# HOW NEW IS NEW LOYALISM?

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# ABBREVIATONS

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| CLMC | Combined Loyalist Military Command |
| DENI | Department of Education for Northern Ireland |
| DUP | Democratic Unionist Party |
| IOO | Independent Orange Order |
| IRA | Irish Republican Army |
| LAW | Loyalist Association of Workers |
| LVF | Loyalist Volunteer Force |
| NICRA | Northern Ireland Civil Rights Association |
| NIHE | Northern Ireland Housing Executive |
| NILP | Northern Ireland Labour Party |
| PUP | Progressive Unionist Party |
| RHC | Red Hand Commandos |
| RHD | Red Hand Defenders |
| SDLP | Social Democratic and Labour Party |
| UDA | Ulster Defence Association |
| UDP | Ulster Democratic Party |
| UDLP | Ulster Democratic and Loyalist Party |
| UFF | Ulster Freedom Fighters |
| UUP | Ulster Unionist Party |
| UUUC | United Ulster Unionist Council |
| UWC | Ulster Workers' Council |
| UVF | Ulster Volunteer Force |
| VPP | Volunteer Political Party |

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

# Abstract: How New is New Loyalism?

This thesis provides an analysis of the manifestos of two political parties in Northern Ireland. These parties are the Progressive Unionist Party (PUP) and the Ulster Democratic Party (UDP), which is now defunct.

These parties came to prominence during the peace process that led to the signing of the Good Friday Agreement in 1998 and both were termed new loyalist. The phrase new loyalism suggests a novel alternative to the pessimistic and exclusivist ethos of traditional loyalist expression as exemplified by Ian Paisley's Democratic Unionist Party (DUP). However, a brief survey of the history of labourism in the North-East of Ireland reveals that there have been previous attempts to form a political party with a social democratic manifesto, an agenda that could supplant sectarianism as the main organising principle of Protestant working class politics. Some of these movements have emerged from within the same loyalist paramilitary groupings who were responsible for the formation of the new loyalist parties.

The purpose of the research on which this thesis was based was to ascertain if the PUP and the UDP represented a genuinely new and different political direction in loyalism, which could outlast uncertainty over constitutional matters. A framework to test the parties was constructed from two separate literature reviews. The first was a review of literature defining unionism, loyalism and new loyalism. The second considered the academic debate on reconciling differentiated citizenship rights within a polity. Data was then collected on the development and manifestos of the two parties and qualitative interviews were conducted with fifteen members of the PUP.

The thesis concludes that the parties were both affected by a number of external factors, in particular the growing disaffection of unionists with the Agreement. However, it must also be concluded that neither party developed an agenda that transcended sectarianism.

# INTRODUCTION

This thesis is concerned with evaluating the concept of new loyalism in the context of Northern Irish politics. The term new loyalism is associated with two political parties the PUP (Progressive Unionist Party) and the UDP (Ulster Democratic Party). The purpose of the thesis is to evaluate the agenda and actions of these parties and provide conclusions as to whether these parties could be described as genuinely innovative and therefore whether there is anything actually new about new loyalism.

New loyalism can be defined as a distinctive political movement within Ulster loyalism. Loyalism is a unionist political ideology, which means that loyalists believe that Northern Ireland is a legitimate part of the United Kingdom and that this constitutional status should be preserved. However, loyalist ideology dictates that this union is constantly under threat. These threats come partly from the Irish Republic. Irish irredentism is seen as one of the main factors that has encouraged Irish nationalists living within the borders of Northern Ireland to agitate, sometimes violently, for the unification of Ireland as an island. Successive British Governments at Westminster have also been defined as a threat. This is because they are unwilling to unequivocally guarantee the future of the union, and have kept the province of Northern Ireland at a distance, despite a history of sacrifice and allegiance to the British Crown by the loyalist people. Loyalism is also threatened by traitors who are supposedly unionist, but who fail to understand that, in order to survive, albeit precariously, loyalism cannot make any compromises or concessions to Irish nationalism.

Loyalism as an ideology has been developing in the North-East of Ireland since the Plantation of Ulster in the Seventeenth Century. Loyalists connect key events of this period, such as the massacre of settlers by Catholic natives in 1641, and battles between the forces of William of Orange and Kings James II in 1688 and 1690 to current events. The continued references to this historical period, the equation of loyal and disloyal in Northern Ireland with Protestant and Catholic, and an emphasis on contractarian relationships between individuals and the government, can make loyalism appear as no more than an anachronism within the modern British state.

However, the components of loyalism – pessimism, vulnerability, hostility to Irish nationalism and suspicion of change – persist within an increasingly secular Northern Ireland, because loyalism provides an immediate 'common-sense' explanation of the conflict between unionism and nationalism.

Given that loyalism is based on intransigence and pessimism, it would follow that new loyalism as an ideology would exhibit more confidence about the merits of change and the future of the union. The definition of new loyalism used in this thesis does take this as a starting point. New loyalism is taken to mean a style of politics that is designed to secure the union by enhancing the quality of life of all those who live within it. This involves a number of policies that make it distinct from loyalism.

Firstly, Traditional loyalism interprets the history of the province as one of a loyal Protestant people seeking to defend themselves against a horde of Catholic rebels. New loyalism rests on a different history, constructed from events leading up to and after the establishment of Northern Ireland in 1921. According to this interpretation of the past, nationalists were deliberately excluded from social, economic and political life and the emergence of conflict became inevitable. Therefore, it would follow that negotiating with nationalists and searching for ways to make Northern Ireland more inclusive is the best way of preventing further violence. In contrast to traditional loyalism, involving the British and Irish governments in such negotiations, would be seen as positive and constructive, rather than inherently dangerous.

Secondly, traditional loyalism depicts political and cultural identity in Northern Ireland as a binary split between Protestant and Catholic, British and Irish and, crucially, loyal and disloyal. Therefore a new loyalist approach to identity would be one which sought to break these automatic connections.

Thirdly, loyalist politicians have often addressed socio-economic issues, rather than just constitutional ones. However, they have connected this style of politics to the binary split of loyal and disloyal, meaning that material resources became part of the battle between loyalists and rebels. In this arena, as in constitutional matters, loyalists had to be dominant because the alternative was defeat and, eventually, obliteration. Conversely new loyalist politicians would use politics based on material need and the

distribution of resources as a means of creating alliances across the religious cleavage, rather than reinforcing it.

From these factors a definition of new loyalism can be offered. It is a style of politics that demonstrates optimism about the future of the union and also demonstrates confidence about dealing with the key actors in any round of negotiations on the subject, the nationalist community and the British and Irish governments. It is also a style of politics that is committed to eroding the binary split between loyal and disloyal and to encouraging a commitment to forging cross-community alliances based on social and economic issues.

This definition is the basis of the positive model of new loyalism used in this thesis. As will be outlined in the following chapter, two models have been constructed of new loyalism, one positive and one negative, as evaluative tools. One more component was added to the positive model of new loyalism, which was a stable level of electoral support. In chapter four, the impact of prison on the paramilitaries who became new loyalist politicians is examined. Being imprisoned by the state they had sworn to defend had a profound impact on UVF members such as David Ervine and Billy Hutchinson, who would go on to be elected to the power-sharing assembly set up after the signing of the Good Friday Agreement in 1998. They underwent a personal journey of transformation. They had joined an organisation that sought to defend Northern Ireland's constitutional by any means necessary, including the murder of Catholic civilians, and moved towards finding common cause with republican prisoners and to committing themselves to the search for a peaceful constitutional settlement that would earn the acquiescence of nationalists. However, the definition of new loyalism is based on it being a political movement, not a few instances of individual epiphany. Electoral support serves as an indicator that the message of optimism and openness has been accepted by those who did not follow the path of paramilitary organisation, prison, politics taken by key figures in the UDP and PUP.

The purpose of the research was to evaluate the novelty of new loyalism as represented by the UDP and PUP. The first three chapters of this thesis are concerned

with creating a framework for this evaluation. The next three chapters deal with the testing of the UDP and the PUP within this framework.

Chapter one outlines the hypothesis guiding this work, which is that new loyalism contains a number of internal contradictions that will cause it to falter. This chapter also details the methodology used to construct this thesis.

The second chapter is the first of two literature reviews and provides an overview of existing academic definitions of unionism, loyalism and new loyalism. This literature review was an essential component of the methodology because it aided the development of definitions of both loyalism and new loyalism.

The third chapter is also a literature review, dealing with theoretical and practical attempts to reconcile civic citizenship with ethnic division. The end point of this chapter is the work of Norman Porter.[1] Porter directly addresses the issue of civic citizenship in Northern Ireland and his aim is to convince other unionists that improving the quality of life within the union is essential to maintain the legitimacy of the constitutional link between Northern Ireland and Great Britain. Porter's discussion of a civic unionism therefore clearly resonates with the definition given here of new loyalism and thus it also fits into the methodology by aiding the construction of a critically rigorous positive model of new loyalism, by which any contenders for the title could be tested.

The fourth chapter outlines a number of projects within unionist politics that could be said to share similarities with new loyalism. These are Terence O'Neill's belief in the use of civil society to reconcile Catholics to Northern Ireland; the Northern Ireland Labour Party's attempt to attract more Catholic voters with a programme based on redistribution and social justice; and the first political initiatives undertaken by the two main loyalist paramilitary groups in Northern Ireland, the Ulster Volunteer Force (UVF) and the Ulster Defence Association (UDA). Identifying the reasons that these projects failed to achieve their aims or to endure, is useful in providing an outline of the pitfalls involved in undertaking a commitment to reach out to nationalists.

[1] Porter, N Rethinking Unionism (Belfast) Blackstaff 1996 and The Elusive Quest: Reconcilliation in Northern Ireland (Belfast) Blackstaff 2003

Analysing paramilitary initiatives prior to the PUP and UDP is also necessary because it helps establish what, if anything, is new about these parties.

The fifth chapter provides the background to the entry of the two new loyalist parties to the peace process. The chapter narrows in focus to the collapse of the UDP. In testing the UDP against the models of new loyalism, it will be argued that the UDP corresponded more closely to the negative model. This model suggests that new loyalism is merely another manifestation of loyalist disaffection with nationalists, other unionists and the British and Irish Governments, given a veneer of novelty by debates about identity. In the case of the UDP their commitment to a civic Ulster identity was not even new in the context of political action undertaken by the UDA. In terms of testing the hypothesis the UDP seem to confirm that they failed to resolve the contradictions between the ethnic and the civic in their vision of Ulster nationalism.

The sixth chapter focuses exclusively on the PUP. In testing the PUP two things become apparent. The first is that in refining its view of social class by using the concept of the community, the PUP has developed significantly from the original actions of the UVF. The second is that the PUP have maintained a commitment to the Good Friday Agreement and to negotiating with all relevant actors, even though this is not an easy position to sell to a loyalist electorate that fails to see what benefits have been delivered by the peace process. However, in terms of the hypothesis, the PUP must also address an internal contradiction, which is between their commitment to replacing sectarianism with politics based on material need and their sectarian analysis of how social goods, such as housing, are distributed in Northern Ireland.

# CHAPTER ONE: HYPOTHESIS AND METHODOLOGY

## 1.1 Overview

The concept of new loyalism remains an under-researched area of the politics of Northern Ireland. Studies of the groupings that are associated with this term, the Progressive Unionist Party (PUP) and the Ulster Democratic Party have usually been fitted into more general studies of unionist responses to the peace process.[1] This literature is by no means comprehensive. Given the collapse of the UDP in November 2001 there is also a need to question the relevance of the term, new loyalist, in relation to the groups that have ostensibly developed to replace the UDP's political role.

The term new loyalism refers to a style of politics associated with the political representatives of loyalist paramilitaries. Ruane and Todd offer a definition of this ideology.

> The post-ceasefire period has seen the emergence of a new loyalist politics. The 'new loyalists' stress the shared and equal deprivation of all working class people under the Stormont regime and the need for a re-alignment of politics on class lines. They also endorse power-sharing in Northern Ireland.[2]

The Combined Loyalist Military Command (CLMC) ceasefire of 13th October 1994 marked the public entry of the PUP and UDP to the peace process. During this period, as McGarry and O'Leary recognise, "the PUP and UDP emerged from obscurity, indicating remorse for the killing of innocent civilians carried out by their comrades and displaying more political sophistication than they had previously been accredited".[3] It was these qualities that led to the popular perception that this was a

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[1] See for example Cochrane, F <u>Unionist Politics and the Politics of Unionism Since the Anglo-Irish Agreement</u> (Cork) Cork University Press 2000

[2] Ruane, J & Todd, J <u>The Dynamics of Conflict in Northern Ireland: Power, Conflict and Emancipation</u> (Cambridge) Cambridge University Press 1996, p105

[3] McGarry, J and O'Leary, B <u>Explaining Northern Ireland</u> (Oxford) Blackwell 1995, p385

different development in loyalist politics. This prompted the branding of these parties as new loyalist rather than, simply, loyalist.

The comrades referred to are the most enduring loyalist paramilitary organisations in Northern Ireland, respectively the Ulster Volunteer Force (UVF) and the Ulster Defence Association (UDA). These organisations both began with a purely military brief but political initiatives have surfaced from within these organisations since the early 1970s. PUP and UDP members saw themselves as the heirs to this political activity, much of which they saw as centred on their community, the loyalist working class.

The purpose of this work has been to ask the question, how new is new loyalism? This is far from a descriptive task. Price, for example, has demonstrated that elements of class-consciousness and attempts to promote non-sectarian politics have previously surfaced in the history of the province.[4] By asking what is new, and by examining the legacy of similar political directions taken within unionism in general and paramilitary organisations in particular, it can be established if new loyalism is a coherent and progressive force, or if it contains contradictory impulses that will cause it to falter.

The main product of this study, therefore, is the construction of a comprehensive definition of the concept of new loyalism and a critical appraisal of the political force and its novelty. Undertaking this task entailed three main objectives. The first was to analyse whether the social-democratic or socialist programmes proposed by these groups were capable of transcending the power of sectarianism. The second was an assessment of whether elements of redistributive social justice and identity politics could be forged into a coherent agenda and pursued in the face of uncertainty about the constitution. The third task set was to examine the impact of this agenda on the parties' proclaimed community, the Protestant working class.

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[4] Price, J 'Political change and the Protestant working class' <u>Race and Class</u> 1995 Vol.37, No.1 pp57-70

## 1.2 Literature and Background

Much work on unionism and loyalism has sought to undo perceptions of Protestants in Northern Ireland as a monolithic, homogenous community. Bew, Gibbon and Patterson argue that in the period before the suspension of Stormont the dominant 'populist' politicians in the Unionist Party managed class tensions by successfully underpinning the state with a sectarian ethos.[5] This created the image of a hegemonic power bloc, an image that obscured the progressive impulses within working class political expression. According to Bew and Norton:

> The first priority of the populists was the reproduction of a "good" relationship between the Protestant masses and the unionist bourgeoisie to the visible exclusion of the Catholic population, irrespective of any British government policy that may have hindered or obstructed this strategy.[6]

McAuley and McCormack state that:

> Before 1969 the Protestant working class had been encouraged to believe that its right to exist and its livelihood were guaranteed by the existence of the Stormont Parliament, the Unionist Party and the Orange Order. Thus to oppose or even criticise the state was to display evidence of disloyalty.[7]

However they do not see this as a static situation, arguing instead that this allegiance was unstable and had to be worked for.

Walker believes that the manner in which the Northern Irish State developed

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[5] Bew, P Gibbon, P and Patterson, H The State in Northern Ireland 1921-1972: Political Forces and Social Classes (Manchester) Manchester University Press 1979, Northern Ireland 1921-1996: Political Forces and Social Classes (London) Serif 1996

[6] Bew, P & Norton, C 'The Unionist state and the outdoor relief riots of 1932' Economic and Social Review 1978-9 Vol.10 p258 See also Norton, C 'Creating jobs, manufacturing unity: Ulster Unionists and Mass Unemployment 1922-1934' Contemporary British History Vol.15 No.2 2001 pp1-14

[7] McAuley, JW and McCormack, C 'The Protestant working class and the state in Northern Ireland since 1930: a problematic relationship' from Hutton, S and Stewart, P Ireland's Histories: Aspects of State, Society and Ideology (London) Routledge 1991 p122

"established a sectarian political mould which determined labour's minor status as a political force". He adds, "labour equivocation on the national question ensured that it would play only a peripheral role in the state's politics as long as the issue over-rode all others."[8] It is the contention of this work that the issues of sectarianism and the national question have to be separated. Constitutional uncertainty has certainly marginalized parties based on other issues. However, sectarian attitudes and values are not simply reliant on constitutional strife.

The labour movement in Ireland, and then Northern Ireland, developed against a background of tension and uncertainty about the future of Ireland's union with Great Britain. This diverted support from developing social democratic parties. The Northern Ireland Labour Party founded in 1924 tried to avoid a stated position on constitutional matters. The party formed links with the British Labour Party but, in common with the other major parties at Westminster, Labour did not organise in Northern Ireland.

From 1949 the NILP defined itself officially as a unionist party, whilst still trying to attract non-unionist support. The party enjoyed its strongest support between 1958 and 1965, holding four seats at Stormont. This period was one of greater security over the status of Northern Ireland and the re-emergence of conflict seems to have been the main factor in the dramatic decline of the party. The SDLP and the DUP drew votes away from the NILP and another new party, Alliance, appealed to those who did not want to vote along constitutional lines. This does not mean, though, that constitutional insecurity has been the only debilitating issue for socialist political groups.

Boyle characterises the period 1805-1906 as a relatively peaceful one in the north-east of Ireland with a Conservative government in power and plans for home rule sidelined.[9] He argues that this created space for working class dissent, in which context the Independent Orange Order emerged. By 1905 the I.O.O. had seventy lodges in the east of Ulster and the chairman, Lindsay Crawford, had drawn up the Magheramorne

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[8] Walker, G.S The Politics of Frustration (Manchester) Manchester University Press 1985, p23

[9] Boyle, J 'The Belfast Protestant Association and the Independent Orange Order 1901-1910 Irish Historical Studies 1962-3 Vol. 13 pp117-152

Manifesto as the vehicle for creating a new political party. The manifesto combined social campaigning on issues such as tenants' rights with a commitment to developing a non-sectarian Irish patriotism. The manifesto proclaimed a new order stood "on the banks of the Boyne, not as victors in the fight...but to hold out the right hand of fellowship to those who, while worshipping at other shrines are yet our countrymen".[10]

This manifesto caused discord in the I.O.O as there were fears it was the first step towards committing the new organisation to support for home rule. However it also seemed to lead the order away from its roots in the Belfast Protestant Association. The association expressed working class dissatisfaction both with the distance of Orange and unionist leaders, and the unchecked power of the Catholic Church. Haddick-Flynn charts the development of the BPA's public criticism of the unionist leadership from heckling politicians for failing to a support a bill for the inspection of convent laundries, through to a critique of the unionist and orange leadership as "a wealthy elite, more concerned with their own interests than with helping workers".[11]

The BPA's first parliamentary candidate, T.H. Sloan stood for election in 1902. Boyle describes his campaign as consisting of "attacks on the Ulster "dead-heads", the leaders of Ulster unionism who slighted the unionist working man, opposed temperance measures, and were generally "soft" on ritualism in the Church of Ireland and the menace of Rome."[12] The constitutional issue created a rift in the I.O.O which was increased with the return of the Liberal Party to British government. However, the I.O.O's move towards a non-sectarian politics was also too radical a departure from the nature of the dissent that had prompted the order's foundation.

The dominant ideology detectable in Protestant working class politics is loyalism.[13] Loyalism is mistrustful of institutional politics and often rests on an antagonistic

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[10] Quoted by Boyle, J 1962-3 Op. cit. p134

[11] Haddick-Flynn, K Orangeism: The Making of a Tradition (Dublin) Wolfhound Press 1999, p316. Convent laundries appeared regularly in anti-Catholic pamphlets and were characterised as a site of sexual depravity.

[12] Boyle, J 1962-3 Op. cit. p120

[13] Todd, J 'Two traditions in unionist political culture' Irish Political Studies Vol.2 1987, pp1-26

attitude to the unionist political elite and the British government, which is seen as duplicitous. Loyalists are thrown into an alliance with these groups, despite their perceived failings, against the force of Irish nationalism. Loyalism expresses itself as intransigent resistance to change, because compromise cannot be made with the nationalist community. Nationalists are always the 'other' that unionism can be defined against. Loyalists seek to defend their British identity, but hostility towards nationalists is matched by fear of the intentions of the British Government. This mindset has been characterised by McAuley as a discourse of perpetuity that links historical and current events to a theme of betrayal by Britain, something which will ultimately lead to the reunification of Ireland by stealth.[14]

## 1.3 New Loyalism

The development of new loyalism has its roots in the activities of the UDA and the UVF. These organisations were founded for military purposes and paramilitaries had characterised themselves as defenders of the state. However, imprisonment by that state and the brutalising experience of prison, especially during protests about the removal of 'special category' status, aided dialogue with republican prisoners.[15] For some loyalist prisoners, such as the UVF's original leader Gusty Spence, this led to a dramatic reappraisal of who paramilitaries shared interests with and ideas of shared identities and socio-economic needs developed.

There was also scope for political activity outside prison. Paramilitaries had played a big role in the successful Ulster Workers' Council strike of 1974, which brought down the new power-sharing executive. This victory encouraged ideas of community action as a means of addressing social issues. Members of the UDA, in particular, immersed themselves in these grassroots activities and new constitutional settlements were floated with a view to attracting the support of nationalists.

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[14] McAuley, JW What's New about New Loyalism? Conference paper for the University of Salford 20th November 2000

[15] Crawford, C Defenders or Criminals? Loyalist Prisoners and Criminalisation (Belfast) Blackstaff 1999

Both paramilitary organisations sought to gain an electoral mandate through the formation of political parties. However, they made a very poor showing at the polls.[16] Bruce argues that the reputation of the paramilitaries as racketeers meant they were often seen as the oppressors of the community they claimed to represent.[17] Additionally the paramilitaries were vying for the title of defender with the security forces which lessened the credibility of their self-defined role.

In addition to involvement in electoral politics both groups, the UDA in particular, became involved in community projects, such as campaigns for improvement in social housing. Nelson argues that "community action encouraged people to see divisions in terms of the small man/woman against 'the establishment' (from planners to politicians) which could often lead to a rather woolly form of populism".[18] This accorded with more traditional loyalist attitudes of hostility and dissent. These were tapped into by the growing Democratic Unionist Party (DUP) which emerged as the main electoral rival to the Ulster Unionists.

The CLMC ceasefire of 1994 was a pivotal moment for paramilitaries who sought political influence. The declaration of certainty that the union was safe was a starting point from which these actors could positively participate in and support the peace process through multi-party talks and public support for the Good Friday Agreement. The finality of the ceasefire and statements of remorse minimised the traditional 'gangster' image of the paramilitary representatives and opened the way for meaningful engagement with nationalist politicians. Election to local government for both parties and to the Northern Ireland assembly for the PUP, plus the appointment of the UDP

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[16] The strongest show of support during the 1970s was for Ken Gibson of the VPP. He stood in the second general election of 1974 in the constituency of North Belfast and gained 2,600 votes. Under the first past the post system this was nowhere enough to win. However, other representatives did get elected with less votes in STV elections, for example Hugh Smyth (connected to the UVF) and Glenn Barr (UDA) gained seats on the constitutional convention in the 1975 election.

[17] Bruce, S The Red Hand: Protestant Paramilitaries in Northern Ireland (Oxford) Oxford University Press 1992

[18] Nelson, S Ulster's Uncertain Defenders (Belfast) Appletree Press 1984, p201

leader, Gary McMichael, to the Civic Forum, gave the parties a role in the new institutional arrangements. The parties also committed themselves to continuing grassroots activities, such as political discussion groups within working class communities, seeking to create change from the bottom up.

The idea of new loyalism rests on an attempt to ease sectarian division and create a secure and legitimate union that enjoys the support of its inhabitants regardless of religion. This begins with a critique of the Stormont regime before its suspension in 1972 as a divisive force that provided marginal superiority over Catholic workers at the expense of long term stability or substantial benefit to the working class of either community. Additionally, there is a critique of the politics of the DUP as a negative force that stifles opportunity for normalised political activity. Leading on from this is a belief that the union can be secured by developing political demands based around social and economic issues. This would be supplemented by assertions that unionism is not about a straightforward split between homogenous national allegiances. Instead one could be Irish albeit peculiarly British (as the PUP contend) or a member of the community of Ulster which is one of the many regional and national identities evident in the United Kingdom (which corresponds to UDP/UPRG) thought). Essentially by promoting the union as the basis of a class alliance that stretches from east to west and a forum for diverse identities, these parties asserted that the exclusive connection between unionism and Protestantism can be broken.

## 1.4 Hypothesis

The central hypothesis to be tested in this work is that there are a number of tensions or contradictory impulses within new loyalism. These tensions would have to be resolved, especially if insecurity about the certainty of the union increases. Otherwise new loyalist parties would not be able to make any contribution to the creation of a civic unionism that would aid the development of normalised politics within Northern Ireland.

For new loyalism to be novel it would have to be about more than the emergence of material political demands, as emerged in the relative peace of the late 1950s

(notwithstanding the IRA's border campaign) and was registered through increased support for the Northern Ireland Labour Party. A new loyalist party would have to recognise and tackle the sectarian perceptions of how resources, such as housing and jobs, are distributed. For new loyalism to be genuinely new, therefore, it must amount to more than the expression of traditional loyalist disaffection and antagonism towards the unionist hierarchy.

Linked to this is how a new loyalist party would deal with anxiety about the future of the union and the sense that unionists were being forced to relinquish too much in the new devolved settlement. If new loyalist politicians are to succeed in creating a brand of politics that is based on common interests they will have to find a way of channeling these anxieties through both institutional and community politics and resist retreating into a traditional fear of expansionist nationalist demands.

In essence, the hypothesis that governs this work is that as a defence of the union that seeks to accommodate the aspirations of all citizens, new loyalism must mark a sophisticated and coherent progression from populist resistance to the unionist hierarchy, which has not combated sectarianism. Otherwise, this challenge to ethnic division from the 'bottom up' will not be able to develop and maintain support and the project could become as discredited as those of reformers within the elite such as Terence O'Neil in the 1960s. This challenge could also founder in terms of electoral support thus leading the parties to dissolve as the NILP did in the 1970s.

## 1.5 Methodology

### 1.5.1 Methodological Issues

At the beginning of this research it was apparent that there were two parties, the PUP and the UDP, who could both lay claim to the title of new loyalism. When considering the best means to undertake data collection it was acknowledged that the methodology must take into account that two separate organisations were being considered. To resolve this issue two models of new loyalism were constructed that both parties could be tested against individually.

As has already been noted, over the course of the research the UDP disintegrated. The UDA's political side is currently expressed through a research group, rather than a political party. The fifth chapter of this thesis charts the party's decline and tests the data collected about the UDP against these models. It will be argued that the UDP's emphasis on an Ulster identity and its populist, rather than social democratic, manifesto meant it did not carve out a distinctive space from the 'no' unionism of the DUP. The implication of this was that the latter half of the thesis inevitably narrowed in focus to concentrate on the PUP. This meant that there was a requirement for more detailed data to be collected about the prospects and manifesto of the Progressive Unionists.

1.5.2 Models of New Loyalism

The models referred to were constructed to enable the concept of new loyalism to be empirically tested. This provided a means of drawing conclusions as to whether these political actors could produce the agenda required to facilitate the emergence of cross-community social democratic politics within Northern Ireland.

The first model offers a pessimistic prognosis for the prospects of new loyalism. The concept is presented as traditional loyalism imbued with a veneer of novelty by debates about identity and grassroots political cooperation. This covers ongoing hostility towards ceding actual political power to the nationalist community. In this model, the emphasis on class politics is merely another manifestation of the alienation of the Protestant working class from the unionist hierarchy. This is something that has not yet managed to preclude sectarian sentiment.

The second model is the polar opposite of the first. In the words of Billy Mitchell from the PUP it is "a radical political alignment where those of us who aspire to a genuine social democracy can engage in debate and action on how best we can ensure that the social and economic benefits derived from the new politics will actually reached the people who need them most".[19] This suggests a redefinition of interests that would aid

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[19] Mitchell, B 'My vision for the future' www.pup-ni.org 2000

the realignment of citizens from ethnic to social issues and would therefore contribute to overcoming the binary logic of Protestant and Catholic as loyal and disloyal.

## 1.5.3 Testing the Models

In composing this thesis, there were three main elements to the methodology required to make this work a comprehensive and effective study of new loyalism. These were a literature review, analysis of the political activities of the parties, and interviews.

The literature review served as an evaluation of existing academic assessments of loyalism and new loyalism and a base from which definitions of both concepts could be advanced. This was complemented by a review of literature covering constitutional settlements that could accommodate different national identities. This was necessary because of the consociational nature of the Good Friday Agreement to which both parties were signatories. The Agreement was the context in which political power was devolved from the British government to Northern Irish institutions.

The analysis of the political activities of the parties was drawn from mainly primary sources and focused on documents produced by the parties, their submissions to peace negotiations and institutional records such as minutes. In this way commitment to cross-community cooperation and diversity within the union could be observed.

Qualitative interviews were undertaken with PUP members, a project that was made possible by the co-operation of the party. These were semi-structured in nature and provided a range of information on attitudes towards a number of areas: identity; socialism; constitutional and non-constitutional political issues; the legitimacy of paramilitary activity; and the future of the party. This information formed the basis of the in-depth assessment of the PUP's manifesto and prospects presented in the sixth chapter.

## 1.6 Structure of Work

The first two chapters set out the construction of the models of new loyalism. The following chapter is the literature review, as outlined above. The third chapter reviews debates about accommodating different national identities within constitutional arrangements and contrasts this with the role of civil society as a space where these identities can be expressed without being institutionalised within the state. This will provide context for a discussion of Porter's concept of civic unionism[20] and whether this can provide a template for a civic new loyalism.

The next chapters assess the development of the UDP and the PUP. It is within these chapters that the parties are tested against the models of new loyalism. The fourth and fifth chapters chart the development of political initiatives within loyalist paramilitary groupings and assess the significance of the collapse of the UDP. The focus will then narrow to the PUP in the sixth chapter.

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[20] Porter, N <u>Rethinking Unionism</u> (Belfast) Blackstaff 1996

# CHAPTER TWO
# LITERATURE REVIEW: UNIONISM, LOYALISM, NEW LOYALISM

## 2.1 Introduction

Whilst it has already been acknowledged that there is a limited body of work on the concept of new loyalism and new loyalist parties, literature has been produced examining the ideology of political movements associated with the UVF and the UDA. This literature fits into a wider debate about divisions within unionism and the material and cultural bases of loyalism.

The purpose of this chapter is to review this debate and evaluate the main academic perspectives on the concepts of unionism, loyalism and new loyalism. This review will consider the elements of national, political and religious identity exhibited within unionism. This will be related to the importance of class, both in terms of how it promotes internal division within unionism and how it relates to the concept of loyalism.

Unionism, at its most basic, is support for maintenance of the union between Northern Ireland and Great Britain, and a belief that British sovereignty is legitimately exercised within the territory. Some commentators have taken this position as a starting point for a search for a core of unionist identity, a core that could be established as the foundation of all unionist political and cultural expression

The first section of the literature review will assess possible core elements of a unionist identity. It will be argued that political support for the union cannot be reduced to a single element such as religion, but that this is not the same thing as saying that unionism suffers from an overwhelming crisis of identity. The second section will consider the impact of class on unionist unity and political aspirations. The third section will review academic assessments of political movements within loyalist paramilitary groupings and possible definitions of new loyalism.

## 2.2 Searching for the essence of unionism

### 2.2.1 Settler Ideologies

The first element of unionist identity to consider is the historical background of colonialism. The plantation of Ulster in the seventeenth century brought an influx of mainly Scottish settlers to the North-East of Ireland. Some commentators have drawn comparisons with other settler groups, in order to underline how this process of settlement creates a distinct ideology. For example, Crawford makes use of the Afrikaner analogy[1] presenting both groups as keen to preserve their identity in a hostile environment and reliant on their religion as a means of proclaiming divine approval for their settlement.

Clayton argues that "significant strands of Protestant ideology in the 20th century can be explained by Ulster's history as a settlement colony".[2] She describes two particular strands - ultras and moderates - who are defined by their respective alienation from and identification with the metropolis.

The Plantation of Ulster did mark a distinct change in the manner that the British State was administered in this part of Ireland. References to historical events such as the massacre of settlers in 1641 are still used in murals and rhetoric to highlight modern insecurities. However, presenting unionists as simply a settler group stems from a limited reading of Irish and British history that ignores other important events and changes in the constitutional status of Ireland, including the 1801 Act of Union. It also belittles the fact that descendants of the original settlers have been developing a sense of connection to the territory over nearly four hundred years.

The depiction of unionism as a settler ideology highlights the problem of focusing on one element of unionist experience to the exclusion of others. It introduces the danger of telescoping key events to support an explanation of unionist identity, which denies

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[1] Crawford, R Loyal to King Billy (London) C.Hirst and Co 1987

[2] Clayton, P Enemies and Passing Friends : Settler Ideologies in Twentieth Century Ulster (London) Pluto 1996, p222

the existence of diversity within unionism and fails to account for anything but broad, simple divisions. It is this diversity that must be borne in mind when considering the relationship between unionism and Protestantism.


## 2.2.2 Unionism and Protestantism


Survey data suggests an association between Protestantism and unionism remains in Northern Ireland and the two terms are often used interchangeably. In the most recent Northern Ireland Life and Times Survey seventy-three per-cent of respondents who identified themselves as Protestant stated that they thought of themselves as Unionists, whilst one per-cent of these respondents answered that they thought of themselves as nationalists. Sixty-five per-cent of Catholics described themselves as nationalists, whilst one per-cent described themselves as unionists.[3] Protestantism in this survey is a matter of self-identification, which could cover those who would define themselves as practising Protestants and those who view it as a cultural identity. In itself the fact that the majority of those who define themselves as Protestants describe themselves as unionist, and indeed make up the majority of voters for unionist parties, does not provide a full picture of the relationship between Protestantism and unionism.


There are a variety of Protestant churches in Northern Ireland. Whyte argued that "if the churches as such were the main source of division, one might expect to find not two, but many more than two communities in Northern Ireland" especially given the history of bitterness between Anglicans and Presbyterians.[4] The analysis of Protestantism and unionism presented by Bruce concentrates on evangelical Protestantism. Bruce posits that it is the central component of an ethnic identity. He argues that evangelicalism resonates beyond those who are actually practising Protestants, because "the key point

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[3] Northern Ireland Life and Times Survey 2002. The question asked was Generally speaking, do you think of yourself as a unionist, or a nationalist or neither? www.ark.uk/nilt . Analysis by Curtice and Dowds shows that in survey data produced between 1989 and 1998 Protestants describing themselves as nationalists and Catholics describing themselves as unionist was not recorded at a higher level than one per-cent. See 'Has Northern Ireland Really Changed?' Crest Working Paper 74, September 1999 www.crest.ox.ac.uk

[4] Whyte, J Interpreting Northern Ireland (Oxford) Oxford University Press 1990, p30

is the centrality of evangelicalism for the Ulster loyalist's sense of ethnic identity".[5] In addition Bruce believes that for loyalism "beyond Protestantism, no secure identity is available."[6]

Bruce depicts a unionist community in Northern Ireland that is a self-contained ethnic group, one that is dependent on evangelical Protestantism as a common bond between its members. He uses the success of the Reverend Ian Paisley's DUP as evidence that the evangelical message exerts influence over many more people than those who come to hear it preached in church.

Bruce rejects the argument that Paisley's message has a distinct secular function where, as Morrow puts it, "Paisley's religious defence of secular borders has appeal to threatened and insecure people".[7] Bruce claims that voting for evangelicals is about more than a robust defence of the constitution, it is about recognising evangelicals as carriers of social characteristics that are perceived as admirable, which is also a recognition that "evangelicalism is at the heart of what it means to be a Protestant".[8]

Bruce's argument that evangelicalism is the core of unionist identity is a reductionist one. It ignores the existence of different Protestant churches in Northern Ireland as well as secular impulses within unionist politics. Maciver asserts that Paisley's political rhetoric links secular history to religious struggle, making Ulster part of the apocalyptic battle between good and evil.[9] However, Bruce is wrong to ignore the extent to which this religious message does have a strong secular appeal. Bruce also downplays the fact that as the DUP has sought to build electoral support, the party itself has had to

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[5] Bruce, S The Edge of the Union: The Ulster Loyalist Political Vision (Oxford) Oxford University Press 1994, p25

[6] Bruce, S God Save Ulster! The Religion and Politics of Paisleyism (Oxford) Oxford University Press 1986, p258

[7] Morrow, D 'Suffering for righteousness sake? Fundamentalist Protestantism and Ulster politics' from Shirlow, P and McGovern, M Who are the People? Unionism, Protestantism and Loyalism (London) Pluto 1997, p63

[8] Bruce, S 'Ulster Loyalism and Religosity' Political Studies 1987 Vol. 35, p647

[9] Maciver, MA 'Ian Paisley and the Reformed Tradition' Political Studies 1987 Vol. 35, pp359-378

consolidate its urban working class base and therefore has engaged with secular political issues.

Paisley himself utilises political arguments that do not rely on religious rhetoric. Writing a critique of the Good Friday Agreement in the Belfast Telegraph, Paisley found a number of reasons to rail against the settlement without calling on the threat to Protestant liberties:

> We saw the terrorist prisoners released, we saw the RUC destroyed, we saw Sinn Fein/IRA ministers sitting in government, saw all-Ireland executive bodies with executive power set up and we saw Northern Ireland being stripped of security installations, but we still have not seen one gun decommissioned or even been told what has been done... Before there is meaningful movement on decommissioning do not be surprised if Sinn Fein are back at the table with another set of demands. [10]

Morrow states that "unionism in Ireland over the last two hundred years is, without any exaggeration, absolutely incomprehensible without an understanding of Protestantism and its theological uses".[11] Protestantism has not been an apolitical force in the North East of Ireland. In particular the Orange Order has historically linked defence of the faith with defence of the union. However, to pitch the practices of Protestantism as the essence of unionist identity is erroneous. In particular Bruce makes connections between religious identity and political action, but in doing so he ignores the historical instances of evangelical preachers agitating against the unionist establishment and mustering support by fusing religious concern and secular resentments. The relationship between evangelical Protestantism and unionist politics is a complicated one. The fact that it has taken the DUP three decades to overtake the UUP as the largest unionist party contradicts Bruce's claim that unionists recognise Paisley's religious stance as the fulcrum of their identity.

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[10] 'The REAL question' www.belfasttelegraph.co.uk 31st October 2001

[11] Morrow, D 1997 Op. cit. p58

Farrington's discussion of the religious-secular spectrum in unionist politics concludes that the secular and religious are not discrete and that "reality dictates that a mixture of the two strains is the most appropriate for success and maintaining a support base".[12] The DUP is a case study, not simply in how the Protestant religion is articulated in political action, but in how the secular and the religious can interact in unionist politics. Bruce's hypothesis is that evangelicalism is the core of unionist identity. He casts the survival of the DUP as a successful test of this hypothesis. The DUP has outlived parties that have advanced a hardline but secular defence of the union, such as Vanguard. However, there are other reasons, principally the DUP's mastery of saying 'no' without embarking on the risky path of offering new political solutions to say 'yes' to, and the emphasis on day-to-day constituency work. The DUP's religious appeal has not excluded a secular component to the party.

Protestantism as an identity can be both religious and cultural. Religion can interact with secular unionist politics and evangelical notions of good battling evil makes immediate sense to those who never enter a church or gospel hall. However, an analysis such as that advanced by Bruce, does not deal with the importance of British-ness to unionists beyond the Williamite settlement and the Protestant crown. In addition this view does not take into account that whilst the evangelical message can exert a strong influence in the political arena, there are secular impulses within unionist identity and politics.

## 2.2.3 Conditions and Contracts

Bruce argues that for loyalists "loyalty to Britain has always been conditional", but that "when Ulster Protestants do want to be British, the Britain they want to be part of seems to be a country which ceased to exist a century ago".[13] The idea of conditional loyalty surfaces more than once in academic assessments of unionism. Informed by his

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[12] Farrington, C 'Ulster unionist political divisions in the late twentieth century" Irish Political Studies 2001 Vol. 16, p56

[13] Bruce, S 1986 Op. cit p251

argument that Protestantism is the essence of an ethnic group present in Northern Ireland, Bruce's view of conditional loyalty is that loyalists have separated the British Crown from the actions of the British Government in order to claim loyalty to Britain whilst decrying any attempts to "undermine Protestant self-determination".[14] Despite use of the term self-determination Bruce is keen to rebut any suggestions of Ulster Protestants as a nation. They are closer to Anthony Smith's idea of an ethnie - an ethnic group that has not identified itself as a nation.[15]

Bruce's assessment of the conditional nature of loyalty amongst unionists asserts a measure of instrumentalism; that is loyalty to Britain is seen as the best way of shoring up the precarious position of Protestants in Ulster. However, Bruce acknowledges an element of identification with British-ness, albeit an idea of British-ness that no longer exists. Neither of these arguments are peculiar to Bruce. Instrumental allegiance and allegiance to an outdated Britishness are relevant to other discussions of contractarianism.

Farrell and Bell developed Marxist critiques of unionism in the 1970s. They placed much more emphasis on the instrumental nature of conditional loyalty. They linked Protestant political identity to the materialist demand to maintain a hegemonic 'Orange State'[16] where the Protestant working class embraced their division from Catholic workers for preferential treatment in employment and provision of social goods. Bell describes the Protestants of Ulster as "a community whose loyalism appears a moveable feast".[17]

This version of conditional loyalty becomes a useful insult in which British-ness is a cynical cover for Protestant supremacy and economic power. Apart from the fact that it reduces unionism to material interest, this type of explanation cannot account for enduring loyalty to Britain since the suspension of Stormont and the dismantling of

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[14] Bruce, S 1986 Op. cit p252

[15] Smith, A.D National Identity (London) Penguin 1991

[16] Farrell, M Northern Ireland: The Orange State (London) Pluto 1980

[17] Bell, G The Protestants of Ulster (London) Pluto 1976, p8

institutions such as the 'B' Specials, that formed the infrastructure of the Orange State. In addition it cannot answer why Protestants were so astute at the turn of the last century to throw their lot in with British industrial and imperial might, but cling to the British state at the turn of this century despite the erosion of this power and the surge in prosperity that has earned the Republic of Ireland the epithet of the Celtic Tiger.

Farrell and Bell both wished for unionism to be erased to make way for a united Irish nation that could then embrace socialism. In contrast Tom Nairn argued that the incipient Ulster nationalism he saw emerging from the growing conflict in the 1970s should be used as the bourgeois stop-gap between pre-modernist allegiance and a developed class consciousness. Nairn linked the idea of developing nationalist identity to the conditional loyalty thesis:

> The Protestant community maintains its claim to be part of 'Britain' against hell or high water, but since it has refused to be 'British' in the fairly elementary sense of obeying the British government's plan for the province the claim has become in practice a form of nationalism.[18]

McBride argues that unionists have not developed an Ulster nation and they are not integrated into the Irish or British nations either. This means, "consequently they are unable to articulate their political demands in the respectable language of self-determination. Instead Ulster Protestants seems trapped within religious and political attitudes derived from the Seventeenth Century".[19]

This echoes the work of Miller on the contractarian position of unionists within the United Kingdom. Miller argues that Ulster unionism was imbued with a sense of insecurity from the beginnings of the Plantation. Settlers were under threat from the Gaels they had displaced, but their practice of public banding for defence was also a mechanism for dealing with constitutional threats, especially the duplicity of kings

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[18] Nairn, T The Break-Up of Britain (London) NLB 1977, p252

[19] McBride, I 'Ulster and the British Problem' from English, R & Walker, G (eds) Unionism in Modern Ireland (Basingstoke) MacMillan 1996, p1

such as James II. Miller says that public banding "sustained in the Protestant community the sense that public order really derived more from their exertions than from the activities of the sovereign authority".[20] This enforced a contractarian idea of the relationship between the settlers of Ulster and the British State rather than "a wholehearted sense of incorporation into the British nation".[21]

Furthermore, Miller argues that this conditional attitude to British sovereignty remains and has hampered the integration of Ulster Protestants into any of the nations 'on offer': Britain, Ireland and Ulster. Miller attributes the persistence of seemingly anachronistic concerns with contracts and covenants to the development of Ulster unionism within the British Empire before modernizing processes such as industrialisation and democratisation. This meant that the unionist identity developed before nationalism became a dominant ideology in Europe. Miller shares the modernist view of nationalism which McCrone outlines:

> The essence of the case is that nationalism is a cultural and political ideology of 'modernity', a crucial vehicle in the Great Transformation from traditionalism to industrialisation, and in particular the making of the modern state.[22]

This modernist view is exemplified in the work of Gellner who argues that "nations can be defined only in terms of the age of nationalism, rather than, as you might expect, the other way round".[23] Miller's conditional loyalty thesis suggests that the development of Ulster Unionism pre-dates this age and is trapped in a now out-of-date ethos of contracts between individuals and the state.

Coulter and Aughey both criticise Miller's account for ignoring the actions of the British State. Coulter states that whilst unionism is about material position and ethnic identity, the precarious nature of Northern Ireland's constitutional position means these

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[20] Miller, D <u>Queen's Rebels</u> (Dublin) Gill and MacMillan 1978, p25

[21] Miller, D 1978 Op. cit p120

[22] McCrone, D <u>The Sociology of Nationalism</u> (London) Routledge 1998, p10

[23] Gellner, E <u>Nations and Nationalism</u> (Oxford) Blackwell 1983, p55

concerns are articulated in contractarian language, or "in other words the contractarianism that pervades unionism represents not its ideological substance, but rather its political form".[24]

Aughey points out that Northern Ireland's constitutional position is open to question and this is a situation that makes contractarianism relevant rather than anachronistic. Furthermore, Aughey argues that unconditional loyalty to a state would belittle an individual to the status of a serf.[25] As part of the Cadogan Group, Aughey has expressed a desire for the British Government to retreat from a declaration of lack of selfish interest in Northern Ireland in favour of an assertion "that Northern Ireland is part of the United Kingdom, that it expects it to remain so for the foreseeable future, and that all discussion of the problem must revolve around that central fact".[26]

A contract does require at least two signatories and Miller's work concentrates more on the actions of one partner. In addition, as Cochrane points out, Miller's argument discounts the fact that a common British culture is perceived to exist by unionists, and that the bonds between unionists and the rest of Britain are seen as more than those of sovereignty and constitutional law.[27]

However, it is incorrect to lay the blame for the continuation of this mode of politics on the policies of British governments. Northern Ireland's position is not challenged solely by the actions of the British State, but by the presence of a group on the territory who question the legitimacy of British sovereignty. This situation means that it is possible that the British State could never be loyal enough for some unionists. In addition Cochrane argues that "it could justifiably claimed that the ambiguity of

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[24] Coulter, C 'The Character of Ulster Unionism' Irish Political Studies 1994 [a] Vol. 9, p5

[25] Aughey, A Under Siege: Ulster Unionism and the Anglo-Irish Agreement (London) C.Hirst and Co. 1989

[26] The Cadogan Group Picking up the Pieces: Northern Ireland after the Belfast Agreement www.cadogan.org May 2003. The other members of the group are Colin Armstrong, Paul Bew, Arthur Green, Graham Gudgin, Dennis Kennedy, and Steven King

[27] Cochrane, F Unionist Politics and the Politics of Unionism since the Anglo-Irish Agreement (Cork) Cork University Press 2001

unionist loyalty to the state is pronounced to an unusual degree".[28] Aughey is right to say that every citizen's loyalty is, or should be, essentially conditional, but unionist loyalty is more conditional than most.

## 2.2.4 The Liberal Unionist Position

Aughey is concerned with notions of citizenship because he is keen to stress that unionism is a political position that is committed to citizenship within a liberal pluralist state. Aughey believes that accusations of an identity crisis have led to attempts by some unionists to foster a specific Ulster heritage. This is a flawed project because unionism is not nationalism and should not seek to be measured in these terms. Instead Aughey opines "the identity of unionism has little to do with the idea of the nation and everything to do with the idea of the state".[29]

Aughey makes a case for the full integration of Northern Ireland into the structures of the British State. The United Kingdom could accommodate Irish nationalists as citizens in a state containing a variety of regional and national identities. The Republic of Ireland would not be able to perform this task as it is still tied to Catholic mores and an exclusivist identity.

While Aughey succeeds in demonstrating that "unionism is defensible in terms that are rational and coherent"[30] not all defenders of the union rely on these rational terms. This is something that Aughey ignores. Coulter points out:

> While the political aspirations of many unionists may well stem from their adherence to abstract ideals of citizenship, they are also motivated by substantive identities such as nationality and ethnicity.[31]

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[28] Cochrane, F 2001 Op. cit p74

[29] Aughey, A 1989 Op. cit, p18

[30] Aughey, A 1989 Op. cit, p1

[31] Coulter, C 1994 [a] Op. cit p16

Aughey is determined to separate the concepts of state and nation. However allegiance to a state is usually based on a more than a rational assessment of its liberal democratic credentials. If it were the Republic of Ireland could feasibly offer a tempting alternative to British citizenship. As McGarry and O'Leary point out, the Irish State is a republic. The legally honoured position of the Catholic Church was removed in 1972 after a constitutional referendum and the first head of state was a Protestant. In contrast the United Kingdom has a monarchy, established churches in England and Scotland, no written constitution and a bar on Catholic accession to the throne.[32]

Aughey's defence of unionism skirts around the full range of motivations that drive unionists to ally themselves with a wider British community. By seeking to separate political aspirations from cultural and national identity, he gives only a partial explanation of why unionists value their British citizenship.

## 2.2.5 An identity crisis?

So far this overview of unionism suggests that unionist identity cannot be reduced to a single essential element. It cannot be explained away as a colonial hangover, a religiously defined ethnicity, an instrumental concern with material position or a purely rational assessment of the merits of British and Irish citizenship.

One of the reasons Aughey is so intent on stressing the citizenship aspects of being part of the United Kingdom is because he believes that unionist politics should not be articulated using nationalist terms of reference. He states that "a popularly held belief is that unionism suffers from a thorough crisis of identity".[33] He seeks to refute this identity crisis thesis by separating cultural and national identity from allegiance to the state. Aughey quotes a loyalist bandsman interviewed in *New Society* about his identity:

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[32] McGarry, J and O'Leary, B Explaining Northern Ireland (Oxford) Blackwell 1995

[33] Aughey, A 1989 Op. cit. p12

Well, I'd like to call myself British, a British person like. But you look deep into it like, I'm Irish...because Northern Ireland like.[34]

Aughey uses this quote to dismiss the "narrow perversity of the politics of identity"[35] which he is convinced the modern British State, and Ulster unionism, has moved beyond.

Cochrane pours scorn on Aughey's interpretation:

Rather than accept the apparently obvious explanation that the individual is profoundly confused about his identity, Aughey chooses to depict the bandsman as a latter-day Platonic philosopher-king.[36]

Cochrane believes that the unionist experience is one of isolation and insecurity which has promoted an identity crisis. He argues:

One of the main problems for unionists in determining their true identity lies not so much in the struggle to understand their own cultural heritage as in coming to terms with where they fit between Britain and Ireland. At the root of their difficulty in comprehending the British/unionist relationship lies the fact that they have taken a political allegiance and transformed it into a cultural one.[37]

In a sense Cochrane's argument echoes Aughey. However, Aughey is trying to argue that a straightforward political preference is forced to define itself in alien terms of cultural and national identity. Cochrane's argument is that unionists have sought to dress up political allegiance in cultural connections to British-ness, whereas in fact they

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[34] quoted in Aughey, A 1989 Op. cit. p15

[35] Aughey, A 1989 Op. cit. p16

[36] Cochrane 2001 Op. cit. p77

[37] Cochrane, F 'Any takers? The isolation of Northern Ireland' Political Studies Vol. 2 No.3 1994[a], p383. Cochrane's thesis is that both communities in Northern Ireland are increasingly isolated as they have failed to grasp changes within the UK and the Republic of Ireland, and changes in the relationship between the two states. See also 'Ourselves Alone' Fortnight March 1994, pp16-18

have a strong degree of cultural distinctiveness, which reflects their political isolation. Outdated unionist ideas of what British-ness is only serve to reinforce this and therefore they cannot share the bonds that keep Scotland, England and Wales within the union. Cochrane avers:

> Unionist expressions of their British-ness, which might have commanded empathy in the nineteenth century, serve to reinforce the cultural alienation of Britain; feeding the desire to maintain the present level of political separation between Northern Ireland and Great Britain.[38]

Within Northern Ireland different regional and national identities are held by both Protestants and Catholics. The 2002 *Northern Ireland Life and Times Survey* showed twenty-five percent of Catholics were willing to say that Northern Irish described them best, whilst sixty-five per-cent chose Irish and ten per-cent chose British.[39] The overlap of British, Irish and Northern-Irish identities is not merely a conundrum for Aughey and Cochrane's loyalist bandsman to wrestle with. Neither is Northern Ireland the only area within the United Kingdom where different national identities are concurrently held, so this 'confusion' cannot be held to be solely a product of Northern Ireland's isolation from either the Republic of Ireland or the rest of the British state.

McBride argues that British-ness is not a homogenous identity but "a plurality of identities brought together by common historical experience".[40] Some of the common bonds, such as empire, have disintegrated since the creation of the Northern Ireland statelet. In addition, as Cochrane is keen to stress, Northern Ireland is geographically separate from the other national groupings of the United Kingdom and has been kept at arm's length in many ways by the British State. It can also be acknowledged that many unionist representations of British-ness are alien to other British citizens. Cochrane presents unionists as physically isolated from the British State and culturally sealed off from modern day notions of British-ness.

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[38] Cochrane, F 1994 [a] Op. cit p384

[39] Northern Ireland Life and Times Survey 2002 ark.ac.uk The question asked was, which of these best describes yourself: British, Irish, Ulster, Northern Irish, Other, European

[40] McBride, I 1996 Op. cit p14

Within the British State there are differences of administrative and legal practices, but Northern Ireland has been subject to distinctly different treatment. Nevertheless, its isolation is not total. Northern Ireland has been fully subject to the British welfare state and the National Health Service. In addition the province receives British media, such as the BBC. When considering cultural isolation, it is apparent that orangeism mystifies many other British citizens. However, unionism cannot be reduced to orangeism and the tenets of monarchy, commonwealth and world war sacrifice have not been completely transcended in favour of a new definition of British-ness.

Presenting unionists as beset by an identity crisis is an over-simplification. It carries the implication that ideas of British-ness and Irish-ness are well defined and subscribed to in full by those who claim these identities. The concurrent holding of different identities is not peculiar to unionists within the United Kingdom. Unionism certainly has internal divisions, but one thing they seem more certain of than ever is their British-ness[41]. That their feelings are not always reciprocated reinforces feelings of insecurity, but this has not forced them to rethink their sense of belonging. That their displays of British-ness can seem a century out of date does not mean that these displays represent in full what all unionists mean when they describe themselves as British.

## 2.3 Class and Unionism

So far this discussion has considered the role of religion and of national identity within unionism. Another important factor is to consider is that of social class. In particular, ideas about how material position and class identity relate to the concept of loyalism must be evaluated before the topic of new loyalism can be introduced.

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[41] Rose's data found that thirty-nine per-cent of Protestants respondents described themselves as British. Rose, R Governing Without Consensus (London) Faber and Faber 1971, p208 The 2001 Northern Ireland Life and Times Survey showed that seventy per-cent of Protestants thought British best described the way they thought of themselves www.ark.ac.uk/nilt/2001

## 2.3.1 Ulster British and Ulster Loyal

One of the most discussed pieces of work on Protestant identity in Northern Ireland is Todd's article on the two traditions of unionist political culture. Todd is at pains to make clear that these are dominant traditions rather than the only possibilities for political culture in unionism. She does not make a neat distinction between two camps but stresses that ideology is the result of several influences and political expression can shift between these dominant strands. She also identifies other tradition such as dissent and socialism.

One tradition is that of the Ulster British which is defined by its "primary 'imagined community' of Great Britain and its secondary regional patriotism for Northern Ireland. It professes liberal values".[42] The other tradition, Ulster loyalism, is more introspective, seeing fellow Protestants of Northern Ireland as the primary 'imagined community'.[43] The Ulster British tradition generates self-esteem from the achievements of the British State, such as a liberal political culture, fighting for the common good in the Second World War, and the creation of the welfare state. Ulster loyalism reproduces itself and identifies with cultural practices such as religion and marching rituals. Evangelical Protestantism is important, not because it is the sole basis of identity, but because the Ulster loyalist tradition entwines it with politics to make sense of insecurity and beleaguerment, creating a simple battle between good and evil.

Todd presents these traditions as underpinned by an ideological structure, by which she means:

> The inter-related and often unspoken cultural assumptions and beliefs which are reproduced not primarily by state action or elite manipulation but by typical modes of experience and practice in the society, which are themselves

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[42] Todd, J 'Two traditions in unionist political culture' Irish Political Studies 1987 Vol. 2, p1

[43] Anderson, B Imagined Communities: Reflection on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism (London) Verso 1991. Anderson argues that the ideology of nationalism dictates that we feel bonds with co-nationals we have never met, with ancestors, and with members of the nation yet to be born. These bonds are the basis of the nation as an imagined community.

conditioned by wide socio-economic structures.[44]

Todd sees these structures cutting across class lines, across integrationist and devolutionist unionism, and across any left-right political spectrum.

Farrington states that a more layered approach should be taken to analysing divisions within unionism rather than seeking an essence or a dichotomy.[45] He believes that Todd's analysis cannot account for the Orange Order's role in the UUP or the secular element of DUP. However, Todd's project is different to Farrington's who is seeking to present a framework whereby a number of divisions within unionism are set in an organisational context. Todd presents these traditions, not simply as the essence of unionism or as a dichotomy, but as "ideological poles" to which individuals gravitate.[46]

Todd presents these traditions as cutting across social class. However, her argument does suggest the importance of socio-economic factors. Todd states:

> Ulster British ideology is reproduced in their life paths which take them to Great Britain and beyond to further their education, business and careers, and in time of war.[47]

Whilst Todd includes bodies such as trade unions in her examples of institutions that bind the Ulster British to this wider community, these opportunities for mobility do tend to be less open to unionists lower down the socio-economic scale. This suggests that the freedom and mobility of the unionist middle class means that its relationship with the state is bound to be more positive.

Coulter argues that the unionist middle class has found itself in a paradoxical situation where:

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[44] Todd, J 1987 Op. cit, p1-2

[45] Farrington, C 2001Op. cit.

[46] Todd, J 1987 Op. cit p2

[47] Todd, J 1988 Op. cit p11

The execution of public policy over the past two decades has simultaneously nurtured the political alienation of middle class unionists from the British state and established their increasingly rewarding instrumental dependence upon the metropolis.[48]

According to Coulter, Northern Ireland's middle class has been pulled in two different directions since direct rule was imposed. The British State has not integrated Northern Ireland but has kept the province at a distance. At the same time the public sector in Northern Ireland has not been subject to the same reduction that it has in other areas of the United Kingdom and it is in fact the main source of employment.[49]

Todd's assessment of the Ulster British tradition seems to suggest that its identification with its British imagined community is less problematic than is actually the case. The British State simultaneously seems to draw Northern Ireland closer and push it away. Todd suggests that Ulster British ideology "is not a closed ideological system."[50] However, it seems wrong to picture 'Ulster British' unionism on a smooth trajectory from a British to Irish sense of community. It also seems too simplistic to link middle class mobility with increased security and generosity towards ideas of Irish-ness. From his qualitative interviews Cochrane offers the example of Nigel Dodds from the DUP as someone who saw the link with Great Britain as a means of preserving the Protestant cultural ethos of Northern Ireland. Cochrane sees Dodds, a lawyer with a degree from Cambridge, as part of a group of "young, urban, upwardly mobile middle class Protestants [who are] not changing their political philosophies in line with the growth

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[48] Coulter, C 'Direct rule and the unionist middle classes' from English, R and Walker, G Unionism in Modern Ireland (Basingstoke) MacMillan 1996 p177. A similar picture of the unionist middle class is presented in Coulter's chapter "The culture of contentment: the practical beliefs and practices of the unionist middle classes" from Shirlow, P and McGovern, M Who are the People? Unionism, Protestantism and Loyalism in Northern Ireland (London) Pluto 1997, pp114-139

[49] Coulter estimates that four out of ten employees in Northern Ireland are employed by the British state. A further three out of ten employees are indirectly dependent on the British state for their continued employment. This means that "the era of direct rule, therefore, has served to establish the British state as the absolute fulcrum of the British economy" 1996 Op. cit p174

[50] Todd 1987 Op. cit, p21

of their material prosperity".[51]

When examining the prospects for change in Ulster Loyalism, Todd believes that transformation will be difficult as loyalist ideology remains self-contained and "no new evidence or argument can prove that humiliation won't follow from loyalists letting down their guard".[52] Todd suggests that change will have to be brought to bear by external forces as loyalists have been so resistant to change. In particular there has been very little redefinition of political action along class lines.

Todd's analysis is over-reliant on differences in social class between the two bases of these traditions. As Finlayson asserts "political identity cannot be simply read off the social structure".[53] In particular, Todd places too much emphasis on the material security of the Ulster British tradition which she sees can generate a greater ease with ideas of Irishness. This is important to bear in mind when considering the relationship between loyalism and social class. When looking at possible connections between economic insecurity and political isolation it must be noted that to infer that prosperity and mobility are in themselves a 'cure' for the introspective nature of loyalism would be erroneous.

## 2.3.2 An Ontology of Class?

Another factor to consider when examining the relationship of loyalism to social class is that it is not just a matter of socio-economic indicators. The holding of class as an identity and the importance of that identity to individuals is also salient. In his article on the PUP and UDP Price says that a "fundamental question for the PUP and the UDP is whether or not the political base they hope to build on actually exists. Does it make sense any longer to refer to the Protestant working class?"[54]

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[51] Cochrane 2001 Op. cit, p44

[52] Todd 1987 Op. cit p20

[53] Finlayson, A 'Loyalist political identity after peace' Capital and Class 1999 Autumn No.69, p48

[54] Price, J 'Political change and the Protestant working class' Race and Class 1995 Vol.37, p63

Northern Ireland has been subject to the same economic developments that have taken place within the rest of the United Kingdom, such as de-industrialisation and casualisation of labour practices. This makes the question Price poses a very pertinent one.

McAuley's exploration of loyalism is based on the premise that it is the ideology that governs the actions of the Protestant working class. McAuley does not present identity as reducible to economic position in the social structure. However he sees ideology as a phenomenon constructed by individuals within economic and geographical constraints to make sense of their experience. He argues that the Protestant working class are exposed to a limited range of ideas from which they construct a 'common sense world view' based on four central concepts of identity: "community, national identity, sectarianism and class identity".[55] Given the decline in the traditional heavy industries that formed the basis of Protestant working class employment it should be noted that class identity persists despite these major economic changes.

Coulter cites British Social Attitudes surveys as evidence that class is still a salient factor in how people view their identity. He advances the theory that class is partly an ontological state, rather than being strictly defined by occupation. Coulter believes this ontology of class means that it can be considered in the same terms as an ethnicity, generating a similar sense of belonging. However this does not mean that class replaces ethnicity as a mode of identity:

> Social class represents an ontological state and cultural form fashioned by the literal everyday experiences of social actors. In segmented societies such as Northern Ireland, however, social reality is mediated not only by class but by ethnic identity also. As a result, the particular forms of cultural expression employed by social aggregates in the province will inevitably betray the influence of both class and ethnic sentiment.[56]

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[55] McAuley, JW The Politics of Identity (Aldershot) Ashgate 1994 [a], p175

[56] Coulter, C 'Class, ethnicity and political identity in Northern Ireland' Irish Journal of Sociology Vol.4 1994 [b] p19

What this suggests is that, in Northern Ireland, a sense of class is not drawn just from economic status but from community and cultural practices and that class interacts with ethnic identity to define a sense of belonging. This implies that class and ethnic identity are both salient in political and cultural expression and that they interact with each other as factors that shape people's perception of the realities of life in Northern Ireland. This argument is important because, as will now be shown, it has been argued by more than one commentator that this strong sense of class has not promoted a sense of unity that would erode the strength of sectarian values. Instead these values and beliefs complement each other. As Graham puts it:

> Working class (increasingly non-working) Protestant identity can be defined along two schizophrenic axes. An element of class politics does exist, reflected in a radical unionist consciousness which traditionally depended on, as it continues to do, the alienation of the Protestant working class from its leaders. In general, however, that class consciousness has been at best diluted, at worst subsumed by a sectarianism derived from the sacred sense of Protestantism[57]

It is this relationship between class identity and sectarianism which must be considered before a definition of loyalism can be formulated.

## 2.3.3 Socialism and Sectarianism

Price states that "an attachment to socialist values does not in itself clear the mind or the collective class consciousness of sectarian values and attitudes".[58] McAuley presents both values as existing within Protestant working class ideology, which, he says, is not "as some would have us believe, uni-dimensional; based on sectarianism. Rather it is best understood as a dual consciousness where sectarianism does not exclude labourism

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[57] Graham, B 'Ulster, a representation of place yet to be imagined' from Shirlow, P and McGovern, M Who are the People? Unionism, Protestantism and Loyalism in Northern Ireland (London) Pluto 1997, p39

[58] Price, J 1995 Op. cit p61

or vice versa".[59]

McAuley acknowledges other divisions within Northern Ireland's working class, but sees sectarianism as "the crucial form of relationship of domination and subordination which divides the working class."[60] Along with McCormack he presents "the strength of the ideological reproduction of sectarianism within both nationalist and unionist blocs"[61] as severely divisive.

Finlayson points out that the working class of Northern Ireland is not an anomaly and that it should not be implied that its members are unusual for not deciding they have collective interests that must be pursued as a political priority.[62] The divisions McAuley touches on, such as "gender, age and employment patterns"[63] would remain if the power of sectarianism was curtailed, which makes it problematic to assert that it is the element that prevents class unity. However, one does not have to view sectarianism as an elite tool for disorganising the working class to accept that "sectarian consciousness has not negated other forms of consciousness, such as class, or vice versa. Rather these co-exist within the same world view and within the same political parameters".[64]

Coulter has considered how sectarianism interacts with other possible ideologies and concludes that the ability of sectarianism to accommodate other political identities allows it to endure. He concludes:

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[59] McAuley, JW The Politics of Identity (Aldershot) Ashgate 1994, p52 McAuley also makes this dual consciousness argument with McCormack in the chapter 'The Protestant working class in Northern Ireland since 1930' from Hutton, S and Stewart, P Ireland's Histories (London) Routledge 1991 pp114-128

[60] McAuley, JW 1994 [a] p181

[61] McAuley, JW & McCormack, J 'The hound of Ulster and the re-writing of Irish history' Etudes Irlandaises December 1990, p149

[62] Finlayson, A 1999 Op. cit.

[63] McAuley, JW 1994 [a] p181

[64] McAuley, JW 'A process of surrender? Loyalist perceptions of a settlement' from Anderson, J & Goodman, J Dis/Agreeing Ireland: Contexts, Obstacles, Hopes (London) Pluto 1998, p204

The sectarianism which besets Northern Ireland should not be conceived as an expression of personal pathology, nor as a phenomenon which exists and operates purely in the realm of the ideal and the cultural. On the contrary, the ethno-religious divisions which exist in the province should be understood as having roots in the material realities of Northern society.[65]

Coulter presents a situation where sectarianism binds itself to political demands making them a zero-sum game: for one side to gain the other must concede. This reinforces conflict between the two communities. He gives the example of employment, where Catholic demands for fair employment legislation seems to Protestants to be a gain for the other side made at the expense of their jobs.

Reviewing these assessments of class identity and politics, it is apparent that more than one analysis of Northern Irish society concludes that sectarian social relations are not a substitute for class-consciousness and collective action. Rather sectarianism accommodates and interacts with a strong self-defined class identity, which means that social issues can generate as much conflict as constitutional ones. This serves to reinforce the binary division of loyalist thought and maintain hostility between the two communities.

2.3.4 Loyalism as Supremacism

The persistence of sectarianism means that it shapes how the distribution of social goods is viewed by both of the main groupings in Northern Ireland. Loyalists seek to resist making concessions by which nationalists would be seen to be gaining. Literature produced regarding loyalist identity explains this by reference to insecurity rather than superiority. Loyalists are engaged in a battle for supremacy because the alternative is annihilation. Todd dissects the meaning of dominance for loyalists:

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[65] Coulter, C 1994 [b] Op. cit, p5

The ideological structure of Ulster loyalism is such that loyalists see dominance as the only means of preserving their identity. It is not simply Protestants' desire to hold on to material or even status advantages that explains Ulster loyalist practices although this is an important factor...It is because dominatory practices are perceived as the only alternative to humiliation that they are fought for to the last. And to the extent that they continue, they reproduce the binary structure of Ulster loyalist thought.[66]

Nelson refutes the notion that loyalism is a supremacist ideology, claiming that:

The very people who repeat cliches about Catholics' reluctance to work or subservience to the Church will often envy what they see as Catholics' ability to 'get on' and their greater capacity for independent social and political action. The phrases used about Irish unity suggest few can even picture a situation where they will not be annexed, repressed or submerged.[67]

McAuley detects this fear of destruction in the current peace process, where "many loyalists perceive the whole 'peace process', the supposed concessions to the IRA and the British government's perceived duplicity, as yet further examples of a dynamic which consistently undermines their fundamental social and political identity".[68]

Price lays stress upon the economic insecurity of the Protestant working class. With the marginal privileges of the Stormont era having been eroded, changes in employment have meant the loss of full-time unionised jobs and the growth of the part-time service sector, which disproportionately recruits female workers. In addition, Price cites the low educational attainment by Protestant working class males as a factor in shutting off avenues of employment.[69]

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[66] Todd, 1987 Op. cit, p11

[67] Nelson, S Ulster's Uncertain Defenders (Belfast) Appletree Press 1984, p13

[68] McAuley, JW 1998 Op. cit p199

[69] Price, J 1995 Op. cit

What this suggests is a wider loyalist fear and insecurity which means that loyalists must not make any concessions to nationalists. Given the growing exclusion of sections of a Protestant working class who, as McAuley argues, construct their ideology within the parameters of loyalism,[70] this insecurity and desire to maintain dominance as the only means of survival, is manifested in more areas than constitutional preference. Whilst the binary structure of loyalist thought imbues the idea of 'loyal' with superior virtues that the rebellious other cannot possess, loyalists both fear and envy the qualities they perceive in the actions of nationalists.


## 2.3.5 Definitions of Loyalism


McAuley states that "at its most fundamental level, loyalism has always rested on its sense of separateness and difference, of an identification with 'Ulster' as a distinct political territory, and 'British-ness' as a label for its political and cultural expression."[71] McAuley makes clear that he regards loyalism not as a solely working class ideology, but as the ideology that frames the actions of the Protestant working class. This distinction is important because unionist identity cannot be split into two discrete blocs of haves and have nots. Material deprivation reinforces uncertainty and insecurity and encourages introspection but it cannot be implied that this dynamic of mistrust and hostility is reducible to economic position.

What emerges from this literature review is that loyalism relies on a binary ideological structure that pitches it into perpetual conflict. The main division is between loyal and disloyal which puts Ulster loyalists a cut above both the rebellion of nationalists and the duplicity of successive British governments. This allows loyalists to make sense of the fact that they are British and that they are often in conflict with the British State.

Loyalism draws on evangelical Protestantism, which creates a narrative of the virtuous and honest, who are continually plagued by, but eventually triumphant over, evil

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[70] McAuley, JW 1998, Op. cit

[71] McAuley, JW 'The Ulster loyalist parties' Etudes Irlandaises Autumn 1997, p122

enemies. However, this has not obscured secular political activity or identities amongst working class loyalists. This sense of class identity and inequality has not in turn marginalized sectarian perceptions of a battle for scarce resources that the other side must not win.

A final observation to be drawn from the literature on loyalism is that emphasis is put on people not place. Graham argues that unionists find it difficult to connect themselves to the land and therefore to any sense of Irish-ness and that consequently unionist historiography rests on key events rather than a sense of place.[72] This means that loyalism can picture Ulster as its home without feeling pressured to come to terms with others who live there who do not share their values.

Loyalism can be defined as a unionist ideology that seeks to shore up the presence of British Protestants in Ulster through the self-reliance of the people. This community is reaffirmed in the public display of rituals that link historical struggles to the present day. Loyalists see themselves as engaged in the battle for material and constitutional security, which must be brought about by domination of the 'rebels' because the alternative is oblivion.

## 2.4 New Loyalism

McAuley has examined how the DUP has reached out from its rural evangelical roots to attract support from the Protestant working class. In addition to constituency work on matters such as housing, the DUP appeals to sections of the electorate because it expresses a loyalist message of continued resistance. McAuley observes that:

> The DUP effectively positions its members within loyalist culture and imposes specific meanings onto contemporary political events. Central to all of this is an idea that entering negotiations is embarking upon a journey that leads to a 'slippery slope' and a spiral towards and all-Ireland.[73]

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[72] Graham, B 1997, Op. cit.
[73] McAuley, JW 'Very British rebels: politics and discourse within contemporary Ulster Unionism' from Bagguely, P Transforming Politics, Power and Resistance (Basingstoke) MacMillan 1999, p118

However, McAuley argues that "support from Protestant workers for the DUP has never been pre-determined. It had to be won, and once won, it had to be sustained".[74] Disaffection from the unionist mainstream did not automatically deliver votes to the Democratic Unionist Party. McAuley depicts the Ulster Workers' Council strike as a defining moment due to his belief that:

> The widespread involvement of the Protestant working class caused many to rethink. It was clearly recognised by sections of the Protestant working class as having marked a distinct break with what had gone before...Although unionist hegemony was rapidly reconstructed during the strike, inherent class tensions quickly re-emerged.[75]

McAuley argues that this process of rethinking publicly re-emerged during the negotiations that led to the Good Friday Agreement. McAuley believes that "the 'peace process' has precipitated a need on the parts of some key elements within unionism to reassess their position, and to participate in a process of self-examination" and that from within working class unionism "there is now a much deeper questioning of social and political values, and the contemporary position they occupy within the social structure".[76] This process of reassessment is seen by McAuley as a challenge to the DUP's preoccupation with stalling change. The process is also threatened by the DUP who seek to impose the 'truth' about negotiation, which is that is can only end in betrayal.

This process of re-examination and questioning seems to be the basis of what could be called a new loyalism. Reviewing literature that considers this subject it seems there are three areas that embody this process. These three areas will now be outlined along with the issues they raise for defining and researching new loyalism.

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[74] McAuley, JW 1994 [a] Op. cit. p58

[75] McAuley, JW 'Review of *Fourteen May Days*' Irish Studies Review 1994, No.8 p46

[76] McAuley, JW '(Re)Constructing Ulster loyalism? Political responses to the 'peace process' Irish Journal of Sociology 1996 Vol.6 p148

## 2.4.1 Re-writing the past

Price detects a process of re-examination of the past taking place within Protestant working class communities. He sees two different pasts being unearthed during this process. One past is a history of socialist activity taking place within these communities. The other rests on pre-history and the uncovering of pictish ancestors who were established in the north-east of Ireland before the advent of the Gaels. Price sees the first past as potentially progressive and the second as promoting an exclusivist Ulster Identity. Price links the PUP to the first new past, stating that "in addition to criticising the UUP for fifty years of misrule, the PUP argues that mainstream unionism has failed even by its own standards. By promoting a sectarian state, the unionist party encouraged Catholic alienation".[77]

The potential importance of this re-examination stems from Graham's argument that unionist identity rests on key events rather than a connection with territory. This accords with Porter's idea of a "grand cultural unionist narrative"[78] in which these events form the basis of a tale of deceit and betrayal, which leaves the Protestant community in Northern Ireland reliant only on itself. The revisionism of new loyalist parties has the potential to tell a different story, one that could redefine traditional ideas of enemies and allies.

Criticising mainstream unionism is not in itself new. As was outlined in the introductory chapter, loyalism has often manifested hostility towards the elite. What could be new is the use of that that loyalist dissent to criticise the mainstream for dividing loyalists from nationalists, rather than not protecting loyalists from nationalist demands. A new historiography could impact on contemporary political alliances. It is the nature of this attitude to the past and how it informs current policies and reactions to contemporary events that needs to be considered in relation to the idea of a new loyalism.

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[77] Price, J 1995 Op. cit p62

## 2.4.2 Who are the people?

Leading on from this revision of the past, is revision of what constitutes loyal and disloyal. Like McAuley, Finlayson sees the peace process as an opportunity for reassessment because the institutions create a new challenge to loyalist support for the status quo and create a space "wherein loyalist identity may be re-configured and re-articulated."[79] Finlayson argues that populism is a defining item of Northern Ireland discourse, meaning that politicians have concerned themselves with defining who the people are and then claiming that they are the defenders of the peoples' rights. Finlayson shows how, using traditional loyalist language of betrayal and defence of the people, the PUP demonstrate an understanding of multiple identities that are subject to transformation. In particular there is an emphasis on representing a previously marginalized (Protestant) working class. Finlayson believes this discourse currently lacks coherence because elements of class, national identity and ethnicity have not been reconciled.[80]

Literature on the UDP and the UDA focuses on a different aspect of identity, that of a separate Ulster heritage. McAuley says that the UDP nominally based its politics on the constitutional solutions proposed by the New Ulster Research Group. However he identifies the core of UDA politics as the definition of an exclusivist Ulster identity, drawing on sources such as Ian Adamson's work on the Cruthin[81] and the Ulster legends of Irish mythical history. Cuchulainn is of particular importance and McAuley avers that for the UDA he "was projected as a proto-type member defending the border against the ancient enemy".[82]

Aughey concurs that there is a strong exclusivist component to 'the people' of Ulster as imagined by the UDA. However, Aughey argues that there is also a recognition of a

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[78] Porter, N Rethinking Unionism (Belfast) Blackstaff 1996, p87

[79] Finlayson, A 1999 Op. cit p52

[80] Finlayson, A 'Discourse and loyalist identity' from Shirlow & McGovern 1997 Op. cit. pp72-94

[81] Adamson, I The Cruthin (Bangor) Pretani Press 1974. Adamson traces the movements of the Cruthin, an aboriginal people, who he asserts crossed over from Ireland to Scotland, making the Plantation a form of homecoming. See also The Ulster People (Bangor) Pretani Press 1991

[82] McAuley, JW 'From loyal solders to political spokespersons: a political history of a loyalist paramilitary group in Northern Ireland' Etudes Irlandaises 1996 No.21, p171

relationship of "equality in adversity"[83] that could possibly admit Catholics to an Ulster nation.

It seems that the UDP and the PUP entered the peace process with different ideas of who they spoke for. The PUP were keen to anchor themselves in the loyalist working class, whereas the UDP's rhetoric centred on the people of Ulster. Given the UDP's disintegration, it is important to find contrasts between the two parties as possible reasons for the poorer electoral showing by the UDP. Given that this is one of the main areas of difference focused on in what literature has been produced, the UDP and UDA's notions about Ulster nationalism seem to be an important part of testing the party against the two models of new loyalism.

## 2.4.3 Marginalizing sectarianism

A theme emerging from this review is that it is a contention of many commentators that sectarianism persists as a 'common-sense' means of understanding daily life in Northern Ireland. It seems to follow that a truly new loyalist movement would engage with this issue and seek to, in McAuley's word's "eradicate, or at least marginalize, sectarianism as a fundamental organising principle".[84]

McAuley saw the UDP and PUP's response to the peace process as to create dynamism and space for negotiation within loyalist politics:

> That is not to say that those within the PUP or UDP, in taking this position, have
> superseded sectarianism or replaced it. Rather it should be seen within the context
> of negotiating the ideological terms within contemporary loyalism...It is the
> negotiation of this settlement which will determine the loyalist reaction, not just

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[83] Aughey, A 'Between exclusion and recognition: the politics of the UDA' from O'Day, A Dimensions of Irish Terrorism (Aldershot) Dartmouth Publishing, p86

[84] McAuley, JW 'A process of surrender? Loyalist perceptions of a settlement' from Anderson, J and Goodman, J Dis/Agreeing Ireland: Contexts, Obstacles, Hopes (London) Pluto 1998, p204

to the contemporary 'peace process' but also the future of Northern Ireland.[85]

Given the emphasis on the persistence of sectarianism, a new loyalist manifesto would have to address sectarian attitudes and perceptions, rather than assume that a social democratic programme would in in itself superseded sectarianism. The manifestos of both parties along with public statements and interview data must therefore be analysed with this project in mind.

## 2.5 Conclusions

Cochrane avers that "the diversity of the unionist ideology's composition is both its greatest strength and its weakness".[86] Since the imposition of direct rule in 1972 this diversity has become more apparent. Unionists remain certain that Northern Ireland is a legitimate part of the United Kingdom and this corresponds to a strongly proclaimed British identity. However there are internal divisions within unionism. There are disagreements over the best form of administration for the province. There are secular and religious impulses that can sometimes be articulated in the same political message. There are liberal and pluralist values as well as exclusivist and hostile elements.

Loyalism is a populist unionist ideology that has dominated the political activity of the Protestant working class, although this does not mean it is defined by or restricted to one social class. What is suggested by McAuley, Todd and Price is that material insecurity and deprivation reinforces the context in which the Protestant working class construct their view of the world. This worldview is also shaped by the persistence of sectarianism, which McAuley says is "located in a strength of common identity and high levels of social segregation".[87] This legitimates the simple extremes of loyalist discourse often articulated in the evangelical imagery of good battling evil.

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[85] McAuley, JW 'The Ulster loyalist political parties: towards a new respectability?' Etudes Irlandaises 1997 Autumn, p127

[86] Cochrane, F 2001 Op. cit. pix

[87] McAuley, JW 'Cuchullain and an RPG-7: the ideology and politics of the UDA' from Hughes, E (ed) Culture and Politics in Northern Ireland 1960-1990 (Milton Keynes) Open University Press 1991, p47

Assessments of new loyalism, such as that of Finlayson, suggest that the peace process and resulting institutions have created a space by which other forms of political activity and identity could emerge and draw on the urban support base of the DUP. McAuley concurs with this view, arguing that one of the most striking developments surrounding the PUP is not their message "but rather the ideological space which has been created within unionism and loyalism to allow the PUP to openly express and find support for such notions".[88]

This review of literature covering unionism, loyalism and new loyalism suggests possible areas of novelty in the political programme of new loyalist groupings to be considered in this thesis: historical revisionism, identity politics and the erosion of sectarianism. These areas relate to the ideal model of new loyalism created for the purposes of testing the overall hypothesis. The development of this model is also the subject of the next chapter, which will draw on literature pertaining to accommodating different national groups within the state.

What is also suggested by this review is that there needs to be discussion of the nature of Protestant working class identification and solidarity, especially given the changes that have eroded the traditional industrial modes of employment in Northern Ireland. Both the UDP and the PUP hoped to gain votes in this area, which necessitated drawing support away from the DUP. The strength and nature of the appeal of both new loyalism and 'no' loyalism to this target group is therefore a factor that would provide an indication of the long-term prospects of any new loyalist project.

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[88] McAuley, JW 'The emergence of new loyalism' from Coakley, J (ed) Changing Shades of Orange and Green: Redefining the Union and Nation in Contemporary Ireland (Dublin) University College Dublin Press 2003, p110

# CHAPTER THREE
## A CIVIC LOYALISM?

### 3.1 Introduction

How can citizenship be combined with the co-existence of different cultural groups which only communicate between themselves with the deafness of resentment?[1]

As was outlined in the introductory chapter, two models of new loyalism have been constructed for the purposes of testing the Ulster Democratic Party and the Progressive Unionist Party. The literature review in the previous chapter considered existing literature on the parties and the possible definitions of what was novel about their agendas. From this was drawn elements of a positive model of new loyalism, relating to the creation of a social democratic political movement that could play a part in transcending sectarian social relations. This chapter completes the framework for testing the concept of new loyalism

This task requires consideration of the work of Norman Porter.[2] He dissects what he sees as the two main perspectives within unionist thinking, cultural and liberal unionism. He identifies weaknesses within them that undermine the coherence of the case they make for the perpetuation of the union between Northern Ireland and Great Britain. He offers his own form of unionist political and cultural expression contained in the concept of civic unionism. Civic unionism rests on the idea that Northern Ireland is a unique place within the British Isles, which requires cultural *and* political recognition that there are two national groups on the territory.

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[1]Leca, J 'Questions on Citizenship' From Mouffe, C <u>Dimensions of Radical Democracy: Pluralism, Citizenship, Community</u> (London) Verso 1992, p30

[2] Porter, N <u>Rethinking Unionism</u> (Belfast) Blackstaff 1996 and <u>The Elusive Quest: Reconciliation in Northern Ireland</u> (Belfast) Blackstaff 2003

In order to provide a critique of Porter's work and consider whether it can be used as the basis of constructing a model of civic loyalism, his work will be placed in the context of a wider debate around ideas of multicultural citizenship. This debate focuses on two questions. Firstly is it possible for a state to be liberal and democratic in character if certain rights are granted on a group, rather than an individual, basis? Secondly, will recognising the political and territorial claims of certain groups destroy or preserve allegiance to the state?

These concerns partly inform the debate on consociational (or power-sharing) political settlements. Consociational democracy is defined by Lijphart as a "culturally divided democracy which is stabilised by an agreement among the leaders of the different subcultures to join in the government of the country".[3] Lijphart advocates consociationalism as a means of ensuring sufficient consensus in societies that are fractured along cleavages such as ethnicity, religion and ideology, and which lack cross-cutting cleavages of equal political resonance. Opponents of consociational settlements argue that instead of promoting moderation and consensus such proposals encourage the entrenchment of ethnic identities and ignore the possibilities for reconciliation offered by common citizenship and a civil society that can support the pursuit of a plurality of interests. Taylor, for example, argues that "it is neither obvious nor logical that ethno-nationalism can be cured by prescribing more of it through constitutional engineering".[4]

Examining these debates puts Porter's work in a wider theoretical context because he argues that institutionalised recognition of difference within Northern Ireland is required as a first step to encouraging nationalists to recognise a commonality of interests with supporters of unionism. It is also important because the parties that are the subject of this study were signatories to a consociational agreement, whilst espousing political programmes that were meant, in part, to encourage political

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[3] Lijphart, A 'The Northern Ireland problem: cases, theories and solutions' British Journal of Political Science Vol. 5 1975, p99

[4] Taylor, R 'consociation or social transformation?' from McGarry, J ed Northern Ireland and the Divided World: Post-Agreement Northern Ireland (Oxford) Oxford University Press 2001, p37

activity along the cleavage of social class. Balancing recognition of difference with encouragement of common interest is the project of Porter's civic unionism and in evaluating Porter's work it will be considered if this could be the basis of a civic brand of loyalism.

## 3.2 Citizenship

Liberal democracy is a system of representative government by majority rule in which some individual rights are nonetheless protected from interference by the state and cannot be restricted even by an electoral majority.[5]

It should be made explicit that this chapter is concerned with the politics of liberal democracy. As the above quotation shows, liberal democratic states protect certain rights accorded to individuals from the vicissitudes of electoral politics. Literature concerning the tension between these rights and group rights uses these liberal norms as the template for a just society. These are conflicting views as to whether according rights to certain cultural or national group destabilises a constitutional framework based on individual rights, or whether it can aid equality between individuals as regards the ability to utilise the protection and opportunities for participation offered by civil rights.

These individuals are citizens – they have the one type of membership that officially accords them personhood.[6] A state may offer protection to children or to visitors to the territory, but it is only citizens who enjoy political rights and obligations. Walzer offers a basic definition of citizenship:

A citizen is, most simply, a member of a political community, entitled to whatever prerogatives and encumbered with whatever responsibilities are

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[5]  Dunleavy, P & O'Leary, B Theories of the State: The Politics of Liberal Democracy (Basingstoke) MacMillan 1987, p3

[6]  Janoski, T Citizenship and Civil Society: A Framework of Rights and Obligations in Liberal, Traditional and Social Democratic Regimes (Cambridge) Cambridge University Press 1998

attached to membership.[7]

By this definition a citizen must fulfil certain duties (for example, the payment of taxes or military service). Additionally they are protected by legal and civil rights and are free to exercise their political rights.

However, in tracing the history of citizenship and its meanings, Walzer detects a debate about the nature of citizenship. It can be presented as a means by which members of a political community fulfil their basic obligations in return for state protection, which guarantees their ability to pursue freedom and happiness in the private sphere. Alternatively, it can be defined as the obligation of regular participation, required to maintain citizenship as the primary loyalty and identity within that community.

Leca traces the evolution of these passive and active definitions from two positions in classic political theory. There is the idea of citizenship as a contract and of citizenship as participation.[8] Held too, examines the development of these two perspectives. He demonstrates that early liberal works, such as those by Hobbes and Locke, centred on the idea of individuals making a contract with the state for protection. Later writings by theorists such as J.S. Mill, argued that people must participate in political life because this creation of direct interest in the activity of government was required as the "basis for an involved, informed and developing citizenry".[9]

Turner denotes this difference in definitions of citizenship as between top down where individuals are the recipients of rights and bottom up where they are the bearers of rights.[10] Rather than locating this in the development of political theory he contrasts

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[7]   Walzer, M 'Citizenship' from Ball, T Farr, J Hanson, R <u>Political Innovation and Conceptual Change</u> (Cambridge) Cambridge University Press 1989, p211

[8]   Leca, J 1992 Op cit

[9]   Held, D 'Central perspectives on the modern state' from McLennan, G Held, D & Hall, S <u>The Idea of the Modern State</u> (Milton Keynes) Open University Press 1983, p44

[10]  Turner, B 'Outline of a Theory of Citizenship' From Mouffe, C 1992 Op. cit.

the gradualist nature of the British state in expanding its body of citizens, with the violent struggle for rights in France creating this bottom-up momentum for membership.

These different versions of citizenship relate to perspectives on the relationship between an individual and both the state and their fellow citizens. Contractarian definitions focus on creating space between us and the state implying that many of our desires can be pursued in arenas other than the state. Participatory definitions do not preclude this pursuit. However, in participatory definitions citizenship is the most important identity we possess and constitutes more than membership of a society, entailing benefits and obligations. We must participate regularly in the political institutions and decision-making processes of the state in order to earn our citizenship.

Participatory definitions are criticised for being impractical. Walzer points out that the society where citizenship worked best as the primary identity and focus for the fulfilment of demands and obligations was the Greek city-state of Athens. This was a relatively small community, which excluded the female and enslaved sections of the population. Modern states would lack the "moral unity" of the small and homogenous band of Athens citizenry.[11]

The impractical nature of participatory concepts of citizenship would lead to some losing their membership. Full and constant participation in political office and decision making would be unworkable. Only an elite would have the time and resources to take part. Those who did not would be shirking their obligations to the point where they could be seen as renouncing their citizenship.

Passive definitions of citizenship could be construed as inadequate. Janoski argues that passive recipients of limited rights could be found living within a benevolent dictatorship.[12] We require rights to participate, to make decisions and seek the

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[11] Walzer, M 1989 Op. cit, p214

[12] Janoski, T 1998, Op. cit.

settlings of our claims by the state. However, taking into account that we are rarely active, Walzer argues that "we must have a state open to our sometime involvement" rather than a state that enforces a high degree of participation as an obligation.[13]

The nature and extent of an individual's participation should not define whether they are a citizen. However, an active element of citizenship is seen as part of the "ensemble of moral qualities" that informs the modern understanding of the term.[14] Skinner relates this moral quality to the idea of civic duty whereby "we can only hope to enjoy a maximum of our own individual liberty if we do not place that value above the pursuit of the common good".[15] A sense of civic duty is lauded as a guard against ills such as corruption and tyranny, which could reverse the endowment of rights. Bearing this in mind it seems that even if we do not continually invoke our rights of participation the idea of citizenship should be valued and protected by a reasonable degree of activity by members of political community. A possible area for this activity is the space between private life and the state known as civil society.

## 3.3  Citizenship and Civil Society

The words 'civil society' name the space of un-coerced human association and also the set of relational networks - formed for the sake of family, faith, interest, and ideology - that fill that space.[16]

Walzer's definition of civil society at first seems to describe the separation of society from the state, that it is where people pursue interests and identity that are important to them in a private manner, free of state interference. According to Pierson, civil society "has been used to define a realm outside of, often contrasting with or indeed

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[13] Walzer, M 'The civil society argument' From Mouffe, C (ed) 1992 Op. cit, p105

[14] Leca, J 1992 Op. cit, p18

[15] Skinner, Q 'On justice, the common good and the priority of liberty' From Mouffe, C (ed) 1992 Op. cit, p221

[16] Walzer, M 1992 Op. cit p89

counter-balancing the jurisdiction of that state".[17] However, as Walzer examines the concept further, he presents state and civil society as inter-linked rather than separate entities. He argues that the state "frames civil society and occupies space within it".[18]

Civil society and the concept of citizenship interact in two ways. First, as Walzer argues, citizenship is the pre-eminent membership within the state because of the state's power. Therefore, though we may rarely take an active role in the state we require the participatory element of citizenship to protect us from tyranny. However, rights such as the right to free assembly enable us to pursue many of our desires and claims at levels other than the state. Space for this activity can be found in the relational networks of civil society. It is suggested that this ongoing sub-state activity can help generate the sense of civic duty where "citizens living within the nooks and crannies of civil society are obliged to exercise vigilance in preventing each other and their political rulers from abusing their powers and violating the spirit of the commonwealth".[19]

Secondly, Dworkin argues that one of the key tenets of liberalism is that there is no one definition of the good life.[20] Liberty is maximised by allowing the pursuit of one's own definition of the good life. Walzer argues that civil society is the best forum for testing and pursuing versions of the good life, rather than attempting to create a communitarian concept of citizenship, which would mean that the state would impose an unsupportable number of common ends on members of the political community. A strong and vibrant civil society would therefore maintain the legitimacy of the state and the faith of its members in the value of citizenship.

However, Kymlicka and Norman suggest that to claim civil society breeds civic virtue "is an empirical claim, for which there is little hard evidence one way or the other. It

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[17] Pierson, C The Modern State (London) Routledge 1996, p 67

[18] Walzer, M 1992 Op. cit p103

[19] Keane, J Civil Society - Old Images, New Visions (Cambridge) Polity Press 1998, p88

[20] Dworkin, R Taking Rights Seriously (London) Duckworth 1977

is an old and venerable view, but it is not obviously true".[21] They argue that there is no method for quantifying the level of civic virtue required to elevate citizenship from its thin conception of legal status to its thicker status of "citizenship-as-a-desirable-activity".[22] Neither can it be proven that activity within civil society generates this virtue: we may join voluntary associations and informal networks for uncivil activities that seek to keep out others.

To conclude this discussion of citizenship it seems that in modern liberal democracy the concept rests partially on the passive receipt of rights but there are also active rights of participation. Whilst the Jacobin ideal of reviving city-state participatory democracy seems unworkable in modern states, which are diverse and densely populated, participation is held up as a civic virtue which reinforces the legitimacy of the state. Constant participation is difficult or undesirable for many citizens. However, citizenship is deemed the most important identity a member of a political community can hold because of the power of the state.

This does not mean that the deliberative processes of state institutions must settle all decisions about the pursuit of citizens' goals. Individuals have different desires and identities, which can be pursued within civil society, the space between the family and the state. The actions of civil society lessen direct demands made upon the state but it is also presented as the arena which generates the sort of activity that encourages people to value and protect their citizenship. However, this virtue is hard to quantify and civil society can also be a site of discord and closed-mindedness.

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[21] Kymlicka, W & Norman, W 'Return of the citizen: a survey of recent work on citizenship theory' Ethics Vol.104, No.2 1994 p362

[22] Kymlicka, W and Norman, W 1994 Op. cit, p353

## 3.4 Citizenship and Equality

Citizenship is passive and active membership of individuals in a nation-state with certain universalistic rights and obligations and a specified level of equality.[23]

There are two points to be made before considering the relationship between group rights and liberal democracy. The first point is that the concept of citizenship relates not just to freedom, but to equality. The meaning of equality in the context of citizenship is open to debate. It could mean simple equality before the law and the endowment of equal civil and political rights. It could also relate to the distribution of material resources and social goods such as education that would make citizenship meaningful. It is possible to assert that mere formal equality does not guarantee the ability to utilise the rights of citizenship or to fulfil the obligations.

The second is that it is implicit in writings about the distribution of rights and obligations that the community discussed is limited: the theoretical framework is not global. Rawls, for example, takes his unit of decision-making as a society, which he defines as "a more or less self-sufficient association of persons who in their relations to one another recognise certain rules of conduct as binding and who for the most part act in accordance with them".[24] Walzer makes this idea of a limited community explicit when he devotes a chapter of his theory of just distribution of social goods to membership and what criteria is acceptable for conferring membership on those entering from outside.[25]

The development of ideas of both liberalism and democracy have run parallel to, and interacted with, the development of nationalism and nation-states as the most legitimate form of administration. T.H. Marshall championed social rights as one of

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[23]Janoski, T 1998 Op. cit, p9

[24]Rawls, J A Theory of Justice (Oxford) Oxford University Press 1999, p4

[25] Walzer, M Spheres of Justice: A Defence of Pluralism and Equality (Oxford) Martin Robertson and Company 1983 Ch.2 Membership pp31-60

the three parts of citizenship, along with civil and political rights defining these rights as:

The whole range from the right to a modicum of economic welfare and security to the right to share to the full in the social heritage and to live the life of a civilised human being according to the standards prevailing in that society.[26]

Marshall also states that "the citizenship whose history I wish to trace is, by definition, national".[27] He relates the evolution of citizenship to the development of national laws and institutions. The term national here seems interchangeable with the actions of the state but states and nations do not always correspond. Sizeable numbers of citizens may value a different social heritage or mode of civilised living to the prevailing standards of society.

Many rights granted in a liberal democracy allow individuals to pursue some versions of the good life, whilst balancing this freedom against notions of harm to others. In addition the discourse of civic, or social, nationalism deems residents of a territorial unit to be members of the nation, rather than defining membership by ethnic blood-ties[28]. Thus, once membership of a civic nation-state is obtained one is meant to be full and equal member within that society.

However, there can be tension between a theoretical framework that offers formal equality and self-defined communities and national groups who make claims of group-differentiation. Immigrants from other states do not automatically discard their old sense of nationhood when they are issued with a new passport. There may be an aboriginal people on the territory, who have been historically excluded from full citizenship, and who now seek to maintain this sense of difference.

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[26] Marshall, TH Citizenship and Social Class (London) Pluto 1992, p8

[27] Marshall, TH 1992 Op. cit p9

[28] Kellas, J The Politics of Nationalism and Ethnicity (Basingstoke) MacMillan 1998

It is this tension, and possible modes of resolution, which inform Kymlicka's work on group-differentiated rights. His discussion of liberalism and ethno-pluralism seeks to encourage the allegiance of citizens to states through some measures of recognition of difference, which he does not believe are at serious variance with liberal norms.

## 3.5 Kymlicka and Group-Differentiated Rights

People are owed respect as citizens and as members of cultural communities. In many situations, the two are perfectly compatible, and in fact may coincide. But in culturally plural societies, differential citizenship rights may be needed to protect a cultural community from unwanted disintegration.[29]

Hadden argues that since the concept of human rights was first articulated it has been taken to refer to either groups or individuals.[30] The American and French revolutions granted rights to individuals against the tyranny of the group. Since then the pendulum has swung between that view and the view that human rights should be accorded to groups. Hadden argues that this latter view is currently gaining dominance. He also argues that individual rights and group rights require completely different legal and political structures.

Kymlicka's concept of group-differentiated rights stands in opposition to this latter argument. Kymlicka argues that a false dichotomy has been created between individual rights and group rights. Instead what Kymlicka seeks to establish is ways in which certain claims should be settled by the differentiation of rights in order for everyone within a state to have full and equal citizenship. His contention is that this can be done without violating liberal citizenship norms based on individual rights.

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[29] Kymlicka, W Liberalism, Community and Culture (Oxford) Oxford University Press 1989, p151

[30] Hadden, T 'Northern Ireland' from Miall, H (ed) Minority Rights in Europe: The Scope for a Transnational Regime (London) Pinter 1994

Kymlicka's opening premise is that the freedom that is central to liberalism relies on an established societal culture. An individual's understandings of the choices they can make are informed by the culture they are making those decisions within. Kymlicka defines a societal culture as:

> A culture which provides its members within meaningful ways of life across the full range of human activities, including social, educational, religious, recreational and economic life, encompassing both public and private spheres. These cultures tend to be territorially concentrated, and based on a shared language.[31]

McCrone argues that nations and states are often seen as synonymous terms and that in nation-states there is a tacit assumption that the cultural membership of the nation and citizenship are coterminous:

> It is implied that the cultural and the political are in alignment, that the 'people' who are governed by the institutions of the state are by and large culturally homogenous in having a strong and common, linguistic, religious and symbolic identity.[32]

However, Kymlicka recognises that for many (if not most) states in the contemporary world the borders of the state do not correspond solely and completely to one societal culture. Re-drawing the global map so that they do is not feasible. Groups are inter-mingled on the same territory; social, political and economic factors make immigration desirable for some and a necessity for others; some nation-states would not be self-sustaining.

Given his belief that multi-nation states constitute a feature of global administration that is unlikely change in the immediate future, Kymlicka seeks to facilitate the

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[31] Kymlicka, W Multicultural Citizenship (Oxford) Oxford University Press 1995, p78

[32] McCrone, D The Sociology of Nationalism (London) Routledge 1998, p7

establishment of a shared identity within them. This shared identity will not be established by the suppression of other national identities rather:

> People from different national groups will only share an allegiance to the larger polity if they see it as the context within which their national identity is nurtured, rather than subordinated.[33]

From this position Kymlicka seeks to establish a criteria for the granting of group differentiated rights - that is rights that protect aspects of a group's societal culture. He believes that the types of claims made and the types of group who make them must be identified and that the granting of these claims facilitates allegiance to the wider societal culture that is dominant within the (liberal and democratic) state.

Kymlicka defines two types of group, immigrant groups and national groups. The first are immigrant ethnic minorities who have grown up within a defined societal culture in another territory. The second type are national groups. These national groups can be aboriginal in nature, such as the Inuit of Canada. These groups have already constructed their societal culture on the territory of the state, but have been shifted from dominance by historical factors relating to colonisation. Kymlicka also applies the term national group to a people like the Quebecois, who have arrived on a territory as a consequence of empire building and have established a distinct societal culture within the larger state.

These groups make two types of claim, internal and external. Internal claims ask the state to intervene in intra-group affairs to preserve orthodox beliefs and practices. External claims are about reducing the vulnerability of the group to being dominated by the majority group within the state.

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[33] Kymlicka, W 1995 Op. cit p189

Kymlicka advances three methods of group-differentiated rights to meet external claims. Polyethnic rights allow members of a group to maintain a cultural practice in a way that does not conflict with participation in wider society. An example of a polyethnic right would be the exemption for Sikhs from wearing a hat as part of the Royal Canadian Mounted Police uniform. Special representation rights would allow for groups to have guaranteed representation within public sector employment or in the state legislature. Self-government rights would grant a measure of political autonomy to a group, which could require re-organising the state on a federal basis.

On the whole, Kymlicka does not regard the claims of immigrant groups as having the same strength as those of a national group. Immigrants are judged to have voluntarily sought membership of the state. This, along with the fact that they no longer have the cement of the territory where their societal culture was constructed, means they do not have the right to recreate their societal culture entire in their new home. Refugees are not voluntary migrants, but Kymlicka says that since no other state has an obligation to allow them to recreate their culture, their grievance must be re-dressed by changes in the state that forced them to leave or they must simply bear the injustice.

Kymlicka does not allow for any internal claims to be made on the state. The state cannot allow for groups to enforce orthodoxy and tradition if members within the group are catalysts for change. Otherwise group-differentiated rights become a means for elites within groups to oppress individuals and abuse their rights.

The basic premise of Kymlicka's multicultural citizenship is that creates a sense of allegiance in a multination state. This is because it lowers possible barriers to participation and therefore opens up access to the dominant societal culture. In addition it grants national groups on the territory a recognition of cultural distinctness and certain measures of autonomy based on that recognition. Kymlicka advances group differentiation as a means of resolving tensions between cultural membership and state membership and therefore allow individuals to pursue the choices on offer to them.

Reviewing the literature devoted to accommodating cultural identities within liberal democratic states four main arguments can be discerned that oppose Kymlicka's position. These arguments will now be evaluated in turn.

## 3.6 Critiques of Group Differentiated Rights

### 3.61. Group differentiation is not compatible with liberalism

The first criticism to consider is that group differentiated rights are collective rights by another name, and that this is a concept at variance with the individual rights of the citizen. Kukathas argues that "liberal theory does not begin with the assumption that the world is made up of isolated atomistic individuals".[34] However, he avers that whilst a liberal theorist may accept that individuals belong to groups, this does not mean that the moral claims of any group can be supported by a liberal state. Liberalism does not promote any particular membership within a society beyond citizenship so it cannot privilege any groups. The only freedoms that apply to groups are freedom of association and the freedom to leave a group. These freedoms apply at the individual level: there are no collective group rights.

Kymlicka responds to this criticism by arguing that interpretations of liberalism have evolved over time and that currently "we need to judge for ourselves what liberalism requires under our own conditions of ethno-cultural pluralism."[35]

Kymlicka is keen to stress that the states these claims are made against are in themselves based on a dominant societal culture and it is erroneous to assume that "the liberal state, in its normal operation, abides by a principle of ethno-cultural

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[34] Kukathas, C 'Are there any cultural rights?' Political Theory 20 (1) 1992, p110

[35] Kymlicka, W 'The new debate over minority rights' from Requenjo, F (ed) Democracy and National Pluralism (London) Routledge 2001, p19

neutrality."[36] A civic nation state is imbued with values from its dominant grouping. The assumptions of the societal culture can bar members of groups from full participation, and therefore the equality of civic membership within that society. Kymlicka sees this as a problem experienced at the individual, rather than collective, level. Not every Sikh wanted to join the Royal Canadian Mounted Police but until the uniform change, practicing Sikhs who did were excluded.

Kymlicka then goes on to argue that liberalism is fundamentally about choice and that group differentiation rights are about equality in freedom of choice, again between individuals. He regards cultural membership as important because of the context it provides for our choices:

> Deciding how to lead our lives is, in the first instance, a matter of exploring the possibilities made available by our culture. However, some minority cultures may need protection from the economic or political decisions of the majority culture if they are to provide this context for their members.[37]

Kymlicka presents this as maximising the freedom of individuals and not placing them within a collective will. Additionally, because Kymlicka's framework accepts no internal claims, the liberal state cannot be invoked to enforce members to maintain complete cultural orthodoxy to the detriment of their individual choice.

According to Kymlicka, the principle of group-differentiated rights is not at variance with liberalism for two reasons. Firstly they are about promoting the choice and participation of the individual citizen. Secondly they recognise that the state is not a idealised neutral entity but one shaped by a dominant culture. However, this mainly applies to the range of rights he defines as polyethnic. Polyethnic claims are based on the assertion that the state is governed by a societal culture that can sometimes adhere to one ethno-cultural perspective to the detriment of members with different cultural

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[36] Kymlicka, W 2001 Op. cit p21
[37]Kymlicka, W 'the rights of minority cultures' Political Theory 20 (1) 1992, p140

values. The adjustment of symbols, regulations and oaths eases potential obstructions to participation but this is a different project to the granting of representation rights or measures of autonomy.

### 3.6.2 Group Differentiated Rights Artificially Perpetuate Group Identities

A second argument advanced in Kukathas's critique of Kymlicka's thesis is that it accepts cultural identity as a given.

> The most seductive and dangerous move in that politics [of identity] asserts that identity is *not* political but somehow, natural or original. But identity is not natural or original, or permanent, or even necessarily particularly enduring. It is fluid, ever changing (to varying degrees) and inescapably political.[38]

The examples Kymlicka uses to illustrate practical instances of differentiated rights are drawn mostly from Canada. One of the main groups making claims on the Canadian State are the Quebecois, who seek powers of self-government and state recognition of their linguistic difference from the Anglophone majority. However, there is no corresponding Creole movement in the U.S.A. Historical differences may over time be diminished, or vanish altogether. Identities do evolve and dissolve.

Kymlicka argues that if interests of culture, language and identity are ignored by the state "then people will feel harmed - and indeed will be harmed - even if their civil, political and welfare rights are respected and the result can be serious damage to people's self-respect and sense of agency".[39] Even if this is true, this is not an argument for group-differentiation in itself. The statement does not explain why pluralism at the level of civil society could not accord respect for a variety of identities and cultures. It also assumes that people value their cultural identity as the essence of themselves, the power that activates their sense of agency, where they may

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[38]Kukathas, C 'Liberalism, multiculturalism and oppression' from Vincent A (ed) <u>Political Theory: Tradition and Diversity</u> (Cambridge) Cambridge University Press 1997, p150

[39]Kymlicka, W 2001 Op. cit, p30

in fact seek no political recognition for such differences as language.

Whilst campaigners for national and cultural claims often present their identity as primordial and essential, one does not have to agree in order to acknowledge these claims. Differentiation can instead be interpreted as a means of dealing with the fact that some cultural identities have developed increasing political salience, rather than a belief that these identities are innate and unchanging. This becomes clearer if the concept of differentiation is seen as a method of reformulating self-determination. Kymlicka asserts that it is implicit in most liberal writings that "cultures of nations are basic units of liberal political theory".[40] Kymlicka seeks to promote differentiation as a means of maintaining the territorial unity of a state, whilst granting lesser measures of autonomy to national groups who demand them, as an alternative to conflict and/or secession.

## 3.6.3 Group Differentiated Rights are not Differentiated Enough

Parekh's assessment of Kymlicka offers criticism from a different perspective to Kukathas and Miller. Parekh contends that Kymlicka's theories are limited because they implicitly regard liberalism as superior when what is required is "a theoretical framework capable of appreciating and accommodating *plural* understandings of culture".[41] Instead Parekh proposes a "dialogically constituted multicultural society"[42] in which state institutions are engaged in a near continual process of defining what constitutes equal treatment across different groups. This project is supported by a body of citizens whose activities embody "such essential political virtues as mutual respect and concern, tolerance, self-restraint, willingness to enter into unfamiliar worlds of thought, love of diversity, a mind open to others' needs, and the ability to

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[40] Kymlicka, W 1995 Op. cit, p93

[41] Parekh, B Multiculturalism, Cultural Diversity and Political Theory (Basingstoke) MacMillan 2000, p108

[42] Parekh, B 2000 Op. cit, p340

persuade and live with unresolved differences".[43]

The burden of expectation that Parekh places on citizenship is unacceptable. As Miller argues, a process of debate between cultural groups cannot guarantee endorsement or understanding.[44] In addition it is questionable whether a love of diversity is an essential political virtue. Bryant argues that "civil society is marked by civility not fraternity"[45] which suggests that, for the most part, polite indifference may work best in matters of cultural plurality. As discussed in the opening sections of this chapter, the Jacobin ideal of participatory citizenship is hard to put into practice and, in addition to this, many citizens may not wish to present themselves in the political arena as bearers of a cultural identity that must be continually acknowledged.

### 3.6.4 Group Differentiated Rights Privilege Ethnic Elites

The final criticism of group-differentiated rights comes again from Kukathas, who asserts that cultural rights do not distinguish between the elite and the mass of a group's membership.[46] Elites move within dominant society, the arena where claims are advanced and settled. This separates their daily experience from the mass membership of the national group. In addition Kukathas argues that a more financially secure elite advances cultural claims whilst the more impoverished bulk of the group would benefit from state policies concerned with redistribution of social and economic goods.

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[43]Parekh, B 2000 Op. cit, p340

[44] Miller, D Citizenship and National Identity (Cambridge) Polity 2000

[45]Bryant, C 'Citizenship, national identity and the accommodation of difference' New Community April 1997 23 (2), p158

[46] Kukathas, C 1992 Op. cit.

Kymlicka only really addresses the issues of differences within the group when he discounts internal claims. Here he argues that group leaders cannot enforce orthodox practice on the group. He does not consider how elites, who are in the position to advance claims, can use this to institutionalise orthodoxy and sideline other claims within the group.

### 3.6.5 Summary

Kymlicka's framework for group differentiated rights seeks to accommodate differences without damaging equality of citizenship. Kymlicka presents this as a solution to the problem, which he perceives as a gap between the dominant societal culture of the state the diversity of those who reside within its borders.

The weakest part of Kymlicka's argument is that he draws too strong a link between individual agency and cultural identity. He cannot use this as the sole basis of his framework of rights as he gives greater weight to national identities historically linked to the territory in question, which would suggest inequality of treatment between identities. In addition he does not address the power of elites within national groups, and therefore does not answer whether there is a conflict between granting cultural justice and social justice.

It would be better to characterise Kymlicka's work as a pragmatic tool used to redefine self-determination to maintain the integrity of existing states. States are presented as imbued with a dominant societal culture and not as a neutral framework of rights and institutions. Kymlicka's measures are designed to encourage allegiance to the wider polity by increasing the opportunities for participation in state institutions and encouraging the desirability of such participation by linking it to a measure of self-government.

## 3.7 Consociationalism

### 3.7.1 Consociational Democracy

The universe of cases to which consociational theory is supposed to apply consists of countries with cultural segmentation. This term means that there exists clearly distinguishable cultural groups each managing its own identity: it means further that these cultural identities have political relevance.[47]

Consociational theorists contend that certain states contain societies that are highly segmented and lack cross-cutting cleavages. A consociational settlement is proposed by supporters as a means of guaranteeing both stability and an acceptable level of democratic decision-making in such societies.

Four European democracies have formed the practical basis of studies of consociationalism: The Netherlands, Austria, Belgium and Switzerland.[48] Lorwin characterises them as examples of segmented pluralism:

> segmented pluralism is the organisation of social movements, educational and communications systems, voluntary associations, and political parties along the lines of religious and ideological cleavages.[49]

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[47]Steiner, J 'Research strategies beyond consociationalism' Journal of Politics Vol. 43, p1242

[48] Luther notes that the inclusion of Switzerland in studies of consociationalism is controversial. Sciarini and Hug concede that the Swiss state is federal rather than consociational and that there are cross-cutting cleavages. However, they argue that Swiss political life is imbued with the consociational characteristics of accommodation, proportionality and concentration of power. See Luther, KR 'A framework for the comparative analysis of political parties and systems in consociational democracy' and Sciarini, P and Hug, S 'The odd fellow: parties and consociationalism in Switzerland' Both from Luther, KR and Deschouwer, K (eds) Party Elites in Divided Societies: Political Parties in Consociational Democracy (London) Routledge 1999

[49] Lorwin, VR 'Segmented Pluralism' Comparative Politics Vol. 3 No.2 1971 p141

Lorwin argues that no society is completely segmented, rather that for societies such as the Netherlands in the immediate post-war period, segmentation was a dominant feature.

Lijphart proposes that "overarching cooperation at the elite level can be a substitute for cross-cutting affiliations at the mass level".[50] The elites of different groups are drawn into a power sharing agreement comprising four elements; coalition at the level of the executive, proportionality in decision making, the power of mutual veto and segmental autonomy.[51] It is envisaged that this type of settlement will encourage moderation and compromise amongst elite leaders and encourage allegiance to the state from groups who would be excluded from power under a majoritarian system of democracy.[52]

Consociational theory is based on the premise that segmental divisions "have to be accommodated and cannot simply be ignored or wished away".[53] This accommodation must take place at the executive level of the state - association within the sphere of civil society is not sufficient. The special representation and self-government modes of group differentiation must be enacted. Opponents of consociational theory disagree with this and argue that the entrenchment of identities within the constitution damages democracy and does not create stability.

Consociationalism is seen as inimical to democracy for three reasons, which will now be considered. These arguments are that firstly the level of consensus required unfairly curtails the dynamism of debate and opposition that makes democracy function. Secondly consociational settlements are accused of fomenting extremism

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[50]Lijphart, A The Politics of Accommodation (Berkley and Los Angeles) University of California Press 1968, p2000

[51] Lijphart, A 'Definitions, evidence and policy: a response to Matthijis Bogaard's critique' Journal of Theoretical Politics Vol. 12 No. 4 October, 2000, p425

[52]Lijphart, A Patterns of Democracy: Government Forms and Performance in Thirty-Six Countries (New Haven) Yale University Press 1999

[53] Lijphart, A Power-sharing in South Africa (Berkley) University of California 1985, p108

rather than encouraging moderation and compromise. Thirdly it is argued that consociational theory reinforces cultural orthodoxy and homogeneity within segments to the detriment of the agency of individual citizens.

3.7.2 Are consociational democracies insufficiently democratic?

A basic element of a consociational democracy is a grand coalition of the relevant elites. Horowitz argues that the structure of consociationalism does not allow for a proper parliamentary opposition, which is a check on executive power.[54] Dixon contends that the 'top-down' form of power sharing advocated by consociational theorists is distinctive because of its "scepticism of democracy".[55] This scepticism is evident in the insulation of elites from the supposedly more extremist masses. Dixon contrasts the consociational model with a civil society model where interaction of groups from the bottom of society upwards creates a conducive environment for a stable democracy. Civil society in consociational settlements is perceived as segmented and cultural autonomy is embedded in constitutional arrangements.

Luther has formulated a framework of parties in consociational democracies.[56] He argues that participation in these democracies is high, but it is mostly symbolic. Parties need to mobilise their subculture as a show of strength to parties from other segments. For these elites quantity, not quality, of participation is key. Advocates of these settlements do accept that consociational democracy is slow to promote change and generate debate, but Lijphart asserts that for plural societies "the only choice is between consociational democracy and no democracy"[57] and that the lack of dynamism is compensated for by the endurance and stability of the settlement.

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[54] Horowitz, D 'The Agreement: clear, consociational, risky' from McGarry, J (ed) Northern Ireland and the Divided World (Oxford) Oxford University Press 2001, pp89-109

[55] Dixon, P 'Paths to peace in Northern Ireland' (I) Civil society and consociational approaches' Democratisation Vol.4 No.2 1997, p2

[56] Luther, KR & Deschouwer, K (eds) 1999, Op. cit.

[57] Lijphart, A 1985 Op. cit, p109

Reynolds states that:

> The consociational philosophy rests on the argument that in bitterly divided
> societies the stakes are too high for politics to be conducted as a zero-sum game.
> The risks of governmental collapse and civil instability are too great for parties
> to view the executive branch of government as a prize to be won or lost.[58]

However, the next criticism of consociational theory to be considered is the
accusation consociationalism facilitates a different zero sum game, one of implacable
ethnic demands, encouraging extremism rather than compromise.

### 3.7.3 Do consociational settlements promote extremist ethnic movements?

Barry argues that emphasis on elite accommodation undermines rather than promotes
consensus within a state because "if there is to be a leadership of an ethnic group that
is not in danger of being undercut by challengers, it must be inevitably seen to be
talking up an extreme position in defence of the group's interests".[59]

Barry's argument assumes that ethnic demands are by their nature extreme and
therefore ethnic group leaders will not be able to reach a middle ground because they
will not be able to compromise. Demands by ethnic group need not necessarily tend
to extremism and may well be catered for by control over areas such as education.
Barry cannot prove that ethnic movements *must* tend towards polarisation.

Barry's arguments suggest that ethnic extremism is, by its nature, inimical to
consensus and moderation. In order to avoid being undercut by a rival within the
subculture, a party must promote a manifesto that cannot be outbid in terms of

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[58] Reynolds, A 'A constitutional pied piper: the Northern Ireland Good Friday Agreement' Political
Science Quarterly Vol. 114 1999-2000, p617

[59] Barry, B 'Political accommodation and consociational democracy' British Journal of Politics Vol. 5
1975, p506

defending that subculture's interests. This view of parties operating within a consociational framework will be examined in relation to party competition since the Good Friday Agreement.

Consociational systems are meant to encourage moderation and compromise. What is open to question is what centripetal forces would encourage a society of segmented subcultures to engage with this type of consensual politics. Bogaards[60] asserts that advocates of consociational theory have offered favourable factors that enhance the probability of the survival of a consociational settlement. These factors include segments being of equal size, segmental isolation and the presence of external threats, which enhance a sense of common interest. However, Bogaards argues that these theorists have not resolved whether any of these factors are either necessary or sufficient for a successful consociational democracy.

Pappalardo agrees that this task must be undertaken if works on consociationalism are to include a predictive aspect, analysing the potential success of future consociational settlements. Not to do so "has its costs, especially if one relies on the voluntaristic, rational and intentional aspects of human behaviour when inquiring into the future of a political system, which in fact risks giving merely presumptive answers".[61]

Barry's criticism suggests that elites must tend to extremism to appease the masses. Consociational models tend to prescribe the insulation of elites in order to encourage the freedom to compromise. An alternative perspective comes from Kukathas' criticism of group-differentiations privileging of elites. As was discussed earlier. Kukathas suggests that elites can be concerned with the granting of cultural rights rather than the distribution of social goods, and in that way can be detached from those they claim to represent. This does not mean that elites always will push for

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[60] Bogaards, M 'The favourable factors for consociational democracy: a review' European Journal of Political Research Vol. 33 1998, pp475-496

[61] Pappalardo, A 'The conditions for consociational democracy: a logical and empirical critique' European Journal of Political Research Vol.9 1981, p366

cultural autonomy over social justice, or that if they do these demands must tend towards intransigence and extremism. However, whilst it cannot be argued that consociational settlements must by their nature encourage ethnic extremism without an adequate theoretical explanation of why they should not, it is harder to accept that study of existing consociational settlements can be used as a template for other divided societies.

### 3.7.3 Do consociational settlements undermine common citizenship?

A third criticism of consociationalism relates to the second. Supporters of social transformation models of conflict resolution present consociationalism as a project that undermines the promotion of a common identity. Instead it entrenches and privileges differences in cultural identity. Rupert Taylor states:

> By reducing the dynamic nature of human action to the common denominator of ethno-nationalism, the consociational position displaces the question of human freedom and action and is ill prepared to grasp the dynamics of social change.[62]

This echoes the criticisms of group differentiation in general, that sectionalism and separatism can be defused by the promotion of an active citizenry sharing an identity that is neutral enough to encourage allegiance. Supporters of social transformation theories look to socio-economic measures that will ease inequalities and increase participation in the civil society and state spheres of political action.

Advocates of consociationalism would argue that the kind of settlement they propose does not create the problem. In certain states some cultural identities have already developed a momentum that propels them to demand certain forms of self-determination. McGarry and O'Leary argue that "consociationalism does not involve the unilateral invention of ethnic groups, but rather the recognition of those groups

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[62] Taylor, R 'Northern Ireland: consociation or social transformation?' From McGarry, J 2001 Op. cit, p40

which assert their presence through popular protest, insurrection or democratic politics".[63]

However, this does not mean that consociational theorists necessarily accept these identities as fixed and inflexible. Instead consociationalism can be advanced as a means of allowing the political salience of cultural identities to be diminished. O'Leary argues that the advantage of consociationalism is that "if it succeeds, it becomes dispensable".[64] McGarry echoes this belief by defining a "consociational paradox" where recognising difference is the first stage to easing differences between citizens.[65]

It has already been noted that consociational theory has been drawn from comparative political analysis, which enables both McGarry and O'Leary to offer Austria and the Netherlands as examples of states that have used the stability of consociational elements in political activity to eventually transcend difference. However, these European democracies combined severe cultural division with an overarching national identity. Lijphart's assessment of the Dutch system of accommodation[66] showed that whilst Catholic, Calvinist and secular education systems taught different interpretations of Dutch history, they were still teaching the history of the Netherlands to which all subcultures were perceived to belong.

Wilson and Wilford argue that the potential of consociationalism to transform segmented societies depends on the nature of the society to which this style of democracy is applied:

> If consociationalism derives from consensus rather than conflict (as it did in the Netherlands) it will tend to wither away to intercultural civility; if it is a

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[63] McGarry, J & O'Leary, B 'Proving our points on Northern Ireland (and giving reading lessons to Dr. Dixon) Irish Political Studies Vol. 11 1996, p151

[64] O'Leary, B 'The limits to coercive consociationalism in Northern Ireland' Political Studies Vol. 37 1989, p572

[65] McGarry, J 'Northern Ireland, civic nationalism and the Good Friday Agreement' From McGarry, J (ed) 2001 Op. cit, p214

[66] Lijphart, A 1968 Op. cit.

response to conflict it will tend (as in Belgium) to reinforce communal separation.[67]

Lorwin suggests that the development of national television channels has partially superseded the segmented print media of the Netherlands, and it is factors such as this that have diminished the salience of cleavages in Dutch society.[68] Wolinetz argues that "almost all liberal democracies have been subject to similar sources of realignment and dealignment" as consociational societies, in particular the rise of environmental politics and the re-emergence of the populist right.[69] Luther and Deschouwer state that these analogous trends "have a potentially especially systemic implication for consociational democracies".[70] In particular these parties undermine bases of support and mobilisation. Luther notes that new far right parties, such as the Freedom Party of Austria (FPO), have made capital out of criticising consociationalism for perpetuating patronage and therefore corruption.[71]

The consociational paradox, whereby politically salient differences between citizens are diminished, could be due to other forces at work in these societies. In addition, some transformations, such as realignment around the platform of far-right parties, might not be the kind of social change that consociational theorists had in mind. However, supporters of consociational settlements argue that they create the stability that allows change to take place and that such systems contain and transform extremism. For example, Kriesi has predicted that the effects of the success of the far-right SVP (Swiss People's Party) in the 2003 elections will be tempered by the consensual Swiss system, as the FPO were in Austria meaning that "the collegial

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[67] Wilson, R & Wilford, R Northern Ireland: a Route to Stability? (Birmingham) ESRC Devolution Policy Paper 2003, p7

[68] Lorwin, VR 1971 Op. cit.

[69] Wolinetz, SB 'The consociational party system' from Luther, KR and Deschouwer, K (eds) 1999 Op. cit, p241

[70] Luther, KR and Deschouwer, K 'Prudent leadership to successful adaptation? Pillar parties and consociational democracy fifty years on' from Luther, KR and Deschouwer, K (eds) 1999 Op. cit, p251

[71] Luther, KR 'A framework for the comparative analysis of political parties and party systems in

system won't change, although its exact composition might".[72]

More recent studies of consociational settlements have expanded the range of democracies studies to take in cases such as Northern Ireland and Cyprus. There are practical difficulties in such extrapolation. For a start the conflict between segments has been more intense. Horowitz points out:

> We cannot quite be sure whether the western cases are conflicts that are moderate because they have effectively been controlled or whether they are effectively controlled because they are moderate conflicts to begin with. This is the problem with advocates of "consociational democracy" on the model of Arend Lijphart.[73]

In addition these conflicts often lack the overarching national identity that the European democracies studied could rely on to create some degree of consensus.

Lijphart argues that social science can only deal with the probable and the success of consociational settlements cannot be guaranteed.[74] However, Lijphart's theories require a greater discussion of what encourages citizens to feel allegiance to a state, especially when the society within that state is a very segmented one.

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consociational democracy' from Luther, KR and Deschouwer, K (eds) 1999 Op. cit, pp3-19

[72] 'Far-right victory could shatter Switzerland's magic political formula' www.channelnewsasia.com 23rd October 2003

[73] Horowitz, D Community Conflict: Policy and Possibilities 1990 published on University of Ulster Centre for the Study of Conflict website www.ccruni.gov.uk/research/csc/possible

## 3.7.4 Consociationalism: a transitional phase?

The best normative case for consociational arrangements is that they involve the self-government of the relevant communities, and they are better than the alternatives: majority domination, bloody partition, secessionist warfare and the unthinkable options of population transfers and genocide.[75]

Consociational theory contends that stability in a divided society can be encouraged if elites are persuaded to cooperate, compromising on some demands in return for a large measure of cultural autonomy. This leads to a slower and less dynamic form of democracy, but the supposed advantage is that the stability that results produces conditions conducive to the diminishing of division.

Some critiques of consociationalism, such as those who offered by Barry and Taylor tend to depict a false dichotomy between a neutral civil politics and ethno-national politics which must, by its nature, tend to extremism. Ethno-nationalist goals need not necessarily be extreme and nationalist demands are not necessarily material demands articulated through the guise of nationalism.

Consociationalism proposes one means of providing a mode of self-government that stops short of secession. However, there are weaknesses in this theory. Consociational settlements are presented as solutions grounded in pragmatism and yet have a tendency to idealise elites as superbly adept at statesmanship. Social transformation theorists such as Rupert Taylor create a dichotomy between ethnic demands and social demands, which suggests two different systems that can only answer one set of these claims. However, consociational 'top-down' settlements cannot hope to evolve as a middle path between these demands without a host of very favourable factors.

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[74] Lijphart, A 1985 Op. cit

[75] McGarry, J and O'Leary, B The Politics of Ethnic Conflict Regulation (London and New York) Routledge 1993, p36

Consociational settlements correspond with ideas of group differentiation in terms of offering special representation and self-government mechanisms. Proponents accept these solutions make for a slow paced democracy, with this emphasis placed on compromise, especially at the elite level.

Group differentiation is not a politics of difference that holds all cultural identities to be fixed and of equal resonance. The essence of differentiation is that the state retains supreme authority, but offers the devolution of powers and responsibility that it presents as a form of self-determination to groups who have defined themselves as a nation. One criticism of both differentiation and consociationalism is that these modes of politics undermine the common political identity of equal citizenship and damages the agency of those citizens.

Proponents of consociational settlements, such as McGarry and O'Leary, have argued that these settlements have the paradoxical effect of transcending difference. However this optimism is qualified by Horowitz. He points out that the comparative study of European consociational democracies is yet to produce a clear indicator of whether elements of stability and consensus can be attributed to the actual system of elite accommodation or whether they predate it. He asks "which in other words is the dependent and which the independent variable?"[76] The idea that consociational democracy is a pragmatic alternative to zero-sum politics becomes more problematic if it is viewed as a result of consensus, rather than the creator of it.

Both sides of this argument need to be considered in relation to the constitutional arrangements for the governing of Northern Ireland laid down in the Good Friday Agreement. The above discussions have set the context for debating the nature of the claims for recognition, autonomy and self-determination in Northern Ireland and the means for accommodating. These will now be outlined.

## 3.8 Northern Ireland: Two Claims for Self-Determination

In Northern Ireland rival nations and rival understandings of national self-determination have been locked in combat.[77]

Lorwin excluded Northern Ireland from his studies of segmented pluralist societies on the grounds that it was "neither state nor nation and which has not created a system of segmented pluralism out of its fierce religious hostilities."[78] He preferred to concentrate on those European states that combined a low degree of conflict with a higher degree of segmentation than found in Northern Ireland. In particular, he laid stress on a segmented trade union movement.

The unionist and nationalist divide is often represented in the simple religious terms of Catholic and Protestant, but terms such as two traditions and two communities are also regularly used. Little notes that the term communities could be problematic if the use of the word implied being prescriptive about the ideas and actions of those to whom the label was being applied. He states that "whilst communities may well have an idea of who is and is not a member of their community...this does not mean that internal relations are necessarily cohesive or consensual".[79] Therefore the use of a term such as community should not preclude understanding of internal diversity.

Hadden profiles the nationalist and unionist communities and concludes that both have aspects that entitle them to claim self-determination: they have distinctiveness drawn from language, culture and religion. Both groups have a shared sense of history and a commitment to maintain a communal identity, which is associated with a territory.[80] This cultural distinctiveness is supplemented by claims to two political

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[76] Horowitz, D Ethnic Groups in Conflict (Berkeley) University of California Press 2000, p572

[77] McGarry, J and O'Leary, B Explaining Northern Ireland (Oxford) Blackwell 1995, p14

[78] Lorwin, VR 1971 Op. cit p44, footnote 4

[79] Little, A 'The problems of antagonism: applying liberal political theory to conflict in Northern Ireland' British Journal of Politics and International Relations Vol.5 No.3 2003, p378

[80] Hadden, T 1994 Op. cit. The revival of the Gaelic language has been associated with Irish nationalism since the nineteenth century. More recently some unionists have promoted Ulster Scots as a language rather than an archaic dialect. However, English is both the official and the vernacular language of Northern Ireland.

identities, British and Irish. Both nationalists and unionists accord with the groups entitled to articulate a claim to group differentiation by Kymlicka's criteria. The nationalist community can establish themselves credibly as an aboriginal group, whilst the societal culture of unionism has been established and developing on the same territory since the 17th Century.

Realising self-determination or self-government for both groups by the measure of re-partitioning the province is not a viable solution. Despite increasing segregation in some areas, there is no easy line of re-partition. Tonge points out that Belfast now has a Catholic majority, but "unless the new border were based on unprecedented contortions, Belfast would remain in Northern Ireland".[81] The two communities are not separated enough for a 'clean' partitioning of Northern Ireland.

In addition to the practical difficulties entailed in a re-partition, it would be wrong to equate religion automatically with constitutional preference. Tonge argues that this proposal would be "based upon the fallacy that all Catholics would support a redrawing" and not on the actual strength of Irish nationalist sentiment in an area.[82] Analysis of electoral surveys carried out between 1989 and 1998 by the Centre for Research into Elections and Social Trends (CREST) shows that ten per-cent of Catholics list their national identity as British and one per-cent describe themselves politically as unionists.[83] Finally, partition would not serve the interests of those minorities within Northern Ireland who have no association with either tradition, if the redrawn boundaries encouraged religious affiliation as the sole marker of belonging.

In summation, the communities have cultural distinctiveness and their societal cultures have been established on the territory in question for a substantial period of

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[81] Tonge, J Northern Ireland Conflict and Change (Harlow) Pearson 2002, p205

[82] Tonge, J 2002 Op. cit p205

[83] Curtice, J & Dowds, L Has Northern Ireland Really Changed? CREST Working Paper No.74 September 1999 www.crest.ox.ac.uk

time. However, for the reasons discussed above repartition would not deliver a workable or just solution.

## 3.9 The Good Friday Agreement

The Good Friday Agreement is the clearest example of fully blown consociationalism that exists today.[84]

Wilford et al describe the Good Friday Agreement as "consociational plus" as it combines "constitutional, political and security issues" with "issues of social and economic inclusion and human and cultural rights".[85] O'Leary avers that the Agreement has the four elements of a consociational settlement: a power-sharing executive, proportionality, cultural autonomy and power of veto. However, this internal consociational model is built into "overarching confederal institutions".[86] External and internal elements are interlinked. The existence of north-south bodies are dependent on the survival of the assembly and vice versa.

When Lijphart first examined the prospects for consociationalism in Northern Ireland he was not hopeful due to the fact that there was no multiple power balance. Instead there were two groupings of unequal size. Also there was a distinct lack of national solidarity. The most hope he could offer was that the requisite statesmanlike qualities could be encouraged amongst elites.[87] O'Leary argues that the lack of elite motivation

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[84] Reynolds, A 1999-2000 Op. cit, p614

[85] Wilford, R MacGinty, R Dowds, L Robinson, G 'Northern Ireland's devolved institutions: a triumph of hope over experience?' Regional and Federal Studies Vol.13 No.1 2003, p32

[86] O'Leary, B 'The nature of the British-Irish Agreement' New Left Review No. 223 Jan/Feb 1999, p68 O'Leary highlights certain elements that fit with his concept of communal autonomy within the Agreement such as the absence of an oath to the Crown, cross-community consent and the public use of the Irish language in a similar manner to Welsh. However, one of the main elements he identifies is equal funding for church and state schools, which he tacitly acknowledges pre-dates the Agreement by noting that the Agreement makes no change to funding arrangements. See "The character of the 1998 Agreement: results and prospects" from Wilford, R (ed) Aspects of the Belfast Agreement (Oxford) Oxford University Press 2001, pp28-48

[87] Lijphart, A 1975 Op. cit.

and domination in Northern Ireland required a measure of coercion, which was achieved by the insistence of the British government to unionists that the Anglo-Irish Agreement could only be superseded by a negotiated settlement.[88]

The prospects of the Agreement rest on three hopes. The first is a belief that a sufficient number of political actors in Northern Ireland will acquiesce with consociationalism as the only settlement that internal groupings and external governments will endorse. Secondly the Agreement is intended to enforce a style of consociational politics that is about compromise, rather than encouraging extremism. The interlinked nature of the elements of the agreement means one cannot pick and choose between institutions.

The third theme of the Agreement is the concept of parity of esteem, which deals with aspirations and identities. The agreement states:

> Whatever, choice is freely exercised by a majority of the people of Northern Ireland, the power of the sovereign government with jurisdiction there shall be exercised with rigorous impartiality on behalf of all people in the diversity of their identities and traditions and shall be founded on the principles of full respect for, and equality of, civil, political, social and cultural rights, of freedom from discrimination for all citizens, and of parity of esteem and of just and equal treatment for the identity, ethos and aspirations of both communities.[89]

Carmichael believes that the Agreement constitutes an:

> accommodation that denies no-one their identity and which accepts that sovereignty must be understood as a more complex phenomenon in a more intrinsic system of governance, without explicitly downplaying the reality of the more narrow legal aspect of sovereignty (that Northern Ireland remains 'British'

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[88] O'Leary, B 'The limits to coercive consociationalism' Political Studies Vol.37 1989 pp562-588

[89] Belfast Agreement 1998 www.ni-office.gov.uk

and coloured to that effect - albeit a paler shade of pink - on the map).[90]

The Good Friday Agreement is not about co-sovereignty or joint-authority over Northern Ireland. It accords with the aims of differentiated rights, because it offers a measure of group differentiation that is designed to encourage nationalist participation in government. Hazelton argues that "the emphasis becomes "internal" self-determination; that is democratic self-government, meaningful participation, human rights, safeguards, communal autonomy, and equal protection for minority communities."[91]

Tonge presents co-identity as one of the components of the settlement, which means "there is no such thing as disloyalty in Northern Ireland. The agreement allows a range of identities; British; Irish; British-Irish. It does not discriminate between them".[92]

The Agreement is founded on consociational prescriptions for a settlement. However, there is a civil society component, which is weak but still present within the ethos of the agreement. What needs to be considered now is the nature of party competition within this consociational settlement. As has already been noted critics of consociational settlements such as Barry, argue that they promote ethnic extremism because parties must protect themselves against intra-bloc rivals. The alternative of a civil society settlement will then be considered.

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[90] Carmichael, P 'Territorial management in the 'New Britain': towards devolution-plus in Northern Ireland? Regional and Federal Studies Vol. 9 No.3 1999, p152

[91] Hazelton, A 'Devolution and the diffusion of power: the internal and transnational dimensions of the Belfast Agreement' Irish Political Studies 2000, p26

[92] Tonge, J 'From Sunningdale to the Good Friday Agreement. Creating devolved government in Northern Ireland' Contemporary British History Vol.14 No.3 2000, p55

## 3.9.1 Extremism and Moderation

Wilson and Wilford have identified four elements of the Good Friday Agreement "which arguably have entrenched sectarian division" and prevented the development of an overarching allegiance.[93] These are the either/or constitutional preference; the single transferable vote (STV) electoral system, the requirement of communal registration; and use of the D'Hondt mechanism for executive formation. Horowitz concurs with the view that, for segmented polities, the alternative vote system is preferable to STV because it is more likely to encourage vote pooling and inter-ethnic transfers.[94] Mitchell disputes this and argues that STV does encourage "pre-electoral co-operation and potentially even accommodation".[95]

The Good Friday Agreement has created a consociational settlement but there is no single framework to which all consociational agreements conform. Supporters of consociational settlements in general and the Agreement in particular can still express dissatisfaction with certain elements. O'Leary for example worries that the dual premiership has proved to be a major weakness.[96] The effect of different elements of the Agreement can be debate, but it is now time to return to Barry's argument that by their nature consociational settlements must engender a party system based on ethnic extremism.

Horowitz believes that the peace process that led to the Good Friday Agreement brought extremes in at the exact point where the popular mood demand they be kept out:

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[93] Wilson, R and Wilford, R 2003 Op. cit, p7

[94] Horowitz, D 1990 Op. cit.

[95] Mitchell, P 'Transcending an ethnic party system? The impact of consociational governance on electoral dynamics and the party system' from Wilford, R (ed) 2001 Op. cit, p34

[96] O'Leary, B From McGarry, J (ed) 2001 Op. cit

The irony is that the participants in the Belfast negotiations had set their face against a government of the moderate middle at the very moment when the moderate middle had grown strong. The participants embraced the extremes when the public was repelled by the violence of the extremes.[97]

Sinn Fein and the DUP are recognised as the extremes operating within the post-Agreement party system. Bew believes that the rise to predominance of these parties would destroy the Good Friday Agreement because it would mean the "victory of two parties whose raison d'etre lies in harking back to past grievances".[98]

Horowitz links the label of extremism to violence implying that paramilitary representatives were the only extremists to be embraced. The DUP, which has recently succeeded in outbidding the UUP for the role of toughest defenders of the union, is not affiliated to any paramilitary movement. They were included in the nascent peace process before any public overtures were made to representatives of the IRA, UVF and UDA.

Groups who utilise the most strident ethnic rhetoric do not necessarily back this up with violence. In fact, the republican movement which has now embraced concerns such as language and culture has perpetrated less violence than it did in the early 1970s when it was steeped in the discourse of civic republicanism and socialist transformation.

Mitchell, O'Leary and Evans recognise that post-Agreement party competition has increased the popularity of the DUP and Sinn Fein and do attribute this to their power to outdo their rivals on issues that can be linked to the interests of their relevant subculture. In particular, they note that the SDLP's position has been undermined very quickly and state that "especially for younger nationalist voters, the question

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[97] Horowitz, D 'The Northern Ireland Agreement: clear, consociational, risky' from McGarry, J (ed) 2001 Op. cit, p101

[98] 'victory for the extremes will doom the Belfast Agreement' www.telegraph.co.uk/opinion 22nd April 2003

increasingly arises: why not vote for the fresher and more assertive brand?"[99] However they argue that this party competition has been aided by covert moderation:

> Despite misleading rhetoric to the contrary, both 'extreme' parties moderated their platforms, and may continue to do so, and this softening of their positions partly explains their electoral successes.[100]

Emerson predicted that the DUP's 'No' stance would continue to be moderated if they overtook the UUP at the 2003 Assembly election:

> If the DUP top the polls though, holy writ will just have to be re-wrote and the track record of the DUP's ministers indicates they are prepared to deal. With their cover blown and Sinn Fein on the policing board, the Agreement will begin to work not from the middle ground out, but from the extremes in - and be all the more stable for it.[101]

Consociational settlements rest on moderation and consensus. There is a sense that the script has been rewritten, in that the SDLP and UUP were envisaged by the British and Irish governments (and themselves) as the main beneficiaries of this settlement because they would reap the rewards of their moderate stance. Supporters of consociational democratic arrangements lay stress on the rewarding of Sinn Fein for moving away from violence and there is now support for the idea that, far from being marginalised by the UUP, the DUP will end up moderating their own militancy and remain within the system.

Luther believes that in a consociational system "the highly conflictual nature of much action-orientated ideological language might be expected to reduce the scope for

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[99] Mitchell, P O'Leary, B & Evans, G 'The 2001 elections in Northern Ireland: moderating 'extremists' and the squeezing of the moderates' Representation Vol.39 No.12002, p24

[100] Mitchell, P O'Leary, B & Evans, G 2002 Op. cit, p23

[101] Emerson, N 'The Ulster Unionist Party is over' Fortnight February 2003, p7

entering into the compromises which such accommodation requires".[102] Therefore an initial stage whereby supporters are mobilised by extreme rhetoric must eventually be transcended. Luther also notes that parties wishing to mobilise a subculture must address material or instrumental values as well as ideational ones in order to demonstrate that they are capable of delivering rewards. They cannot trade on rhetoric forever. However, an alternative view of transcending difference is provided by a civil society model where the emphasis is placed on centripetal forces that emanate from the bottom-up rather than from top-down elite accommodation. It is this model that will now be considered.

### 3.9.2 Consociation or Civil Society?

The failure of civil society to deliver support for power-sharing does not necessarily mean that the mobilisation of civil society during the current peace process cannot propel politicians towards compromise. Northern Ireland is not trapped in history and the past does not have to repeat itself.[103]

Dixon contends that proposed methods of conflict resolution for Northern Ireland have oscillated between a top-down consociational model and a bottom-up civil society model. British optimism about the potential of civil society has been dashed continually, one example being the failure of the TUC's back-to-work march during the Ulster Workers' Council strike of 1974. During the peace process leading up to the Agreement of 1998, Dixon says this optimism was again confounded by the low showing for the UDP, PUP and Women's Commission at the Forum elections in 1996. Dixon argues that this despair pushes policy makers towards elite accommodation, on the erroneous assumption that because civil society models have failed they always will.

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[102] Luther, KR 1999 Op.cit, p10

[103] Dixon, P 'Paths to Peace in Northern Ireland (II) The peace process 1973-1974 and 1994-96' Democratisation Vol.4 No.3 Autumn 1997, p11

Dixon's thesis assumes that the framers of the peace process were disappointed and surprised by the results of the Forum elections. However, the elections were organised in such a way that one per-cent was enough to give the Women's Commission two seats and entry to negotiations. Cochrane presents their campaign as mounted "from a standing start" only six weeks before the election was held.[104] The electoral system was designed to catch any stray organisation that was dedicated to an agenda other than the intransigence of the DUP. It was also a way of drawing in the political representatives of the loyalist paramilitaries. As will be shown in the following chapters, they charged themselves with selling the benefits of participating in negotiations their comrades and to a wider loyalist working class constituency and the convoluted electoral mechanism guaranteed that they would be kept within that negotiating process.[105]

The Good Friday Agreement is a form of bi-national settlement, but there is potential within it for non-communal political debate. The referendum for the agreement encouraged political activity in the civil society mode as trade unions, churches and business organisations formed a company to co-ordinate a non-party campaign for a yes vote.[106] Additionally, as Hazelton argues, there is potential for cross-community political action in that "people are free to transcend communal divisions through the Civic Forum in Strand One, through the North/South Ministerial Council in Strand Two, and the British-Irish Council in Strand Three."[107] Woods acknowledges that the Civic Forum is "viewed with some scepticism by many elected representatives", but he argues that the potential of the forum "lies in bringing the resources and goodwill

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[104] Cochrane, F Unionist Politics and the Politics of Unionism Since the Anglo-Irish Agreement (Cork) Cork University Press 2001, p359

[105] Hennessey argues that the forum election system "was specifically designed to ensure that minority parties associated with the loyalist paramilitaries could be elected to the forum". Hennesey, T The Northern Ireland Peace Process (Dublin) Gill and MacMillan 2000, p102

[106] Elliot, S 'The referendum and assembly elections in Northern Ireland' Irish Political Studies Vol.14 1999, pp138-149.

[107] Hazelton, A 2000 Op. cit, p34

of civil society to bear in support of the work of the assembly".[108] Beyond this, there is scope in the normal functioning of the assembly for co-operation on socio-economic matters, which was denied to the parties during direct rule.

The Agreement is consociational, but there are spaces within the institutional arrangements for the articulation of demands that cut across the main national groups. The fulfilment of this potential depends in part on whether political actors utilise them.   This is where the importance of individual parties and their manifestos becomes pertinent to this discussion.  Luther and Deschouwer believe that "parties do matter. They are not mere passive respondents to sociopolitical factors, but strategic actors".[109]

To put the manifesto of new loyalism in context the focus of this chapter will now move to the work of Porter who advances a model of civic unionism that encourages debate and participation.  Porter's work is important because he asserts that a civic political spirit of participation and co-operation can be generated within a settlement that has institutionalised separate national identities. This is significant in light of the UDP and PUP's commitment to social democratic politics as the basis of cross-community action, which they held whilst negotiating and signing a bi-national consociational settlement.

## 3.10 Norman Porter - *Rethinking Unionism*

Wrestling with political issues of identity is not in itself a sign of abnormality though wrestling with virtually nothing else is.[110]

Porter seeks to articulate a mode of unionist political thought and action that supports a framework of institutions that grants recognition to British and Irish identities as a

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[108] Woods, J 'The civic forum' from Wilson, R (ed) Agreeing to Disagree? A Guide to the Northern Ireland Assembly (Norwich) Stationery Office 2001, p79

[109] Luther, KR & Descshouwer, K (eds) 1999 Op. cit, p262

[110] Porter, N Rethinking Unionism (Belfast) Blackstaff 1996, p8

starting point for a Northern Irish way of life that encourages allegiance and reconciliation. His opening argument is that currently unionism suffers from a lack of vision. It is about maintaining the union for the union's sake, rather than debating what life within that union should be about. Porter identifies two dominant perspectives within unionism, which he terms cultural unionism and liberal unionism. He assesses both positions and deems them inadequate for dealing with the challenges that unionism faces. He seeks to establish a mode of unionist engagement with nationalists that facilitates a process of reconciliation. He argues that this engagement "entails risks and vulnerability, as we expose ourselves to others in a critically reflective way".[111]

The challenges to unionism come from a number of different directions. Unionism is weak through internal division. It is challenged by the conspicuously different treatment it receives from Westminster. The Irish Government offers a series of challenges both because it offers unionists a permanent invitation to join the Irish State and because it seeks involvement in Northern Ireland as a guarantor of the nationalist community's rights. The European Union generates debates within the United Kingdom on the subject of sovereignty and national self-determination. Porter even considers the possibility that that this could encourage the development of a distinct English nationalism, which would challenge unionists to answer which peoples the union was between.

Finally there are challenges within Northern Ireland which Porter relates to the concept of 'parity of esteem'. He argues that parity of esteem is the basis of a discourse that informs the actions of the nationalist community and both the British and Irish governments. He says that it is also a profoundly important idea for non-nationalist groups in Northern Ireland:

The non-nationalist challenge to unionism transmitted indirectly through a politics of civil society has a significance that far exceeds the electoral strength

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[111] Porter, N The Elusive Quest: Reconciliation in Northern Ireland (Belfast) Blackstaff 2003, p95

of non-nationalist political parties.[112]

Porter argues that the current dominant unionist positions cannot respond to these challenges. Their politics are intransigent and do nothing to guarantee the existence of the union as the constitutional framework for a vibrant and relatively uncontested polity.

### 3.91. Porter's Thesis

Porter's thesis is two-fold. Firstly he argues that we interpret events in the context of a horizon of meaning, a "particular horizon that defines the parameters of significance for those who share it".[113] This context should be capable of being revised in the light of experience, but primarily as a result of dialogue with those who interpret events in the context of a different horizon of meaning.

Secondly, Porter reasons that we cannot step outside ourselves or detach ourselves from our cultural background, but we do have a "capacity of critical reflection" by which we can revise and adopt different understandings within our cultural tradition.[114] This critical reflection is also primarily aided by dialogue, which must involve recognition and reciprocity.

In short, Porter argues that although we make choices within the context of a cultural tradition, this horizon of meaning will become restrictive, or our actions will become more and more inconsistent with our cultural background, unless we constantly recognise the worth of other horizons of meaning and revise our understandings of our motives through dialogue. As proof of this thesis, Porter offers us cultural and liberal unionism as instances of horizons of meaning that are blinkered and therefore

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[112] Porter, N 1996, Op. cit p12

[113] Porter, N 1996 Op. cit, p12

[114] Porter, N 1996 Op. cit, p14

weak. He then offers civic unionism as a means by which unionists are encouraged to recognise the worth of nationalist identity and nationalists are in turn encouraged to value the worth of a citizenship they share with unionists.


## 3.9.2 Cultural Unionism and Liberal Unionism

Porter characterises cultural unionism as the expression of an Ulster way of life that is framed by a Protestant horizon of meaning. Since the dissolution of Stormont it has been expressed in the actions of paramilitaries, in loyalist murals and in the Orange Order, as it has lacked adequate institutional expression. Cultural unionism rests on the idea that Protestantism is essential to liberty. British-ness should be about rejoicing in the Williamite settlement, which guarantees civil liberties under the auspices of the Protestant Crown. The defence of the Protestant people against the illiberal and disloyal Catholic presence in Ireland forms a historical narrative stretching from the massacre of settlers in 1641 to the undoing of Sunningdale in 1974. These events are the basis of:

> A grand cultural unionist narrative which emphasises three themes: the precariousness of Protestant experience in Ireland, the right of Protestants to belong in the north as a distinctive British presence, and the ongoing willingness of Protestants to make ultimate sacrifices for the sake of Britain in general and the Ulster unionist way of life in particular.[115]

This narrative and the Protestant horizon of meaning that frames it is deemed unacceptable by Porter for three reasons. Firstly, examination of experience elsewhere demonstrates that Protestantism is not the sole guarantor for liberty in a state, and that at various times it has been the guiding force in a despotic state (Porter gives the example of Calvin's Geneva). Historically and in the contemporary world Protestantism has been demonstrated to be neither a sufficient nor a necessary condition of a liberal settlement. Because adherents of cultural unionism do not

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[115] Porter, N 1996 Op. cit, p90

engage in any form of dialogue they do not acknowledge this.

Secondly, this horizon of meaning alienates nationalists since it shuts them out from full membership of the political community. It encourages no dialogue between the two groups.

Thirdly, this horizon of meaning makes the cultural unionist position incomprehensible to the rest of Britain. The mistrust and bitterness generated by this incomprehension further isolates cultural unionists within their supposed larger community of the United Kingdom. Porter argues that this affects cultural unionists' self-understanding of their Britishness and exacerbates their isolation. Dialogue with outside groups is cut off along with opportunities for unionists to re-appraise the union and what kind of life it should support.

Liberal unionism, on the other hand, proclaims its support for a British political way of life. Liberal unionism purports that "unionism is a necessary condition of a liberal society in Ireland".[116] A liberal settlement would rest on co-operation between the British and Irish states which would overcome nationalist intransigence by establishing Northern Ireland as an integral and fully integrated part of Great Britain. Expressions of Irish-ness would be found at the non-political level as the settlement would include toleration of cultural diversity.

Porter argues that liberal unionism is as closed off and uncompromising as cultural unionism for two reasons. Liberal unionism does not enter into dialogue with the nationalist community because it seeks to belittle their claims. The previous experience of devolved government in Northern Ireland under the supposed auspices of a liberal democracy was an alienating one for nationalists, but liberal unionists choose to ignore the implications of this. Liberal unionism also chooses not to recognise the strength of nationalist claims to difference, believing that it would be a straightforward matter for the British and Irish governments to ensure that the position of Northern Ireland was no longer contested.

Additionally liberal unionism is inadequate because it offers a "thin conception of citizenship" based purely on legal rights.[117] There is no consideration given to the idea that citizens need to be able to form a sense of attachment to institutions for the state to be reasonably uncontested. Porter maintains:

It is hard not to conclude that liberal unionists, with their gaze fixed unwaveringly on the goal of unsullied political British-ness, seem oddly oblivious to the political responsibilities of living in a deeply divided society.[118]

Liberal unionism fails to recognise its own emotional investment in British-ness and therefore presents a procedural citizenship stripped of an overarching civic identity that would encourage participation by nationalists. As it eschews examination of its own horizon of meaning and dismisses that of nationalists, it too is unable to answer enough of the challenges to unionism in the contemporary world.

### 3.9.3 Cultural and Liberal Unionism as Theoretical Models

Whilst Porter's critiques of cultural and liberal unionism are incisive, there are two problems with the use of these theoretical models. The first of these concerns the concept of cultural unionism, specifically the emphasis on a Protestant horizon of meaning. Porter asserts that loyalist paramilitaries have been some of the staunchest adherents of the grand cultural unionist narrative of a besieged people. Yet these paramilitary groups were formed for reasons other than the defence of the Williamite settlement. It is problematic to name a Protestant horizon of meaning linking politicians, paramilitaries and the Orange Order. It does not explain the continuing resonance of what Porter has termed an Ulster way of life in a Northern Ireland that is becoming more secular. It does not explain the ability of cultural unionism to adapt

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[116]  Porter, N 1996 Op. cit, p147

[117]  Porter, N 1996 Op. cit, p160

[118]  Porter, N 1996 Op. cit, p145

even without dialogue with others. There is the additional danger both of conflating Protestantism with anti-Catholicism when, as discussed in the previous chapter, the importance of Protestantism within unionist identity is complex and can have more than one meaning.

The second problem with these models is the lack of discussion of the scope for interaction between them. Aughey argues that:

> The situated (unionist) self assumed by Porter's communitarianism is a caricature of the multiple contradictory and diverse influences which together constitute unionist politics in particular and the situation in which unionists find themselves in general. His unionist – of whatever variety – is an abstraction from a complex and contradictory reality.[119]

Aughey himself has outlined two visions of 'the people' within unionism. The constitutional people are tied to British-ness via the institutions of the state, whilst the sovereign people are unwilling to fully transfer their sovereignty to the United Kingdom. However, these are not two distinct political groupings. As Aughey puts it:

> If the policy of the British Government appears to undermine the rights of the constitutional people, then the uncivil state of the sovereign people may be a way to assert those rights.[120]

Unionist politics can express sentiments of rationality simultaneously with a cultural identity. For example, despite differences between the UUP and the DUP it cannot be said that one is the representative of liberal unionism and the other of cultural unionism.

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[119] Aughey, A 'A new beginning? the prospects for a politics of civility in Northern Ireland' from Ruane, J and Todd, J (eds) After the Good Friday Agreement: Analysing Political Change in Northern Ireland (Dublin) University College Dublin Press 1999, p137

[120] Aughey, A 'The character of Ulster Unionism' from Shirlow, P & McGovern, M Who are the

Porter does concede that Orangeism can have an emotional pull on those who would fit into his liberal unionist model but these models are still very prescriptive. He inserts another cleavage, that of pro and anti-Agreement and sites the PUP in the cultural unionist yes camp and Trimble's supporters in the liberal yes camp, sidestepping the issue of the UUP's Orange Order connections .[121]

These criticisms do not invalidate Porter's discussion of how unionists cut themselves off from dialogue with nationalists. However, the extent to which cultural and liberal unionism interact with each other and the manner in which they have evolved within their own horizon of meanings should be noted.

## 3.9.4 Civic Unionism

That Northern Ireland in all its complexities and contradictions might be the site of a way of life that is peculiarly its own is a disturbing thought to those whose sights remain firmly set on Westminster or Dublin, and one distorted beyond recognition by those who claim 'Ulster' as the exclusive home of their tribe or tradition.[122]

Porter is seeking to advance the idea that there is a distinctive Northern Irish way of life. Northern Ireland is presented as a site where British-ness and Irish-ness meet and mutate into different forms with special meaning to those on the territory. Porter argues that this way of life is one worth having. It is an already existing way of life but one that is rarely recognised. Porter argues that two steps are required to bring this way of life to the fore and protect it.

Porter holds that the union is legitimate because Northern Ireland is recognised in international law as part of the United Kingdom and because of the consent principle.

People? Unionism, Protestantism and Loyalism in Northern Ireland (London) Pluto 1997, p23

[121] Porter, N 2003, Op. cit

[122] Porter, N 1996 Op. cit, p171

However, whilst the consent principle relates to the majority of the province bearing a British political identity Porter argues that there must be "a recognition of an Irish identity in public institutions".[123] This is both to reflect the political identity of a substantial minority and to open up nationalist and unionist horizons of meaning to dialogue.

The second step concerns the relationship between the state and civil society. Porter asserts that political, legal and socio-economic institutions and practices are required to encourage the development of healthy political life in Northern Ireland, comprising an active civil society, protection and representation of citizens, and social justice to ensure a more equitable distribution of goods. Porter is looking to ensure a sense of civic pride and duty that would reinforce the legitimacy of Northern Ireland as a defined territorial unit. Legal equality would be granted within the framework of the British State, but social justice and institutional recognition of an Irish identity would help make that equality meaningful in different ways and thus encourage participation.

In order to assess this model of civic unionism an evaluation of Porter's assumptions about citizenship, identity and political participation needs to be undertaken. This will involve a discussion of civil society in Northern Ireland and existence of a Northern Irish sense of identity.

## 3.10 Porter and Citizenship

Porter acknowledges that his work rests on classic republican theories of citizenship and the benefits of political participation. He says "a recurring republican theme is that a good society is conceivable only if there are good citizens".[124] Therefore, he believes that the development of civic virtue is vital. In particular citizens in Northern

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[123] Porter, N 1996 Op. cit, p177

Ireland need to develop three qualities to enable them to transcend conflict; forgiveness, magnanimity and reasonableness. Porter's work tackles the question of how these qualities can be developed within a framework that institutionalises political identities.

### 3.10.1 Citizenship and Identity

Porter's work engages with parity of esteem which he terms due recognition. He argues that esteem for aspirations and identities cannot be equal whilst Northern Ireland remains with the jurisdiction of British sovereignty. This means that Northern Ireland tends towards British-ness *politically*. However, due recognition provides for the equal respect of both identities and accompanying aspirations by granting the recognition each is due in institutional and non-institutional settings. This recognition is due to individuals, cultural groups, and political identities.

Porter's concept of due recognition is an adaptation of the work of Charles Taylor on the politics of recognition, a philosophical standpoint based on the premise that "due recognition is not just a courtesy we owe people. It is a vital need".[125]

Taylor's argument is that political action has become framed by the "modern ideal of authenticity".[126] This is an ideal that states one must be true to one's own nature, which is assumed to derive from a cultural tradition that constitutes one's people or nation. This nature depends on recognition. Mis-recognition is the product and cause of discrimination and the marginalisation of an identity. Recognition is assured partly through "dialogical relations with others"[127] but it also requires some accommodation within state provision such as education. Taylor opines that there must be a starting

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[124] Porter, N 2003 Op. cit, p99

[125] Taylor, C Multiculturalism and the Politics of Recognition (New Jersey) Princeton University Press 1992, p26

[126] Taylor, C 1992 Op. cit, p31

[127] Taylor, C 1992 Op. cit, p34

point of presumption of the equal worth of a culture, but not all aspects of cultures can be accommodated in a larger society governed by liberal mores of individual freedoms. The challenge is to establish what levels of a liberal state can accommodate recognition of identities and what must remain inviolate and 'difference blind.'

Waldron proposes a counter-argument to Taylor, discounting any claims to institutional recognition for identities. He argues that identity politics have affected people's conception of responsible civic participation. Civic participation is the duty to "come to terms with one another and set up, maintain and operate the legal frameworks that are necessary to secure peace, resolve conflicts, do justice, avoid great harms, and provide basis for improving the conditions of life."[128] In addition Waldron argues that the politics of recognition rests unjustly on "which culture X's identity was forged in" rather than "what particular identity X forged within that culture".[129]

Waldron's concept of civic participation echoes Miller's defence of republican citizenship. He defends this ideal against what he sees as a sectional "politics of difference".[130] Miller says that:

> There is no reason to think that a republican conception of citizenship, which sees the citizen as someone who plays an active role in shaping the future direction of his or her society through political debate and decision making, places groups such as women or ethnic minorities at a disadvantage.[131]

Miller is seeking to reassert the primacy of citizenship, which grants equality for

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[128] Waldron, J 'Cultural identity and civic responsibility' From Kymlicka, W and Norman, W (eds) Citizenship in Diverse Societies (Oxford) Oxford University Press 2000, p155

[129] Waldron, J 2000 Op. cit, p158

[130] Miller, D 2000 Op. cit, p7

[131] Miller, D 2000 Op. cit, p30

individuals and allows them to hold a number of other identities concurrently, which can be expressed at levels other than the state. What is interesting is that Porter also lauds the benefit of a republican ideal of citizenship, whilst suggesting that this ideal can be pursued in parallel with a settlement that accommodates different identities at the elite levels of the state.


## 3.10.2 Civic Unionism, Civil Society

Waldron and Miller's charge that the politics of difference undermines civic unity cannot be easily applied to an entity that has never enjoyed the unqualified support of a substantial number of residents. Irish nationalism has traditionally equated self-determination with the withdrawal of British sovereignty, although, as has been discussed, there is a diversity of constitutional preferences amongst nationalists in Northern Ireland. Additionally the civic nationalist case includes Northern Irish Protestants within this claim to self-determination, even though they themselves have resisted this interpretation. Waldron and Miller's arguments fit with the liberal unionist case that Porter has criticised for belittling or discounting the nationalist claim to political recognition.

Porter makes the connection between parity of esteem and due recognition because he sees it as a means of reinterpreting self-determination, which is the first step towards the creation of what he terms expansive citizenship: the dialogue that will bring his Northern Irish way of life to the fore. Porter argues that lack of dialogue, and therefore recognition of worth, has been the greatest obstacle to civic participation. However, Porter also seeks to settle claims based on identity in order that claims based on other cross-cutting cleavages can be advanced. It his belief that:

It is only as nationalists as well as unionists are persuaded fully to invest in political life in Northern Ireland that an identity based on concerted actions

becomes conceivable.[132]

Porter's civic unionism is being advanced as a method of creating unity by, paradoxically, recognising difference. It echoes Kymlicka's insistence that subordination of different national identities aids alienation rather than assimilation. Porter depicts a form of unionism that has the generosity of spirit towards nationalists and others that stems from a union made secure by the quality of the social and political life within it. This is consistent with his thesis that unionists must be able to revise their horizon of meaning through dialogue with those who would challenge them.

Porter's use of the word civic relates to the moral qualities of civic duty outlined by Skinner, as discussed earlier in this chapter. Citizenship is in its most basic sense derived from the freedoms granted by a liberal state, but a degree of participation is required to affirm allegiance to the political community in which we find ourselves.

Porter sites most of this dialogue and activity at the level of civil society. This is partly because he believes this is the sphere where an active and organic Northern Irish way of life could develop separate from institutions that have incorporated political British and Irish identities in order to guarantee simple acquiescence. This emphasis on civil society is also important, considering the arguments set out in the earlier sections of this chapter. Political activity at the sub-state level is meant to lessen the number of common ends imposed upon citizens and allows for choice and diversity of identity rather than Waldron's feared imposition of state-approved hegemonic cultural identities.

By linking a politics of civil society to the non-nationalist parties that challenge unionism, Porter seems to be suggesting that civil society represents a middle path between unionism and nationalism. His relaxed attitude to the institutionalising of

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[132] Porter, N 1996 Op. cit, p201

British and Irish identities seems related to his belief that civil society is an effective counter-weight to this elite accommodation.

There are organisations and individuals within Northern Ireland that do not define themselves by national identity, or who are not connected to the traditional unionist and nationalist communities. However, civil society in Northern Ireland does not operate independently of nationalism and unionism. McGarry and O'Leary point out that the two biggest organisation in civil society are the G.A.A. and the Orange Order[133] and the churches themselves are involved in the civil and social activity of the province. Cochrane and Dunn's study of the voluntary sector impact on conflict resolution found that "the attitude of many groups is governed by a desire to see a broadening of political dialogue and an inclusion of civil society within the debate".[134] However, they note that many of these groups are themselves single identity groups concerned with working within one community only.

This does not necessarily discount Porter's defence of civil society as an arena suitable for his project of encouraging unity through promoting diversity. However, Porter seems to gloss over the ways in which division manifests itself here. Without a greater discussion of this and of what constitutes the non-nationalist challenge, the phrase civil society seems in danger of being as bland and unhelpful as references to a reasonable or silent majority.

3.10.4 British, Irish, Northern Irish

The answer of assimilation mishandles the claims of difference, just as the answer of prioritising difference mishandles the claims of commonality. The slightly more hopeful answer of balancing the interests of rivals sets of difference, such as those of unionism and nationalism, does not succeed either,

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[133] McGarry, J and O'Leary, B 1995 Op. cit

[134] Cochrane, F and Dunn, S People Power? The Role of the Voluntary and Community Sector in the Northern Ireland Conflict (Cork) Cork University Press 2002, p83

as it curtails concerns of commonality for the sake of placating the interests of difference.[135]

Porter believes that "we can admit plurality without forfeiting hope of commonality" because making identity claims does not exempt us being reasonable or from engaging in debate and political action across political lines.[136] He argues that we can all recognise a common humanity even if we accept that citizens are culturally encumbered. However, he also seeks to establish the "possibility of a civic identity developing through the qualities of character that are appropriate to them".[137]

Porter's civic unionism is based on a Northern Irish way of life, and so it would seem to follow that there is a connection between a civic identity and a sense of Northern Irish-ness.

The 2002 *Northern Ireland Life and Times Survey* shows that whilst British and Irish are still the most popular identities, 'Northern Irish' is an identity held by nearly a fifth of respondents (nineteen per-cent). Catholics (twenty-five per-cent) are more likely to describe themselves as Northern Irish than Protestant (fourteen per-cent). The identity is much more likely to be chosen than the label of 'Ulster' (one per-cent of Catholics and six per-cent of Protestants described themselves thus).[138]

The survey breaks down political attitudes by age group, religion and gender. It does not break down results by the identities of British, Irish, Ulster and Northern Irish and so does not provide empirical data as to the political attitudes of those who feel that Northern Irish is the label that best describes them. A sense of Northern Irish-ness

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[135] Porter, N 2003 Op. cit, p134

[136] Porter, N 2003 Op. cit, p142

[137] Porter, N 2003 Op.cit, p172

[138] Northern Ireland Life and Times Survey 2002 www.ark.ac.uk/nilt. The question asked was do you think of yourself as British/Irish/Ulster/Northern Irish?

could be about a simple sense of belonging, a cultural sense of identity. It does not necessarily follow that it can be the basis of civic virtue and a shared political identity. This does not mean that the model of civic unionism is rendered invalid as a means of testing unionist horizons of meaning. However, Porter's enthusiasm for the potential of a new politics based republican citizenship must be qualified by doubts about the significance of 'Northern Irish' as an identity as well as the divided nature of civil society in Northern Ireland.

Concerns have already been noted about the viability of a Jacobin ideal of a band of citizens engaged in a constant process of debate and action. Porter's model of civic unionism relies on specific civic virtues he identifies as aids to dialogue and critical reflection. Whilst Porter's model may rest on a very favourable view of the potential of civil society and political activity therein, he does provide a model that offers unionists room for manoeuvre within a bi-national settlement.

### 3.11 Civic Loyalism

The hypothesis that guides this work is that new loyalist parties must mark a sophisticated and coherent progression from populist resistance to the unionist hierarchy. The Protestant working class have participated in and generated different political movements, which have oscillated between sectarianism and labourism. A new loyalist politics can be equated with civic unionism for three reasons: a concern with social justice; a willingness to engage in debate with challengers; and an acceptance that holding an Irish national identity is not tantamount to disloyalty.

These three elements of civic unionism are important to any idea of a new loyalism because they manage to combine security about the current state of the union with a vision of what life within that union should be about. Parity of esteem, as understood through the terms of the Good Friday Agreement, still places greater weight on British sovereignty. A new loyalist party should use this as the starting point to stress the importance of a variety of identities that would encourage cross-community political

action and prevent the bi-national settlement from ossifying.

Bearing in mind Porter's insistence on the importance of dialogue as a means of providing dialogue as a means of critically reflecting upon one's own understanding, cross-community alliances would also mark new loyalists' willingness to enter into dialogue with traditional opponents. However, dialogue could also be used by new loyalist politicians to respond to the challenges that Porter identifies as facing unionism. This response could offer challenges to nationalists to rethink their horizon of meaning.

The political programme a new loyalist party offers should be one that addresses issues of social justice as a means of representing groups within loyalism who are excluded from dialogue due to material deprivation, as well as a method of encouraging political activity along a cleavage other than ethnicity.

These tenets of new, or civic, loyalism would need to rely on two factors. Firstly new loyalist groupings would have to deal with challenges from within unionism in order to withstand constitutional uncertainty. Otherwise they could eventually meet the fate of the Northern Ireland Labour Party whose support crumbled as inter-communal conflict resurfaced.

Secondly, if a new loyalist party is to be part of a spontaneous evolving political life within Northern Ireland it would have to demonstrate increasing electoral support, in particular from the Protestant working class who are meant to be new loyalism's constituency. This is vital if new loyalists are to engage in an active role in Northern Irish politics as the representatives of the community they claim to speak for.

## 3.12 Conclusions

Citizens are members of limited political communities. Civil and political rights grant citizens the power of state protection and protection from the state itself. Rights also enable citizens to pursue their version of the good life away from state institutions. However, there is not a clear distinction between the state and civil society. Instead, the two spheres are inter-linked. There is debate about the passive and active nature of citizenship and about whether participation in political activity in both spheres can generate virtuous civic qualities that reinforce the legitimacy of the polity.

There are more self-proclaimed nations in the modern world than there are states. Measures of group-differentiation have been advanced by liberal theorists such as Kymlicka as means of maintaining allegiance to a wider civic state by granting measures that recommend the right of national groups to a measure of autonomy. Group-differentiation also informs proponents of consociational solutions to the potential conflicts within highly segmented societies.

Kymlicka and Norman admit that some measures of group differentiation may encourage secessionist politics, although they have proposed them as a means of reinforcing the integrity of the state. They believe that ultimately, for multi-nation states "it is an open question what holds such a country together".[139] It is as hard to address this question satisfactorily as it is to quantify the civic virtue held up by many as the basis of a vibrant and unified citizenry.

Consociationalism and the critics of this style of democracy have been discussed above. Particular attention has been paid to the idea of the consociational paradox, that these settlements can aid the transcendence of the differences they institutionalise. Horowitz, for example, has highlighted the difficulty in applying the experience of post-war European consociational democracies to societies beset by more intense instability and aggression.

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[139] Kymlicka, W and Norman, W 1994 Op. cit, p377

These theories deal with the design of the constitution and political institutions. However, this thesis is concerned with the ability of a new loyalist party to operate at this elite level and within grassroots politics. Reviewing Porter's concepts of cultural, liberal and civic unionism serves as a context for testing new loyalism because of his belief that a bi-national settlement need not preclude the bolstering of a civic Northern Irish politics. This could shift the focus away from identity and encourage activity along other cleavages. This relates to the confidence of a new loyalist party as regards the security of the union, and to the breaking of the binary understanding of loyal and disloyal political allegiances. This informs the construction of the optimistic model of new loyalism, which, along with the pessimistic model, will be used to test the PUP and UDP in the following chapters.

# CHAPTER FOUR - THE ROOTS OF NEW LOYALISM 1966-1982

## 4.1 Introduction

In the previous chapters the concept of new loyalism has been evaluated. The ideal model of a new loyalist manifesto would be one that had a sophisticated approach to working with nationalists and dealing with the challenges posed by the concept of parity of esteem. A new loyalist manifesto would address issues of deprivation and distribution of resources in a manner that would marginalise sectarianism. This manifesto would have to attract a stable level of electoral support amongst the Protestant working class, the group that both the UDP and have claimed to represent, and it would be sufficiently rigorous and developed to deal with internal tensions. This ideal model amounts to a comprehensive definition of new loyalism.

The purpose of this chapter is to assess previous projects within unionism that could be said to contain elements of this model of new loyalism. The first political agenda to consider is that of Terence O'Neill, Prime Minister of Northern Ireland between 1963 and 1969. He believed that encouraging cross-community activity in Northern Irish civil society would be enough to reconcile nationalists to the state. It will be shown that O'Neill's ambitions were actually very limited, and his reform programme modest. However, his actions raised nationalists hopes and unionist fears and the resulting tension developed into violent conflict by the end of the 1960s. The resulting political and social breakdown forced O'Neill to resign, and it also overwhelmed the Northern Ireland Labour Party.

The NILP leadership had also committed themselves to reach out to the nationalists. They sought to do this by encouraging alignment around social and economic issues, rather than constitutional preference. When the conflict began, it became apparent that it was not possible to supplant constitutional issues with politics based on social class,

because it was quite possible to combine a commitment to socialism with a unionist or nationalist identity.

The final projects to be considered in this chapter are the historical antecedents of the PUP and the UDP. This entails charting the development of the UVF and the UDA as paramilitary organisations and considering the attempts of some within these organisations to develop other roles through electoral and community politics. This will set the manifestos and activities of the UDP and PUP in a historical context and aid consideration of what, if anything, is genuinely new about new loyalism.

Although both the UVF and the UDA became more formally organised throughout this period it must be noted that neither were completely centralised organizations. The UDA, in particular, rested on a loose federal structure. This reflected the fact that it developed out of the amalgamation of a number of groups that had developed spontaneously within local communities. The UVF was smaller in size than the UDA and the organisation's self-image was of a tightly knit military unit. However, it too lacked complete control of its members, many of whom affiliated themselves to it rather than being inducted into a clear hierarchical structure.

The UVF and the UDA contained members with a variety of political positions and many who were opposed to any form of political action. These groups had been formed for military purposes and many felt that a political direction was antithetical to the brief they had set for themselves: the military defence of Ulster. Therefore, when discussing political activity associated with the UVF and UDA, it is the thinking of the dominant grouping with those organisations that can be observed.

## 4.2 The Formation of the UVF

### 4.2.1 The New UVF

The formation of the UVF pre-dates the Troubles; The Northern Ireland Civil Rights Association (NICRA) was officially formed on 1st February 1967, but in the months preceding this armed men in the North Belfast area were undertaking terrorist acts using the name, the Ulster Volunteer Force. The original UVF had been raised in preparation for armed resistance to Home Rule in Ireland. Most of this force was killed in the Battle of the Somme, where they fought as the 36th (Ulster) Division.

Fighting in the Great War seemed to be a testament to the UVF's loyalty to the British State and empire. Their resolve to defy Home Rule would seem to contradict this, but to unionists in the North-East of Ireland this apparent disloyalty was both necessary and legitimate to defend the integrity of the United Kingdom against the secessionist intentions of the Irish nationalist movement. The sense of legitimacy was reinforced by the Curragh Mutiny of 1914 where it became apparent that the British Army could not be relied upon to curtail the activities of a unionist paramilitary force.

The modern UVF emerged in the 1960s when a series of attacks on Catholic-owned property took place in Belfast. On 7th May 1966 a home on Upper Charleville Street in the Shankill area was petrol bombed and the tenant, a 77-year-old Protestant called Matilda Gould, died later of her injuries. The Catholic proprietor of the off-licence next door owned the house and the properties were similarly decorated, appearing from the outside to be one building.[1] Two murders of Catholics took place in the following weeks: John Patrick Scullion and Peter Ward.

Whilst these events were occurring there were also a spate of incidents designed to suggest that the IRA had resumed their campaign of violence, for example another

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[1] Cusack, J & McDonald, H UVF (Dublin) Poolbeg Press 2000, p5

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shooting incident at the home of a North Belfast Unionist politician called John McQuade. This was be a trick that the UVF would repeat as the civil rights movement gained momentum. On 19th October 1968, an explosion at the Silent Valley reservoir was designed to give the impression the IRA were active.

Against this backdrop the new UVF identified itself publicly. A phone call to the Belfast Telegraph from "Captain William Johnston" of the UVF claimed Scullion was an IRA man. On 21st May 1966 an anonymous phone call to the newspaper announced on behalf of the UVF:

> From this day we declare war against the IRA and its splinter groups...we are heavily armed Protestants devoted to this cause.[2]

This new grouping were proscribed on the 25th June after the murder of Peter Ward. The UVF's leader, Augustus 'Gusty' Spence, was later imprisoned for the crime, for which he still denies responsibility. O'Neill denounced the UVF as evil and during the Stormont debate on the proscription of the new organisation he made a clear distinction between the old UVF and the new. He informed the house that "as honourable members may know I flew back last night from France. The purpose of my visit there was to honour the men of the Thirty-Sixth (Ulster) Division" and he made clear that he saw no connection between them and "a sordid conspiracy of criminals prepared to take up arms against unprotected fellow citizens".[3]

In 1966 the UVF were in the position of having to manufacture an IRA rebellion. Nelson argues that the UVF "gave literal expression to the traditional Protestant notion of the public band" defending themselves against the Catholic rebels in their midst.[4]

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[2] Quoted in Cusack, J and McDonald H 2000 op cit, p8-9

[3] O'Neill, T Ulster at the Crossroads (London) Faber and Faber 1969, p121

[4] Nelson, S Ulster's Uncertain Defenders (Belfast) Appletree Press 1984, p62

However, the IRA had ended its border campaign four years earlier and there was little concrete evidence of imminent Catholic insurgency. 1966 was the fiftieth anniversary of the Easter Rising in Dublin and this event was commemorated by republican groups in Northern Ireland. However, the threat that the UVF were reactive to was not simply the danger of republican action.

4.2.2 O'Neill the Modernizer

Terence O'Neill had become Prime Minister of Northern Ireland in 1963. O'Neill's approach was ostensibly to pave the way for modernization in the province. Northern Ireland desperately needed foreign investment and increased trade, a fact that necessitated opening up the economic system to outside intervention. O'Neill argued that "although Britain was the first country in the world to develop an industrialised economy, many countries are now more productive and more efficient".[5]

Harris says that, in the post-war period, Northern Ireland suffered from low growth in the manufacturing sector. This was at the root of problems such as "high unemployment, high outmigration, low wages and therefore a high incidence of poverty and general social deprivation".[6] Indigenous industries were coming under increasing international competition and the interlinked nature of the local economy meant that there was a need for a new and more diverse manufacturing base. For example, linen was produced by one set of firms and then processed into goods by other local companies.

A way out of this slump was suggested by the *Matthews Report* of 1963 and the *Wilson Report* of 1965. The former laid out a strategy for developing new towns with developed infrastructure to encourage regional growth, while the latter identified forms

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[5] O'Neill, T 1969 Op. cit, p103

[6] Harris, R Regional Economic Policy in Northern Ireland 1945-1988 (Aldershot) Gower 1991, p16

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of public investment to attract new businesses to Northern Ireland.

Patterson argues that "decades of Unionist party rule had produced a style of leadership which focused obsessively on intra-Protestant relations to the virtual exclusion of changes within Northern Ireland".[7] O'Neill's tenure in office did not mark a departure from this. Buckland says that O'Neill sought to maintain unionist ascendancy by transforming the economy and the changing the tone, if not the structure, of government".[8] Economic modernisation would win back working class support for the party. This change would also benefit, and therefore mollify, Catholics without the need for any structural reform that might give unionist voters the jitters.

O'Neill believed that new towns and new industries, based on innovations such as synthetic materials, would generate prosperity that would benefit all, arguing for example that "new industries for Newry mean new hope for all its people".[9] In addition to economic modernization, O'Neill offered a friendlier image to the nationalist community, through public relations gestures.

Mullholland believes that "O'Neill's gestures to the minority - visiting Catholic schools and inclusive, if anodyne, rhetoric of social and economic advancement - were designed to ease Catholic assimilation into civil society".[10] Mullholland argues that O'Neill had a strong faith in the power of civil society to assimilate Catholics into Northern Irish society and that this process would allow him to sidestep the difficult issue of whether the Unionist Party should canvass for Catholic support as a means of promoting reconciliation.

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[7] Patterson, H 'Northern Ireland 1921-1968' From Aughey, A and Morrow, D Northern Ireland Politics (London) Longman 1996, p10

[8] Buckland, P A History of Northern Ireland (Dublin) Gill and MacMillan 1981, p106

[9] O'Neill, T 1969 Op. cit, p130

[10] Mullholland, M 'Assimilation versus segregation: unionist strategies in the 1960s 'Twentieth Century British History' Vol. 11 No.3 2000, p298

To this end he developed Civic Weeks and the PEP (Programme to Enlist the People), which were designed to encourage voluntary work across community boundaries. Convinced of the healing power of such civic-minded activity he asked:

Is it, for instance, too visionary to look forward to Protestant young people helping to redecorate a youth club in Andersontown or a young Catholic reading to a bed-ridden lady on the Shankill Road?[11]

This accommodation and reconciliation was not the main focus of O'Neill's agenda. Bew believes that the most pressing issue when he took office was the need to consolidate Protestant working class support for the Unionist Party:

O'Neill made it clear to his memoirs that he assumed, when he took over as premier in 1963 that the Northern Ireland Labour Party, not nationalism, was the main problem. The question of politics was why is Northern Ireland the least prosperous part of the United Kingdom? The issue of Irish unity was apparently marginalized.[12]

However, within the nationalist community, this message of change presented an opportunity to organise and demand structural reform. The Campaign for Social Justice, founded in 1964, was the first step towards the development of a civil rights movement that would lobby for equality of citizenship through the removal of electoral malapportionment, discrimination in housing and employment, and the draconian security set-up, which was underpinned by the Special Powers Act.

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[11] O'Neill, T 1969 Op. cit, p131

[12] Bew, P 'The Union. A concept in terminal decay?' from Boyce, D.G. and O'Day, A (eds) Defenders of the Union (London) Routledge 2001, p321

The formation of the UVF was a reaction to O'Neill's tentative modernization programme. Modernization generated uncertainty and the reaction of the nationalist community suggested that the Unionist Party were now set to preside over the concession of power to a nationalist community perceived as disloyal and insatiable in its demands.

## 4.2.3 Paisley the Protester

The UVF did not constitute the only visible reaction to the uncertainties of the 1960s. Other organizations formed around this time also reflected this tension. One of the most notable figures to emerge was Ian Paisley. Paisley was a fundamentalist preacher from County Armagh. He founded his own church, the Free Presbyterian Church of Ulster, in 1951. Buckland states that "he was a bitter opponent of fashionable ecumenism and would have no truck with Rome or church unity".[13] His campaigning against O'Neill seemed primarily based on the perception that the prime minister was pushing Northern Ireland down an ecumenical path; one which would inevitably lead to damnation. However his critique fed into a wider populist sentiment that O'Neill's reforms would destroy the province and this raised his profile considerably. Wichert avers:

> His fundamentalist evangelicalism appeared to provide a political as well as a religious answer; while the redundant Protestant worker had probably little interest in the intricacies of Protestant theology, ecumenism appeared to be supported by not only those people who had the jobs but also those who were offering more to Catholics. Thus keeping their Protestantism fundamentalist implied keeping Catholics out and preserving Protestant privileges in jobs, housing and power.[14]

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[13] Buckland, P 1981 Op. cit, p119

[14] Wichert, S Northern Ireland Since 1945 (Harlow) Pearson Education Limited 1999, p95-6

Paisley's populist message was played out in street protest throughout the 1960s.[15] His criticism of O'Neill and the unionist hierarchy incorporated recognition of the poverty of many working class Protestants. Coogan points out that the "the wretched state of Northern Ireland's housing stock was a political issue. [Paisley] made capital out of the fact that O'Neill and his like lived in 'Big Houses', while many poorer Protestants lived in 'kitchen houses' with no flush toilets".[16] This reinforced the simple message that now, more than ever, was not the time to be making concessions.

This aided Paisley in the establishment of a protest movement, the Ulster Protestant Volunteers (UPV) co-ordinated by the Ulster Constitution Defence Committee into rallies and marches against O'Neill. At the same time Tara emerged from within the Orange Order. Led by a British Israelite[17] William McGrath, this grouping was pledged to defend Ulster by any means necessary.

Some UVF members belonged to these organisations and used them as recruiting grounds. However, whilst groups like the UPV avoided proscription, the UVF had managed to get itself declared illegal and have its leader arrested within weeks of declaring war on the IRA, which stunted its potential for channeling loyalist unrest. Paisley positioned himself outside of straightforward party politics until he perceived that the O'Neill premiership was vulnerable. He moved out from the base of his own church towards populist organisations that suggested a willingness to defy the law, without undertaking the murderous acts the UVF had.

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[15] for example Paisley's actions provoked rioting in the Falls Road area of Belfast during the 1964 election by campaigning to force the RUC to remove a tricolour flag from a Sinn Fein office in Divis Street.

[16] Coogan, T.P. The Troubles (London) Arrow Books 1996, p57

[17] Bruce defines McGrath's status as a British Israelite as a belief "that the original Ulster people were one of the lost tribes of Israel" and Irish Celts had usurped their rightful place on the Island. Bruce, S The Red Hand (Oxford) Oxford University Press 1992, p23

What the UVF shared with its namesake was a belief that extra-constitutional activity was legitimate to shore up the constitution. There was also a similarity in perceptions of what Northern Ireland was endangered by. Whilst the original UVF was prepared to defend itself against the secessionist intentions of Irish nationalism, it was also a reaction to the Liberal party's championing of home rule. If Westminster politicians failed to understand the nature of the threat then unionists would have to take matters into their own hands. The UVF of 1966 took the same view of the patrician O'Neill and determined to keep down the 'rebels' until the unionist hierarchy recovered its common sense.

Throughout the late sixties the UVF remained a small secretive grouping.[18] This was partly because the self-image of the organisation as an elite military body but, crucially, there were other, legal, organisations that Protestants could join to express their frustrations with O'Neillism. When large-scale violence broke out the UVF were not in the position to monopolise paramilitary activity and there was space for other groups to form.

As internal divisions developed within the Unionist Party, Paisley felt that it was time to enter electoral politics. O'Neill just managed to hold him off when he challenged for the Prime Minister's Bannside seat as a candidate for his first political party, the Protestant Unionist Party in 1969. He won the seat in a by-election in 1970. In September 1971 he founded the Democratic Unionist Party (DUP) with the Shankill MP, Desmond Boal. Boal said that the party would be "right wing in the sense of being strong on the Constitution, but to the left on social policies".[19] Being strong on the constitution meant initially being supportive of the imposition of direct rule. Bew and Patterson state:

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[18] Garland estimates that the core membership of the UVF in Belfast in 1969 was thirty. (Garland, R Seeking a Political Accommodation: The UVF's Negotiating History (Belfast) Shankill Community Publications 1997)

[19] www.ark.ac.uk

The formation of the DUP, the alliance with Boal and the associated emphasis, at least in the rhetoric, on social radicalism, was aimed at expanding the party's support in Belfast. The support for direct rule and integration was purely opportunist. Paisley quite correctly calculated that direct rule would be a body blow to the Unionist Party, robbing it of control of the local state apparatus.[20]

The DUP constituted one reaction to the escalating conflict in Northern Ireland and the faltering unionist hierarchy. However, a more immediate reaction on the streets of Northern Ireland was the formation of vigilante groups. These groups, or defence associations, as they were known, would become the basis of a new paramilitary organisation.

## 4.3 Reactions to Conflict

### 4.3.1 The Ulster Defence Association

The original defence association was the Shankill Defence Association, a community group formed to improve the condition of Shankill housing stock. As violence increased throughout the summer of 1969 the brief of the organisation changed to pressuring Catholics out of their homes. At the same time other defence associations sprang up in the Belfast area. These vigilante groups lacked a central leadership and seemed to developed spontaneously. The strongest and most organised was the Woodvale Defence Association which would become the base of the UDA.

The event that played the biggest part in the merging of these organisations was the introduction of internment in 1971. The imprisonment without trial of Catholics fuelled riots and recruitment to the IRA. Here was the rebel threat manifested on the

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[20] Bew, P and Patterson, H The British State and the Ulster Crisis: From Wilson to Thatcher (London) Verso 1985, p41

streets and one of the main forces of containment, the B specials, had been dismantled. Over the Summer of 1971 UDA meetings were held, attended at first by a handful of people, a figure which grew to approximately three thousand.[21] By 1972 the UDA was a mass movement with membership estimated to be between forty and fifty thousand.[22]

One noteworthy aspect concerning the formation of the UDA was the overlap with trade unionism. Shop stewards such as Billy Hull and Glenn Barr were attracted to the organisation and the UDA aligned itself with the Loyalist Association of Workers (LAW) under the auspices of the United Loyalist Council in October 1972. LAW, formed by Billy Hull and Hugh Petrie, was an attempt to coordinate the frustration of loyalist workers at the situation in Northern Ireland. The Harland and Wolff shipyard was a particular site for the expression of grievances.[23]

So the UDA was a organisation with a working class membership and from the beginning there was an alliance with labour organisations. However, it had sprung haphazardly from a collection of separate vigilante groups. Bew and Patterson argue that after its formation "the UDA was still very much a set of local organisations that lacked any clear strategy".[24] The UDA was not formed as a political movement and while events in Northern Ireland provided the organisation with a mass membership there was no guarantee that the association could hold on to, or direct, the mass of loyalist protest.

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[21] Bruce, S The Red Hand (Oxford) Oxford University Press 1992, p5

[22] Gillespie, G and Bew, P Northern Ireland: A Chronology of the Troubles 1968-1999 (Dublin) Gill and MacMillan 1999, p39

[23] For example on 28th June 1970 approximately 500 Catholic workers were expelled from the shipyard. A walkout was also staged from the yard in March 1971 in protest at the murder of three off-duty Scottish soldiers. This murder was also the inspiration for groups of loyalist youth to label themselves as 'tartan gangs'. These groups were mostly absorbed into the burgeoning UDA

The UDA attracted thousands of members at the beginning of the troubles. In contrast to the UVF they remained legal and would in fact avoid proscription for twenty years. The developing UDA leadership took advantage of the opportunities this provided for public marching and displays of strength. The panic and outrage sparked by the protests of nationalists and by the dismantling of long standing bulwarks against such dissent (The B Specials and the Special Powers Act in particular) gave impetus to the development of the UDA. However, there was no guarantee that this momentum could be maintained.

The UDA formed at a time when law and order seemed to be breaking down irreparably, and the new organisation aimed to present itself as a legitimate force of defence. This was initially enhanced by the fact that the British Army's strategy was to concentrate on insurrection in nationalist areas. The 'Ainsworth Avenue stand-off' of 3rd July 1972, where the army gave up on the project of dismantling loyalist barricades, was used as direct proof that the army was as reluctant to fight against unionists as it was in 1914.

Barricading was developed in nationalist areas to keep both the army and loyalists out. The UDA copied this technique in the Waterside area of Derry, as a means of protesting against similar action taking place in the Bogside and Creggan areas of the city.[25] However, the technique was also copied to provide the same message to the army and the British government that their authority was being called into question. A co-ordinated barricading of streets in Belfast on 9th June 1972 sealed off the normal flow of traffic and people through the city centre. The *Belfast Telegraph* reported that "men in military style uniform were drilled in broad daylight behind some of the scores of Protestant barricades".[26]

[24] Bew, P and Patterson, H 1985 Op. cit, p64

[25] 'We'll carry on with our policy: UDA' Belfast Telegraph 22nd May 1972 'Twenty- four hour 'no go' area set up in Derry' Irish Times 5th June 1972

[26] 'UDA drill behind barriers' Belfast Telegraph 10th June 1972

Barricading was one means of demonstrating the UDA's power and enhancing the legitimacy of the role sought by the organisation. A UDA statement released on 11th July 1972 stressed that:

> Our future role will be to help the security forces by keeping peace among the people unless the security forces fail to get a grip of the situation in Northern Ireland...The UDA will take the offensive against the IRA and do our level best to eliminate and destroy them as Mr. Whitelaw and the Heath Government should have done a long time ago.[27]

### 4.3.2 Violence and Legitimacy

On 24th March 1972 the Prime Minister, Edward Heath, announced that, as of 30th March, Stormont was to be suspended for twelve months. This marked the beginning of direct rule. Discussions within the Conservative Government demonstrate that this was seen very much as a temporary measure:

> The alienation of the minority population is growing and world opinion is becoming increasingly critical. A purely military solution could not guarantee success and made a political initiative more urgent. The implementation of our plan might well involve an interregnum, during which Northern Ireland would be subject to direct rule.[28]

The combination of a resurgent republican movement and the prospect of political change served to heighten anxiety amongst unionists that Northern Ireland's

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[27] 'Pledge by UDA to keep the peace' <u>Belfast Telegraph</u> 12th July 1972

[28] Notes of Ministerial Committee on Northern Ireland 9th February 1972. Document reference CAB 130/650 Public Records Office www.pro.gov.uk

constitutional position could be about change and that IRA violence would force them out of the United Kingdom. The IRA called a ceasefire on 26th June 1972 but this broke down in a few weeks and on 21st July, now known as Bloody Friday, they set off twenty-two bombs in Belfast, killing nine people.[29]

For some loyalists the turmoil of the early 1970s led to a desire to take action against republicanism before Northern Ireland was lost. Michael Acheson remembers attending a Vanguard rally, which strengthened his belief that something needed to be done:

> One of the most heart-rending things for me was a mass rally called in Grove Park by Craig and Vanguard and all that was there. I'm sure Paisley was there, I can't remember. It was massive: hundreds turned out for it. And this politician, whoever he was, stepped up and said where are the young men of Ulster? You know, this whole Carson thing, where's the young men of Ulster, our police are being killed. You know, that terminology, our police is being killed. But I just had this feeling that the whole crowd was focusing on me - sort of what are you doing? You were sitting there, just sitting with a turmoil within yourself. It's hard to explain. And I think that's why I started looking toward the paramilitaries. I just sort of take myself back to that time when the cry was the young men of Ulster. You know, your country's dying and you're just sitting watching there instead of doing whatever's possible, you have to do something. I'm trying to go back to that. At that time we thought that the IRA were winning the war, that nothing was done by the police and the army because their hands were tied for whatever reason. So yes, I suppose at that time, it seemed that the IRA were winning, that there had to be other means to try and challenge them.[30]

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[29] 1972 had the highest number of deaths due to the conflict. 103 soldiers were killed along with 41 police/UDR officers and 323 civilians. The IRA's ceasefire had been called to enable them to enter into dialogue with the British Government, although no headway was made.

[30] Interview with Michael Acheson 12th March 2001

William Smith echoes this sense that the security forces were being prevented from taking necessary action:

> Within the Protestant community, it was seen that the security forces' hands were tied and they should have went [sic] and basically shot people. It was a hard line, you'll always hear that phrase, they should take the gloves off. There was that type of opinion in all shades, where you saw the security forces defending loyalism or Protestantism. Prior to 1969, loyalists or Protestants would have joined the B specials or they would have joined the police force. As long as they had a badge of authority they felt, if I shoot a Catholic or a republican, as long as I have a badge of authority that's OK.[31]

The loss of the B Specials was keenly felt and the sense that security forces were constrained prompted people like Michael Acheson and William Smith to consider the role of extra-constitutional force. However, many other unionists did not take this action and they continued to wish for the legitimacy of a badge and a uniform, as Smith describes above.

Notes of a meeting between the Defence Secretary and four Northern Irish Ministers on 4th October 1971 record the thoughts of Harry West regarding the new Ulster Defence Regiment:

> Mr. West reverted to the subject of the UDR. He doubted if the British government was really aware of the extent of the damage being done by terrorists to the fabric of social and economic life in Northern Ireland, or of the desperate need for a massive build-up in the manpower available to the security forces. If people wanted to join the UDR with a limited commitment to serve in their own neighbourhoods, they should be allowed to do so; and if that smacked of the B

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[31] Interview with William 'Plum' Smith 18th January 2002

specials, this hardly seemed the time for ministers in London to be fussing about the susceptibilities of the Labour Party in that regard.[32]

The growth of the UVF and especially the UDA were a reaction to the constitutional uncertainty and increasing violence of the 1970s. Members sought to remedy what they saw as a breakdown in law and order and believed this had to be done outside of the security forces. This was because they believed that the British Government was reluctant to allow the police and the army to use the full amount of force necessary to quell republicanism.

However, not all unionists shared this view and many were uncomfortable with the idea of taking such direct action. Some politicians indulged in stirring rhetoric invoking past struggles but were short on actual action. In 1975 McKittrick noted:

As recently as two months ago, Mr. Paisley made a call for Protestants to band together for "the defence and preservation of our country". He did not however, spell out specifically what form such defence would take.[33]

This gap between Paisley's stirring speeches and his actions would be a constant source of frustration and anger amongst loyalist paramilitaries.

It must be noted that after Bloody Friday, the army embarked on the removal of barricades in no-go nationalist areas. This served as a visible demonstration of the security forces re-imposing constitutional order on the streets. Although the UDA remained a legal organisation, the security forces remained the recognised constitutional defenders of the state.

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[32] Document Reference Prem 15/472 www.pro.gov.uk

[33] 'Paisley hits out at 'Loyalist Killers' Irish Times 20th March 1975

## 4.4 Sunningdale and the Ulster Workers' Council Strike

### 4.4.1 The Sunningdale Settlement

The imposition of direct rule was intended to be a temporary measure. The restoration of devolved government was envisaged as part of a settlement that would earn the allegiance of nationalists. This took shape in the *Northern Ireland Constitutional Proposals* published on 20th March 1973. The proposals centred on a new power-sharing coalition government with a non-executive Council of Ireland.

From the beginning the Council of Ireland was a problematic concept for many unionists. A similar measure had been included in the legislation that had created Northern Ireland. The idea behind it had been that the two devolved governments would be free to transfer powers to this body. Incorporating the Council of Ireland into the 1973 proposals gave unionists cause for concern, as they feared it would become the administrative centre of a future united Ireland. The Agreement also gave cause for concern as it stated that "the governments concerned will co-operate under the auspices of a Council of Ireland through their respective police authorities". [34] This synchronisation of policing policy was termed necessary in the Agreement because:

> It was broadly accepted that the two parts of Ireland are to a considerable extent inter-dependent in the whole field of law and order, and that the problems of political violence and identification with the police service cannot be solved without taking account of that fact. [35]

The tensions developing in Northern Ireland from the late 1960s onwards had spawned

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[34] The Sunningdale Agreement December 1973. Point 15

[35] The Sunningdale Agreement December 1973. Point 13

paramilitary and other groups seeking to secure the status of the province against the intentions of both nationalists and Westminster. The unionist hierarchy had also come in for heavy criticism as it seemed the Unionist Party had played a significant role in the development of the current situation. The Unionist Party was facing electoral challenges to its dominance, whilst the rule of law was facing challenges in the form of loyalist paramilitaries and trade union protest. Yet there was no cohesive challenge to those who had over-seen the previous status quo. Unionism was becoming more fragmented but it had not split into discrete blocs.

The Ulster Loyalist Council's first attempt at a general strike on 7th March 1972 (in protest over internment of Protestants) was a failure. The violence and intimidation alienated many unionists, especially as it led to the murder of a fireman on duty in Sandy Row. The reaction to the strike signalled the demise of LAW, which was already riven by leadership disputes and allegations of financial impropriety. However, the ULC had never claimed the exclusive loyalty of its members. It was a coalition of groups who had their own prescription for change and who fed into other groups most notably Vanguard.

Vanguard was launched as a movement, rather than a party, on 9th February 1972. At the head of the movement was William Craig, a Unionist Party minister who had been a harsh critic of O'Neill, Chichester-Clark and Faulkner because he believed they had failed to bring the security situation under control. Craig modelled Vanguard on resistance to home rule and his speeches echoed that fight unmistakably with allusions to armed defence and solemn covenants[36]. Vanguard's links with LAW and the UDA had given rise to rallies and strikes that had reduced the output of power stations.

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[36] See for example 'Craig talks of armed defence' Belfast Telegraph 12th June 1972. This article states "Mr. William Craig, the Vanguard loyalist leader, has revealed that loyalist organisations are now in a position to take up arms to defend democracy in Ulster".

On 27th March 1973 a motion was put before the Ulster Unionist Council to reject new constitutional proposals. This motion was defeated by 381 votes to 231. This spurred Craig to leave and form the Vanguard Unionist Progressive Party, which was determined to resist the implementation of the proposed settlement. This did not mean that the Official Unionists left were now united in support of the white paper. In the forthcoming district council elections Official Unionist candidates were open about whether they pledged support to the white paper or not. What it did mean was that Craig was at the head of a political party whilst at the same time he had built up contacts among trade union and paramilitary organisations allowing him to retain the flexibility of methods of protest that the looser Vanguard movement had given him. However, as the events that followed the inauguration of the executive showed, he was not the sole or supreme leader of dissent within unionism.


4.4.2 The Ulster Workers Council Strike


The first attempts to destroy the proposals were in the electoral arena. Unionists opposed to the settlement put themselves forward for election as assembly members. However the results of the election on 28th June 1973 gave a majority to those who supported the paper and Brian Faulkner prepared to head a new executive. Of candidates linked to the coalition of shop-steward led and paramilitary movements, only Glenn Barr and Hugh Smyth were elected. With the executive due to take office on New Year's Day 1974, the idea of a strike was floated by the Ulster Army Council (a new co-ordinating body comprising loyalist paramilitary representatives) and former LAW members who were reconstituting their organisation as the Ulster Workers' Council (UWC). However, another opportunity at electoral protest arose unexpectedly when Edward Heath declared a general election for 28th February 1974. Anti-Sunningdale candidates fared much better here. The DUP, VUP and anti-Faulkner OUP members organised themselves into the United Ulster Unionist Council. Their opponents could not organise in the same way, divided as they were between unionist,

nationalist and avowedly non-partisan parties. The UUUC took 11 out of 12 seats, which seemed to provide a strong mandate to demand the end of the executive.

However, the executive still seemed insulated from protest and the idea of a strike re-asserted itself under the auspices of the new UWC. From within the assembly there was another attempt to bring down the executive with a loyalist motion calling for the rejection of the Sunningdale agreement which was defeated by 44 votes to 28. The vote served as the perfect backdrop for the first planned step of the strike - the public announcement in the Stormont press room by Harry Murray and Bob Pagels that Northern Ireland's workers were to begin a strike that would only end when fresh assembly elections were organised.

Given the lack of success of the last attempt at a general strike, and in view of the amount of intimidation required to kick-start industrial action, the strike was not recognised as a genuine threat to the new constitutional arrangements. However, the strike held and intimidation bolstered support. In particular the UWC capitalised on the militancy they had previously relied on amongst power station workers. The UWC and UAC proved adept at managing and distributing supplies. Fisk argues their legitimacy was further aided by the BBC, because it ended up performing the role of information service for the UWC by broadcasting its statements about rationing and distribution.[37]

This adroit management of the situation contrasted with the inability of the Labour Government at Westminster to grasp that the strike commanded strong support. They put a lot of faith in a back-to-work march organised by the TUC, which turned out to be a pointless and embarrassing exercise. In his memoirs, Faulkner said of the march that "in the executive the idea was treated with some levity and regarded as another example of the sad incomprehension with which our well-meaning secretary of state and his

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[37] Fisk, R The Point of No Return: The Strike that Broke the British in Ulster (London) Andre Deutsch 1975

ministers were approaching the whole affair".[38]

This lack of political judgement culminated in Wilson's disastrous condemnation of the strike. He implied that all Protestants were spongers and seemingly equated the UWC with the IRA with rhetoric such as "the people on this side of the water, British parents, have seen their sons, vilified and spat upon and murdered".[39]

As the strike maintained its momentum, politicians such as Paisley and Craig put their support firmly and openly behind it. Paisley's initial reluctance was something that would be brought up again and again as relations between him and the paramilitaries grew increasingly sour. An ambiguity could be detected amongst UUUC members who began to understand that the strike could force the Labour government's hand, where the general election result had not. In a debate in the House of Commons on 20th May 1974 Captain Orr, MP for South Down argued that "while one may not concede to the strike, one should concede to the result of the ballot box".[40] Whilst UUUC MPs feted the striking masses when the executive crumbled (on 28th May 1974) there was little evidence that these politicians were enthused about continued co-operation with the paramilitary elements of the strike.

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[38] Faulkner, B Memoirs of a Statesman (London) George Weidenfield and Nicolson 1978, p267

[39] Quoted in Anderson, D Fourteen May Days: The Inside Story of the Loyalist Strike of 1974 (Dublin) Gill and MacMillan 1994, p130

[40] Parliament Column The Times 21st May 1974

## 4.5 The Northern Ireland Labour Party

The strike had another consequence for Northern Irish politics because the division it created in the Northern Ireland Labour Party (NILP) was the final blow for a party that was already hemorrhaging support, and whose remaining members were more and more divided amongst themselves. The NILP is important to the study of new loyalism for two reasons. Firstly, the party's actions in the 1960s constitute another attempt by a unionist party to accommodate nationalists within the British State, one that had differences from and similarities to O'Neill's project. The second is the NILP's emphasis on social class and a belief in the possibility of realignment from constitutional to economic issues.

The NILP had experienced a surge of support in 1945, which more than halved in the 1949 Stormont elections.[41] The creation of the Republic of Ireland in 1949 was exploited by the Unionist Party and sufficient NILP members felt that the time had come to resolve the party's stance on the constitution. From then on the NILP campaigned as a unionist party. Although, the party still hoped to receive nationalist votes the party was more concerned with developing a unionist support base and did not actively seek Catholic support in the 1950s.

The low impact of the IRA's border campaign of 1956-62 meant that the republican threat was not such a feature in the 1958 election, where the NILP gained sixteen per-cent of the vote and returned four members to Stormont. Four members were also elected in 1962 and the party gained twenty-six per-cent of the vote. Rumpf and Hepburn state that the NILP dealt with issues such as rent rises and unemployment:

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[41] In the 1945 Stormont election the NILP returned two MPs out of 15 candidates and gained 18.6% of the vote. Two MPs were also returned in the 1949 election out of 9 candidates but the party only gained 7.2% of the vote. The average vote per candidate in 1945 was 4,404 and in 1949 2,981. Results from Elliot, S Northern Ireland Parliamentary Elections 1921-1972 (Chichester) Political Reference Publications 1973

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Stormont in this analysis was characterised not as repressive or sectarian, but as incompetent and part-time, 'the laziest parliament in the world'.[42]

Emboldened by success, the NILP Chairman, Charles Brett announced in 1963 that "the time has come when we must challenge the Catholic vested interests as well as the Protestant ones".[43] Constituency associations were set up in Catholic parts of Belfast and it was hoped that urban Catholic support for republican and republican labour candidates could be converted into votes for the NILP. However, there were concerns about this whether this strategy would lose Protestant votes and there was disquiet in the party about this change of direction. In 1964 NILP councillors in Belfast had a serious falling out over the perennial issue of chained-up swings on Sunday.

As has already been noted by Bew, O'Neill made it clear in his autobiography that he regarded the NILP as the main threat to the Unionist Party and he records with delight that at the 1965 election "they were practically annihilated".[44] O'Neill saw the 1965 result as a vindication of his strategy of rapprochement. This suggests he viewed the NILP as the only vehicle for dissatisfaction with his gestures of reconciliation and that, even by the time, he retired to write his memoirs, he had failed to grasp why Ian Paisley had risen to such prominence. In addition it must be noted that Bew and Patterson characterise his 1965 campaign as one of personal attacks on NILP candidates.[45] He put them in the same camp as the Labour Prime Minister, Harold Wilson, who he said was committed to the Irish nationalist cause.

The reaching out to Catholic voters by the NILP meant that it attracted the attention of

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[42] Rumpf, E & Hepburn, AC Nationalism and Socialism in Twentieth Century Ireland (Liverpool) Liverpool University Press 1977, p205-6

[43] Rumpf, E and Hepburn, AC 1977 Op. cit, p206

[44] O'Neill, T The Autobiography of Terence O'Neill (London) Rupert Hart Davis Ltd 1972, p75. Although the NILP lost two seats they still gained twenty per-cent of the votes, which was hardly annihilation.

[45] Bew, P and Patterson, H 1985 Op. cit.

student politicians involved in the nascent civil rights movement. Queen's University students such as Michael Farrell campaigned for the NILP in 1965, but they hoped that they could move the party away from its official unionist position. Arthur notes that Farrell was one of the activists involved in the formation of the Council of Labour in Ireland, a discussion forum for the NILP, Irish Labour Party and Republican Labour.[46] At the 1967 party conference the Queen's labour group were behind the successful motion calling for a British government enquiry into Northern Ireland.

As tension in Northern Ireland escalated into conflict many party activists sought stronger affiliation, and even merger, with the British Labour Party. At a special meeting in February 1970 four out of thirty constituencies voted yes to seeking discussions with the British Labour Party on increasing their links with the NILP. However, the British Labour Party were not receptive to suggestions of merger and tried instead to keep the NILP afloat with a package of funding to aid the party's campaign for the next Stormont election.[47]

Whilst the majority of constituency parties had backed greater integration, two of the four who did not were Falls and Derry. The Falls MP, Paddy Devlin, became a founder member of the SDLP. One of the Derry delegates at the merger meeting was the civil rights campaigner, Eammon McCann. These activists sought to channel their commitment to socialism or social democracy towards institutions that could bring about a new, united Ireland. They sought to get the NILP to withdraw its official unionist position, and did not welcome the idea of closer links with the British Labour Party, even while it was in power in the UK.

As well as facing criticism from nationalist members and activists the NILP was losing unionist support. The association drawn by some unionist voters between the NILP, the

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[46] Arthur, P The People's Democracy 1968-1973 (Belfast) Blackstaff 1974

[47] 'End of road for six county labour?' Sunday Press 11th October 1970 'British party to help NILP in election' Irish Times 3rd February 1971

Labour Party and NICRA could not help but harm their electoral prospects. In 1969 Billy Hull had resigned from the NILP, a move he felt demonstrated his opposition to the British Labour Party's decision to disband the B Specials. The 1969 Stormont elections were marked by infighting in the unionist party and a challenge from Paisley. The NILP were increasingly marginalized and their electoral popularity decreased to eight per-cent of the vote.

The formation of the Social Democratic and Labour Party (SDLP) and Alliance meant that the NILP were facing new contenders in the middle ground of Northern Irish politics. Alliance did not challenge the NILP on its class-politics basis, but as a new party committed to neutrality on the constitutional issue, they offered an alternative to some NILP supporters who wanted a political party that could transcend communal difference. Although the SDLP emerged out of the civil rights movement, the founders were committed to dealing with social and economic issues. The NILP was doubly wounded by this new party because, as has already been noted, it lost an MP, Paddy Devlin, to this group.

James Callaghan said "I believed that the British Labour Party should pin its official support to the NILP because of its close links with the trade union movement which have always been a non-sectarian force in the north".[48] To this end he tried to encourage trade union members to back a Northern Ireland Council of Labour, which would serve as the backbone of future NILP election campaigns. In 1971 Callaghan and British trade union leaders toured Northern Ireland trying to get the council off the ground and were heckled and picketed at each meeting - by Catholics or Protestants, depending on the area.

In the 1973 assembly elections the NILP won one seat, whilst Alliance secured eight. As well as losing support the party became increasingly divided about the way forward.

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[48] Callaghan, J A House Divided: the Dilemma of Northern Ireland (London) William Collins, Sons & Co. 1973, p152

In 1971 Faulkner had taken the former NILP chairman, David Bleakly into his government giving him the rather unappetising post of Minister for Community Relations. Most of the party backed Bleakly, but others thought that this was not the time to join a unionist cabinet.[49] There was anxiety that future political arrangements would marginalize economic and social political issues.[50]

The NILP was also divided about the benefits of the Sunningdale Agreement, and there was particular anxiety about the Council of Ireland. In the early days of the new power-sharing arrangement, the party issued an official statement in which it said it deplored "the unfounded belief that the council of Ireland would open the door to an all-Ireland republic".[51] However, a few days later, the party secretary, Douglas McIldoon said that Sunningdale was ill considered and he expressed anxiety about the potential for the Council of Ireland to develop executive functions.[52] After the strike, the Coleraine NILP constituency party issued a statement issues statement aligning itself with "the majority in Northern Ireland [who] said "no" to a Council of Ireland" at the General election of February 1974.[53]

The UWC strike put further pressure on the party. Some NILP members backed a memo to Rees and Orme sent on 19th May 1974, asking them to meet with the UWC and find some way of accommodating loyalist views into the executive.[54] Other members were angered by this and declared that it was a mistake for the NILP to court the unionist working-class vote and leave the nationalists to the SDLP. An invite to

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[49] Bleakley – 'North Labour may split again' Irish Press 10th May 1971

[50] The NILP Paper on Power-sharing 1972 argued that proportional representation would be enough to ensure adequate representation of Catholics in government. The paper stated that each committee in a future power-sharing government should be chaired by a member who represented the ideological majority within it, in order to give the government programme sufficient cohesion.

[51] 'NILP hits out at 'dishonest politicians'' Newsletter 9th January 1974

[52] 'NILP man hits out at pact' Belfast Telegraph 16th January 1974

[53] 'Britain 'incited strike' Newsletter 28th May 1974

[54] Anderson, D 1994 Op. cit.

discuss the way forward for the party contained the assertion:

> The end of the line for many long-serving members was reached when the small
> clique of these NILP office-holders called for the recognition of the UWC, even
> before the 'loyalist' leaders had openly endorsed the stoppage, thus starting the
> bandwagon which gave the stoppage its ultimate success.[55]

Rumpf and Hepburn argue that the NILP was always far more divided by constitutional issues than by ideology.[56] The constitution diminished in relative salience during the late 1950s and early 1960s and this gave the party the space to mount a challenge to the Unionist Party. The resurgence of the border as an issue was therefore bound to damage their electoral prospects and to promote internal division. However, this time the pressures proved fatal to the party. O'Connor argues that "a cautious response to the crisis of August 1969 offended Catholic supporters, without reassuring Protestants".[57] The NILP became increasingly divided about the way forward and the supporters were presented with more electoral options.

The fate of the Northern Ireland Labour Party is relevant to the study of new loyalist parties because of the forces that destroyed it. The party increased in popularity at a time of relative security about the union. When that disappeared the space for a social democratic critique of government in Northern Ireland was diminished. The party found it increasingly difficult to maintain a unionist working class base whilst reaching out to Catholics. Class-based political issues did not in themselves create unity because nationalists could demand a socialist Ireland and unionists a socialist UK. It seems that the party also found itself damned by association with the British Labour Party and its attempts to foster a civil society solution from within the trade union movement at a

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[55] Invitation to meeting on 25th July regarding the NILP and the current situation 16th July 1974

[56] Rumpf, E and Hepburn, A 1977 Op. cit.

[57] O'Connor, E 1996 Op. cit, p53

time when some shop stewards were using their role to foster links with paramilitary protest.

The NILP's project was different from O'Neill because the party believed that economic regeneration would have to be coupled with mechanisms for redistributing the resulting wealth. However, like O'Neill, the NILP did not see why any structural changes were required to accommodate nationalists within the state. O'Neill's prescription was increased civic virtue; the NILP's was organised commitment to social justice. It was assumed that if politics in Northern Ireland prioritised social and economic issues, then aspirations for Irish self-determination could be marginalised. However, as the conflict emerged in the late 1960s it became apparent that class identity was not a substitute for national identity but that instead the two could be held concurrently.

After the strike both the UVF and the UDA began to discuss and formulate political alternatives to what was being offered by the Ulster Unionists and the new Democratic Unionist Party. The salience of class was an important feature of these discussions. By the time these political alternatives were launched, the NILP had dwindled away to insignificance. However, given the fate of the NILP, it should have been apparent that offering a programme based on socialist principles was not a popular or straightforward way of resolving the conflict or changing the focus of politics in Northern Ireland.

## 4.6 The Collapse of the UWC

Whilst the UWC had proved victorious, the end of the strike also marked the end for this loose coalition. Both the UVF and the UDA had been involved in the strike through the Ulster Army Council, although the UDA had taken the bigger role especially through the brigade leader Andy Tyrie's management of intimidation tactics. In the period immediately after the strike confidence ran high about the power of people who were not cast in the role of the traditional politician to defy Westminster and ensure demands were met. The UWC Journal proudly declared:

> The constitutional stoppage in May 1974 was a concerted victory for the Ulster Loyalist people, after years of Republican rebellion - and political deceit by the then leaders of the OUP and the Westminster Government. In the wake of the constitutional stoppage, Westminster belatedly realised that the ordinary people of Ulster could not and would not accept the Sunningdale sell-out.[58]

The questions now for those involved in the strike were what could be done with this power and what was the way forward?

The first major forum for debate after the strike was a conference in June 1974 funded by the Joseph Rowntree Organisation on the way forward for unionists. Paisley, Craig and Harry West were pointedly not invited on the grounds that they had not backed the strike until victory. Hugh Smyth wrote in *Combat* that "Since it was the workers who made the real sacrifices, they and they alone must make the decisions through the council".[59] The implication was that the UWC could now be used to forge political demands that would put pressure on the unionist hierarchy.

This did not happen. Instead the UWC disintegrated. The focus of the council was the

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[58] UWC Journal No.1 1975 cain.ulst.ac.uk

[59] Quoted in Daily Telegraph 'UWC Conference Snub' 17th June 1974

strike and now that was gone. Though the initial elements had assembled in the Harland and Wolff shipyard, the workers of LAW and later the UWC included rural agricultural workers as well as organised urban industrial groups. The final victorious rally at Stormont was marked by farm workers "driving in from the Newtownard area on tractors, trucks, horse-boxes and agricultural machinery".[60] The UWC did not have a space where policies could be formulated that could reconcile a rural and urban base, instead it was collapsing from within, spurred on by a dispute about dialogue with the IRA.

Harry Murray of the UWC made a speech at a British and Irish Association conference calling for the end of the internment and talks with the Provisional IRA. An official UWC statement was released disassociating itself from Murray's comments and he resigned on 9th July 1974.[61] The UDA had shown itself open to the idea of dialogue (under ceasefire) with both wings of the IRA at the Joseph Rowntree Conference. On 20th July 1974 the UDA resigned from the UWC and invited Catholic representatives to enter into dialogue with them. The UWC continued to fragment and dwindled away.

Without the focus of the strike the UWC collapsed and loyalist politicians such as Paisley and West asserted themselves once more as elected representatives. For the UDA and the UVF their role in the downfall of the Sunningdale executive generated a sense of legitimacy and popularity that encouraged an optimistic view about the participation of the paramilitaries in the political life of the province. It seemed these groups were in a position to do more than defend. Before exploring the first political initiatives emanating from these groups, the republican attitude to the aftermath of the strike will be considered.

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[60] Financial Times 'Stormont Crowd Cheers Attack on Executive' 29th May 1974

[61] 'Murray quits UWC' Daily Telegraph 10th July 1974

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## 4.7 The Republican Perspective

During this period both the UVF and UDA showed themselves open to discussing Northern Ireland's future with Catholic representatives, including the IRA. Before the strike the UVF had declared themselves open to dialogue between "ordinary rank and file people" of any religion within the province, an offer that Maire Drumm, the Vice-President of Sinn Fein welcomed as an appreciation "that the only people who can reach an agreement are the militants on both sides of the community".[62] A UDA bulletin circulated immediately after the strike appealed to Catholics, arguing that "you don't need free staters. We don't need outsiders. We can run our own country together if they will leave us alone." This offer came with the proviso that "If you are not prepared to do this then we have only one alternative - we will rule alone".[63]

The Sunningdale Agreement had been opposed by Sinn Fein and the IRA, although for the opposite reason to loyalists. As English observes:

> While loyalists and unionists opposed Sunningdale (considering it to have gone too far in a nationalist direction), republicans too were hostile to the 1973 compromise (thinking it not to have gone far enough).[64]

The destruction of Sunningdale was a welcome event and it sparked debate within republicanism on the possibility of shared interests with loyalists. Both sides had been affected by security measures such as internment and both sides had made reference to a sense of resentment with a ruling class. A reaction to the UDA offer to run the country together appeared in *An Phoblact*:

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[62] 'Sinn Fein welcome UVF appeal to people' Irish News 4th February 1974

[63] Quoted in 'UDA's olive branch with strings' Irish Independent 30th May 1974

[64] English, R Armed Struggle: a History of the IRA (Basingstoke) MacMillan 2003, p166

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The first thing that the UWC must hammer out is its relationship to Britain. The old connection is gone, smashed by the loyalist rebellion against Westminster as characterised by the UWC strike...Is Westminster likely to forgive or condone this rebellion?[65]

Articles in *An Phoblact* suggested that loyalists were finally on the brink of realising that "the interests of working people north and south, Catholic, Protestant, dissenter and atheist are the same all over Ireland".[66] Belfast based *Republican News* was less charitable, depicting the Ulster Workers Council as one face on the "hyrda headed beast", the Orange Order. However the same article also saw that:

Now, when England is washing her hands of the embarrassment of "loyalists" she does not want, is the time for the disowned and disinherited to recognise that Ireland can be their country if they choose it.[67]

Whether the loyalists were rebellious or disowned, there was a perception that class consciousness, along with confrontation with the British state, could be the basis of political unity in a new Irish Republic. However, the strike had been marked by intimidation of Catholic owned businesses which resulted in the murder of two brothers who ran a pub in Ballymena. The paramilitaries were not relying solely on popular protest to achieve their aims.

On 17th May 1974 two car bombs were detonated in Monaghan and Dublin, in the Irish Republic, killing 28 people. The UVF were quick to rebut accusations that the bombs were their doing, although it was widely believed that they were responsible.

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[65] 'Partnership with UWC?' <u>An Phoblacht</u> 7th June 1974

[66] 'Sunningdale for peace?' <u>An Phoblacht</u> 31st May 1974

[67] 'England washing her hands of loyalists' <u>Republican News</u> 22nd June 1974

We want to make it quite clear that we are appalled by these explosions. It is indiscriminate and definitely against our own policy...we at the moment are engaged in the political field of Northern Ireland and we believe that the political solution to Northern Ireland can only be found democratically by the people of Northern Ireland within Northern Ireland. Therefore we are not concerned with the policy of Eire or indeed the dictates of Westminster politicians.[68]

Rees had released the UVF from proscription in order to facilitate their participation in a political solution. Admitting to the bombing could have endangered this new status.[69] However, the Dublin and Monaghan bombs continued a pattern of bombing in the Republic that had been going on for the previous two years. Whilst the UVF and the UDA proclaimed themselves to be in search of political solutions in the early 1970s, attacks continued to take place against Catholic civilians and not just suspected republicans. The rationale behind this was that the nationalist community should be persuaded that 'harbouring' the IRA was not a sensible tactic. Billy Mitchell sums up the attitude to targeting nationalist civilians during this period:

We developed a policy of, if the IRA's action was to terrorise the British Government into giving Northern Ireland up, then we'll terrorise the nationalist community into calling the IRA to stop. And basically the loyalist war, it was a war, it was a counter-revolution. If the IRA were revolutionaries, then we were

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[68] 'UDA, UVF deny being responsible' Irish Times 18th May 1974

[69] The UVF finally admitted responsibility for the bombings in a statement on 15th July 1993. This was in reaction to a Yorkshire Television documentary that suggested the UVF colluded with the security forces to plant the car bombs. The UVF statement affirmed that the operation was "carried out by our volunteers, aided by no outside bodies". No-one has been arrested in connection with the murders but the documentary implicated [dead] UVF men Billy Hanna and Horace Boyle, who are also named in two books on the subject: Bowyer-Bell, J In Dubious Battle: The Dublin and Monaghan Bombings 1972-4 (Dublin) Poolbeg Press 1996 and Mullan, D The Dublin and Monaghan Bombings (Dublin) Wolfhound Press 2000. In 2003 Mr. Justice Barron published a report on his judicial enquiry on the bombings and subsequent Garda investigation. "In his report Judge Barron said "there are grounds for suspecting that the bombers may have had assistance from members of the security forces". However, he said any collusion between the UVF bombers and the security forces remained a matter of inference". Irish Examiner www.examiner.ie 11th December 2003

counter-revolutionaries. And the object was to terrorise their community. You can't dress that up in nice language, it wasn't a nice thing. It was brutally, if youse are supporting the IRA we'll kill you.[70]

The Republic of Ireland was seen as part of this nationalist community. Not only was the Republic deemed insufficiently concerned with issues such as border security, senior Fianna Fail politicians (including future prime minister, Charles Haughey) had been charged with smuggling arms to the IRA.[71] This rationale was one that allowed the UDA and UVF to claim a large number of targets as legitimate, despite victims being non-combatants.

The strike and the months following it saw the UVF and the UDA engaged in discussions about finding a way forward through political action. However, when considering the initiatives undertaken within these groupings, it must be emphasised that the military was not abandoned in favour of the political.

## 4.8 The First Political Initiatives

### 4.8.1 Independence for Ulster

The UDA, in the immediate period after the strike, seemed open to the possibility of an increasingly political role and conferences were held in an attempt to thrash out tactics and policies. The notes of one such meeting at the Fromer Hotel in March 1975 record that:

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[70] Interview with Billy Mitchell 12th March 2001

[71] All defendants were acquitted between May and October 1970

The objective of the UDA from the beginning has been to maintain the status quo in the fact of the threat to destroy Ulster by the IRA. However, it was now recognised that the UDA did not seek to bring back all the trappings of the old unionist government with the disadvantages for working class people which had characterised the last fifty years.[72]

This did not lead to the formation of a socialist political party. The UDA was also much exercised by the debate over negotiated independence. This idea was most assertively argued for by Glenn Barr, who had declared at Stormont in November 1973:

Let it be put on record that I stand here as an Ulster nationalist.[73]

The idea of negotiated independence, or of dominion status for the six counties of Ulster contained within the boundaries of Northern Ireland, suggested a solution to sectarian conflict by offering equality of Ulster citizenship to all. In 1975 fourteen UDA commanders accepted the invite of the European Council of Churches to observe the Dutch system of power-sharing.[74] Although the constitutional reforms that they would eventually propose did not rest on consociationalism, there was a commitment from the beginning of these political discussions to earn Catholic support for a new Ulster.

There was also little support for a straightforward political party because of a fear of failure. The Fromer Hotel conference minutes show a reluctance to engage in activity that would split the Protestant vote and a belief that the border question would have to be settled before other types of politics could be practiced. Therefore the way forward was to develop policy initiatives that encouraged "the firm commitment of the Catholic

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[72] UDA Conference notes 27th - 29th March 1975 cain.ulst.ac.uk

[73] Quoted in Gillespie, G & Bew, P 1999 Op cit, p68

[74] 'UDA in study of Dutch system' Newsletter 31st January 1975

community in Ulster to the future of Ulster".[75]

So from the inception of political debate within the UDA circles the idea of developing a civic nation of Ulster was highly influential. This would be a solution to the crisis because it would isolate Ulster from the treachery of Westminster and Dublin and allow for a stable and legitimate Northern Ireland State. Barr was the most ardent and articulate supporter of this position:

> We need to create a system of government, an identity and a nationality to which both sections of the community can aspire. The only common denominator that the Ulster people have whether they be Catholic or Protestant is that they are Ulstermen. And that is the basis from which we should build the new life for the Ulster people, a new identity for them. Awaken them to their own identity. That they are different. That they're not second class Englishmen but first class Ulstermen. And that's where my loyalty is.[76]

This initial policy was to have a strong bearing on future initiatives from within the UDA. Though documents from this period express sentiments of resentment about the treating of working class loyalists by their unionist 'betters' the over-riding concern was with speaking for the people, who would be awakened to their membership of the nation of Ulster. The UDA would be the midwife for this new nation and this would be the source of their legitimate right to represent 'the people', rather than a mandate from the ballot box.

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[75] UDA Conference 27-29th March 1975 cain.ulst.ac.uk

[76] Quoted in Bruce, S 1992 Op cit. p231

## 4.8.2 The Formation of the Volunteer Political Party

In contrast to the UDA's position, the UVF decided to take the conventional political party route. In 1973 an Ulster Loyalist Front had been started by some within the UVF, concerned mainly with the rights of loyalist prisoners but also a forum for ideas such as industrial democracy. The show of strength by working class people during the strike suggested that a party could be organised and could field candidates for positions higher than that of local councillor. This led to the formation of the Volunteer Political Party in June 1974.

Initially the UVF seemed attracted to ideas of an independent Ulster in a similar manner to the UDA. Desmond Boal, the former chairman of the DUP, had floated a plan for an amalgamated federal Ireland, which caused Paisley to distance himself further from his former colleague.[77] The UVF's favourable reaction to discussing the plan hinted at independence as an article written at UVF brigade headquarters for the *Sunday News* for others to follow their lead in the realisation that "life in Ulster can only be enjoyed to the full by the creation of a new society". The article also stressed that "Britain must be told in no uncertain terms that in future the people of Ulster will plot their own destiny and govern their own internal affairs".[78]

However, this statement sought the destruction of "the proposed 32 county provisional parliament for Ireland established at Sunningdale" and was deliberately ambiguous about the link with Britain.[79] Boal's plan had also been welcomed by senior members of Sinn Fein. According to the *Sunday Independent* "Mr. Ruairi O'Bradaigh was reported earlier last week to have said that if Mr. Boal's plan reflected the views of

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[77] "In 1974, after he had given up the chairmanship of the DUP, [Boal] announced support for an Irish federal parliament holding the powers reserved to Westminster under the 1920 Government of Ireland Act and the restoration of the Stormont parliament with its old powers". Elliot, S & Flackes WD Northern Ireland. A political Directory 1968-1999 (Belfast) Blackstaff 1999, p186

[78] 'UVF policy for a lasting peace' Newsletter 4th Feburary 1974

[79] Newsletter 4th February 1974 op. cit.

loyalists in the north he would feel able to suggest to the Provisional IRA that they should call a ceasefire".[80] Although the article made reference to Catholics and Protestants as Ulstermen, the UVF's main concern was building support within the loyalist community and flirting with constitutional proposals that Sinn Fein approved of was not the way forward. A few months later a *Combat* editorial stressed "Ulster's destiny always has, and always will, lie not just within the UK but with the British Commonwealth of nations and we must support every measure that will serve to instil patriotism into our politicians."[81]

The Volunteer Political Party was launched in the UVF journal *Combat*. The party was billed on the front cover as "a progressive and forward thinking unionist party" but not a socialist party.[82] This followed the ULF which Derek Brown noted in *The Guardian* "has a policy of defending and promoting the interests of the Protestant working class - although it does not espouse socialism".[83]

The V.P.P was born out of a feeling that working class loyalism had no political voice in Northern Ireland but the policies of the party were not sharply developed. The invitation to join the new party included the opportunity to "submit to the political executive their proposals for inclusion into the policy document" which was unwritten at the time of the VPP's foundation.[84]

The V.P.P seemed clearer about what they were against (principally internment and any ideas of an independent Ulster) than what they wanted to achieve. However, there was a clear link between the improvement of working class people's lives and the

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[80] 'UVF back Boal's unity plan' Sunday Independent 13th January 1974

[81] 'Remain British appeal by UVF' Newsletter 17th August 1974

[82] Combat Vol I. No.26 1974

[83] Outlawed loyalist group turns to politics' Guardian 30th March 1974

maintenance of the union. A demand for parity with Scotland and Wales made this clear:

> Our demand is to be treated like the other smaller British nationalities, not as second class citizens of the UK. In whatever local assembly is set up as a result of the convention we will support any evolution that will work for the good of all the people, not just the fur coat brigade as the old Stormont governments did not for a United Ireland as the SDLP did in the executive.[85]

This defence of working class interests extended to fielding candidates for election, even if it meant splitting the unionist vote. The founders of the VPP had originally hoped that they would be accommodated within the UUUC but Bruce notes:

> At the first hurdle the VPP failed. It applied to join the UUUC coalition of loyalist parties but was turned down. This was hardly a surprise, given that, since the end of the strike, the politicians had been moving as fast and as far as they could from the paramilitaries.[86]

The second general election of 1974 was held on 10th October and, despite the knock-back from the UUUC, the VPP selected Ken Gibson from the UVF to stand in North Belfast. Gerry Fitt retained the seat for the SDLP. Gibson polled approximately 2,600 votes. Whilst this was a reasonably respectable return it was nowhere near enough to get elected and the VPP was dealt a fatal blow by the failure. Those within the UVF who were more committed to the military than the political capitalized on the VPP's poor performance and rose to ascendancy within the organization.

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[84] 'Volunteer Political Party statement' <u>Combat</u> Vol. 1 No.14 1974

[85] 'Volunteer Political Party - for God and Ulster' <u>Combat</u> Vol.1 No.26 1974

[86] Bruce, S 1992 Op. cit, p122

The election had also brought to light the growing breach with the UDA, following the unity of action displayed during the strike. The UDA backed the DUP/UUUC candidate for West Belfast, John McQuade. McQuade had initially pulled out of the election after death threats. The UDA advised him to "reconsider his retirement" which he did.[87] This political row highlighted a growing feud between the UVF and the UDA, which spilled over into violence and lasted into the summer of 1975. Whilst policy statements emanating from the UVF and UDA both spoke of working class advancement and unity, it seemed that loyalist paramilitaries could not manage this amongst themselves.

Though the VPP disintegrated the UVF still had political representation in the form of Hugh Smyth, who maintained a link with them whilst standing as an independent. A Progressive Unionist Group was formed by UVF members in 1977, becoming the Progressive Unionist Party (PUP) in 1979, of which Smyth was a member. During this time political elements within the UVF were marginalized. However, from the earliest political forays, there was a stronger commitment to articulating class politics than the UDA had demonstrated. The UVF were not looking for a new nation to claim allegiance to and the issues of deprivation and inequality within the union were the basis of VPP policy.

## 4.9 The UVF: The Men Behind the Wire

One only has to look at the Shankill Road, the heart of the empire that lies torn and bleeding. We have known squalor. I was born and reared in it. No one knows better than we do the meaning of deprivation, the meaning of suffering for what one believes in, whatever the ideology. In so far as people speak of fifty years of misrule, I wouldn't disagree with that. What I would say is this, that we have suffered every bit as much as the people of the Falls Road, or any other

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[87] 'Rivalry for loyalist seat' Guardian 21st August 1974

under-privileged quarter, in many cases more so.[88]

UVF Political groups from the ULF to the PUP concerned themselves with the rights of prisoners and the iniquities of practices such as internment. The UVF journal *Combat* also concentrated on welfare groups and protests against measures such as the diplock system of trial without jury. Prisoners were defended, protected and mythologised by the organisation on the outside. However, as the UVF hardened its military stance from 1975 onwards their 'men behind the wire' were engaged in a process of self-examination that dovetailed with early UVF political thinking about the importance of social class.

Gusty Spence had been in prison since 1966. Before his involvement with the UVF, Spence had belonged to Ulster Protestant Action, an organisation that lobbied for Protestants to receive preferential treatment in employment. He had also headed groups of unionist voters in scams to impersonate voters in local government elections which he says he saw as "a continuing service to the Union - the end-all and be-all of everything".[89]

A career in the army had imbued Spence with an old-fashioned Irish unionist identity. Spence joined the Royal Ulster Rifles in 1957. The ceremonial life of the regiment drew on Irish symbols such as the toast of Slainte, the shamrock and the harp. Within the army these traditions seemed to blend easily with Orange marches and Somme commemorations. Spence believed that "all those things awakened in me the feeling that we're Irish. We're British of course, but we're also Irish".[90]

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[88] Gusty Spence quoted in Boulton, D <u>The UVF 1966-1973. An Anatomy of Loyalist Rebellion</u> (Dublin) Gill and MacMillan 1973, p172

[89] Quoted in Garland, R <u>Gusty Spence</u> (Belfast) Blackstaff 2001, p38

[90] Quoted from Garland, R 2001 Op. cit, p31-2

Spence's incarceration, with a short spell of illegal liberty after breaking parole conditions in 1972, had induced him to articulate his political position. The quotation cited here about the bleeding heart of the Shankill provides a succinct example of Spence's thinking. He argued that Stormont had been a disaster for all working class people in Northern Ireland because it had failed to tackle deprivation and inequality. In addition, prison allowed him the time to pursue his interest in Irish history and his conviction that Irish-ness and British-ness were compatible identities deepened.

Spence undertook the task of encouraging new UVF prisoners to engage in this process of self-criticism and analysis. This coincided with the British Government granting special category status to paramilitary prisoners. Prisoners aligned themselves to paramilitary organisations and lived within these groupings. A measure of debate opened up between all groups on practical matters and there was also a limited political debate.

Spence undertook this political debate in the spirit of breaking down barriers through dialogue arguing that:

> Borders and walls are coming down in today's world and it could come about that Ireland will be united some day. But it will not be united until the hearts and minds of the people are united.[91]

Garland stresses that Spence's partners in this dialogue were usually the Official, and not the Provisional, IRA. Garland states that "Gusty found that the provos had little to offer loyalists" and quotes Spence's assertion that "The provos didn't have a political agenda".[92]

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[91] Gusty Spence quoted In Garland, R <u>Seeking a Political Accommodation: The UVF Negotiating History</u> (Belfast) Shankill Community Publications 1997, p6

[92] Garland, R 2001 Op. cit. p120

UVF prisoners who wished to debate with Republicans found that the Official IRA were keener to explore inter-community class loyalties. Furthermore Provisional prisoners were uncomfortable with and often hostile to initiatives such as a 'downtown office' for prisoner welfare because of the amount of co-operation with British authorities that it required.

With politics more marginal to the running of UVF operations on the outside, the prisoners were an isolated group and Bruce argues that the leadership "was dominated by people who thought [Spence] had 'gone soft'".[93] Nelson contends that this did not stop the prisoners viewing their organisation as a socially progressive force who could undertake a war that would be just and legitimate.[94]

In light of the above it could be argued that the political re-evaluation undertaken by prisoners was a naive and irrelevant process. The emphasis on cross-community class alliances seemed partly to borne out of an unwillingness to engage with nationalist aspirations. Problems and solutions were viewed in material terms only. In addition Spence addressed his UVF colleagues on the outside as if they had sworn to build a new Jerusalem in Northern Ireland, whereas the leadership, and indeed most of the membership, were primarily concerned with the defence of the status quo.

However, this isolated position also had its advantages. Debate and dialogue could carry on away from public hostility. Reaching out to nationalists was a dangerous business for any unionist politicians, as Craig found out when the suggestion of an expedient alliance with the SDLP crushed his Vanguard Party. The prisoners were also shielded from Paisley and the DUP. Though Paisley's political activities sometimes

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[93] Bruce, S 'Unionism amongst the Paramilitaries' from Hanna, R (Ed) The Union: Essays on Ireland and the British Connection (Newtownards) Colourpoint Books 2001, p73

[94] Nelson, S 1984 Op cit.

brought him onto the same platform as paramilitaries, he was also swift to condemn illegal activity. Paisley had harried Craig and taken advantage of Vanguard's demise. The prisoners were freer of these pressures. Being sidelined, even to an extent by their own organisation, gave them more space to explore potentially unsettling options.

This idyll of debate and self-analysis was severely curtailed by events of the late 1970s and early 1980s. The withdrawal of special category status sparked protests that involved both loyalist and republican prisoners. However, the denouement of the protests, the death on hunger strike of ten Provisional IRA prisoners, made the issue an iconic moment for the republican movement which allowed them to capitalise on the unrest in a way that loyalists couldn't. The special category protests also narrowed the focus of prisoners' politicking from wider ideas of class and national identity to worsening conditions.

In addition the prison population was growing. The first UVF prisoners were now being joined by a new wave of their more militant and militaristic colleagues who were not enthused by the prospect of Spence's schooling in socialism and Irish history. Spence had stepped down as camp commandant due to ill health. Billy Hutchinson, his successor, was overthrown by a coup in 1979 and intra-group relations within the prison system became more turbulent.

It seemed that the initial process of re-evaluation in prison had been diminished by the intrusion of reality, both in the shape of increased discord with republicans and the arrival of new prisoners who represented the UVF as it really was, rather than an idealised version. However, key ideas that would recur again and again in PUP thinking, such as the idea of being Irish and British, and a critique of mainstream politicians for exploiting loyalist deference, took shape under these conditions.

## 4.10 The UDA: In Search of a Mandate

### 4.10.1 The Next Strike

The UDA had built up a sense of power and legitimacy thanks to the UWC strike. However, this dissipated throughout the rest of the 1970s. Whilst the paramilitaries promoted themselves as defenders, they were not wholeheartedly accepted as such by the communities they claimed to represent. Their credibility was further dented by a feud between the UVF and UDA in 1975 that led to the UVF being proscribed once again. It seemed Ulster's defenders were more interested in fighting each other than the IRA.

Unionist concerns over the political future of Northern Ireland had been eased by the perception that the British government was prepared to tighten security and that another Sunningdale settlement was not about to be forced on the unionist electorate. This further eroded claims to legitimate activity by the paramilitaries. The UDA's link to more mainstream political activity was damaged by the attempt to recreate the success of the 1974 stoppage in co-operation with Paisley. The UDA had always had a difficult relationship with Paisley and they had had a public spat in 1975, when the UDA leadership gave its blessing to Craig's coalition plans. Paisley had denounced Andy Tyrie as the leader of an organisation "guilty of the most diabolical crimes" against Catholics and Protestants.[95] Paisley liked to combine rhetoric that suggested he felt Ulster should be defended by any means necessary with a condemnation of those who actually used illegal force.

Burying their differences for another strike in 1977 delivered little benefit for either Paisley or Tyrie. The 1977 strike committee did not win over sufficient numbers of power station workers. It lacked the focus of a scary constitutional proposal like the

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[95] 'Paisley in slanging match with UDA' Guardian 29th September 1975

Council of Ireland. In addition, the replacement of Merlyn Rees by Roy Mason marked an emphasis on more reassuring security-focused policies for Northern Ireland. As Douglas puts it:

> Mason in his nine months in office before the strike began, had already done much to dispel the confusion and woolliness of Rees policies. He kept repeating that a British withdrawal was simply not a possibility, and with his more militaristic approach he was clearly offering more support to the security forces.[96]

Mason described his confusion over Paisley's commitment to the strike, saying that "he knew perfectly well that I had been harassing the IRA with as much vigour as was legally acceptable in a liberal democracy".[97] Learning the lessons of the UWC strike, Mason took the protest seriously and put the army on standby. He used intelligence to gauge potential support for the strike and to second guess the UDA's actions. It soon became clear that the strike was not going to have any serious impact.

What became apparent during the 1977 strike was that the UDA had lost two of the roles the organisation had claimed for itself. There was no need to guard Ulster against flawed politicians because there was no imminent prospect of another power-sharing arrangement. There was also less scope for the UDA to present themselves as an alternative branch of the security forces as they had done during the construction of no-go areas in 1972 and through UDA 'police' patrols in 1975.[98] However, at the same time another role was emerging for the UDA and a possible avenue for re-establishing legitimacy presented itself in the form of community action.

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[96] Douglas, J 'No Doomsday plans for Ulster's Defenders' Fortnight 9th September 1985

[97] Mason, R Paying the Price (London) Robert Hale 1999, p174

[98] The UDA threatened to institute their own police patrols in reaction to the setting up of incident centres - a Sinn Fein measure that was seen as a means of policing their own community. The UDA called off this threat after leaders met with Merlyn Rees on 28th February 1975 and he reassured them that no illegal police forces would be tolerated in Northern Ireland (i.e. he made it clear he was not condoning republican actions). See 'UDA backs down on private policing plan' The Times 1st March 1975

## 4.10.2 the Ulster Community Action Group

Weiner argues that the civil rights campaigns of the 1960s had demonstrated to Protestants that activism could lead to demands being met and this realisation spurred action on one of the most pressing issues facing working class Protestant people: the poor quality of housing stock. Weiner asserts that "housing was seen as women's work, the job of getting repairs done was largely left to the women which again cut out much mass support".[99] However the sense of political power generated by the strike and hostility to mainstream politicians meant that housing could act as the spur for public rather than private activism, especially as controversial redevelopment projects were proposed in urban areas.

The UDA entered these protests initially through the West Belfast Housing Association in 1972, managing the tactic of squatting. The UDA then branched out into providing advice on housing and jobs as well as supporting opportunities for local people to engage in handicrafts and music. The *Sunday Times* marvelled at this development:

> Nursery groups and sewing classes sound unlikely subjects to hold the attention
> of the tough UDA. But under the shrewd guidance of bespectacled chairman
> Andy Tyrie, the men of Ulster's most militant loyalist paramilitary organisation
> are turning their hands to community work.[100]

McCready asserts that "from the time that Andy Tyrie assumed command of the UDA, it became apparent that the organisation was searching for ways to adapt to its grassroots membership".[101] This led to various community initiatives that coalesced

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[99] Weiner, R The Rape and Plunder of the Shankill (Belfast) Farset Co-operative Press - Belfast 1980, p128

[100] 'The UDA at work' Sunday Times 16th March 1975

[101] McCready, S Empowering People: Community Development and Conflict 1969-1999 (Belfast)

into the Ulster Community Action Group (UCAG) in 1976. UCAG received funding from the Rowntree Trust and from the British Government. McCready says that the group "became a vehicle for social protest about housing conditions and recreational needs in working class communities".[102] However, by 1981 the group was virtually defunct. Poor leadership meant that few of the objectives set by UCAG were actually achieved. There was a lack of willingness to work with community groups from the other side, which limited lobbying power. Many of those involved with UCAG felt dissatisfied with its progress.

Nelson argues that social activism only appealed to one element within the UDA and "It was more of a step sideways for the organisation which added another role to the confining number it had already. It changed the lives of some individuals but the effect was often that they left the UDA".[103] Community work did not lead to a synthesis of roles within the UDA and therefore it did not provide a coherent political direction to complement or supplant the terrorist activities carried out under noms de guerre such as the Ulster Freedom Fighters.

For both the UDA and the UVF the title of defender of the community was tainted by gangsterism. Fund-raising for paramilitary action was often achieved through extortion and racketeering. Bruce argues that the UDA could only draw on the revenues of subscription during its initial phase of mass recruitment.[104] McAuley and McCormack state that the UDA's community work was overshadowed by accusations of gangsterism, which prompted allegations about "the exploitation of 'ordinary people' whom the UDA were supposedly protecting".[105]

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Stationery Office 2001, p49

[102] McCready, S 2001, p49

[103] Nelson, S 1984 Op cit. p195.

[104] Bruce, S 1992 Op. cit, p189

[105] McAuley, JW and McCormack, PJ 'The Protestant working class and the state in Northern Ireland since 1930: a problematic relationship' from Hutton, S and Stewart, P Ireland's Histories. Aspects of

The criminal image also wounded the paramilitaries because they were in competition with legal security forces. Many unionists may have believed that the security forces were unfairly constrained in their battle to quell violent republicanism but the logical demand arising from this belief was more power for these forces (which Mason was supplying) not the freedom to rob banks, run illegal drinking dens or demand money with menaces.

Nelson argues that the self-image of many unionists reflected the belief that Protestants were a law-abiding people.[106] The UDA and UVF had come to prominence at a period when the laws and the permanence of Northern Ireland's constitutional status was uncertain. As fears about the future of the union eased in the mid-1970s, this widened the gap between this perception of law-abiding Protestants and law-breaking paramilitaries.

## 4.10.3 The New Ulster Political Research Group

The idea of a nation of Ulster continued to be championed by those such as Glenn Barr and after the failure of the 1977 strike the schism from politicians opened up an opportunity for further exploration. Along with Bill Snoddy, Thomas Lyttle and Harry Chicken, Barr formed the New Ulster Political Research Group in 1978. The group stressed that an independent Ulster was the only viable solution to the conflict in Northern Ireland:

> It is the only proposal that does not have a victor and a loser. It will encourage the development of a common identity between all of our people regardless of religion. We offer through our proposal first class Ulster citizenship to all of our people because like it or not the Protestant of Northern Ireland is looked upon as a

State, Society and Ideology (London) Routledge 1991, p123

[106] Nelson, S 1984 Op. cit.

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second class British citizen in Britain and the Roman Catholic of Northern Ireland as a second class citizen in the south.[107]

The blueprint for an independent Ulster took shape in the 1979 document *Beyond the Religious Divide*, consciously modelling the new state on the constitution of the United States of America. The bill of rights included ideas of positive as well as negative liberty proclaiming "the government is obliged to protect and promote employment and where necessary to provide the basic commodities and services".[108]

The new Ulster would be a civic state with particular emphasis on the secularisation of education. It was imagined that this civic citizenship would encourage allegiance regardless of religious background. This civic nationalism and proportionality in government would suffice to attract nationalists into a constitutional set-up that was still largely based on mechanisms of majority rule.

## 4.10.4 Eire Nua

During the 1970s Sinn Fein and the IRA Army Council had pledged support to *Eire Nua* as the blueprint for the administrative arrangement of a future united Ireland. Moloney describes the programme as being "designed to create a political structures that, its architects believed, would calm Protestant fears that a United Ireland would mean their subjugation and eventual absorption by nationalist and Catholic Ireland".[109] The programme rested on a federal Ireland, based on the four ancient provinces on the Island (meaning that the term Ulster pertained to the Counties of Monaghan, Donegal and Cavan as well as the six counties of Northern Ireland). It was designed to correct the economic imbalance between east and west, as well as to allay the fears of northern

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[107] NUPRG Constitutional Proposals 1979, p4

[108] NUPRG Beyond the Religious Divide 1979

Protestants.

O'Brien states that "Eire Nua was totally the brainchild of Ruairi O'Bradaigh and Daithi O'Connell as well as Maire Drumm".[110] It has already been highlighted that O'Bradaigh and Drumm publicly lauded the UVF and the UDA's consideration of new structures of government, believing this could be the beginning of a wider loyalist acceptance that they were children of the Irish nation.

However, whilst the NUPRG was concentrating on crystallising what a future independent Ulster would look like, the IRA and Sinn Fein were moving away from this position. Gerry Adams used *Eire Nua* in his battle to break the influence of the southern based leadership. Moloney says he persuaded the IRA Army Council that Eire Nua was "a sop to loyalism"[111] and pushed for a centralised Republic of Ireland to become the official constitutional goal of the republican movement, levering out O'Braidaigh and O'Connaill in the process of developing an avowedly socialist Sinn Fein.

*Eire Nua* took Northern Ireland out of the United Kingdom. The emphasis on Irish language and culture suggested that Ireland was still envisaged as the home of a Gaelic people. However, it had attempted to address the resistance unionists felt to a united Ireland and its architects had looked to developments within loyalist politics as a means of gauging the potential of winning support from Protestants in the north. The ascendancy of northerners within Sinn Fein and the IRA, marked by the absorption of *An Phoblacht* into *Republican News* and the rise of Adams to the position of President of Sinn Fein, curtailed these developments. For the UDA this was actually a potentially positive development. Although *Beyond the Religious Divide* sought to earn the

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[109] Moloney, E A Secret History of the IRA (London) Penguin 2002, p180

[110] O'Brien, B The Long War: The IRA and Sinn Fein (Dublin) O'Brien Press 1999, p111

[111] Moloney, E 2002 Op. cit, p182 Eire Nua ceased to be party policy in 1982. Bradaigh stepped down the following year, marking the shift of power away from him and O'Connaill. Maire Drumm was assassinated in Belfast in 1976.

allegiance of Catholics in the province, the UDA's initial task was trying to establish legitimacy within a loyalist community that hated and feared the IRA. The abandonment of federalism meant that the UDA's constitutional solutions were distinctly different from those of the republican movements.

4.10.5 The Formation of the Ulster Loyal Democratic Party

However the NUPRG was not the only political activity within the UDA camp. The Ulster Loyal Democratic Party (ULDP) was launched on 2nd June 1981. The prime mover in this development was the UDA commander John McMichael. Early UDA political debaters had shied away from forming a party partly for fear of splitting the Protestant vote, but also from experience of the failure to get UDA men like Tommy Herron elected to the Assembly in 1973. Instead political activity had occurred at the grassroots community level or in policy documents that heralded a future independent Ulster.

McMichael and Andy Tyrie felt that this was no longer enough. The failed strike of 1977 had ensured a much deeper estrangement from constitutional politicians. They were an easy target for the frustration many in the UDA felt about the dissipation of the power they had generated from the 1974 stoppage. Interviewed a few months after the launch of the party, Tyrie complained:

We produced the soldiers because we thought the politicians would have the courage of their convictions. In private they gave us their blessing but in public they would not come out and be the officers.[112]

The positive reception to documents like *Beyond the Religious Divide* encouraged

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[112] Marxism Today December 1981, p2

McMichael to form a political party and fight elections on the platform of achieving greater independence for Ulster:

> The aspiration of the ULDP is to achieve Ulster national sovereignty by the establishment of a democratic Ulster parliament, freely elected by the Ulster people, whose authority will be limited only by such agreements as may be freely entered into with other nation-states or international organizations for the purpose of furthering international co-operation and world peace.[113]

However, Bruce notes the change from an independent Ulster to independence within the United Kingdom. He identifies a split within the UDA at this time. Barr and Chicken withdrew, leaving McMichael as the dominant political force. Bruce says that the new party was symbolic of this change:

> As its name - not only 'Ulster' but 'Loyalist' made clear, the new party represented a step back from the NUPRG position. In response to criticisms that the UDA was a 'Prod Sinn Fein', the ULDP offered a more limited independence within the United Kingdom.[114]

McMichael believed that his experience of betrayal by the unionist mainstream would resonate with enough of the Protestant electorate to gain representation in Westminster. He also felt he could sell the idea of an independent Ulster to Catholics arguing that "more and more of our people will realise that they've a separate identity from being Irish and from being British".[115] The party was formed against new political initiatives by the Conservative Government, who intimated that another assembly could be established.

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[113] ULDP Constitutional Proposals 1981

[114] Bruce, S 1992 Op. cit, p233

[115] Marxism Today December 1981, p28

The chance to test McMichael's optimism came in February 1982 when John McMichael stood as the ULDP candidate in South Belfast. The election was won by the UUP whereas, as Bruce notes, "McMichael got just two per-cent of the unionist vote in a constituency that included several thousand working class loyalists in the Roden Street, Sandy Row and the Village areas. Many of them would have been members of the UDA".[116]

McMichael had ignored the fact that whilst mainstream unionist politicians had not brought peace and stability to the province, the UDA's prestige and credibility had declined post-Sunningdale and it was not automatic that they would be embraced as an alternative. Standing on a straightforward social democratic programme would have been difficult enough, given that loyalist paramilitaries carrying that message had not had much electoral success and that the constitutional issue still had a stranglehold on political life. However, despite limiting the scale of secession what the ULDP had focused on was independence which was deeply unpopular with all sides in the conflict.

Despite clashes with Westminster and the imposition of direct rule, Protestants in Northern Ireland had not redefined themselves as belonging primarily to the nation of Ulster. On the contrary, a sense of British-ness actually increased. in 1968 a survey by Rose found that thirty-nine per-cent of Protestants surveyed viewed themselves as British, whilst thirty-two per-cent defined themselves as Ulster and twenty per-cent as Irish.[117] Ten years later Moxon-Browne found that sixty-seven per-cent of Protestant respondents identified themselves as British with twenty per-cent stating Ulster and eight per-cent Irish.[118] The intensity of conflict, and the lack of a Northern Irish parliament had encouraged polarisation of identity. An independent Ulster did not

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[116] Bruce, S 2001, p78

[117] Rose, R Governing without Consensus: An Irish Perspective (London) Faber and Faber 1971

[118] Moxon-Browne, E Nation, Class and Creed in Northern Ireland (Aldershot) Gower 1983

reflect the identity of the majority of Protestants in Northern Ireland.

As for persuading Catholics into such a constitutional change, the chances were slim. The UDA were unlikely persuaders, given that the main modus operandi of the organisation was to target Catholic civilians as a means of revenge and intimidation. Additionally though the blueprints for this new state deliberately echoed the civic American model, the independent Ulster debate also drew on sources such as *The Cruthin*, a pre-historical pictish tribe who had moved from the North-East of Ireland to Scotland, making the Ulster plantation a home-coming rather than a colonisation.[119] This was evocative of a more ethnic and therefore exclusive Ulster nation. It was a nation to which the majority of Northern Ireland's residents did not feel they belonged.

After the party failed to secure seats for the new assembly, the ULDP's role became to absorb the political energies of some UDA members in the way community work did. While Sinn Fein had felt able to take the hunger strikes as a fresh starting point for electioneering, loyalist paramilitaries still lacked a political direction and indeed were torn about whether to search for one at all. In reaction to the Hunger Strikes, the political was once again supplanted by the military and the Ulster Army Council, a title claimed by both the UDA and the UVF, was used in conjunction with promises that paramilitaries would have "no hesitation in retaliation, even to the extent of taking the offensive".[120]

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[119] Adamson, I The Cruthin (Bangor) Pretani Press 1974. See also The Ulster People (Bangor) Pretani Press 1991
[120] Combat Vol 4 Issue 3 1981

## 4.11 Conclusions: New Loyalism Mark One?

The IRA's border campaign of the late 1950s made little impact and garnered very little in the way of nationalist support. Therefore, it seemed possible to some politicians to encourage nationalists to abandon abstentionism for participation. One of these politicians was Terence O'Neill who believed that economic growth and gestures of reconciliation would be enough to create inclusion through the fostering of civic pride. Other politicians within the NILP, such as Charles Brett, felt that nationalist votes could now be actively courted without alienating unionists. The NILP stressed common interest in bringing down a patrician and incompetent unionist hierarchy in favour of increased welfare and worker's rights. Both of these projects had foundered as conflict re-emerged in the 1960s, due to the consequences of nationalists campaigning for the structural reforms they felt were necessary for genuine inclusion.

The UVF and the UDA constituted a reaction to the civil rights movements, and both groups were committed to defence of the constitutional status quo. Many members of these groups saw military defence as the only role for loyalist paramilitaries. However, by the end of the 1970s the UVF and the UDA had experimented with various political roles and some members came to believe that they could become the political representatives of a marginalized loyalist working class community. The UWC strike created a sense of empowerment and demonstrated the benefits of defying mainstream politicians. Meanwhile prison gave some paramilitaries the unexpected advantage of space and time to discuss and debate with their own side and with republicans.

Paramilitary leaders like Andy Tyrie saw politics as a means of augmenting legitimacy. After the violence and uncertainty of the early 1970s, Northern Ireland's place in the union seemed less insecure due to Mason's 'get-tough' approach and a moratorium on power-sharing initiatives. This meant that the UVF and UDA found it harder to present themselves as an alternative security force. Both organisations explored political options, whilst maintaining their self-appointed role of defenders. They produced

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political parties and the UDA branched out into both community politics and constitutional proposals.

These experiments produced several themes that would re-emerge in the agendas of the UDP and the PUP. These were the recognition of the diversity of identity within Northern Ireland; willingness to reach out to republicans; confidence that new political institutions could be created that would win the support of both communities; a belief that the needs of the Protestant working class were not being addressed; and finally, a willingness to criticise unionist politicians and to stand against them, even at the risk of splitting the unionist vote.

However, these first initiatives did not mark a significant political realignment. The UVF and UDA remained paramilitaries first and foremost and their reactive military strategy included the targeting of Catholic civilians. The VPP lacked a coherent political programme and the ULDP's main idea was independence within the United Kingdom, which was an unpopular platform. The UVF and the UDA also faltered because they were easily marginalized by other actors in Northern Ireland. After the shock of the strike, constitutional politicians managed to reassert their supremacy and they were never really troubled by the electoral performance of representatives connected to paramilitaries. The republican movement periodically expressed interest in the UVF and UDA's politics but Sinn Fein's endorsement was not the kind of thing to encourage support amongst unionists. The rapprochement that occurred during prison was cut short by the entry of more militant loyalist inmates, but it was also curtailed because it was the republican movement that managed to exploit the special category protests. The loyalists remained a reactive military force and by the end of the 1970s there was less space for them to demonstrate innovation in the political sphere. This period produced some key ideas and experiences that would inform the development of the PUP and the UDP. However, the political actions of the paramilitaries lacked coherence and direction, and they failed to attract significant electoral support.

# CHAPTER FIVE - NEW LOYALISM AND THE PEACE PROCESS

## 5.1 Introduction

This chapter opens with the constitutional initiatives undertaken by the Thatcher Government and focuses on the effects of the Anglo-Irish Agreement on unionist politics. Unionists reviled the Agreement, and protest against it promoted a strong sense of unity amongst politicians and paramilitaries. However, this comradeship dissipated as protest failed to dislodge the Agreement. The UVF and the UDA displayed increasing frustration and dissatisfaction with mainstream politicians and began searching for their own alternatives and political programmes.

When talks between parties were resuscitated in the early 1990s the British and Irish Governments made approaches to loyalist paramilitaries and sought to include them in the developing peace process. The reaction of the paramilitaries to these overtures will be assessed along with the effect of the CLMC ceasefire on the stature of the paramilitaries and their representatives, the PUP and the UDP.

The focus of the chapter will then narrow to the UDP. The UDP developed from the UDA and it will be argued that it drew on the UDA's commitment to speak for the people of Ulster, rather than the development of a comprehensive social democratic manifesto. Divisions within the party reflected a wider ambivalence about the benefits of the peace process within the UDA. Having failed to get elected to the new assembly the party was overwhelmed by the actions of elements within the UDA grouping who had other, less constitutional ideas about representing 'the people'.

## 5.2 The Second Assembly

The first constitutional initiative undertaken by the new Conservative government was a conference between parties to consider possible options for devolved power, organised by the Northern Ireland secretary Humphrey Atkins. The talks were beset with problems. The DUP refused to discuss power-sharing. The SDLP met with the

government in a parallel conference and so did not sit down with unionists. James Molyneaux, who had been elected leader of the UUP in 1979, was one of the strongest advocates of the integrationist stance the party now espoused. The UUP boycotted the talks on the grounds that they were only concerned with constitutional settlements that would maintain Northern Ireland's distance from Great Britain. James Prior replaced Atkins in September 1981 and proposed a scheme of 'rolling devolution'. This entailed an assembly that would begin with a scrutinising role and which would have more powers devolved to it, if the parties managed a greater degree of consensus.

The assembly never received more powers than those of scrutiny. The SDLP boycotted the assembly. The UUP was unenthusiastic about devolution and also boycotted the assembly for a period in protest about security.[1] The assembly received no new powers, as the SDLP stayed away. However, O'Leary, Elliot and Wilford say that unionists became increasingly convinced that the assembly would endure and that "the SDLP could not continue their abstentionism without eventually suffering an electoral setback".[2]

The ULDP shared this belief. The party had fielded two candidates, in North Belfast. Between them they gained five per-cent of first preference votes, which was not enough to gain a seat. Despite their non-involvement, the UDLP and UDA were supportive of rolling devolution. John McMichael urged the IRA to call a ceasefire and nationalist representatives to take up their seats in the assembly. McMichael appealed; "stop this nonsense of trying to find a solution outside of Northern Ireland, because it can only be found in Northern Ireland".[3]

Like other unionists, McMichael was keen for the assembly to work because plans for devolution were occurring at the same time as Anglo-Irish summit meetings were being held. Elliot and Wilford note that "the ULDP called for a united unionist front against

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[1]   The catalyst for this boycott was the murder of three worshippers at a Pentecostal church service in Darkley Co. Armagh in November 1983, for which the INLA claimed responsibility. The British Government was unmoved by the protest and the UUP rejoined the assembly after five months.

[2] O'Leary, C Elliot, S & Wilford, R The Northern Ireland Assembly 1982-1986. A Constitutional Experiment (London) C.Hurst and Co 1988, p186

[3] 'UDA explains reason for ceasefire' Ulster August 1983

the Anglo-Irish Governmental conference and remarked ominously that 'marching days are over'".[4] The party shared anxiety about the implementation of solutions with an all-Ireland aspect and saw the assembly as the best means of preventing this.

The Progressive Unionist Party at this time remained marginal to the UVF's operations. Party activity was based around Hugh Smyth and his advice surgery on the Shankill Road. Smyth had failed to get elected to the Assembly. The West Belfast constituency in which he stood returned only four members, as opposed to the six who had been elected for the 1975 Constitutional Convention. This raised the bar for a small party like the PUP, but Smyth's vote dropped and he lost nearly two-thirds of the support he had gained in 1975.[5]

Any political energies within the wider UVF were absorbed in concern for prison conditions and prisoners' rights. This was intensified by the effect of 'supergrass' trials. UVF members William 'Budgie' Allan and James Crockard gave evidence that led to scores of UVF members being brought before the courts.[6]

Neither the UVF nor the UDA had a stake in the assembly in terms of elected representatives. The fact that the assembly represented an internal settlement was reassuring compared to the Council of Ireland element of the previous attempt at devolving power to the province, although there was an awareness that the assembly would have to prove its effectiveness in order to stave off other constitutional initiatives. The paramilitaries were not in the assembly, but they did not oppose it either, so it did not provide focus for political action. This did not mean that activism was abandoned by either grouping but it was marginalised. The optimism and confidence engendered by the UWC strike had dissipated to a large degree and the role of community worker had not supplanted that of defender, however problematic a title defender itself may

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[4] Elliot, S & Wilford R The 1982 Assembly Election (Glasgow) University of Strathclyde 1983, p9

[5] www.ark.ac.uk/elections

[6] Allen's evidence led to forty-seven people being tried for a total of two hundred and twenty six crimes ranging from UVF membership to murder. Twenty-nine people appeared in court in connection with Crockard's evidence although the judge dismissed charges against seventeen of them on the "balance of probabilities". See 'Forty seven sent for trial of word of 'Budgie' Allen' Belfast Telegraph 18th August 1984 and 'Crockard informer case thrown out' Belfast Telegraph 21st Feburary 1984

have been.


## 5.3 The Anglo-Irish Agreement


### 5.3.1 The Signing of the Agreement


The signing of the Anglo-Irish Agreement on 15th November 1985 publicly marked a shift in British policy towards Northern Ireland. The feasibility of a lasting internal settlement was undermined by continual disagreement between Northern Ireland's politicians. The assembly had not earned the support of nationalist representatives. Sinn Fein's share of support had grown to approximately one third of the Catholic vote, increasing the pressure on the Thatcher administration to bolster constitutional nationalism.[7] Additionally ongoing concerns about security pointed to improving relations with the Republic of Ireland, which was seen as a weak point in defending against republican violence. Tonge asserts that the British government "was prepared to accept the Irish-ness of the minority in Northern Ireland in the hope that the Irish government would help ensure that expressions of minority interests were non-violent".[8]


The agreement retained the principle of majority consent, that the constitutional status of Northern Ireland could not be changed unless the majority of the electorate expressed support for change. The Irish Government could offer its views on the governance of Northern Ireland through the mechanism of the inter-governmental conference, but "without prejudice either to British sovereignty or to the objective of establishing a devolved government in Northern Ireland acceptable to both communities".[9]

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[7] Cunningham, M British Government Policy in Northern Ireland 1969-2000 (Manchester) Manchester University Press 2001

[8] Tonge, J Northern Ireland. Conflict and Change (Harlow) Pearson Education Ltd 2002, p127

[9] Hadden, T and Boyle, K The Anglo-Irish Agreement. Commentary, Text and Official Review (London) Sweet and Maxwell 1989, p10

The agreement relied on co-operation between ministers of the two governments on matters relating to security, human rights, the administration of justice and cross-border co-operation. The agreement also recognised the legitimacy of both nationalist and unionist aspirations and identities.

## 5.3.2 Unionist Reaction

The signing of the Anglo-Irish agreement took unionists by surprise. Thatcher's attitude to the New Ireland Forum Report of 1984 had been one of derision. In addition the continuance of the assembly had not given them cause to believe the British were looking at anything other than an internal settlement. The overwhelming reaction was outrage followed by panic that this agreement was a pre-cursor to joint authority, which in itself would herald a united Ireland.

The strength of feeling made for a huge degree of unity against the imposition of the agreement, under the slogan 'Ulster Says No'. The first major demonstration of this unity was a rally to Belfast City Hall on 23rd November 1985, attended by twenty per cent of the Protestant population.[10] The two main unionist parties, the UUP and the DUP, joined in this spirit of unity and undertook an electoral pact which was first exercised in by-elections held across Northern Ireland on 24th January 1986, a necessity created by the resignation of unionist MPs in December. The parties also organised protest at local government level, refusing to set council rates or undertake council business.

Protest also emerged in other forms. One was the formation of Ulster clubs. The clubs had an explicit Protestant connection and the founder member, Alan Wright, was a Salvation Army officer. The clubs expressed anxiety about losing British citizenship, but also about the denigration of an Orange-Protestant identity, evidence for which was detected by events in Portadown. Loyalists fought with police in March and April 1986 over the banning of an Apprentice Boys march. In the subsequent rioting a protestor, Keith White, was shot by plastic bullets. He died later of his injuries, becoming the first

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[10] Tonge, J 2002 Op. cit, p133

Protestant to be killed by plastic ammunition.

Another protest organization, Ulster Resistance, launched on 11th November 1986 with Paisley and Peter Robinson chairing the inaugural rally. Ulster Resistance was in keeping with Paisley's idea of a 'Third Force' of citizens prepared to defend Ulster with legally held weaponry. Paisley's Third Force had first made an appearance as part of protests in the wake of the murder of the MP, Reverend Robert Bradford, at his constituency surgery on 14th November 1981. Bradford's murder focused protests about security leading to a day of action on the 23rd, with Paisley marching his force around Conway Square in Newtownards. The Anglo-Irish Agreement provided a new focus for Paisley, who utilised the same tactics he had when trying to rally support around his demands for harsher security measures.

Though both the Ulster clubs and Ulster Resistance carried a threat of force this could not be made too explicit. Alan Wright proclaimed that "obviously there is a dire need to meet force with force".[11] However, Aughey argues that the Ulster Clubs' popularity was based on ambiguity in "giving the impression of militancy while shrinking from violent acts".[12] As for Ulster Resistance, elected politicians disassociated themselves from it as it became clear the UDA and UVF had hit on the idea of using it as a front for gun-running from South Africa.[13] Though the Agreement had pitted unionists against Westminster, there was still a reluctance to use violence amongst the majority of Protestants.

As for constitutional protest, activism seemed to founder on the fact that the Agreement had been designed to withstand unionist protest. It was an agreement between the British and Irish government and whether Ulster said no or yes did not seem to matter. The electoral pact was continued through the general election of 1987 and the two parties formed a task force to explore alternatives to the agreement. However, divisions emerged about the way forward and there was strong disagreement on the issue of

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[11] Newsletter 'Loyalists must stand together - Wright' 7th February 1986

[12] Aughey, A Under Siege: Ulster Unionism and the Anglo-Irish Agreement (London) C.Hurst and Co London 1989, p75

[13] Taylor, P Loyalists (London) Bloomsbury 1999

integrating Northern Ireland further into the United Kingdom. Court rulings and fines pushed councils into undertaking more and more business. It seemed that though opposition to the Agreement remained, boycotting and negative tactics had not brought any change. Additionally, protest that was potentially more militant survived by ambiguity rather than actual action. The unionist protest seemed to have hit an impasse.

## 5.3.3 The Reaction of the Paramilitaries

Reviewing events around the Anglo-Irish Agreement Gusty Spence reflected that "the UVF and the UDA were quite placid. They too had come of age. They too were reading the political runes".[14] Placidity was a relative concept for the paramilitaries. The UVF and UDA were active throughout this time and were responsible for shots fired at the RUC during rioting, for example after the 'Day of Action' on 3rd March 1986. In addition the UDA struck in the Republic of Ireland, with the UFF planting bombs in Dublin and Donegal in February 1987.

Spence himself was optimistic about the possibility of a peaceful settlement. He was released from prison in December 1984 and involved himself in community work. Garland says that he "told the loyalist paramilitaries to 'grease up your guns and put them away'".[15] He believed that negotiation and some form of accommodation of nationalist culture could be the basis of a democratic solution. He signalled that he would be prepared to talk to Sinn Fein on the grounds that "if people are democratically and constitutionally elected then you have to take account of them, that is if you are a democrat".[16] However, he was opposed to the political involvement of the Irish Government.

It was not the case that the paramilitaries astutely assessed the Agreement the day after it was signed and decided to 'hang fire'. The initial strength of opposition to the

[14] Garland, R Gusty Spence (Belfast) Blackstaff 2001, p264

[15] Garland, R 2001, Op. cit p263

[16] 'Gusty set for politics' Irish News 1st June 1985

Agreement, suggested that it would be overwhelmed by the rage of the people without too much military assistance. When this did not happen a lot of loyalist angst was diverted into activities such as the Ulster Clubs rather than leading to the mass recruitment that would have turned the UVF or UDA into a citizens' army. The legitimacy of the paramilitaries was not substantially altered by events.

In the initial period after the Agreement was signed there was a strong degree of unity against the new political development. Loyalist paramilitaries and mainstream unionist politicians were determined the Agreement should be scrapped as soon as possible. At first these two groups complemented each other, though perhaps not consciously, by their statements and actions. Mainstream politicians preached apocalyptic visions of a Northern Ireland on the verge of a bloody fight for its survival. Paisley, inevitably, was one of the loudest doom-mongers. As the British Government demonstrated its refusal to listen to Unionist protest he continued with warnings such as:

> We are on the verge of civil war... We are asking people to be ready for the worst and I will lead them.[17]

These warnings also emanated from the UUP, with John Taylor stating:

> The UVF and UDA must be rubbing their hands with joy as Mrs. Thatcher moves blindly towards creating a crisis situation in Northern Ireland.[18]

For their part, the paramilitaries were happy for politicians to lead the protest whilst they acted as the embodiment of the potential violence that could engulf the province. Interviewed by the BBC, John McMichael said that the UDA were not waiting for violence. However "he added that it may be at the end of the day that the Anglo-Irish Agreement would bring about violence but every avenue would be explored without violence".[19] In other words the UDA would implement the people's wishes if more acceptable and legitimate political initiatives failed.

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[17] 'Warning of a Civil War' Newsletter 25th June 1986

[18] 'Taylor warns of violence from unionists' Irish Times 30th November 1985

Immediately after the Agreement the paramilitaries seemed to be acting obligingly as the substance to the mainstream politicians' threats that bloodshed would follow if their protests were ignored. However, two problems with the strategy became apparent.

The first problem was that, although the spirit of Carson's covenant was again invoked, this was not enough to scare the British or Irish Government. Paisley addressed the first mass rally against the Agreement with the words:

> I never thought I would see the day when 1912 was repeated. It's just the same as you see in those old brown pictures taken at the time. This is the voice of the Protestant people.[20]

In the end Carson's army had not been put to the test. With no world wars breaking out unionist politicians would actually have to demonstrate that they could channel this massive discontent into a people's militia. The paramilitaries were recruiting new members who were prepared to undertake violence but this could not be said of the whole unionist community. A poll conducted by Mori for The *Sunday Times* in November 1985, during the initial wave of protest, found that only ten per-cent of Protestant respondents were supportive of armed revolt.[21]

The mass of the unionist community were not prepared to contemplate a war, supporting Aughey's thesis that the impression of militancy was the best that most unionist politicians could offer if they wished to maintain popularity. The paramilitaries began to realise that they would not be accorded the status of an army in waiting but they also began to question the tactics of the politicians. A few weeks after the mini general election caused by unionist MPs resigning their seats, Andy Tyrie told The *Newsletter* that there would be no need to get into violent confrontation with nationalists or the security forces. This was because "we do believe if the politicians here and particularly the unionists get their act together then they could present a good

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[19] 'UDA in terror pledge' Irish News 7th February 1986

[20] 'The Prods Chant from Never Never Land' Guardian 25th November 1985

[21] 'Protestants Three to One against Irish Deal' Sunday Times 24th November 1985. Armed revolt was one option in answer to the question "here is a list of ways in which opposition to the Anglo-Irish-Agreement could be expressed. Please tell me the ones you are in favour of"

case to all the people of Ulster".[22] However, the politicians were apparently incapable of running either a war or a constitutional protest and criticism by paramilitaries of the protest became more vocal.

### 4.7.3 *Common Sense* and *Sharing Responsibility*

As the Agreement withstood the protest it became apparent that the DUP/UUP alliance was ineffective as a means of changing British policy and that continuing with the negative tactics of boycotting and refusing dialogue did not amount to a plan of action. From the UDA camp a critique of the campaign was developed and articulated:

> It is not enough to simply say no! Any advertising agency or public relations consultant would tell you that it is impossible to sell a product in a negative fashion. People would want to see and hear something positive, something hopeful and something with which they want to identify.[23]

This positive move was unveiled on 29th January 1987 as *Common Sense*[24] a policy document complimented by Cochrane as "the first real sign of intelligent life within unionism for several years".[25] *Common Sense* once again drew on American constitutional principles and took its name from the writings of Thomas Paine. However, mindful of the previous reception to the campaign for an Independent Ulster this parliament, based on proportionality and a bill of rights, would be fixed within the United Kingdom. *Common Sense* was intended, like its predecessor *Beyond the Religious Divide*, to foster a sense of allegiance amongst all residents of Northern Ireland. However, this was to be allegiance to a region, not a new nation-state.

McMichael stated that "*Common Sense* was prepared over a long period of time and in

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[22] 'Tyrie opts out of deal conflict' Newsletter 26th February 1986

[23] UPRG A Cohesive Co-ordinated Campaign 1986

[24] NUPRG Common Sense 1987

[25] Cochrane, F Unionist Politics and the Politics of Unionism since the Anglo-Irish Agreement (Cork) Cork University Press 2001, p217

the absence of those whom we elected to represent us coming to terms with the agreement".[26] Those elected representatives seemed to find the UDA's politicking distinctly unwelcome. Molyneaux dismissed *Common Sense* as "irrelevant" because there were no signs the British Government was prepared to consider an alternative to the agreement. Paisley argued that "power-sharing was rejected by the Northern Ireland people at the time of Sunningdale and we still reject the idea that any party should have seats in government as of right."[27] As with previous loyalist paramilitary constitutional experiments it was representatives on the nationalist side who seemed most positive about *Common Sense*, with John Hume pronouncing himself "pleasantly surprised" by the document.[28]

There were also signs within the UVF grouping of frustration with the anti-Agreement campaign. Another mass rally was held on the first anniversary of the signing of the Agreement. The main outcome of this protest was two days of rioting, which led to two deaths. An editorial in *Combat* despaired of the state of the campaign and proclaimed:

> The days of marching to God-knows-where are over. There has to be a new approach. The great crowd of loyal Ulstermen and women who gathered yet again at the City Hall need a goal rather than a pitch to mill around on.[29]

The PUP also contributed to the debate by publicising the document it had formulated before the signing of the Anglo-Irish Agreement. *Sharing Responsibility*[30] was based on the significant strengthening of local government in Northern Ireland, with powers to be transferred to it on a rolling basis.

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[26] 'Before it's too late' Sunday Tribune 15th February 1987

[27] 'UDA blueprint hits Paisley snag' Newsletter 30th January 1987

[28] 'UDA plan for North is welcomed' Irish Press 30th January 1987

[29] Combat Vol. 6 Issue 2 23rd November 1986

[30] PUP Sharing Responsibility September 1985

PUP documents during this period concentrate on Britishness rather than Ulster. The proclamation that "the PUP is the only socialist unionist party in this region"[31] was different in tone to the ULDP whose emphasis was still on independence as the "the next logical step"[32] if the Agreement was maintained. The PUP concentrated on stressing the innate Britishness of the region and arguing for some measures of integration such as mainland parties organizing for Northern Irish elections.

The PUP built on the original VPP position that the border issue had served to marginalise the loyalist working class, and that socialist politics must be articulated, even at the risk of creating divisions within unionism. The PUP looked to the British Labour Party for a role model, which is most recognisable in the PUP constitution.[33] *Sharing Responsibility* was in truth not a sophisticated solution to the conflict, as it seemed to posit that the continual transferring of powers to Northern Ireland would create stability in itself. The most noteworthy aspect of these documents is that, in marked contrast to the formation of the Volunteer Political Party, there was no squeamishness about the use of the word socialism.

*Common Sense,* for all the plaudits it garnered, was not the solution either. There seemed to be an inability to recognise the importance the agreement placed on aspirations and identity. *Common Sense* sought to circumnavigate these difficult issues by faith in a neutral regional patriotism, rather than grappling with the concepts the Agreement was built on.

The UDA's profile, heightened by public wrangling with Paisley, had ensured that statements from its leaders and think tanks were represented as the definition of paramilitary political thinking. Hence, when feuding within the UDA led to the death of John McMichael[34] and the organisation turned in on itself, the pressures placed on mainstream politicians from this quarter diminished rapidly.

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[31] PUP War or Peace? 1986

[32] ULDP Peace Democracy Jobs 1988

[33] PUP Constitution and Standing Orders

[34] McMichael was killed in December 1987 by an IRA car bomb. However, Cusack and MacDonald, Garland, Bruce and Taylor (op. cit.) concur that the information required to target McMichael came from his own side. McMichael had decided belatedly to tackle fraud and racketeering in the UDA.

The Anglo-Irish Agreement had provided a target that constitutional politicians and paramilitaries could attack. It encouraged co-operation between the DUP and the UUP and the doomsday rhetoric of senior unionists encouraged paramilitaries to views themselves as a modern manifestation of Carson's Ulster Volunteer Force. However, the estrangement between paramilitaries and politicians was not just due to the realisation that mainstream unionists were not really prepared for war. It was also the product of a critique of the tactics of the 'no' campaign. The burying of the DUP and UUP's Task Force report increased frustration with the negativity of the mainstream campaign and once again paramilitary groups floated constitutional solutions that relied on the accommodation of nationalists. Though these proposals lacked sophistication they were a sign that political elements within the UVF and the UDA were open to the idea that a new constitutional settlement could be a positive move.

## 5.4 The Peace Process

Peter Brooke was appointed Northern Ireland Secretary on 24th July 1989. Until his removal[35] he dedicated himself to drawing parties in Northern Ireland into talks that could generate concord about a settlement of conflict. This marked a new phase in the search for political agreement in Northern Ireland.

The activities of the paramilitaries in the following years seemed to imply they were totally committed to military action. Violent acts increased, usually taking the form of revenge attacks against ordinary Catholics for IRA acts.[36] In addition their official definition of a legitimate target widened in reaction to the perception of a pan-nationalist front, founded on dialogue between John Hume, the leader of the SDLP and the Sinn Fein president Gerry Adams. The GAA and bars that played Irish folk

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[35] Brooke's rendition of *My Darling Clementine* on an Irish chat show was judged to be an offensive show of frivolity in light of the Teebane massacre. Major initially seemed to back Brooke during the furore but in the cabinet reshuffle after the general election in April 1992 he was replaced by Sir Patrick Mayhew.

[36] For example, the UVF murdered a Catholic taxi driver in County Tyrone the day after the IRA murder of a Protestant taxi driver in Belfast on 23rd October 1990. The UFF attacked a bookmakers shop on the Ormeau Road on 5th February 1992 and killed five Catholics, in revenge for the killings at Teebane.

music were named as targets (though condemnation from other unionists led to the revision of these threats).

However, whilst the violence escalated the paramilitaries were also being drawn into negotiations with the British and Irish government and showed signs of optimism about the effectiveness of entering into dialogue. It is the gap between escalating violence and political negotiation that will now be examined.

5.4.1 Collusion

On 25th August 1989 a Catholic called Loughlin Maginn was murdered by the UFF. The IRA denied he was a member but the UFF/UDA were so keen to prove he was a legitimate target that they invited a BBC reporter, Chris Moore, to look over their cache of intelligence documents. In the following weeks excerpts from these files were pasted on walls across Belfast.

The resulting furore led to the first of three investigations undertaken by the deputy chief constable of Cambridgeshire, John Stevens. His first investigation showed evidence of collusion between the UDA and members of the security forces. Fingerprints on security documents leaked to the UDA turned out to be those of Brian Nelson, the UDA's director of intelligence. This led to the revelation that he was also a British army agent, listed as Agent 6137 by the Force Research Unit (FRU), making use of army information to aid the UDA/UFF in targeting republicans.[37] Nelson pleaded guilty to five counts of conspiracy to murder in January 1992. He was sentenced to ten years, the judge accepting the mitigating evidence offered by the former head of FRU, Colonel Gordon Kerr. Kerr said that Nelson's courage had foiled assassination attempts and saved lives, a claim disputed by the Stevens Enquiry Team.[38]

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[37] Taylor, P Loyalists (London) Bloomsbury 1999

[38] The journalist John Ware interviewed several members of the Stevens Enquiry team for his two-part *Panorama* documentary, *A Licence to Murder* shown on BBC1 on 19th and 23rd June 2002. On the second programme, Detective Constable Sarah Bynum stated "I can't say that it was clear to us that the whole goal of the army having him [Nelson] in place was to save life".

Further work by Stevens uncovered the revelation that the RUC and the army had deliberately obstructed his enquiry. Turning his attention to the murders of Patrick Finucane and Brian Lambert, he found evidence of another agent at work in the UDA, William Stobie.[39] The third Stevens Enquiry concluded that whilst Stobie had supplied the weapon which killed Finucane, "Nelson was aware and contributed materially to the intended attack on Finucane" at the very least by showing his photo to UDA members.[40]

Stevens reported that he found evidence of collusion in the murders of Finucane and Lambert and he noted that "my enquiries have highlighted collusion, the wilful failure to keep records, the absence of accountability, the withholding of intelligence and evidence, and the extreme of agents being involved in murder. These serious acts and omissions have meant that people have been killed or seriously injured".[41]

Although there was evidence of collusion involving the Ulster Volunteer Force, it was the UDA that bore the brunt of the arrests following the instigation of the Stevens Enquries.[42] However, Taylor notes that the resulting clear out delighted younger members of the UDA and he quotes an interview with one member who feels that events had worked out in the organisation's favour:

> The Stevens Enquiry got rid of all the old guard within the UDA and fresher men took over, not people who had been in the organisation from the start. The people who had lived through the eighties, a very frustrating time, we were now in charge and were now bringing the war to the Provisional IRA. Whereas in the eighties the people in our area were calling us gangsters etc., in the nineties you

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[39] Brian Lambert was murdered whilst at work on a building site on 9th November 1987. He was a Protestant and it is believed he was mistakenly identified as a Catholic and shot in revenge for the IRA bomb at a Remembrance Sunday service in Enniskillen. Patrick Finucane was a solicitor who represented many republican clients. He was murdered in front of his family on 12th February 1989.

[40] Stevens Three: Overview and Recommendations 17th April 2003 point 2.12

[41] Stevens Three 2003 Op. cit, point 1.3

[42] For example on 17th July 1988 Nelson spotted a car outside a restaurant which belonged to the Sinn Fein member, Alex Maskey. He tried to summon a UDA team to assassinate Maskey but failed to get them together in time. He then passed on information about Maskey and other targets to the UVF.

were proud to be a part of the UDA, you were proud to be a member.[43]

The UDA seemed determined to increase the intensity of their campaign. Guelke says that "the new leadership saw the restraint that the UDA had exercised during the 1980s as a product of the corruption of the old guard and was determined to demonstrate its effectiveness by matching the violence of the Provisional IRA blow for blow".[44] This determination was such that by the end of 1992 loyalists were responsible for more deaths than republicans.

Moloney says that the IRA was unnerved by this sudden loyalist rejuvenation. Not only were they getting sharper as regarded targeting republicans, the ferocity of their campaign threatened the credibility of the defensive role of republican paramilitaries:

> The loyalist onslaught directly challenged the IRA's raison d'etre and the pressures on the organisation in Belfast to respond were enormous. After all the Provisionals had come into existence to defend the city's vulnerable Catholic communities, and any failure to hit back at those behind the attacks could provoke uncontrollable freelance operations by IRA units. In a worst-case scenario these could even precipitate a split in the organisation.[45]

This panic led to the IRA's attempt to blow up the UDA leadership on 13th October 1993. However, the UDA were already gone from the room above Frizzel's fish shop on the Shankill, and the bomb killed nine customers and one of the bombers. The UDA's reaction included the murder of eight customers on Halloween at a pub in Greysteel, Co. Derry.

The ferocity of the UDA's campaign under their new leaders had spurred the new Northern Ireland Secretary, Sir Patrick Mayhew, to announce that the UDA would be listed as a proscribed organisation from midnight on 11th August 1992. This final

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[43] Interview with Billy "Twister" McQuistan Taylor, P 2000 Op. cit, p209-210

[44] Guelke, A 'Political Violence and the Paramilitaries' from Mitchell, P and Wilford, R (eds) Politics in Northern Ireland (Boulder) Westview Press 1999, p47

[45] Moloney, E A Secret History of the IRA (London) Penguin 2002, p414

public acknowledgement that the UDA were a paramilitary organisation responsible for aggression and murder seemed a little hollow in light of the revelations about collusion. It also seemed unusually timed in that loyalist paramilitaries were being sounded out about involvement in the peace process. It could be seen to accord with the development of communication channels with the IRA at the same time as Major was claiming it would turn his stomach to talk to the organisation.[46]

Bruce argues that pro-state terrorists find themselves in a difficult position:

> If the state encourages and tolerates the pro-state group, then the latter has many advantages of the former. But if the government feels that its own agencies are capable of dealing with the threats to the state, then the pro-state terror group is in competition with the state and, except in the extreme circumstance where the state itself collapses is bound to lose in that context.[47]

Evidence of collusion could demonstrate that the UDA had enjoyed the benefits of being tolerated by the British State but it was when they distanced themselves from the security services that members felt they were finally achieving their goal of destroying violent republicanism. British government agencies had not only tried to direct the UDA in their war against the IRA, at other times they had funded and encouraged the community action side of the organisation. As has already been noted the UDA has always been an amorphous organisation. It has contained different factions who have been in conflict with each other, sometimes to the point of violence. As such it was a hard organisation to control and direct from the outside.

Proscription did not mark the end of attempts by the British government to make contact with UDA members for political purposes and in the next few years, their political connection, the UDP would be publicly involved in the peace process. However, the revitalisation of the UDA in the early nineties boosted members' self-image as an effective scourge of republicanism. As will be shown this created a sense of unease within the organisation about embracing constitutional politics as the

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[46] 'Major's secret links with IRA revealed' the Observer 28th November 1993

only way forward.

## 5.4.2 The First Ceasefire

Parallel to the increase in violent action, there was support for the ongoing dialogue. At the beginning of 1991, The UDA and UVF joined together in a Combined Loyalist Military Command (CLMC) to co-ordinate a loyalist response to political developments. The CLMC announced a ceasefire on 17th April 1991 to enable politicians to make progress in the Brooke talks. The ceasefire ended on 4th July 1991 as the talks collapsed. David Ervine, felt that unionist politicians had ignored the ceasefire and failed to take advantage of it:

> The world wasn't watching, the world wasn't listening. Some might feel the world wasn't even told. That then created another circumstance. In that not only did we have to think for ourselves, we were going to have to talk for ourselves. [48]

The UVF began to open channels of communication with the Irish government. This was accompanied by threats against the Republic of Ireland if ideas of joint authority surfaced, topped off with a letter bomb to Dick Spring in October 1993, which one of the bloodiest months of the conflict.

Meanwhile, although the UDA had stepped up the violence, it had been part of the ceasefire and its political component had not been erased in this new phase of militancy. John McMichael's son, Gary, had pumped life back into the ULDP, which dropped the loyalist from its title in 1989 in order to "make the party more attractive to a broader public". [49] Gary McMichael was articulate and a non-combatant. During the Anglo-Irish Agreement protests he had joined the Ulster Clubs. However, he became disillusioned with the campaign after the dismissive reaction within unionism to *Common Sense*. He echoed Ervine's argument that loyalists must talk for themselves:

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[47] Bruce, S 1992 Op. cit, p270
[48] Taylor, P Loyalists (London) Bloomsbury 1999, p217
[49] UDP 'A Brief History' www.udp.org

Never again would [loyalist paramilitaries] allow loyalism to be represented by proxy to the traditional unionist parties while legitimate loyalist political voices were excluded.[50]

Together, the UDP and the PUP would become the explicit political link to the paramilitaries and, through the brokering of a loyalist ceasefire, would enter the resuscitated peace process. Both the British and Irish governments were keen to draw them into the process even before the ceasefire was declared. Sinnerton points out that the CLMCs six principles for a political settlement, relating to the rights and dignity of both communities and to the freedom to pursue change by peaceful and democratic means, can be seen in paragraph five of the Downing Street Declaration.[51]

## 5.4.4 The Second Cease-fire and Negotiations

On 13th October 1994, six weeks after the IRA ceasefire, the CLMC announced its own cessation of violence at a press conference. Gusty Spence's speech pledged that the ceasefire was permanent (that is loyalists would not start any offensive) and offered 'abject and true remorse' to innocent victims.[52]

The CLMC ceasefire had the immediate effect of conferring a new credibility on the political wings of loyalist paramilitaries. The UVF and UDA had always strained to maintain sufficient legitimacy, even within their own proclaimed constituency, whilst they undertook acts of violence. Now putting that violence on hold gave them legitimacy beyond the community. They were no longer the people who perpetrated terrorism but they could appear as the group who had put a stop to it. Previously other unionist parties could claim that they must be listened to or the paramilitaries would win out. Now parties linked to the paramilitaries could claim they must be listened to

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[50] McMichael, G An Ulster Voice (in Search of Common Ground in Northern Ireland) (Dublin) Roberts Rhinehart 1999, p41

[51] Sinnerton, H David Ervine. Uncharted Waters (Dingle) Brandon 2002

[52] CLMC statement delivered by Gusty Spence 13th October 1994

because it was they who had curbed the violence.

Secondly the UDP and PUP were now drawn into negotiations. Both parties exploited their new positions as guardians of peace through their link to loyalist paramilitaries. In submissions to exploratory dialogue with the British Government both parties underlined this role as the source of their authority:

The UDP claims credibility in assisting to broker the loyalist ceasefire.[53]

We [the PUP] believe that notwithstanding our lack of electoral mandate, we have a significant contribution to make towards the development of peace in Northern Ireland. We helped to broker a ceasefire. We are encouraging the CLMC to maintain and consolidate that ceasefire.[54]

Thirdly, as the above PUP statement makes clear, the role of peacemaker acted as a substitute for the role of popularly elected spokesperson. It provided a mandate the parties had lacked, as neither party had advanced from a small presence in local government. At a press conference in December 1994 Billy Hutchinson of the PUP asserted "our mandate comes from the silence of the guns".[55]

Now they had been drawn into the process, the credibility of both parties was further boosted by the 1996 Forum elections. The PUP gained 3.4 per-cent of the vote and the UDP 2.22 per-cent. They gained two seats each via a 'top-up' list that provided them with negotiating teams equal to the larger unionist and nationalist parties.[56] Bew, Gibbon and Patterson argue that the electoral system was designed to gain representation for these parties:

The loyalist ceasefire had the temporary effect of enhancing the credibility and political acceptability of the PUP and the UDP amongst working class Protestants.

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[53]  UDP Political Prisoners. Submission to Exploratory Dialogue 1995

[54]  PUP Submission from the PUP 23rd December 1994

[55]  Quoted in Sinnerton, H 2002 Op. cit, p175

Concerned that politics should be seen to work for the loyalist paramilitaries, the Northern Ireland Office provided a mixed electoral system for the forum.[57]

Both parties had, through a place in negotiations, a public platform for their views. They acknowledged that their electoral mandate was still small, but, although they claimed a place at the table had been earned through the ceasefire, they also sought to link this legitimacy to the need to represent the loyalist working class. They argued that, without the participation of the PUP and the UDP, this group would not have a real say in the negotiations.

Now that they were cast as the parties that kept the lid on loyalist violence, the UDP and the PUP also served as a means by which more pragmatic unionist negotiators could out manoeuvre negative tactics. Cochrane asserts that whilst the UUP were trying to find a way into negotiations with the British government they were hemmed in by the DUP:

> Every attempt by Ulster Unionists to emerge from the trenches dug in 1985 was accompanied by shouts of betrayal from the DUP and a frantic scuttling back to their previous position by the UUP.[58]

Cochrane's work tends to assume a clean, neat divide between the DUP and the UUP, which fits in with his hypothesis of a radical/pragmatic divide in unionism. However, Molyneaux and then Trimble were often under pressure from the pessimism and hostility to change from elements of their own party. That said, Cochrane is correct to assert that "The fear of being undercut by the loudest voice - which for the last thirty years has been owned by Ian Paisley - has been an important dynamic within unionist parties".[59]

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[56] Tonge, J 2002 Op. cit.

[57] Bew, P Gibbon, P and Patterson, H Northern Ireland 1921-2001 Political Forces and Social Classes (London) Serif 2002, p230

[58] Cochrane, F 2001 Op. cit p254

[59] Cochrane, F 200 Op. cit p350

Given this, the role of the PUP and the UDP in negotiations was to diminish the impact of accusations of treachery from the DUP camp. They greatly enjoyed ridiculing Paisley and undermining his negative position in the negotiations.[60] Given their new position as those who had put a stop to violence, Paisley had very little scope for threatening violent retribution against those who threatened Northern Ireland's constitutional status. The parties also sought to undermine Paisley as they were looking to challenge the DUP's mastery of the urban loyalist vote, arguing that no party had addressed the real needs of this constituency.

Aughey quotes George Mitchell, who chaired the talks that led to the Good Friday Agreement as a means of highlighting the fact that the DUP's main tactic (and that of Robert McCartney's UKUP) during the peace process was that of boycotting:

> Their absence freed the UUP from daily attacks at the negotiating table, and gave
> the party room to negotiate that it might not otherwise have had.[61]

Darby and MacGinty consider the implication of the DUP's withdrawal, as Sinn Fein were admitted, as being that "the DUP strategy was now to sit back, in the hope that the talks would come crashing down around David Trimble".[62]

Given this the UDP and the PUP linked the flexibility they displayed in negotiations to confidence that the union was safe, as a means of repelling any accusations of Lundyism. Spence, who was now enjoying the position of patron saint of new loyalism summed up this confidence arguing that "the union is safe because a million people say it is safe. The union is safe because the British government, despite what people say about the British government's word, the British government, the Irish government and indeed the American government say that the union is safe".[63] Once again there was the

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[60] Probably the most famous instance of this is the UDP/PUP ambush of a press conference organised by Paisley on 9th April 1998 to damn signatories to the Good Friday Agreement as traitors.

[61] Aughey, A 'The 1998 Agreement: unionist responses' Cox, M Guelke, A & Stephen, F A Farewell to Arms? From 'Long War' to Long Peace in Northern Ireland (Manchester) Manchester University Press 2000, p65

[62] Darby, J and MacGinty, R The Management of Peace Processes (Basingstoke) MacMillan 2000, p76

opportunity to exploit the paramilitary link in that those who had been prepared to fight and die to defend the union now appeared convinced that the purpose of the negotiations was not to dismantle that union.

The parties also demonstrated a belief that involvement in the peace process would allow them to take on nationalists and put pressure on them to reappraise the position of unionists. For example Gary McMichael argued:

> The government's declaration that it has no selfish strategic or economic interest in Northern Ireland was seen as many unionists as a sign of abandonment. I, however, see it as a strong message to nationalists that it is not the government with which they must resolve the conflict, it is with their cohabitants with which they must resolve the conflict.[64]

The PUP and UDP publicly aligned themselves with David Trimble and pragmatists within the UUP. Trimble was the surprise victor in the UUP leadership contest that followed the resignation of James Molyneaux in the 1995. The former law lecturer, had been involved in the Vanguard movement before joining the UUP in 1978. As the new leader of the party, Trimble seemed to establish his hardline credentials during the marching season. He walked hand-in-hand with Ian Paisley at the front of a jubilant Orange Order parade in Portadown, after marchers had successfully faced down a protests by nationalists, who had sought to divert the parade from the Garvaghy Road.

However, during the peace process, Trimble emerged as a pragmatic leader who was ready to take risks, such as entering into talks with Sinn Fein, in order to reach a constitutional settlement. When he accepted the Nobel Peace Prize in 1998 (which he shared with the SDLP leader, John Hume) he said, "in Ulster what I have looked for is peace within the realms of the possible".[65]

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[63] Gusty Spence quoted in Rowan, B <u>The Story of the IRA and Loyalist Ceasefires</u> (Belfast) Blackstaff 1995, p147

[64] McMichael, G 1999 Op. cit, p85

[65] Acceptance speech for Nobel Peace Prize, 10th December 1998

Hugh Smyth articulated the belief that his party "gave Trimble a backbone. I don't mean this to undermine Trimble but it is an inescapable fact that he would not have been able to sit down with Sinn Fein without the backing of the PUP. There wouldn't have been a peace process at all. We made him strong".[66] The PUP and UDP negotiating teams saw themselves as part of a pragmatic bloc within unionism, and Trimble made this alliance public, by arranging to walk into talks at Stormont, flanked by Ervine and McMichael.

In the hours before agreement was finally reached a Sinn Fein delegation approached the PUP and UDP on the subject of prisoner release. Sinn Fein wanted to cut the waiting period before all prisoners were released from three years to one. Explaining why the PUP and UDP did not back this amendment Gary McMichael said "we didn't want to push the boat out any further than it had to be, because we knew that would throw the UUP off board. So we declined".[67] Both parties believed that the alliance with the UUP was crucial to the success of negotiations, as this created a unified cohort of unionist politicians who were prepared to make compromises and concessions in order to secure the union.

From the reviews of literature relating to unionism in Northern Ireland and to citizenship in ethnically divided societies, an analysis of the components of a new loyalist politics has been established. This can be summarised as the securing of electoral support for a manifesto that asserts that the union is safe and life within that union can be improved both by social democratic politics and the recognition of and accommodation of varied political and national identities.

During negotiations the PUP and the UDP offered confidence, pragmatism and the stifling of violence. However, both parties saw themselves as offering more than this. They sought election to the Assembly created by the Good Friday Agreement on

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[66] Quoted in McAuley, J.W. & Hislop, S "Many roads forward: Politics and Ideology within the PUP" Etudes Irlandaises Spring 2000, p182

[67] Quoted in Mallie, E and McKittrick, D Endgame in Ireland (London) Hodder and Stoughton 2001, p182 The timescale for prisoner release was reduced to two years.

manifestos committed to putting socio-economic issues on the agenda of the new institutions. They had been accommodated within the peace process because of the ceasefire. They sought to be accommodated within the new assembly by gaining credence for their self-proclaimed representation of the working class. This required a successful electoral campaign. However, whilst the PUP gained two seats in the new Assembly, the UDP failed to get elected. The PUP's claim to new loyalism will be evaluated in the following chapter. However, the demise of the UDP is the final issue to be considered within this chapter and it is this failure to gain a seat in the new assembly that marks the beginning of this demise.

## 5.5 The End of the UDP

### 5.5.1 The Consequences of the First Assembly Elections

I know that the UDP shall grow from strength to strength and that we shall continue to give the loyalist people the decisive and vibrant leadership they so desperately want and deserve.[68]

The above comment from Gary McMichael proved to be less than prophetic. The PUP candidate Billy Hutchinson was elected to the Assembly in North Belfast. His first preference votes totalled 3,751. Gary McMichael performed best for the UDP. His first preference votes in the constituency of Lagan valley came to 3,725. He was eliminated in the last count, though he ended up with a slightly higher vote total on transfers than Hutchinson had in his constituency. The UDP could be therefore said to be unlucky in not securing representation in the new Assembly.

However, the PUP polled more than twice the votes obtained by the UDP and David Ervine's election in East Belfast was a more secure victory.[69] Conversely in South Belfast (and calling to mind John McMichael's failure in 1981 to gain votes out of areas like the Village and Sandy Row) Davey Adams of the UDP polled poorly. McAuley

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[68] Gary McMichael UDP Conference Notes 1997

argues that the failure to win seats "marked a turning point in UDP fortunes, with those involved directly in the UDP unable to convince the broader UDA of the merits of political involvement".[70]

Academic literature relating to new loyalism focuses in more depth on the PUP than on the UDP. In light of this Crawford's work on the disintegration of the UDP after the assembly elections is interesting. He argues that the alliance between politicians and paramilitaries was contingent on the UDA being rewarded for its acquiescence in the peace process by representation in post-Agreement Northern Ireland. Evidence for Crawford's thesis can be drawn from Mo Mowlam's visit to UDA/UFF prisoners to persuade them to back the UDP's place in negotiations. McMichael had lost a key member of the UDP in 1994, when Ray Smallwood was murdered by the IRA. He entered negotiations as the political connection to a large organisation, which contained many sceptics within it.

However, when Crawford seeks to explain why the UDP failed to make the grade he attributes far too much cunning to the British Government:

> Quite frankly the exclusion of the UDP (and implicitly the UDA/UFF) in the political process, upon either a democratic or an executive basis, strikes one as such a glaringly obvious omission one questions the nature of governmental intent.[71]

This view is hard to support. As Goldsmith points out, the Northern Ireland Assembly has only twenty-one seats less than the Scottish Parliament, even though the Scottish population is three times the size of Northern Ireland's.[72] Furthermore, in the absence of assembly success, David Trimble appointed Gary McMichael to the Civic Forum. The evidence suggests that attempts were made to keep the UDP in, not push them out. As Chris Thornton argues that the UDP "provided a study of decaying political

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[69] Ervine polled 5,114 first preference votes and was elected fourth out of six candidates.

[70] McAuley, JW 'Unionism's last stand? Contemporary unionist politics and identity in Northern Ireland Global Review of Ethnopolitics Vol.3 No.1 2003, p62

[71] Crawford, C "A Reluctant Ceasefire" Fortnight Magazine February 2001, www.fortnight.org/polcols

[72] Goldsmith, R "Democratic Audit" Fortnight Magazine June 2001, www.fortnight.org/polcols

influence...although the other parties and the governments kept a place open for them in the process, the UDP's ability to persuade their paramilitary partners became obviously reduced. It became apparent who led who".[73]

Davanna believes that "UDA prisoners seem to hold a unique position within their party's decision making process".[74] She suggests that when Mo Mowlam went to visit UDA/UFF prisoners, the UVF/RHC prisoners met her out of courtesy – they accepted that the political decisions were being made on the outside by the PUP. Mowlam's intervention did draw the prisoners back into a supportive position, but they remained ambivalent about the peace process.

Crawford is right to pin-point the UDP's failure in the Assembly elections as the starting-point for the party's collapse, though he blames the wrong people for that failure. There were elements within the UDA who did not support the new political developments as well as those who had never been enthusiastic about a political path. These elements were strengthened by the election result. This disenchantment with the Good Friday Agreement also emerged within the UDP with a third of the party resigning their membership. By the time of the local elections in May 2001, the party was in disarray, though two UDP councillors were elected, (despite the fact that late registration led to party candidates being classed as independents).

The UDA began releasing statements announcing "grave concerns about the implementation of the Good Friday Agreement and its viability if unionist concerns are not satisfactorily addressed and public confidence restored".[75] Statements were also released in the name of the UFF, an action that in itself implied a willingness to embrace violent action. Whilst the pro-Agreement parties met at Weston Park in July 2001, a UFF statement announced withdrawal of support for the Good Friday Agreement. This was on the grounds that "we find it intolerable that Sinn Fein have gained concession after concession, yet there is still a growing erosion of our culture

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[73] 'Loyalism Part V: The Rocky Path to Politics' belfasttelegraph.co.uk 4th October 2002

[74] Davanna, T ' When Mo went to jail' Fortnight Dec 98/Jan 99, p14

[75] 'UDA 'Concerned' About Peace Accord' www.news.bbc.co.uk 24th January 2001

and heritage".[76]

The UDP was now in a difficult position because it was still committed to the Good Friday Agreement. Party spokesman John White admitted:

> The difficulty within the UDP at this moment in time is that we support the GFA and the UDA have said that they no longer support it so there is a conflict there and we can no longer say we fully represent that views of that organisation.[77]

On 12th October 2001 the Northern Ireland Secretary, John Reid, declared that the ceasefires of the UDA and the LVF were over.[78] Events seemed to be pushing the UDA further away from the political path and this culminated in the disbandment of the UDP on the 28th November 2001. The announcement by the party explained:

> During the past month's intensive discussions have taken place within the UDP regarding the future electoral and representative viability of the party. These discussions are now at an end and it has been decided that, from this date, the UDP should be dissolved and therefore cease to exist as a political party.[79]

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[76] "Loyalist Anger over Political Process" www.news.bbc.co.uk 10th July 2001

[77] Broadcasting House Radio 4 28th October 2001

[78] The issue of whether a ceasefire has or has not been broken seems to have been within the power of the British Government to ascertain. Guelke argues that "the main paramilitaries never intended the ceasefires to apply to their use of violence for secondary purposes" such as punishment beatings (Guelke, A 1999 Op. cit, p49). The UDA and the UVF had been involved in a murderous feud over the summer of 2001 and UDA members were deemed to play a large part in rioting taking place in Belfast. The final straw for the British Government as far as the UDA and LVF were concerned was the murder of the journalist Martin O'Hagan on 29th September 2001.

[79] "UDA moves to Disband its Political Offshot" www.independent.co.uk 29th October 2001.

## 5.5.2 The Feud

During the summer of 2000, tensions between the UVF and the UDA came to a head. The UVF suspected that the UDA had allied themselves with the breakaway LVF and that they were using this group as a cover to attack the UVF in Belfast. The extent of bad intent towards the UVF became apparent on the twentieth of August when, under the cover of a loyalist cultural day, UDA members provoked a confrontation and opened fire on the Rex Bar on the Shankill Road. This incident marked the beginning of an open feud beginning with tit-for-tat attacks on homes and party offices and culminating in four murders.

Cusack and McDonald state:

> The first feud in 1974 took place just two months after the loyalist victory of the UWC strike. Loyalism was searching around for a political way forward following the collapse of the power-sharing executive at Stormont. Since the earliest days of the Troubles there has been a tradition that when one loyalist group tries to reach out the hand of friendship to their enemies across the peaceline, the other becomes more sectarian and belligerent in a bid to vie for supremacy.[80]

The UDA's provocative behaviour kick-started the feud and foreshadowed the end of the political project pursued by the UDP. However, the UVF responded in kind and it was their attack on the Shankill UDP office that led the UDA to burn down the PUP office. The feud highlighted a fundamental problem for any party seeking to claim the epithet, new loyalist. The continuing existence of different loyalist paramilitary groupings and their separate political representation (and divergent political agendas) represents a serious obstacle for any party that claims to speak for the urban loyalist communities. Competition between the UDP and the PUP fragmented what was already a fragile electoral coalition of support. Competition between the UDA and UVF damaged the legitimacy of their political representatives as constitutional actors.

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[80] Cusack, J & McDonald, H UVF (Dublin) Poolbeg Press 2000, p399

## 5.5.3 Models of New Loyalism - Testing the UDP

The UDP's failure to secure seats in the assembly election started a chain of events that heralded its collapse. The optimism of Gary McMichael that his party would "grow from strength to strength" proved to be unfounded. As the purpose of this thesis is to establish what is new and different about the concept of new loyalism, the models of new loyalism constructed in accordance with the methodology governing this work need to be applied to the UDP. This application demonstrates that the agenda of the UDP was subject to internal tensions that prevented the party from contributing to normalised Northern Irish politics.

From the manifesto and statements of the UDP two things are apparent. Firstly, the emphasis on an exclusivist identity remained. The UDA publication, The *New Ulster Defender* supported the role of the UDP in the peace process. Articles within the journal rested on the idea of Ulster as a nation and the idea of independence was still given credence. One article in favour of negotiated independence proclaimed that:

The simple truth is that there are two nations on this island - Ulster and Eire.[81]

The nation of Ulster was not characterised in evangelical term, but Protestantism was still an implicit badge of membership due to the ethnic blood connection drawn with the Scottish planters through prehistoric kinship. There was a noticeable tension between the civic and the ethnic in the depiction of Ulster as a nation.

Secondly UDP manifestos did not seem to have moved on from a populist style of politics and pronouncements from the party seemed to express a degree of anxiety about nationalists and about the institutions of British government. A motion at the 1997 conference, when the UDP was riding high as a negotiation team, stated that "this party believes that the Northern Ireland office and the Northern Ireland Housing Executive have a hidden agenda of systematically moving Protestants out of the Greater

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[81] 'Self-Determination - an Ulster Nationalist Viewpoint' <u>New Ulster Defender</u> Vol 1, No 9 March 1994

Belfast Area."[82] The forces ranged against loyalism remained nationalists and a two-faced British government and the UDP concentrated on negative responses.

It was this perception of loyalists being driven out of North Belfast and housing estates as the venue for the ongoing battle against the insatiable demands of nationalists that, in part, prompted a resurgence in UDA violence. Statements were issued in the summer of 2000 warning that the ceasefire would end if Catholics didn't stop forcing Protestants out of their home.[83] Racioppi and O'Sullivan See argue that the UDA paper, the *New Ulster Defender* "emphasized the suffering of Protestants during the 'Troubles' and in the 1990s argued that Protestants became victims of ethnic cleansing. One article went so far to compare to the Irish Roman Catholic Church to the Croatian Ustashi".[84] As will be shown in the following chapter, this discourse of ethnic cleansing stunts the potential of a new loyalist politics because it links social and economic issues to the constitutional issues that they are meant to supersede. That the UDP were accepting of this idea suggests their populist political agenda had not resolved the tensions that have allowed socialist and sectarian values to co-exist within loyalist political action.

The UDA had always been a larger and more amorphous organisation compared to the UVF. The UVF actually became more centralised and urban as the peace process developed. Dissident members based mainly in the Mid-Ulster area broke away in 1996 and formed the Loyalist Volunteer Force. As the anti-politics elements within the UDA gained prominence the UDP was left in a vulnerable position. In the absence of a strong electoral mandate the UDP's legitimacy was based on brokering the ceasefire. When the ceasefire ended that legitimacy was damaged and, having failed to increase their share of the vote in the meantime, the UDP did not seem to have a constituency to represent and could not stand alone from the UDA.

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[82] Motion proposed by Thomas English, North Belfast <u>UDP Conference 1997</u>

[83] Cusack, J and McDonald, H Op cit. 2000. The authors note that all of the twenty-one people forced out of their homes in North Belfast in July 2000 were Catholics.

[84] Racioppi, L and O'Sullivan See, K: 'This We will maintain': gender, ethno-nationalism and the politics of unionism in NI' <u>Nations and Nationalism</u> Vol 7 No.1 p102-103

Crucially though the UDP had not developed a manifesto that differed radically from other political movements within the UDA. Populism rather than socialism governed the agenda of the party and the emphasis on an Ulster identity remained which tended towards an exclusivist idea of who 'the people' were. It could seem that the UDP were the victims of unfavourable circumstances but in fact the party had not developed the confidence and sophistication required to withstand this turbulence. For the larger UDA grouping the only role that remained open was representing the people of Ulster through extra-constitutional action.

The next chapter will explore loyalist perceptions of the effects of the Good Friday Agreement in Northern Ireland in depth. What has become apparent is that sectarian tension has been rising, especially in interface areas. Shirlow says of residents in these areas:

> The whole peace process is basically a folly for these people. There have been benefits in the suburbs and rural areas - better jobs, the possibility of higher incomes, greater stability - but in other areas conflict is still being reproduced in the same way as for the last thirty years. If people can't even move within the city [Belfast] and accept work where they wish, where is the peace dividend?[85]

Shirlow argues that both communities see themselves as victims and refuse to acknowledge the suffering of the other side, which exacerbates division.

For the UDP to sell the Good Friday Agreement to this constituency would be a difficult task by any stretch of the imagination. The alternative could have been to become an anti-Agreement party but this position has been covered by the DUP, who have enjoyed two distinct advantages over the UDP. Firstly, the DUP have no paramilitary connections and are far more respectable as an electoral option. Secondly, the DUP's defence of Ulster does not connect with ideas of independence, making their agenda far more reassuring to anxious loyalists. With the DUP's electoral strength growing, there was never really a space for the UDP to be reconfigured as an anti-Agreement constitutional force and the party ended up being jettisoned, with

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[85] 'Belfast more divided in 'peace' than strife' thetimes.co.uk 4th October 2002

McMichael withdrawing from public life.


## 5.6 After the UDP


Although the government had declared their ceasefire was over, UDA members presented themselves as still maintaining that ceasefire. They attempted to exploit tension in interface areas in order to present themselves as a necessary form of protection against republican harassment, but also as an unofficial police force, preventing loyalist reprisals. In January 2002 the North Belfast brigade issued statements to the effect that they had launched patrols to prevent loyalists attacking Catholics and promised to punish those that did. One statement said

> We are without doubt on the edge of an abyss. The fuse is getting shorter, and we
> are now faced with the reality of having to break our ceasefire in order that we can
> defend our community with the same means openly used by Sinn Fein/IRA to
> attack loyalists over recent months.[86]


Meanwhile, under the cover name of the Red Hand Defenders the UDA murdered a Catholic postman in North Belfast called Daniel McColgan on 12th January 2002. In the following week the RHD issued threats against Catholic postal workers and teachers. McColgan's murder caused outcry and was the cause of a lunchtime stoppage on 18th January, organised by the trade union movement. The UDA acknowledged this adverse reaction by telling its alter ego to stand down and stated that "we condemn unreservedly the threat to school teachers and post office workers, along with any other members of their profession".[87] Instead a brand new group, the Loyalist Reaction Force, emerged to issue more death threats, this time against Sinn Fein members such as Alex Maskey, Eoin O'Broin and Sean Kelly.[88]

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[86] 'We are on the edge of abyss, say UDA' www.times.co.uk 5th January 2002

[87] 'Loyalist terror group lifts threat' The Guardian 17th January 2002. The LVF also used the name Red Hand Defenders as a cover and were, by all accounts, irritated by the UDA 'disbandment' of the imaginary group.

[88] 'UDA accused of issuing death threats' www.utvinternet.news 25th January 2002

It was against this background that the formation of the Ulster Political Research Group (UPRG) came to prominence. Containing former UDP members and represented publicly by John White the group was presented as a think-tank that the *Belfast Telegraph* noted "intended to explore methods of addressing the political alienation of loyalist communities".[89] This alienation was seen in part to stem from the Good Friday Agreement:

> Support can only be given when changes are made to the Agreement. The UPRG sets as one of its main objectives the review of the Agreement.[90]

UPRG members also worked with the Loyalist Commission, a loose grouping of paramilitaries, community workers and church ministers. The Commission's primary task had been to ease tensions between the UDA and UVF after the last feud. However, the group had been instrumental in encouraging loyalists residents to negotiate during the Holy Cross protests and have since promoted themselves as spokesmen for Protestant working class communities.[91]

The British and Irish governments have shown willingness to talk with both the Loyalist Commission and the UPRG as part of a recognition, according to an Northern Ireland Office spokesman, that "dialogue with the political leadership of loyalism is a vital part of the peace process. Like many other groups, the UPRG has a contribution to make".[92]

Neither of these groups can be said to fit under the label of new loyalist. They both have a limited agenda and their actions are mainly based on a straightforward reaction to events at grassroots level rather than planning and presenting a cohesive political

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[89] 'Welcome for loyalist 'think-tank'' belfasttelegraph.co.uk 14th January 2002

[90] 'Loyalist group urges review of agreement' www.thetimes.co.uk 26th January 2002

[91] 'Loyalist think-tank working at peace' Sunday Tribune 20th January 2002

[92] 'The UDA dog day afternoon' belfasttelegraph.co.uk 22nd February 2003. See also 'Reid holds talks with loyalist paramilitaries' utvinternet.com/news 5th March 2002 and 'Government meets loyalist group' news.bbc.co.uk 14th August 2002

programme.[93]    The idea that the UPRG could in any way be a substitute for the UDP has been disproved by events subsequent to the release of the Johnny 'Mad Dog' Adair.

When Adair was released on 15th May 2002, John White announced "he wants to rekindle his relationship with his family before assessing his role as an influential figure within loyalism" and hinted at a revival of the UDP.[94] Given that Adair had been pivotal in the UDA/UVF feud, it would not be unfair to see his influence on loyalism as malign. Adair now seemed to see his main role as supreme commander of the UDA and he provoked a power struggle within the organisation, creating a murderous internal feud and involved the LVF. Adair and White were expelled from the Inner Council of the UDA in September 2002 and Adair was returned to jail on 10th January 2003.  By the following month White had fled Northern Ireland along with other Adair supporters to escape the wrath of other senior UDA members.[95]

After these events the UDA announced a twelve-month ceasefire, which they christened "the John Gregg initiative".[96] However, the likelihood of the UDA producing a new commitment to a political direction is small.  The events surrounding the release and incarceration of 'Mad Dog' have revealed that the UDA is internally divided and beset by power struggles. Moloney has argued that the UDA's division means it is too weak to wreck the Agreement

> Some elements are more hostile to the Good Friday Agreement than others while some districts are more or less totally absorbed in criminal activities such as drug peddling.[97]

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[93] UPRG member and Lisburn Councillor, Frank McCoubry did stand as an independent at the 2003 Assembly election, but he only polled 469 votes.

[94] 'Released Adair will be a force for good' belfasttelegraph.co.uk 15th May 2002.  Adair had been returned to prison after the feud between the UVF and the UDA.

[95] 'Adair supporters flee homes' news.bbc.co.uk 5th February 2003

[96] 'The loyalist call for peace rings hollow' guardian.co.uk 26th February 2003. John "Grug" Gregg had been pivotal in getting Adair ostracized by the UDA and his murder on 1st February was attributed to Adair supporters.  He seems an unlikely patron of a posthumous peace initiative, having been linked to the murder of Daniel McColgan.

[97] 'Secret loyalist think-tank may curb violence' Sunday Tribune 20th January 2002

However, in its current state, the UDA seems unlikely to provide constructive constitutional solutions or to raise its involvement in local communities to a level where it is addressing the causes of tension rather than provoking hostility. In addition the media focus on Adair has once again underlined the popular image of the UDA as thugs and gangsters, something that has always hampered claims to legitimacy.

## 5.7 Conclusions

The ineffectiveness of protests after the Anglo-Irish Agreement presented loyalist paramilitaries with another opportunity to pursue a political role. The UVF and UDA both built on initiatives undertaken in the 1970s. The UDA published proposals for a new civic settlement within Ulster, although they played down ideas of independence. The UVF was more committed to a British identity and to socialist politics as a means of promoting change and peace.

The peace process of the 1990s drew in paramilitaries from both sides. The CLMC ceasefire conferred a new legitimacy on politicians connected to the UVF and UDA and they presented themselves as a distinct alternative to the 'No' unionism exemplified by the DUP. However, after failing to get elected to the new Northern Ireland Assembly, the UDP began to disintegrate. What became apparent was that the UDA's support for the Agreement was contingent on electoral success and when this was not forthcoming the UDP was overwhelmed by those opposed to the Agreement and those who did not see any value in engaging in constitutional politics. A new cadre had risen to the top of the UDA in the early nineties and their ferocious campaign against republicans and the wider nationalist community had rattled the IRA. Compared to this success, the benefits of participation in the peace process seemed pretty feeble.

Even without this uncertainty about the peace process within the wider UDA, the agenda of the UDP lacked the sophistication that would have seen it measured successfully against a positive model of new loyalism. The UDP's populist manifesto

and Ulster identity politics did not represent a significant development from previous political developments within the UDA and, as members drifted away from support for the Agreement, they offered no viable alternative within loyalism to the resurgent DUP.

The fate of the UDP must be borne in mind during the next chapter, which focuses on the PUP. The public emergence of division between politicians and paramilitaries within the UDA grouping should be compared to the growing anxiety about the Agreement within the UVF. The areas where the PUP have carved out distinctiveness from the DUP also need to be considered, as the factors that marked the UDP out from Paisley's party, such as connection to paramilitaries and suggestions of independence, were not vote winners. In addition the way the PUP has reacted to loyalist disenchantment with the Good Friday Agreement is an issue to be addressed when considering the party's continued confidence in the political process.

# SIX - NEW LOYALISM AND THE PROGRESSIVE UNIONIST PARTY

## 6.1 Introduction

The collapse of the Ulster Democratic Party can be attributed in part to their failure to carve out a distinct brand of loyalism from the DUP. Their unique attribute was the championing of a distinctive Ulster identity, which has never been a successful electoral strategy because of its association with secession. Lack of success in the Assembly elections of 1999 hastened their demise, especially given the demonstrable ambivalence within the UDA regarding the Good Friday Agreement. This chapter is concerned with examining the agenda and actions of the Progressive Unionist Party in relationship to the models of new loyalism that have been outlined in the previous chapters.

The Democratic Unionist Party seems to have benefited from being stridently opposed to the Good Friday Agreement. Shortly before the suspension of the Northern Ireland Assembly Ian Paisley took the opportunity to tell the Assembly that his prophesies of disaster were being fulfilled:

> What we said would happen has happened. We said that the IRA would continue to plan and carry out its acts of terror at will. Since the Belfast Agreement was signed, the IRA has updated its weapons and bombing techniques in Colombia. It has rearmed from Russia and Florida. It has targeted leading political, judicial, security, forensic and loyalist figures, using updated intelligence files. The Police have identified the IRA as the only major line of enquiry into the break-in at Special Branch Headquarters at Castlereagh.[1]

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[1] Hansard 8th October 2002

Increasing electoral support for the DUP and poll data suggesting unionist enthusiasm for the Agreement is on the wane[2] has been taken in media and government circles as indicators of deep-seated unionist alienation from the peace process. In November 2001 the then Northern Ireland Secretary, John Reid, stated that he did not want Northern Ireland to become a 'cold house' for unionists. He described unionists as a community:

which feels its traditions, culture and way of life are under threat from an alliance between the large and vibrant Catholic minority within its boundaries, its larger neighbour to the south, and a spineless, ungrateful or even perfidious parent across the Irish Sea. A community which feels that some elements of nationalism are intent on humiliating it under the legitimate guise of achieving parity of esteem.[3]

This sense of despair is perceived to be especially intense amongst unionists at the bottom of the socio-economic scale. Richard Haas, the United States Envoy to Northern Ireland, surveyed protests at the Holy Cross School in North Belfast and stated:

The rage which spilled out in this inexcusable behaviour was rooted in economic distress, unease about demographic changes, lack of proper housing, and - most importantly - a fear that the new society being built in Northern Ireland offers little place for those doing the protesting.[4]

It is important to assess this prevailing view in relation to the agenda of the PUP for a number of reasons. Firstly party documents depict the PUP as an integral part of a

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[2] For example a poll conducted for the BBC programme *Hearts and Minds* after the suspension of the assembly on 14th October 2002 found that support for the Agreement had slipped from seventy per-cent at the time of the referendum to fifty-six per-cent. Only a third of unionists said they would vote for the agreement again, as compared to eight out of ten nationalists. 'Slump in Support for Agreement' news.bbc.co.uk 17th October 2002. This is a similar figure to the 2002 *Northern Ireland Life and Times Survey* which showed only thirty-five per-cent of Protestants would vote for the Agreement again. www.ark.ac.uk/nilt

[3] Address to Institute of Irish Studies, University of Liverpool 21st November 2001

[4] Quoted from 'The Protestant Factor' www.guardian.co.uk 12th January 2002

Protestant working class community in Northern Ireland, and not just a political party offering political representation to this constituency.

> When we want to know what the people want **we ask ourselves**. When we want to know the people's priorities **we just look at our own hearts**. When we want to know of hardship **we just look at our own plight**. Because whatever adversity faces us too since we live and move and have our being in the working class districts of Northern Ireland.[5]

The PUP seek to augment electoral support with the legitimacy that stems from being seen as an essential component of a community that cannot be fully understood from outside. Understanding the Progressive Unionists' depiction of this community and its needs is therefore crucial to examining their commitment to establishing normality in Northern Ireland through policies of redistributive social justice.

It is also important because the PUP leadership maintained support for the Good Friday Agreement after the UDP had moved to a 'no' position. How the PUP reconciles this with the increasing electoral threat from the DUP is an important indicator of the depth of PUP confidence in the peace process and the new institutional arrangements.

Finally it is important because the PUP belief that a normalised social democratic political process can be established is connected in part to a stated willingness to create a class cleavage across the two communities, where the promotion of common socio-economic interest could allow politics in Northern Ireland to develop beyond constitutional concerns. According to the party leader, David Ervine:

> The reality is that if you want sectarianism to go away you've got to replace it with something and the only way you're going to replace it with something in a society as divided as ours is create common purpose and alliances.[6]

Therefore this chapter will provide an analysis of the new loyalist agenda of the PUP in

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[5] Breaking the Mould PUP 1998 Bold typeface in the original document.

[6] 'The Fortnight Interview: Rudie Goldsmith talks to David Ervine' Fortnight January 2004, p16

relationship to their proclaimed constituency, the Protestant working class. This will involve examining statistical data on deprivation in Northern Ireland. Much of the data focuses on Belfast. Although the PUP have stood for elections outside Belfast, in Derry City and North Down for example, it is in Belfast where they have been successful. Hugh Smyth is a Councillor for Shankill Ward in West Belfast. Billy Hutchinson was elected as an MLA in North Belfast in 1999. He lost that seat in 2003 but remains a member of Belfast City Council. David Ervine is also a councillor and retained his MLA seat in East Belfast in the 2003 Assembly election. Tommy Sandford's seat on Castlereagh Borough Council is contained within the constituency of East Belfast. Therefore the focus of this data aids the development of a profile of the areas that have given a degree of support to the PUP.

The activities of the PUP will be examined at different levels of government allowing for an examination of their participation at the macro-level of the Assembly and of their involvement in grassroots politics. This will facilitate a discussion of PUP attitudes to the concept of citizenship and the impact of the Agreement on the agenda of the party.

## 6.2 Exclusion and Inequality

As outlined in the introduction, there is a widespread perception that the despair and alienation exhibited within contemporary unionism is most acutely expressed by those at the lower end of the socio-economic scale. *Daily Telegraph* editorials do not, as a rule, lament the decline of the labour movement. However an opinion piece entitled *Belfast Ghettos* did just this:

> Consider for a moment the shrinking world of the urban Protestants over the past thirty years. All the institutions which upheld respectable working class life have been destroyed. The manufacturing industry has gone - and with it much of the trade union movement. The Orange Order has been demonised as a sort of a Ku Klux Klan. The RUC and the UDR were consigned to the scrap heap of history. Britishness has been downgraded from the official culture to one of two equal sectarian traditions. And BBC Northern Ireland is scarcely friendly to pro-British narratives. There's even talk about replacing the Northern Irish

football team with an all-Ireland side.[7]

Writing for the *Irish Times* Mary Holland argues that disillusion with the Good Friday Agreement is "symptomatic of a much deeper sense of exclusion and fears about the community's long term future" which will have to be addressed through educational achievement and increased investment to turn working class Protestants away from voting for Paisley and "into the pro-agreement tent".[8]

There is a problematic element to this media discussion. As was discussed earlier in this thesis, the insecure worldview expressed by loyalists should not be treated as a disease of poverty that can be cured by social mobility. As well as surveying evidence of deprivation in Protestant working class areas, the significance of exclusion and inequality in relationship to constitutional politics needs to be considered.

6.2.1 Patterns of post-industrial development

Changes in the nature of central government funding, through the Barnett formula, mean that post-Agreement Northern Ireland is facing a relative decrease in public subsidy. The formula was devised in the 1970s, but there has been a move towards stricter application of the formula since the creation of devolved government within Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland. The formula is based on population rather than need, and stricter application has been undertaken to hasten convergence towards equal per capita spending in the UK. A report commissioned for the Northern Ireland Assembly notes that "potential high public service demands could cause particular concern, especially if combined with low disposable incomes as is the case in the devolved countries, particularly in Northern Ireland which is the lowest".[9] The report depicts convergence as a measure that will promote less rapid rise in expenditure

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[7] 'Belfast Ghettos' www.opinion.telegraph.co.uk 12th January 2002

[8] 'Stormont Deal Won't Solve Problems of North Belfast' www.ireland.com/newspaper 8th November 2001

[9] 'A background paper on the Barnett formula' Northern Ireland Assembly Research Paper 12/01 2001, point 76

outside England, rather than an actual decline in funding for the devolved regions. However, the report notes that this could have implications for the new Scottish Parliament and Welsh and Northern Irish Assemblies, as they could be blamed for slower provision of service improvement in areas such as health.

Central government subsidy is not the only means by which post-Agreement Northern Ireland could sustain itself. Shirlow and Shuttleworth argue that one of the key elements in policy around the Good Friday Agreement is the promotion of economic reconstruction to supersede "the use of public expenditure to compensate for Northern Ireland's economic decline".[10] There is an implicit assumption that there will be an economic peace dividend, and that regeneration will ease social exclusion and in turn curb violence. However, Shirlow and Shuttleworth refute this:

> The conventional notion that growths in jobs and wealth creation reduce both social marginalisation and poverty is somewhat erroneous given the pattern of accumulation, investment and social exclusion over the past two decades.[11]

They depict economic regeneration as dependent on an increased service sector, which promotes job and wealth creation without easing inequality. Cebulla and Smyth also see economic development in Northern Ireland as widening the gap between different types of employment and present a study of patterns of employment in Belfast to support this claim:

> The expansion of the private and the public service sectors in Belfast has increased the number and proportion of professional jobs in the city while the growth in consumer services had the opposite effect of expanding the lower occupational strata, thus leading to the *polarisation* of employment in the city.[12]

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[10] Shirlow, P and Shuttleworth, I 'Who is going to Toss the Burgers? Social Class and the Reconstruction of the Northern Irish Economy' Capital and Class No.69 1999 p28

[11] Shirlow, P and Shuttleworth, I 1999 Op. cit, p39

[12] Cebulla, A and Smyth, J 'Disadvantage and New Prosperity in Restructured Belfast' Capital and Class No.60 1996, p39-40

This polarisation in employment is mirrored in residential polarisation. Cebulla and Smyth's study shows affluent Protestants moving into the suburbs and their Catholic counterparts moving into South Belfast.

The increasing feminisation of the workforce stems from the decline of the unionised industrial sector and the growth of the service sector, which offers flexible part-time work that can be based around childcare responsibilities. Coulter argues that:

> The poor rates of pay invariably associated with forms of employment classified as essentially 'female' has ensured that growing economic activity has often not afforded women financial autonomy.[13]

Thus investment and job creation do not automatically increase the financial well being of the poorer workers in Northern Ireland's economy. By June 2001 unemployment in Northern Ireland had hit a 25 year low[14] but economic development has promoted polarisation that is evident not just in disparity of wealth and job security but in terms of residential separation. In the Belfast area the migration to the south of the city or to the suburbs has intensified the decline of other areas of the city. Belfast contains eight out of the ten worst wards in Northern Ireland in terms of quality of life.[15]

The polarisation between different socio-economic strata is accentuated by the education system. Primary school children sit a transfer test, commonly known as the eleven-plus, that determines whether they receive a grammar school or secondary modern education. The Department of Education for Northern Ireland is aware of the

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[13] Coulter, C Contemporary Northern Irish Society. An Introduction (London) Pluto 1999, p117

[14] West Belfast and Greater Shankill Task Force Report February 2002

[15] The wards are Crumlin, Woodvale and New Lodge in the constituency of North Belfast; Falls, Whiterock and Shankill in West Belfast; and The Mount and Ballymacarret in East Belfast. The measurement used is the Noble Index of Deprivation which considers income, employment, health, education, access to services, housing and the social environment. HAZ Database: A profile of North and West Belfast North and West Belfast Health Action Zone Report July 2002 The HAZ (Health Action Zone) project was an initiative launched by Frank Dobson when he became Health Minister. Deprived areas were declared Health Action Zones. Statutory and voluntary agencies could bid for money to be used in innovative projects aimed at improving the health of the population in these areas. The initiative was not renewed by Alan Milburn when he took over at the Department of Health

effects of socio-economic status on the pass-rate for the test:

> There is a marked relationship between social disadvantage and achievement in the Transfer Test. As the proportion of pupils entitled to free school meals increases, the proportion of pupils achieving grade A decreases. Of those who sat the test, pupils at schools in the lowest free school meal band were more than two and a half times as likely to achieve a grade A as those at schools in the highest free school meal band. Moreover, in general, as the proportion of pupils of pupils entitled to free schools rose, so too did the proportion of pupils not sitting the test.[16]

Coulter notes that "socio-economic origins, therefore, exercise an important influence upon the matter in which the Northern Irish educational system is accessed and experienced"[17]. Residential segregation in terms of social class is therefore largely complemented by educational segregation.

These urban working class areas have also experienced a disproportionate amount of violence during the years of conflict, and for inner city Belfast, the signing of the Agreement has not produced a dividend in terms of reduced violent incidents. For example, between July 2001 and March 2002, one-hundred-and-thirty-six houses in Belfast were vacated due to social unrest. All but five of these were in North Belfast.[18]

The most cursory examination of Northern Irish society reveals poverty and inequality. However, it the impact of these indicators on loyalist political action and confidence that needs to be explored. The violence in these areas is not visited upon them from outside; it is the product of conflict between nationalist and loyalist communities, and conflict within those communities. The relative deprivation between the communities and the significance of any disparity therefore needs to be examined.

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[16] DENI Report - Transfer Procedure Test Results 2001/2002 23rd May 2002
www.deni.gov.uk/facts_figures

[17] Coulter (1999) Op. cit, p73

[18] Report of the Project Team North Belfast Community Action Project May 2002.

## 6.2.2 Catholic and Protestant Inequality

Borooah et al point out that

> there is much greater inequality *within* the Catholic and Protestant communities than there is between them and this statement holds true even for Catholic and Protestants belonging to specific categories. Therefore if one was serious about "doing something" for inequality in Northern Ireland then one should start by attempting to narrow income differences between the "rich" and "poor" (irrespective of religion).[19]

They argue that there has been an assumption of a gap in wealth between the two communities that directly correlates to the differences in the rate of unemployment and that this has distorted debates on inequality and poverty.

There has been a persistent difference in rates of unemployment in the two communities with Catholic men being at least twice as likely to be unemployed as Protestant men.[20] Teague states that that there has been a general acceptance since the 1970s of this disparity between the two communities. Along with the unemployment differential, Catholic males are over-represented in semi-skilled and unskilled jobs. However, Teague says that the debate over why this is the case often ignores the indirect forces that shape outcomes.[21]

Cebulla and Smyth state that the Northern Ireland's economy during the Stormont era was marked by a clientelist system and that Catholics were largely excluded from

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[19] Borooah, V Mckee, P Heaton, N Collins, G 'Catholic-Protestant Income Differences in Northern Ireland' Review of Income and Wealth Vol. 41, No.1 Mar 1995, p55

[20] The Labour Force Survey Religion Report 2001 National Statistics (2003) puts the unemployment differential between Catholics and Protestants at 2.1 for males and 1.6 for females

[21] Teague, P 'Catholics and Protestants in the Northern Ireland Labour Market. Why Does One Group Perform Better than the Other?' Economy and Society Vol. 26 No.4 November 1997 pp560-578

trades because of "residence, family tradition and local informal networks".[22] However, they believe that deliberate attempts to stimulate business development in nationalist areas such as West Belfast during the conflict were doomed to be unsuccessful due to the economic conditions of global recession. They cite the De Lorean plant, which produced fabulously expensive luxury cars for a virtually non-existent market, as a particularly ill-thought out plan. Teague agrees that reducing the unemployment differential is difficult because the Northern Irish economy can only develop so much. He estimates that to increase Catholic male employment by the time of the 2011 census without damaging Protestant male employment thirty-nine thousand new jobs would need to be created.[23]

Another factor to be taken into consideration is what Coulter refers to as "the geography of fear".[24] Teague points out that "Segregation in employment is only reflecting the growing residential segregation of the two communities".[25] He argues that many firms recruit locally and informally, which results in extended internal labour markets. Booroah et al see these networks are made more impervious to entry from outside by a marked reluctance to seek jobs outside one's own informal labour market. They point out that

> Northern Ireland should not be seen as an area over which workers and job-seekers regardless of religion, move freely but rather as a constellation of geographically segmented labour markets between which mobility is extremely limited.[26]

Coulter states that technical and white-collar workers feel freer to move across geographical boundaries in search of work. He says "the nature of territorial politics and the fear generated by thirty years of conflict impacts, in terms of locating places to

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[22] Cebulla and Smyth 1996 Op. cit. p46

[23] Teague, P 1997 Op. cit

[24] Coulter, C 'The Absence of Class Politics in Northern Ireland' Capital and Class 69 1999, p41

[25] Teague, P 1997 Op. cit, p563

[26] Borooah, V et al 1995 Op cit, p55

work, which are perceived as safe, most upon the deprived and socially excluded".[27] Working class areas are marked out through murals and symbols which as Hughes and Donnelly point out enhance a sense of isolation from the other community:

> Segregation has been accompanied by an increase in "chill factors", referring to demarcation of sectarian boundaries with graffiti, flags, kerb painting and other manifestations of cultural/political identity and paramilitary association.[28]

The violence of the conflict has encouraged residential segregation, which has in turn ensured that informal networks of recruitment remain localised. Segregated housing plays a role in discouraging many people to apply for all possible available jobs due to an unwillingness to go into the "other" area, a sentiment felt most intensely in working class areas where streets and communities are clearly demarcated and there is still a high incidence of sectarian violence. In addition to this segmentation of the labour market, the underperformance of the Northern Irish economy means that easing the unemployment differential through simple job creation is not a viable option.

These social and economic developments have two important implications for the search for links between deprivation and unionist alienation, which will be discussed below. The first is the sense of deterioration of position felt by many working class Protestants and the second is the marked importance of defending one's territory against the "other side".

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[27] Coulter, C 1999 Op. cit, p41

[28] Hughes, J and Donnelly, C 'Ten years of social attitudes to community relations in Northern Ireland' from Gray, AM Lloyd, K Devine, P Robinson, G Keenan, D (Eds) Social Attitudes in Northern Ireland. The Eighth Report (London) Pluto Press 1999, p40

## 6.2.3 Deprivation and Decline

McAuley argues that sectarianism is the main value which governs Protestant working class relationships but:

> for many loyalists, however, their experience also needs to be seen in the context of dramatic economic decline, political disarticulation and ideological disintegration.[29]

The existence of a differential in unemployment rates does not mean that Protestant workers as a group are enjoying significantly higher levels of affluence and job security. Teague points out that during 1971 and 1991 the absolute number of jobs held by Catholic males declined by four per-cent but for Protestant males the decline was fourteen per-cent.[30] Firms such as Harland and Wolff in Belfast are no longer the major employers they once were. As manufacturing in Northern Ireland went into severe decline in the 1970s the gap was filled to some extent by the burgeoning security forces. However, this is another sector seeing marked change. Police reform has rested in part on the creation of a new police force that is meant to be more reflective of the community it serves. The fifty-fifty recruitment drive means that applications are split between Protestants as a group and nationalists and other communities. This further promotes a sense of estrangement from policing in Northern Ireland. As previously noted disaffection has been evident within the Protestant community since the Anglo-Irish Agreement.

An area where the Catholic working class is outperforming their Protestant counterparts is education. As previously stated DENI's own research shows that socio-economic status affects performance in the Transfer Test. Overall a lower proportion of Catholic managed pupils achieved a grade A in the academic year 2001/2002. According to the DENI this "reflects the higher proportion of pupils

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[29] McAuley, JW 'A process of surrender? Loyalist perceptions of a settlement' from Anderson, J & Goodman, J Dis/Agreeing Ireland: Context, Obstacles, Hopes (London) Pluto 1999, p204

[30] Teague, P 1997 Op. cit.

entitled to free school meals in Catholic schools".[31] However the figures also show that "in contrast to the overall position, within each free school meal band a greater proportion of pupils at schools under Catholic management achieved a grade A than at schools under Other management".[32] In addition to this Catholic managed pupils are more likely than those at Other managed schools to go onto higher education. In the academic year 2000/2001 nearly twice as many Catholic secondary pupils went on to higher education than those in Other managed schools.[33]

As was noted in the introduction to this thesis, many academic assessments of the Stormont era of direct rule describe dominant politicians within the Unionist Party fostering a populist ethos.[34] This style of politics eased tensions within unionism because it encouraged Protestant working class voters to feel that their loyalty was recognised and rewarded. Unionist politicians are no longer in a position to orchestrate a similar partnership and unionist political representation has become increasingly fragmented.

As noted by Nelson and Todd the supremacism and desire for domination evident within loyalism is the obverse of anxiety over the power of Irish nationalism to marginalize and submerge loyalist culture.[35] Coulter detects a strong belief in Protestant working class communities that fair employment measures are a simple means of taking jobs held by hard working Protestants.[36] The relative deterioration of economic well- being has occurred over the same period that the institutions and ethos

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[31] DENI Transfer Procedure Test Results 2001/2002 23rd May 2002, www.deni.gov.uk/facts_figures

[32] DENI 2002 Op. cit.

[33] The figures are 13.1% and 6.9% respectively DENI Qualifications and Destinations of Northern Ireland School Leaves 2000/2001 June 25th 2002 www.deni.gov.uk/facts_figures

[34] See for example   Bew, P Gibbon, P and Patterson, H The State in Northern Ireland 1921-1972: Political Forces and Social Classes (Manchester) Manchester University Press 1979, Northern Ireland 1921-1996: Political Forces and Social Classes (London) Serif 1996 and McAuley, S and McCormack, C 'The Protestant working class and the state in Northern Ireland since 1930: a problematic relationship' from Hutton, S and Stewart, P Ireland's Histories: Aspects of State, Society and Ideology (London) Routledge 1991 p122

[35] Todd, J 'Two traditions in Unionist political culture' Irish Political Studies Vol. 2 1987 pp1-26 Nelson, S Ulster's Uncertain Defenders (Belfast) Appletree Press 1984

[36] Coulter, C 1994 Op. cit.

of the Stormont era have been dismantled. Therefore it seems reasonable to assert that working class loyalists would make connections between the two. For example, support for the RUC became problematic when they were seen as quelling protest against the Anglo-Irish Agreement. Now the new PSNI is problematic for another reason, in that it is less open as a source of employment.

Political losses have occurred during the same period as economic losses reinforcing a sense of precariousness. Educational underachievement marginalizes loyalists, especially within the polarised and segmented job market of Northern Ireland. This insecurity is reinforced within Belfast by the sense that physical territory is being lost as well.

## 6.2.4 The Importance of Territory

Coulter asserts that for residents of working class areas a knowledge of 'sectarian' geography, that is the ethno-religious make up of different neighbourhoods, is necessary for simple self-preservation. He argues that:

> The spatial distinctions that define contemporary Northern Irish society are particularly pronounced within working class districts. The experience of living within a divided society frequently impacts dramatically upon the disposition and conduct of the working classes.[37]

There is a strong sense within working class areas of territoriality, that different districts belong to the loyalist or nationalist grouping living there and that these areas should not be breached by the other side. Within Belfast during the last few years there has been a notable decline in areas with a majority of Protestant residents. For example, between 1991 and 1999 the population of Shankill ward declined by just under five per-cent and the population of Glencairn by just under nine per-cent.[38] Wards with nationalist populations around these areas have been increasing in population density

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[37] Coulter, C 1999 Op. cit. p40

[38] North and West Belfast HAZ 2002 Op. cit.

and, as noted earlier in this thesis, the city itself now has a majority Catholic population.

According to Jarman:

> With a young and growing Catholic community and an aging and declining Protestant community the shift in territorial identity is seen as unidirectional...it is thus increasingly important to defend the boundaries of one's area and ensure that the land does not pass into the hands of the 'other'.[39]

This view is echoed by the North Belfast Community Project Team. Their report also states:

> This aspect of territoriality is a highly emotive subject in North Belfast and it has damaged already fragile relations between the two communities in the area. Protestants/unionists feel strongly that there is a desire on the part of Catholics/ nationalists to move the Protestant working class out of the city. They see the Housing Executive as being compliant with this strategy. In particular, violence directed towards the Protestant community is often interpreted as active attempt to encourage this community to either move out or further back to provide space on which to house the 'other community'. The Catholic community on the other hand feel that their need for housing is not being taken seriously and they are trapped behind 'walls of fear' even though there may be space available within Protestant areas.[40]

In fact the Northern Ireland Housing Executive (NIHE) is trying to avoid aggravating this tension by accommodating greater Catholic demand within their traditional areas. Their current strategy for North Belfast aims to meet need in the area by 2007 with more than four times the houses being built in Catholic areas than Protestant.[41] However, if these demographic trends continue these areas cannot be maintained and

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[39] Jarman, N Managing disorder: responses to interface violence in North Belfast from Hargie, O Dickson, D (Eds) Researching the Troubles: Social Science Perspectives on the Northern Ireland Conflict (Edinburgh) Mainstream Publishing 2003, p230

[40] North Belfast Community Action Project 2002 Op. cit, p36-37

[41] 'Walls of Hatred' The Guardian 21st November 2001 The projected figures are 1,450 and 350 homes respectively.

current strategies do not seem to have mollified Protestants in North Belfast who believe that they are being deliberately squeezed out by nationalists. A community worker and former UDA member, Eddie McClean told the *Guardian* that "Sinn Fein is shipping these people in because they want North Belfast to be nationalist, the same as West Belfast".[42] Given that it is the NIHE that controls housing transfers in public stock, it is unlikely that Sinn Fein could embark on such a deliberate strategy even if they wanted to. McClean's comments reveal a tacit acceptance that the republican enemy can easily manipulate the agencies of the state in order to get a step closer to pushing loyalists out of Northern Ireland altogether.

Shirlow's analysis of Ardoyne and Upper Ardoyne shows that Protestant Upper Ardoyne residents read the decline of their areas in terms of economic well-being, population and amenities "as a result of republican violence and erroneous policy making against the community".[43] He argues that local residents have developed a righteous attitude where they must hold on to "their" territory for the sake of it.

This sense of decline and of defences being overrun accords with a hypothesis that socio-economic patterns can echo fears about loss of constitutional control and cultural self-expression. Territoriality in housing also fits into a wider discourse of loss and betrayal due to the continuing conflict generated by Orange Order parades. Jarman sees that "there is no common understanding of the [parades] issue, no acceptance of the other's point of view, no desire to compromise and no willingness to give ground."[44] He argues that part of the reason that parades are so inflammatory is that they often breach perceived territorial boundaries. Events at Drumcree have stirred tensions in Belfast and elsewhere in part because it seemed to many loyalists unjust that nationalists would prevent their areas being entered for a certain period of time whilst seemingly bent on overwhelming loyalist areas permanently. Thus an issue like housing can fit into a larger tale of unionist loss.

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[42] 'Walls of Hatred' The Guardian 21st November 2001

[43] Shirlow, P 'Who fears to speak. Fear, mobility and ethno-sectarianism in the two 'Ardoynes''. Global Review of Ethno-Politics Vol.3 No.1 September 2003, p83

[44] Jarman, N 2003 Op. cit, p229

## 6.2.5 Making Connections

The above passages have suggested ways in which socio-economic factors can accord with constitutional uncertainty and political alienation. However, two qualifications need to be noted. The first is that the amelioration of inequality and deprivation would not necessarily infuse working class loyalists with faith in the peace process.

Murtagh's research into interface areas shows a high level of social deprivation. These areas have three times the unemployment than Northern Ireland as a whole and twice as many households on income support. Whilst forty-five per-cent of the Northern Irish population has an annual income of five thousand pounds or less. The proportion at interface areas is sixty-nine per-cent.[45] However, one cannot establish a continuum within unionism where those furthest away from deprivation and violence are uniformly confident about their ability to extract benefits from political engagement with nationalists and the British and Irish governments.

The second thing to note is that when it comes to seeking electoral support the DUP does not rely solely on the kind of rhetoric and politics that has placed it in the anti-Agreement camp. David Rose, the deputy leader of the PUP, criticises Paisley's constitutional stance but says that in the past "I voted for Paisley because his party actually did do behind the scenes work on the ground for ordinary people, which the Official and Ulster Unionists never do".[46] This is also an observation made by Billy Hutchinson:

> It was Mr. Paisley, to his credit, who pointed out the need to do something for the working class people. He was one of the first to raise the issue about the 'big house' unionists.[47]

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[45] Murtagh, B 'Territoriality, research and policy making in Northern Ireland' from Hargie, O and Dickson, D (eds) 2003 Op. cit, pp209-225

[46] Interview with David Rose, Deputy Leader, 17th September 2002

[47] 'Progressive Politics' Combat March 1999

As noted by McAuley and McCormack[48], the DUP has never been able to take support in areas like East Belfast for granted, they need to have something to offer in terms of non-constitutional issues.

McAuley argues that:

> The current period has witnessed a growing recognition from within key sections of loyalism that unionist politicians have largely absolved themselves of many social and economic responsibilities by giving primacy to the constitutional issues.[49]

When constitutional crises assert themselves unionists can overcome their differences and band together, as was shown in the immediate aftermath of the signing of the Anglo-Irish Agreement. However, this does not mean that sharing a sense of despondency over these matters encourages working class loyalists to overlook their socio-economic needs. Neither does it mean that a robust rhetorical defence of the union is enough to guarantee loyalist working class support. A 'common-sense' narrative can be constructed that links issues such as housing to a wider fear of destruction of the unionist community but this does not mean that loyalists simply believe that a different constitutional settlement would be the key to overcoming all the challenges they face. Politicians seeking votes in this area have not been able to avoid addressing social and economic issues, no matter how firm their stand on the constitution.

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[48] McAuley, JW and McCormack, P 1991 Op. cit.

[49] McAuley, JW 'The emergence of new loyalism' from Coakley, J (ed) Changing Shades of Orange and Green: Redefining the Union and Nation in Contemporary Ireland (Dublin) UCD Press 2003[a], p107

## 6.3 The PUP: Class and Community

PUP literature depicts the party as representatives of the Protestant working class and as part of that class. In interviews the concept of class seems linked to locality rather than to a shared socio-economic position. David Ervine describes himself as working class but adds "I have to say to you that I have a number of neighbours who are not even working. A number of neighbours who, maybe I insult them, I do so surely for the right reasons, are underclass".[50]

The idea of being underclass is linked to not being in employment. Robin Stewart states

> I am part of the underclass. I won't say working class because I don't work. I am part of the underclass because I live in these streets, I live around here [Netownards Road]. I don't drive a fancy car. I don't have a boat. I don't have a nice pension. So underclass.[51]

The references to neighbours, and to living in a certain area, underline a theme prevalent in PUP politics that class status is linked to the idea of community and geographical location. Billy Mitchell sums up his sense of the divisions within Northern Irish society:

> There's still these distinctions, the class divisions in Northern Ireland are about postcodes...there are still distinctions whether you would call them working class, middle class, upper class, you know the people you belong to, those in the inner city or the urban areas and those from the leafy suburbs.[52]

It is this concept of community that links the PUP to those they seek to represent. They see themselves as living within an organic grouping with its own specific needs. Even though their own life-chances may have been altered by the education they've had, the jobs they do now, and their experience of political decision making, they are still

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[50] Interview with David Ervine, PUP leader, 30th April 2003

[51] Interview with Robin Stewart, East Belfast constituency office worker, 17th January 2003

[52] Interview with Billy Mitchell, PUP Executive Member, 12th March 2001

authentically part of the community. William Smith states:

> A lot of our policies would be based on working class issues, because we emanate from hardline, well not hardline, but tough deprived areas in Belfast. We have two MLAs, we have four councillors in Belfast, the four councillors come from areas that are deprived, are on the frontline of the conflict, interface areas et cetera, et cetera. So you need to be fully accustomed to the issues of the people in those areas, you know[53]

This sentiment is echoed by the former leader of the party, Hugh Smyth:

> The one main thing that makes us distinctive is that we are involved in our local communities. Our roots are in local communities... The difference between us is that we concentrate on working class issues, the things that affect the people out there. And I believe that those are housing, health, unemployment. I don't think that you divorce those three things. They are enshrined together. They are married together. You can't divorce them. And those are things that we concentrate on. That is the difference between us even to this day from the Unionist Party, while there's great changes that have taken place in it. But I still don't believe that they emphasise enough the needs of the people in deprived areas.[54]

This concept of community reflects social and economic change. Instead of placing the PUP's natural constituency within the workplace it depicts a grouping that takes in those who do not work or those whose work is in the home. The emphasis on community reflects a recognition that the shipyards and the factories are not the centre of political and economic life in these areas. This has the potential to embrace a more modern politics dealing with identities such as gender because it does not rely on an image of a full-time male unionised workforce.

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[53] Interview with William 'Plum' Smith, Party Chairman, 18th January 2002

[54] Interview with Cllr. Hugh Smyth, 13th January 2002

## 6.3.1 Women and the PUP's Community

Cochrane argues that "the very nature of politics in Northern Ireland has produced a male-dominated environment" because of the violence associated with politics and because Northern Irish society retains more commitment to traditional gender roles and sexual morality than the UK as a whole.[55] Instead women have often channelled their activism into voluntary organisations both in the secular and church spheres. Sales argues that women's activism could actually increase tension within communities. For example, the skills women developed during their organisation of support to prisoners and their families created a desire to transcend this supportive background role. This brought them into conflict with the idea that their place was firmly in the domestic sphere.[56] Some of this activism allowed for the creation of the Northern Ireland Women's Rights Movement in the 1970s. However, this organisation was divided over conflict related issues such as women prisoners and it finally split over the need for a response to the hunger strike. Racioppi and O'Sullivan See argue that since this period feminism became associated with republicanism and "many unionists saw feminism as a cloak for Irish nationalism".[57]

Weiner's analysis of housing protests in the 1970s concluded that issues such as housing had often been seen as women's work before other groups, such as the UDA, attempted to use them as a means of bolstering legitimacy.[58] Grassroots politics has long been associated with female activism. Therefore, the PUP has been in the position to develop out of a style of politics where women are already involved.

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[55] Cochrane, C Unionist Politics and the Politics of Unionism Since the Anglo-Irish Agreement (Cork) Cork University Press 2001, p48

[56] Sales, R 'Gender and Protestantism in Northern Ireland' from Shirlow, P & McGovern, M Who are the People? Unionism, Protestantism and Loyalism in Northern Ireland (London) Pluto 1997, pp140-157

[57] Racioppi, L and O'Sullivan See, K 'This we will maintain: gender, ethno-nationalism and the politics of unionism in Northern Ireland' Nations and Nationalism Vol. 7 No.1 2001, p99

[58] Weiner, R The Rape and Plunder of the Shankill (Belfast) Farset Co-operative Press 1980

Wilford and Galligan characterised the PUP's 1997 manifesto as gender-neutral because it talked of women's rights in broad neutral terms rather than proposing specific measures[59]. However, Racioppi and O'Sullivan See argue that the 1999 Assembly manifesto "promulgated a more extensive women's agenda than any other party".[60] The 2001 PUP manifesto built on this programme. Indeed the section on equal rights is one of the most practical and detailed sections in terms of defined policies and demands. The manifesto centred on reproductive rights, improved legal protection and pay for part-time workers and increased provision of benefits and childcare to allow women to choose between employment and full-time motherhood.

The UDP actually had a very similar approach to women's rights in their last manifesto, including the same commitment to the extension of the 1967 Abortion Act to Northern Ireland.[61] However, Ward believes the PUP's approach has been more comprehensive because of the party's establishment of a Women's Commission in 1995, which "has been active in developing the party's policy on women".[62] In addition the PUP tries to provide a high profile for women within the party as spokeswomen, members of the executive and electoral candidates.

Given that the party is linked to such an overwhelmingly masculine organisation as the UVF, the promotion of women within the party serves to underline their commitment to be more reflective of this community they seek to serve. However, it must be noted that the proportion of female candidates remains low, something which has been a feature of elections in Northern Ireland in general and in unionist parties in particular. Given that the constitution still dominates much of mainstream Northern Irish politics, the PUP have been hindered in any attempts to strengthen the grassroots women's politics they have in part developed from. Racioppi and O'Sullivan See conclude:

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[59] Galligan, Y & Wilford, R 'Gender and Party Politics' from Galligan, Y Ward, E & Wilford R (Eds) Contesting Politics: Women in Ireland, North and South (Boulder) Westview Press 1999, pp169-184

[60] Racioppi, L and O'Sullivan See, K 2001Op. cit, p104

[61] UDP Manifesto 1998 www.udp.org

[62] Ward, R 'Invisible women: the political roles of unionist and loyalist women in contemporary Northern Ireland' Parliamentary Affairs No.55 2002, p176

The PUP stands out for its extensive policy statements and quota commitments to women, but it has also failed to make women visible in politics.[63]

## 6.3.2 The community and socialism

The concept of community enables the PUP to create for itself a base that does not centre on outdated ideas of who is employed and where. However, while this idea of community is inclusive in this sense it is exclusive in another. Communities are divided from each other by ethno-religious identity and the PUP see themselves as embedded within the loyalist side of that divide.

A sense of this division is evident in discussion of the term socialism. David Ervine describes the PUP as "the only socialist unionist party in the region".[64] However there is also an awareness that the term socialist is problematic within loyalist politics. Wilson McArthur notes:

> I would probably call myself a social democrat, but in this community, to call somebody a socialist, just due to the past the lines are sort of pretty hazy. If you're going to name something socialist - the republican movement gained its dynamic in 1969 very much through the international support of the socialist movement in different countries. And that connotation has sort of, the Marxist side of the republican movement and the socialism of their leaders and things, has left a sort of bad taste to socialism within the loyalist community. That's where people may have difficulty, where this, I suppose in any other industrialised city in the United Kingdom would be a prime constituency for the Labour Party, and the Labour Party is of socialist descent.[65]

The emphasis on community within the PUP seems to offer a defence against this

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[63] Racioppi, L and O'Sullivan See, K 2001 Op. cit, p104

[64] Ervine, D <u>Redefining Loyalism - a Political Perspective</u> Institute for British-Irish Studies Working Paper No.4 2001

[65] Interview with Wilson McArthur, Stormont office worker, 13th March 2001

mistrust of terms such as socialism. Michael Acheson sums up a sense of the difference between socialism and community politics:

> I am very upset and annoyed when I see media journalists putting us as a left of centre party and the whole stigma of what left means, comes into it... I would never say I am a socialist. But then again if someone said to me, if I have that interest in social problems then I am a socialist. I see myself as from my community and certainly I want to give something back to that community... So if socialism means that I work within my own community I take all the abuse that that gives us.[66]

The PUP sees itself as speaking for a distinct grouping with Northern Ireland. Its self-proclaimed constituency is loyalist communities who are struggling both with social deprivation and with the continuing effects of sectarianism and violence. The questions to be considered about this view of community politics relate to how the PUP seek to represent this grouping, both at the elite levels of government which accommodated them during the peace process and at the grassroots level.

## 6.4 The Peace Process

The 1996 Forum elections brought the PUP and the UDP into the negotiations that led to the Good Friday Agreement, with negotiating teams of equal strength to larger parties. Contact with the British and Irish Governments had developed before the CLMC ceasefire of 1994, although the ceasefire statement with its expressions of remorse marked the beginning of a new higher public profile. Rowan argues that the speech was a signal "that loyalism was emerging from the backroom closet and wanted a place at the political talks table".[67] Unlike the UDP, the PUP was elected to the Northern Ireland Assembly. As discussed in the previous chapter, the accommodation of the UDP within the Civic Forum was not enough to keep the UDA within the elite

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[66] Interview with Michael Acheson, member of Duncairn Branch, 12th March 2001

[67] Rowan, B <u>Behind the Lines. The Story of the IRA and Loyalist Ceasefires</u> (Belfast) Blackstaff 1995, p128

level of government.

For the moment the PUP remains officially a pro-Agreement unionist party. However, as will be discussed, there has been change within the PUP-UVF grouping as regards this issue.

## 6.4.1 Devolution and Integration

One aspect of the agreement that seems welcomed by the PUP is that of devolution. From the inception of the party, PUP documents have alternated between emphasising the benefits of integration and of devolution. In the UVF publication, *Combat* there has been a lack of consensus on constitutional structures. Some articles have expressed hostility to the idea of a devolved assembly. For example, a *Combat* editorial in 1988 questioned the worth of Paisley's championing of a new assembly as the most effective replacement for the Anglo-Irish Agreement:

> A Northern Ireland Assembly is not new. The last one didn't work, it was made unworkable by elected representatives. So what makes Paisley think that another would be any different?[68]

During the 1980s PUP documents often expressed anxiety about devolution as something that estranged Northern Ireland from the rest of the United Kingdom. The 1986 document, *War or Peace?* argued that "power should not be available to any political structure designed to meet the needs of a region in the UK".[69] The PUP championed their constitutional proposals as an alternative to Anglo-Irish governmental structures. The document *Sharing Responsibility*, which was subtitled "an alternative to foreign involvement in the internal affairs of a region of the United Kingdom"[70] focused on strengthened local government. It was not that devolution was rejected out of hand in PUP policy documents, rather that there was a noticeable

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[68] Editorial Combat Vol.7 Issue 7 September 1988

[69] War or Peace? Conflict or Compromise PUP 1986

[70] Sharing Responsibility PUP September 1985

anxiety about isolating or estranging Northern Ireland.

When interviewed for this thesis Hugh Smyth concentrated on the benefits of devolution, arguing:

Devolution worked properly will be the salvation of Northern Ireland. Forgetting about what we had in the Unionist Stormont, those people are gone, their day is gone, that era is gone. It's essential that we give people from Northern Ireland charge of their own affairs where they will be saying how the money is spent.[71]

However, at the first PUP conference after the signing of the Agreement he seemed less enthusiastic and more pragmatic about the introduction of devolution:

On the matter of the Assembly Mr Smyth stated that he was not particularly happy with that and would have preferred total integration. But now having seen that devolved government had been given to Scotland and Wales it was inevitable that it would happen here.[72]

The devolution projects in Scotland and Wales have served to normalise devolution for the PUP and have made constitutional arrangements for Northern Ireland seem less asymmetric. The Northern Ireland Assembly grew out of a different process to the Scottish Parliament and the Welsh Assembly. Each institution possesses a different set of powers and the Scottish Parliament exceeds the assemblies in terms of power and autonomy. However, it is the simple fact that Northern Ireland is now one of three regions with devolved power that makes its position within the UK seem less asymmetric. Devolution is seen to have similar effects and benefits for all regions and therefore the outcome of the process, rather than the specific powers and institutions involved, is promoted. David Ervine argues that "devolution does bring politics closer to people and it doesn't really matter whether it's Wales or Scotland or the regions of England - and they will come along".[73] Billy Mitchell echoes this idea:

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[71] Interview with Hugh Smyth, 13th January 2002

[72] Report of PUP Annual Conference Combat December 1999

[73] Interview with David Ervine, 30th April 2003

I believe that local people have local problems. Local people should be able to address them. So, I mean, devolution, we need local administration. The same as Scotland, Wales. I also believe there's a good argument for decentralisation in England too, where you have local assemblies. I think that's the way forward.[74]

Devolution is also seen as a means of normalising politics because of the potential for bringing non-constitutional issue means to the fore. According to Eileen Ward:

For far too long our politicians have got away with doing damn all on socialist issues. Now it's like they're going to have to be seen to be doing stuff, you know what I mean? They'll not be able to get away with it any more. People just won't vote for them. Hopefully.[75]

For the PUP, attitudes towards devolution seem to have become more positive and certain compared to the 1980s. This can partly be accounted for by the devolving of powers to Scotland and Wales, which mean that devolution in Northern Ireland actually makes the province seem less of a satellite. However, the development of PUP certainty on this area can be linked to the parallel development of optimism about the ability to engage in negotiation with nationalists and with both the British and Irish governments. Anxiety about the possibilities of measures such as joint authority meant that constitutional change, especially if it enhanced distinctiveness from Great Britain, meant that that issue was fraught with uncertainty and difficulty.

## 6.4.2 Conflict Transformation

After interviewing Billy Hutchinson for his research about the republican and loyalist ceasefires of 1994, Rowan noted:

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[74] Interview with Billy Mitchell, 12th March 2001

Billy Hutchinson speaks in terms of conflict transformation rather than conflict resolution - basically because he believes the diverse positions of nationalism and unionism cannot be reconciled. The best hope for Northern Ireland, he believes, is that its violent battle can be transformed into a political battle.[76]

The concept of conflict transformation is part of the Progressive Unionist manifesto:

The Progressive Unionist Party is committed to facilitating a conflict transformation process to allow politics in Northern Ireland to progress to the stage where Central Government would restore power. Progressive Unionists will play their part to the full in order to achieve a way that will take the gun out of unionist politics. We talk about transformation rather than resolution because the party would claim that resolution is not possible between unionism and nationalism as they are diametrically opposed. However we do believe that the conflict can be transformed from one of violence to one of constructive dialogue and that out of this transformation can come a respect for diversity.[77]

This idea of conflict transformation seems suited to a consociational settlement. It suggests that political structures can accommodate divergent aspirations, that conflict can be turned inwards towards peaceful negotiations over differing demands. There are two issues to be considered when applying the practical use of this concept in the following passages. The first is that unionist political representation is extremely fragmented and the PUP is not in a position to direct unionist discourse from above. The second is that ideas of compromise and dialogue require two partners and the actions of nationalists and Progressive Unionist perceptions of those actions is therefore vitally important.

These ideas will be discussed at length in relation to relationships with both nationalists and other unionists. An example of what the PUP considers to be the use of conflict transformation is the debate on the display of lilies at Stormont. The proposal to display

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[75] Interview with Eileen Ward, Executive Committee Member, 14th March 2001
[76] Rowan, B 1995 Op. cit, p142

[77] PUP Manifesto 2001

lilies in the grounds of Stormont during Easter 2001 provoked a debate in Stormont because the symbolism of the lilies (that is their association with the Easter Rising of 1916) was seen by many unionists as deliberately confrontational. Jim Wells from the DUP argued that "this is not simply about a floral display representing the Irishness felt by some members of the Assembly. If they wanted that Irishness represented, they could have used shamrock".[78]

Ervine was the only designated unionist not to vote against the planting of the lilies. His contribution to the debate upset both sides:

> As a unionist, I have no particular desire to appreciate or venerate the republican dead - some of my colleagues and I would like to have added to their ranks. As members of the DUP slid about the 'Armagh Desert' with rolled-up manifestos determined to destroy the republican movement, there were those of us who tried to do exactly that, more efficiently. I am sorry that we did not have as much success as I would like to have been able to report...The motion that was put forward was an attempt to reach a compromise wherein some people would accept that that was an appreciation for them and a veneration of the dead. For others it was a way to make politics work, and to take us on to the next undoubtedly problematic item on the agenda.[79]

Ervine's speech suggested that this nationalist demand could be met on grounds of pragmatism and that accepting something so painful to unionists was a means of moving away from conflict. However, his comments about not finishing off a few more republicans reinforced his belief in the legitimacy of loyalist paramilitary actions - because they had brought out this situation wherein republicans were willing to compromise. Therefore he felt he could afford to be provocative because the conflict had been transformed rather than resolved.

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[78] Hansard. 10th April 2001

[79] Hansard. 10th April 2001

## 6.4.3. Support for the Agreement

Although the PUP remains officially a "Yes" party as regards the Good Friday Agreement, this has not meant that change has not taken place within the party, and within the UVF. On the 16th January 2003 the UVF announced that it was withdrawing its contacts with the International Decommissioning Body headed by General De Chastelain, thus bringing to an end its half-hearted engagement with the decommissioning process. This came just over a week after the PUP had walked out of peace talks alluding to secret deals and government duplicity. Ervine argued that the party was being excluded from the real negotiations:

> It is clear that there are things going on in the undergrowth - both political and paramilitary. Unless we have a clear understanding, a clear sight of what those are it would be foolish for the PUP to take its place in the upcoming talks and be used for simply a pat on the head and to rubberstamp something we have not been party to. We are not prepared to play that game.[80]

This leadership criticism of the current negotiations to end the suspension of the institutions reflects unease within the party. On 11th March 2002 the Castlereagh Central branch of the PUP posted an open letter on the party website:

> We are dismayed at the Westminster Government's political strategy with Republicans of concessions without sanctions... Our concern presently lies with the views expressed in Castlereagh. As such it is the view of Castlereagh Central PUP, that we can no longer endorse the continuing flawed implementation of the Good Friday Agreement.[81]

Anxiety about the Agreement is also apparent within the UVF. Interviewed the day after the break with the decommissioning body, Robin Stewart observed:

> I would gauge the fact that maybe ninety per-cent, ninety-five per-cent of

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[80] 'PUP walks out of talks' news.bbc.co.uk 7th January 2003

members of the UVF and Red Hand Commando are not for this agreement which makes it hard then for the five per-cent who would be in the leadership who are for the agreement to keep it going and keep everyone on board. I think yesterday's statement is voicing a genuine concern. This is happening in the community and both the UVF and the RHC are from the community so therefore their views would be reflected well within the community.[82]

The key word in the Castlereagh statement is implementation. The PUP have remained supportive of signing the agreement, but critical of the implementation of it. It is the significance of PUP criticisms as regards the implementation of the Agreement that must now be addressed.

Peter Robinson, the DUP MP for East Belfast, has criticised the manner of the CLMC ceasefire because of the assertion that the union was safe:

I think they are in the worst of all worlds because they are now in a position where they either go along with whatever a British government does or they have to stand up and say, we got it wrong.[83]

The emphasis on implementation seems to be the way out of this for the PUP. David Ervine says he still supports the Agreement but:

Where the Good Friday Agreement went wrong was the fact that it was unfinished business: unfinished business on police, on weapons, on criminal justice, and a few other areas that where we, instead of taking the decisions ourselves, hived them off to commissions and then gutted the shit out of the commissioners when they made their judgement...We couldn't have achieved better. That doesn't mean to say it [the Agreement] is perfect. Far from it. Then the implementation was a bloody disaster. We are in uncharted water here.[84]

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[81] 'Open letter from Castlereagh Central PUP' www.pup-ni.org.uk
[82] Interview with Robin Stewart, 17th January 2003

[83] Rowan, B 1995 Op. cit, p150

[84] Interview with David Ervine, 30th April 2003

David Rose also criticises the implementation of the Agreement:

> I advocated it. I support it on paper but I think that there's been an unholy mess made of it. I think that whenever Mo Mowlam left and Mandelson arrived, he changed the dynamic of it. He changed it from an agreement with all the parties involved, to a save David Trimble agreement. Well I don't follow David Trimble. I never supported him and I never will so once I was excluded from that, then I owed the Good Friday Agreement nothing. So I don't feel I owe it anything. If I was asked to go out and campaign for it now, I wouldn't. But that's not because I am particularly against the Good Friday Agreement, it's because we were put out of it. And thus we owe it nothing.[85]

This critique of implementation rather than of the Agreement itself includes a lot of ire directed at Sinn Fein for using the Agreement as a starting point for demanding more. Anger is also directed at the British and Irish governments for meeting these demands and therefore encouraging Sinn Fein to carry on adding to their wish list. At talks between Tony Blair and Northern Irish political parties at Downing Street in December 2002 there were accusations from unionists that a secret deal was being struck with Sinn Fein over amnesty for prisoners on-the-run. The *Belfast Telegraph* reported:

> PUP leader David Ervine accused Sinn Fein of using blackmail to try to get its way on issues such as policing and on-the-run prisoners during behind the scenes talks since the assembly was suspended. "My community would be furious if republicans on the run were granted an amnesty. I am not prepared to countenance blackmail; maybe the best option is not to be in the process".[86]

These themes don't seem to differ much from the 'no' unionist camp: the obsession with finality and with a permanent unchanging settlement; the insatiable demands of republicanism; the duplicity of the British government making concession after concession. This viewpoint also tends to ignore areas Sinn Fein have been frustrated or

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[85] Interview with David Rose, 17th September 2002

have had to make compromises. Mandelson's departure from the Northern Ireland Office was commemorated by a mural on the nationalist Ormeau Road. The mural depicted him as Pinocchio, which demonstrates that his appointment was no more popular with many republicans than it was with David Rose.

Also, given that policing, and the replacement of the RUC with the PSNI, is one of the most contentious issues for unionists it must be remembered that Sinn Fein were very dissatisfied with the Police (Northern Ireland) Act 2000. Republicans were already critical of Chris Patten's proposed reform programme and believed it was not sufficiently far-ranging. Mitchell, O'Leary and Evans point out that "neither the act nor the published implementation plans delivered the full Patten, only Patten lite".[87] Sinn Fein's demand then became focused on the need to implement Patten in full; their ambitions for police reform had been limited by the way the Agreement had been implemented. The idea that Sinn Fein have consistently reaped benefits without paying any price or making any compromises is simplistic.

However, where the PUP critique of post-Agreement politics is different is the emphasis on the role of unionists in wrecking a process that was meant to benefit them. Unionists often criticise each other, but the PUP analysis does not rest on accusations of lundyism and going too far. Rather, it is that other unionists have not had the courage to go far enough.[88]

In particular unionists are criticised for the emphasis that has been placed on decommissioning. When asked about the Good Friday Agreement Wilson McArthur stated:

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[86] 'Prime Minister pressed on Sinn Fein deal' www.belfasttelegraph.co.uk 5th December 2002

[87] Mitchell, P O'Leary, B and Evans, G 'The 2001 elections in Northern Ireland: moderating 'extremists' and the squeezing of the moderates' Representation Vol. 39 No.1 2002 p27

[88] Robert Lundy was a Governor of the City of Derry. He was ousted in 1688 because he was believed to be a covert supporter of James II whose army was laying siege to the city. He is burned in effigy during the marching season and his name has become synonymous with treachery within unionist ranks.

I think one of the biggest difficulties I have at the moment is that the Ulster Unionist Party have been forced by dissident unionists over ground that they cannot walk. They have been pushed consistently by no unionists or by dissidents within the UUP who have forced Trimble to take a no guns, no government position, which I think is nonsense. Decommissioning is a red herring. Anybody who gives up guns one day still has the knowledge to use them, they still have the supply routes, they still have the targets, they still have everything.[89]

Billy Mitchell echoes this sentiment

The republican movement appear to be using the issue of decommissioning as a bargaining chip in order to prise concessions out of Her Majesty's Government. It is a very cynical approach to decommissioning and shows a lack of good faith in the process. However it must be said that unionists handed the Shinners this bargaining chip on a plate by making decommissioning such a big issue.[90]

McAuley identifies decommissioning as an important issue because:

The growing belief across unionism that the republican movement has not moved as far, or as fast, down the road they have charted, has led directly to a turning away of support from the Good Friday Agreement by unionists.[91]

Although they may not have done enough to ease unionist anxiety, the IRA has made moves in this area. Wilson McArthur's comments about targets and supply routes are interesting. It is unlikely that republican patrons such as Colonel Gadaffi will be supplying arms to the IRA in the future. In fact the only group to make a commitment to decommissioning were the LVF, who are currently re-armed and active. PUP members are right to argue that many unionists have focused on decommissioning to the

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[89] Interview with Wilson McArthur 13th March 2001

[90] Billy Mitchell posting on 'Progressive Forum' (PUP chatroom) www.pup-ni.virtualave.net 9th August 2001

[91] McAuley, JW 'Unionism's last stand? Contemporary unionist politics and identity in Northern Ireland' Global Review of Ethno Politics Vol.3 No.1 2003[b], p61

exclusion any benefits that the Agreement may have brought. It is also sensible to point out that it is impossible to verify that the entire cache of republican arms have been decommissioned and that all republicans are sincere in their intent to use only peaceful political means. However, the PUP cannot reason away the emotional impact of the decommissioning issue. Continued movement by the IRA will increase the pressure on loyalists to prove their own peaceful intent.

The PUP has managed to maintain a pro-Agreement stance by criticising implementation. This allows the party leadership to be critical of unionists as well as republicans and the British government. This stance needs to be evaluated in two ways. It needs to be asked both whether this emphasis on implementation is a genuinely different attitude within loyalism. It also needs to be questioned whether the nuances of this stance are understood and supported by potential voters. However, before conclusions can be drawn an overview of the way in which the PUP have operated within the parameters of post-Agreement political life in Northern Ireland needs to be developed to aid understanding of the party's commitment to the peace process.

## 6.4 Working with Nationalists

In creating the models for testing new loyalism three aspects have been identified that relate directly to the nationalist community and these will now be considered in term. The first is the development of a critique of the unionist period of hegemony before the suspension of Stormont. The second is openness to less exclusive ideas of belonging and national identity. The third is a willingness to work with nationalist political representatives.

### 6.4.1 The Stormont Era

PUP members seem to find it easy to be critical of the Stormont Era and a common theme is that the benefits that Protestants accrued in this era were minimal. A few months after the loyalist ceasefire Billy Hutchinson addressed a nationalist audience in terms that resonated with the speeches of Gusty Spence:

The alienation you feel, I feel, since I too was born and reared in a slum, mine being in the heart of the Shankill Road. We did not call them slums since that would have implied condemnation of those set in charge of us.[92]

Considering the period before direct rule was introduced, David Ervine says

I think the only thing we had a bit different from the Catholic population was one, that degree of patronage, which did of course help in day-to-day life, the wages weren't great but at least they were wages. The other part I think was a sense of belonging, that we belonged.[93]

McAuley sees this critique of the past as crucial to the PUP's ideology and as a means of establishing legitimacy for the party by identifying a lack of real leadership as a long term weakness in loyalist politics:

One central feature of the PUP project has been its attempt to reconstruct and reinterpret loyalism's past. From the beginning the PUP has sought to locate its politics directly in the claim that this group was not being properly represented by the traditional unionist leadership and to provide a different understanding of the past within unionism.[94]

This reconstruction seeks to expose the supposed benefits of discrimination as largely illusory. Hugh Smyth's view of the period suggests that loyalists were hoodwinked because the benefits between Catholics and Protestants were based on perception rather than reality.

I would be one of those, as a unionist and a Protestant, who would be more

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[92] 'Address by Billy Hutchinson at Pilots View Community Centre, Londonderry on Prospects for Peace' Combat April 1995

[93] Interview with David Ervine 30th April 2003

[94] McAuley, J.W. 2003[a] Op. cit, p109

critical than the Catholics. I believe that Stormont failed all of us miserably... They were all so comfortable in their wee way of going that Protestants were made to believe because they were Protestants that they were first class citizens and Catholics were made to believe that because they were Catholics they were second class citizens but the truth of the matter is, when you analyse it, we were all third class citizens and we allowed ourselves to be third class citizens. So I would be very, very critical.[95]

This view suggests a large degree of passivity on behalf of the Protestant working class, something that also emerges in an interview with William Smith.

The only thing that I would say about that is that the Stormont Government was an elite cream within unionism - upper class, it discriminated not just against Catholics but against Protestants.

In response to the comment, "but Protestants voted for it" Smith replied.

I'll give you an example of a family, a marriage - a man beats his wife up but she still stays with him. That doesn't mean she likes getting beat up. People had no choice. For instance working class people had neither the money nor the time to formulate the political parties. The whole country was based around sectarianism right from the start... The housing on the Shankill Road and the housing on the Falls isn't any different. It's not like we were living in luxury which it was sometimes portrayed. We were living in the same state as nationalists... We were no better. We thought we were better, we were told we were better but we weren't any better.[96]

The PUP critique of unionist hegemony concentrates primarily on economic factors and the limited nature of the benefits of discrimination. The Protestant working class is presented as a passive group, easily manipulated and fearful of the consequences of biting the hand that fed them.

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[95] Interview with Hugh Smyth, 13th January 2002

[96] Interview with William Smith, 18th January 2002

David Ervine argues that any redefinition of loyalism must recognise:

The way in which we had a one party state; the way in which we *did* discriminate; the way in the circumstances were created. Circumstances where there were "them" and "us" these were the circumstances that undoubtedly created the conditions for bitterness and hatred, because "them" and "us" translated into another language is zero-sum.[97]

This process of re-examination suggests a possibility of finding common cause with nationalists. According to Paul Morrow:

The Stormont Government created and reacted against people who wanted a right, and that was the right to have a say. They also reacted against the Protestants who also wanted to have a say. They created enough fear and created sectarianism to pull that Protestant community to its side... I have always said that when nationalists stood up and demanded rights, unionists betrayed them. We should have stood up and demanded the same rights for ourselves.[98]

However, another more traditional view of pre-conflict Northern Ireland was contained in literature placed on the PUP website during the time of the Holy Cross dispute. In September 2001 *The Ardoyne Interface : A History of Glenbryn* was placed on the website as a means of providing a historical context for contemporary events. The document presented a continuous history of unprovoked nationalist aggression:

Each year at the "Twelfth" celebrations, when the streets were decorated and children's parties organised, no distinction was made on the ground of creed all the children joined together in the fun. Disharmony began to be created when in 1966 rumours went the rounds that there would be no "twelfth" celebrations where the Roman Catholic ten per-cent were concerned. Republic [sic] pressures

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[97] Ervine, D Redefining Loyalism - a Political Perspective Institute for British-Irish Studies Working Paper No.4 2001, p1

[98] Interview with Paul Morrow, PUP website manager, 20th August 2001

prevented Roman Catholic children from joining in the "Twelfth" revelry of 1969. Later in the month verbal abuse, window breaking, and the destruction of gardens at night were the evidence of the republican intimidation of Protestants which was to cause older residents to flee their homes. The vacated houses were immediately occupied by Roman Catholics, many of them militant republicans.[99]

This is another representation of loyalists as passive and powerless. This history of Ardoyne jars with the PUP project of reinterpretation as it taps into a more traditional past where loyalists have been at the mercy of devious and demanding republicanism. Under the heading "Ardoyne: The story of Belfast in Miniature" the author Hugh Stockman, a former resident of Glenbryn argues that "the events which took place in Ardoyne from 1969 have been repeated in many places throughout the city of Belfast".[100] Catholics are shown as taking over Protestant areas using a combination of stealth and violence.

The PUP re-examination of Northern Ireland's history is not fully thought through. The emphasis on the elite of unionism and the discrimination undertaken by state institutions connects to a presentation of the Protestant working class as passive and helpless. This makes this re-interpretation problematic. It means the potential for a new view of the past to impact on the present is limited by emphasising the role of victim.

In fact, as was outlined in the introductory chapter to this thesis, the history of labourist politics in the North-East of Ireland provides evidence of activism rather than passivity. If, as William Smith stated in his interview the existence of Northern Ireland centred on sectarianism, its continued existence would be hard to justify. It would be more positive for the PUP to concentrate on the independent unionists and NILP politicians who harried the elite for their laziness and isolation, rather than present the Protestant working class as powerless and apathetic.

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[99] Stockman, H The Ardoyne Interface of Glenbryn www.pup-ni.org.uk September 2001

[100] Stockman, H 2001 Op. cit.

## 6.4.2 Who are the People?

One of the most recognisable slogans used by the Progressive Unionist Party is the proclamation of being Irish but peculiarly British. Interviews with party members show that they hold and prioritise a number of identities from Paul Ferguson's description, "British with an Irish/Ulster shine"[101] to Joan Totten's assertion that she is "British, Protestant and Proud".[102] There is a clear awareness of the difference between political and cultural identity as can be seen by Billy Mitchell's statement that "I regard myself as an Irish unionist. In terms of political identity, British. I would say I'm an Irish man or Northern Irish anyway."[103]

As with attitudes to devolution, discussions of national identity often show a concern with stressing normality, that loyalists are not estranged from the wider British community by holding a sub-national identity. This can be seen in an interview with Robin Stewart:

> Irish, Northern Irish. I have no problems with that. I have also British in the same way as someone in Scotland is Scottish first and foremost, but they are British because they belong to part of the British Isles, the same as a Welshman or an Englishman. I'm no different. I live in Northern Ireland so at the very least I must be Northern Irish and then British.[104]

It would seem that Irishness is viewed as an element of identity that must be consciously acknowledged and embraced in order to provide a logical and credible reason for belonging to Britain. Billy Hutchinson and Dawn Purvis give similar descriptions of their national identities.

> British-Irish, definitely. I'm British, everything about my culture. Belfast has more in common with Leeds and Liverpool than what it does with any town in the

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[101] Interview with Paul Ferguson, Secretary and Treasurer of PUP Shankill Branch, 13th March 2001

[102] Interview with Joan Totten, Secretary of PUP Oldpark Branch, 12th March 2001

[103] Interview with Billy Mitchell, 12th March 2001

[104] Interview with Robin Stewart, 18th January 2003

Republic... I think those strong industrial links, like Newcastle, Sunderland, the shipbuilding and all that sort of thing. That's where my main links are. I would have more in common with people in Leeds, than people in Dublin. But because I was born on the island of Ireland, there's an Irishness about my culture as well, that would be distinct to me here as opposed to somebody in Leeds.[105]

Politically I'm British and culturally I'm Irish. I don't have a problem with that. I mean it would be nonsense for everyone to say if they grew up in Northern Ireland since 1921 that don't have both whether you're a republican or a loyalist...I've grown up in a society a very working class one, where people race greyhounds and gamble on horses and do all those things and work on the shipyard. Same as people in Leeds, Manchester and Birmingham... I don't have a problem saying that there are good things about the Irish culture as well. The difficulty with that is, in terms of our society is people trying to force Irish culture down people's throats and in many ways, there seems to be I suppose a reluctance to actually accept or to acknowledge that there's any of it in you. But there is, it's impossible not to.[106]

These discussions make deliberate links between Irish-ness and British-ness. The British-ness outlined here makes no reference to the Crown or other traditional loyalist symbols of British-ness, although the working class lifestyles referred to also seem slightly outdated due to the emphasis on heavy industry. Irish-ness is something to be dealt with, acknowledged. This is notably different from the concept of Northern Irish-ness, which is expressed as an identity stemming prosaically and pragmatically from the experience of living in Northern Ireland:

I would say British. However, if you sort of move back, I have a personal identity - I'm Northern Irish.[107]

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[105] Interview with Dawn Purvis, Assembly Co-ordinator, 16th September 2002

[106] Interview with Billy Hutchinson, MLA for North Belfast, 13th January 2002

[107] Interview with Wilson McArthur, 13th March 2001

I've never known an all-Ireland context. So I perceive myself as being Northern Irish.[108]

The 2002 *Northern Ireland Life and Times Survey* shows that whilst British and Irish are still the most popular identities 'Northern Irish' is an identity held by merely a fifth of respondents (nineteen per-cent). Catholics (twenty-five per-cent) are more likely to describe themselves as Northern Irish than Protestant (fourteen per-cent). The identity is much more likely to be chosen than the label of 'Ulster' (one per-cent of Catholics and six-percent of Protestants described themselves thus).[109] As has already been discussed the term Ulster suggests an exclusive identity to Catholics and has an unwelcome connection to independence for many Protestants.

The emphasis on British-ness and Irish-ness is a deliberate and conscious attempt to address the divisiveness of national identity in Northern Ireland. However, the attitudes to Northern Irish-ness seem to be different to Irish-ness, which is linked to a process of exploration and discussion. It has to be said that this process seems rather forced and conscious and Reynolds argues that it is a process that has not had greater resonance outside the PUP, meaning that "its attempts to get loyalists to embrace Irishness failed".[110]

What is more significant is the apparent sense of ease about identity: that is possible to explore and discuss without straying from what fundamentally defines national identity. As Ervine states:

I don't need to plant a Union Jack on my baldy head to identify who I am, I live comfortably with who I am. I don't know that there's a single symbol that you could say is British because I don't think that there's a British purity.[111]

This openness on the issue of identity could be seen to stem from attitudes within the

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[108] Interview with Michael Acheson, 12th March 2001

[109] Northern Ireland Life and Times Survey 2002 www.ark.ac.uk/nilt The question asked was do you think of yourself as British/Irish/Ulster/Northern Irish?

[110] Reynolds, L 'Scrabbling for Answers' Fortnight September 2003, p5

[111] 'The Fortnight Interview: Rudie Goldsmith talks to David Ervine' Fortnight January 2004, p16

PUP towards religion. Joan Totten's response is anomalous in making a direct link between Protestantism and Britishness. The only PUP member interviewed who described himself as a churchgoer was Billy Mitchell who sees himself "as part of the evangelical wing of Protestantism".[112] However, as both Michael Acheson and William Smith point out, going to church is not always seen as a necessary condition of describing oneself as adhering to Protestant faith:

I am not a practising Protestant because I don't go to church on a regular basis, but certainly I would believe in all the teaching that I grew up with.[113]

Protestantism is an ethos of individuality. You don't have to belong to a church to be a Protestant. You don't have to go to church to be a Protestant.[114]

David Rose describes himself as being "from the atheist wing of Protestantism"[115] and Eddie Kinner as "a prod agnostic or a prod atheist".[116] Although both of these replies were delivered in a humorous tone they demonstrate clearly that Protestantism as an identity goes beyond either practise or faith. However, on the whole the PUP do not make connections between crown, faith and belonging. The descriptions of identity do not centre on an exclusivist concept of Britishness that must automatically repel nationalists. The British/Irish project can seem forced and self-conscious. However, it is an attempt to show that Protestantism and Britishness are not intrinsically linked and that one is not a condition of the other.

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[112] Interview with Billy Mitchell, 12th March 2001

[113] Interview with Michael Acheson, 12th March 2001

[114] Interview with William Smith 18th January 2002

[115] Interview with David Rose, 17th September 2002

[116] Interview with Eddie Kinner, 14th March 2002

## 6.4.3 Protestantism and Catholicism

The relationship between Protestantism and unionism has already been discussed and it has been argued that Protestant institutions often have a secular significance because they are associated with ideas of unionist culture and belonging. This is not the same as agreeing with Bruce's argument that Protestantism is the defining essence of unionist identity.[117] One example of this is the endurance of the Orange Order, which is a valued institution to many of those from a Protestant background who would not consider themselves to be active members of a faith. Given how controversial the parades issue has become, it seems inevitable that PUP members would express frustration and annoyance. Although the consensus in interviews was that the Orange Order had to recognise nationalist concerns and enter negotiations there was a palpable sense that parades had become with which to beat loyalists. According to Michael Acheson:

> It's not about us not accepting people's Irish-ness, they're not accepting us for anything... you get to the stage where you negotiate your flags away and then you go on to negotiate something else away and what are you left to negotiate with?[118]

Dawn Purvis argues that "Unionism, Britishness, Orangeism has been demonised."[119] Although the PUP agenda may wish for the separation of unionism and Protestantism, there is a sense that attacks on Orangeism are attacks on the union and attacks on the culture of those who regard themselves as British. The need to rally to the defence of Orangeism suggests that the link between Protestantism and loyalism remains relevant and that secular political action is still subject to the influence of cultural Protestantism.

However, it is important not to conflate Protestantism and anti-Catholicism when reviewing secular loyalist political action. Evidence of suspicion and of influence of

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[117] See Bruce, S God Save Ulster (Oxford) Oxford University Press 1986 & The Edge of the Union (Oxford) Oxford University Press 1994

[118] Interview with Michael Acheson, 12th March 2001

[119] Interview with Dawn Purvis, 16th September 2002

Catholicism is evident in PUP literature. For example the 1998 document *Breaking the Mould* states that Catholic nationalism and socialism are inimical because "the Catholic working class are caught in the rhetoric of anti-imperialism which bends itself more comfortably to the nationalist agenda. Class politics have always operated better within the UK than in the Irish Republic".[120]

The reference to the Irish Republic is significant because it seems there is still a view of the south as a confessional state, militating against individualism and civil liberties. Billy Mitchell acknowledges in *Principles of Loyalism* that "in recent years the Irish Republic has become more liberal and pluralist but it remains our belief that the United Kingdom is better suited to the development of a multi-faith pluralist society than the Irish Republic."[121] He cites the strict adherence to the papal decree of Ne Temere (which demanded children of mixed marriages be raised as Catholics) and the influence of senior Catholic clergy on public policy and in the area of artistic censorship. He links these historical events to the contemporary furore over President McAleese taking communion in a Protestant church and Bertie Ahern's public conduct of a relationship with another woman after separating from his wife.

Comments such as these accord with David Trimble's denunciation of the Republic as a "pathetic, sectarian, mono-ethnic, mono-cultural state" compared to the United Kingdom which "respects the identity of all and threatens none. It seeks to accommodate and not repress. It offers stability and flexibility. It guarantees a higher standard of living."[122]

Acknowledgement that the Republic has become more liberal and pluralist contains an implicit critique that it has started from a much more illiberal position than the United Kingdom. Mitchell's view of the Republic, for example, overlooks the powerful censorship of artistic expression legitimated by the British State during the same historical period. Instead he seeks to demonstrate that the Republic has not yet freed

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[120] Breaking the Mould PUP 1998

[121] Mitchell, B Principles of Loyalism unpublished 2002. This document has been serialised in the UVF publication Combat beginning in Issue 12 Spring 2003

[122] Speech by David Trimble to Ulster Unionist Council Annual Conference. 9th March 2002

representative of working class loyalism.[124]

The PUP's commitment to engagement with Sinn Fein relates to more than the constitutional negotiations that other unionists within the UUP have undertaken. It occurs within their framework of conflict transformation. As noted the PUP blame other unionists for allowing republicans to wrest concessions from the British Government due to their disunity over all issues except an obsession with decommissioning. Billy Hutchinson has argued that Sinn Fein cannot be ignored or wished away but they can be contained if unionists face up to them:

> No amount of feigned anger, empty rhetoric or grandstanding to the media will defeat or dissolve Sinn Fein. The only way is to confront them in everything they say or do.[125]

The PUP leadership argues that Sinn Fein can and should be confronted about whether the IRA's war is over. They are also concerned with issues such as parade protests, in which the hand of Sinn Fein is detected, stoking up tension. David Rose observes:

> Gerry Kelly is a parades junkie. I don't know anyone else who would out of his bed at half past eight in the morning, phone round 400 close friends to get them to watch a march he doesn't like. I myself would lie in bed for an extra half-hour and enjoy the lie in.[126]

Willingness to engage with traditional enemies such as Sinn Fein does not preclude distrust and antagonism. However, the PUP present themselves as prepared to deal with Sinn Fein in another guise, as representatives of an equally deprived constituency as the PUP's proclaimed community. It is the tension between these two positions that will now be addressed.

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[124] McAuley, J.W 2003 Op. cit, p 112

[125] 'Hutchinson calls on unionism to face down Sinn Fein' www.irelandclick.com 28th April 2003

[126] Interview with David Rose. 17th September 2002

## 6.5.1 Are Sinn Fein a Socialist Party?

A common theme that has emerged in interviews is a distrust of Sinn Fein's socialist credentials. When asked if they are a socialist party, David Rose offers the following response:

> Sinn Fein are a right-wing single identity nationalistic party who have adopted some social polices. But at the core Sinn Fein to me would come out of the same tradition as say the Spanish Falangists in the thirties, that basically you're either Irish or you're out. One thing they're certainly not is Irish Republicans irrespective of what they say.[127]

Eddie Kinner goes so far as to say, "I see Sinn Fein as mainly being purely fascist".[128] This accords with the comments of Paul Ferguson:

> They're a fascist party...their view of a united Ireland is of a united Ireland for Irish people going on their definition of an Irish Gael with a Celtic history. Now to me that's not an inclusive Ireland, that's an exclusive, xenophobic racist Ireland, which if you look at fascism that's what they are: racist and xenophobic.[129]

Both Billy Hutchinson and William Smith refer to the abandonment of the ideal of a socialist thirty-two county republic, with Smith dismissing claims to socialism as "total hypocrisy. In prison I'd listen to SF and their 32 county socialist republic ideals and all that. Basically they have played that card but in fact they aren't socialists. Some people think that they are a right-wing Catholic party."[130] They both question how socialists could take money from what they see as right-wing Irish-American organisations.

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[127] Interview with David Rose, 17th September 22
[128] Interview with Eddie Kinner, 14th March 2001

[129] Interview with Paul Ferguson, 13th March 2001
[130] Interview with William Smith, 18th January 2001

Dawn Purvis and David Ervine present what they see as Sinn Fein's compliance with

private finance initiatives as evidence that they cannot be a socialist party. Ervine says

"it seems to me that they may well have...Orange Order...working-class-ism, or some might describe it as socialism, but it's socialism drawn...the people"[131] ...deals with Sinn Fein.

The residents' groups that have been formed to campaign for re-routing of parades are

seen by many unionists and loyalists as a front for Sinn Fein. In addition as Billy

Mitchell argues, Catholicism is still seen as the primary influence on Sinn Fein's actions:

However, whilst Hugh Smyth presents a similar picture of Sinn Fein, he does not see this quality as a bad thing:

> If you took the violence of their views out of the scenario that there wouldn't be
> an awful lot of difference between how they appeal to their constituents and the
> constituents and the areas that they're in, that the Catholic Nationalist party. You know Sinn Fein
> spokespersons repeatedly refer to the Irish... Much as I don't like saying that but it's a fact of life. "the
> Catholic community", "the nationalist community", "the republican
> If you look at somebody like Gerry Adams who represents West Belfast and look
> community" thus reminding Protestants that we're representing the one
> at me, Hugh Smyth, who represents West Belfast, we're representing...into the
> twenty-first century the republican movement... the nationalist area
> constituency although it may be that he would concentrate itself primarily as a
> Catholic Nationalist movement which holds the other threads in the unionist part
> in West Belfast and I for obvious reasons have other threads to the term Irish.

of West Belfast. But really leaving aside, as I said, the political end of it, we

Given Sinn Fein's increasing electoral support... commitment to cross-community

represent people who have been deprived for hundreds of years[132]

class politics inevitably means the PUP have to interact with them in some way. And it

will now be considered how the PUP have tried to do this whilst remaining critical of

On the whole though Sinn Fein are seen as pursuing a nationalist agenda, which rests on

Sinn Fein and republicanism.

an exclusive definition of Irishness - one that must by definition push loyalists out.

Their policies on social and economic issues are a gloss to cover the ageless and

unchanging demands of Irish nationalism. There is no agreement amongst PUP

## 6.5 Cross-Community Politics

members as to what socialism is or whether the PUP is a socialist party, but there is a

view that, on the whole, Sinn Fein is a party that contains some socialists whilst

According to McAuley:

actually being a one-issue nationalist party.

> The willingness to engage with the political opposition... the constitutional
> The PUP still aver that the Good Friday Agreement... opposition...even
> constructed as traditional enemies (and... as long as the majority wish it
> position of Northern Ireland within the United Kingdom... clearly marks it
> out the PUP from other strands within unionism... However, until very recently the open
> and that Sinn Fein have tacitly accepted this by signing up to it...
> expression of such a political stance would have been untenable from a
> PUP members are on the matter of Sinn Fein would have... the pursuit of social

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[131] Interview with David Ervine, 30th April 2003
[123] Mitchell, B 2002, Op. cit.

justice, conflict transformation could in theory allow them to confront Sinn Fein about this and draw them into partnership despite ongoing profound differences on national identity. The PUP is committed to supplanting constitutional wrangling with political issues that could push entrenched interests into realignment. It has already been noted in this thesis that socialist politics and sectarianism are not separate entities, but that sectarianism can entwine itself around socio-economic issues. It is here that the PUP's faith in establishing normality in Northern Irish politics is tested.

## 6.5.2 'Bread and Butter' Politics

An issue that has allowed Sinn Fein and the PUP to work together is education. As education minister, Martin McGuinness dedicated himself to ending the current selective system of secondary education in Northern Ireland. In a debate at Stormont on proposals for changes in Northern Ireland (commonly known as the *Burns Report*[133]) McGuinness refuted the idea that selection benefited poorer children and he cited PUP arguments in so doing.

> The poorest eleven-plus results are achieved in controlled schools with high levels of free school meals that serve working class Protestant areas. David Ervine and Billy Hutchinson of the PUP told me that in many working class Protestant areas, a grammar school place is beyond the reach of almost all pupils. In the Shankill less than two per-cent of pupils gain a grammar school place. If that is not a damning indictment, I do not know what is.[134]

Hutchinson and Ervine have backed McGuinness in assembly debates on the subject. When McGuinness restated his determination to abolish the eleven plus, Billy Hutchinson responded:

> I welcome the minister's statement, which because it concerns future generations of working class-children, may address the most important decision to be made

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[132] Interview with Hugh Smyth, 23rd January 2002

[133] Education for the Twenty-First Century: Post-Primary Review Body DENI 2001

[134] Hansard 23rd April 2002

by the assembly.[135]

Education is also an area where the PUP have carved out a distinct position from the DUP. Sammy Wilson's contribution to the *Burns Report* debate criticised Martin McGuinness for pursuing a "narrow socialist agenda". Wilson said

> The most bizarre argument that I have heard from the Minister is that he now wishes to become the champion of working-class Protestant children. It is a pity he did not think about that thirty years ago when he was blowing them up, shooting them and making them orphans. Anyone who believes that Martin McGuinness is concerned about the well-being of Protestant children from working class backgrounds needs their heads felt.[136]

The above comments were clearly aimed at the PUP given McGuinness's approving quotation of their figures and Hutchinson's supportive comments.

Education seems to be a good example of how the PUP has used the institutions of the Good Friday Agreement to establish agreement with those they fought against. However, as a resource, education is far less problematic than housing. The haves and the have-nots can be clearly characterised as those with or without material goods. The proposed education reforms have created controversy and debate but no riot can so far be attributed to frustration over access to education.

As noted above, housing is one of the things that has stoked tensions in the areas the PUP claim to represent. In particular small enclaves of housing within bigger areas belonging to what is seen as the other side and the interfaces between different areas have been the flashpoints for inter-communal violence. It was in such an area, Glenbryn, that one of the biggest crises occurred for the PUP: the protests at Holy Cross School.

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[135] Hansard 8th October 2002

The PUP have often been involved in trying to defuse conflict at interface areass. Jarman notes that:

> Following the violence in north and west Belfast in 1996, Billy Hutchinson and other members of the PUP argued against people rioting and destroying their own areas in response to events at Drumcree and since that time the PUP and the Ulster Volunteer Force have been prominent in trying to prevent local disorder.[137]

It was inevitable, therefore, that party representatives would be drawn into trying to find a solution to the protests around a North Belfast school. During September 2001 tensions in the area came to a head as residents from loyalist Glenbryn stepped up protests on a route that led towards the Catholic Holy Cross primary school. They claimed that the pupils' parents, and republicans with no cause to be in the area, were using the school run to infiltrate Glenbryn for the purposes of aggression and intimidation. They sought to force the pupils to use another entrance to the school and, in addition, demanded increased security measures such as gates and higher fences. In a mirror image of republican strategy, they formed a group to articulate these demanded, the Concerned Residents of Upper Ardoyne. The protests ended in November, after the First Minister and Deputy First Minister met with the residents and confirmed in writing that CCTV and gating would be installed and that there would be increased police patrols in the area.

McAuley has argued that the PUP must secure support from the constituency it claims to represent if it is to pursue its agenda:

> The importance for the future direction of unionism of the ability of the PUP to gain and maintain popular support cannot be overstated. Although it is of no little significance that the PUP has successfully presented its arguments to an extremely wide audience. It is its ability to convince its more immediate constituency that will ultimately prove of most importance.[138]

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[136] <u>Hansard</u> 23rd April 2002

[137] Jarman, N 2003 Op. cit, p100

[138] McAuley, J.W. 2003 Op. cit. p110

The Holy Cross protests revealed how the PUP were led by their constituency rather than providing the leadership by which they hoped to gain votes. Billy Hutchinson was the main PUP contact for the residents and the media. He seemed to accept at face value the complaints of the residents, citing the continued efforts of parents to beat the blockade as evidence that they were seeking to score political points.

> Children are not the problem. Their parents are. Now, you know, lets be honest. People who bring their children up this road, through all of this, you know, need to actually rethink what they're doing. And if this is about making their children political pawns in some sort of political game, then I think that's disgraceful.[139]

Hutchinson saw the hand of the republican movement guiding the parents' action asking "are they trying to create a situation where the IRA are made to hold onto their guns?"[140] However, when considering the overall problem of conflict at interface areas Hutchinson has made comments that show he sees these enclaves as a set of last stands to be taken against republicans. For example, observing increasing tension in Torrens he argued:

> Torrens is a classic case of ethnic cleansing. You have to live there to understand the problems faced by this Protestant community.[141]

Holy Cross turned out to be a major incident and an example of direct community action. It was one that the PUP were forced to react to and the responses of their main spokesman in relation to this and incidents in other interface areas showed an acceptance of this discourse of ethnic cleansing. Given that the location and provision of social housing is already a sensitive issue, these incidents have reinforced for many loyalists a sense that they will be imminently swallowed up or pushed out of an Irish Catholic Belfast. In reacting to the events of Holy Cross, the PUP did nothing to challenge these fears, but added to their articulation.

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[139] Interview with Billy Hutchinson broadcast by the Australian Broadcasting Corporation. www.abc.net 6th September 2001

[140] 'No let up in violent clashes' irishnews.com 22nd June 2001

The provision of social resources such as housing can provoke sentiments that lend themselves to traditional ethnic bloc politics. The PUP's attempt to provide a way out of this by encouraging cross-community consensus on deprivation and inequality seems to have been effective to some extent in terms of education. At the elite level of the assembly the PUP felt able to give full backing to Martin McGuinness. This was because education could be presented as an resource from which loyalists in particular but the working class in general was excluded. However, the anxiety that many loyalists feel about the future of their neighbourhoods is something that the party seems to been led by. The notion of ethnic cleansing remains unchallenged by the party, which suggests they are yet to question how sectarianism and socialist ideas interact with their own agenda.

Holy Cross also demonstrated the extent to which the PUP were in competition with other forces within loyalism, who wished to control or represent people like the Concerned Residents of Upper Ardoyne. In particular the UDA were seen to be the dominant force in Glenbryn. Jarman lists paramilitary rivalry as a factor in interface violence

> Within the unionist community the increasing fragmentation of political representation is compounded by the presence of rival paramilitary groups who are claiming the right to defend existing interests, while at the same time aiming to extend their power and authority over other-working class territories. In such a context launching attacks upon the 'other' (whether rhetorical or otherwise) is a well-established political strategy that continues to be pursued across the area.[142]

Interviewed by the *Christian Science* Monitor, both Shirlow and Jarman attributed the decline in violence at interface areas during the marching season of 2003 in part to pressure placed on the UDA. Shirlow argued that "The ARA (Assets Recovery Agency) has concentrated minds" and that the UDA was keen to avoid provoking police investigation. Jarman stated that "The UDA wants to gain some electoral credibility

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[141] 'Hutchinson to discuss escalating violence' www.icnorthernireland.icnetwork.co.uk 4th June 2003

[142] Jarman, N 2003 2002, Op. cit. p230

within its own community and moved to keep its more militant elements under control".[143] The actions of the UDA in Glenbryn demonstrates that their influence has an important effect on events in interface areas. This presents a challenge to any attempts by the PUP to direct the anxieties felt by loyalists residents into constitutional action.

Also, although the PUP is linked to the UVF, it cannot be said to be the sole director of its actions. The UVF's ceasefire has continued to be recognised by the British Government, but their involvement in paramilitary activity has not ceased, particularly in relation to competition with the UDA. A murderous feud between the two groups in the summer of 2000 was only one in a series of violent incidents stretching back to the early 1970s. By the time of the Holy Cross protest the UDA was only a matter of weeks away from being declared as having broken their ceasefire by the British Government. Paramilitary competition and aggression in these areas has demonstrated another means of articulating and exploiting anxieties within loyalist communities such as Glenbryn, one that does not rely on constitutional politics. This ongoing paramilitary activity thus allows another form of representation that does not require a political party. However, as will be shown later, this is not the only problem that paramilitary violence creates for the PUP.

Holy Cross also showed how the PUP were not the only constitutional representatives of this constituency. Another North Belfast MLA, Nigel Dodds, had extensive contact with the media. He sought to show that his party, the DUP, also understood the plight of areas such as Glenbryn. He avoided the pitfalls inherent in supporting a protest that had involved media coverage of terrified schoolgirls subjected to intimidation and more concrete threats such as a pipe bomb. Hutchinson on the other hand seemed to get caught trying to please too many audiences at once when the bomb incident provoked him to state he was ashamed to be a loyalist. As the *Irish News* noted:

> Earlier Mr. Hutchinson said "no protest can be justified now. This is no longer about children going to school. It is about people out to cause trouble and I don't

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[143] 'Northern Ireland's Summer of Content' <u>Christian Science Monitor</u> www.cs.monitor.com 29th August 2003

want to be part of it." Later he said "after the blast I said I was ashamed to be a loyalist. But at the end of the day I am a political representative and have to defend the human rights of the residents".[144]

It was not just a question of media savvy. The more established DUP was expressing the exact same message as the PUP. Nigel Dodds welcomed the resolution of the protests in the *Shankill Mirror*. His analysis of the situation did not differ significantly from Hutchinson's:

> The situation in Ardoyne came about as a result of the government continually ignoring the plight of isolated communities who have been the subject of an organised campaign of intimidation for over thirty years.[145]

The PUP and the DUP were chasing the same votes. Dodds and Hutchinson represented the same area and were claiming to speak on behalf of the same people. The Holy Cross protests seemed to demonstrate very little difference between the parties. This is something to be taken into account when considering how the PUP seeks to make itself distinctive.

## 6.6 The Republican Perspective

Prevalent in loyalism is a narrative that equates republican violence with city planning because they have both attacked loyalist communities where they are vulnerable. A recent edition of *Combat* provided this analysis of planning in South Belfast:

> Prior to redevelopment, South Belfast was a safe and happy place to live, made up of the close-knit communities of Sandy Row, Donegall Pass and Donegall Road. In the mid-1970s the powers that be decided to rip away the old Victorian kitchen houses and replace them with modern homes, incorporating gardens and inside toilets.

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[144] 'Hutchinson defends U-turn' www.irishnews.com 6th September 2001

[145] 'Dodds welcomes Protest move' Shankill Mirror Christmas 2001/January 2002

Although these changes were necessary as the living conditions in the old houses were nothing short of Dickensian (akin to all over Ulster during that era) a vast majority of the people within the houses felt the need to pack up and leave. Therefore, a mass exodus occurred and left the areas concerned greatly depleted populous wise.

Since the building of the new developments, republicans have seized the opportunity to take advantage of the smaller communities. Night after night the houses in Vernon Street came under attack from the republican McClure Street in the Lower Ormeau Road.[146]

Redevelopment and republican aggression are presented as two interlinked forces that have depopulated and destroyed loyalist communities. However, whilst loyalist areas are seen to be in decline, republican areas are expanding. Shirlow's figures show that whilst the population of Protestant Upper Ardoyne declined between 1971 and 1991, Catholic Ardoyne has increased in population size during the same period. Shirlow detects frustration in Ardoyne that housing has not kept pace with this expansion and he also argues that this creates resentment towards Protestants because of a belief that Ardoyne cannot be expanded because of their feelings. Therefore their quality if life is directly affected by what they see as the unfair demands of Upper Ardoyne residents.[147]

Republican politicians have sought to establish that violence at interface areas is the result of loyalist aggression and that the British media has a vested interest in presenting it as the product of two equally blameworthy parties.[148] Reaction to the suspension of Stormont in *An Phoblacht* demonstrated these beliefs:

Haven't we been here before? It has been another week of loyalist attacks on

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[146] 'South Belfast: the stronghold tightens' Combat Issue 17 September 2003

[147] Shirlow, P 2003 Op. cit Upper Ardoyne has declined from 3,000 to 1,500 and Ardoyne has increased from 4,500 to 6,400 (these figures are approximate).

[148] 'Reported with prejudice: maintaining the tit-for-tat myth' An Phoblacht 19th July 2001 See also 'Forced out' 18th September 2003 & 'From the cradle to the grave' 2nd October 2003

nationalist and republican areas and squandered opportunities in the political process. This has become a recurrent theme. Families in vulnerable areas live in fear of loyalist bombings, yet are bombarded with media commentary about IRA arms.[149]

Just as loyalists believe that republicans have used decommissioning to lever more concessions out of the British government, republicans see loyalist violence as a way of ensuring that they retain their hold on territory and resources. The announcement of a regeneration scheme for North Belfast in September 2001 was presented by the Sinn Fein MLA, Gerry Kelly, as a reward for Holy Cross:

> The fact that three out of four areas in North Belfast approved by DUP minister, Maurice Morrow, for the Urban Renewal scheme are loyalist, challenges the minister's announcement that this will send a 'positive message to everyone in North Belfast'.[150]

In addition to this frustration with the distribution of resources, republican politicians have also made reference that loyalist violence against their communities is part of a process of ethnic cleansing. For example, Alex Maskey, MLA and former Mayor of Belfast has stated that "the increase in loyalist attacks on Catholics right across the north can only be described as a sectarian pogrom".[151]

The sense of despair and threat that loyalists feel is mirrored by republican frustration and injustice. Jarman observes that republican politicians have been accused by unionists of stirring up conflict over the issue of Orange Order parades. The residents groups that have increased in number since the IRA ceasefire of 1994 are seen as a front for Sinn Fein. The cynicism of the PUP as regards nationalist and republican objections to parades in their areas has already been noted - it is almost taken as a given that parades protests are in fact a new form of republican aggression. However, Jarman argues that

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[149] 'Anger at British suspension' An Phoblacht 27th September 2001
[150] 'Glenbryn rewarded for bigotry' An Phoblacht 20th September 2001
[151] 'Unionist silence on sectarian attacks appalling' An Phoblacht 26th July 2001

While there was undoubted support for the protests among republicans, the objections to parades were more widespread within the Catholic and nationalist population. They had in fact predated the ceasefires.[152]

Sinn Fein have exploited rather than created the antipathy to the Orange Order and they have sought to bolster their own legitimacy at the grassroots level. The concept of conflict transformation was based on the transmutation of violent advocacy of respective constitutional positions into peaceful pursuit and on the creation of a new politics based on need. However, both loyalists and republicans seem overwhelmingly to accept a narrative where they are frustrated and threatened by the other side who can employ higher forces (from the media to the NIHE) to achieve their ends.

This ongoing hostility and mutual incomprehension has overshadowed positive developments, such as the support given by the PUP to Martin McGuinness in the Assembly. Issues such as housing are being linked by both sides to an ongoing story of threat and betrayal, which reinforces the tension about territory that has been stoked up by Orange Order parades and the protests against them. The actual nature of the antagonisms between the PUP and Sinn Fein that were revealed during the Holy Cross protests are different to the nature of debate envisaged when conflict transformation was proposed as the way forward for the party. This has limited the PUP's ability to break away from the traditional loyalist discourse of despondency and vulnerability. The PUP are also harmed, though, because they are not an equal electoral force to Sinn Fein. Sinn Fein have outstripped the SDLP whilst the PUP have lost ground.

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[152] Jarman, N 'From outrage to apathy? the disputes over parades 1995-2003' Global Review of Ethno Politics Vol.3 No.1 2003, p94-95

## 6.7 The PUP and Unionist Party Competition

The PUP entered the peace process publicly after the CLMC ceasefire of 1994. They claimed a place in negotiations as one of the parties that had put a stop to loyalist paramilitary violence. They secured this place in the 1996 Forum elections, albeit on a mandate of 3.5 per-cent, which was enough for the electoral system utilised to return them from a top-up list.

Hugh Smyth became an elected representative before the PUP was established. He has said of the party, "we knew we were never going to be a major large party. We'd always be a ginger group, one that would be kicking at the heels of those in power".[153] However, the PUP has sought to increase its share of the vote and candidates have stood for European, Assembly, Westminster and local government elections.

During the peace process the PUP's vote did increase but elections in 2001 showed it had slipped back. The party's vote in the 2001 general election was more than halved compared to its 1997 showing. Although there was little difference in votes between local elections in 1997 and 2001, the PUP had fielded more candidates for the latter.[154] It is interesting to note the fluctuation in Hugh Smyth's first preference votes. In 1993 the figure was just over sixteen hundred. This rose to over three thousand in 1997 and then slipped to just over thirteen hundred in 2001 - similar to the level of support he has received in elections stretching back to 1974.[155]

The 2003 Assembly elections confirmed this decline in the PUP's popular support. David Ervine retained his seat in East Belfast but lost more than two thousand first preference votes. Billy Hutchinson faced a similar decline. Given his smaller support base this was enough for him to lose his North Belfast seat.[156]

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[153] Interview with Hugh Smyth, 13th January 2002

[154] The CAIN election pages show that the PUP gained 1.4% of the vote in the 1997 general election and 0.6% in the 2001 election. They gained 2% of the vote in the local government elections of 1997 and 2001. www.ark.ac.uk

[155] The exact figures are 1,609 3,070 and 1,336 Belfast City Council Elections Archive 1993-2001 www.belfast.gov.uk

Given a decline in support for the Good Friday Agreement, it would seem credible to suggest that a pro-Agreement unionist party would find their support slipping. However, the PUP also acknowledge that the paramilitary link is a long-term barrier to building electoral popularity. William Smith says:

> Within the nationalist community, ex-prisoners are seen as heroes or ex-prisoners are accepted within their community. Ex-loyalist prisoners are only accepted within their immediate community. They're not accepted within Belfast, they're not accepted within upper class communities.[157]

Finlayson believes that PUP literature echoes the DUP's obsession with truth and falsehood but that this discourse has been remodelled around the experience of loyalist paramilitaries:

> It is the narrative of the ex-paramilitary drawn into conflict by the blood and the thunder of the demagogue only to be betrayed by him. It is the narrative of the working class unionist strung along by the middle class and business interests, made to fight a war on their behalf and then disowned.[158]

An example from *Breaking the Mould* bears this out:

> The days of putting a union jack on a donkey in order to whip the working class electorate into shape at the polls are long gone. If the 'troubles' have done nothing else they have 'wised up' the ordinary man and woman in the street and, equally important, those men who were prepared to fight what they believed. Long years in Crumlin Road Jail and Long Kesh prison camp certainly provided the solitude for deep contemplation of things political and otherwise.[159]

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[156] In 1998 Hutchinson gained 3,571 first preference votes which dropped to 1,358 in 2003. This represented a drop in support for the PUP from 9% to 4%. Ervine's vote dropped from 5,114 to 2,990 (14% to 10%) www.ark.ac.uk/elections

[157] Interview with William Smith. 18th January 2002

[158] Finlayson, A 'Loyalist political identity after peace' Capital and Class No.69 Autumn 1999

[159] Breaking the Mould PUP 1998

The PUP has linked the experience of their paramilitary members to a wider experience of working class Protestants. 'The truth' emerges despite the attempts at manipulation and dissembling by politicians. This puts the PUP at the end of a continuum of suffering and betrayal that makes them the embodiment of a community that is dissatisfied with the unionist representatives traditionally foisted upon them. This creates a link between the paramilitary actions of the past and both the political strategy of the present and the PUP's imagined community of the urban Protestant working class. As such it represents an attempt to turn a paramilitary association into an asset.

## 6.7.1 The PUP and the Ulster Unionist Party

The PUP, along with the UDP, was drawn into the peace process due to their connection with loyalist paramilitary groups. As previously discussed they both drew on the CLMC ceasefire to show their political legitimacy came from the end of loyalist violence. Billy Mitchell's assertion that "we've sheathed the sabre, now they can't rattle it any more"[160] is particularly apposite. The ceasefire didn't just mean that political representatives of the paramilitaries could claim they were committed to constitutional means with credibility. The silence of loyalist guns was also seen as a means by which other unionist politicians would be pushed into positive negotiations because they could not hide behind threats that engagement with this process would result in an increase in violence.

Whilst the DUP's attitude to the process remained antagonistic, the UUP did engage and Trimble aligned himself publicly with the UDP and the PUP. Since the end of the UDA ceasefire and the increase in incidents linked to the UVF, Trimble has stood by the PUP. Their relationship has been made more difficult because of a major difference over decommissioning and, as already been shown, individual party members are critical of his leadership. However, within the Northern Ireland Assembly they joined forced when debating a motion on the exclusion of Sinn Fein. Trimble stated:

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[160] McKay, S Northern Protestants (Belfast) Blackstaff 2002, p61

I wish to express my appreciation to the PUP for its support of the motion. Some people have expressed surprise that we have accepted that support but we are glad of it...I have no doubt about the PUP's commitment to exclusively peaceful and democratic means.[161]

Aughey argues that Trimble has fought against the innate fatalism in unionist political culture and instead has adopted a pragmatic and flexible attitude in recognition of the fact that "to preserve the old, it is necessary to support the new order".[162]

Trimble's acceptance speech at the Nobel Prize ceremony, acknowledged problems in the past, although he encouraged nationalists to do so as well:

As Namier says, the irrational is not necessarily unreasonable. Ulster Unionists, fearful of being isolated on the island, built a solid house, but it was a cold house for Catholics. And northern nationalists, although they had a roof over their heads, seemed to us as if they meant to burn the house down.[163]

Aughey identifies a pragmatic new unionism that he links to Trimble. He argues:

Here was Ulster Unionist thinking which implied abandoning majoritarianism and embracing pluralism. Interestingly it coincided with a similar reassessment taking place within loyalist parties like the PUP.[164]

Trimble's criticisms of the past do seem to accord with the PUP critique. Trimble has also tried to emphasise that the Good Friday Agreement has delivered tangible benefits for unionism. During a debate on the status of the IRA ceasefire in the Assembly he

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[161] Hansard 8th October 2001. The motion debated was 'That this Assembly resolves that the political party Sinn Fein does not enjoy the confidence of the Assembly because it is not committed to non-violence and exclusively peaceful and democratic means'. The motion was recorded as negative - it received no nationalist support.

[162] Aughey, A 'Learning from *The Leopard*' from Wilford, R (ed) Aspects of the Belfast Agreement (Oxford) Oxford University Press 2001, p189

[163] Trimble, D Acceptance Speech For Nobel Peace Prize, 10th December 1998 www.ark.ac.uk

[164] Aughey, A 2003 Op. cit, p190

stated:

> At the outset it is worth recalling our present situation. We should never forget
> that Northern Ireland is clearly a better place to live in today, and we do not
> debate the motion at a time of heightened fear...It is the UUP that has delivered
> this situation.[165]

Although the PUP's agenda seems to share many of the positive and pragmatic
elements of Trimble's defence of involvement in the peace process (and the negative,
such as attitudes to the Republic of Ireland) there are two problems. Firstly, Trimble's
brand of unionism is currently in danger of being marginalized. The DUP eclipsed the
UUP at the 2003 election and UUP MLAs, such as Peter Weir and Jeffrey Donaldson,
have defected to Paisley's Party. Trimble still faces challenges from within his own
party, which has never demonstrated unity about the Agreement. Secondly, the
loosening of the UVF's ceasefire, brings with it the danger of more established
constitutional unionists feeling the need to distance themselves from the PUP.

The Northern Ireland Minister, Paul Murphy, has argued that loyalist politicians have a
choice:

> They can either choose gangsterism that we have seen in the last number of days,
> or they can choose political loyalism - the loyalism I have been associated with in
> terms of meeting with people over the last number of years - and I think the
> choice is pretty obvious. People have to go down the political road. Gangsterism
> masquerading as loyalism is something we cannot tolerate in Northern Ireland -
> we won't tolerate it.[166]

The PUP have reacted angrily to any association with the gangster element of loyalism
as can be demonstrated in Hutchinson's justification of the UVF decision to break off
contact with the decommissioning process:

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[165] Hansard 29th April 2002

Mr Hutchinson said the vilification and demonization of loyalism continued at the same time as the 'politicisation' of republicans, despite the Colombia "eco-terrorists", Castlereagh break-in and Stormont spy-ring allegations. The articulate voice of loyalism he said, and included former UDP/UDA linked Gary McMichael and David Adams along with his own party leader, David Ervine had been replaced - with more than a little help in the media - by men with dogs in t-shirts, a clear reference to now imprisoned Johnny Adair. "We are perceived as Neanderthals whose knuckles are trailing the ground. That is not the reality", he said.[167]

However, the PUP must recognise that they were accommodated within negotiations because they, along with the UDP had declared that loyalist political violence was at an end. Members are no longer in a position to depict the party as the political force that presents the return of physical force. Ervine has argued that "The UVF don't pose a specific threat to the peace process and aren't wanting to seek political advantage through military action".[168] However, editions of *Combat* have admitted to attacks in North and East Belfast with one article declaring "we are a stronger and more disciplined force that will defend the people of Ulster".[169]

The PUP argued that the ceasefire provided sufficient legitimacy to enter Northern Irish political life and then sought to develop long-term authority from representing "their" community, the loyalist working class. However, without a break-through in electoral terms and with the frailty of the UVF's commitment the Agreement the two potential sources of legitimacy for the PUP are endangered. The PUP once again put an emphasis on passivity, presenting themselves as victims of the media, politicians and unseen dark forces. An alliance with Trimble and the UUP negotiation team suggested that the PUP could integrate their pragmatic positive stance within the wider agenda of a bigger unionist grouping. However, this is also problematic, given the current state of the Ulster Unionists.

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[166] 'Loyalists should take political road' www.utv.newsroom 6th February 2003

[167] 'Hutchinson spells out reason for UVF move' www.belfasttelegraph.co.uk 17th January 2003

[168] 'US omits terror groups from list' 23rd July 2003 news.bbc.co.uk

## 6.7.2 Competition with the Democratic Unionists

Whilst unionists associated with the signing of the Agreement have come up against a number of problems, the DUP seem to be increasingly confident that they have been proved right. When the PUP launched their 'Yes' campaign at the unfortunately named Adair Arms Hotel, their campaign director, Dawn Purvis, expressed confidence that opposition to the Agreement could be overcome:

> Various people have contacted our offices to complain that they all seem to be hearing is negative blustering but that they have been assured that the 'No's will burn themselves out very soon.[170]

However, the DUP have not burnt out. Instead they have increased their electoral support and they became the largest unionist party in the 2003 Assembly elections. In the areas where they have fought most fiercely for the same seats as the PUP they have cemented their dominance.[171] In the hiatus caused by the suspension of the elections, the DUP have presented themselves as the representatives of popular unionist feeling, without having to deal with the responsibilities of holding political power. Their 'common sense' rhetoric centres on the need for fundamental re-negotiation of the Agreement. This critique is from Nigel Dodds.

> We are almost one year on from the first anniversary of the fourth suspension of devolution here. If you bought a new car and it broke down four times in its first few years, you would ask for your money back. The unionist people are asking for their money back. They want a new agreement. They don't want the old one patched up and put on the road again with another inevitable breakdown somewhere on the horizon.[172]

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[169] 'Ulster loyalists admit breach of ceasefire' timesonline.co.uk 1st August 2002

[170] PUP Press Statement 5th May 1998 www.pup-ni.org.uk

[171] The 1998 Assembly elections gave the DUP 21% of the vote in North Belfast and 31% in East Belfast. In 2003 this changed to 34% and 39% respectively www.ark.ac.uk/elections

[172] 'Dodds calls for 'refund' on Good Friday Agreement' www.belfasttelegraph.co.uk 23rd September 2003

DUP politicians have never let up in attacks on the PUP, not just for the support for the Agreement but for their paramilitary connections. During the debate on the exclusion of Sinn Fein, Peter Robinson, MLA and MP for East Belfast, noted:

> There are also those who consider a joint Ulster Unionist/PUP motion to be hypocritical. How, they argue, can the UUP table a motion to exclude IRA/Sinn Fein while in harness with the PUP... Is the PUP's support for an exclusion motion to be taken as a signal that the loyalist paramilitaries who are associated with that party are, at last prepared to commence actual decommissioning? If so the PUP's support for the motion, in one sense, can be taken as a welcome signal. If not, the sincerity of its support for the motion is seriously open to question.[173]

Decommissioning as been used by the DUP to demonstrate the hypocrisy of the PUP and to underline their lack of constitutional legitimacy. This feeds into the 'gangster' image that Bruce argues has always limited the appeal of paramilitary political representatives.[174]

In February 2003 Tony Blair announced a regeneration package for Northern Ireland worth three million pounds that he expected "to especially benefit loyalist communities". He also said it was important that loyalism found a "proper true and political voice" and that he hoped the government would be able to help.[175] Nigel Dodds welcomed the package, but he demanded that the money be monitored very closely:

> What it has to be used for is ensuring that there are people within the community who are taking on leadership, who have the skills to advocate for their local communities a way forward and don't have to rely on paramilitaries or gangsters or local mobsters to do it for them.[176]

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[173] Hansard 8th October 2001

[174] Bruce, S The Red Hand (Oxford) Oxford University Press 1992

[175] 'Cautious welcome for loyalist initiative' news.bbc.co.uk 6th February 2003

Once again Dodds was staking his claim to represent the same community as the PUP but with greater legitimacy. The lack of a monopoly on loyalist force has allowed the gangster allegations to persist and hinders attempts by the PUP to use their paramilitary past as a means of enhancing credibility. Added to the PUP's continued support, albeit increasingly critical, for the Good Friday Agreement the DUP have been able to assert their popular support and legitimacy compared to the gangsters and traitors that have competed for their loyalist constituency.

As was noted in the introductory chapters of this thesis both Finlayson and McAuley have noted the space created within unionism by the peace process.[177] They have argued that new loyalist politicians have had a certain amount of freedom to engage in negotiations and political action that challenge the traditional pessimism and uncertainty of unionism. The revitalised DUP is looking to end this freedom and curtail the challenge of rivals such as the PUP. Wider unionist anxiety about the lack of benefits delivered by the Good Friday Agreement has also damned the PUP who are associated with strident support of the Agreement and with Trimble, no matter how critical they have been with them.

McAuley believes that the DUP has managed to reflect and make use of the most problematic outcomes of the Good Friday Agreement:

> Any concessions within the political process are seen as a weakening of a core identity, a lessening of what it is to be 'British', Protestant and a unionist. This reading of contemporary events suggests that their very British identity, expressed as either unionism or Protestantism, is under attack. The heart of the DUP project continues to frame the conflict in this way and to construct discourses that re-emphasize and reinforce the central anxieties of many unionists.[178]

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[176] news.bbc.co.uk 6th February 2003 Op. cit.

[177] McAuley, J.W. 2003[a] Op. cit, Finlayson, A 1999 Op. cit.

[178] McAuley, J.W. 2003 [b] Op. cit, p68

McGinty and Darby point out that unionists have had to make compromises on current and visible issues, whilst nationalists had compromised on more abstract ideas:

> Unionists had compromised on prisoner releases, the prospect of major police reform, and the entry of republicans into government. Nationalist and particularly republican concessions seemed to be of a different order. The recognition of the consent principle was somewhat academic given the remoteness of a United Ireland in the realm of practical politics.[179]

This has meant that DUP politicians can point to a number of betrayals and attacks on unionism that are happening now, rather than the issues of sovereignty that more positive unionists have tried to present as copper-fastened by the acceptance of the consent principle. It is these key issues - prisoners, police and Sinn Fein in government - that the DUP has used to constrict the potential space for a rival such as the PUP. Given that the PUP also wanted prisoner releases and accepted the logic behind demands for police reform, the DUP can point the finger at them directly when looking for someone to blame. However, it could also be said that the actions of the PUP and the UUP have created space for the DUP in another way.

Both before and after the 2003 Assembly election, pronouncements from the DUP suggested that their hour was at hand. Peter Robinson, MLA and MP for East Belfast, and deputy leader stated during the campaign:

> All and sundry said that negotiations would not follow Assembly elections. Nobody who inhabits the real world would now dare argue against the proposition that immediately and inevitably after the November 26th poll new negotiations will take place.[180]

This emphasis on re-negotiation suggested that the DUP was confident that it could create a new Agreement that wrote Sinn Fein out of the process. Paisley maintained his

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[179] McGinty, R & Darby, R Guns and Government: The Management of the Northern Ireland Peace Process (Basingstoke) Palgrave 2003, p47
[180] 'DUP setting the pace in election race - Robinson' www.icnorthernireland.icnetwork.co.uk 3rd November 2003

righteous stance towards republicans, stating bluntly that "the idea that some of the party would be part of government with Sinn Fein is a lie. That is a slur on the decency, honesty and integrity of my colleagues."[181]

However, Peter Robinson's comments are more ambiguous and interesting. After the election he said:

> I accept that Sinn Finn Fein are likely to be the dominant nationalist party and that the system we have in Northern Ireland must recognise that that is the case...If [Sinn Fein] become democrats then that's a new set of circumstances. I don't see it. There's nothing in their behaviour that suggests they are going to reach that stage.[182]

Whilst not offering any straightforward measures by which Sinn Fein could become sufficiently democratic, Robinson's comments suggest that something could happen to cause the DUP to reappraise their assessment of the party. There is an element of flexibility. Indeed, when interviewed for *Newsnight*, Sammy Wilson of the DUP stressed that the party did not simply say no to everything, but to crucial issues such as being in government with terrorists, prisoner releases and the destruction of the RUC.[183] Whatever happens in negotiations about restoring devolution, it is highly unlikely that the DUP could ever bring back the RUC or round up all the released prisoners. They can say no to the release of prisoners, without having to actually do anything about it.

David Ervine has said "I was on my hands and knees with a little two pound club hammer breaking the ground that David Trimble could walk on and now I find that Peter Robinson is walking on it as well".[184] It was the UUP, UDP and PUP who entered the negotiations, made the concessions and signed the Agreement that brought about so many painful reforms. Restoring devolution may involve some hard choices

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[181] 'The future is orange, Paisley insists' The Guardian 15th November 2003

[182] 'We will recognise Sinn Fein's vote: Robinson' www.belfasttelegraph.co.uk 4th December 2003
[183] Newsnight broadcast on BBC2 15th December 2003

[184] Fortnight Op. cit. 2003, p16

for the DUP, but many of the most controversial issues have already been dealt with.

As previously discussed, consociational settlements are argued to encourage ethnic outbidding. The DUP has presented itself as the most trenchant defender of the unionist community and has exploited the loss and anxiety created by issues such as police reform. However, because other unionists made those compromises and hammered out a deal with nationalists based on them, the DUP does not have to deal with them and does not have to promise to re-open the Maze or disband the PSNI. It was the pragmatism and risk-taking of other unionist parties that has given the DUP the space to challenge for prominence and, in turn, stifle the greater impulse for change within a party like the PUP.

As such it would seem that the PUP's agenda has been hampered by circumstances and by the actions of other unionists that are beyond their control. However, it is not enough to say that constitutional uncertainty has restricted the impact of their social democratic agenda. Whilst the PUP aimed to challenge more established forces within unionism on issues such as deprivation, it is here where they have revealed themselves to be closest to the DUP. They have failed to question the assumptions of ethnic cleansing and nationalist manipulation of socio-economic issues. The DUP utilises their language of community and seeks to represent the same people, but without the baggage of paramilitary association. It is this lack of rigour in the PUP's critique of politics of Northern Ireland and their place within it that also reaffirms the discourse of betrayal that McAuley has detected within loyalism.[185]

The PUP's slogan for the Assembly election was, how long are you prepared to wait for benefits for our community? When the results were announced, the PUP website was wiped of all information except for contact details and a statement that read:

How long are you prepared to wait? There can be no question that the electorate have issued their answer to this question...we can only respect the mandate the electorate have delivered but we doubt the outcome will result in any meaningful

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[185] McAuley, JW <u>What's New about New Loyalism?</u> Conference paper for the University of Salford 20th November 2000

change that enhances the prospects of working class unionists.[186]

The tone was one of injured pride and a certain wry sadness on behalf of the electorate. Throughout the election campaign the PUP had acted with this sense of noble sacrifice, Ervine arguing "we have set our stall out. We shall be respected for our honesty".[187] After the election he argued, "when a prime minister treats you with irrelevance and the media treats you with irrelevance you can hardly blame the electorate for treating you any other way.[188]

However, that election slogan reveals a problem with the PUP's presentation of its agenda. It is unclear what community is being referred to - the unionist community as a whole, specific loyalist communities or just the local community within the constituency being contested. The PUP has failed to package its notion of community in an attractive way, much as it failed with its exploration of Irish-ness. The ascendancy of the DUP has curtailed the freedom of the PUP to champion the salience of political issues that don't relate to the constitution or the Agreement. However, acceptance of notions such as ethnic cleansing have meant that the PUP has itself not moved far enough from the DUP's pessimistic world view.

## 6.8 Conclusion

McAuley believes that the PUP have embarked on a project of reassessment, which requires rethinking of traditional unionist discourses. He argues that "central to this has been the challenge offered by new loyalism to the authority of the established unionist political leadership and to some of the core ongoing discourses within unionism".[189] In many ways the PUP were responding to similar changes within the established leadership of the UUP. Now both parties seemed to have been marginalized by the DUP's victory. The DUP have been able to criticise the PUP both for maintaining a

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[186] www.pup-ni.org.uk 28th November 2003
[187] 'Election 2003: East Belfast - Unionists square up for battle' www.belfasttelegraph.co.uk 8th November 2003

[188] Fortnight January 2004 Op. cit, p16
[189] McAuley, J.W. 2003, p104

link with violence through the UVF and for making common cause with the established UUP.

Little argues that:

> The realm of formal politics in Northern Ireland has been dominated by middle class representatives who have been somewhat distanced from the communities that have experienced the brunt of political violence, antagonism and conflict. This is important because many in these deprived communities question the legitimacy of the political institutions and agreements that have been forged by the political elites.[190]

The PUP have sought to speak for these deprived communities whilst playing a part in the forging of the very institutions that Little perceives as alienating. Inequality and deprivation persist in Northern Ireland and are accompanied by increasing polarisation and segregation. The PUP believed that they could gain a place within the new institutions as representatives of the loyalist working class, which they pictured as an identifiable community.

The party has been hampered by the fact that the DUP have refused to fade away but instead have gained in popularity. They are also at a disadvantage because their republican sparring partners have massively outstripped them in terms of electoral success. Some of the 'bread and butter' issues which both Sinn Fein and the PUP could group around, such as housing, have proved to be the most contentious and divisive, which has serious implications for the PUP's concept of conflict transformation.

The final problem for the PUP is the fact that without an increased electoral mandate their place in government becomes more dependent on the UVF ceasefire. This is becoming increasingly frail and, in addition to this, the activities of the LVF and UDA show that no one organisation has a monopoly on loyalist violence. Given the emphasis on passivity and victimhood that occurs within PUP critiques of Northern Ireland, past

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[190] Little, A 'The problems of antagonism: applying liberal political theory to conflict in Northern Ireland' British Journal of Politics and International Relations Vol.5 No.3 August 2003, p378-9

and present, there is a danger that party members will now fail to challenge the limitations of their own project and will instead blame neglectful or nefarious forces within unionism, republicanism, the media and the British and Irish governments for their marginalisation.

# CHAPTER SEVEN
## CONCLUSION: HOW NEW IS NEW LOYALISM?

## 7.1 Introduction

New loyalism, as defined in this work, is taken to mean a style of politics that is designed to secure the union by enhancing the quality of life of all those who live within it. Therefore it is envisaged that new loyalist politicians would demonstrate optimism about the future of the union and confidence about dealing with the key actors in any round of negotiations on the subject; the nationalist community and the British and Irish governments. It is also a style of politics that is committed to eroding the binary split between loyal and disloyal and to encouraging a commitment to forging cross-community alliances based on social and economic issues. This definition fits with the positive model of new loyalism, which, along with a corresponding negative model was used to test the so-called new loyalist parties, the UDP and the PUP.

This chapter will begin with a summary of the hypothesis and the methodology governing this thesis. Conclusions will then be drawn as to the novelty of the "new" loyalist projects of both the UDP and the PUP. It will be argued that, whilst the PUP do not fully correspond to the positive model of new loyalism, their programme is closer than the UDP and that this can be attributed to "the people" that both parties imagined themselves as speaking for.]

## 7.2 Hypothesis

It has been suggested by McAuley and Finalyson that the peace process created space for a loyalist alternative to the DUP to emerge. For example, McAuley argues:

> Perhaps one of the most striking developments surrounding the PUP is not what they are saying (this has been reasonably consistent since the mid-1980s), but, rather, the ideological space which has been created within unionism and

loyalism to allow the PUP to openly express and find support for such notions.[1]

There are many factors that have combined to curtail this space for an exploration of ideas. In particular the ongoing anxiety over the intentions and actions of the republican movement has reinforced the fear of many unionists that they have made all the concessions without any tangible and significant reward.

However, the hypothesis that governs this work centres on internal factors. It was posited that there were a number of internal tensions or contradictory impulses within new loyalism. These tensions would have to be resolved in order for a new loyalist party to contribute to the creation of a civic unionism that would aid the development of a normalised politics within Northern Ireland.

What this hypothesis meant in terms of the UDP and PUP was that new loyalism needed to mark a progression from populist resistance to the unionist hierarchy, which did not combated sectarianism. New loyalist politicians also needed to develop a sophisticated analysis of how sectarianism could be marginalised rather than assume that exploring other political identities or focusing on material need would automatically provide a substitute for sectarianism.

## 7.3 Methodology

In order to test the hypothesis, two models of new loyalism were constructed against which the UDP and the PUP could be assessed. One was a positive model in which new loyalism represented a significant progression from previous attempts to sideline sectarianism in loyalist politics. It would be more accepting of diversity within Northern Ireland and open to debate that could undermine binary ideas of identity, where Protestant and Catholic equalled loyal and disloyal. This progression would be encapsulated in the belief that the best way to secure the future of the union would be to improve the quality of life within it through co-operation with nationalists at both the

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[1] McAuley, JW 'The emergence of new loyalism' from Coakley, J ed <u>Changing Shades of Orange and Green: Redefining the Union and Nation in Contemporary Ireland</u> (Dublin) UCD 2003, p110 See also Finlayson, A 'Loyalist political identity after peace' <u>Capital and Class</u> No.69 1999, p47-76

elite and grassroots level. This would entail the development of a manifesto that addressed social and economic needs. For this new loyalist model to be genuinely new it would have to attract more electoral support than politicians with paramilitary connections did in the 1970s. This positive model amounts to a definition of new loyalism.

The negative model presented the novelty of new loyalism as a surface deep series of changes that masked negativity about the future of unionism, concerns over the precarious existence of loyalists in Northern Ireland and hostility and mistrust towards nationalists and outside political forces such as the British government.

The positive and negative models of new loyalism were developed through two separate literature reviews. The first sought definitions of unionism and loyalism, and areas of novelty within new loyalism. The areas identified were a re-interpretation of the Stormont era; confidence about the future of the union; a break with the binary representation of Protestant and Catholic as loyal and disloyal; and a new approach to social and economic issues that could promote common cause with nationalists. The potential in this positive style of politics came in part from the opportunities it presented for pushing the 'no' unionism of the DUP to the margins.

A strong indicator of the success of this project would be electoral support. Securing an increasing share of the vote would enhance the claim of these parties to speak for their communities, as well as showing a practical improvement on previous attempts by paramilitaries to become elected representatives. It could also serve as an indicator that the message of these parties, that negotiation and compromise with nationalists could have positive outcomes for unionism, had been accepted by those who did not undertake the personal rethink that PUP and UDP leaders did, necessitated by being imprisoned by the state they had broken the law to defend.

The second literature review highlighted debates relating to communal and individual rights. The Good Friday Agreement, to which the PUP and UDP were signatories, was drawn up from consociational principles. Critiques of consociationalism centre on

arguments that such settlements encourage division and intransigence. More positive interpretations, such as those found in the work of McGarry and O'Leary, identity a "consociational paradox" whereby the political recognition of cultural differences within a state is the first step to defusing their salience.[2]

What became apparent from this literature review was that it was impossible to judge the merits of any attempts to mediate division and/or conflict through constitutional change without considering the actions of politicians working within that framework. Porter's work suggested one way in which unionists could respond to the challenges of the concept of parity esteem as embodied in the Good Friday Agreement and as accepted by Northern Irish nationalists and the British and Irish governments. This was through the development of a civic unionism that "anticipates a way of life in which the British-ness and Irish-ness of Northern Ireland are recognised and structures of democracy and justice are established".[3]

Considering Porter's work it is apparent that his own models of unionism are very prescriptive and that his discussion of civil society seems to separate it entirely from the division between nationalists and unionists. In addition, he acknowledges that his project of reconciliation rests on a classical republican theory of citizenship, whereas other literature on citizenship and civil society suggests that it is hard to quantify the benefits of a high level of political participation.[4] However, three aspects of Porter's model of civic unionism were identified as relevant to the positive model of new loyalism: a concern with social justice; a willingness to engage in debate with challengers; and an acceptance that holding an Irish national identity is not tantamount to disloyalty. These complemented the tenets of a genuine new loyalism generated from the first literature review and allowed for the construction of the models by which the new loyalist parties and their political forebears could be tested.

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[2] McGarry, J 'Northern Ireland, civic nationalism and the Good Friday Agreement' from McGarry, J (ed) Northern Ireland and the Divided World (Oxford) Oxford University Press 2001, p124

[3] Porter, N Rethinking Unionism (Belfast) Blackstaff 1996, p11

[4] See for example: Walzer, M 'Citizenship' from Ball, T Farr, J & Hanson, R Political Innovation and Conceptual Change (Cambridge) Cambridge University Press 1989 pp211-219        Kymlicka, W & Norman, W 'Return of the citizen: a survey of recent work on citizenship theory' Ethics Vol 104. no.2 pp352-381

The third element of the methodology, after these literature reviews, was the collection of primary data on the parties themselves. This data collection ended up being weighted towards the PUP. This was partly because PUP members agreed to take part in qualitative semi-structured interviews, but also because, with two members sitting in the Northern Ireland Assembly, the party's contribution to debate was recorded in minutes of Assembly proceedings.

## 7.4 Testing New Loyalism

The first three chapters of the thesis were dedicated to constructing the framework for testing new loyalism. The fourth chapter dealt with forerunners to the PUP and UDP, in terms of attempts by unionist politicians to find positive ways to accommodate nationalists and secure the union. These projects were the civic unionism of Terence O'Neill, the NILP's social democratic critique of the Unionist government, and the first political initiatives undertaken by the UVF and UDA. These will now be summarised in turn.

### 7.4.1 O'Neillism and the Northern Ireland Labour Party

The 1960s promised to mark a new era in Northern Ireland. The IRA abandoned its border campaign in 1962 and this seemed to create the space for projects that could make the constitutional issue marginal to Northern Irish political activity. O'Neill presented himself as a modernizer. His mission to revitalise the Northern Irish economy was spurred by the need to maintain support amongst the Protestant working class. However, he believed that economic growth would have the side benefit of bringing Catholics into the mainstream of Northern Irish society. This would require no adjustment in terms of political institutions or security arrangements; rather gestures of reconciliation would be sufficient.

O'Neill's faith in the power of civil society to generate common civic virtue was demonstrated by his commitment to civic weeks and the Project to Enlist the People

(PEP). O'Neill's project was very much a top-down one, where his magnanimity towards Catholics would be an example that could be followed by the lower orders. His analysis of the division in Northern Ireland came from his belief that Catholics could be brought up to the level of civilisation set by a civic Northern Ireland, hence his belief that "if you treat Roman Catholics with due consideration and kindness, they will live like Protestants in spite of the authoritative nature of their church".[5] He believed Catholics had deliberately isolated themselves within Northern Ireland arguing that "where there is apartheid in our society it comes almost entirely from a voluntary separation from the mainstream of public and social life. This starts at an early age with the insistence that certain children cannot attend state schools".[6]

O'Neill's project was seen as such a threat to the future of Northern Ireland that it encouraged the entrance of an outsider like Ian Paisley into the mainstream and shaped the actions of the founders of the new UVF. However, his version of civic unionism was in fact very timid. His certainty that Catholics had marginalized themselves meant he had no willingness to consider any other reasons for abstentionism and isolationism. His faith in the power of civil society was a means by which he could resist institutional change. His commitment to modernization substituted any need to address issues of social and economic inequality in the province. O'Neill envisaged civil society as the place where the virtues of active citizenship could be developed in such a manner as to provide new legitimacy for the state. However, he was unwilling to reform that state in order to remove inequalities between these citizens and he was unable to deal with the demands generated by nationalists through the civil rights movement.

The Northern Ireland Labour Party challenged the dominance of the Unionist Party during this period but they were destroyed by the re-emergence of conflict at the end of the decade. The NILP manifestos centred on issues such as continuing high unemployment and attacked the Unionist Party for incompetence and high-handedness. After the IRA's border campaign was abandoned, many NILP members committed themselves to increasing their Catholic support base as well as their Protestant one. The NILP represent a nearer ancestor of new loyalists than O'Neill because of the

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[5] Interview with Terence O'Neill Belfast Telegraph 10th May 1969 www.ark.ac.uk

[6] O'Neill, T Ulster at the Crossroads (London) Faber and Faber 1969, p121

party's emphasis on class as an important political cleavage in Northern Ireland, and a faith in the realignment of political activity from constitutional to social and economic issues. The NILP was also confident that it was important to mount an electoral battle that meant it would be fighting for the same votes as the Unionist Party. However, the onset of conflict revealed the fragility of the party's support base. It was not just that Protestant working class voters rallied to the defence of the union or blamed the NILP for its association with the British Labour Party.

The problem for the NILP was that both unionists and nationalist members could still continue to proclaim the importance of class politics, but the former directed this towards integration with Britain and British labour organisations, whilst the latter looked towards Irish labourism. There was no intrinsic reason why socialism would keep the two factions together in the face of constitutional turmoil.

## 7.4.2 The UVF and the UDA

After the success of the Ulster Workers' Council strike in May 1974, there was a drive towards political action by the leadership of the UDA and UVF. There was a genuine sense that loyalism lacked a political voice and it was legitimate to challenge the unionist hierarchy, even while the future of Northern Ireland as an integral part of the United Kingdom looked so uncertain. There was also a need to augment the legitimacy of the paramilitary organisations. The UVF took the conventional political party route, founding the VPP in 1974. The UDA, under the leadership of Andy Tyrie, involved itself in grassroots activities and in constitutional debate, which centred on the idea of a civic Ulster nation. However, by the end of the 1970s John McMichael had steered the UDA towards the formation of a political party, the ULDP.

During the 1970s these political activities laid the foundations for the PUP and UDP. They encouraged debate on the diversity of identity within Northern Ireland. These developments also signified confidence that a constitutional settlement could be established that accommodated all residents of Northern Ireland. There was also a

willingness to criticise unionist politicians for ignoring social and economic issues. In addition, for many paramilitaries in prison, especially within the UVF, there was a willingness to engage in debate with republicans and search for a sense of common interest.

These initiatives did not accord with the positive model of new loyalism for a number of reasons. Paramilitary political representatives performed poorly in elections. Furthermore, political debate about establishing common cause with nationalists did not direct the UVF and the UDA away from violence, and attacks on Catholic civilians continued. Indeed many within these organisations were openly hostile to political activity and resented what they saw as the hijacking of military groupings. These initiatives also faltered because the paramilitaries were restricted in their room for manouevre by other events and actors in Northern Ireland. Mainstream unionist politicians, who publicly rejected illegitimate force, managed to re-establish themselves after the strike. The British government bolstered the established security forces, which affected the paramilitary role of defender. Republicans exploited the special category protests and the international reaction to the death of their hunger strikers made it difficult for loyalist prisoners to continue their process of debate, even though many of them had a strong measure of empathy.

However, one of the key weaknesses of these first political steps, which meant that they corresponded to the negative model of new loyalism, was the lack of sophistication and depth to this work. The UDA's one big idea was an independent Ulster. Even though they retreated from the idea of full independence, they remained associated with the idea of an isolated Ulster, which appealed to neither nationalists nor unionists. The VPP was formed without a manifesto and disintegrated after its failure to get elected. In addition, the existence of two separate paramilitary organisations, which pursued separate political paths, lessened the possibilities for a coherent Protestant working class organisation and promoted discord, even to the point of murderous feuding. This problem still affects loyalist paramilitaries and their political representatives.

## 7.5 The UDP and the PUP

The previous two chapters have assessed the agendas of the UDP and their successors the UPRG, and of the PUP. There have been a number of problems that have faced both groupings. As Rowan notes "after the ceasefires of 1994, the loyalist parties did build on their electoral mandate, but it was a case of baby steps, rather than giant strides".[7] This slow improvement was halted as the wider unionist community turned against the Good Friday Agreement. McAuley points out that "the PUP has had difficulty in continuing to convince its core support that the peace process has delivered".[8] The UDP had in fact already failed to establish a significant level of core support, even amongst the UDA. Crawford argues that there was always a strong degree of ambivalence about the peace process, given that the aggressive UDA of the early 1990s had struck at the IRA so successfully.[9]

The PUP managed the first hurdle of the 1998 Assembly election. However, the party lost support, and one seat, at the 2003 election. McAuley notes that the pluralism of the PUP and their allies within the UUP has been restricted by the "continued reconstruction of the traditional hegemonic unionist bloc around the DUP".[10] The PUP has also been affected by the strength of Sinn Fein, who far exceed the PUP in electoral terms, representing the fact that they have been able to take "their" people with them. The PUP is not in a position to battle with Sinn Fein as the respective representatives of loyalist and republican blocs.

Despite the problems the PUP have faced they have not yet been excluded from the political mainstream and their agenda has shown itself to be more sophisticated than anything produced by the UDP or UPRG. The reason for this difference lies in the 'people' that both groupings have purported to speak for. The UDP moved away from ideas of independence. However, it was still based on the idea of a distinctive Ulster identity, which linked it to the original political activities of the UDA. Likewise the

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[7] Rowan, B Armed Peace: Life and Death After the Ceasefires (Edinburgh) Mainstream Publishing 2003, p72

[8] McAuley, JW 'Unionism's last stand? Contemporary unionist politics and identity in Northern Ireland Global Review of Ethno Politics Vol.3 No.1, p62

[9] Crawford, C Inside the UDA (London) Pluto 2003

PUP continued to focus on class, which had been the main focus of any UVF political initiatives. The PUP have moved their class politics towards a discussion of community and still eschew ideas of an Ulster nation.

## 7.5.1 The UDA's Civic Ulster

By the time the UDP had entered the peace process, the party had moderated the original plans for an Independent Ulster to the championing of a distinctive Ulster identity. What remained was the belief laid out in the NUPRG discussions of the 1970s that "the only common denominator that Ulster people have whether they be Catholic or Protestant is that they are Ulstermen".[11] The commitment to an independent Ulster stemmed in part from the belief that "it will encourage the development of a common identity between all of our people regardless of religion".[12] Even after the idea of independence was downgraded, due to its palpable unpopularity, the belief in a common civic identity persisted.

This civic Ulster was consciously modeled on the United States of America. Civic institutions such as an assembly and a constitution would be complemented by a secular education system. The consensus created by constitutional change would enable politicians to tackle "the real enemies which confront and terrorise the whole community – social deprivation, economic recession, unemployment, the need for more housing and the breakdown of respect for law and order".[13] This would mean that civic citizenship would be enhanced by a diminution of social inequality.

As Kymlicka has pointed out it is erroneous to presume that liberal states are completely neutral in the sense that there is often an ethnic base to the official civic culture.[14] Whilst the UDA was constructing an ideal of a civic modern state, members

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[10] McAuley, JW 2003, p70

[11] Glen Barr quoted in Bruce, S The Red Hand (Oxford) Oxford University Press 1992, p231

[12] NUPRG Constitutional Proposals 1979

[13] UPRG Common Sense 1987

[14] Kymlicka, W 'the new debate over minority rights' from Requenjo, F (ed) Democracy and National

were also influenced by ideas of the Cruthin and an ancient ethnic belonging to Ulster. The UDP entered negotiations for a settlement that accepted the need for political and cultural recognition of two national identities. It did not respond to this new challenge by developing its manifesto either by reformulating the significance of an Ulster identity in this bi-national context, or by enhancing its stance on social and economic issues, which remained a populist one. The emphasis on a separate sense of Ulster-ness failed to attract nationalist or unionist support.

It could be suggested that the UDA was singularly unsuited to its proposed civic nationalist programme. The UDA remained an association, a loose affiliation of members and units. In contrast, although the UVF was not quite the tight-knit military outfit its self-image suggested, it was a more organised and defined group. The UVF were also keener from the start to engage with institutions of the state, for example through the formation of a political party rather than a research group. It was acknowledged in *Common Sense* that a civic settlement rested in institutions and a written constitution. However, the nebulous decentralized nature of the UDA means that it is more suited to an ethnic idea of the nation where sovereignty cannot be fully vested in anything but the people. This legitimates populism and exclusivity. It is this fundamental base of all political activity associated with the UDA that means it has always gravitated towards the negative model of new loyalism. This was true of the UDP, but is especially so in respect of the current UPRG, which is particularly lacking in coherence and substance. It means that the UDA has remained connected to the highly conditional loyalty that denotes traditional loyalism.[15]

## 7.5.2 The PUP and the Community

The PUP's alignment to a community rather than a nation does represent a development from original UVF thinking. Given the decline of the manufacturing industry in Northern Ireland the emphasis on community reveals an understanding of social and economic change and allows for a political platform that goes beyond the imagined constituency of male manual workers in unionised industrial locations.

Pluralism (London) Routledge 1991
[15] Miller, D Queen's Rebels (Dublin) Gill and MacMillan 1978

Ruane and Todd argue that

New loyalism presents itself as a genuine attempt at reconciliation which breaks
with the view of irreconcilable communal conflict. But opposition to nationalism
and republicanism remains intense and the conciliatory and egalitarian image
fractures under pressure.[16]

In the case of the PUP this is a simplistic analysis. As Ruane and Todd themselves
acknowledge "the provisions of the Agreement do not tackle local level
sectarianism".[17] The PUP concept of conflict transformation was meant to serve as a
means of dealing with this issue. Conflict transformation acknowledged that division
and antagonism remained but the concept demonstrated a belief that conflict over
constitutional aspirations could be transformed into peaceful political activity. The
PUP could therefore be quite open about their hostility to the ideals of republicanism.
At the same time the party could forge alliances between what they saw as their
community and the community spoken for by Sinn Fein. This would be achieved by
encouraging realignment around social and economic issues.

Given that consociational settlements concentrate on accommodation of elites, the
PUP's emphasis on community and grassroots politics provides a means by which
cross-cutting cleavages could be encouraged from the bottom up. Conflict
transformation represents both a pragmatic and imaginative framework for PUP
alliances with Sinn Fein because it allows them to work with republicans on social and
economic issues whilst still speaking for 'their' side of the divide. Sinn Fein and the
PUP's mutual support in the area of education policy is a demonstration that this
approach can be successful.

However, the flaw in this concept stems from the fact that some social and economic
issues are not seen as separate from constitutional issues. In particular the provision of

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[16] Ruane, J & Todd, J The Dynamics of Conflict in Northern Ireland (Cambridge) University Press 1996,
p106

[17] Ruane, J & Todd, J After the Good Friday Agreement: Analysing Political Change in Northern Ireland
(Dublin) University College Dublin Press 1999, p27

social housing, because of its association with territory, is an issue that generates antagonism between the communities that the PUP and Sinn Fein seek to represent. PUP members need to revise their understanding of 'ethnic cleansing' of loyalist areas if they are to transcend sectarianism and challenge Sinn Fein's analysis, which also rests on victimhood.

The PUP has been constrained by external factors, particularly increasing unionist disaffection as regards the Good Friday Agreement. This has affected the PUP's ability to challenge the DUP. The DUP won their first urban Westminster seat in 1979 in East Belfast. It is here that the PUP's most visible and charismatic senior figure, David Ervine, has stood for election. The PUP gained 10 per-cent of the vote in the 1996 Forum elections and in the 1998 Assembly elections this rose to 14 per-cent. However, by the 2003 election this had slipped back to 10 per-cent. Meanwhile the DUP's vote has increased from 29 per-cent in the Forum elections to 31 per-cent in 1998 to 39 per-cent in 2003.[18]

The Good Friday Agreement has changed the parameters in which the DUP formulates its message. The emphasis is not on sovereignty but on the internal elements that constitute the human rights agenda of Sinn Fein. The recent success of the DUP in the 2003 Assembly elections demonstrates that their common-sense worldview resonates with voters who have not previously given the party their support. The DUP have been able to exploit an interpretation of post-Agreement politics that seems logical to a group adjusting to a consociational settlement. If Sinn Fein have used their position in the negotiating process as leverage why not vote for the DUP who seem to be the only unionist party prepared to do the same for their community?

This suggests that external pressures have curtailed the PUP. However, it is apparent that internal tensions and contradictory impulses are at work and that presenting the PUP as victims of ethnic outbidding is too simplistic. The PUP accepted the need for police reform as part a new post-Agreement society. When interviewed for this thesis, Ervine said the emotional impact and sense of loss generated by police reform had to be expected but he asked "why is it that all of these quite expected things shock us, annoy

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[18] www.ark.ac.uk/elections

us, upset us? Because people claim different and that's the difference".[19]

However Ervine also argued that nationalists had unbalanced this process of reform by demanding single constituency benefits which "destablises the other side".[20] As has already been discussed, he has made public statements that suggest republican are making ever increasing demands as regards policing when he could have tried to sell the idea that Sinn Fein have in fact been forced to compromise in this area, whatever their rhetoric.

McAuley and McCormack argue that the DUP have had to work hard to maintain their urban support base and have therefore needed to address social and economic issues.[21] This is another area where the PUP has sought to represent their potential electorate. However, party members need to challenge some of their own assumptions about the social democratic programme that they believe can transcend sectarianism at the local level. As Shirlow points out, conflict at interface areas encourages people to view their communities as pure and homogenous and to intimidate and even physically attack those on their own side who challenge this view.[22] If the PUP continues to accept the 'ethnic cleansing' explanation for why violence occurs in situations like this their vision of their community cannot develop in terms of acknowledging internal diversity.

## 7.6 What's New about New Loyalism?

There was no obligation for those who took up arms in defence of Ulster in the 1970s and 1980s to rethink their position or make any contribution to the political life of Northern Ireland. Emerson's review of a biography of David Ervine notes:

> Reviewing Ervine's contribution in one volume is sobering. It bids the question: 'if only our elected representatives had such imagination'. But then the question

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[19] Interview with David Ervine 30th April 2003

[20] Interview with David Ervine 30th April 2003
[21] McAuley, JW and McCormack, C 'The Protestant working class and the state in Northern Ireland since 1930' a problematic relationship' from Hutton, S and Stewart, S Ireland's Histories: Aspects of State, Society and Ideology (London) Routledge 1991

turns around 'if only people with such imagination could get elected' and we're back to square one. Ervine could make his remarkable personal journey but he couldn't bring enough people with him.[23]

The story of politicians such as David Ervine.and Billy Hutchinson suggest that the term new loyalism is really just the story of personal transformation. Only a tiny section of the loyalist community underwent their experiences of paramilitary activity and subsequent imprisonment. And only a handful of these people undertook to use these experiences as the beginning of a search for genuine rapprochement with nationalists. For new loyalism to be more than this the UDP and the PUP needed to develop a coherent manifesto, which would help marginalise sectarianism as an organising principle of loyalist political activity, and they needed to attract support for this in the form of votes.

What is clear is that during the period of the peace process and the signing of the Good Friday Agreement is that the PUP had developed a more comprehensive socialist manifesto than the original VPP and that the party had responded to changes in Northern Irish society such as the entry of women into the workforce. The UDP did not develop from populism and Ulster separatism in the same way.

However, the PUP has yet to fully correspond with the positive model of new loyalism. The party's challenge to the DUP has not succeeded and Paisley's party seems to be stronger than ever, although it cannot undo all the changes that the PUP, UDP and UUP accepted as part of a new constitutional settlement. The PUP also failed to establish a strong electoral base and has faced setbacks in this area. Finally, the party needs to be more critical about how members have dealt with social and economic issues. This said the PUP has shown itself capable of pragmatism, clear-headedness and imagination and may in a future period of stability be able to develop its project further in the direction of a confident and sophisticated new loyalist politics.

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[22] Shirlow, P 'Who fears to speak?' Global Review of Ethno-Politics Vol.3 No.1 2003

[23] Emerson, E 'How special was Ervine?' Fortnight November 2002

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Michael Acheson and Billy Mitchell are both former members of the UVF who have served life sentences for murder. They are both members of the PUP Executive. Joan Totten is a community worker who serves as secretary of the Oldpark branch of the PUP. She joined the party in 1997. Michael Acheson joined in 1996 and Billy Mitchell was a founder member of the PUP, which was formed in 1977.

2. Wilson McArthur 13th March 2001
At the time of this interview, Wilson McArthur was a full-time worker for the PUP at the party's office in Stormont. He joined the party in 1996.

3. Paul Ferguson 13th March 2001
Paul Ferguson is a former employee of the electronics factory, Shorts. He is a member of the PUP executive. He joined the party in 1998.

4. Eddie Kinner 14th March 2001
Eddie Kinner is a former member of the UVF who served a life sentence for murder. He works as an IT officer and serves on the PUP executive. He joined the party in 1993.

5. Eileen Ward 14th March 2001
Eileen Ward manages the office at the PUP's headquarters on the Shankill Road. At the time of this interview she was also reading for a Women's Studies degree at Queen's University, Belfast. She joined the party in 1995.

6. Paul Morrow 20th August 2001
Paul Morrow is the PUP's website manager. At the time of this interview he was unemployed. He joined the party in 1998.

7. Billy Hutchinson 13th January 2002
Billy Hutchinson is a former UVF member who served a life sentence for murder. At the time of this interview he was MLA for North Belfast, although he lost his seat in the 2003 Assembly elections. He remains a councillor in the same area. He joined the party in 1992.

8. William 'Plum' Smith 18th January 2002
William Smith is a former UVF member who served a life sentence for murder. He works for EPIC, a charitable organisation that aids former loyalist paramilitary prisoners in their civilian lives. He is a founder member and Chairman of the PUP.

9. Hugh Smyth 23rd January 2002
Hugh Smyth is the PUP's longest-serving elected representative of the PUP. Before the formation of the party he had also been elected as an independent to the power-sharing assembly set-up by the Sunningdale Agreement, and he was a founder member of the PUP. At the time of this interview he was still the party's leader. He stepped down in April 2002 but remains a councillor for the Shankill ward in West Belfast.

10. Dawn Purvis 16th September 2002
At the time of this interview Dawn Purvis worked in the PUP's Stormont office, whilst completing a politics degree at Queen's University Belfast. She joined the party in 1994. She stood (unsuccessfully) in East Belfast for the PUP at the 1998 Assembly elections and in the 2001 council elections. She directed the PUP's 'vote yes' campaign in the 1998 referendum and is a member of the PUP executive.

11. David Rose 17th September 2002
David Rose is a deputy-headmaster at a state secondary school in Bangor, County Down. He joined the party in 1997. He became Deputy Leader of the PUP in April 2002.

12. Robin Stewart 17th January 2003
At the time of this interview, Robin Stewart was working as a volunteer in the East Belfast constituency office. Formerly he was a press officer for the PUP and an unsuccessful candidate in the local government elections in 2001. He joined the party in 1997.

13. David Ervine 30th April 2003
David Ervine succeeded Hugh Smyth to the post of Party Leader. He is also an MLA and a councillor for East Belfast. He was a member of the UVF and was sentenced to eleven years in 1974 after being stopped with a bomb in his car. He joined the party in 1984.


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