellington! Whose honors, earth's too bounded to contain;
>
> Who, from the green sea to the western main, Made Britain's lion of monarch of each plain;
>
> Who tore the vulture-eagle from his height, And broke his bloody beak, and smote him in his flight;
>
> For the proud bird his noble nature lost, When his wide wing led on Gauls impious host. (Clarke 1817: 20–1)

Ireland was now an integral part of the British imperial and military experience. Yet, for Protestants, the reality of being a minority in a Catholic populated country was never far away. This was particularly acute as Daniel O'Connell led his campaign, based upon the Roman Catholic Church mobilizing its peasantry, behind his campaign to repeal the Union. This led, in October 1843, *The Northern Whig* to report the contents of a rough draft of a petition which it received from a 'very influential quarter', to be submitted for signature in the North if the repeal agitation proceeded much further.

The *Whig* further noted that Northerners 'are far more intimately connected, in their various interests, with the people of the neighbouring shores of England and Scotland, than they are with the South and South-West of Ireland'. The North, or Ulster, should either, in the event of Repeal taking place, be erected into a separate kingdom, having a separate legislature; or it should be continued in connection with England and Scotland, though the rest of Ireland were to have its own parliament; the Whig preferred the latter of the two plans.

This petition is probably the first claim to partition the island of Ireland, by Irish Protestants not British politicians, in the event of self-government being granted to the Catholic majority:

> Outline of a Petition the Queen.
>
> That your petitioners are not, nor ever have been, advocates of the Repeal of the Union, which they deprecate, as destructive to both countries.
>
> They do no anticipate it as likely to take place.
>
> Nevertheless, if any circumstances do induce your Majesty and Parliament to grant such a measure, we earnestly entreat that Ireland may be constituted not one, but two distinct kingdoms, with Belfast as the capital of the Northern division of the island.
>
> Besides, we observe that the advocates of Repeal urge the distinction of the Saxon and Celtic races, as reason for disunion.
>
> We are a people in a great measure of a Saxon race, or largely intermixed with that race; and we, therefore, humbly submit, that those who advocate on such grounds, a separation from Great Britain, cannot wish, or, at least, fairly demand, that the new kingdom they propose to form should contain subjects of a race which they profess to regard with hostile jealously.
>
> We ourselves, indeed, disavow and deprecate any such hostile feelings, as characteristic of barbarians and heathens, rather civilized and Christian nations. We believe, that both Great Britain and Ireland are inhabited by a mixed race, descended from Saxons, Danes, Normans, Milesans, and others, mingled with the descendants of various Celtic tribes, as hostile to each other, in former days as to any foreign invaders.
>
> We wish to see the difference of race, and former contests, thence arising, to be practically buried in oblivion;
>
> And we desire to continue as fellow subjects with all the inhabitants of the British Isles.
>
> But we deprecate being formed into a distinct kingdom of Ireland, when a large proportion of the inhabitants of this island have been trained to regard us with unfriendly feelings as aliens and intruders.
>
> Whether these, and other reasons for our wish, appear to anyone satisfactory or not, we humbly submit that, if a separate Legislature be conceded to a certain portion of the subjects of the United Empire, on the sole ground that such is their earnest wish, it would be unreasonable not to concede the same, on the same ground, to another portion.
>
> We beg leave again to declare our aversion to any dissolution of the Union, and our sincere hope that it may never take place.
>
> We petition for the erection of the kingdom of the North of Ireland (or Ulster), merely as the less of two evils, on the supposition (we trust most improbable), of the impossibility of maintaining the existing Union. (*Northern Whig* 17 October 1843)

Nationalist loyalism

At this point it well to consider that loyalty to the Crown and Ireland's place within an imperial system was not solely the preserve of unionists: nationalists too saw self-government in Ireland within loyalist terms and within an imperial system. Republicanism within nationalism was the dream of a minority. Daniel O'Connell, who campaigned to repeal the Union, wanted the restoration of the Kingdom of Ireland not an Irish Republic.

Charles Stewart Parnell , despite saying one thing to his Irish American financers and another to the House of Commons, seems to have settled for the *realpolitik* of Home Rule in his later career. He certainly became the leader of a movement that, after his death, was true to the dream of a self-governing Ireland not merely within the Empire but *within* the Union with Britain. By the eve of the First World War, the leadership of the Home Rule movement realized that they had to appease not only British unionists but also Irish unionists too to secure Home Rule and a united Ireland – under the Crown.

John Redmond, the leader of the Home Rule movement, described the Irish Unionist Party's charge that nationalists were inherently disloyal to the Crown and Empire as the 'most dishonest and ridiculous of all cries'. Redmond defined loyalty as loyalty to one's motherland; to a free constitution; to a government, which protected industry, property, lives and liberty; to a monarchy, which was the guarantee of such a constitution and government; and to a sovereign who, in his person, was its head and representative.

Redmond also asked if Englishmen remembered Ireland's past suffering through its loyalty to British sovereigns. Under King James I, the Catholic Irish fully submitted to the 'Gaelic King' who came to the English throne; they were rewarded by 'persecution, proscription, and whole-sale plunder'. When his son, King Charles I, came to the throne, English and Scottish disaffection drove the King from the throne and saw him beheaded; Catholic Irishmen did not rebel, but took to the field for him, and as a result, suffered slaughter and plunder. When King James II succeeded to the throne, again it was the English who rebelled and the Catholic Irish who stood loyal, once more suffering the penalty of confiscation and persecution (Redmond 1912a: 33–4).

Replying to the unionist inquiry as to why Irish patriotism had not developed in the same manner within the Union as Scotland's had, Redmond answered that Scotland, in contrast to Ireland, had been dealt with in a spirit of reasoned consideration. When the Scottish and English Crowns were united under the Stuarts, Scotland provided the monarch; in Ireland, Britain was engaging in an attempt to extirpate all traces of the old kingly houses, and even of the people themselves (Redmond 1912b).

Redmond had summed up the aspirational loyalty which home rulers sought to embrace, in August 1902, on the occasion of the coronation of

King Edward VII. Then he had stated that, in Ireland, Edward VII 'was not a Constitutional Monarch'. No English monarch had been a Constitutional Monarch of Ireland since the Union; the Irish Constitution was suspended (*Nationality* 19 May 1917). Redmond pointed out that when Queen Victoria ascended the throne Canadians were in armed rebellion against England; but fifty years on, the grant of Canadian home rule made Englishmen hardly believe that Canada was ever disaffected.

In Canada, as Ireland, Redmond accepted there were two races and religions; but the concession of freedom produced complete loyalty, and Canada, divided only by an imaginary line from the greatest republic in the world, had not moved towards separation from Britain because of the tie of free imperial association (Irish Press Agency, n.d.). Thus, Irish Catholics and nationalists were not inherently disloyal; they merely wanted to take their just place in the Empire argued Redmond.

This aspirational and conditional nationalist loyalism even extended to the founder of Sinn Féin, Arthur Griffith. He wished to see the dissolution of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Ireland, and the restoration of the Kingdom of Ireland and a separate Kingdom of Great Britain. Dual Monarchy, as this policy was called, accepted that it had been a feature of Irish society that Irishmen had yielded allegiance to kings even when these monarchs had little claim to their respect and affection; therefore, republican ideals were not indigenous to Ireland but had been imported from France and America.

Two sovereign states might, he argued, be subject to the same prince without any dependence of the one on the other and each retaining its free sovereign right as a nation. The King of England might be 'elected' as King of Ireland by the free will of the Irish people who would yield him loyalty as King of Ireland not as King of England. This did not admit the 'preposterous' position advocated by some nationalists that the King of England under the Union was *de facto* and *de jure* King of Ireland (*Sinn Féin* 20 April 2007).

The Kingdom of Ireland had been a separate kingdom from that of the Kingdom of Great Britain, and its establishment would have ended the Empire's status as a single realm. The First Article of the Act of Union had declared that the 'said Kingdoms of Great Britain and Ireland, shall ... be ... for ever after, be united into one Kingdom, by the name of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Ireland'.

The restoration of the Kingdom of Ireland would create a situation where there would be *two* crowns in the Empire, rather than one common Crown. Therefore the British King could, as he had been before the Anglo-Irish Union, be the King of Great Britain, and the King of Ireland *separately*, although the same person. This would create the separate status of British subject and Irish subject within a 'Brito-Hibernian' Empire.

The Irish would therefore be a separate nationality from Britons, Canadians, New Zealanders, Australians and South Africans, who would continue

to constitute British subjects owing allegiance to the British King. For Griffith, a Briton was a native of England, Scotland or Wales. Thus, there were 4 million British subjects in Ireland and 400 million British subjects in India, but there were no Britons in either country outside the governors and speculative immigrants.

Griffith was distinguishing between the legal sense of Britishness and the emotional or nationalistic definition of Britishness. He claimed that the phrase *Civis Britannicus sum* could not be *Anglicanus* without excluding Scotland and Wales, nor could it be *Britannicus* without excluding Ireland. Griffith marked in this phrase the recognition of English, Scots and Welsh people as British citizens and the relegation of 'that part of the United Kingdom called Ireland' to the status of British subjects.

For Griffith, the phrase implied that the British Empire was Britain's possession and that Britain and Ireland were distinct entities, the one imperial ruler, the other subject nation. The kingdom was the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Ireland, but the empire was not the Empire of Great Britain and Ireland but the British Empire. Turning to his analysis of Dual Monarchy, Griffith considered the title of 'Austrian Empire' to have been a denial of Hungary, and the title British Empire to be a denial of Ireland. He noted that there was no longer an Austrian Empire but an 'Austrio-Hungarian' Empire while there remained a British Empire, not a 'Brito-Hibernian Empire'.

Griffith argued that in the nineteenth century there had been no 'Hungarian Imperialists' to boast that they were citizens of the Austrian Empire, and that while the British Empire existed the majority of Irishmen would not boast that they were citizens of it; their instinct, if not their reason, would inform them that such a boast was a denial of their country's right and dignity. Many might be charmed by the idea of equal partnership with Britain in the Empire, but none, he believed, would swap the name of Irishman for that of British subject. An acceptance of the British Empire was an acceptance of English ascendancy (*Irish Review* August 1911: 269–70).

Griffith further insisted that until those in Ireland who cherished the imperial idea translated it into 'Hiberno-British' instead of 'British', they would find no audience outside the ranks of those who had consistently identified the Empire with Irish nationalist suppression. When imperialists were prepared to so translate their vision Griffith predicted that they would find nationalist Ireland willing to discuss their views (*Irish Review* August 1911: 272).

Partition

The basic difference, and a wide one, was that Irish unionists already possessed an unconditional loyalty to the Crown and the British national/imperial identity. They threatened loyalist rebellion not against the Crown itself but officers of the Crown in Parliament: in 1912 this was the Liberal

Government that, they believed, sought to expel them from the British national/imperial community. Unionists perceived their membership within the United Kingdom as an inalienable and inherited right, which no *government* had the authority to cast away. The *Belfast News Letter* explained how:

> Unionists held ... that their claim to remain under ... the Imperial Parliament is an inalienable right of their citizenship which no Government of any time has the right to deprive them of. There need be no mistake about this, it is the position which Ulster has taken up all along; it is the heart and the essence of what has come to be called the Ulster Question. It goes deeper and further than any question of what Party is in power ... It is indeed fundamental, for it goes right down to the principle of nationhood.
>
> In other words, Ulster's resistance to Home Rule is founded upon recognition of and loyalty to the nationhood of the United Kingdom. Our loyalty to that nationhood we hold in common with people of England ... Scotland and Wales, and it cannot be denied that Ulster has given the best of her sons to its service. It makes us none the less patriotic Irishmen any more than it does Englishmen and Scotsmen to their countries.
>
> Can the same be said for Irish nationalists? Most certainly it cannot. Their conception of nationality is opposed to ours both in object and in spirit; it is confined to Ireland alone, and it is hostile to the unity of the Kingdom, therefore it is hostile to the conception of nationhood to which we are loyal. Therein lies the right of Ulster to resist ... since it would be a severance against their will of a loyal people from their nationhood, which no Government has the right to do. (*Belfast News Letter* 19 September 1912)

There was no clearer articulation of how, by the eve of the Great War, unionist loyalism encompassed both allegiance to the Crown and allegiance to idea of Britishness in the form of a British national/imperial identity. In contrast, one of the consequences of the Easter Rising and the revamped Sinn Féin that emerged from it was the ending of the centuries-old association of nationalism with loyalty to the Crown.

In its place came republicanism, and with it, the end of any understanding that unionists and nationalists could reach an ambiguous compromise in their Britishness and Irishness, through subjectship and allegiance to the Crown. Republicanism meant that there could only be Irish citizens in the emerging Irish republic (certainly from the 1930s onwards). And so, in the partitioned North, Ulster unionists could triumphantly proclaim that nationalists were disloyal all along; as the former already knew.