

**Alternative Ulster: Voices of Political Radicalism,
Cultural Empowerment and Social Dissent Within
Loyalist Paramilitarism in Northern Ireland Since 1966**

T. Scott

**A thesis submitted in partial fulfilment of the
requirements of London Metropolitan University for the
degree of Doctor of Philosophy 2014**

This thesis considers the political thought that has been threaded throughout the history of loyalist paramilitary activity in Northern Ireland since the outbreak of the modern Troubles in the mid-1960s - a political voice that would often speak in more radical tones than anything else emanating from within a fractured Ulster unionism since the collapse of Stormont in 1972.

The overview is grounded upon the historical experiences of the various political fronts associated with the Ulster Volunteer Force and Ulster Defence Association and will provide an original and gauged interpretation of the reasons for their comparative lack of success despite considerable promotion and encouragement from external parties. There will be particular focus throughout on the effect of Protestant public antipathy to loyalist paramilitary organisations and to their standard modus operandi regarding both targeting and criminal endeavour.

A definitive analysis will thus be made of the cultural and paramilitary dynamics so often underestimated, overlooked or indeed misinterpreted by outside observers and commentators that have continuously underpinned these political failures of note since the first loyalist paramilitary-linked political body was formed in 1974. This alongside clear historical contextualisation of political violence in the north of Ireland both before and after 1966 and in relation to pathways of political division and dissent within the Protestant community of considerable historical vintage. In light of the clear inability of UVF and UDA-linked bodies to mirror the fortunes of republican political groups associated with the Irish Republican Army, consideration shall also be made of the spatial room for political manoeuvre ahead for existing loyalist fringe parties.

With completion of UVF and UDA decommissioning in early 2010 a moment of historical closure would appear to have been reached with regard to loyalist paramilitarism. In turn, the near collapse of the Progressive Unionist Party at that year's end - and the party's subsequent support for major loyalist protests on the streets of Belfast from late 2012 - may likewise suggest that the radical voice of paramilitary political loyalism now stands at an equally defining crossroads.

CONTENTS

I	Introduction	1
II	Literature review	12
III	The political thought of the Ulster Volunteer Force and Ulster Defence Association in historical perspective	24
IV	Loyalist paramilitarism reborn – the collapse of Stormont and the destruction of Sunningdale	47
V	The Volunteer Political Party 1974	81
VI	The New Ulster Political Research Group 1978-81	101
VII	The Ulster Loyalist Democratic Party 1981-87	122
VIII	The role of the Progressive Unionist Party and Ulster Democratic Party in the Northern Ireland peace process	140
IX	Decline of loyalist paramilitary political innovation following the Good Friday Agreement	172
X	New loyalism - cartographers of peace or sophisticated mob leaders?	194
XI	Conclusions	224
	Glossary	228
	Bibliography	232

AUTHOR'S NOTE

In this thesis the author has capitalised the terms “Unionist”, “Loyalist”, “Nationalist” and “Republican” only within the context of party political affiliation as opposed to general ideological labels. Quotations however will follow the direct usage from the original text. “Protestant” and “Catholic” are capitalised throughout.

“Ulster” will be used generically with regard to Protestant Ulster - or the six-country state of Northern Ireland which existed between 1921 and 1972 - but not the Irish province.

I apply the term “Stormont” only in regard to the period when devolved government was located in that specific East Belfast location from 1932 onwards.

“Londonderry” is used to refer to the North Western county of Northern Ireland and “Derry” or “Derry City” in regard to its major conurbation.

I personally hold that the term “loyalist” can be used in reference to a cross-class Protestant constituency in broad-based historical terms as opposed to certain academic commentators in recent years who qualify it as a phenomena lodged solely within working class communities. The Orange Order, Ulster Vanguard, the Democratic Unionist Party and Traditional Unionist Voice certainly contained and contain middle class members who are evidently political loyalists in my opinion. Furthermore I hold that to limit loyalism to such a working class specification fundamentally complicates a large raft of earlier written material.

“Volunteers” is used throughout with regard to loyalist and republican paramilitaries.

I believe future historians will say something else about us. They will say it was moral issues which were the really critical issues of our day. It was questions of right and wrong, of truth and half-truth which, in fact, confronted society. We are being judged in so many ways as a society. Violence judges those who practise it; violence judges those who react to it; violence judges those who accept it as inevitable; violence judges those who talk about it. Moral judgements can so easily become clouded in a period of prolonged violence in a community.

- Bishop of Down and Dromore Robin Eames at the funeral of murdered RUC Constable Thomas Bingham, February 1984

I: INTRODUCTION

Some people would argue that for it to be a worthwhile thing to do, there has to be an electoral reward at the end of the day... the point should be this ... it was worthwhile anyway - Loyalist paramilitary source quoted in the Belfast Telegraph during the 2004 Leeds Castle talks on the value of loyalist paramilitary political innovation.¹

In March 2009, following upon the murders of three members of the security forces by republican dissidents in Antrim and Lurgan, Northern Ireland Deputy First Minister Martin McGuinness held a joint news conference in Belfast with First Minister Peter Robinson and Police Service of Northern Ireland (PSNI) Chief Constable Hugh Orde. McGuinness' condemnation of those involved in the attacks as "traitors to the island of Ireland"² could readily be interpreted as the defining moment when the Northern Ireland conflict unequivocally merged into the realms of the much-vaunted "new dispensation".³

The positive feedback that the former Irish Republican Army (IRA) Chief-of-Staff would receive from certain unionist and loyalist quarters⁴ – well-versed in the minutiae of three decades of violence in Northern Ireland - was further proof that the republican movement's troubled transition from war to peace had left it firmly embedded within the island's democratic structures. The conclusion of the Ulster Troubles would thus see Sinn Féin in government office and in receipt of international recognition for its acts of statesmanship and peacemaking.

The parallel attempt by loyalist paramilitary groupings to negotiate such a pathway over the course of the conflict from sectarian murder into democratic discourse would be equally problematical. However, as this thesis will argue, the specific complexity of such a metamorphosis within Protestant political culture – as gauged upon its historical relationship to political violence - would prove beyond the resources of group or individual endeavour. The loyalist paramilitary role as a pro-state actor would fundamentally qualify the dynamics of its campaign in comparison to republican groups. This by way of the central inability to portray itself as a radical force expecting broad public support from the Protestant community within a remit of clear cultural continuity. The new loyalist political forces emerging from the Ulster Volunteer Force (UVF) and Ulster Defence Association (UDA) could not replicate Sinn Féin success even with the aid of high profile media exposure and an electoral framework constructed for its specific benefit in the mid-1990s.⁵

A wall mural in the Templemore Avenue area of East Belfast shows the face of former Progressive Unionist Party (PUP) leader and UVF member David Ervine beside a Harland and Wolff shipyard crane and philosopher George Santanyana's words "Those who forget the past are condemned to repeat it".⁶ Ervine's memory may now be etched deep in both Belfast and Northern Ireland social history but the broader political experiment that he was to be famously

associated with as one of its two most notable figures may well eventually be regarded as a Troubles footnote of somewhat anachronistic note. *We Are The People* essentially would not make the political leap of faith from exclusion to inclusivity within the remit of latterday loyalist paramilitarism.

The central aim of this research will be to underscore that the failure of the loyalist political experiment was not grounded on the sectarian and criminal aspects of the UVF and UDA campaigns alone but more fundamentally on the overwhelming scale of Protestant public antipathy to the entire modern phenomena. Recent academic analysis remains cognisant of the former factor while often paying qualified attention to the latter linkage despite its all-encompassing importance. This critical nuance can be traced from the the time of the first UVF murders through to the loyalist paramilitary endgame itself - the sheer longevity of which has fundamentally negated the residual political credibility of both organisations.

The author considers himself sensitive as to why loyalist paramilitary activity in the early 1970s could be construed as directly reactive to republican violence. The majority of bomb attacks in my North Belfast neighbourhood during the conflict emanated from the Third Battalion Belfast Brigade of the Provisional Irish Republican Army (PIRA) in the Ardoyne district as an historical fact. I also remain aware of the political and cultural reasons why Protestant civilians engaged with paramilitarism throughout the course of the conflict. Furthermore I am conscious of how the political reflections under debate were both well constructed, genuine and even redolent of historic voices of Protestant political dissent in Ulster.

However I contend that the nature of Protestant public fealty to the state and state institutions, to tenets of law and order and to pride in their military heritage meant that the specific form and direction loyalist paramilitarism took from the start of the Troubles - as contextualised by the existence of other legal security forces in which the Protestant civilian could serve - created a critical moral space that no political voice from the UVF or UDA could but ever fill. This dichotomy surrounding the perceived abuse of Protestant civic values by loyalist paramilitary groups in the modern era is a political thread which will be clearly stated throughout this historical overview. It cannot be disregarded or underemphasised in consideration of why loyalist paramilitarism failed to develop exponentially within political unionism. Likewise it remains one of the very few unequivocally positive manifestations of ethical restraint in the broad amorality of the conflict and deserves to be recalled as such.

The standard contemporary narrative of the Ulster Troubles as relating to the political development of the UVF and UDA originates with the working class Ulster Protestant witnessing both Stormont and the Unionist Party alike failing to provide fundamental political and physical security for a state born into bitter violence and perennially wedded to suspicion of the Irish republican threat. A subsequent raft of formal loyalist political alternatives would

provide no clearcut substitute for a population seemingly politically adrift and clearly devoid of external support. To many of those subsequently drawn to loyalist paramilitary ranks - or in their support - the unionist leaders who had expected Protestant working class fidelity by default had betrayed the same constituency by drift and surrender to the point of daily destruction of life and property in Ulster's cities and towns.

The simmering intra-unionist class conflict which preceded the state's birth – the electoral consolidation of which was an urgent matter of consideration throughout its 50-year existence for the Protestant political leadership - would also reanimate with the sudden and emotional termination of unionist rule. Political groups would subsequently emerge from within the ranks of loyalist paramilitarism itself to proffer painful self-analysis and sound prescriptive alternatives to marry their time. Their populist message not only considered how the unionist leadership fundamentally failed the Protestant worker in past and present – by way of political security and economic wellbeing - but also stressed the existent commonality between all the Ulster people. This in turn would mirror the rich vintage of earlier pro-Union Protestant dissent which included the Independent Orange Order (IOO) and Northern Ireland Labour Party (NILP). However despite the utmost reinforcement, encouragement and finally huge promotion the political rewards would be paltry.

New loyalism's lack of success would subsequently appear profoundly illogical to many outside observers since its class construct mirrored that of republican groupings. Likewise since certain loyalist political actors were unequivocally the most charismatic figures to have emerged throughout the entire course of modern Northern Irish paramilitary activity on either side. Yet in other respects I will argue that the failure stands as a natural reflection of traditional unionist attitudes to Protestant political violence since 1966 and the problematical blurring of political distinctions between “loyalty” and “rebellion”. Likewise for the difficulty in compartmentalising socio-economic critiques from overarching questions concerning Northern Ireland's very constitutional existence or indeed the lack of an “heroic” idealisation of the Troubles for many former loyalist paramilitaries themselves.

Thus during a 2002 visit to the empty HMP Maze for a BBC news feature David Ervine commented on the suggestion of turning the prison into a memorial to the conflict.:

I have no desire to bring my children or my grandchildren here. I have no desire to justify or legitimise a dirty stinking war because when you justify dirty stinking wars of the past, you leave options for people to fight dirty stinking wars of the future...My view is bulldoze it – put something here that is wonderful and bring your children and your grandchildren and give them something that is about their future and not from my torrid past.⁷

Hence we can now definitively synthesise the commonly-held perceptions of the political faces of loyalist paramilitarism over the past 40 years into a balanced overview and as grounded on a

factual denouement of significant electoral and criminal note. From a scornful dismissal as securocrat-manipulated and essentially sectarian backwoodsmen to those viewing it as a phenomena representing a genuine seachange in the political balance of working class Protestant Ulster. When the “men of violence” who represented the continuity of Ulster’s defence tradition in illegal form would offer themselves to Protestant civic society as responsible political leaders. And when the loyalist communities significantly vilified by both nationalist Ireland and the mainland British alike - as England’s colonial puppets and rank national embarrassments respectively – would seemingly produce architects of good government and harbingers of genuine reconciliation.

A core qualification of any study of loyalist paramilitarism is the lack of clarity to be gauged throughout its linear development. The four reasons for this opaque “otherness” would historically underpin mainstream unionist detachment from the loyalist paramilitary political alternative.

Firstly, from the time of the third UVF formation in 1965 it has been symbiotically linked to openly rank sectarianism and a targeting policy orientated around sheer convenience. Two of the three fatalities caused by the UVF in 1966 would be the proverbial Catholics “in the wrong place at the wrong time”.⁸

Secondly, from the foundation of the UDA in mid-1971 this phenomena has been likewise closely associated with a dark underbelly of often alcohol-fuelled criminality. During 1972 alone three of the ten UDA volunteers who died – Ingram Beckitt, John Lunnen Brown and Ernest Elliott – were murdered in the circumstances of drunken internecine brawls with fellow loyalists.⁹

Thirdly - since 1972 and the onset of the loyalist paramilitary offensive against Catholic civilians - there have been wave after wave of collusion allegations concerning British military intelligence, the national security agencies, Special Branch of the Royal Ulster Constabulary (RUC) and the Ulster Defence Regiment (UDR).¹⁰ These would be directly associated with such notorious figures in both the UVF and UDA as Albert “Ginger” Baker, Robin Jackson, Brian Nelson and Mark Haddock.¹¹

Fourthly - and as the author can personally testify through a potentially fatal experience - there was a widely grounded acceptance within the Protestant community during the earlier stages of the Troubles that loyalist paramilitaries were wildly incompetent.¹² Thus both the first UVF and the first UDA volunteer to die would be killed during the placing and manufacture of explosives respectively. Likewise Protestant collateral damage can be dated back to the very first victim of the entire Troubles – an elderly widow who was fatally burnt by a UVF petrol bombing. In its most extreme manifestation in July of 1976, the UVF attacked the Ramble Inn on the Antrim to

Ballymena road in revenge for the republican killings at Walkers Bar in Templepatrick which had left three Protestants dead. The Ramble Inn fatalities numbered one Catholic and five Protestant civilians. ¹³

Loyalist paramilitary violence would descend to truly depraved extremes. Victims included 31-year old Anne Ogilby who was battered to death by a gang of UDA women in a loyalist club in 1974 while her 6-year old daughter banged on the door crying “My mammy’s in there” – her teenage killers stopping for a cigarette and then dancing along to disco music during the course of the proceedings. ¹⁴ Also 46-year-old Harry Bradshaw who was killed during the 1977 loyalist strike while driving his bus – the UDA sending his widow a ten pound note to apologise for their mistake after realising he was actually a Protestant. ¹⁵ Or 48-year-old Joseph Donegan who was abducted, tortured and murdered by the UVF in 1982 – beaten to death with a spade after having his teeth removed by pliers. ¹⁶

Such violence was nonetheless contextualised by the long war of the Irish Republican Army. The biggest death toll from loyalist violence in Northern Ireland itself – the 15 Catholics murdered by the UVF at McGurk’s Bar in 1971 – came at the end of a long vicious cycle of tit-for-tat Belfast bombings which unequivocally originated with IRA attacks. ¹⁷ Seven months later on 31st July 1972 an IRA car bomb attack on the village of Claudy, allegedly under the operational command of Catholic priest Father James Chesney ¹⁸, left nine civilians dead including 9-year-old Protestant Kathryn Eakin. In one of several interviews given during the 30th anniversary of the murders, her mother Merle recollected the loss of a daughter for whom the government duly provided 58 pounds in compensation:

I often wondered if I should have had more children, but I don’t think so. If you have 10 children, you still grieve for the one you lost. I still see her wee face, and it never changes. I’ve tried to imagine what she would look like now, to picture her in a wedding dress. But I can’t. She’ll be eight until the day I die, and she’ll be eight when I hold her again. ¹⁹

One may also recall the sordid circumstances surrounding the kidnap and murder of German businessman Thomas Niedermayer in West Belfast in December 1973 which engendered the subsequent suicide of his wife Ingeborg in the Irish Republic in 1990, his daughter Renate in South Africa in 1991 and finally his remaining daughter Gabrielle in England in 1993. ²⁰ Likewise one may reflect upon the lost lives of the nine Protestant men, women and children killed in the October 1993 Shankill bombing. On the tenth anniversary of the murders 60-year-old Raymond Elliott explicitly recalled the horror of helping the emergency services:

The psychiatrist tells me there was no one to save – but it is really wrecking me. If I could have got just one with even their leg missing, I think I would have been all right. I wish I could describe what I saw. But if I tell you it will be in your head, too. I wouldn’t pass it on to nobody. ²¹

The IRA's "legitimate armed struggle"²² - as boldly confirmed as such in 2005 with the formal end of the Provisionals' campaign - also incorporated the murders of three individuals known to the author personally. These were a 23-year old semi-paralysed epileptic who was a neighbour of my grandparents in the Woodvale district and shot twice in the head during a bombing raid on a brush factory, a 49-year-old off-duty RUC officer who was a friend of my parents and murdered in front of his wife and daughter on the way into his family home and my former Sunday School and Cub Scouts companion killed by three gunmen at the age of 19 for having applied to join the police.²³

My research will reference primary and secondary sources of books, political pamphlets and articles, loyalist paramilitary magazines, local and national newspapers, online information and archive ephemera. Despite a lengthy discussion at a public forum with David Ervine, I have not engaged in further interviews on self-evident ethical and security grounds in light of ongoing engagement in criminality, punishment attacks and widespread civil disorder by paramilitary groups directly associated with the political bodies under discussion.²⁴ Ironically Ervine's fellow speaker at the *Divided Loyalty* presentation in 2003 at London's Institute of Contemporary Arts was playwright Gary Mitchell who would face subsequent loyalist intimidation by virtue of the content of his work.²⁵ I hence maintain that published interviews with loyalist paramilitaries as undertaken by professionally employed academics will suffice for reference purposes in this thesis (Nelson 1984; Bruce 1992; Crawford 1999; Crawford 2003; Wood 2006; Gallaher 2007; Spencer 2008; Shirlow et al 2010; Novosel 2012; Shirlow 2012).

This decision is copperfastened on a personal level by being a direct victim of loyalist violence on two occasions and a raised awareness of criminal paramilitary dynamics having worked for ten years in national print and television news and current affairs. I would also maintain that the infrastructure of the North Belfast area I grew up in has been fundamentally and irreversibly damaged by loyalist paramilitarism. The local public house was the scene of a grotesque murder of a UDA member by fellow paramilitaries in April 1987²⁶ while in the early part of the century the district contained one of Belfast's busiest drug dealing streets as linked to the Loyalist Volunteer Force (LVF).²⁷ The main shopping area in turn would see a UDA public "naming and shaming" of alleged criminals as recently as 2003 - two young men were forced to stand on the main road throughout the day with placards proclaiming "We are scum who robbed our own people"²⁸ - while my former childhood street in this same period contained a paramilitary memorial garden including a plaque tribute to a notorious sectarian killer.

Other qualifying matters that would suggest an ethical distance is advisable regarding this subject matter for all researchers would be Ervine's continual references to intelligence direction of the LVF²⁹ and the Northern Ireland Affairs Committee confirmation of loyalist paramilitary engagement in human trafficking³⁰. One might also consider the candid *tu quoque* rhetoric within the UDA *Conflict Transformation Initiative* report³¹ from one volunteer

bewailing the fact that all loyalist paramilitary groups are dealing drugs anyway (and that the UDA should not be singled out for specific blame) or indeed the specific details of all the post-1998 fatalities caused by loyalists to be referenced on the Rights Watch website.³² As recently as June 2013 Nick Garbutt of the *Belfast News Letter* claimed that four Northern Ireland journalists had been issued with death threats in the spring alone - three from the UVF.³³ Some months later a BBC Northern Ireland *Spotlight* current affairs documentary outlined the scope of ongoing UVF criminality and revealed the senior paramilitary rank of one leading PUP spokesman.³⁴

This thesis will therefore consider loyalist paramilitary political thought on an historically linear level while incorporating reference to central thematic constructs of class tension, communal reconciliation, cultural identity, conflict resolution etc throughout. It shall underscore that credible academic commentary on the subject cannot analyse the political message of the UVF and UDA in what often appears to be a highly self-contained and selective context. The sectarian violence and criminality symbiotically fused to these organisations generated a moral distancing from the vast majority of the Protestant community by default. Hence the space for political manoeuvre was narrowed on a literally immediate level to negligible parameters. I will thus argue that this Protestant public antipathy throughout the Troubles - as clearly observable historical continuity - is the crucial factor which explains the failure of the political experiment as opposed to mere electoral performance.

The paper commences with a review of the published literature pertaining to the subject. The chronological manifestations of Protestant extra-legal bodies from the plantation to the 1935 Belfast riots shall then be considered. This will be contextualised with reference to examples of radical thought and action in the northern Protestant community which ran in parallel to this course and bear relevance to later political history. A bridge into the modern conflict will be made by noting developments within Northern Ireland prior to the Troubles when there was no known display of loyalist extra-legal activity for thirty years.

The second wave of loyalist paramilitarism from Gusty Spence's Standard Bar UVF to the 1974 Ulster Workers Council (UWC) strike will then be discussed including consideration of UDA social and legal initiatives which went well beyond the occasional noteworthy comment from individual members of this organisation and the much smaller UVF. The five main loyalist political wings will then be examined in turn - the Volunteer Political Party (VPP) experiment at a time of UVF legality, the New Ulster Political Research Group (NUPRG) think-tank, John McMichael's formal Ulster Loyalist Democratic Party (ULDP) and then the Progressive Unionist Party and Ulster Democratic Party (UDP) which gained such a high-profile from the period of the 1994 ceasefires.

Following this will be an overview of the fatal division in loyalist ranks after 1998 including the disbandment of the UDP and the creation of the Ulster Political Research Group (UPRG) and Loyalist Commission, the conclusion of loyalist decommissioning in early 2010 and the near collapse of the PUP as a political entity at the end of that same year. Finally there will be analysis of the spatial room left for manoeuvre for political representatives of the loyalist people's armies in an Ireland at peace - this against a balanced historical summation of the UVF and UDA 's paramilitary campaigns and with clear regard to the presentational and cultural constraints upon political development throughout. Such loyalist voices indeed as those who can express such political correctness on matters ranging from abortion to gay rights yet have direct familial links to the Shankill Butchers and Greysteel's "Trick or Treat" killers. The paper will conclude by briefly reiterating the main arguments and themes under consideration.

The causes and course of the conflict, and particularly the choreography of its endgame, have now been endlessly recited and disseminated for a global audience. Furthermore, it is now generally accepted that the rumour variables within certain centres of conspiratorial debate such as the Dublin-Monaghan bombings or the Kincora boys' home scandal could remain unresolved forever. Likewise for the further reaches of speculation attendant to the life and death of a figure such as Billy Wright.³⁵

However despite the alternating variables affecting the prospects for a sustained peace since the mid-1990s, one notable fact does stand out alone regarding the bloody loyalist war. For beyond the terrifying manifestations of past and future threat on Shankill Road and Newtownards Road murals, the history books show that at war's end some loyalists did express remorse. This in stark contrast to the preceding Provisional IRA ceasefire statement of 31st August 1994 and with regard to a paramilitary battle which in terms of military bravado they unequivocally consider to have technically won.³⁶ Yet sorry nonetheless – and undoubtedly sincerely so at the time of the Combined Loyalist Military Command (CLMC) ceasefire announcement at Fernhill House on 13th October 1994:

In all sincerity, we offer to the loved ones of all innocent victims over the past twenty-five years abject and true remorse. No words of ours will compensate for the intolerable suffering they have undergone during the conflict...Let us firmly resolve to respect our differing views of freedom, culture and aspiration and never again permit our political circumstances to degenerate into bloody warfare.³⁷

The political representatives of modern loyalist paramilitarism have thus engaged the conflict dynamic on social, economic, political, religious, historical and moral levels. Since the mid-1970s they have certainly provided a more incisive and thoroughgoing reanalysis of class divisions, nationality perceptions, penal policy, historical self-deceptions, ethnic identity and the optimum functioning of the democratic process in Northern Ireland than anything originating from the mainstream unionist and loyalist political parties since the formation of the Democratic Unionist Party (DUP) and the Vanguard umbrella. From the Volunteer Political Party candidacy

in West Belfast in the October 1974 General Election through to the Good Friday Agreement (GFA) 24 years later which was negotiated with loyalist and republican paramilitary representatives around the negotiating tables and inside the plenary sessions – several of whom being convicted murderers. However unlike Carson’s martyred UVF or even the historically crucial Apprentice Boys of Derry, what price then to morally legitimise a modern loyalist political credo which includes the ghosts of Lenny Murphy and the Brown Bear team, the long shadows of Mad Dog and Top Gun and the spectres of drug fratricide worthy of South Central Los Angeles? ³⁸

¹ *Belfast Telegraph*, 16th September 2004.

² *The Independent*, 12th March 2009.

³ Graham Spencer article “The loyalist endgame” in *Belfast Telegraph*, 12th March 2009.

⁴ *The Guardian*, 12th March 2009.

⁵ Spencer, 2008, p 152.

⁶ David Ervine became leader of the Progressive Unionist Party in April 2002 and held the position until his death in January 2007.

⁷ “Back to Jail for Politicians”, BBC News Online, 27th May 2002. Later PUP leader Billy Hutchinson also stated in April 2013 that the Maze should be demolished in order to hamper any potentiality of it becoming a republican shrine (*Belfast Telegraph*, 27th April 2013).

⁸ McKittrick et al, 1999, pp 25-28.

⁹ *ibid*, pp 170, 205 and 300.

¹⁰ For detailed consideration of collusion allegations regarding loyalist paramilitarism see Chapter 2 of Shirlow 2012. In December 2012 the De Silva Report into the murder of solicitor Pat Finucane by the Ulster Freedom Fighters revealed that 85% of intelligence held by the UDA in the 1970s was sourced within the state and that such a percentage may have remained unchanged by the time of Finucane’s murder in 1989. See www.sluggero.toole.com/2012/12/12/de-silva-report-reveals-that-85-of-uda-intelligence-in-late-70s-sourced-in-state-material.

¹¹ Information on Baker’s military background and suggestions he was an Army agent while head of the infamous UDA gang in East Belfast discussed in *Irish News*, 21st February 2005. *Irish Independent*, 4th June 1994 for overview of Robin Jackson’s UVF history including commentary from former intelligence operative Colin Wallace on Jackson’s role as a leading assassin of the Troubles and state agent. The Force Research Unit’s relationship with UDA Intelligence Officer Brian Nelson is reviewed in articles by Greg Harkin and Ed Moloney for the *Sunday People* (16th June 2002) and *Daily Telegraph* (25th June 2002) respectively. *The Independent*, 23rd January 2007 for analysis of the Police Ombudsman’s inquiry into the activities of Mount Vernon UVF figure Mark Haddock while engaged as a Special Branch agent.

¹² During mid-1970 a three-pound pipebomb would detonate on the doorstep of the author’s family home in the then religiously-mixed Ballysillan area of North Belfast. This was placed there mistakenly by a loyalist paramilitary group with the intended target being a republican activist who lived two houses away. A subsequent anonymous telephone call to my family offered to remove all Catholic residents from the estate in retaliation for this attack. For further analysis of the TPFU phenomena - Typical Prod Fuck Up - see Tiernan, 2002, p218 for discussion of the June 1975 UVF attack on the Dublin-Sallins train.

¹³ McKittrick et al, *op cit*, pp 25, 43, 130 and 659. The specifics of the Ramble Inn attack are also noted in detail within Gillespie’s *Years of Darkness* chronology (2008, pp123-126).

¹⁴ McKittrick et al, op cit, p 468. Also *Sunday Life*, 7th February 2010. The women's UDA was dissolved by Andy Tyrie following the Anne Ogilby murder. *Only The Rivers Run Free: Northern Ireland The Women's War* by Eileen Fairweather, Roisin McDonough and Melanie McFadyean (Pluto Press, London 1984) references the Ogilby murder and the psychological repercussions for the two teenage killers during their subsequent incarceration according to a fellow prisoner: "Every Saturday they'd re-enact the killing. You'd hear them in their cell and in the end it nearly drove them mad and they even asked the Catholic chaplain to exorcise the cell - they were terrified, they thought Anne Ogilby's ghost was there. It was terrible" (p283). Etta Cowen and Christine Smith were released from prison in 1983. Elizabeth Douglas who was the head of the Sandy Row "Heavy Squad" of the women's UDA died shortly after being released from Armagh women's prison in 1979 on compassionate grounds.

¹⁵ McKay, 2000, p79.

¹⁶ Dillon, 2003, p169.

¹⁷ The Belfast loyalist community would thus source the beginning of the 1971 tit-for-tat bombing cycle to IRA attacks on the Shankill's Mountainview Tavern and a British Legion Hall in Suffolk in May. The explosions at the Bluebell Bar in Sandy Row on 20th September injured 27 people and that at the Four Step Inn on the Shankill Road nine days later killed two men and injured another 27 civilians. Between the Four Step Inn and the McGurk's Bar bombings in early December there would be a loyalist attack on the Fiddler's House in Durham Street in October which left one Protestant female dead and the IRA bombing of The Red Lion pub on the Ormeau Road which killed three Protestants.

¹⁸ *The Guardian*, December 22nd 2002.

¹⁹ *Daily Mirror*, July 27th 2002 and *The Guardian*, 21st September/December 22nd 2002. Merle Eakin, who died in August 2008, stated in one interview "It is very emotional because it is the same Christmas present every year, a bunch of flowers. You don't have to think about what you are going to buy her. It's not fair really. She was such a lovely child" (www.iraatrocities.fsnet.co.uk/Kathryn_Eakin.html). Her husband William died in 2009 while the following year a Northern Ireland Police Ombudsman's report revealed collusion between the British government and the Catholic church to have Father Chesney transferred to the Irish Republic because of the potential implications of the clergyman's involvement in the atrocity upon loyalist violence ("Claudy Bomb: Conspiracy allowed IRA priest to go free", BBC News Online, 24th August 2010).

²⁰ "Three generations: fall-out from a forgotten Irish kidnapping", BBC News Online, 15th February 2013. Discussion at www.sluggerooole.com/2013/02/04/the-niedermayers-and-the-cascading-misery-of-our-dirty-little-war. The IRA bombing of the La Mon House Hotel at Gransha near East Belfast on February 17th 1978 left 12 Protestant civilians dead in turn - those murdered included seven women and three married couples. The inquest heard that three of the men and two of the women were identified only from blood samples taken from the bodies and relatives. Two people were only identifiable through elimination. The widower of Sandra Morris recalled how he attempted to shield the circumstances of his wife's murder from his children then aged three and five years of age: "Keith the youngest heard what had happened to his mother, his mental torture began. Keith came as close to a nervous breakdown as a child could come to. My wee boys would have been always talking in their sleep. Their young lives were just tortured". Keith Morris committed suicide at the age of 26 in 2000. See www.iraatrocities.s5.com/la%20mon.html. In the aftermath of the bombing 25 people were arrested including Sinn Fein President Gerry Adams - Provisional IRA Chief of Staff between December 1977 and February 18th 1978 according to Ed Moloney's 2002 *The Secret History of the IRA*. Adams was not charged in connection with the attack but with IRA membership. He was subsequently acquitted.

²¹ *News Letter*, October 23rd 2003.

²² For full IRA statement on the end of their armed campaign see *The Guardian*, 28th July 2005.

²³ Following Roy Young's murder his mother noted: "He loved dancing though he couldn't do it very well. He was going to the firm's Christmas party on Friday. He was going to wear new shoes and a new sweater I was going to buy him for the party. Every morning he used to try and dance to the music on the radio before he went to work. His last words to me were, 'Cheerio, mum, see you tonight'. He was going to buy me a Christmas carol record as a present. He didn't have any girlfriends but he was very popular with all the neighbours and his mates at work. He was a good boy who wouldn't hurt anybody but I don't want anybody else killed for him, please God no" (McKittrick et al, op cit, p693). A neighbour of RUC officer Gerry Cathcart recalled "No better man ever walked. He was well liked by us all. He was a very respectable, clean-living person". Another commented "Gerry was a darling, a Christian man loved by everybody. He always said hello, even to people he didn't know" (McKittrick et al, op cit, p944). The family of Gary Smyth who was murdered at Belfast College of Technology pleaded for no retaliation for his death - Sinn Féin refused to condemn the murder as being a consequence of the British presence (McKittrick et al, op cit, pp1018-1019).

²⁴ See David McKittrick article in *Belfast Telegraph*, 5th July 2013 for suggestions that the UVF were behind the pushing of drugs in Belfast that caused eight deaths in a matter of weeks. The piece also considers the largely independent position of the East Belfast units within the organisation alike the UDA's fractures with its South East Antrim Brigade.

²⁵ *Divided Loyalty* debate at London's Institute of Contemporary Arts took place on 14th July 2003. Mitchell's intimidation by loyalist militants in Rathcoole in Greater Belfast occurred in late 2005 (*Belfast Telegraph*, 26th November 2005).

²⁶ Hugh Hill McFarlane was murdered on 20th April 1987 at a public house in the Ballysillan district of North Belfast. A UDA member and former British soldier, Hill was bludgeoned to death with a breezeblock by two other UDA members outside the premises after having intervened to stop a bar fight when a pensioner was knocked to the ground. A man was jailed for six years for manslaughter having provided the weapons though the suspected killer was released due to a witness retracting evidence in fear of his life (McKittrick et al, op cit, 1999, p1072).

²⁷ *Belfast Telegraph*, 19th February 2006.

²⁸ *Irish News*, 21st March 2003.

²⁹ David Ervine interview on BBC Radio Ulster *Inside Politics* programme ("Feud will get worse says Ervine", BBC News Online, 23rd July 2005).

³⁰ "Northern Ireland progress threatened by crime", BBC News Online, 5th July 2006. Also "Police waging war on 180 crime gangs", BBC News Online, 4th July 2012.

³¹ See *Conflict Transformation Initiative, Loyalism in Transition 1, A New Reality?* (Compiler M Hall).

³² Formerly the British and Irish Rights Watch - www.rwuk.org,

³³ *News Letter*, 13th June 2013.

³⁴ *UVF: Abusing Peace* transmitted on BBC Northern Ireland on 29th October 2013.

³⁵ Mullan 1984 and Moore 1996. Also Dillon, 2003, pp47-48 for Billy Wright's prophetic comments on 9/11 in Manhattan. The official inquiry into the murder of Wright in the Maze Prison concluded that it was due to negligence as opposed to state collusion (*The Independent*, 15th September 2010).

³⁶ In opposition to the accepted historical wisdom that paramilitary stalemate had been engaged by the mid-1990's, an article by Tongue, Shirlow and McAuley (2011) presents both parties as betraying little sense of defeat. Similar analysis regarding the fundamental lack of any international input into loyalist endgame strategies are discussed in Roger MacGinty's article "Post-Agreement Loyalism and the International Dimension" (McAuley and Spencer, 2011).

³⁷ Taylor, 1999, p233. For further consider of Spence's expression of remorse see Spencer op cit, pp 112-119.

³⁸ Dillon 1989, Lister and Jordan 2003 and McDonald and Cusack 2004.

II: LITERATURE REVIEW

Aside from the problematical constructs of pro-state terrorism in itself¹ - and the concomitant heightened difficulties of a social message emanating from the same quarter - the loyalist paramilitary political alternative was fundamentally hamstrung by the negative feelings of the Protestant general public towards a phenomena associated historically with random sectarian murder and criminality. The author contends that certain recent secondary sources have a tendency to dilute this core dilemma by either a/ focusing on unionist party political hostility to new loyalism or else b/ analysing these political groups in such self-contained fashion that it selectively ignores the fact that Protestant public antipathy was actually on such a scale that it invalidated the alternative in clear practical essence.

Broad theoretical overviews of grassroots loyalist political militancy have ranged widely from Marxist analyses (Gibbon 1975; Probert 1978) to colonial settler-native interpretations (De Paor 1970; Clayton 1996) to comparative studies with other conflict zones (Wright 1987; Lustick 1993) to “conditional loyalty” explanations (Miller 1978). In the main however the two main competing analyses of the Ulster conflict as relating to the loyalist community reside as either a consequence of direct metropolitan or Unionist Party elite manipulation of Protestant sectarian dynamics for economic and geopolitical advantage (Bell 1976; Farrell 1980 and 1983) or as a self-contained and mutually-reinforcing sectarian division on the narrow ground of Ulster with clearly pragmatic bottom-up political dynamics in evidence within the unionist bloc (Wright 1973; Gibbon 1975; Bew et al 2002) . Therefore the crucial interpretative framework within which modern loyalist political thought will be subsequently considered in this thesis is the interrelationship of the Protestant working class with both broader British state stratagems and the unionist leadership - thus viewed as either a fundamentally manipulated constituency or as drivers of political action themselves.

Published works on Ulster loyalist paramilitarism have appeared to a quantitatively lesser extent than studies of militant Irish republicanism over the past four decades. The non-academic literature spans a broad sweep from forensic historical investigation to populist criminology and will be briefly surveyed initially. Important details regarding the origins and earliest manifestations of pre-1969 loyalist paramilitarism in the modern conflict are discussed in works on the Reverend Ian Paisley and William McGrath (Moloney and Pollak 1986; Moore 1986) while UVF and UDA paramilitarism itself has been considered in depth in at least five further studies of note (Boulton 1973; Davis 1994; Cusack and McDonald 1997; Taylor 1999; McDonald and Cusack 2004). Of these David Boulton’s *The UVF 1966-73: An Anatomy of Loyalist Rebellion* stands alongside the defining *Sunday Times* Insight Team study of 1972² as one of the most perceptive and accurate of the early analyses of the outbreak of the conflict. Peter Taylor’s subtle elicitation skills for the acclaimed BBC documentary *Loyalists* in 1999 meanwhile brought forth some extraordinary and often chilling reflections from loyalist

militants on their entrée into violence and the dynamics affecting the conflict's closure.³ David McKittrick's reportage compilations (McKittrick 1989, 1994) also have significant sections dealing with the UVF and UDA campaigns while the stories of all loyalist victims are discussed in the *Lost Lives* study he co-authored in 1999.⁴

Regarding the political face of loyalist paramilitarism, the UDA's earlier experiments with the NUPRG and ULDP have been comprehensively analysed within two broader works on Northern Irish politics (O'Malley 1983; Aughey 1989). There has also been significant analysis of both the PUP and UDP's contribution to the political resolution of 1998 (Rowan 1995, McKittrick and Mallie 1996; Stevenson 1996⁵; De Breadun 2001; McKittrick and Mallie 2001) and the post-ceasefire problems particularly affecting the UDA's political wing (Rowan 2003 and 2008). UDP leader Gary McMichael's articles for *Irish Voice* and *Ireland on Sunday* were collected as *An Ulster Voice*⁶ while both Gusty Spence⁷ and David Ervine⁸ have been the subject of sympathetic biographies.⁹ The latter's testimony of his paramilitary life given to Boston College was included in Ed Moloney's 2010 work *Voices From the Grave*¹⁰ alongside that of former IRA leader Brendan Hughes.

The more populist and journalistic studies of the current conflict are mostly associated with the work of Martin Dillon – both in his early *Political Murder in Northern Ireland*¹¹ written with fellow *Belfast Telegraph* journalist Denis Lehane and later best-selling criminology books (Dillon 1989, 1990, 1992, 1997, 2003). Directed to a similar demographic have been autobiographies and biographies of leading loyalist paramilitaries (Anderson 2002; Stone 2003; Adair 2007) alongside detailed studies of paramilitary units (Lister and Jordan 2003) and the use of state agents (Davies 1999, 2004). Likewise for works focusing on loyalist paramilitary links to the far right (Lowles 2001) and the drugs trade (McDowell 2001, 2008).

Loyalism and the Dirty War is discussed in several works (Lindsay 1979; Murray 1990; Rolston 2000; Larkin 2004; Brown 2005; Travers 2007; Cadwallader 2013) though the veracity of some remain open to question (McPhilemy 1998; Black 2008). The Ulster Workers Council strike and the Dublin-Monaghan bombings have been considered in depth (Fisk 1975; Devlin 1975; Mullan 1984; Anderson 1994; Bowyer Bell 1996; Tiernan 2002) while the collusion claims of Colin Wallace and Fred Holroyd (Foot 1989, Holroyd 1989) remain actively discussed to this day on internet blogs and forums.

More fleeting and tangential insights into the minutiae of loyalist paramilitarism are sprinkled through genres as diverse as travelogues (Murphy 1978; Belfrage 1987), autobiographies of Belfast youth (Beattie 1992, 2004)¹², military reminiscences (McCallion 1996) or recollections of the early Troubles by quality journalists (Myers 2006; O'Doherty 2007).¹³ Loyalist paramilitarism has also been referenced in various fictional and artistic works long before the Uncle Andy character from BBC Northern Ireland's *Give My Head Peace* appeared in 2001 at

the Stadium Youth and Community Project's award ceremony on the Shankill Road showing young adults how to "walk like a Protestant".¹⁴ Such figures can be found in the background of many Troubles-related books and plays like Graham Reid's four *Play For Today* productions focused around the character of Billy Martin¹⁵. They would also be in the foreground of works such as Maurice Leitch's Whitbread Prize winning novel *Silver's City*¹⁶ and Rathcoole playwright Gary Mitchell's *As The Beast Sleeps*¹⁷ which deals with tensions between a UDP politician and an Ulster Freedom Fighters (UFF) lieutenant.¹⁸ Even less flattering presentations can be found in the two motion pictures based on the Shankill Butchers story – *Nothing Personal* released in 1995 and the 1997 adaptation of Eoin McNamee's *Resurrection Man*. Finally, two of the greatest works in Irish theatrical history are tangentially linked to loyalism in Frank McGuinness' *Observe The Sons of Ulster Marching to the Somme*¹⁹ and Stewart Parker's *Pentecost*.²⁰

The close association of the UVF and UDA with criminal endeavour, the dearth of republican paramilitary activists falling victim to loyalist groups and the historical sweep of collusion allegations directly manoeuvred the phenomena outside any broad remit of serious political analysis for many years. All the subsequent academic secondary sources focusing specifically on modern loyalist paramilitary groups however have touched upon the difficult attempts to articulate a political voice and secure support from the wider Protestant community.

Sarah Nelson's participant-observation study *Ulster's Uncertain Defenders: Loyalists and the Northern Ireland Conflict*²¹ (1984) straddles both loyalist paramilitarism and broader loyalist activity in the early period of the conflict. It offers a plausible and well-contextualised overview of the fatal fracturing of monolithic unionism between 1969 and 1974 into its paramilitary and workplace offshoots. A major section of the work covers the course and aftermath of the UWC strike, the VPP experiment, UDA social and community initiatives and the general radicalisation of loyalist ex-prisoners and internees. Although written 30 years ago Nelson's work provides arguably the most balanced analysis of the Northern Ireland state's implosion from a grassroots loyalist perspective.²² However even here in this first major work about loyalist paramilitary political thought the author appears to be presenting somewhat overly benign interpretations of political critiques emanating from such militant figures as John McKeague and the UVF leadership of the time.

Steve Bruce's *The Red Hand: Protestant Paramilitaries in Northern Ireland*²³ (1992) is a groundbreaking chronological study of the development of the loyalist groupings and their internal dynamics - the author being one of the major academic commentators on the subject in the late 1980s and early 1990s alongside Arthur Aughey and Colin McIlheney. Bruce is healthily sceptical about many of the rumours attached to the subject - such as a Mr Big figure behind the modern UVF revival²⁴ - and clearly unravels the bewildering internal divisions within that organisation in the mid-1970s and inside the UDA in the early 1990s. However

despite genuine disclaimers from the author it must be noted that this work - and indeed his later and more broadly focused *The Edge of the Union: The Ulster Loyalist Political Vision*²⁵ (1994) - both fall victim to some degree of rash speculation on future developments within loyalist paramilitarism and conflict resolution respectively. The explosion of loyalist violence in the pre-ceasefire period was thus not foreseen amidst his reflections on an irrevocable post-ban collapse of the UDA in the former work. In the latter book Bruce predicted a Whitehall political agenda which would be diametrically opposed to the model of strategic neutrality adopted by the British which centrally underpinned the Downing Street Declaration and GFA.

However I firmly contend that his analysis of the contradictory dynamics of pro-state terrorism has been a valid and sustainable interpretation - Bruce being convinced that it could never have provided an effective political or social alternative for the Protestant worker. The conservative mainstream unionist parties successfully articulate the political concerns of the vast majority of conservative unionist voters. Hence loyalist attempts to forge a distinctive alternative brings them further away from core unionist sensibilities and eventually from their own quintessential pro-state complexion. Likewise the attempts of the pro-state UDA to forge a firm bedrock of support from constructive community action projects leads them into competition with agencies of a state to which they are not theoretically opposed. Hence there is no space for them to replicate republican success in this field outside periods such as May 1974 when the state was unable to fulfil its basic social functions:

...modern societies have clear divisions of labour: policing is done by professional policemen, politics is done by political parties, the administration of justice is done by a legal system, and so on. Only in the extreme circumstances of, say, Lebanon, when civil society and its institutions collapse is that division of labour replaced by paramilitary organisations offering a variety of roles.²⁶

Former Maze Prison probation officer Colin Crawford has published two interview-based works which are quintessential to any overview of the subject in respect of the important role that paramilitary prisoners played in providing a bedrock of support for the loyalist ceasefires. *Loyalist Paramilitaries: Defenders or Criminals*²⁷ (1999) focuses on the psychologically damaging effects of the criminalisation process in the H-Blocks upon UVF and UDA prisoners.²⁸ The clarity of thought and verbal articulation expressed by some of the interviewees for both this study and his later *Inside the UDA: Volunteers and Violence*²⁹ (2003), which utilises a similar methodological approach, significantly belies the standard labelling of all loyalist paramilitaries as apolitical thugs. Unlike other works, the direct professional links Crawford has with these prisoners and ex-prisoners somewhat circumscribes the ethical constraints which would otherwise surround such a painfully open dissection of loyalism at war.³⁰ Both books offer some of the most thought provoking and honest reappraisals of Northern Irish paramilitarism to be found in serious Troubles-related literature since the start of the modern conflict. The latter volume is complemented by Ian S Wood's *Crimes of Loyalty: A*

*History of the UDA*³¹ (2006) which provides original and revelatory historical analysis of both the paramilitary and political development of the organisation during the 1970s.

*After the Peace: Loyalist Paramilitaries in Post-Accord Northern Ireland*³² (2007) by American social scientist Carolyn Gallaher is a thorough overview of the struggle for the loyalist alternative to take root in an utterly hostile political landscape. Her work touches upon familiar factors affecting development and growth alongside fresh insights into the problems surrounding loyalist engagement with the voluntary sector and Ulster's new cultural battlegrounds of language, history and art. Throughout the book Gallaher places an overarching focus on the shocking decay of loyalist working class communities at the start of the century as directly linked to peacetime paramilitary activity³³ – particularly regarding involvement in criminality, feuding and racist attacks. She is also openly honest about the fundamental limitations upon any study of the loyalist paramilitary experience – such as the difficulty in accurately gauging rhetoric from representatives of paramilitary groups retaining military arsenals within the framework of a working political settlement. On occasion however Gallaher can veer towards somewhat sweeping generalisations of global paramilitary activity against the mirror of Ulster's narrow experience. Likewise her attempt to clarify the 21st Century battleground between political and recidivist loyalism within the paramilitary milieu tends to understate the seemingly irreversible nature of post-1998 collapse.

The four main academic commentators on loyalist paramilitary political thought since the time of the loyalist ceasefires have been Graham Spencer³⁴, James W McAuley, Peter Shirlow and Aaron Edwards. Graham Spencer's *The State of Loyalism in Northern Ireland*³⁵ (2008) provides a minutely detailed overview of the political and paramilitary endgame of the loyalist war from 1991 to 2007. Alongside background chapters on the unionist world view and the split between Paisleyite and paramilitary loyalism is an exploration of the media's role in the peace process and the effect it had on public perceptions of loyalism. Alike Spencer in offering comprehensible analyses of new loyalism, James White McAuley's study of unionist politics in the wake of the GFA and the subsequent electoral renaissance of the DUP – *Ulster's Last Stand: Reconstructing Unionism After the Peace Process*³⁶ (2010) – includes a substantial examination of loyalist political innovation and the social fracturing of the Protestant community. It makes interesting note of the reasons behind the lack of Protestant working class anti-state activism during the Stormont years and the cultural and political factors which undermined such innovation since the onset of the Troubles.

Shirlow and Kieran McEvoy's *Beyond the Wire*³⁷ (2008) - and also Shirlow, Tongue and McAuley's *Abandoning Historical Conflict*³⁸ (2010) - source feedback from former UVF and IRA prisoners in thorough analyses of their role as key agents of conflict resolution and the future direction that ex-prisoner welfare organisations may take. This against often stereotypical generalisations made of such figures that has hampered reintegration into both their

communities and the workforce – and that particularly so from within the unionist population by way of accusations of residual criminality.

With regard to this more recent research on the subject the author holds that Shirlow's *The End of Ulster Loyalism?*³⁹ (2012) - which traces the course of loyalist paramilitarism and political loyalism in the the post-ceasefire periods - appears to have significantly dislocated the issue of mass Protestant antipathy to loyalist paramilitarism from the analytical remit. The same creeping susceptibility to this end would appear to hold for some of the journal articles of Aaron Edwards and also Tony Novosel's *Northern Ireland's Lost Opportunity*⁴⁰ (2013) study of early thinking in the Ulster Volunteer Force and Red Hand Commando.

All three authors, and indeed Gallaher's referenced work as well, clearly allude to issues of sectarianism, criminality and the complex construct of pro-state terrorism but there still seems to be a clear tendency to focus political animosity towards new loyalism upon unionist political bodies and representatives as opposed to the general unionist population. That latter antipathy deriving from the earliest days of the Troubles, in direct reaction to the nature of loyalist paramilitary activity as it rapidly evolved and in the context of existent state forces in which the Protestant public could combat the perceived security threat. I again contend that the moral distancing between the Protestant public and manifestations of modern loyalist paramilitarism is the key factor in understanding the limitations on UVF and UDA military capacity and their political constituency alike.

It may also be construed that these authors have constructed fundamentally propitious appraisals of new loyalism against the clearly malign hallmarks of modern loyalist paramilitary activity. Carolyn Gallaher thus dismisses seasoned Belfast newspaper editor Jim McDowell's contextualisation of post-ceasefire loyalist paramilitary activity as a literal gangland war over criminal assets - and indeed Bruce's suggestion that Billy Wright may have been driven by megalomaniacal impulses (as self-reference to oneself in the third person may reasonably suggest) - before noting:

This violence is neither pretty nor mistake free. In many respects it has been counterproductive. And, to be certain, political and criminal motivations can and do jumble together for some fighters. However, it is clear that political Loyalism's violence was not driven by economic motives alone, or even in large part.⁴¹

Although perhaps suggestive of being clearly contradictory dynamics, Aaron Edwards states that the PUP's unique position within unionism was grounded on its paramilitary links alongside a commitment to transforming the conflict beyond violence and an opposition to sectarianism.⁴² In turn, Edwards and Bloomer's critical friend analysis of the UVF's DDR (Decommissioning, Disbandment, Reintegration) discourse within the East Antrim Conflict Transformation Focus Group touches upon feuding and drug dealing yet still maintains a clearcut military rhetoric throughout. Thus conflict emerged due to the retirement of "seasoned

veterans” allowing local commanders to become involved in “nefarious criminal activities” by way of the absence of a “strong disciplinary code amongst volunteers”.⁴³ In another article regarding the project - published the year after the UVF murder of former member Bobby Moffett on the Shankill Road - the authors underscore the worth of this methodological approach in that sensational content in secondary sources “has led to the tendency among some commentators to study the phenomena of loyalist paramilitarism from a detached journalistic position and in a way that accepts -without question - that the goals of the groups are simply criminal and devoid of a rational political and strategic dimension.”⁴⁴

Even in light of the radical collapse of political loyalism in the past decade, Shirlow and Novosel would appear to agree with Edwards and Bloomer⁴⁵ that the voices of political loyalism were actually more advanced than mainstream unionist thinking all along. This while yet again selectively compartmentalising the same sectarianism and criminality at its core or indeed while completely ignoring certain aspects of Vanguard’s political thinking that fell outside the set rationale of previous unionist thought and were of equally radical import. Tony Novosel - whose work contains stylistic flourishes worthy of a dark moral parable⁴⁶ - thus maintains that the failure of earlier manifestations of political thinking would follow a clearcut pathway:

These political thinkers within Loyalism had stepped out of their traditional roles, the ‘scales had fallen from their eyes’, and they had become ‘Enlightened Ulstermen’. However they had gone too far, too fast. The majority of volunteers and the majority of the Loyalist population did not really understand the political thinking emerging from the leading elements of Loyalism.⁴⁷

Novosel’s tendency to qualify the moral interplay of political violence with political experimentation in somewhat benign fashion reaches its apotheosis in his conclusion that:

...after each of their attempts and failures, they changed strategies and tried again to find a way to put their ideas into the public square for discussion and to find a way to end the terrible violence even while carrying out that violence.⁴⁸

For Peter Shirlow the rupture in the UVF endgame at conflict’s end, as represented by Moffett’s death, underscored:

...the manner in which positive Loyalist intent remains submerged by negativity - both from within and beyond. That negativity is burned into the consciousness of the citizens of Northern Ireland who have an imprecise knowledge of Loyalist diversity with regard to variant discourses and behaviours.⁴⁹

Moreover Shirlow academically compartmentalises loyalist paramilitarism as falling within the remit of either regime challenging violence, constitutional protection violence or anti-transgressive violence. This surely emplaces an overly clinical sheen upon what will clearly be presented in the chapters ahead as volatile and often anarchic paramilitary activity.⁵⁰

By the end of this thesis I will have provided clear evidence that the qualifications outlined in this literature review - with regard to the recent work of Gallaher, Shirlow, Edwards and Novosel - are both intrinsically valid and indeed essential to consider when reconstructing an ethical, balanced and clearly unambivalent appreciation of the violence which underlay the UVF and UDA's political voice. The dark nature of loyalist paramilitarism from 1966 to date and the problematical ability of pro-state terrorist groups to gestate a populist alternative would underpin the fractious relationship between the Protestant public and loyalist paramilitaries throughout. Only by appreciating and reiterating the political implications of this constantly observable intra-unionist dynamic - as opposed to the trend in more recent analysis to suggest that political loyalism could somehow strategically circumvent such bloody historical flotsam - can we directly refocus attention again on the fact that the general animosity between the Protestant general public and loyalist paramilitarism is clearly the most crucial and indeed nullifying factor in analysing this political phenomena.

¹ Bruce 1992b and 1993.

² Sunday Times Insight Team, 1972.

³ In the prologue to the first episode of *Loyalists* Taylor notes how republican contacts he had engaged with for the preceding *Provos* documentary warned him earnestly that research into loyalist paramilitarism could entail fatal consequences even for a broadcaster of his reputation. Taylor's wide range of extremely candid interviewees include a particularly interesting trio rescued from historical obscurity in the form of Noel Doherty of the Ulster Protestant Volunteers, Northern Ireland Prime Minister Lord Moyola and Vanguard leader William Craig. The clearest overview of the political thinking of Vanguard can be found in Alan F Parkinson's study of the Ulster Troubles of 1972 (2010, pp 62-72).

⁴ The sobering 1999 *Lost Lives* work by David McKittrick, Kelters et al is the definitive source book for information on the victims of loyalist paramilitary attacks and feuding as well as loyalist paramilitary fatalities themselves. On ethical grounds this chronology does not reveal the identities of paramilitaries sentenced for terrorist-related offences. One of its very few failings is unnecessary inclusion of laboriously convoluted and often ridiculous defence gymnastics from many court cases. Furthermore, cross-reference of the *Lost Lives* work with the UVF "Roll of Honour" narrated on the loyalist folk band Platoon's *No Higher Honour* CD - listing both volunteers killed in the course of paramilitary activity and those having died of natural causes while still members such as former Chiefs-of-Staff Samuel "Bo" McClelland and Tommy West - reveals several individuals classified as "Protestant civilians" as having actually been members of this loyalist paramilitary group. This would be confirmed in 2006 with the publication of the UVF's *The Fallen and the Brave* rolloall of deceased volunteers (Ulster Volunteer Force Regimental Association). Biographical details for McClelland and West can be found in *Combat* Volume 3 (3) - also July 1998 - and Volume 4 (37) respectively.

⁵ Stevenson's commendable work is only marred by the use of some inappropriately folksy americanisms such as the description of the Ulster working class as "blue collar folks". Likewise some bizarre historical claims are accepted uncritically from his interviewees such as the apparent murder of eight Catholic workers at Harland and Wolff in the late 1940s by loyalists! In similarly unquestioning style Tony Novosel's 2013 *Northern Ireland's Lost Opportunity* quotes PUP member Bobby Cosgrove's belief without qualification (p34) that the political complexion of Northern Ireland was due to the influence of Tories, the upper class and academics! Tom Roberts of UVF prisoner support group EPIC similarly juxtaposes his paramilitary career with that of his brother in the B-Specials and how his family had no difficulty with the latter "slaughtering people because he had the legitimacy of the state uniform" (p203) despite there being no know historical evidence of USC criminality warranting this description outside the remit of the first Ulster Troubles. Novosel's work in turn contains the most benign description of the UVF to date in political literature - "I found a story of an armed, violent and, some would say, terrorist movement that sought a way out of the dead end of violence" (p xviii) - and an even more benign appreciation of their paramilitary *modus operandi* (p223): "In its declared war on the IRA, the UVF attempted to find and kill known IRA men. When they could find no one, they targeted innocent Catholics".

⁶ McMichael, 1999.

⁷ Garland, 2001.

⁸ Sinnerton, 2002. An interesting review of Sinnerton's biography by Bobbie Heatley of The Connolly Association (*An Phoblacht*, 27th March 2002) associates the industrial and infrastructural decline of East Belfast with the PUP's attempt to "breath life into the corpse of the Northern Ireland Labour Party." Satirist Newton Emerson's review in *Fortnight* magazine in turn (Issue 408, November 2002) provides a fundamental critique of political loyalism when concluding "Ervin could make this remarkable personal journey, but he couldn't bring enough people with him. For this, we are supposed to blame middle-class unionism, cynically keeping its armed wing at arm's length, using the working class to fight its battles for it. That argument might have had merit when Gusto Spence was a Long Kesh lecturer, but it's transparently ridiculous now. A little less reliance on class war clichés could have made all the difference to the PUP. It would certainly had made all the difference to this book."

⁹ Billy Hutchinson's autobiography *Hard Man Honourable Man: My Loyalist Life* - co-authored with T.L. Thousand - remains on the search engines of many online booksellers but is still unpublished at the time of writing. The provisional details reference New Press as the publisher and 1999 as the publication date.

¹⁰ Maloney, 2010. An interesting analysis and heated public discussion of Ervin's contribution to the work can be found on www.sluggertoole.com/2010/11/29/hearing-the-other-voice-from-the-grave-why-should-we-listen-to-david-ervins-stories.

¹¹ Dillon and Lehane, 1973.

¹² Geoffrey Beattie's *We Are The People: Journeys Through The Heart Of Protestant Ulster* and *Protestant Boy* are moving and often hilarious accounts of growing up in the early 1970s in the Ballysillan area of North Belfast with teenage friends from the TOR gang like Jim "Tonto" Watt who would later graduate to loyalist paramilitarism as a leading UVF bombmaker. Watt received the monicker not for his Red Indian-wildness but for his overuse of a sunlamp which elicited the original nickname of "Tanno". During the conflict a frequent metaphor used for more violent urban areas of Belfast was "Comanche Territory" or "Apache Territory". The North Belfast district where Beattie's book is set and where the author of this thesis grew up himself - Belfast 14 - was the subject of a moving autobiographical song by singer Jake Burns. It was no doubt also the setting for the earlier Stiff Little Fingers' anthem of teen alienation (and parental exasperation) *At The Edge*.

¹³ Sally Belfrage's cosy interview with UVF leader John Bingham in *The Crack: A Belfast Year* is in stark contrast to the malign impression of the same loyalist paramilitary by security services veteran Harry McCallion in his own *Killing Zone* military reminiscences or indeed Martin Dillon's final Troubles overview *The Trigger Men* in 2003. In turn, Kevin Myers' *Watching The Door* includes his recollection of a potentially fatal meeting with a South Belfast UDA leader in 1972 and also references the self-confessed involvement of Tommy Lyttle of the NUPRG and ULDP in the murder of a Catholic couple in the same year. Malachi O'Doherty's own reflections upon his early career at the Belfast *Sunday News* concludes with a striking example of the same UDA leader's aura of threat and questionable sense of humour. A study of Lyttle by his son John is contained within Bill Rolston's 2011 *Children of the Revolution* compendium of Troubles reflections by the children of paramilitary activists.

¹⁴ *Shankill Mirror*, Issue 19, March 2001. The "Uncle Andy" character's sartorial styling is obviously modelled on UDA Chairman Andy Tyrrie. In 1984 Tyrrie would co-write a play *This Is It!* on the theme of an Ulster identity.

¹⁵ *Too Late To Talk To Billy, A Matter Of Choice For Billy, A Coming To Terms for Billy* and *Lorna* transmitted on BBC Television between 1982 and 1987. A fifth play *Love, Billy* was presented at Belfast's Lyric Theatre in May 2013.

¹⁶ Leitch, 1981. *Silver's City* clearly mirrors the life story of Gusto Spence by way of the folk hero status of the central character. Aside from Silver Steele it may be construed that the novel's Billy Bonner is modelled on Tommy Herron while Galloway appears to prefigure a hybrid of Lenny Murphy and Johnny Adair. The narrative resembles Spence's history in particular with his escape from incarceration and even commentary on the physical destruction of Protestant communities in Belfast (p93):

Outside, the ravaged houses still sped past, although here and there the prisoner noticed signs of habitation, a door, a window still curtained. He must have spent the night in one such outpost, he told himself, oblivious of the rats and the creeping rot behind the bedroom wallpaper.

"Pretty, isn't it?" He felt as though his thoughts had been on display.

"It reminds me of the Blitz." And it did, except for the absence of people. The streets seemed always crowded then as though there was an impatience to rebuild. But this territory had been abandoned for good, nothing seemed surer.

¹⁷ Mitchell, 2003.

¹⁸ Playwright Mitchell and his family would later suffer direct intimidation at the hands of loyalist paramilitaries on the Rathcoole estate following the making of *As The Beast Sleeps* (*Belfast Telegraph*, 26th November, 2005 and *The Guardian*, 29th January 2006.). Some years before the local Labour representative Mark Langhammer had a bomb placed under his car for supporting a police plan to establish a clinic in Rathcoole (*Belfast Telegraph*, 28th July 2003 and *The Guardian*, 8th September 2002.).

¹⁹ McGuinness, 1986. *Observe the Sons of Ulster Marching to the Somme* focuses on the elderly character of Kenneth Pyper and his recollections of the 36th Ulster Division attack on the Somme. The extraordinarily moving end of the play has the Ulster soldiers transpose the Somme to the Foyle, Lagan, Bann and Erne. Earlier the elderly Pyper character reflects on the modern Troubles in Northern Ireland: "The house has grown cold. Ulster has grown lonely. Fenian cowards. They won't burn me out with their fire. I have defeated fire before. And you will always defend me. You will always guard Ulster" (p 11).

²⁰ Parker's final play *Pentecost* concentrates on five lost souls - four metaphorical and one literal - cast adrift during the UWC strike of 1974 in a condemned terraced house in Belfast. The Protestant exile Peter's critique of the stoppage climaxes with the observation: "...shipyard bible-thumpers, unemployed binmen, petty crooks and extortionists, pigbrain mobsters and thugs, they've seized control over all of us, they're now ordering the sewage workers out, the raw sewage is about to come flooding down those streets out there, and it won't be the English who die of typhoid" (Parker, 1989, pp 183-184). The civil disorder of the Northern Ireland conflict remains much in the background of Parker's earlier *Iris In The Traffic*, *Ruby In the Rain* which ran as part of the BBC *Play For Today* series in 1981. This drama is set on one winter's day in Belfast and followed the parallel lifepaths of the two eponymous women. Belfast punk group Stiff Little Fingers provided the soundtrack with singer Jake Burns in a supporting dramatic role himself. In 1977 Parker's first contribution to *Play For Today* was *The Catchpenny Twist* which covered the songwriting career of two ex-teachers against the political vagaries of 1970s Ireland. *The Kamikaze Groundstaff Reunion Dinner* was also shown in 1981 in the series and had white British actors playing Japanese war veterans. Parker died of cancer in 1988 at the age of 47. For an analysis of Parker's *Northern Star* play on Henry Joy McCracken see "Living in Interesting Times: Stewart Parker's *Northern Star*" by Marilyn Richtarik in *Politics and Performance in Contemporary Northern Ireland* (University of Massachusetts Press, 1999). This play contains one of Parker's most famous lines of dialogue when discussing the crux of political division in Ireland - "It isn't true to say they forget nothing. It's far worse than that. They misremember everything". For overview by Ulster writer Glenn Patterson of Parker's association with Belfast see *The Guardian*, 13th June 2008.

²¹ Nelson, 1984.

²² Nelson's interviewees included one elderly Shankill woman who clearly underscored the unlikelihood of peace taking root in Ulster: "I seen it before, before ever Ireland was divided, and in the twenties, and each time after that; and Ireland will never be at peace, or and them stop fighting, till the end of the world" (p 79).

²³ Bruce, 1992a.

²⁴ Also discussed in Novosel, 2013, pp 15-21.

²⁵ Bruce, 1994.

²⁶ Bruce, 1992b.

²⁷ Crawford, 1999.

²⁸ *ibid*, pp 162-176 for particularly revelatory interviews with three prison officers who served at the Maze Prison during the period of the criminalisation process.

²⁹ Crawford, 2003.

³⁰ Crawford's 1999 and 2003 interviewees produce some extraordinarily uninhibited contributions to the broad political analysis of militant loyalism - this by way of their reasons for paramilitary engagement and feelings towards arrest and imprisonment: "They (the protestants) were getting shot and bombed to hell. If we didn't hit back, they would have wiped us out, and yet, by and large, they didn't support us. We offended their notion of respectability. They must have reasoned that it was preferable to suffer and die quietly like the bloody Jews in World War II. Then (their) fate wouldn't have been dissimilar, the only difference was we shot the SS who were intent on our extermination. If it came right to the wire, it would have been them in camps, not us" (Crawford 1999, p125). "I was a countryman. I suppose I wouldn't have become involved but for a close friend of mine being killed. He had been in the police. It wasn't a clean kill. He suffered horrendously. I was in the hospital with him and he was semi-conscious. I said 'I'm going to get the bastards who did this to you'. I swear he smiled. I went to a loyalist bar in the town and said 'Right, who the fuck is in charge here?' A big fella tapped the table with his glass and nodded over. That was it. I was in" (Crawford 1999, pp121-122). "The police came into my cell and asked 'Alan, when your wife is nervous does she crumple her jumper up and pull it?' I said 'Yes'. And they said 'Well she must have something to hide, because she's doing it now'. My interrogation was almost a secondary issue now, I was really worried about her. The police came back into the cell some time later, and by now I knew they were going to get me, through using her. They said 'Alan, we showed your wife photographs of your handiwork (the dead man's body). He was on a slab in the morgue with a wooden block under his head. We forced her to look at it and describe it to us. You know what Alan? She was sick all over the place.' It wasn't long after that that I confessed, even though I knew it was going to mean a life sentence in prison" (Crawford 2003, p190). "I felt and feel extremely aggressive towards prison officers - I'd go for them in the street. I got slapped about, and saw friends getting worked over. The injustice was hard to take. Call me 'Sir', being treated like a dog - I wouldn't call my own father 'Sir'. I didn't return home for a long time. I lost my confidence and my self-respect. Treatment like that can only make you worse" (Crawford 1999, p86).

³¹ Wood, 2006.

³² Gallaher, 2007.

³³ Gallaher's work references two extraordinary lowpoints in loyalist violence with regard to the activities of the local UVF-associated fluteband in the Donegall Road area of South Belfast around the year 2004. They allegedly beat a local French national resident for walking around his own house naked and also attacked and killed seagulls flying through the area (p184).

³⁴ "The unlikely lads of loyalism" interview with Dr Graham Spencer and Chris Hudson, *News Letter*, 4th February 2013.

³⁵ Spencer, 2008.

³⁶ McAuley, 2010.

³⁷ Shirlow and McEvoy, 2009.

³⁸ Shirlow, Tongue and McAuley, 2010.

³⁹ Shirlow, 2012.

⁴⁰ Novosel, *op cit*.

⁴¹ Gallaher, *op cit*, pp16-17.

⁴² Edwards, 2007.

⁴³ Edwards and Bloomer, 2005.

⁴⁴ Edwards and Bloomer article “Transforming Loyalist Communities: A Participatory Peace Research Approach” in McAuley and Spencer, 2011, p 114. The tone that the same authors adopt in a *Fortnight* article towards UVF disbandment following the public murder of Bobby Moffett and the resignation of Dawn Purvis appears more sobering in contrast: “The tolerance with which the organisation has been treated by ordinary people in the Shankill, Monkstown, Rathcoole, the Waterside, Ballymena and other areas where it has been traditionally strong is now waning. A complete winding up of its military structures must now take place. If it resists there is compelling evidence to suggest that it will continue to be criminalised as the state moves to extend the writ of the local power-sharing executive”. See “Dawn Purvis and the End of Progressive Loyalism” article in *Fortnight*, August 11th 2010.

⁴⁵ Edwards and Bloomer, 2005, pp 9-14 : “The PUP and the Protestant Working Class”.

⁴⁶ Gusty Spence’s brief freedom from custody in 1972 is thus prefaced as follows: “While most of this was taking place, Spence was in Crumlin Road Gaol fighting for political status, making contacts with the OIRA, trying to understand how the conflict started and how he ended up in prison” (Novosel, op cit, p 30).

⁴⁷ *ibid*, p159.

⁴⁸ *ibid*, p 208.

⁴⁹ Shirlow, op cit, p178.

⁵⁰ *ibid*, p 31.

III: THE POLITICAL THOUGHT OF THE ULSTER VOLUNTEER FORCE AND ULSTER DEFENCE ASSOCIATION IN HISTORICAL PERSPECTIVE

This chapter provides a concise historical background to the modern conflict with reference to earlier Protestant political violence in the north of Ireland in the 18th and 19th centuries and cross-class consolidation of the unionist bloc within the Ulster Unionist Council (UUC) and Ulster Volunteer Force against Home Rule. Northern Ireland state formation following the Great War and during the first Ulster Troubles will then be considered alongside reference to the threats to political stability and unionist hegemony during its half-century existence. These by way of republican violence, intra-unionist political dissent, labour unrest, civil disorder, engagement in global conflict, Irish irredentism, mass unemployment and eventually a significant electoral alternative for the Protestant working class. A wide of body of exceptional work relates to these specific historical determiners (Buckland 1973; Farrell 1976 and 1983; Stewart 1979 and 1985; Devlin 1981; Gray 1985; Fisk 1985; Walker 1985; Munck and Rolston 1987; Orr 1987; Barton 1989; Campbell 1991; Bowman 2007; Edwards 2009).

The thread of radical political thinking from within the ranks of loyalist paramilitary forces in Ulster - be that on social issues affecting the working class or broader constitutional matters - is a genuine phenomena of the modern northern conflict with no exact historical precursor. Any expectation of concrete historical linkages will prove a false friend. Alexander "Buck Alec" Robinson, Snatch McCracken, George Scott and other legendary UVF gunmen of the 1920s and 1930s never expounded sincere analyses of the class war for the *News Letter* and *Northern Whig*. Similarly the Independent Orange Order, the Northern Ireland Labour Party and particularly the Ulster Progressive Unionist Association of the 1930s never had military wings.¹

It will however be noted that manifestations of Protestant extra-legal political activity in Ulster were often paralleled by significant voices of dissent from within the northern Protestant grassroots that would indeed be replicated in tone by the modern loyalist political fronts - from William Johnston of Ballykillbeg through to Harry Midgley's Commonwealth Labour Party and beyond. Spanning the timeframe in similar fashion would be suspicion and hostility from mainstream unionist political culture towards such stirrings - readily transformed in turn into stark accusations of disloyalty towards the Union and even the Ulster Protestant people themselves.

EARLY POLITICAL VIOLENCE AND DISSENT IN PROTESTANT ULSTER

Hooded men with blackened faces hiding in the dark of the Ulster night first appear within the Protestant tradition as part of the outbreak of anti-landlord Whiteboyism between the 1750s and 1770s. This mirrored the earlier phenomena of native Irish resistance which the plantation home guard of the colonisers² combated a century and a half before. Both the Catholic and

Presbyterian population were affected to various degrees during the 18th Century by the contemporary test acts, penal laws, franchise restrictions and compulsory tithes to the Episcopalian establishment. The Presbyterian standing within Irish society at this time saw them orientated between two poles as contextualised by Flann Campbell in his chronicle of northern Protestant dissent:

...neither as wealthy and influential as the Episcopalian landlords, army officers and parsons, nor as submerged and poverty stricken as the Catholics. Half in the Ascendancy because of their Protestantism, and half out because of their inferior legal status, they formed a substantial group of the kind that was so obviously missing in the south – a middle or yeoman class.³

The Oakboys organised in Counties Armagh, Tyrone and Londonderry and the later Steelboys in County Antrim. While professing loyalty to the monarch and the constitution on one hand, the Oakboys mounted an armed opposition to compulsory taxes towards roadbuilding projects and the harsh exaction of tithe requirements. The Steelboys under the leadership of such figures as Captain See Justice and Captain Firebrand aimed to protect the security of tenure of the Ulster Presbyterian tenant against the rack-renting landlords of the Donegall family and their appointed middlemen.

The Protestant siege mentality remained embedded in planter society from the traumatic upheavals of the 1641 Ulster rebellion. A Laggan army, lead by veterans of the Thirty Years War and drawing personnel from the English and Scottish, had initially attempted to protect the settlers from Irish forces during the uprising. They were referenced in many contemporary documents as the “British forces in Ulster”.⁴ Similar reinforcement for Protestant Ulster came from the multifarious political lessons learnt about “enemy and passing friend” during the 1689 sieges of Enniskillen and Derry. When 13 Apprentice Boys shut Ferryquay Gate against Lord Antrim’s Redshanks and manifold defence associations were set up throughout the north as eastern Ulster fell to Tyrconnell’s army.

Yet notwithstanding the existence of such a steadfast laager, the latter part of the 18th Century would see 34,000 Ulstermen in arms as part of Lord Charlemont’s northern Volunteer movement which came together to provide security against invasion and in support of Henry Grattan’s 1782 (exclusively Protestant) Patriot Parliament.⁵ Made up of merchants, tradesmen and farmers, it included many Presbyterian rank and file members who were much more radical in inclination than their leadership. At the historic Dungannon Convention in February of that year, motions were to be passed supporting Irish parliamentary independence, the removal of discriminatory mercantilist laws against Irish trade and even some for Catholic emancipation. However with qualified independence gained and trade restrictions eased a gulf was to open up between the leadership and the more radical Volunteers who now favoured genuine parliamentary reform. In October 1791 modern separatist republicanism itself was born at the hands of Belfast Protestants with the inauguration of the Society of United Irishmen.⁶

Conversely in North Armagh the journeyman weaver descendants of the Oakboy movement had resorted to brutal sectarian conflict as “wreckers” with economically competing Catholic linen workers and paramilitary Defenders. Such groups included the Protestant Boys, Nappach Fleet and the Orange Boys. The “representative violence” of the Protestant vengeance groups can be seen as proletarian bodies seeking sanction from landlords for a new compact of citizenship in a period of radical socio-economic upheaval.⁷

The politico-religious conflict would be further exacerbated with the creation of the Masonic-style Orange Society at Loughgall in County Armagh following the Peep O'Day Boy victory at the Battle of the Diamond in September 1795 over their Catholic Defender rivals.⁸ A weaver-farmer based organisation with a mostly Church of Ireland membership, the ongoing United Irishmen campaign led to its substantial growth over the following years as the Orange Order with many peers and landlords joining. David Boulton's early study of modern loyalist paramilitarism includes the stock explanation for the attraction of the Order to Protestant workers:

Like a later generation of poor whites in America, he had the consolation of knowing there was always someone worse off than himself. If he shared nothing else with the gentry in the big houses, the common rhetoric of the lodges gave him the illusion of equality. Their victory at the Boyne was his victory, their responsibility to uphold Protestant law and Protestant order was his responsibility.⁹

Another chief centre of Orange power at this time was to be the 30,000 strong Yeomanry which replaced the suspect Volunteers and who were virtually Protestant to a man. The non-appearance of General Humbert's French forces doomed the poorly lead rising when it finally broke in the early summer of 1798 in County Wexford and the non-plantation Ulster counties of Antrim and Down. Inevitable defeat followed at the Battles of Vinegar Hill, Antrim and Ballynahinch respectively. The fate of many Protestants during this “First Year of Liberty” at Scullabogue in County Wexford meanwhile would join the 1641 murders at Portadown as salutary warnings of what native revenge awaited all those of loyal stock should their vigilant guard falter.

The sectarian clashes of the 1790s in the north east of Ireland would continue on a smaller scale into the following century and most memorably at “The Battle of Garvagh” in 1813. Though hit hard in many ways by the 1845-47 Great Famine in terms of death and evictions Ulster was to have two advantages over other parts of Ireland. The Ulster Custom gave the tenant relative security over his holding and also there was the buoyancy of a linen trade which had moved steadily away from domestic to factory production following the end of the cotton boom. In the same period fledgling engineering and shipbuilding industries took root in the Lagan Valley. A growing belief in the destiny of the unified Protestant north and the benefits of empire had already been articulated during the 1830s by Presbyterian minister Henry Cooke.¹⁰

1849 would witness the legendary loyalist victory at Dolly's Brae near Castlewellaan which left up to 30 Catholic Ribbonmen dead - the musical celebration of which may be heard at many loyalist band parades to this day from Ballymena to Bridgeton - while incidents of communal unrest were rising in Belfast's already delineated ghettos. These outbreaks were often inspired by the sectarian reinforcement of clerics like the Reverends Thomas Drew of Christ Church and "Roaring" Hugh Hanna of St Enochs.¹¹ The first serious large scale rioting broke out around the Twelfth of July period of 1857 between the residents of Protestant Sandy Row and the Catholic Pound district. Extraordinarily violent communal unrest involving adze-wielding loyalist shipwrights and gunmen from both communities firing upon men, women and children alike occurred again in 1864 and 1872.¹² Peter Gibbon would note how from 1864 the character of rioting changed from a localistic to an ethnic nature with its geographical relocation within Belfast to the Shankill district and the involvement of shipyard workers:

The dominant form of riot behaviour in Sandy Row was localised confrontation, in Shankill generalised exemplary belligerence. These were the prevalent institutional forms in areas distinguished by the predominance of shatter-zone riots on the one hand, and the assumption by shipyard workers of a role of permanent aggressive vigilance on behalf of the entire Protestant population on the other.¹³

The 1860s and 1870s was a period of tremendous economic growth in Greater Belfast in the linen and shipbuilding industries. This period would also witness the much overlooked phenomena of intra-Protestant conflict wherein the Orange Order spoke out on working class grievances with a populist voice. As the political scientist Henry Patterson has stressed with regard to the historical importance of this development:

If it can be shown in these conflicts involving Protestant 'democrats', a significant amount of class feeling was articulated, then the traditional view of how Orangeism functioned may have to be developed. Orangeism, it will be argued, derived its significance not simply as a pliant instrument in the hands of the bourgeoisie, but as a relatively autonomous institution with practices and demands that could and did bring it, or sections of its membership, into conflict with the leaders of Belfast Conservatism.¹⁴

William Johnston of Ballykilbeg, the major figure associated with this splintering of the Protestant class hegemony, sprang to prominence after his outspoken criticism of the Party Processions Act then in force. The 40,000 strong Orange demonstration he led in March 1867 from Newtownards to Bangor resulted in jail sentence martyrdom and subsequent electoral victory the next year over millowner John Mulholland in South Belfast.¹⁵ During the campaign, and with the support of the Orange and Protestant Working Mens Association and sections of the Liberal Party, Johnston stressed the manipulation of the working class "Protestant Democracy" by the upper classes who were more than willing to accept their bedrock defence of the Union yet would not contemplate working class representation in Westminster.

The conservative leadership in Ulster was to be strengthened however by the subsequent success of their opposition to Home Rule legislation in 1886 and 1893. Ulster liberals decided to break with Gladstone over the first bill and, with many Home Rulers dismissing the Ulster resistance as “all bunkum and bounce”¹⁶, it was defeated in the House of Commons in a year when Belfast was convulsed by the worst riots of the century. The 1893 second Home Rule bill in turn fell in the House of Lords. Yet again the economic divergence factor of a thriving north against a southern backwater was to be a mainstay of the unionist dialectic with an Ulster Unionist Convention in Belfast’s Botanic Gardens bringing together 11,000 delegates. Colonel Edward J Saunderson’s Ulster Defence Union (UDU) under their “Quis Seperabit” motto made plans for a provisional government and arms importation while Frederick Crawford founded the Young Ulster secret society.¹⁷

Yet the “land and labour” issue in this period between the second and third Home Rule bills would still remain emotive. In 1886 the fiercely anti-landlord liberal unionist Thomas Wallace Russell won victory in Tyrone South. He had heavily criticised sectors of the Orange and church establishment and successfully won the support of many in the discontented Protestant agrarian community in Counties Antrim and Down.¹⁸ Organised trade union activity had also emerged in Belfast at the turn of the century. Two of the most prominent figures in the movement were labour organiser William Walker and Thomas Sloan who, as a shipyard labourer, was associated with the impassioned Protestant oratory on the Custom House steps.

The goal of William Walker – who failed to take the North Belfast seat at Westminster in 1905 for the Independent Labour Party – was a new form of unionism distinct from the conservatives who represented the industrial and landowning interests and pitted themselves so regularly against social reform legislation. For “municipal socialism” to succeed, unity would originate from below and hence the national question could be theoretically circumvented. According to Walker:¹⁹

Their platform in the present campaign was not a party platform. If they went to the Shankill Road and spoke what was popular there it would be all right and the same would happen on the Falls. But their mission was to try and unite the best elements of the Shankill with the best elements from the Falls.²⁰

The former leading Belfast Protestant Association member Thomas Sloan meanwhile joined with *Irish Protestant and Church Review* editor Lindsay Crawford in forming the Independent Orange Order after being expelled from the parent body following his election as an independent unionist MP for South Belfast in 1902. The IOO were a significant focus of populist dissent within Orangeism for a short but significant period with a triple appeal of combining support for the Protestant industrial worker and tenant farmer, criticism of the conservative elite’s political resolve and fervent bias against the Catholic church. The latter aspect of their approach was to be moderated significantly with the publication of the extraordinary *Magheramorne Manifesto* which was both democratic and ecumenical in tone.²¹

As an early example of progressive unionism, albeit more enthusiastically expounded by Crawford than the "Protestant Democracy" representative Sloan, it would criticise the sectarian basis of much lay and ecclesiastical rhetoric within the unionist tradition as blatantly divisive against any goal of achieving a common Irish identity. The IOO manifesto thus attacked the official unionism of the day as a "discredited creed" and envisaged the Protestant worker standing:

...once more on the banks of the Boyne, not as victors in the fight, nor to applaud the noble deeds of our ancestors ... but to hold out the right of fellowship to those who, while worshipping at different shrines, are yet our countrymen – bone of our bone, flesh of our flesh.²²

In 1907 the strike of the Belfast carters and dockers – as organised by James Larkin - provided a framework for fleeting communal unity in Belfast. 1000 members of the IOO marched to Shaw's Bridge on the Twelfth of July to hear Crawford attack the Orange Order for its blacklegging duties during the Land War.²³ As unrest spread to the ranks of the Royal Irish Constabulary (RIC) a labour rally of 100,000 took place in Belfast later that month. Violence in nationalist areas however would confirm many Protestants' deepest suspicions and fears about inherent political dangers afoot - John Gray's chronicle of the strike focusing on this key historical determiner in its course and resolution :

If, then, the 1907 dispute revealed in full array the capacity of Protestant workers to provide a formidable vanguard in industrial agitation it also illustrated the limitations of such agitation, as the powerful impact of the workers' actions raised issues which threatened other compelling supremacist imperatives.²⁴

CARSON'S ULSTER VOLUNTEER FORCE FROM CRAIGAVON TO THIEPVAL WOOD

Under the leadership of Sir Edward Carson the Ulster Unionist Council was formed in March 1905 in the ongoing fight against Home Rule. The UUC would unite all the unionist associations in Ulster and provide a central authority to determine political policy. Membership included MPs and representatives from local unionist associations and the Orange Order.²⁵ The end of the Lords veto with the passing of the Parliament Act of 1911 led to the introduction of a constitutionally unassailable third Home Rule bill in 1912. In Ulster the economic gulf with the rest of Ireland had increased substantially since the start of the century with the Lagan Valley now forming an integral part of a great commercial triangle along with Clydeside and Merseyside.

Unionist leaders stressed how the constitution had been sold out to an electoral numbers game, that the various Land Acts had solved so many long-term Irish grievances and that the bill's limitations on the Home Rule parliament's financial independence could not be squared with

any final satisfaction of nationalist demands. The propaganda of the Union Defence League and British League for the Defence of Ulster on the mainland accompanied the July expulsions by the Protestant “public band” of up to 2,000 Catholic and “rotten Prod” workers in Belfast’s two shipyards. Lord Milner organised a British Covenant that garnered two million signatures while support would also be received from the Scots-Irish diaspora in North America, Australasia and South Africa.²⁶

Carson, convinced of the sincerity of the Ulster position by a parade of 50,000 loyalists at Craig’s East Belfast home of Craigavon on 23rd September 1911, would threaten to set up a provisional government for the Protestant province of Ulster.²⁷ Fervent encouragement was then given in turn by Conservative Party leader Bonar Law in speeches at Balmoral in Belfast in April 1912 and at Blenheim Palace the following month.²⁸ On “Ulster Day” of 28th September 1912, and as a climax to a series of province-wide meetings, a Solemn League and Covenant was to be signed by over 471,414 unionists - several in their own blood.²⁹

In January 1913 an Ulster Volunteer Force eventually 90-100,000 strong was formed by the UUC Military Committee to formalise earlier licensed drilling in paramilitary Unionist Clubs which had mushroomed in the wake of the bill’s passing. Support in the British military establishment for the Ulster stand was widespread with some British Army officers accepting UVF commissions.³⁰

Carson was seemingly willing to stand by the King’s Rebels to the very end as would be suggested in one Belfast speech to the UVF:

Remember you have no quarrel with individuals. We welcome, aye and we love every individual Irishman, even though opposed to us. Our quarrel is with the Government. If they wish to test the legality of anything we are doing, or have done, do not let them take humble men. I am responsible for everything. They know where to find me, for I never ask any man to do what I am not myself ready to do.³¹

Conversely however it must be remembered that in certain respects Carson and Craig, whilst expressing extraordinarily militant words of defiance, were personally placing their faith in strictly political solutions.³² As historian Alvin Jackson underlined:

Certainly Carson blessed unionist militancy through his speeches and through his presence at various martial displays; but in private he advised against pushing the make-believe aggression of the UVF into the realm of reality.³³

With the Ulster rebels having moved irrevocably towards a coup d’etat by March of that year, rumours began to steadily mount of imminent UVF raids for arms against British armouries in the north. Churchill ordered the Royal Navy to northern Irish and Scottish waters, drafted plans for a raid on Craigavon and considered the arrests of Carson and Law.³⁴ However the speculative moves to crush or provoke the UVF were counteracted by officers of the Third

Cavalry Brigade at the Curragh camp in Kildare who refused to countenance action against the Ulster rebels.

The following month Frederick Crawford organised Operation Lion - the running of 24,600 rifles and two million rounds of ammunition from Hamburg into the ports of Larne, Belfast, Bangor and Donaghadee.³⁵ The UVF could now dispose of its wooden training weapons as Carson and Craig brought the gun back into Irish politics by way of the German Mauser, the Austrian Mannlicher and the Italian Vetterli-Vitali.³⁶ With the onset of war Home Rule was placed on the statute book and suspended - the UVF were constituted as the 36th Ulster Division along with the 2000-strong Young Citizen Volunteers of Ireland (YCV).³⁷

After training at Clondeboye, Finner and Ballykinler the Ulster Division held its final parade in Belfast on Saturday 8th May 1915.³⁸ The UVF rebellion would be transformed into a day of terrible destiny on 1st July 1916 north and south of the River Ancre near Thiepval Wood. In counterpoise to Wilfred Spender's oft-quoted eulogy to the Ulster soldiers³⁹, one private was to write home to Belfast:

Dear Mother...tell them that ther is not another grosvenor Rd fellow left but myself. Mother wee were tramping over the dead I think there is onley about 4 hundred left out of about 13 hundered... Mother if God spers me to get home safe I will have something ufal to tell you if hell is any worres I would not like to go to it.⁴⁰

5,500 men of the Division were to be killed or injured on the first day of the attack - the old Battle of the Boyne anniversary on the Julian calendar. . The outstanding feat of arms achieved against the Schwaben Redoubt overshadows to this day even the most cynical of retrospective republican analyses.⁴¹ The following year at the Battle of Messines, 30,000 Irishmen fought together as part of the 16th Irish and 36th Ulster Divisions. Irish nationalist leader John Redmond's brother Willie, who was also a Westminster MP, would be killed here and his body recovered from the battlefield by a soldier of the old UVF.⁴²

CIVIL WAR IN NORTH AND SOUTH – LOYALIST PARAMILITARISM AND THE CREATION OF THE ULSTER SPECIAL CONSTABULARY

The month following the end of the Great War saw a Sinn Fein electoral landslide off the back of the utterly changed military and political situation in Ireland after the 1916 Easter Rising. In the north Sinn Fein election victories at the local elections in January and June of 1920 lead to many county and rural councils pledging allegiance to the Dail. The first "Troubles" of the century in Ulster began in Derry in June, where just such a situation had arisen. Loyalist snipers rained gunfire from Derry's Walls into the Bogside and UVF roadblocks were set up and manned by volunteers with faces covered with black masks or handkerchiefs with eyeholes. This outbreak of trouble claimed the lives of fourteen Catholics and four Protestants.

Soon the violence spread to Belfast with Carson's inflammatory Twelfth of July Finaghy field demonisation of Belfast labour leaders as "the Trojan horse of the IRA" and threats to remobilise the UVF: "I am sick of words without action".⁴³ Trouble erupted in the Queen's Island shipyard with expulsions of Catholics and "bad Prods" who were involved with the earlier 1919 44-hour-week engineering strike. The removal of such leaders as James Baird and John Hanna by "the boys" of the Belfast shipyard could be seen as both punishing Catholics for the actions of the IRA elsewhere in Ireland and also to provide work for unemployed Protestant ex-servicemen.

By this stage some Labour Unionist MPs such as Thompson Donald and Sam McGuffin - staunch loyalists who were hostile to independent labour organisation and with tangible links to Protestant paramilitary groupings - were producing rhetoric even more extreme than the most right-wing fringes of the Unionist Party itself. The Ulster Unionist Labour Association (UULA) had been formed in 1918 under the chairmanship of future Northern Ireland Prime Minister J. M. Andrews and the leadership of William Grant. Ironically its first President was Edward Carson who had a significant parliamentary record of opposing social reform affecting trade unionists, pensioners and tenants amongst others.⁴⁴

Central to this period in representing the urgency with which class divisions within unionism were seen to require containment, the leadership saw the UULA as a way of demonstrating unionism's cross-class support in Ulster to external observers. Likewise as a means of securing working class representation at a time of wider Bolshevik-haunted post-war social and economic uncertainty. Three of the Belfast seats at Westminster were to be secured for working class unionists alongside Belfast city council seats and minor positions in the Northern Ireland cabinet.⁴⁵

Leading unionist Richard Dawson Bates would correspond with Carson in June 1919 about the important institutional function of the UULA as a forum for labour and social issues otherwise inadequately discussed within other unionist and Orange bodies. Its existence would thus lessen the possibility of "younger members of the working classes joining socialist and extreme organisations run by the Independent Labour Party, where they are educated in views very different to those held by our body."⁴⁶

Also included within this construct of "New Unionism" - dismissed as a safety-valve against working class loyalist unrest by its critics - were an Ulster Workers Union (UWU) and an Ulster Ex-Servicemen's Association (UESA).⁴⁷ As a unionist stratagem to head off internal grassroots dissent and combat the threat from Labour the UULA significantly failed to inspire the Protestant working class. However by sounding the communal tocsin against the revolutionary threat from both republicanism and socialism alike, it would be a significant actor in the deepening sectarian conflict in Belfast.

Parallel to this the UVF was being formally reorganised in the six county area under Colonel Wilfred Spender as Chief-of- Staff at Craig's behest. It co-ordinated the existing vigilante groups that had lately been set up in light of IRA violence and Dublin Castle hesitancy to authorise such groups as Special Constables. These included Sir Basil Brooke's Fermanagh Vigilance, John Webster's Protective Patrol in Armagh and a group in Tyrone under General Ricardo's leadership.⁴⁸ Like Carson's original UVF the leadership roles devolved to the upper echelons of the Ulster elite and clandestine linkages were forged with the British military up to and including plans to kidnap Arthur Griffith and hold him hostage in the north.⁴⁹

The UUC demand for a Special Constabulary was to be met at the end of 1920 when many UVF units were transformed into the Ulster Special Constabulary (USC) - full time uniformed A Specials, part time B Specials and a C Specials emergency reserve. Several UVF commanders like Brooke became USC County Commandants. However a 20,000 strong UVF was still in existence. Crawford planned to expand the group to a 150,000 strong membership to defend Ulster against southern invasion and wanted undercover loyalist squads to tackle republican terrorism. He went ahead at this point with the initial help of William Grant to set up his own comparatively small Ulster Brotherhood paramilitary group for intelligence-gathering which was also known as Crawford's Tigers.⁵⁰

In 1921 elections were finally held under the Government of Ireland Act⁵¹ and in June King George V opened the Belfast Parliament. The state of Northern Ireland was thus born with the de jure partition of Ireland and the loss of 70,000 southern Protestants in Cavan, Monaghan and Donegal. A truce would come into effect in July. With USC activity curtailed during this closely monitored period loyalist paramilitary activity increased – paramilitary Cromwell Clubs were organised from unionist headquarters according to IRA intelligence.⁵²

Individuals from a 150-strong Ulster Protestant Association (UPA) were in the forefront of violence up to 1923. Like the East Belfast UDA half a century later they were accused regularly of involvement in extortion and intimidation and kept internal discipline at their Newtownards Road public house headquarters with a flogging horse.⁵³ With a membership originating within the UVF, a contemporary police report noted how the UPA "attracted to itself a large number of the lowest and least desirable of the Protestant hooligan element".⁵⁴ Another now rarely referenced group was the Imperial Guards whose membership may even have surpassed the reformed UVF.⁵⁵ Originating as an East Belfast vigilante force set up by UULA and UWU activists during the first summer of violence, the 40,000 strong Guards consisted of many ex-servicemen and members of the UVF.⁵⁶

The Anglo-Irish negotiations in London were to be almost scuppered at the end of the year by revelations of the RIC Divisional Commander's plans to legalise Crawford's rump UVF, the

Imperial Guards and UESA together as a Territorial Army force. Spender himself was at this stage supportive of UVF retention as a counter threat to British government peace concessions while Crawford had condemned the leadership of the other loyalist bodies as “irresponsible individuals enlisting a lot of scallywags who will only be a menace and a danger to our cause”.⁵⁷ The plan itself did come to fruition with the creation of a CI Specials at the start of 1922 under the co-ordination of Unionist Party Chief Whip Captain Herbert Dixon. Membership of this new body would include UPA killer and later lion-wrestling Belfast street legend Alexander “Buck Alec” Robinson.⁵⁸

Two pacts between Craig and Michael Collins in the first half of this year failed to expedite the return of the shipyard expellees or Catholic inclusion into the northern security infrastructure. Neither could they halt the continuing cycles of murder, reprisal and arson in the north. Outside the twin centres of conflict in North Belfast’s York Street and the Short Strand in the east of the city the most infamous incidents in Belfast included the murder of six Catholic children by a loyalist bomb in Weaver Street off the Shore Road and the RIC “Murder Gang” killings of the Catholic McMahon family in Arnon Street.⁵⁹

The assassination of Sir Henry Wilson in Eaton Place in London lead directly to the storming of the Four Courts by Free State forces and the formal commencement of the Irish Civil War. The IRA threat in the north was practically nullified because of the operational implications and the police clamped down heavily on the UPA. Labour Unionists professed their anger at the internment of up to 20 UPA loyalists and also continued to speak against the readmission of expellees to the Belfast shipyards.

The Troubles in Ulster between 1920 and 1922 caused the deaths of 559 people. The dynamic of loyalist paramilitary activity in the period was fuelled by both the Anglo-Irish talks and the necessity for security powers to be devolved to a local administration to which they gave unwavering fealty. Access to arms from the original gun-running may well have underpinned much of the early 1920s violence from this source but Spender’s reformation of the UVF was a numerical and political shadow of its predecessor. Likewise the defeat of the IRA in the North by 1922 would be fundamentally due to the efforts of the British Army, RUC and A Specials as opposed to loyalist paramilitarism.⁶⁰

THE CONSOLIDATION OF THE NORTHERN STATE 1924-35

The Northern Ireland local elections of 1924 saw limited success for Labour due to the earlier government abolition of proportional representation which a disapproving Westminster allowed to proceed after the unionists threatened to resign en masse. The use of a proportional representation system at the 1920 elections – introduced to both parts of Ireland in defence of minority interests- had increased non-unionist representation in the north. This seriously

threatened unionist hegemony in all border areas and naturally magnified the nationalist claims that such areas should transfer to the south. Abolition strengthened the unionist position and mollified its rank and file in favour of reconciliation with the northern minority or Collins' government. It would also thus place structural restrictions upon matters of economic concern ever taking priority over the national question by way of local electoral consolidation for Labour.

At the same time the rebellious councils were seized and ward boundaries gerrymandered by the nationalist-boycotted Leech Commission.⁶¹ The northern government had also restricted the local franchise to rate-payers and their spouses since control of local government equated to control of housing and public sector jobs.⁶² The 1922 Civil Authorities (Special Powers) Act (NI) was also renewed annually to 1928, then for a five-year period and finally made permanent in 1933. With the Union secure by 1925, and the RUC established in 1922, the A Specials had to unwillingly go along with the C and CI Specials. The B Specials however remained 11-12,000 strong on average.

Despite Craig's use of the Treaty's Boundary Commission threat – which had led to the raising of three UVF battalions in Liverpool by William Grant and J.F. Gordon MP to oppose the body's work⁶³ - the 1925 Northern Ireland General Election was to see the Unionist Party lose five seats to independent unionists and a tenants' candidate. Labour in turn won three seats and became the official opposition as nationalists slowly returned. However their attempt to balance the Walkerite and Connollyite socialist traditions while simultaneously avoiding the partition issue was a sensitive political balance as Graham Walker notes:

The party in effect walked a political tightrope between Unionism and Nationalism, but its image was such that the Unionists had no difficulty in convincing Protestants that it was no friend of the British link, while the Nationalists, for their part, were able to criticise it quite legitimately for not coming out unequivocally against partition.⁶⁴

Labour Unionists were quick to deride any possible groundswell of proletarian unity afoot. In turn the independent unionist gains were as always based on grievances with the Unionist Party's democratic accountability and lacklustre response to working class discontent as opposed to any uncertainty over the benefit of the Union – as indeed had been the case with internal dissent from Thomas Wallace Russell at the turn of the century through to P.J. Woods who won a by-election in West Belfast in 1923.⁶⁵ Nevertheless the Unionist Party itself viewed the independent unionist victories as a divisive development which could fundamentally undermine the Protestant support base and was a direct factor in the abolition of proportional representation for the Northern Ireland General Election in 1929 - Labour and the nationalists uniting unsuccessfully against the proposal.⁶⁶

With the Protestant electorate now facing the realisation that a split vote could potentially hand victory to an anti-partition candidate, the status of the Union was underscored as the central

political factor for consideration in the unionist-nationalist battleground. Atop the suspicion attendant to any fracturing of unionist unity, the question of the state's fundamental security was now heralded as being above and beyond any appeal on social and economic grounds from an alternative Protestant candidacy .

The 1929 election would thus see the Unionist Party winning six more seats than in 1925. The Labour threat had been turned back by the clearcut implications now manifest upon a vote against the Unionist Party by the Protestant voter. In turn the independent unionist victories in the Shankill district of Tommy Henderson and J.W. Nixon posed no threat to the government with regard to the constitutional issue – though the former had frequent input on social issues affecting the Protestant and Catholic worker alike.⁶⁷

1932 was to be long remembered for the outdoor relief strike - the protests against the Poor Law Guardians being organised by Marxist Revolutionary Workers Groups. Cross-communal rioting erupted on the Falls and Shankill in September rekindling again the spirit of working class solidarity seen in 1907 and 1919. An oft-used quotation, albeit oscillating wildly on the apocryphal, pinpoints what must have been one of the most extraordinary seconds in the bitter history of Belfast City:

On the Shankill Road crowds of growling men lounged around waiting. Suddenly a big red-faced woman with a black shawl thrown over her shoulder, wisps of hair hanging from eyes, appeared, almost from nowhere...She ran to crowds of men and in quick terse language told them that the unemployed and the police were in conflict on the Falls Road. 'Are you'se going to let them down?' she almost shrieked. 'No by heavens we are not', they roared back and in almost a twinkling, a veritable orgy of destruction began.⁶⁸

The RUC finally channelled the violence into the nationalist Falls ghetto while an Ulster Protestant League (UPL) closely associated with J.W. Nixon was already working in the background to emphasise the overarching need to prioritise on the employment of Protestants in the workforce. While the strike was certainly successful in achieving its goal of increasing relief rates - and though communal unity had genuinely been forged around a bitter economic issue affecting the entire working class under the leadership of the Catholic Tommy Geehan - such solidarity as displayed did not even transfer as far as the subsequent Corporation and Poor Law Guardian elections in terms of unionist victories.⁶⁹

In 1933 and 1934 the unionist MP and future Prime Minister Sir Basil Brooke added to the seeds already sown by the UPL with a series of highly inflammatory and outrageously exclusionist speeches concerning Catholic disloyalty to the state - Craig in turn supporting such sentiments fully.⁷⁰ Against this background, and during the marching season of 1935 in the year of King George V's Silver Jubilee, the tension exploded on the Twelfth of July with yet another manifestation of UPA gunmen returning to the streets to the musical accompaniment of

Glasgow's Billy Boys band.⁷¹ Sectarian rioting in Belfast's York Street district left five Catholics and eight Protestants dead.⁷²

During this period Unionist Party Chief Whip Daniel Dixon maintained contact with loyalist militants while the UPL were permitted to use the party's Glengall Street headquarters for meetings. Paddy Devlin's work on the strike claims that one of the leading Protestant rioters was in the pay of William Grant at the time⁷³ and Ronnie Munck and Bill Rolston's study further stated how in their research they had found no individual who had actually been a member of the UPL underlining how comparatively small the organisation was.⁷⁴

The latter work also underscores that political speeches could not have caused the 1935 riots alone - as a raft of violent incidents over the preceding three years made plain - and that sectarianism had never died out despite the class militancy of 1932:

Sectarian divisions had a dynamic of their own and sectarian struggles were as 'normal' as class struggles, so that it was pointless to call for a 'restoration' of some 'pure' working-class unity which had never existed.⁷⁵

It is crucial to underscore at this point that in the three decades between the 1935 killings and the resurrection of the UVF in 1965 there was to be no loyalist paramilitary organisation operating under this or any other name in Northern Ireland. Or indeed any examples of sustained sectarian killings by armed gangs or groups of individuals. Thus unlike the republican movement's subterranean militant presence, this thirty-year period experienced no loyalist paramilitary activity outside the state monopoly on military force.⁷⁶

THE SEIGE CONTINUES WITHIN AND WITHOUT 1936-66

During the last election before the Second World War in 1938, the millionaire W.J. Stewart and his short-lived Progressive Unionists would place stress on the unemployment issue and the need for agricultural reform and a housebuilding programme. Stewart would underscore:

Partition as an election cry has no value because all Unionists in Northern Ireland are firmly opposed to any attempt to interfere with the province as an integral part of the United Kingdom... We will fight the election on the question of unemployment.⁷⁷

Predictably all 12 candidates – branded as “wreckers” by the Unionist Party leadership and unrepresentative as mainly liberal-minded businessmen and professionals - were to fail under Craig's pragmatic stress on the manifold dangers of De Valera's 1937 Fianna Fail constitution.⁷⁸ The war itself - in which the loss of the southern Treaty ports of Lough Swilly, Berehaven and Cobh to Allied use saw Ulster's strategic importance come into its own - would see criticism of the Stormont government from backbencher Edward Warnock before the death of Lord Craigavon in 1940 and his replacement by fellow populist J. M. Andrews at the head of

a barely altered cabinet. Disgruntlement peaked with the April-May 1941 Luftwaffe triple blitz which killed 942 people in the Greater Belfast area and caused massive industrial disruption and destruction of housing.⁷⁹

In 1943 Brooke became Prime Minister of Northern Ireland and his cabinet reshuffle saw Harry Midgley installed as Minister of Public Security⁸⁰ and William Grant as Minister of Labour. Midgley had left the Labour Party in 1942 over the vexed partition issue to form his own Commonwealth Labour Party. This group would stand in opposition to the formal Unionist Party in two ways as analysed by Midgley's biographer Graham Walker:

... first of all by showing that the Unionists did not have a monopoly on loyalty to Britain and on commitment to the war effort; and secondly, that the Unionists were hidebound by a retrogressive social outlook which ill-equipped them to lead Ulster into the post-war world.⁸¹

The course of the war in general strengthened the Union, as Churchill's valedictory final address made plain, though industrial unrest did break out again in centres of Belfast industry in every year between 1942 and 1944. The June 1945 Stormont election saw the Unionist Party campaign on a broadly anti-socialist platform of opposition to Labour's plans for nationalisation and planning while at the same time promising to introduce any social reforms passed at Westminster into Northern Ireland.

With the south formally declaring full republic status in late 1948 another election was called in Northern Ireland the following year in an atmosphere of extreme tension. The "Chapel Gates" election, so called because of the Mansion House conference decision to collect voluntary donations outside southern churches for anti-partition candidates in the north, solidified the unionist bloc. All Labour MPs were defeated and the party organisation splintered over the partition issue with a now firmly pro-Union Northern Ireland Labour Party emerging. The opposition in Stormont now became fully Catholic and the British government reaffirmed Northern Ireland's constitutional status in the 1949 Ireland Act.

During the first half of the 1950s the government added to its unique legal portfolio with a Public Order Act in 1951 and a Flags and Emblems Act in 1954. Backbench pressure on the Stormont government was the main dynamic behind both pieces of legislation and with similar directional forces emanating from the Protestant grassroots. The November 1956 Saor Uladh attacks on northern customs posts pushed the IRA into military action with the launch of Operation Harvest the following month. Between December 1956 and February 1962 eight IRA volunteers, six members of the RUC and two USC men were killed. The campaign had been a failure with limited support for the IRA from northern nationalists and cross-border internment hitting hard.

In 1958 the NILP won four Stormont seats in Belfast – Pottinger, Oldpark and the staunchly Protestant Woodvale and Victoria . Being unequivocally pro-partition since 1949 - and constantly firm on law and order issues - they would focus on the recession problems affecting agriculture, shipbuilding and the textiles industry. In 1962 they increased their vote yet again to over 76,000 votes and held onto their four seats with increased majorities. The NILP would theoretically represent a new Protestant and Catholic working class alliance to tackle socio-economic problems within the Stormont system. However in reality its gathering support since the late 1940s was mainly founded on Protestant working class voters who viewed its unionist credentials as essentially sound. Its qualified Catholic support over the unemployment issue had in turn attracted liberal Protestants of all classes in terms of its non-sectarian appeal.⁸²

Aaron Edwards history of the party suggests that the NILP provided both “a diagnosis and a panacea” for Protestant working class angst over unionist failings in the social and political sphere:

Protestant workers had clearly suffered economic impoverishment at the hands of an “inept” Unionist regime but they were not prepared to throw in their lot with a socially retrogressive Republic which, via the Unionist propaganda medium at least, was repeatedly characterised as politically backward, economically autarkic, firmly irredentist and deeply clerical. Following its withdrawal from the British Commonwealth it was all these things and more to the Protestant working class. Their ties to the economic logic of partition would bind them firmly to pro-British sentiment.⁸³

In the early 1960s economic recovery proved elusive with the Hall Committee report suggesting that loyal Ulstermen should consider becoming *Gastarbeiter* on the British mainland as an interim safety valve. Brookeborough’s successor in 1963, Terence O’Neill, would utilise many of the NILP’s policies about combating unemployment and the contraction and collapse of the three core industries. The Labour vote was still holding strong at this time with 103,000 votes but no seats at the October 1964 Westminster election. However the November 1965 Stormont election which O’Neill called to consolidate his position, which was already attracting undue negative reaction from some unionist quarters, saw the NILP vote plummet. Only the Pottinger and Oldpark seats would be retained as the Labour vote fell by 10,000 from its 1962 performance.⁸⁴

O’Neill’s focus on economic recovery for the moribund northern economy - and especially his desire for co-operation with the trade unions and Sean Lemass’ Republic of Ireland - placed him almost to the left of the NILP. Within the party a distancing was occurring between the more left-wing members and the pro-unionist MPs David Bleakley and Billy Boyd who seemed to embody a Belfast-orientated and sabbatarian Protestant image inimical to broadening the support base. This came to a head over the “Sunday swings” controversy of late 1964 where Woodvale NILP representatives were expelled and then readmitted to the party. Divisions also took place within the NILP over the election of former IRA member Paddy Devlin to the party

executive, the decision to contest seats in majority nationalist areas and a NILP-proposed private members bill in Stormont in 1964 to outlaw religious discrimination.⁸⁵

Political scientist Frank Wright would clarify how the opening of specific political space in Northern Ireland for the NILP to enter as an essentially working class unionist party had now fundamentally contracted over two issues:

With the rapid fall in the unemployment rate by 1965, from its early 1963 peak, the NILP also lost the major issue upon which it had been able to attract working class 'extremist' unionist support. On the other side too, those middle class 'liberal' unionists who had supported the NILP because they disliked the protestant-dominated character of Unionism found an alternative political home in the Unionist party now under the leadership of the 'liberal' Prime Minister O'Neill.⁸⁶

By 1966 and the twin blood-sacrifice anniversaries of the Easter Rising and the Battle of the Somme, stormclouds began to gather over Ulster. Historian A.T.Q. Stewart was to provide the definitive metaphorical context against which all was to follow:

Men and women who had grown to maturity in a Northern Ireland at peace now saw for the first time the monsters which inhabited the depths of the community's unconscious mind. It was as if a storm at sea had brought to the surface creatures thought to have been long extinct.⁸⁷

Three decades of turmoil would ensue in which the descendants of Carson's volunteers would play a central role in the creation and sustenance of Northern Ireland's cyclical violence.

CONCLUSIONS: PATHWAYS OF POLITICAL DISSENT AND POLITICAL VIOLENCE

A dominant theme threaded throughout much modern Irish nationalist political discourse has been the belief that communal division and economic exploitation in Ulster were centrally underpinned by the direct manipulation of metropolitan political elites from above. From financial sponsorship of the first Ulster Volunteer Force during the Home Rule crisis through to the Conservative government's shoring-up of a tottering Stormont regime in the early 1970s in support of the introduction of internment.

However as we have seen, in the history of the Protestant north there are many examples of bottom up dynamics – most notably in the case of the Orange Order - where the Protestant bedrock ensured that the unionist leadership did not diverge from core guiding principles for quite pragmatic economic and political reasons.⁸⁸ Furthermore, in the rural ethnic frontiers and urban shatterzones, both the genetic sectarian hostility to the Catholic enemy and the attendant inherited folk wisdoms were self-reinforcing and autonomous in nature.

Essentially the crucial political dynamic affecting the birth, life and death of the Northern state would not be those of an imperial geopolitical nature but be linked instead to the populist control mechanisms utilised by the Unionist Party to contain the socio-economic demands of the Protestant working class community. Be it through recourse to sectarian rhetoric, the assurance of economic privilege for the majority community or the vilification of alternative Protestant candidacies - all of which have been noted in this chapter - the end result would be volatile community relations in Ulster and the qualification of the long Protestant tradition of political dissent.⁸⁹ The latter as broadly limited by considerations of loyalty to the British nation and subsequently to what appeared to be a fundamentally secure Northern Ireland state.

The political bond between the unionist leadership and the often acquiescent Protestant worker would not survive the nationalist reform demands from the mid-1960s onwards that would focus on the social and economic repercussions of the same association. In the maelstrom of political reaction and violence that would ensue, voices would emerge from the loyalist community that were openly scurrilous about Stormont economic competence, the worth of their political representatives, the degree of social concern for the working class from the unionist leadership and eventually the rationale of communal division itself.

¹ Hugh Smyth of the PUP draws an unqualified analogy between the modern political group and the specific unionist party that campaigned in the 1938 Stormont election in Novosel, 2013, p56.

² The plantation of King James I of English and Scottish lowland undertakers, servitors and settlers had affected the O'Neill and O'Donnell territories in Armagh, Tyrconnell, Coleraine and Tyrone as well as Fermanagh and Cavan - Monaghan had already been taken from the MacMahon family in the Elizabethan period. Separate to the main plantation schemes were the Hamilton and Montgomery settlements in North Down and that of Sir Arthur Chichester on the Antrim coast between Belfast and Carrickfergus. Scottish influence had been longer felt in Counties Antrim and Down with long-term transmigration of Catholic Gaelic MacDonnell stock to the northern glens while the overall influx from Scotland included the expelled Reivers or Riding Families of the Borders. Infamous horsethieves, cattlestealers, blackmailers and looters - "generally the scum of both nations, who, for debt or breaking and fleeing from justice, or seeking shelter, cam thither" (Bardon, 1992, p128 and Fitzpatrick, 1989, Chapter One).

³ Campbell, 1991, p 13.

⁴ For information on the Laggan Army: www.ulsterscotsagency.com/lagganarmy.asp

⁵ In 1784 the First Belfast Volunteer Company raised half the cost of the construction of Belfast's first Catholic chapel - St Marys in what is now Chapel Lane -and famously paraded in full dress to its opening mass. Three years later a declaration to the French National Assembly from the Volunteer movement in Belfast received the following reply from Nantes: "LIBERTY OR DEATH! Citizens of Belfast! You have celebrated that Triumph of the human kind, and you have done it with such splendour, as renders you truly worthy to partake of the hatred with which we are honoured by crowned tyrants...we swear to preserve it in our archives" (Bardon, 1992, p219).

⁶ Radicals from the earlier Volunteer movement would be involved with the United Irishmen such as the founder of the Royal Belfast Academical Institution William Drennan, landowner Hamilton Rowan and the Reverends William Steel Dickson of Portaferry and James Porter of Greyabbey. One third of Derek Lundy's 2006 *Men That God Made Mad: A Journey Through Truth, Myth and Terror in Northern Ireland* discusses the legacy of Lundy's relative William Steel Dickson.

⁷ The expansion of the linen industry within Armagh had lead to the decline of small-scale agricultural commodity production and the “proletarianisation” of independent weavers to employee status. The result according to political scientist Peter Gibbon was not class conflict but merely the casting of traditional landlords in the role of tribune and the survival of previous class relations: “Faced with the threat to the principle of homogeneity which determined the character of the social relations of the community, and its relations with the world as a whole, the weavers appropriated to themselves the powers of enforcing what they understood to be an integral part of the 1691 settlement. In doing so they were reported to be acting under the belief they were enforcing the penal laws” (Gibbon, 1975, p34).

⁸ Bardon, 1992, pp 223-227.

⁹ Boulton, 1973, p14.

¹⁰ The statue of Cooke is the famous “Old Black Man” in College Square East in Belfast which has stood at the site since 1876.

¹¹ The statue of Hanna stood in Belfast’s Carlisle Circus until its destruction by explosion on March 1st 1970 – a loyalist attack according to Boulton (1973, p135). The statue of Siege of Derry hero George Walker, positioned in a strategically commanding position overlooking the Bogside, befell a similar fate at the hands of republicans in 1973.

¹² Racial violence would increase radically in Northern Ireland in 2003 – frequently from loyalist paramilitary sources. Ironically Boyd notes that during the 1872 riots one of the main “wreckers” on the loyalist side was a black civilian, George Henry Thompson, of the Shankill Road (1987, Chapter 6).

¹³ Gibbon, op cit, p78.

¹⁴ Patterson, 1980, p xii.

¹⁵ *ibid*, pp 1-18.

¹⁶ Kee, 1987, Volume II p105.

¹⁷ Boulton, *op cit*, Chapter Two. A famous story regarding Fred Crawford in this period suggests that his Young Ulster group gave serious consideration to the kidnapping of Prime Minister Gladstone on Brighton promenade and holding him captive on a Pacific Island until such time as Home Rule could be abandoned (Stewart, 1979, p90). However Keith Haines’ 2009 biography of Crawford suggests that both the Gladstone story and the legend that Crawford signed the Ulster Covenant in his own blood are not corroborated by historical evidence (pp 123 and 154). The book also notes that had the UUC weakened in its resolve to follow the gun-running through to completion that Crawford had been willing to land the entire shipment as a *fait accompli* at Ballyholme Bay east of Bangor.

¹⁸ Campbell, *op cit*, pp350-52. Thomas Wallace Russell claimed to be a double-dyed unionist wherein he favoured the Union and the union of the Irish people. Russell supported the birth of the “democratic Orangeman” who would favour land reform outside the manipulative bounds of the internal Orange hierarchy. The Russellite protest would be halted with the passing of the Wyndham Land Act of 1903, renewal of the Home Rule threat and significant Protestant suspicion of any shadow of division cast across the foundations of the unionist body politic.

¹⁹ Patterson, *op cit*, p56.

²⁰ *ibid*, p 57. William Walker’s faith in the advantages of the Union for Ireland’s social and economic regeneration saw him providing suitably appropriate answers to a pre-election questionnaire from the Imperial Protestant Foundation which immediately alienated the Catholic voters in the constituency and saw him narrowly lose to Lord Mayor Sir Daniel Dixon.

²¹ Campbell, *op cit*, p384-385.

²² *ibid*, p 385.

²³ Gray, 1985, p89.

²⁴ *ibid*, p209.

²⁵ Stewart, *op cit*, pp32-33. Also Boyce and O’Day, 2001, p 120-21.

²⁶ Fitzpatrick, op cit, p 261. The city most associated with Scots-Irish settlement in the British Empire would be Toronto in Ontario. Irish Protestants were the largest single immigrant group in 19th century Canada - with particular strength in Newfoundland - and with the Orange Order consolidated there as a national mass movement by the Second World War. Three Canadian Prime Ministers were Orangemen – Sir John A Macdonald, Sir Mackenzie Bowell and John Diefenbaker. (*Irish Echo*, 13th August 2003).

²⁷ Kee, 1995, p 145.

²⁸ Lyons, 1985, p 303. The Liberal Home Secretary Winston Churchill, Marlborough's descendant, had earlier received a volatile reception in Belfast where he was forced to speak to a small crowd in Celtic Park in the nationalist west of the city instead of at the Ulster Hall where allegedly loyalist gunmen desisted from attacking him only because of the presence of his wife Clementine.

²⁹ Bruce, 1992a, p 9.

³⁰ Timothy Bowman's essential 2007 study of the Ulster Volunteer Force stresses the flaws in UVF leadership, funding and arms distribution whilst emphasising the ability of the organisation to have overcome any Royal Irish Constabulary opposition as opposed to that of the British Army itself - the UVF as "a poorly armed military force but a very well armed police force" by the author's estimation (pp 106 and 156-57). Bowman also notes interesting variables which question the historically accepted mass transformation of the second UVF into the Ulster Special Constabulary and indeed Carson's UVF into the 36th Ulster Division.

³¹ Stewart, 1981, p 80.

³² During August 1912, Carson had lunched in Hamburg with the German Kaiser. The latter commented upon his longstanding wish to visit Ireland and how this had been blocked by Queen Victoria. The Ulster leader would reply in words which encapsulated the multi-faceted complexity of Irish political life with dry wit: "I think, sir, you are well out of it" (Stewart, 1979, p85).

³³ Boyce and O'Day, op cit, p129.

³⁴ Carson returned to Belfast in March with no little sense of the dramatic - telling the hushed Commons "I am off to Belfast" and the press reporters on the dockside "I go to my people". A *Daily Express* reporter further reinforced the defining moment which the Ulster rebellion appeared to have reached on the Friday night and Saturday morning of March 20th-21st 1913: "Tonight there is a watching Covenanter in every church tower in Ulster, ready to sound the tocsin that will...bring the citizen army into being. When two rocket bombs are fired over the Old Town Hall...it will be too late to talk of compromise, for at the signal Ulster will go to arms". Quoted in Stewart, op cit, p151.

³⁵ Crawford's arms contact in Hamburg, the German Jew Bruno Spiro, was to commit suicide in a concentration camp after having his business "aryanised" by the Nazis (Stewart, op cit, p243). Some Mausers from the Larne gun running would end up in the hands of Ethiopian forces who helped to defeat the Italian forces in 1941 (Cusack and McDonald, 1997, p197). For a comprehensive account of the fate of the UVF arms see Bowman, op cit, pp 146-53. Irish nationalist leader Padraic Pearse would reflect upon the Ulster gun-running "Personally I think the Orangeman with a rifle is a much less ridiculous figure than the nationalist without a rifle; and the Orangeman who can fire a gun will certainly count for more in the end than the Nationalist who can do nothing cleverer than make a pun" (De Paor, 1970, p83).

³⁶ The fully armed UVF at this point now had a streamlined Ulster Signalling and Dispatch Rider Corps, Volunteer Medical Board and Motor Car Corps. Four Special Services Sections were in existence in Belfast. The West Belfast Section under the leadership of Captain F.P. Crozier were regarded as the cream of the UVF.

³⁷ The 36th Ulster Division was thus formed from the amalgamation of the UVF and YCV into the 107th, 108th and 109th Brigades of the Royal Irish Rifles, Royal Irish Fusiliers and Royal Inniskilling Fusiliers. The Young Citizen Volunteers group had been set up for men between 18 and 35 as a hybrid of militia and boy scouts (Orr, 1987, pp30-34). Another separate organisation merged into the UVF was the Enniskillen Horse regiment - formed in the Fermanagh town as a mounted escort for a visit by Carson. Both the Enniskillen Horse and the YCV were founded in September 1912 - the former assimilated with the UVF in early 1913 and the latter in the spring of 1914 (Bowman, op cit, p24.)

³⁸ In Belfast and across Ulster extraordinary scenes were witnessed in the summer of 1914 as the UVF and the Irish Volunteers marched off to train for warfare. In the county town of Tyrone for example: "The Ulster Volunteers and Irish National Volunteers united at Omagh on Friday night in giving a most hearty send-off to the final draft of the Army reserve of the Royal Inniskillings, who left the town about half-past nine o'clock, and a scene of unparalleled description was witnessed when the procession of both bodies of Volunteers and military marched through the town together. Subsequently, as both bodies of Volunteers paraded the town, they met one another and respectfully saluted." (Bardon, 1992, p449).

³⁹ "I am not an Ulsterman, but yesterday, the 1st of July, as I followed their amazing attack, I felt that I would rather be an Ulsterman than anything else in this world... The Ulster Volunteer Force, from which the Division was made, has won a name which equals any in history. Their devotion deserves the gratitude of the British Empire" (Bardon, 1982, p 186).

⁴⁰ Bardon, 1992, p 455.

⁴¹ *Republican News*, 30th September 1999. Four members of the 36th Ulster Division were awarded posthumous Victoria Crosses. The men of the Cavan, Monaghan and Armagh Volunteers - Blacker's Boys - returned from the field of battle with only 64 survivors of the 600 that had left the trenches.

⁴² *Battles Beyond the Boyne: Orangemen in the Ranks* - a leaflet produced by the Grand Orange Lodge of Ireland. This document notes how Private John Meeke from Dervock in County Antrim carried Redmond's body from the battlefield. Meeke was an Orangeman and Ulster Volunteer. The first Member of Parliament to die during the Great War was the father of Northern Ireland Prime Minister Terence O'Neill - Captain Arthur O'Neill of Shane's Castle, Randalstown.

⁴³ Kenna, 1922, p14.

⁴⁴ Bell, 1976, pp37-38.

⁴⁵ Farrell, 1980, p68.

⁴⁶ Buckland, 1973, p138

⁴⁷ Patterson, op cit, p 26 and 93. Also Farrell, 1983, pp26-27.

⁴⁸ Bowman, op cit, pp 190-191.

⁴⁹ Farrell, 1983, p 65.

⁵⁰ Haines, op cit, pp 284-290.

⁵¹ Another notable example of Ulster unionist humor - alike the earlier noted conversation between Edward Carson and the German Kaiser - stemmed from James Craig's meeting at the time of the first Northern Ireland elections with Eamonn De Valera in Dublin. The talks apparently failed due to the republican leader's concentration on 700 years of Irish grievance: "Craig's recollection was that after half an hour De Valera 'had reached the era of Brian Boru. After another half hour he had advanced to the period of some king a century or two later. By this time, I was getting tired...fortunately, a fine Kerry Blue entered the room and enabled me to change the conversation'" (Bardon, 1992, p480).

⁵² Farrell, 1983, p 71.

⁵³ Ryder, 1989, Chapter Three.

⁵⁴ McDermott, 2001, p 66.

⁵⁵ Bowman, op cit, pp 190-191.

⁵⁶ *ibid*, p 291.

⁵⁷ "Each Cromwell Club was to contain 50-100 men armed with rifles, automatic pistols and a Lewis gun per club. The reports claimed that the chief organiser was a Sergeant William McCartney from the main RIC barracks at Musgrave Street, just around the corner from the Old Town Hall. He is reported to have spoken at a meeting of delegates of Unionist Clubs in mid-October, outlining the movement's aims as 'the subjugation of those who are refusing to recognise the Ulster Parliament', and giving a rather bloodthirsty account of their projected methods". IRA intelligence reported quoted in Farrell, 1983, p 72.

- ⁵⁸ The local Belfast history website “Rushlight” references the incarceration of loyalist gunmen Buck Alec, George Scott and others in Derry gaol in 1922 and alleged government stratagems underpinning their release without charge. See www.belfastirelandpersonalities.rushlightmagazine.com/index.html.
- ⁵⁹ The RIC “Murder Gang” was directly associated with District Inspector Nixon and County Inspector Harrison. Harrison was believed to be the authority behind the killings while in charge of the city’s detective unit – the actual murderers being lead by Nixon from Brown Square Barracks on the Shankill Road. See Johnston, 2008, pp 226-228 for the circumstances surrounding Nixon’s expulsion from the RUC in 1925 prior to his career as Stormont MP. Inspector Harrison would subsequently reach the rank of Inspector General in the new Northern Ireland police force.
- ⁶⁰ Bowman, op cit, pp 199-200 for interesting analogy with the German *Freikorps*.
- ⁶¹ Farrell, 1980, pp 83-86
- ⁶² Bew, Gibbon and Patterson, 1995, p264.
- ⁶³ Farrell, 1983, pp224-225.
- ⁶⁴ Walker, 1985, p 50.
- ⁶⁵ Bell, op cit, p70.
- ⁶⁶ Farrell, 1980, p 111.
- ⁶⁷ *ibid*, pp 114-116.
- ⁶⁸ Bell, op cit, p103.
- ⁶⁹ Farrell, 1980, pp131-132.
- ⁷⁰ Munck and Rolston, 1987, p 44.
- ⁷¹ Cusack and McDonald, 1997, p65. Roy Garland’s 2001 biography of Gusto Spence includes reference from Spence that the 1935 loyalist gangs were a partially reconstituted UVF paid ten shillings a week to promote a sectarian war (p44).
- ⁷² See Novosel, 2013, pp 51-53 for Alexander “Buck Alec” Robinson’s expressions of regret for engagement in the 1935 disturbances.
- ⁷³ Devlin, 1981, p143.
- ⁷⁴ Munck and Rolston, op cit, p11.
- ⁷⁵ *ibid*, p9.
- ⁷⁶ Within the history of loyalist paramilitarism therefore no “apostolic succession” would take place between generations of the UVF as mirroring Thomas Maguire’s appointment as the last survivor of the pre-Treaty Dail to the Provisional IRA Army Council. See Davis, 1994, p88. Spencer’s 2008 study of new loyalism however does include a claim from the UVF “Number 2” leader that “development” did take place during the 1940s and 1950s though no further elaboration is given (p 60).
- ⁷⁷ Bell, op cit, p 70.
- ⁷⁸ Probert, 1978, pp73-74. The Progressive Unionists won 40,000 votes at this election (Edwards, 2009, p 19).
- ⁷⁹ Both of the author’s grandparents’ houses - in the Shankill and Oldpark districts respectively - were destroyed in the 1941 Belfast blitz.
- ⁸⁰ Harry Midgely - who had been an anti-partitionist Labour candidate in the first Stormont election in 1921 and then a vociferous critic of the unionist leadership as Labour MP for the religiously mixed Dock ward during the 1930s - would formally join the Unionist Party in 1947. As a latter day “unionist evangelist” he served as Minister of Labour and then Minister of Education from 1949 until his death in 1957. In the latter period of his life Midgely would be a member of both the Orange Order and Royal Black Preceptory as well as chairman of Linfield football club.
- ⁸¹ Walker, op cit, p159.

⁸² Wright, 1973, pp 265-267

⁸³ Edwards, 2010, p 61. The author notes how the significant Labour vote in the 1964 General Election was almost matched by the 98,194 votes won in the June 1970 equivalent. However this work clearly underscores the devastating effect which sectarian conflict and “the plebeian outgrowth of Loyalism” in the late 1960s had upon non-sectarian class politics and the electoral fortunes of the NILP (p 204).

⁸⁴ Farrell, 1980, p232

⁸⁵ Wright, *op cit*, p266

⁸⁶ *ibid*, p268.

⁸⁷ Stewart, 1986 , p 16.

⁸⁸ See Patterson 1980 for the most detailed overview of inter-communal cleavage and intra-unionist class friction throughout the 19th and early 20th Century. Also McAuley, 2010, pp 174-178 for consideration of the effect of sectarianism upon social democratic thought amongst the Ulster Protestant working class.

⁸⁹ The scale and scope of the Protestant political dissenting tradition in Ulster means that significant figures cannot be considered within the remit of this brief overview. These would include Francis Hutcheson, Roddy McCorley, Thomas Russell, Samuel Nielson, William Orr, Betsy Gray, Jemmy Hope, Henry Montgomery, Sharman Crawford, Richard Ferguson, John Mitchel, Alice Milligan, Francis Joseph Bigger, Bulmer Hobson, Ernest Blythe, Captain Jack White, Roger Casement and the Reverend James Brown Armour of Ballymoney. The author remains aware that caution must be exercised in distinguishing between groups and individuals in Irish history who have made radical moves across ideological or cultural boundaries - the United Irishmen as opposed to the Unitarian Fenian John Mitchel for example.

IV: LOYALIST PARAMILITARISM REBORN - THE COLLAPSE OF STORMONT AND THE DESTRUCTION OF SUNNINGDALE

The clear success of the unionist leadership in holding off the threat to their hegemony from the NILP in the late 1950s and early 1960s - and thus securing the concomitant political bond with the Protestant working class - would not be replicated against the later structured and choreographed campaign for civil rights demands from the minority community. Stormont's attempt to concede reform in minimalist fashion in order to protect its unique constitutional position within the UK from the critical attention of a Labour government at Westminster would expose the sectarian dynamics at the heart of the state and its Protestant populist nature. The political reaction in turn would catalyse sustained civil unrest, republican and loyalist paramilitary revival, barely contained civil war, the end of Stormont and a major Protestant political strike within a seven year period.

This chapter shall look at the complex circumstances behind the appearance of three new militant loyalist bodies at the end of the 1960s - including a third UVF - and mass mobilisation into the UDA following the outbreak of the Troubles. It shall consider the latter organisation's political associations with the Vanguard movement and the Loyalist Association of Workers (LAW) that took place in parallel to involvement in random sectarian assassinations and the eventual creation of the Ulster Freedom Fighters. Consideration shall also be made of UDA social initiatives including legal rights, prisoners aid and community groups as well as the background, course and aftermath of the Ulster Workers Council strike.

It shall also endeavour to search for archaeological traces of the radical political thinking that would later evolve within the two bodies in various periods - harking back thematically to those historical displays of social dissent and political independence in the Protestant north. While no formal political front was created before 1974 there was nonetheless a significant fracturing of the Ulster Protestant class alliance in the early years of the Troubles that would never be healed. This early period of Troubles history as relating to loyalist paramilitarism has been considered in depth in many works of merit (Boulton 1973; Dillon and Lehane 1973; Nelson 1984; Bruce 1992; Crawford 2003; Wood 2006). The violent and subterranean nature of the subject however means that it is highly unlikely to ever be illuminated in the way that Michael Kerr's groundbreaking 2011 study of the Assembly and Convention was able to uncover equally submerged (and indeed unequivocally dark) political dynamics of the same period.

Much of the retrospective loyalist analysis of Stormont's failings to be discussed in turn is grounded in these formative years of conflict. When mounting unionist extra-legal reaction to the civil rights movement fused with cabalistic manoeuvrings in Fianna Fail party circles to produce an IRA faction which would become one of the deadliest terrorist groups in history. Working class reservations about the political alternatives that arose in the wake of Stormont's

collapse - and its interface with the grim nature of another Protestant paramilitary revival - would provide the backdrop against which the UVF and the UDA would gradually articulate a political voice. At the same time, the qualifications that created such a significant gulf between the Protestant paramilitaries and the broad mass of their own communities will clearly be seen in evidence not only from the start of the Troubles but even in connection with the political murders that preceded them by several years.

ULSTER PROTESTANT VOLUNTEERS, TARA AND THE THIRD UVF

In 1964 the Reverend Ian Paisley was to directly enter public consciousness within the context of Ulster's political conflict and outside of his ongoing crusading with the National Union of Protestants against the ecumenical slipstream flowing from Vatican II. He had also campaigned for Protestant exclusivity in employment with the Ulster Protestant Action (UPA) grouping.¹ Paisley threatened to remove an Irish tricolour from republican headquarters in Divis Street during the Westminster election in September of that year when Billy McMillen of Sinn Féin stood in West Belfast against unionist candidate Jim Kilfedder.² The RUC raids thus invoked lead to the worst rioting in Belfast since 1935.³

Paisley was subsequently to be closely associated with the first flowerings of loyalist paramilitarism in the modern Troubles before their radical growth into some of the largest bodies of their kind in Irish history. Members of his Ulster Protestant Volunteer (UPV) "divisions"⁴ - linked with the Ulster Constitution Defence Committee (UCDC) - were involved in grey intrigues with both the UVF and William McGrath's shadowy Tara.⁵ The latter group's politico-religious philosophy was a curious mix of thinking on Irish pre-history, British-Israelite genealogy and communist-republican conspiracy theories.⁶ Membership crossover within these bodies means that clearcut stratification outside the realms of hearsay remains practically impossible to this day regarding their wider aims, structures and periods of activity.⁷

Northern Ireland had enjoyed a lengthy period of qualified peace following the formal end of the IRA border campaign in 1962 - community relations having settled into a state of relative equilibrium as O'Neill's plans for economic development and investment moved in tandem with various public relations gestures of rapprochement with the Catholic community in the north. But at the same time they would arouse intense animosity and anger in sections of the monolithic Unionist Party and the wider Protestant community. This was particularly so over the two meetings with Taoiseach Sean Lemass at the start of 1965.

Likewise cosmetic manoeuvrings on sensitive symbolic matters affecting the nationalist community failed to tackle core political and social grievances. The worthiness and undoubted sincerity of a half-mast Union flag over Belfast City Hall upon Pope John XXIII's death - or photographs of the Prime Minister with smiling nuns - did not balance out the economic gulf

between “growth points” east and west of the River Bann. Nor indeed for the insensitivity of proposals to site the country’s second university in Protestant Coleraine or the naming of the new town in County Armagh after the organisational genius behind the first UVF.

By 1966 a group of loyalist militants who met at the Standard Bar on the Shankill Road, lead by ex- Military Police Sergeant Augustus “Gusty” Spence, decided to confront the twin dangers of O’Neillism and resurgent republicanism head on. Part of a new paramilitary body allegedly formed in 1965 they were named after Carson’s original volunteer army. Other reliable archival sources however claim that three groups at this time used the UVF name.⁸

In May and June 1966 the first murders of the modern Troubles took place in West Belfast in a fashion so typical of the first phase of loyalist killings in respect of alcohol-fuelled ad hoc “operations” against non-combatants. An elderly Protestant widow was fatally burnt in her home on the Shankill’s Upper Charleville Street in a petrol bombing of the adjoining Catholic owned off-licence.⁹ A heavily inebriated Catholic civilian was then fatally shot at random in the Clonard area of the Falls Road after the UVF failed to locate a leading Belfast republican. Later still a UVF unit attacked four bar staff from the city centre’s International Hotel who had been having late-night drinks in Watson’s Bar in Malvern Street. The murder of 18-year-old Peter Ward took place under a wall slogan proclaiming “Up the UVF”.¹⁰

The UVF campaign of 1966, and indeed the 28-year loyalist war ahead, had been heralded by First Battalion adjutant Captain William Johnston’s solemn warning that war had been officially declared against the IRA and its splinter groups by “heavily armed Protestants dedicated to this cause”.¹¹ Within a handful of months Spence and fellow ex-servicemen Hugh McClean and Bobby Williamson would be imprisoned and on trial for murder. O’Neill on his return from the Ulster Tower memorial at Thiepval would proscribe the body under the Special Powers Act and condemn it as an apostasy to the Protestant military tradition as personified by the Ulster Division dead in Flanders’ fields.

The overwhelmingly majority of the unionist population of Northern Ireland would no doubt have agreed heartily with O’Neill’s, and indeed Paisley’s disdainful dismissal at this stage. The UVF “public band” had thus won neither plaudits nor approval. Their bold stand against Fenianism and the middle class unionist reformers undermining the fundamental frameworks of patronage in the northern state went unrewarded. Under the leadership of Korean War veteran Samuel “Bo” McClelland the rump organisation bided its time underground.¹²

CIVIL RIGHTS TO CIVIL INSURRECTION

On the nationalist side of the political divide the mid-1960s had witnessed growing Catholic discontent on a variety of socio-political fronts being made manifest with the formation of the

Northern Ireland Civil Rights Association in 1967. By demanding the basic social and political rights due to all British citizenry it thus strategically inverted Ulster's predictable political zero-sum game.¹³ The first major protest march in August from Coalisland to Dungannon was choreographed to attract maximum local media publicity. The immediate mobilisation of Paisley's UPV in reaction to this invasion of loyalist territory set the scene for a following year of demonstration, counter-demonstration and fateful RUC overreaction.

Hence by the time of the 5th October 1968 rally in Derry against the city's acute housing problem the countdown to full blown civil disorder would begin. From the black and white Radio Telefis Eireann footage of the RUC batoning civilian protesters and Stormont MPs alike to the formation within days of the People's Democracy at Queens University. And from the UPV standoff against civil rights protestors in Armagh City the following month¹⁴ to December's "Ulster at the Crossroads" speech from O'Neill wherein he berated Protestant Sinn Feiners for their Rhodesian dreams.

The new year would break with stone and cudgel attacks from Loyal Citizens of Ulster members and off-duty B-Specials alike at Burntollet Bridge against the People's Democracy Long March from Belfast to Derry. The final Stormont General Election ever in February would not bring the Prime Minister the unqualified backing of the unionist grassroots. The flawed logic of attempting to reform a state wherein the central political issue was its very constitutional existence was now clarifying apace. Thereafter, UPV-UVF bombs against power and water supplies in March and April escalated the sense of tension in the north and directed popular attention to the resurgent IRA threat. O'Neill would subsequently resign and be replaced by his cousin James Chichester-Clark.¹⁵ On the 28th of April O'Neill stated on television:

I have tried to break the chains of ancient hatreds. I have been unable to realise during my period of office all that I had sought to achieve. Whether now it can be achieved in my life-time I do not know. But one day these things will be and must be achieved.¹⁶

The summer of 1969 saw rioting in Belfast's Ardoyne and Unity Flats preceding the pennies and petrol bombs of the Battle of the Bogside. A directly linked conflagration would then follow at three Belfast interfaces. The Shankill Defence Association (SDA) vigilante group, chaired by John McKeague, was to be strongly to the fore in these disturbances and expulsions.¹⁷ The eight deaths and massive displacement of mainly Catholic households during those few historic days lead to the deployment of British soldiers on the streets of Belfast and Derry to general nationalist relief.

The subsequent "48 hours" slogan in loyalist counterfactual mythology referred to the amount of time and space needed without British Army intervention for swathes of West Belfast to have been demographically cleared of Catholics. However during the August period too the Workers Committee for the Defence of the Constitution group (WCDC), as lead by former NILP member

and Harland and Wolff shop stewards' convenor Billy Hull,¹⁸ would pass comment upon fateful intra-familial frictions within unionism.:

The children of the workers deserve the opportunity of higher education and the statistics show that they are not getting it here today. Where there ought to be rows of terraced houses with modern bathrooms, up-to-date playing fields and old people's homes, swimming pools and normal necessities of life today, the Shankill Road and other workers' areas present a bleak picture of desolation ... The leaders of Unionism have not inherited our automatic support.¹⁹

Loyalist reaction to the Hunt Report recommendation of B Special disbandment - and replacement by a British Army-controlled Ulster Defence Regiment and RUC Reserve - lead to even fiercer riots in October at the Lower Shankill-Unity Flats flashpoint. With yet further galling historical irony in Protestant Ulster's spiralling implosion, the first RUC dead of the modern conflict would fall to a UVF sniper's bullet. The same night two Protestant civilians were also shot dead by British soldiers in the same area.²⁰

The murder of Constable Arbuckle was to set the tone for years of often illogical, self-defeating and misfiring loyalist violence with Protestants killing a Protestant policeman in order to protest against reform of the Protestant state's front line of defence.²¹ Loyalists had clashed with the British Army on the Shankill in September and in East Belfast earlier in October too. The People's Democracy stressed in their *Free Citizen* newspaper:

We do not rejoice when any section of the working class is beaten off the streets by the army. The army is here to protect the interests of the British ruling elite, an elite which has as little interest in the fate of the people of the Shankill as it has in the people on the Falls.²²

The sands of time however had ran out for such inclusive hyperbole to have much connectivity for Ulster. Any more in fact than Radio Free Derry's instructions the previous January to "love one another and keep cool" against the mellow folk sounds of The Incredible String Band had any long term effect on arguably the most crucial turning point in Ulster history since partition.²³

PROTESTANT MASS MOBILISATION IN THE UDA

With the formation of the Provisional IRA at the turn of the decade seven years of extraordinarily intensive political violence and turmoil would ensue. Yet another summer of discord would await Northern Ireland's penultimate Prime Minister in 1970 alone.²⁴ In June five Protestants were shot dead in riots at Ardoyne and the Newtownards Road-Short Strand interface following Orange parades. In July the Falls curfew terminally undermined the potential for any peaceful resolution while February of 1971 saw the first British Army death in Ireland for 50 years. The later murders in March of three Royal Highland Fusiliers at Ligoniel by Ardoyne Provisionals – in whose iconic honour the loyalist Tartan gangs were allegedly

named - launched the countdown to Chichester-Clark's departure and the arrival of Brian Faulkner as Prime Minister.

The various-sized defence associations of Protestant Belfast, some in existence since the 1969 outbreak of violence,²⁵ had come together provisionally under central control shortly before the fateful 9th August introduction of internment without trial. Loyalist militants were untouched - allegedly due to Faulkner's insistence - though according to Boulton the UVF and Official Irish Republican Army (OIRA) leaders had provisionally discussed a "united front" against the onset of mass arrests.²⁶

Northern Ireland was to be thus pushed over into barely contained civil war with the greatest population movements seen in Europe since 1945 and with particular focus on North and West Belfast.²⁷ The *News Letter* editorial of the day resonates with understandable fear beneath its highly qualified tone of hope:

The benefits of internment should be felt, maybe more than anywhere else, in those areas where vicious, violent men have been exercising certain sway by threat and intimidation over thousands of decent men and women. Any relief today springs from a sense of knowledge that at last we are squarely facing the worst, albeit at the arrival of a moment of dread.²⁸

Within days of the introduction of internment the formal birth certificate of the UDA was being distributed in Protestant Belfast. BBC journalist Chris Moore²⁹ claims that the author of this godfearing document was Tara OC William McGrath:

Being convinced that the enemies of the Faith and Freedom are determined to destroy the state of Northern Ireland and thereby enslave the people of God, we call on all members of our loyalist institutions, and other responsible citizens, to organise themselves immediately into platoons of twenty under the command of someone capable of acting as a sergeant.³⁰

The year would end with a terrible tit-for-tat bombing cycle following the Provisionals' decision to move away from broadly economic targets. On December 4th a UVF bombing claimed by the "Empire Loyalists" at McGurk's Bar in North Queen Street killed 15 Catholics.³¹ The following Saturday afternoon an IRA explosion at the Balmoral Furniture Showrooms on the Lower Shankill killed two adults and a pair of children aged two and seventeen months - the former child being decapitated.

This last attack led to many working class Protestants from the area joining the ranks of the mushrooming UDA and a UVF who had been reforming in the winter of 1971-72 particularly in Belfast and the Portadown-Lurgan area.³² Two other significant loyalist groups of this period were the Orange Volunteers³³ and the much smaller Red Hand Commando (RHC)³⁴ who were active in East Belfast and North Down. Menacingly, and after many years of annual Twelfth of July homages by Prince Albert Temperance Lodge and accompanying "Kick The Pope" bands

to Ulster's premier political prisoner and his symbolic fist of solidarity from Crumlin Road gaol, the graffiti "Gusty was right" would also start to appear on the walls of loyalist Belfast. ³⁵

The specific origins of the UDA – soon to become Europe's largest paramilitary group – have been extraordinarily difficult to extrapolate from secondary sources. ³⁶ The main September 1971 foundation meeting, under Charles Harding Smith's initiative, had led to Billy Hull³⁷ being chosen as the first UDA chairman with Alan Moon as his vice-chairman. Moon was replaced shortly thereafter by Jim Anderson of the Woodvale Defence Association (WDA). During the main period of growth for the UDA in 1972, when Harding Smith and future UDP Prisons Spokesman John White were imprisoned in England on gun-smuggling charges, Anderson would be the organisation's first overall leader as "Major General". Initial rules for UDA membership claimed that there would be no political activity internal to the organisation and that membership was barred to MPs, religious mentors or Catholics. One loyalist magazine sourced from the period mentions plans for the creation of a Red Branch Knights social wing to include infant, junior and senior sections. ³⁸

A senior UVF figure was to allude to a widely perceived core handicap affecting the origins of all the new loyalist armies and underscore the essentially plebeian nature of their makeup compared to earlier manifestations where overlaps existed with the political mainstream:

Loyalists fell down because the middle classes didn't give us the leadership they did in 1912. The potential was there for good organisation but in 1969, when certain people made noises and insinuated that it was 1912, the leadership wasn't forthcoming. ³⁹

Colin Crawford's study of UDA/UFF life prisoners in the Maze also focused attention on this central problem of inefficient leadership cadres in that particular movement at this formative stage:

As an organisation, the UDA was formed in great haste, with ordinary men speedily propelled into positions of leadership and power without regard to their experience or aptitude for such roles. This resulted in many being placed in positions beyond their realm of competence.... ⁴⁰

Most intriguingly, Gusty Spence had suggested at the time that the UVF incorporate the UDA en masse but this was refused by the former's leadership. A truly fascinating counterfactual of Troubles history thus arising with the possibility of a single numerically strong yet more strategically focused Ulster secret army in situ by 1971 - alike the post 1929 Haganah in Palestine - as opposed to the decentralised and often uncontrollable UDA.⁴¹

ULSTER VANGUARD AND EXHORTATIONS TO WAR

Bloody Sunday and the bombings at Aldershot, the Abercorn Restaurant and Donegall Street would presage the prorogation of Stormont on the 28th March 1972. For many unionists the

final bastion of Protestant security had now been breached after years of insidious siege by a subterranean IRA presence. With the passing of unionism's key structural defence would a fullblown crisis of political identity emerge – the bonds which qualified so much of the intra-Protestant class conflict in the past being loosened in its wake.

The UDA had continued to grow from its Shankill Road nucleus to a dues-paying membership of between 25-40,000 by the end of 1972 ⁴²- parading en masse in parkas and bush hat and organised like the more selective and much smaller 1-2,000 strong UVF upon formal military hierarchies. ⁴³ Parallel to the UDA growth was that of the umbrella Vanguard organisation to which they were closely linked.

Whereas the entry into the northern fray of Paisley and Desmond Boal's Democratic Unionist Party could be legitimately portrayed as a populist attempt to break with historic unionism in being right wing on the constitution and security whilst left wing on social policies; Vanguard was more of a focused attempt to harness the new Protestant militants in order to win control of unionism from within while retaining the traditional balance of class collaboration. The Ulster working man would still know his place after manning the last line of the laager's defence. Sarah Nelson garnered the following deadpan commentary from one Vanguard businessman on the bright future ahead for the loyalist backbone of a New Ulster:

We'd have to tighten our belts initially but I think the loyalist worker would be prepared to make the sacrifice. The Protestant has dignity and would rather eat grass than be humiliated. ⁴⁴

At a 70,000 strong monster rally at Ormeau Park in March - one of many huge Vanguard meetings across the province following Bloody Sunday - Craig as the unionist leader who had banned the UVF in 1966 would arrive in an outrider-escorted limousine and underline his militant intentions in similar fashion to later openly homicidal statements:

We must build up a dossier of the men and women who are a menace to this country because, if and when the politicians fail us, it may be our job to liquidate the enemy. ⁴⁵

This would prove to be a suggestion taken literally by many of the audience while the Vanguard leadership would merely encourage boycotts of Kerrygold butter in protest against Stormont's suspension. Ex-UVF volunteer Bobby Morton was to make the following cutting criticism of loyalist politicians and the logical corollary of their diatribes against republicanism. This focus of rhetoric being a major mainstay of loyalist post-conflict reassessment along with the underscoring of pan-religious social poverty in pre-Troubles Ulster⁴⁶ and the withdrawal of the Protestant middle classes from the conflict arena:

We all have to take on responsibility for this (conflict) and not least the politicians. They were only too happy to lead us by the nose at one stage, "Get into them, boys!",

“Protestant Ulster!”, “We will fight and we will die!” Well they never fought and they never died. It was left to people like me to go out and act on their behalf. ⁴⁷

The Vanguard organisation also had its own paramilitary-uniformed bodyguard wing in the shape of the Vanguard Service Corps (VSC) lead by Hugh Petrie. ⁴⁸ However the middle-class leadership would be divided not only over the martial invocations against the British state up to the point of UDI but also over the underpinnings of an Ulster nationalist identity. The anti-integrationist *Ulster - A Nation* pamphlet notes how Ulster had pulled away from mainland Britain in terms of social permissiveness and attitudes to religion:

Two different communities in Great Britain and Ulster at different stages of development by virtue of different historical experience possess different scales of reference by which to measure, weigh and judge. The cardinal error is for the one to judge events in the other by its own different value system. ⁴⁹

With the eventual suspension of Stormont, Vanguard aimed to lead the way in any subsequent re-negotiation of Ulster’s relationship with Westminster. The pamphlet also stresses how the strength of the Ulster spirit would overcome all barriers:

Vanguard’s purpose is to mobilise all those moral forces of our breed, which have been hardened over generations of struggle. A nation whose troops do not know for what they are fighting in Ulster are no moral match for an Ulster that does know that it is fighting for its survival. ⁵⁰

David Miller’s critique of the “independent British Ulster” alternative notes how the dominant rhetoric of early Vanguard tended to be less purely nationalistic and more a reaffirmation of faith in the contractarian link. A replay of 1911-14 would be suggested by the enlarging paramilitary forces and a new Covenant ⁵¹ but Ulster’s Protestants were fundamentally divided following the defections of the previous few years from constitutional certainties:

...even among those who still thought in contractarian terms, contractarian logic seemed to lead not to the conclusion that UDI should be undertaken, but to the need to keep Britain up to the mark in honouring her imputed obligations. The Ulster Protestant community, in other words, was not prepared to reconstitute the state they had created between 1912 and 1920. ⁵²

Alan Parkinson’s study of the 1972 period of the Ulster Troubles also notes the “safety valve” nature of the Vanguard movement which qualified Craig’s martial rhetoric and also underscores the clear political dichotomy in that:

The fundamental appeal of Ulster nationalism appeared to many to represent the antithesis of what they claimed to be their underlying political, economic and cultural philosophy – the maintenance of a close bond with the rest of the United Kingdom. ⁵³

Thus a major leitmotif threaded throughout modern loyalist paramilitary activity - even at such an early stage and indeed as centred around the literal death of the Protestant state – would be the fundamental fealty given to state institutions by the unionist masses as opposed to broad-

based support for extra-legal activity. A secondary though much overlooked factor in this respect, as analysed by Eric P Kaufmann in a major analysis of the Orange Order, was similar distancing between that organisation and loyalist paramilitarism despite the origins and development of the former being seeped in sectarian conflict.

Kaufmann notes how the Order - in both Northern Ireland and Scotland - prided itself throughout the Troubles on its law-abiding and respectable image in contrast to the indulgent attitude of Irish nationalists to republican violence. Despite seeing Protestant paramilitary prisoners as symbols of their community whose interests needed safeguarding - and formal association with bodies such as Vanguard who had specific paramilitary links - the Order in general was strongly against loyalist paramilitary violence and supportive of the security forces.

Following a government ban on parading in 1970 an Orange Order Central Committee meeting included assertions that a disorganised defiance of the ban would play into the hands of republicans. Concern was expressed in turn over the rising influence of the UVF and the infiltration of “undesirable people” into the Order but as Kaufmann underscores:

Clearly the Order wanted to parade, but it wanted to sideline paramilitary elements which might prompt violence and blacken the image of the Orange institutions. This ‘tough but clean’ template would continue to define the Orange world view on the security question in the decades ahead.⁵⁴

Most interestingly, Kaufmann references a Grand Lodge meeting following the introduction of Direct Rule where an appeal was made for the body to give formal approval to the Orange Volunteers which was then the second largest paramilitary group after the UDA. Despite the turmoil of the period voices counselling restraint held sway against moves towards activity perceived as subversive – “the closest the Order would come to endorsing armed struggle” in the author’s opinion.⁵⁵

In spring and early summer 1972 loyalist no-go areas were set up in protest against republican enclaves in Belfast and Derry which existed outside the writ of British government control. UDA assassinations and Tartan gang agitation in Belfast increased with the June truce⁵⁶ which would see leading Provisionals being flown to meet Secretary of State William Whitelaw in Chelsea. Whitelaw would also meet a masked UDA delegation face to face at Stormont the same month while on 3rd July a tense standoff took place at Ainsworth Avenue between the British Army and 7-8,000 mobilised UDA men.⁵⁷ The uneasy IRA truce would end with heavy gunbattles in Lenadoon following pro-active loyalist provocation. With the 20-bomb carnage of Bloody Friday⁵⁸ Whitelaw authorised the military invasion of the republican strongholds under the aegis of Operation Motorman.

During this extraordinary year of violence and fear two innocent Protestant civilians were shot dead by the anti-tank platoon of the Parachute Regiment in the Shankill in September. The Northern Ireland Civil Rights Association would support Councillor Hugh Smyth and the local community there in its demands for a public enquiry.⁵⁹ The following month saw full-blown armed conflict between the loyalists and the British Army in a “48 hour war” in East Belfast called by Brigadier Tommy Herron following the deaths of two UDA volunteers in a riot.

THE PROTESTANT BACKLASH BEGINS - INTERNAL POLITICAL CONFLICT IN THE UDA

In 1972 the more militant ultras within loyalist paramilitarism commenced a prolonged campaign of overwhelmingly random violence against the Catholic population. As the thunder of IRA bombs echoed across the Belfast night – destroying public and private property in both Protestant residential areas and city centre alike - the long-prophesised and frequently debunked Protestant backlash would begin in earnest.⁶⁰

The reaction to republican violence and the bellicose statements of some nationalist politicians around the time of Stormont’s collapse would be brutal in both its physical context – often in the form of romperings and torture killings⁶¹ - and in its specificity against non-combatants in the Catholic community.⁶² As the UVF’s Billy Mitchell would elaborate:

Sometimes you did try and justify things – you’d say, look what the British did in Dresden, there was civilians killed there, so it must be all right. If I don’t know the difference between a Ra man and a Taig, look what Bomber Harris did. But mostly we didn’t rationalise. We were just caught up in the hurly-burly.⁶³

One loyalist paramilitary interviewed for the Thames Television documentary series *The Troubles* in 1980 was clearly unambivalent about his feelings at the time:

We knew something like this was going to happen – not to the scale it did happen but it was gonna come out and we expected it. But it hardened the case on my part to really then fight fire with fire. And the only way to get rid of civil rights, the IRA, the lot was to wipe them off the face of the earth. And this was the basic attitude of mine anyhow at the start.⁶⁴

Notwithstanding the republican violence that inspired their actions both before and indeed during the assassination campaign - or conversely the oft-raised psychological explanation of a critical mass having been reached for the Protestant people sending them over from political anger to psychotic fury - the details of that year’s killings of Victor Andrews, Bernard Moane, David McClenaghan, Henry James Russell, Thomas Madden, Francis Peter Lane, James Patrick McCartan and Patrick Benstead amongst others are shocking views into pure human degradation. Their ability to horrify remains unabated over four decades after the events.⁶⁵

These loyalist attacks can be traced back to the murder of Catholic Ex-Servicemen's Association member Bernard Rice at Ardoyne in February 1972 by the RHC but were mostly to be the work of the UDA.⁶⁶ This despite the semi-political face the organisation presented through figures such as Hull and Moon. The UVF contribution to the death toll caused by loyalist violence was mainly in the three years following this initial 1972-73 outbreak of sectarian killing.

With Harding Smith's return to Belfast in December 1972 the UDA leadership was reorganised. He would share the chairmanship with Anderson while Herron was vice chairman and public relations officer⁶⁷. Already at this early stage of the UDA's life internal feuding had begun in earnest. Bruce presciently underscores the fact in *The Red Hand* that "left wing-right wing" explanations for the frissons within the UDA in this early period are of lesser import than the broad sociological context of competition for group status within violent working class environments.

In analysing this period of UDA development it would indeed be both convenient and intensely rewarding to pinpoint the beginnings of radical thinking within the milieu of latterday Protestant militancy to a fond notion of the Franz Fanon- reading Ernest "Duke" Elliot bemoaning the division of the Protestant and Catholic working classes in his meetings with Official republicans and Marxists in Dublin and Belfast. The new loyalist *zeitgeist* thus suggested within such a tableau would be reinforced by the socialistically minded Herron and London-born David Fogel. It would subsequently be opposed by the media-unsavvy Harding Smith who would agree to Herron's mafia-like control of East Belfast for the *quid pro quo* of the sectarian murder campaign.⁶⁸

Yet ultimately the UDA as a whole by mid-1972 - and to a far lesser extent the UVF - were fully immersed in the business of killing and "fundraising" despite mass marches, street justice displays against hoods and perverts, social initiatives to help OAPs and grandiose military titles. Limited interpretations can be placed upon the UDA comment in September, prior to a major Vanguard rally at Stormont that would supposedly be one of its last public appearances, that members would thereafter be "used in a more constructive manner" with the intention of "getting their teeth into some of the problems of Ulster".⁶⁹

And indeed within contemporary sources one can read of bewilderingly complex criminality accusations against all the "left wing" and "right wing" figures involved - with the possible exception of Hull and Anderson. Dillon and Lehane reference Fogel's antipathy to the West Belfast UDA associating with the "evil men" of the UVF while the authors themselves classify the latter group as being composed mainly of "patriotic men of principle"! ⁷⁰ Within this whole confused remit it could validly be suggested that the space for alternative political thinking was highly circumscribed.

Most pertinently, for all of Elliott's socio-political nuances he was to meet his vicious death in the sordid circumstances of a drunken argument over missing arms with the Sandy Row UDA. McDonald and Cusack's 2004 study of the UDA furthermore notes Elliott's active attendance at the torture killing of Catholic civilian Patrick Devaney in August 1972.⁷¹ Later manifestations of political thinking in the loyalist world would have a much longer shelf life and motivating vitality than the intriguing though hopelessly over romantic vision of a Shankill Road Che Guevara.⁷²

Likewise for the anti-corruption and anti-sectarian socialist class warriors of the loyalist paramilitary Ulster Citizens' Army (UCA) of this period, with their striking agitprop posters, and whose rumoured existence looms large in the alleged psyops black propaganda exercises originating from the Information Policy Department at British Army headquarters in Lisburn. Within this "Army", which Bruce and Cusack/McDonald dismiss as fictitious, Elliott and Herron were appropriately claimed as "Lieutenant-Colonels".⁷³

LAW, EARLY UDA SOCIAL INITIATIVES AND LOYALIST PRISONERS

The legal UDA which grew from local bodies of communal defence, and unlike the illegal and solely military-focused UVF, did attract from the start a different calibre of membership. Individuals from trade union backgrounds would join the Loyalist Association of Workers body formed in 1971 from WCDC origins and which was closely linked with the UDA and Vanguard.⁷⁴

Whereas the UDA-Vanguard relationship was fraught by the fact that Vanguard had not directly established it, LAW was closer to Craig's organisation in its early days simply because the rank and file Protestant worker within the "labour aristocracy" had most to lose from the break-up of Protestant power in Ulster. Vanguard's espousal of UDI however, though protective in theory of local capital, would still present a raft of negative economic implications for the Protestant workers' living standards.⁷⁵ This group was lead by Hull and Petrie and drew support from industrial workers in the shipyards, Short Brothers, Mackie's foundry and Gallaher's tobacco factory.

LAW were one of the first groups to consider non-violent means of political action by supporting the boycott of produce from the Republic of Ireland. They would organise a successful one-day strike in protest at the security situation following the Abercorn bombing and along with Vanguard managed a two-day strike following the suspension of Stormont the next year. Robert Fisk notes that at the latter rally one young loyalist made his own sterling contribution to Irish history by tearing down the Union flag from the City Hall's mast and replacing it to the cheers of thousands with that of the Red Hand province.⁷⁶

LAW would outline the grim realities facing the loyalist worker in the organisation's magazine :

We say that if the burnings, bombings and civil disobedience is allowed to continue then production will not be our main problem as inclusion in a United Republican Ireland will sound the death knell to a great many industries in Northern Ireland, with the loss of many thousands of jobs, and could lead to mass emigration of many Loyalist workers. It is, therefore, the duty of all you to be forever vigilant in the cause of Ulster, in the workshops and the areas in which you reside. ⁷⁷

Some members of LAW and the UDA would also consider forming a political party in August of 1972 to fight the constitutional corner for the Protestant working classes on socialist principles and distancing themselves from the landlord and factory owner heritage within unionism as represented by O'Neill and Faulkner. ⁷⁸ Along such lines a later edition of their journal would stress:

Our former leaders so managed Loyalist Ulster that today the women of Working Class Belfast are the cleaners in our hospitals, while the doctors are Africans, Asians and Englishmen and sometimes Ulstermen who are not Working Class. Clearly everything must be done to secure university education for the children of Ballymacarrett, Sandy Row and the Shankill. ⁷⁹

In September UDA leader Jim Anderson noted how "The ordinary man is starting to think for himself about the fifty years of misrule that he did have" while in November Hull stated clearly that blind allegiance by the loyalist working class to the middle-class unionist politicians was now a thing of the past. ⁸⁰ The following year, during a May rally against the extradition of UDA member Robert Taylor to the Republic of Ireland, Tommy Herron would move a significant rhetorical step further when bewailing "What we need is a few Coopers, Humes, Fitts and Devlins on the Loyalist side – men who will stand fearless in defence of our cause and heritage". ⁸¹

Earlier in 1972 friction had arisen between LAW-UDA and Vanguard over Craig's proposed rent and rates strike in protest at post-ceasefire IRA violence. Sarah Nelson quotes one member of the UDA Inner Council on such fractious relations with Vanguard:

We stood for all the ordinary people, but they thought they could run over us. We had thousands behind us and told them so – one day they'll find out. The only time you could put one over on them and have a right laugh with them about wetting themselves was when you parted your jacket or put on the masks. ⁸²

The UDA also made concrete attempts to deal with social problems in working class Protestant Belfast subsequent to the post-internment dislocation of housing and welfare. When the first two loyalist paramilitaries were interned in February of 1973 – Edward "Ned" McCreery and John McKeague - a violence-wracked two-day Vanguard strike called under the remit of the United Loyalist Council caused provincewide unrest ⁸³. The day's dead would eventually number two loyalist paramilitaries, a female Protestant civilian, a British soldier and a Protestant fireman shot by a UDA sniper in Sandy Row.

The mounting arrests, internments and trials under the Diplock Courts lead to the formation of an Ulster Citizens' Civil Liberties (UCCL) group within the UDA headed by Harry Chicken and Sammy Smyth. The UDA would claim in *Ulster Loyalist* magazine that the legal advice centre:

...has been set up to combat the harassment of Protestant people by the Army and police. Remember folks, this is important, this abuse of citizens' rights will not cease when the Troubles cease. The police will have become too well used to treating citizens like dirt that it will become a habit. We do not intend to let this type of situation become permanent.⁸⁴

It provided legal advice to loyalist activists who had become mired in the emergency legislation of the time and would encourage further UDA experimentation in the realms of community-action groups, youth work, tenant groups and the prisoner support body of the Loyalist Prisoners Association (LPA).⁸⁵ This was mirrored by the UVF support organisation the Orange Cross and the later Loyalist Prisoners Welfare Organisation (LPWA). These prison welfare bodies were involved in organising transport for prisoners' families and the provision of newspapers and parcels. They would also facilitate opportunities for further education, hobbies and handicrafts.⁸⁶ Prisoners' rights issues were also to be a mainstay of loyalist paramilitary publications throughout the conflict.⁸⁷

Only 107 of the 1,981 interned between 9th August 1971 and December 1975 were loyalist activists.⁸⁸ This significant imbalance reflected not just the security prioritisation of the time – despite loyalist paramilitarism being an acute factor in the political violence in the country – but also numerical proof of the difficulties for the loyalist prisoners in expanding their supportbase beyond the beleaguered urban strongholds.

The albeit qualified support of the northern Catholic community for republican prisoners on issues of fundamental injustice and oppression could not be replicated across the sectarian divide on a broad ideological sweep spanning the constitution of “loyalty” itself and the brutal nature of UVF and UDA violence. This would have long-term repercussions as political voices would gradually emerge from within the prison environment itself.

In April 1972 UVF leader Gusty Spence had been granted parole to attend the wedding of his daughter. Earlier in the month he had famously sent his condolences to the widow of legendary Official IRA Staff Captain Joe McCann following his fatal shooting by British soldiers. In his sympathy missive he saluted the fallen Soldier of the Republic as a Volunteer of Ulster. Such radical departures tied in with earlier rumours of his desire to learn Irish and his request for Irish history books from the prison library.⁸⁹

When being driven back to prison the car was “hijacked” by armed men. Thus began the “Orange Pimpernel” era of Spence’s political odyssey wherein he eluded the security force

manhunt for four months. In the meantime he would articulate to the press some of the most profoundly literate critiques of unionist political mismanagement since the start of the conflict. In similar tones to earlier tape recordings smuggled from prison, Spence would state with genuine compassion and regret to a *World In Action* reporter that:

One has only 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 slums, the meaning of deprivation, the meaning of suffering from what one believes in, whatever the ideology. In so far as people speak of fifty years of misrule, I wouldn't disagree with that.⁹⁰

In the same interview Spence would furthermore deny involvement in the murder of Peter Ward, self-deprecatingly qualify the hero-status he had by now achieved and unequivocally condemn the random killings of the period.⁹¹ Some political commentators would allude to hidden agendas behind his forced freedom from assisting the loyalist assassination campaign to the injection of stable leadership at a time of random killing of innocent civilians.

Spence used this period to further restructure the UVF on military lines, co-ordinate raids such as that on Lurgan military barracks⁹² in order to expand their arsenal with modern arms, institute a Young Citizens Volunteers youth wing whose social consciences would be honed by being forced to repair homes in Protestant Belfast⁹³ and formally incorporate the Red Hand Commando into the UVF.⁹⁴ During the month of May in this period, UVF and OIRA prisoners in Crumlin Road would join together in a subsequently successful demand for political status to Vanguard's disapproval. Belfast would seldom again witness a scene so strikingly surreal as the Tricolour and the white sheet embossed with the UVF initials which hung from a prison window at one point. As noted by Boulton:

In the street outside, a supporting demonstration of 'loyalists' organised by Mina Browne reacted to the baffling appearance of the two flags with a novel sound which observers took to be an attempt to cheer and boo at one and the same time.⁹⁵

On 4th November 1972 Spence was apprehended by the Parachute Regiment in the Glencairn district of West Belfast and returned to custody – his biography noting in turn how local people were shocked at his presence in a stolen car at the time of arrest. The content of his political critique however – and concomitant Protestant ambivalence to the same – would endure.⁹⁶

ULSTER FREEDOM FIGHTERS AND A NEW LOYALIST WORLD VIEW

Late March 1973 saw the elevation of Andy Tyrie to the position of UDA chairman at a mass meeting of the organisation's commanders. Anderson had decided to stand down as joint-chairman and Tyrie was chosen as a compromise candidate between Harding Smith and Herron. September of that year in turn would witness the mysterious "honey trap" murder of Herron – his death conveniently removed a UDA figure linked directly to street level corruption and

criminality. It also eliminated an individual viewed as unstable by British Intelligence and many loyalist leaders with regard to his willingness to take Ulster's conditional loyalty to its logical corollary in fighting the British Army to stay British.

Bruce would elaborate on the strong standing of the organisation at this juncture:

It had a mass membership and an increasingly articulate and influential central organisation. It had brought in a number of more politically minded community activists. It could turn out very large numbers for mass demonstrations. It could mount a major pub-bombing campaign in retaliation for the IRA's attacks on pubs in Protestant areas, and the assassination campaign continued. ⁹⁷

The formal utilisation by the UDA of an Ulster Freedom Fighters cover name from May ⁹⁸ - whether as an effective *nom de guerre* stratagem to avoid the banning of the organisation or as part of a genuine military construct within the group carved from the original Belfast assassination squads - was followed in June by the publication of a profound articulation of the transmogrified loyalist *Weltanschauung*. It was redolent of earlier aggressive commentary in Sammy Smyth's short-lived *Ulster Militant* publication that proclaimed:

We the militant Protestants threaten the sinecures of the professional classes; we threaten the position of the so-called moderates of the working class; we threaten the Establishment. Are we ashamed? Are we mindless of our own people? Questions like this are stupid. We believe that survival is more important than any one group or combination of groups. ⁹⁹

The June statement given to the *Sunday World*, and a second document released days later, represent a truly extraordinary summation of the position of Protestant militants and the rationale for their violence. Dillon has reproduced major quotations from the full draft of the former in three of his works - and both are considered in depth in Wood's 2006 UDA history - yet at the time the *Belfast Telegraph* used only minor extracts. While neither were formal press statements on behalf of the UFF as such, their historic importance lies in their appearance during the Harding Smith-Herron dispute and prior to a reinvigorated period of loyalist violence.

The authorship of this extremely well written, pithy and occasionally humorous document remains enigmatically unknown despite being signed by Andy Tyrie and Jean Moore who lead the women's UDA. Dillon's *Trigger Men* links it directly to a legal figure associated with the "cabal" behind the original mid-1960s revival of loyalist paramilitarism. ¹⁰⁰ Devoid of soothing words of reflection and reconciliation it stands as an icy epitaph on the end of the Protestant class alliance - loyalist militants now exhibiting an aggressive confidence not seen before.

The *Sunday World* article bewails the tarnishing of Protestant Ulster as the right-wing "bad guys" of the conflict in comparison to media lionisation which turned "an adulterous little slut into a revolutionary saint" and a "soft-voiced failed priest fanatic" into a moderate. The vitriolic

attacks against Bernadette Devlin and John Hume respectively continued as the author described IRA leader MacStiofain as "a pop-eyed Englishman with a false name and no Irish connections whatsoever". The support base of the pan-nationalist front above included the "raving fanatic" ruler of Libya, Kennedy the "heroic nightswimmer of Martha's Vineyard" and John Mary Lynch's corrupt Free State government.¹⁰¹

It provides an accurate geopolitical history of Protestant linkages to north east Ireland and bewails the negative judgements made on the whole Protestant community because the Stormont regime utilised gerrymandering for survival in the Irish political zero-sum game. Most crucially, civil rights claims in the late 1960s are accepted as being partially justified. Betrayed yet again by Britain despite years of loyal military service and with their backs to the wall, these "Second class Englishmen, half-caste Irishmen" have no option left but to turn to attack against the world revolutionary movement railed against them. Instead of having more British soldiers sent home in boxes this new breed of loyalist militant will take the war to the enemy's door and, if need be, into the Irish Republic.¹⁰²

The second statement, which was again given to *Daily Telegraph* journalists by UDA representatives, spoke of their admiration for the Israeli fight for national security and how it was up to the Catholics to rid themselves of the cancer of IRA violence before Ulster's communities can once again live in peace. In the meantime, like a medical surgeon, the new breed of militants would have to cut deep to remove the illness in the body politic.¹⁰³

After years of Westminster apathy, unionist bungling and insufficient security force responses a moment of literal racial destiny would thus appear to have arrived for some in Protestant Ulster. However such a clinical, intelligent, aggressive, ideological and indeed fundamentalist presentation of militant loyalism would fail to translate into Protestant paramilitary reality for many years of political violence ahead and arguably ever.

ASSEMBLY ELECTIONS, SUNNINGDALE AND THE ULSTER WORKERS COUNCIL STRIKE

1973 saw the continuance of efforts to forge a secure political alternative for Ulster within the remit of both combating terrorism and creating governmental structures acceptable to both communities. The requirement for an Irish dimension to any political solution underscoring the impossibility of Stormont being directly reconstituted as such.

The 28th June Assembly elections had seen Billy Hull, Bill Snoddy, Tommy Lyttle, Tommy Herron and Glenn Barr standing as Vanguard Unionist Loyalist Coalition candidates. Two days prior to polling day the UFF had stabbed Senator Paddy Wilson and Irene Andrews to death on the Hightown Road in Belfast in revenge for the republican murder of a mentally handicapped

Protestant teenager.¹⁰⁴ The Vanguard Unionist Progressive Party (VUPP) manifesto expressed support for a re-negotiation of the Northern Ireland Constitution Bill and the defeat of the IRA. It proposed that control over security return to a local Assembly and favoured desegregation of education and federal government for the UK.¹⁰⁵

Vanguard would win a credible 10.5% of the vote in the election with a total of seven seats - as compared to the DUP's 10.8% and eight seats¹⁰⁶. However as reflective of the problematic dynamics within the Vanguard movement the UDA candidates would poll badly with a disgruntled Herron in East Belfast winning only 2,480 votes in an 80,000 strong constituency. Glenn Barr however would be successful in Derry – Barr being associated with trade union and LAW work in tandem to being foremost in setting up the UDA in that city. Hugh Smyth, who was close to the social and political wing of the UVF, also got elected for the West Belfast Loyalist Coalition.¹⁰⁷

This was an interesting and profoundly prophetic example of how unionists would be willing to vote for people with qualified links to paramilitaries but not necessarily for openly associated members themselves - despite the UDA's relative shrewdness in compartmentalising its public, defensive and offensive faces. Indeed John McKeague had performed in equally uninspiring electoral fashion in the 1970 General Election in North Belfast. In clear essence, the middle classes never would lose faith in their natural leadership role within unionism while no group would be more conscious of the often chaotic development of loyalist paramilitarism in the modern era than the working class grassroots communities themselves.

The Executive had taken power on New Years Day 1974 without ratifying a phasing process for Sunningdale or the proposed all-Ireland law enforcement measures. It was to be crushingly undermined by the February General Election result in which the United Ulster Unionist Council (UUUC) of Official Unionists, Democratic Unionists and Vanguard Unionists would win 11 of the 12 Westminster seats under its "Dublin is just a Sunningdale away" electioneering slogan.

The same month the UDA's *Ulster Loyalist* magazine refused to accept the options of Sunningdale or a united Ireland while placing faith in only independence or a Protestant Ulster for Protestants alone. They would also fall back on intriguing economic revisionism:

We in the UDA do not accept there was 50 years misrule. The world was in a depression from the Twenties and this was followed by the war years. This means that at least 35 years of that 50 could not have been very different economically for the remaining 15 years progress was very evident. That many did not share in that progress is true: but it is also true that those who did not share comprised Protestants and Roman Catholics just as those who gained were also Protestants and Roman Catholics.¹⁰⁸

LAW - which had fell apart in early 1973 under poor leadership and embezzlement allegations - was superseded by the Ulster Workers Council. This body would organise the general strike in protest against the Executive's acceptance of Council of Ireland proposals . Initial information about the body in the main UDA journal claimed that with the shadow of a united Ireland approaching it would:

...convey to the politicians, whatever banner they operate under, that the workers are no longer tools to be used to forward their political ambitions, but that the workers are equal partners and that the future of Northern Ireland will no longer be decided behind closed doors, between rival groups of politicians each jockeying for the best advantage for himself and to hell with the workers. ¹⁰⁹

Under the chairmanship of Barr the UWC co-ordinating committee included prominent loyalist politicians, shop stewards Harry Murray and Billy Kelly and also leading paramilitary figures who would provide the muscle behind the massive discouragement-labelled intimidation to come. ¹¹⁰ They would also deftly choreograph the mass non-confrontation manoeuvres against the security forces on the ground in a purposeful policy reversal of the February 1973 debacle.

Loyalist paramilitaries had earlier came together in December 1973 – on the day the Sunningdale Agreement was announced - under the Ulster Army Council (UAC) umbrella and many of their representatives sat on the UWC co-ordinating committee. These would include Tyrie, Ken Gibson of the UVF, Bob Marno of the Orange Volunteers, Colonel Peter Brush and “Big Bill” Hannigan of Down Orange Welfare (DOW) ¹¹¹, Hugh Petrie of the VSC, George Greene of the Ulster Special Constabulary Association (USCA) and individuals from the UFF, RHC and the Ulster Service Corps (USC).

The two week strike began on Tuesday 14th May - following the defeat of an anti-Sunningdale loyalist motion in the Assembly - and despite British and Irish military intelligence fears of a loyalist backlash kicking in from January. ¹¹² Initial lacklustre responses from the unionist public were overturned by paramilitary presence at the barricades and workplaces from the first afternoon. The stoppage then gathered a self-reinforcing momentum which attracted professional and middle class Protestant support off the back of Executive, Northern Ireland Office and Westminster political flailing. And this notwithstanding early UDA equivocation over links with the UWC as opposed to the rump LAW, province-wide blackouts, queues for petrol coupons from proverbial “tattooed UDA thugs”¹¹³ and open intimidation to be seen at the barricaded port of Larne.¹¹⁴

With Fisk's history of the strike noting British plans to power the province by a Valiant nuclear submarine and Catholic civil servants fearing certain incarceration by loyalist paramilitaries, the detailed minutiae delivered to posterity is extraordinary on reflection. From Rees and his entourage being jeered at as “traitors” by middle class patrons of the Culloden Hotel at Cultra to

Harry Murray underlining "You started all this" to Minister of State and early civil rights supporter Stan Orme.¹¹⁵

The fourth day of the strike was to see carnage on the streets of Dublin city centre and Monaghan Town in the fifth fatal loyalist bombing incident in the Irish Republic since the start of the Troubles. 33 civilians would die in total in the four car bomb explosions¹¹⁶ with the identities of the UVF (and UDA) killers apparently known soon thereafter to both the Garda and RUC.¹¹⁷ UDA press officer Sammy Smyth would note "I am very happy about the bombings in Dublin. There is a war with the Free State and now we are laughing at them."¹¹⁸

Following the reduction of electricity supplies to greatly reduced operational levels of wattage output at Ballylumford and Coolkeeragh the UWC took over province-wide oil and petrol distribution - the strike committee directing the first tanker to the Falls Road. Security force reaction in general was slight until the very end of the stoppage when the East Antrim UDA leaders were arrested.

Faulkner had been forced to helicopter between his Seaforde home and Stormont over the barricade-pocked County Down countryside. The TUC back-to-work march lead by Len Murray meanwhile would receive a welcome of rotten fruit and vegetables¹¹⁹ and an equally humiliating *presse* of the day's events in the *Irish Times*:

The Labour lads on the other side of the water are no match for the cornerboys of Belfast; those who held hands and sang The Red Flag have been routed by genuine proletarians.¹²⁰

Prime Minister Wilson's extraordinarily bilious television broadcast - wherein he failed to clarify to the British public that the sponging loyalists were not the population sector who were mainly doing the spitting, vilifying and murdering of their sons in the British Army - was to be the final ingredient in the Executive's destruction.¹²¹

AFTERMATH OF THE ULSTER WORKERS COUNCIL STRIKE

The power-sharing Executive had thus been destroyed in less than five months by the fateful convergence of paramilitary muscle, industrial power and party political union in Protestant Ulster - alleged Clockwork Orange manipulation of Army/UDA activity notwithstanding.¹²² The Ulster Workers Council itself, whose political strike may have cost the United Kingdom around £100 million and had seen them take practical control of most of eastern Ulster's essential public services down to the level of public burials in just 14 days, would in turn collapse within a year of their veto on the Sunningdale initiative. And this despite glowing post-strike loyalist paramilitary rhetoric in *Ulster Loyalist* which would claim:

We had our “Protestant backlash” and brought down the Executive without touching the Catholic community and without a violent confrontation with the Army. The press still talks of “Protestant fears of a United Ireland”. We don’t fear a United Ireland – it’s not going to happen and that’s that. ¹²³

Following the strike and at a paramilitary meeting at Vanguard’s Hawthornden Road headquarters would come an extraordinary offer from the West Belfast UDA for a three-month paramilitary ceasefire and direct discussions with both wings of the IRA. The suggestion was unpopular both with loyalist politicians - who would be excluded from the proceedings - and with UDA leaders who saw such developments as laying foundations for a new working class political party.¹²⁴ In August however the UDA met with the Social Democratic and Labour Party (SDLP) for talks.¹²⁵

Government papers released in January of 2004 refer to further meetings between the UDA and both IRA wings following the strike with up to 60 paramilitaries meeting to discuss an end to violence. Rees claimed that Tyrie had organised the talks without the knowledge of many of his supporters though in general the UDA were merely “willing to experiment” at this stage as opposed to the Officials’ enthusiasm.¹²⁶

Mid-1974 would indeed prove to be the highpoint of Protestant paramilitary power in terms of negotiating from a position of strength. The chastened and suspicious mainstream unionist parties quickly monopolised the political battleground which, with the end of the devolution experiment, was now solely anchored at Westminster. Thus for the Marxist academic Belinda Probert:

The UWC was an essentially defensive political move, led by the Protestant working class, and subsequent events proved that Protestant unity at this moment could only be maintained on such negative issues as opposition to a Council of Ireland. Indeed, once the struggle had taken on this industrial form, the tensions between the working class and the bourgeoisie were likely to increase. ¹²⁷

Fragmentation developed in the latter half of 1974 within the heterogeneous constructs of the UWC. The Orange Order and conservative paramilitaries such as DOW began to distance themselves from the more radical and often conciliatory viewpoints expressed by UDA elements on future directions for any new independent working class loyalist movement. As such elements were pushed to the sidelines the remaining UWC “rump” including Jim Smyth and Billy Kelly would move closer to Paisleyite thinking. Only Craig appeared interested in the subsequent Ulster Loyalist Central Co-ordinating Committee (ULCCC) liaison group between paramilitaries and unionist politicians. Under Barr and McKeague’s leadership it was an unrepresentative forum of unionist opinion which was rapidly reassembling to traditional political standpoints articulated through established political groupings. ¹²⁸

UVF-UDA tension had come to a head during the UWC strike with the killing of UVF member Joe Shaw by UDA patrols in Belfast's North Queen Street in a row about pub opening. This brought an end to the life of the UAC and UDA involvement in the UWC. The ongoing feud in turn would lead Paisley to call on Protestants the following year to withdraw all support from loyalist paramilitaries because of crimes "just as heinous and hellish as those of the IRA".¹²⁹

The threatened secession of the West Belfast UDA from the parent body, following a controversial UDA trip to Libya in November 1974 at the same time as a Sinn Féin grouping, led to Harding Smith's exile to England after two assassination attempts. The delegation had visited Tripoli at the invitation of a Dublin banking consortium to discuss Libyan plans for offshore oil investments in Ireland. They denied talking to Sinn Féin members and insisted that they were intent on stopping Gaddafi's continual funding of the IRA. Barr also stated that he was seeking economic support for a future independent Ulster and gaining Libyan orders for Northern Irish firms.

The UDA at this point were still edging towards more radical political posturing and at one point considered utilising Gaddafi's projected money to buy the then ailing *Belfast News Letter* and transforming it editorially into a UDA newspaper. They had also formed the Ulster Community Action Group (UCAG) as a federation of local organisations in Belfast to which their more socially-minded members could contribute. Though UDA input into the UCAG would gradually decline there were notable successes in East Belfast estates like Tullycarnet and Taughmonagh where interface tension was absent.¹³⁰

CONCLUSIONS: ULSTER FROM CROSSROADS TO CROSSROADS

The scattergun development of loyalist paramilitarism in the late 1960s and early 1970s as discussed had taken place against the background of unparalleled intercommunal violence, the ongoing obliteration of Ulster's economic base by republican terrorism and the eventual dissolution of the Northern Ireland state itself. This chapter has shown how the deferential bonds within Ulster unionism that had qualified class conflicts for half a century would be fundamentally transformed during the early years of the Troubles by the blanket sense of loss and disorientation within working class Protestant communities. The outplay of the same by way of vicious sectarian murder campaigns by loyalist paramilitary groups would be of as dark a nature as anything scoured in Irish history.

In particular it was the destruction of the very state to which the Protestant Ulsterman had steadfastly given his fealty and loyalty for a half a century – and the apparent lack of resolve in the unionist political leadership with regard to its rearguard defence – that led the grassroots to question the very provision of political, social and even physical security that they had expected by default. However the potentiality for a significant political realignment within

the foundations of Ulster unionism by May 1974 – at a juncture where the middle class political leadership had been radically usurped by the Protestant working classes on the barricades and factory floor - would be both momentary and unrepeatable. Alike documentary footage of the strike period itself – displaying a still broadly Protestant, industrialised and densely populated Belfast - the historic momentum would forge elsewhere.

It is within this anti-climactic context of division and uncertainty inside the working class Protestant community that radical thinking on political representation and conflict resolution would thus evolve from the most unlikely of sources. The following chapters will underscore in turn how the the brutal sectarianism and criminality associated with modern loyalist paramilitarism would qualify the political voice throughout and emplace irredeemable distance from Protestant civil society in general.

¹ Moloney and Pollok discuss the origins of UPA at some length in their 1986 biography of Paisley. The UPA were blamed for causing the death of the first Troubles fatality Martha Gould in 1966 during legal proceedings taken out by her son for damages. It was suggested during this particular court case that the UPA later changed its name to the UVF.

² Kilfedder is named in Jordan's *Milestones in Murder* (2002) as the "Mr Big" figure behind the reformation of the UVF in the mid-1960s. Such allegations of a secretive "cabal" have also been a mainstay in the publications of Dillon and other writers who suggest official unionist infiltration of both this body and the UPA. Dillon has suggested that this cabal consisted of a lawyer, a preacher, John McKeague and various B Specials (2003). This theory has been dismissed by Bruce in consultation with David McKittrick (1992a) and also in the Cusack/McDonald study of the UVF (1997).

³ The banner erected in the republican offices in Divis Street in 1964 proclaimed "Let the Orange lily be the badge of you my patriot brother, the everlasting Green for me and us for one another" - lyrics from the Irish folk song *The 12th of July (Lament for the Children)* by John Frazier and Sean Tyrrell.

⁴ The list of loyalist paramilitary fatalities in the modern era is headed by Thomas McDowell from Kilkeel. He was found severely burnt at the County Donegal substation he had been attempting to destroy on 19th October 1969. McDowell had been involved in the series of loyalist explosions which fatally undermined O'Neill's premiership. He was a member of the Reverend Ian Paisley's Free Presbyterian church and the Ulster Protestant Volunteers body associated with the cleric's Ulster Constitution Defence Committee. See Moloney and Pollock, 1986, p181. Also *The Guardian*, April 1st 2001. Kilkeel and Portavogie were allegedly the main points of entry in the early days of the modern conflict for arms and explosives exported by sympathetic Scottish donor-givers.

⁵ McGrath would later achieve notoriety as the infamous housemaster and serial pederast of Kincora Boys Home. Tara has been frequently cited as an MI5 front for intelligence clearing and for ultimate control of loyalist paramilitarism in circumstances of a final breakdown in law and order or invasion by the Irish Republic. Moore suggests that Tara was set up as an insidious conduit to facilitate British withdrawal from Ireland (1996) while Larkin (2004) stresses that its main function was to direct loyalism extremism away from any left-wing thinking. Ed Moloney's *Voices From the Grave* claims that the residue of Spence's UVF were submerged within the Tara organisation in the aftermath of the Malvern Street murder up until December 1971 (p 338). For further consideration of Tara within the context of security service manipulation of early loyalist paramilitarism see Novosel, 2013, pp 150-161.

⁶ Flackes, 1994, p318. The University of Ulster's CAIN archive reproduces a Tara Proclamation which they source to April 1973 though do not confirm as such. The preamble of the four page leaflet is pseudo-religious in tone and the text references the Provisional IRA, the Ulster Defence Regiment and the sectarian assassination campaign. The ten point proclamation includes commentary pointing to the need for Protestant areas to maintain a clean and orderly appearance, a plea for the end of sectarian murders and general criminality, support for the Army and police, the outlawing of the Catholic church and the introduction of integrated education. The tenth point considers the inevitability of conflict - "We are not looking for trigger-happy gunmen but we are anxious to meet responsible men who are prepared to defend their hearth and the glorious liberty that has come to us in the Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ." The document ends with authorship ascribed to "Tara - The Hard Core of Protestant Resistance! Resistance With Responsibility! We Hold Ulster That Ireland Might Be Saved And That Britain Be Reborn". See www.cain.ulst.ac.uk/othelem/organ/docs/tara73.htm.

⁷ A pre-requisite for any attempt to research loyalist paramilitarism is an acceptance that the periods of often fleeting activity of the various groupings, and membership crossovers between them, will be almost impossible to clarify on a definitive level. Thus Dillon and Lehane (1973) mention a Loyalist Defence Force in their appendix on loyalist killers while Jordan (2002) notes a Protestant Action Volunteers body as part of the mid-1960s groupings. These bodies however only seem to be mentioned in these respective sources. A telling and overarching example of the greyness of early loyalist paramilitary history is that to date no published work on the Northern Ireland Troubles has a labelled picture of early UDA leader Charles Harding Smith. An image of the late UDA leader was however uploaded onto Victor Patterson's Northern Ireland photograph archive in 2012 - www.victorpatterson.photoshelter.com/image/10000.ecZgp3n.ts.

⁸ Holland, 1999, p10. Also *Notes by Jack Holland and David McKittrick on UDA formation* – Linenhall Library, Belfast.

⁹ In the months preceding the petrol bombing in Upper Charleville Street, previous loyalist attacks in Belfast against Catholic properties included one against Holy Cross girls school in Ardoyne.

¹⁰ Boulton, 1973, p50. Peter Ward's 86-year-old mother Mary recalled her son's murder in a BBC Online article on UVF victims in 2007: "He didn't like that bar as soon as he got there. He told the fellas he was with that he wanted to leave. That's when the UVF barred the door and Peter was shot. I've never got over Peter. It's an awful thing. I know thousands of people have gone through what I've gone through. There's times I just sit in the house at night crying about him. I have a photo of him and I just sit looking at it". See "Pain of UVF victims' families", BBC News Online, 4th May 2007.

¹¹ Bardon, 1992, p 635. An autographed copy of the *Ulster At The Crossroads* collection of O'Neill's speeches in the author's possession - dated to December 1984 by the former Prime Minister – notes "These speeches show that words alone cannot bring about change".

¹² Holland op cit p37. Also Cusack and McDonald, 1987, p21. Another Korean War veteran was the early 1970s' Mid-Ulster UVF leader Billy Hanna who organised the Dublin-Monaghan bombings. He was awarded the Military Medal for bravery during service with the Royal Irish Fusiliers in the conflict.

¹³ The "one man one vote" sloganeering of the civil rights movement was qualified to some technical degree by way of the numbers of lower-income Protestants who were unable to vote in local government elections under householder and tenant franchise restrictions.

¹⁴ At the Armagh standoff Major Bunting would utilise a phantom diversion against the civil rights marchers with a flamboyant late 1960s flourish. A "trooping of colour and cavalcade" was announced for the same day by "Apprentices and Fellowcraft, Tubal Cain Group (Masters and Purplemen) and Knights of Freedom".

¹⁵ James Chichester-Clark took office as Northern Ireland Prime Minister on 1st May 1969 under the doom-laden omen of a meteorite passing over Ulster for the first time since 1902 and crashing into an RUC armaments depot at Sprucefield near Lisburn six days earlier.

¹⁶ Bardon, 1992, p 664.

¹⁷ McKeague was the founder of the RHC who recruited heavily from among younger members of the Protestant community such as the Droog-like Tartans. A homosexual with a criminal record for buggery, he was also implicated in the Kincora scandal. For many years too his name would be linked with the ritual murder of 10-year-old Belfast schoolboy Brian McDermott in 1973 whose mutilated remains were found burnt and dismembered in the River Lagan. McKeague was shot dead by the Irish National Liberation Army in 1982. In 2008 Brian McDermott's brother William confessed to committing the murder as a 15-year-old (*Belfast Telegraph*, 4th March 2008). Brief biography of John McKeague available at www.historyireland.com/volumes/volume17/issue4/news/?id=114425 - this includes reference to his desire for his body to be dumped in a republican district (upon possible loyalist assassination) in order that Catholics be blamed for the murder.

¹⁸ The WCDC would become the Loyalist Association of Workers following the 1969 intervention of the British Army. Aaron Edwards' 2009 history of the Northern Ireland Labour Party notes the work of both Woodvale Methodist minister and NILP member Reverend John Stewart and Oldpark NILP MP Vivien Simpson in liaising with the UVF on social issues during the earlier period of the Troubles (pp 205-209). In 1977 NILP members David Overend and Jim McDonald would leave the party to join Hugh Smyth in forming the Independent Unionist Group which was renamed the Progressive Unionist Party in 1979 (p 219).

¹⁹ Boulton, op cit, p138.

²⁰ George Dickie and Herbert Hawe were the first two Troubles fatalities caused by the British Army.

²¹ The first female RUC member to lose her life in the conflict was Mildred Harrison – killed by a UVF bomb which exploded at a Catholic-owned public house in Bangor, County Down on 16th March 1975.

²² Hall, 1988, p19.

²³ McCann, 1980, p54.

²⁴ Several major confrontations took place in Belfast between loyalists and the British Army over the course of 1970 - in January, June and September in both West and East Belfast. During the "Battle of Milanda" on the Shankill in September a young West Belfast UVF volunteer scaled the walls of the bakery being used as a command post and humiliatingly seized the flag of the Kings Own Regiment. See Cusack and McDonald, 1997, p83.

²⁵ These included the East Belfast Defence Association, Roden Street Defenders, Young Newton and the Hammer Defence Association. The UDA's Sammy Duddy claimed that early defence associations would even be armed on occasion with water pistols painted black! (Crawford, 2003, p56).

²⁶ Boulton, op cit, p139.

²⁷ Two Protestants who were interned were the late John McGuffin of the Peoples Democracy and future INLA founder Ronnie Bunting whose extraordinary story emplaces him as one of the greatest Lundies in Protestant demonology. The son of Paisley's early aide Major Ronald Bunting was shot dead in a UFF attack at his home in the Turf Lodge area of West Belfast in 1980. He was buried from a funeral parlour on the Newtownards Road to jeers and flagwaving from UDA headquarters opposite.

²⁸ *The Troubles*, Glenravel Publications, Issue 6.

²⁹ Moore, 1996, pp81-82.

³⁰ Hall, op cit, p28.

³¹ "Memorial to bar bomb victims", BBC News Online, 4th December 2001. In this article the daughter of victim Kathleen Irvine recalled the aftermath of the mass murders for her own family : "I remember at night after my mummy had died, listening to my daddy crying and calling for her. I remember my granny, she was 80-odd years of age, going into him. When I looked into the room she was cradling her son in her arms. 'It's all right Johnny' she said. 'It's all right'. This seemed to go on every night, where he cried and he relived the whole explosion. It was a very sad time." For 2011 Police Ombudsman report into the bombing and conversation between journalist John McGurk (whose mother, sister and uncle were killed in the explosion) and sole-convicted UVF bomber Robert James Campbell see *Belfast Telegraph* 22nd February 2011 and 1st March 2011. McGurk also reflects upon Campbell's death in a 6th February 2013 article for the same newspaper. Ciaran MacAirt's 2012 study of the attack - as written from the perspective of the Belfast nationalist community - portrays the bombing as a failed UVF "false flag" operation that was initially targeted against a nearby Official IRA pub. A successful attack on The Gem Bar would thus have maximised the potential for internal republican paramilitary feuding. In turn allegations by the security forces that the explosion was the result of an IRA own goal would have conveniently allowed the Northern Ireland government to shift focus from the need to intern loyalist militants as insisted upon by Prime Minister Edward Heath (should circumstances dictate) as the political price of introduction. A more direct and extremely successful "false flag" operation would be the loyalist bombings of water utilities in 1969 which preceded O'Neill's resignation.

³² Sporadic UVF explosions in Northern Ireland and the Republic of Ireland since late 1969, mainly utilising pipebombs, included attacks on Wolfe Tone's Kildare grave at Bodinstown, Roddy McCorley's Toomebridge memorial and the author's family home in North Belfast in mistake for a republican activist neighbour.

³³ The Orange Volunteers were founded in 1972 from members of the Orange Order and ex-B Specials and lead by tobacco-factory foreman Bob Marno. Approximately 3000 strong according to Fisk (1975) and 500 strong by Cusack and McDonald's later reckoning (1997) they were organised in the Greater Belfast area and had linkages to the UVF. Lieutenant-Colonel Michael Dewar's *The British Army in Northern Ireland* (1985) has this group forming in 1969 and states that they were part of the Loyalist Defence Volunteers umbrella group in the early 1970s along with Down Orange Welfare, the Ulster Special Constabulary Organisation and the Ulster Service Corps.

³⁴ For further information on the formation of the Red Hand Commando see Novosel, op cit, pp 28-29. Woods and Spencer reference the RHC as "the operational arm of the UVF" (2006, p34) and "the UVF elite" (2008, p 68) respectively but provide no further clarifications.

³⁵ Bruce, 1994, p5. Garland, 2001, pp91-92.

³⁶ To compare and contrast the reputed origins of the UDA see Taylor, op cit, p83; Bruce, 1992a, pp49-50; Holland, op cit, pp70-71 and Wood, 2003, p69. More detailed aspects can be sourced in *Notes by Jack Holland and David McKittrick on UDA formation and UDA lecture briefing from circa mid-to-late 1970s* at Linenhall Library, Belfast. See also *News Letter*, 6th June 1973 for John McKeague's claims to be the first UDA leader. McDonald and Cusack's 2004 study of the UDA chronologically notes how in June 1971 a small meeting at Aberdeen Street primary school had seen the idea of Belfast-wide co-ordination of defence groups be floated. This meeting was convened by Alan Moon. A late August meeting at the same venue attracted over 100 men while a third meeting in early September lead to over 3000 men attending (pp 18-20).

³⁷ Billy Hull would be mercilessly lampooned by the Ulster comic-actor James Young in his BBC *Saturday Night* television series with the character of Billy Hulk. Tom Thompson's 2013 *Auld Hands* reminiscences of working life in the Belfast shipyard claims that Hull took this satirical portrayal very personally.

³⁸ *UDA News*, 1. For archive footage of a literal UDA disco for children see the BBC 1974 documentary *Children in Crossfire* which compares and contrasts the lives of young people in Derry's Creggan and East Belfast. The latter section focuses on a 15-year-old school truant and juvenile delinquent Billy who expresses his desire to join the UDA in order to go to meetings, parade in marches and follow orders. He is domiciled at the time of the documentary with Billy Elliott - bodyguard to Tommy Herron and later UDA East Belfast Brigadier. The teenager is pictured in the documentary answering phones at the UDA headquarters at Gawn Street and also shown in contemporary news footage on UDA patrols looking for the missing Herron in 1973. When asked by the BBC interviewer about the prospects of a united Ireland Billy replies that it will be a "bloodbath" - a word the author recalls being commonly in use even amongst fellow primary school children at this specific time with regard to such a dread political outcome.

³⁹ Bruce, 1992a, p270.

⁴⁰ Crawford, 2003, pp30-31.

⁴¹ Dillon, 1989, p11. Other intriguing, plausible and deeply sobering political counterfactuals in the author's estimation - alongside the notion of a single loyalist paramilitary body in situ by 1971 - would be the consideration of mass fatalities of children at Tullyholmen on the same day as the 1987 Enniskillen bombings, loyalist paramilitaries having been publicly lynched at the Andersonstown funeral for Michael Stone's Milltown victims, a prototype loyalist "Bloody Sunday" at the Drumcree barricades in 1998 or even a Real IRA bomb having detonated in a Protestant town with greater casualties than Omagh.

⁴² UDA membership at end of 1972 quoted as approximately 26,000 dues-paying members according to Steve Bruce's *The Red Hand* (1992a, p59). W D Flackes' *Northern Ireland: A Political Directory* estimates 40,000 for the UDA in the same period (1994, p327). The latter source places UVF membership in 1972 as 1,500 (p342).

⁴³ This irony-free use of such titles was to be hilariously lampooned in Graham Reid's *Too Late to Talk to Billy* play with the John Fletcher character berating his UDA underlings for using his Christian name with the admonition "It's Sergeant on duty". Seven other *Play For Today* productions touched upon the Ulster conflict. Dominic Behan's 1972 *Carson Country* - starring Harry Towb and Sam Kydd - looked at Protestant working class life around the period of the Home Rule crisis and the creation of the Northern Ireland state. It was transmitted in October of that year instead of the planned May in order as not to provoke trouble during the marching season. The following month Behan's *The Folk Singer* for *Armchair Theatre* on ITV - about the visit of a Liverpool musician to Belfast - was given a later scheduled transmission slot on the instructions of the Independent Broadcasting Authority. Three months later in turn ATV chairman Sir Lew Grade banned entirely the transmission of Kenneth Griffith's *Hang Up Your Brightest Colours: The Life and Death of Michael Collins* and this would not be shown at all until 1993. Over the remainder of the 1970s *Taking Leave* (1974) was the story of a British soldier who returned to Ulster after six years of service and considered his parents' wish for him to terminate his army career; Colin Welland's *Yer Man From Six Counties* (1976) focused upon a young boy's move to the West of Ireland after the death of his father in an IRA bomb; *The Legion Hall Bombing* (1976) looked at the Diplock court system then operational in Northern Ireland and whose transmission was also delayed by further BBC concern over editorial content while *The Last Window Cleaner* (1979) followed the transfer of a policeman to Ulster and his experiences in wartorn Belfast at The Crumlin View boarding house. During the 1980s Jennifer Johnston's *Shadows On Our Skin* (1980) viewed the Troubles through the eyes of an 11-year-old boy in Derry's Bogside while *Fire At Magilligan* (1984) followed upon the consequences of a driver picking up a hitchhiker on the motorway out of Belfast and the two gradually realised they were not unknown to each other after all.

⁴⁴ Nelson, 1984, pp110-111. Another sterling Vanguard quotation in Nelson's study came from a former factory worker: "Government should be more puritanical...a country that works hard is unbeatable. Look at the Israelis now, and the Germans, we'd be like that. Of course you'd have to have a dole but say it was only for three months and then the unemployed could be put to building roads...this would also bring down road taxes." It should be noted however that contemporary news footage used on the 2004 BBC Northern Ireland documentary *Shutdown: The Inside Story of the Ulster Workers Council Strike* does include one female loyalist supporter's confirmation of her literal willingness to "eat grass".

⁴⁵ O'Clery, 1999, p133. Aside from the Ormeau Park speech Craig's other infamous diatribes were delivered at Lisburn in Country Antrim and at the Monday Club in London during 1972. At Lisburn Craig pledged "We are determined to preserve our British traditions and way of life, and God help those, ladies and gentlemen, who get in our way". In London the Vanguard leader insisted "We are prepared to come out and shoot and kill. I am prepared to come out and shoot and kill. Let us put the bluff aside. I am prepared to kill, and those behind me will have my full support. We will only assassinate our enemies as a last desperate resort when we are denied our democratic rights". According to political legend Craig was at least mildly inebriated during the latter speech.

⁴⁶ Billy Mitchell's contribution to the Philip Orr article "Reflections on the Relationship between Loyalism and Church" (McAuley and Spencer, 2011) notes: "...the home where I spent the bulk of my childhood was a wooden hut that has long since been demolished...there was no running water...a large bucket served as a toilet...for entertainment we had a wireless...for pets we had field mice. I was supposed to be one of the privileged Prods but when I was in Long Kesh I encountered dozens upon dozens of loyalists whose experiences of growing up were similar to my own...we know from personal experience what it is like to live below the poverty line. Our upbringing made us practical social activists." On a similar note, one of Bruce's interviewees for *The Red Hand* reflected "What chance did we have? With us, you got bucked out of school at fifteen and into the shipyards and that was you. They used to walk past our house every day in their nice uniforms going to their good school up the Antrim Road and getting a better education than us and suddenly they are going on about civil rights" (p 28).

⁴⁷ Taylor, 1999, p97.

⁴⁸ This became the Ulster Volunteer Service Corps (UVSC) when Vanguard became a formal political party in 1973 as the Vanguard Unionist Progressive Party (VUPP) and some discreet distancing was required. According to Boulton (1973), in June 1972 the VSC were part of an Ulster Guard along with the Orange Volunteers and the USCA. Cusack and McDonald (1997) mention a militant group within Vanguard called the Vanguard Volunteers. See *An Phoblacht*, 2nd March 2000 for discussion on Henry McDonald's biography of David Trimble which suggested that the former Ulster Unionist Party leader was a member of the Vanguard Service Corps.

⁴⁹ *Ulster - A Nation* – Cain Archive document: www.cain.ulst.ac.uk/othelem/organ/docs/vanguard72.htm.

⁵⁰ *ibid*.

⁵¹ See *The Troubles* magazine, Glenravel Publications, issues 8 and 10 for Loyalist Covenants from 1971 and 1972 respectively.

⁵² Miller, 1978, p157.

⁵³ Parkinson, 2010, p72.

⁵⁴ Kaufmann, 2007, pp 61-62.

⁵⁵ *ibid*, pp 81-82.

⁵⁶ *Republican News* did little to conceal its fury at the levels of Protestant violence at this stage: "Control your rabble, for which you and you alone are responsible. It was YOU that bred them; you created them...you cannot and will not pass them off as an Irish problem, they are your problem. KEEP YOUR PROBLEM OFF OUR BACKS. Do you want your boys shot for them or more likely by them? We doubt it, rid yourselves once and for all of your mess." Quoted in Hall, *op cit*, p37.

⁵⁷ Gillespie, 2008, pp 61-64.

⁵⁸ A BBC Northern Ireland documentary in 2012 commemorated the 40th anniversary of Bloody Friday. A subsequent Radio Ulster phone-in on The Stephen Nolan Show included public commentary from one civilian who recalled seeing children playing around the bridge supports where the first bomb of the day detonated. Footage was included in the documentary of the Reverend Joseph Parker who launched the Witness For Peace movement following the murder of his son Stephen on that day in the Cavehill Road bombing. This particular explosion would have been clearly heard from the author's family home while the author's uncle attended the aftermath of the Oxford Street bombing as a fire officer. The recollections gathered from several relatives of the murdered on that day made for harrowing viewing - Stephen Parker's mother recalled "Stephen never sat still for a moment. We often and indeed many's the time I said to him - 'Oh for goodness sake sit still!' Now I just wish he was here making all the noise again...and I could say 'Sit still Stephen...be quiet'".

⁵⁹ *Republican News*, 31st October 2003 for Lord Saville's refusal to allow the Bloody Sunday inquiry to hear details of the Shankill killings by the same platoon. Following the 2010 release of the official report significant public commentary from both sides of the community could be sourced on Northern Ireland and Belfast-related internet forums regarding the actions of the Parachute Regiment in the Ballymurphy district on internment day and on the Shankill in September 1972.

⁶⁰ The mother of the author once recalled how during the early days of the IRA bombing campaign she reflected one evening upon the dramatic escalation in republican violence. This against the literal background of detonating explosives in the near distance in North Belfast. The author's father replied "If you think this is bad wait until our lot get started". Such observation delivered obviously with world-weary resignation as opposed to unrestrained loyalist militancy.

⁶¹ Rompering as a term for loyalist interrogations or punishment beatings originates with the globally franchised children's television programme *Romper Room* which had a local version transmitted on Ulster Television and in which the author once took part as a child. With the matriarchal figures of UTV's "Miss Adrienne" and "Miss Helen" being transformed into hostile UDA members in backrooms of loyalist Ulster, Belfast's black humour would never arrive in a darker hue. The use of the term "Romper Room" in this context originated allegedly with UDA leader Davy Payne.

⁶² In consideration of the deaths of Rose McCartney and Francis Arthurs on July 22nd 1972 the horrendous vista arises wherein two of the most infamous killers of all - Davy Payne and Lenny Murphy - were on active service duties in the same 24 hour period following Bloody Friday and within a few miles geographical radius of each other. See Kevin Myers' *An Irishman's Diary* article in *Irish Times*, 25th March 2003 for discussion of Payne. Myers recalls the UDA leader informing him "You know, I've never killed a journalist. Not yet, anyway".

⁶³ McKay, 2000, p54.

⁶⁴ *The Troubles*, Thames Television, 1980.

⁶⁵ The use of torture was not unknown within the remit of republican murders either although the following details are of course to be considered with extreme caution. In March 1973 18-year-old Protestant Robert Collins, who was due to join the Merchant Navy in England, was abducted with his friend while walking near the Ardoyne following a disco. He was tortured and killed by the IRA with his loyalist tattoos allegedly being cut off his arm and sent to his family (Stevenson, 1996, p3). Anecdotal evidence relating to the murders of 21-year-old David Poots in July 1972 and 29-year-old William Meaklin in August 1973 involve claims of torture and even sexual mutilation either before or after death. In Taylor's *Loyalists* (1999, p107) the UFF's Bobby Norris recalls the death of Poots: "He had been taken away and tortured. He'd been badly beaten and had his private parts cut off, removed and hidden in his mouth. He was an inoffensive lovely chap who had been brought up and raised amongst Catholic people". Susan McKay's *Northern Protestants: An Unsettled People* (2000, p 191) includes an interview with Mrs Margaret Frazer who vividly remembers the murder of Meaklin: "He used to come to my house every morning. See the death they gave him - they cut his privates parts off and stuck them in his mouth. They cut his fingers off him. They threw him in a drain and fired shots over him and him dead". Mrs Frazer expresses her further belief that a doctor and nurse were present at the scene to keep Meaklin alive to prolong the torture. McKay however references Toby Harden's own research into South Armagh republicanism that the pathology reports on the murder confirm significant physical abuse but not the grotesque torture noted above.

⁶⁶ Like the agrarian secret societies of Irish history the UDA assassins would sometimes claim the murders under different colour-coded "Captain" titles such as Captain Black and Captain Red.

⁶⁷ Herron - a chapel-baptised half-Catholic with relatives in the OIRA - used the services of the Braniel Tartan "General" Michael Stone at one point as his bodyguard. Stone's "Reservoir Prods"-style eulogy of the UDA leader in his 2003 autobiography makes for chilling reading.

⁶⁸ Boulton, op cit, Chapters 10-11. Also Dillon and Lehane, 1973, Chapters 8-12 and 14.

⁶⁹ Deutsch and Magowan II, 1974, p222.

⁷⁰ Dillon and Lehane, op cit, p 148 and p 229.

⁷¹ McDonald and Cusack, 2004, p42. Similar circumstances surrounded the murder of UDA member John Lunnen Brown on June 25th 1971. Brown received the first official UDA funeral as an alleged victim of republicans.

⁷² As an example of the bewildering illogicality engrained into this period of Troubles history, 1972 ended with UDA attendance at a Woodvale Park Christmas Eve commemoration service in the Shankill district in memory of all the Troubles dead. 1973 commenced with the UDA leadership calling off the assassins under threat of death following a New Years Day fatal stabbing of a young engaged couple on the County Donegal border by the organisation. Herron would then claim he could no longer hold back the loyalist militants at the end of the month after several Provisional IRA murders.

⁷³ *Ulster Loyalist*, 16th December 1974.

⁷⁴ LAW would include female members and parade in uniform. At the funeral of UDA man Dennis Eccles in North Belfast's Silverstream district in 1973 LAW Rangers were present along with other loyalist organisations. Eccles had been killed in a shooting in a local community centre.

⁷⁵ Probert, 1978, pp117-128.

⁷⁶ Fisk, 1975, p34 .

⁷⁷ *LAW*, V1(1).

⁷⁸ Deutsch and Magowan II, 1974, p203.

⁷⁹ LAW, VI(26).

⁸⁰ Hall, op cit, pp 40-41.

⁸¹ Deutsch and Magowan II, 1974, p296. During 1972 the UDA had responded positively to comments by Gerry Fitt that he had more in common with Paisley and Craig than with Fianna Fail and Fine Gael: "Could it be that he, and those who he represents, are now ready to accept their responsibilities and work to create a more prosperous Northern Ireland on a basis of equality of citizenship and in opportunity. Let us hope so, fervently, for let us hope that we can get together not as Catholics, Protestants, Jews, Humanists, Agnostics or Athiests but as citizens of Northern Ireland united in one common aim - the social and economic improvement of Northern Ireland". See *Official UDA News* 1(31). However in October of 1973 the UDA would respond to Fitt's demands for the organisation to be banned with the following aggressive broadside: "The disbanding of the USC and disarming of the RUC, the outlawing of the UDA with the UVF is not the answer to achieving an all-Ireland. I am afraid you will one day have to exterminate all Prods and wouldn't your Republican hoods wish for such a job, but of course this would be a job for fighting men, not cowards who hide behind children". See *Ulster Loyalist*, October 25th 1973.

⁸² Nelson, op cit, p132.

⁸³ The United Loyalist Council had been set up in October 1972 under Craig's leadership to co-ordinate the policies of organisations such as LAW, UDA and the Loyalist Defence Volunteers umbrella. In January 1973 the UVF was included in ULC statements. McDonald and Cusack's 2004 UDA study says the United Loyalist Front was a rebranding of the ULC for a March rally in the aftermath of the disastrous February strike.

⁸⁴ *Ulster Loyalist*, March 14th 1974.

⁸⁵ *Ulster*, July/August 1988 for background information on the LPA.

⁸⁶ The UVF and UDA-linked bodies associated with resettlement issues affecting former loyalist paramilitary prisoners at the conclusion of the Troubles were the Ex-Prisoner's Interpretive Centre and the Post Conflict Resettlement Group respectively.

⁸⁷ Loyalist groups utilised their own press from the early years of the Troubles with the UDA's *UDA News*, *Official UDA News*, *Ulster Loyalist* and *Ulster* and the UVF's *Combat* from 1974 onwards. Like their mother organisations, the magazines at various junctures took part in fervent bouts of accusation and counter-accusation about communist infiltration and the sectarian nature of rival loyalist paramilitaries. Beyond "War News" and exhortations of support for loyalist prisoners the main magazines certainly covered a wide raft of issues such as linkages with Ulster's Cruthin heritage, revisionist views of the United Irishmen as genuine Ulster patriots, recollections of Protestant Ulster's martial heritage, critiques of Roman Catholic church equivocation over IRA violence, analysis of integrated education and political analogies with settler struggles in Israel and Algeria. Two other significant publications during the early Troubles were Red Hand Commando leader John McKeague's *Loyalist News* and Sammy Smyth's *Ulster Militant*. UVF and UDA publications at the time of writing are *The Purple Standard* and *The Loyalist*.

⁸⁸ Reference from CAIN website: <http://cain.ulst.ac.uk/events/intern/chron.htm>. In June 2012 it was claimed that nineteen Protestant men who were jailed without trial in the early 1970s would commence legal action against the government and Ministry of Defence for damages over unlawful detention ("Protestant men jailed during interment sueing government", BBC News Online, 7th June 2012). During the Troubles of the 1920s in Northern Ireland over 700 Catholics were interned in contrast to less than two dozen Loyalist extremists according to K.D. Ewing and C.A. Gearty's *The Struggle for Civil Liberties: Political Freedom and the Rule of Law in Britain* (Oxford University Press, 2000, p. 379). Tom Roberts of the EPIC UVF ex-prisoners organisation claimed in an interview for McAuley and Spencer, 2011 that of the 30,000 paramilitaries imprisoned during the Troubles that 10-12,000 were loyalists.

⁸⁹ Garland op cit, p 125.

⁹⁰ Hall, op cit, p38.

⁹¹ Garland, op cit, Ch 11. The *World In Action* episode *In Search of Gusty Spence* transmitted on 10th July 1972.

⁹² Joe Tiernan's investigation of the Dublin-Monaghan bombings makes note of the Lurgan arms raid and how a significant amount of materiel was abandoned when the Land Rover the UVF gang stole ran out of petrol. A spare tank of petrol was actually accessible via a switch under the dashboard (2002, p175).

⁹³ Nelson, op cit, p146. See also Novosel, op cit, pp 29-32 for further information on UVF reorganisation during Spence's period of freedom.

⁹⁴ Gusty Spence in this period also instituted the standard black uniform of beret, leather jacket, jumper and sunglasses after dark. See Taylor, op cit, p112.

⁹⁵ Boulton, op cit, p169.

⁹⁶ Garland, op cit, pp 153-54

⁹⁷ Bruce, 1992a, p 77.

⁹⁸ The UDA would name their youth wing the Ulster Young Militants in a similarly literal fashion.

⁹⁹ *Ulster Militant*, 1.

¹⁰⁰ Dillon, 2003, p187.

¹⁰¹ Dillon and Lehane, op cit, pp 280-283.

¹⁰² *ibid*

¹⁰³ *ibid*, pp285-286.

¹⁰⁴ In an interview for Crawford's *Inside the UDA: Volunteers and Violence* (2003), and following the critical mass theory mentioned above, White claims the IRA carbomb murder of six Protestant pensioners on June 12th 1973 was the incident which directly set him on course to the Hightown Road stabbings.

¹⁰⁵ Deutsch and Magowan II, 1974, p308. On 5th December 1973 fighting broke out at the Assembly when certain unionists were attacked by DUP and Vanguard members – the police being called to intervene. News footage of the incident, as incorporated in the Thames Television documentary *The Troubles* in 1980, shows a furious Hugh Smyth haranguing the Royal Ulster Constabulary: "Let me tell you this – we have tried to keep the people off the streets. And we tried to make them support the RUC. But when they see what has taken place in this house today I can tell you this – that I never in my life will try and defend the RUC because youse are no good – youse are only puppets for Whitelaw and the rest of them Comanches at Westminster."

¹⁰⁶ Flackes, 1994, p369. The electoral performance of Vanguard is worthy of detailed consideration. Alongside local council elections in 1973 and 1977 Ulster Vanguard - formally the Vanguard Unionist Progressive Party from March 1973 - stood candidates at elections for both the Ulster Assembly of 1973 and the Constitutional Convention of 1975. Likewise for the 1974 Westminster elections in February and October. Because of the complexity of Unionist disintegration from the beginning of the Troubles it has been difficult to clarify the amount of local councillors pledged to Vanguard but in the major elections they were certainly able to match or surpass the votes gained by the DUP. In June 1973 Vanguard won 11.5% of the vote in elections for the Northern Ireland Assembly with seven seats at Stormont while three MPs were returned to Westminster at both 1974 elections - leader Craig in East Belfast, the Reverend Robert Bradford in South Belfast and John Dunlop in Mid-Ulster. These MPs thus represented a quarter of Northern Ireland's political representation nationally. A year after the UWC strike the Convention election of June 1975 saw the party surpass its Assembly vote on 12.7% and return 14 members. In comparison the DUP had only one Westminster MP with Ian Paisley in North Antrim and sent eight and twelve representatives to the Assembly and Convention respectively. Following the Vanguard split at the Convention the VUPP folded in February 1978 with Craig rejoining the Official Unionist Party. Ulster Vanguard continued as a pressure group within the OUP though Craig lost his Westminster seat in East Belfast to Peter Robinson in 1979 by a mere 64 votes. He also failed to be elected to the 1982 Northern Ireland Assembly while standing directly as a Vanguard Unionist. Craig died in 2011 at the age of 86 and was survived by his German-born wife and two sons.

¹⁰⁷ McDonald and Cusack, 2004, p66. For analysis of Red Hand Commando "Proposals for the Assembly" published in *Loyalist News* in July 1973 see Novosel, op cit, pp 93-101.

¹⁰⁸ *Ulster Loyalist*, February 14th 1974.

¹⁰⁹ *Ulster Loyalist*, April 6th 1974.

¹¹⁰ UDA discouragement included the use of cameras devoid of film to "photograph" traitorous strike breakers for guaranteed publication in the next edition of the UDA magazine.

¹¹¹ Down Orange Welfare was an approximately 5,000 strong “doomsday” body under the leadership of Colonel Peter “Basil” Brush. DOW was considered the most respectable and law-abiding of loyalist groups and consisted mainly of farmers. Larkin (2004) notes Brush’s close friendship with Airey Neave – both of whom were allegedly part of the Unison right-wing cabal. Brush won a UUUC Convention seat for South Down in 1975 and died in 1984.

¹¹² Fisk op cit and Anderson, 1994. Fisk’s *Point of No Return* title for his study of the UWC strike refers to a doom-laden phrase used frequently by the Northern Ireland Electricity Service spokesman on the delirious effect that further wattage reduction would have on civil society. The title is of course also analogous to the implications the strike had on relations between Protestant Ulster and Great Britain ; the feelings many Irish nationalists had witnessing open “collusion” between the UDA and the British Army on the barricaded streets or a comment on the wider Northern Irish conflict that thereafter would provide a problem for every solution with Protestants finally in revolt against Westminster’s political primacy.

¹¹³ Don Anderson’s 1994 history of the strike notes one particular dialectic at a loyalist barrier which veers from high comedy to cutting class consciousness: “Every person who drew up at a UWC pump was vetted and asked for their UWC pass. Many were turned away by the UWC ‘inspector’. One garage was near a main hospital: the Royal Victoria. The ‘inspector’ was allowing petrol to some of those with hospital car park stickers on their windscreens, but not all. Seeing a sticker on the windscreen, the ‘inspector’ asked, “Are you a doctor or a nurse?” “I’m a consultant.” “Sorry, doctors and nurses only”. (p120)

¹¹⁴ The integrationist British and Irish Communist Organisation reflected upon the political performance of the Secretary of State and the Executive in their 1977 *Against Ulster Nationalism* booklet: “Rees and the Executive behaved like a faction in an 18th century oligarchy demanding unconditional surrender from the aristocracy for measures to keep down the masses. But since power lay with the masses, and since the masses knew it, the interval between hubris and tragedy in this instance was not three generations but two weeks. The times when the sins of the fathers were visited on the children are fast disappearing.” (p75).

¹¹⁵ Fisk, op cit.

¹¹⁶ The 1974 Dublin-Monaghan bombings and the Omagh bomb in 1998 incorporated foreign nationals in the death tolls. Restaurant owner Antonio Magliocco from Casalattico in Italy was murdered in the Parnell Street explosion and French tourist Simone Chetrit in Talbot Street. In 1998 12-year-old Fernando Blasco Baselga from Madrid and his teacher Rocio Abad Ramos died at Omagh alongside three Donegal-based children accompanying them on an outing. Amos, leader of the school exchange group, was described as a woman who loved Ireland. The 1974 Monaghan bomb was placed outside a Protestant-owned public house in the town and of the seven fatalities four were Protestants.

¹¹⁷ The Dublin-Monaghan bombings were officially claimed in a telephone call to the *Irish News* by Captain Craig of the Red Hand Brigade. Despite years of speculation on their military accomplices, and the open identification of the suspects in the media, no criminal conviction has taken place. The identities of the Dublin-Monaghan suspects can be found in the transcript of Yorkshire Television’s 1993 *First Tuesday* documentary *Hidden Hand – The Forgotten Massacre* as reproduced in Don Mullen’s study (1984). The December 2003 Barron Report on the bombings concluded there were grounds for suspicion of collusion between the British security forces and loyalist paramilitaries but it had not been possible to definitively prove this (*Belfast Telegraph*, December 11th 2003). For report on the death of alleged Dublin bomber and Mid-Ulster UVF leader Robin Jackson see *Irish Independent*, 4th June 1998. The bombings were the fourth fatal attack of their ilk in the Irish Republic during the Troubles. Bombs had exploded in Dublin’s Eden Quay and Sackville Street killing two bus employees on December 1st 1972 on the night of the Dail’s Offences Against The State (Amendment) bill debate. Two civilians were murdered in a bombing at Belturbet in County Cavan later the same month and yet another bus driver was killed in a loyalist bomb at Sackville Place in January 1973. Within Northern Ireland itself, and on the second Friday of the stoppage, the Byrne brothers were murdered in Ballymena by a “flying picket” of drunken UVF and UDA members for allowing their Wayside Halt pub to remain open for business. Other Catholic fatalities of strike week included a 21-year-old Belfast woman shot by a UFF sniper at the New Lodge-Tigers Bay interface in North Belfast, a Queens University student shot dead in South Belfast, a 52-year old alcoholic found stoned to death in a partially completed house in West Belfast’s Glencairn estate and two civilians killed when their car hit a felled tree in County Tyrone.

¹¹⁸ O’Clery, 1999, p144. Fisk quotes an allegedly well-known loyalist politician involved with the UWC strike who had underlined his opposition to such violence before adding that outside basic humanitarian reactions his reaction had been “Slap it into you fellahs - you’ve deserved every bit of it” (Fisk, op cit, p81). The identity of the politician remains unknown.

¹¹⁹ One demonstrator screamed in accusatory fashion against the back-to-work marchers "You're communists getting the protection of the army, come out and fight us".(Fisk, op cit, p113). Meanwhile Paddy Doherty of the Bogside Community Association - "Paddy Bogside" - would provide arguably the most wry postscript on May 1974 by judging it as "brilliantly conceived and executed...Britain does not need Ulster Loyalists but Ireland does." (Hall, op cit, p54).

¹²⁰ Hall, op cit, p51.

¹²¹ For a radically alternative interpretation of the Wilson speech see Purdy, 1989, pp 111-118.

¹²² A 2008 Ulster Television documentary *The Troubles I've Seen* compiled memories of the conflict from famous Northern Irish public figures. In the programme *Coronation Street* actor Charlie Lawson clearly recalled his youthful admiration for the UWC strike and general fascination with loyalist paramilitarism.

¹²³ *Ulster Loyalist*, 4th July 1974.

¹²⁴ Bruce, 1992a, pp 100-101.

¹²⁵ The SDLP were represented at the talks by Gerry Fitt, John Hume, Paddy Devlin, Ivan Cooper and Hugh Logue. UDA representatives were Andy Tyrrie, Bill Snoddy, Tommy Lyttle and Ronnie Reid. Some agreement was reached on internment issues but little on the political future of Northern Ireland with the UDA insisting that the SDLP's united Ireland aspirations be shelved. Fitt himself sensed from the tenor of the UDA dialogue at this time that a power struggle was taking place within the organisation. See Deutsch and Magowan, 1975, p 126.

¹²⁶ "Ministers encouraged IRA-UDA talks", BBC News Online, 1st January 2005.

¹²⁷ Probert, 1978, p144.

¹²⁸ Nelson, op cit, pp155-169.

¹²⁹ Bruce, 1986, p109.

¹³⁰ The UCAG aimed to encourage all members of the community to take responsibility for the good and peaceful organisation of society and to promote the development of Area Community Action Groups to involve people in the management of their own affairs. It would ensure that all citizens had access to the best facilities and advice on matters such as redevelopment and housing, vandalism, recreation, entertainment, social amenities, social benefit and jobs. See *Ulster Loyalist*, 17th February 1975. For more on UDA involvement with community groups see chapters 12 and 15 of Sarah Nelson's *Ulster's Uncertain Defenders* (1984). Also Shirlow, Tongue et al, 2010, p150.

V: THE VOLUNTEER POLITICAL PARTY 1974

Following the May 1974 UWC strike the Ulster Volunteer Force established a formal political wing that in its brief existence encountered similar barriers to progress which would face all future loyalist fringe parties in turn. This chapter references the short period of Volunteer Political Party activity in 1974 alongside the broader paramilitary context for political experimentation within the UVF at this particular time. It will also consider the thinking on the sectarian conflict within the prisoner component of the organisation that catalysed such activity in part and the violent repercussions that followed the unequivocal nature of the electoral denouement.

The chapter will clearly show how obfuscated socialist thinking would not easily disseminate to Protestant Ulster in a period of ongoing constitutional uncertainty. Likewise how the VPP would also fail to overcome engrained opprobrium from both the wider loyalist community and mainstream unionist parties to representatives of paramilitary organisations associated with overwhelmingly random sectarian killing. The open criticism that the VPP would attract from such quarters whose set political allegiance still lay with state agencies of law and order being proof to that end. The VPP have been discussed in several major academic works on loyalism (Nelson 1984; Bruce 1992a, Novosel 2012) while this especially complex period of UVF history is referenced in detail in other popular criminological or journalistic texts (Dillon 1989; Tiernan 2002; Travers 2007).

Loyalist and republican violence in Ulster between the fall of Stormont and late 1976 would replicate similar patterns of murder not witnessed in Northern Ireland since 1922. Yet even within such a framework of unrelenting daily physical and political threat for the Protestant worker, the assertive political alternatives propounded by the self-proclaimed defenders of the same working class loyalist people would not be able to avoid divisive ends. This as buffered throughout by the aforesaid party political vilification and public antipathy.

The failure of both the UVF peace overtures and the VPP experiment in 1974 would be the catalyst for fundamental changes within the upper echelons of the organisation's paramilitary leadership.¹ The strategic outplay with regard to the Shankill Butchers gang in particular would heavily qualify public opinion arguably to this day regarding UVF political thinking - this no matter how well considered, articulated and marketed in turn. The deflating political experience of the UVF at this point was also to pre-figure similar electoral disappointments for the UDA's Ulster Loyalist Democratic Party and Ulster Democratic Party in the mid-1980s and late-1990s.

Hence the political dynamics affecting the Volunteer Political Party's birth will be seen as overlapping with a class critique stretching from the formation of the Ulster Defence Association in the early 1970s through to the revitalisation of pan-loyalist paramilitary political

thinking in the late 1980s. Yet I will contend that it is equally observable that the VPP as the first political party directly associated with loyalist paramilitarism provides the definitive example of how a political loyalty forged on a compound of sectarian violence and criminality could not realistically avoid being portrayed as a malign and suspect presence in the critical gaze of Protestant civil society.

UVF CEASEFIRE AND DEVELOPMENTS WITHIN LONG KESH

On March 23rd 1974 the first edition of the UVF magazine *Combat* was issued while on the same day a statement from Brigade Staff Headquarters pledged support to the associated Ulster Loyalist Front (ULF) ginger group as represented by West Belfast Assemblyman Hugh Smyth and Belfast City Councillor and former Shankill Defence Association member Fred Proctor.² Smyth had been associated with early political thinking on the fringes of the UVF alongside David Overend, Jim McDonald and the Reverend John Stewart.³

The ULF – formed on 14th October 1973 - claimed to be a study group to examine “the historical, cultural, religious and political problems which have lead to recurring divisions and violence in Northern Ireland”.⁴ They aspired towards the “unity and sovereignty of the Ulster people above all divisions of class, creed or vested interest” and a democratic system where power lies not with “the Unionist Fur Coat Brigade and the Castle Catholics, but with the ordinary rank and file people of the province.”⁵

The ULF are referenced frequently in the earliest editions of *Combat* with a rhetoric that forged beyond the standard UVF self-image as a solely military actor to mirror the social agendas and class consciousness of the UDA. Their particular focus was on the concerns of loyalist prisoners with regard to the return of jury trials and the release of internees. It supported the right to bear arms although also suggested various interesting policy positions on worker partnership schemes in factories, housing allocation reform and increased use of referenda.⁶ While touching base on populist levels of concern for the young, the elderly and the disabled its main thrust was still upon the military defeat of the IRA. And this despite such empowering populist invocations of the period within *Combat* to:

Boycott the city bus service and use the low fare people’s taxi service. If you do have to use the bus service, refuse to pay the outrageous increases.⁷

On 17th November 1973, and after frequent urging from Spence, the UVF had called a 43-day ceasefire. This was extended indefinitely on Christmas Eve despite the UVF joining the UAC umbrella in December against the Council of Ireland threat embedded within the Sunningdale Agreement.

At the end of January 1974 the UVF gave a detailed reflection upon the failings of unionist leadership to the *Sunday News*. In exasperated tones they would note “What is the sense of bombing the IRA when our political leaders are incapable of working out a political solution?” As no political group in the British Isles appeared to have a constructive policy to solve the Northern Ireland problem only a Council of Ulster forum could thus forge “a new society based upon the unity and sovereignty of the ordinary rank and file Ulster people – Protestant and Catholic alike”.⁸ The statement ended with a moving call to all Ulstermen – redolent indeed of the words of King George V at the 1921 state opening of the Northern Ireland parliament - “to pause, to stretch out the hand of forbearance and conciliation, to forgive and forget, and to join in making for the Province which they love, a new era of peace, contentment and goodwill.”⁹

Tara would hurl accusations of Marxist influence at the UVF following its briefing which in turn would be rebuffed in a UVF “Review of Policy”. This underscored its commitment to military action and opposition to the Council of Ireland. It would also make counter-slurs against Tara in consideration of its embrace of Irish historical iconography and doomsday warnings.¹⁰

Around February 1974 UVF Brigade Staff members including *Combat* editor Billy Mitchell and James Hanna met representatives of the Official IRA in Dublin and Belfast. They then talked to the Provisional IRA’s Brian Keenan and Daithi O’Connell in County Cavan. This led to rough agreement on social and economic matters but no meeting of minds around the Sinn Féin “Eire Nua” policy position of the time. Or indeed a potential dovetailing with Desmond Boal’s concept of an amalgamated Ireland which the UVF had expressed an interest in.¹¹ The memoirs of Irish journalist Kevin Myers meanwhile, who acted as a conduit for the latter meeting, qualify somewhat the potentially historical import of the gathering in consideration of the alcohol-fuelled nature of the later evening’s proceedings.¹²

Loyalist violence from this quarter during the UVF “ceasefire” hardly let up despite a genuine limitation being placed upon their considerable explosives capacity - James Hanna himself was murdered within months of the talks with republicans by the UVF as an alleged informer. However though some leading UVF figures certainly admired the British National Front¹³, and while accepting the moral qualifications surrounding the legitimacy of political discourse originating with individuals trained for urban guerrilla warfare, it was clear from UVF public statements of the time that before wholeheartedly entering the sectarian assassination campaign some substantial reanalysis of the conflict’s constructs was taking place. Likewise contacts were indeed forged across paramilitary divides in this period which appear truly extraordinary in hindsight in light of the violence levels of the time - and despite the limited consequences from the meetings themselves.

Billy Mitchell would recall the meetings a quarter-century later for Peter Taylor’s *Loyalists*:

They had the one-track mind with the thirty-two-county Ireland and even within unionism, Boal's "amalgamated Ireland" wasn't acceptable. Obviously, as history has shown, nothing was resolved. Probably we were a few small voices on the loyalist side. What we did wasn't particularly liked or welcomed but we felt we had to do it. And unfortunately nothing came of it. At least we tried.¹⁴

In March 1974 a no-conflict policy had been announced within Long Kesh between republican and loyalist prisoners.¹⁵ The first attempt by a loyalist paramilitary group to create a formal political party was thus to take place against the background of a similar seachange in political thinking from within the UVF compounds and as centred around the figure of Gusty Spence. Spence would reconsider long-held loyalist credos surrounding the use of political violence and the nature of the relationship between the Protestant working classes and the unionist establishment. Likewise for the quantitative economic advantages bestowed on the Protestant proletariat from the same marriage.¹⁶

Ad hoc political discussions with Official IRA prisoners had begun in Crumlin Road gaol. A 2008 history of the institution would include commentary from Spence on his belief that the Officials were the least sectarian organisation in existence in this period:

We were very sympathetic towards the Officials, because when they said they wanted an 'All Ireland', they wanted justice and a fair share, this and that and the other thing, which was something that we wanted too, apart from the aspect of a united Ireland. So we decided to co-operate, and had some good political debate. You could in effect say it was the first embryonic expression of political thought, real political thought, with real bread and butter issues, that occurred amongst the Loyalists.¹⁷

The meetings there between Spence and Billy McMillan - and then with the Provisional OCs - lead in turn to the no-conflict policy between all paramilitary groups following on from the tense atmosphere engendered by the nearby McGurk's Bar bombing in North Queen Street in December 1971. Spence would reflect upon the awakening he underwent in Crumlin Road for a latterday analysis of UVF political experimentation. He recalled one particular conversation with Provisional IRA leader Billy McKee:

"Listen", I said, "you have to understand - you entered into this situation and you knew what you were on about, you knew exactly what you wanted to achieve. I didn't. I hadn't a clue and yet I had all these qualifications: I was a Prod, a member of the British Army, I was in the Orange and the Black, and I voted Unionist and I did all these things. Whenever you people are put in here it's a 'foreign' government puts you in here. But my government put me in here."¹⁸

Such formal understanding transferred in turn to Long Kesh where a Camp Council was instituted to discuss matters of common interest with the prison management. Spence would install a British Army-style military regime in the UVF compounds there. His folk legend is centrally focused on his insistence upon the display of a soldierly *esprit de corps* from his imprisoned colleagues as a general motivating stimulus.¹⁹ This in turn would underscore the

political nature of their paramilitary activities and hence distance the UVF from the corruption and racketeering which had been attached to the UDA from the beginning.

Spence questioned each new inmate on the wider political circumstances behind his incarceration and insisted on the highest levels of military order and cleanliness within the spartan living environment. Any expressions of a bullying culture would be brought to bear instantly while in turn UVF prisoners violently attacked the individuals associated with the David McClenaghan murder for the shame that they had brought upon UVF prestige.²⁰

The now widely disseminated vision of Spence in his years as UVF OC has been one of a firm but fair mentor and - with the help of sympathetic local academics²¹ - a muse for revelatory political discussion. He would certainly locate the social inversion of "prison-as-university" within an openly philosophical framework:

You have to seek yourself. You get the first key and you open the first door. You present that key to someone else. You close the door behind you and you let them go through the door. It's no use you finding the way through the door for them. At the same time if they want counsel and advice you offer that.²²

Contemporary and retrospective qualifications of course would centre upon the dichotomy of equating blossoming socialist thinking in UVF ranks with their iron faith in British imperialism and its glorious military cornerstones. Likewise the gallant rhetoric of self-respect and faith in their Prisoner of War status would jar, and often gallingly so, with the rapid descent in the sectarian nature of UVF violence on the mean streets outside.²³

Brigade Staff attitudes towards Spence's missives would often be far from placatory too. Billy Mitchell recalls an individual writing "Bollix" across one particular document²⁴ while Bruce quotes one UVF man disparaging Spence in even more scurrilous language.²⁵ Likewise it is well to remember that not every single UVF volunteer would accept the road to political revaluation or avail themselves of Open University educational opportunities in the compounds.²⁶ The calibre of imprisoned loyalist volunteers would naturally replicate the exterior social reality in terms of including individuals with a background in criminality or steeped in seasoned sectarian vitriol.²⁷

However inside Long Kesh, and as thus removed from the political restraints upon wider and potentially divisive unionist civic debate, there was indeed a truly radical self-questioning process in operation. It was focused on the core flaws within the loyalist paramilitary world view in terms of the qualified support they received from the Protestant public and the proactive lack of regard from loyalist politicians, the Orange Order hierarchy and mainland Britain. Or indeed the painfully ironic contradiction of UVF men ending up on a windswept and boggy World War Two airfield being guarded by British soldiers and loyalist prison officers for taking

the war to the republican enemy. Furthermore, the volunteers clearly saw the conditions of their imprisonment as valediction of their essentially political motivations.

Spence himself would always hold firm to the belief that such initial collaboration as shown in the Camp Council and pan-paramilitary protests in March and August 1974 - over visiting conditions and food quality respectively - could have been extended into full blown external social collaboration between paramilitary-linked welfare bodies.²⁸ The Downtown Office schemes²⁹ originating from 1975 would have pooled resources for the benefit of all prisoners and their dependents. Such a plan was to be hamstrung by mainstream unionist obstruction, IRA reticence and allegedly by even darker central government intrigues. These related to the current Westminster stratagems to build "structures of disengagement" against which such reconciliation would have jarred.³⁰

An example of such an initiative reaching structural fruition however would occur in February 1976 when an anti-sectarian assassination conference took place inside Long Kesh between OCs, external paramilitary representatives and Protestant and Catholic clergymen. At the meeting only UDA representative Sammy Smyth underscored his dictum that Catholic civilian targets were legitimate from the three-year-old child to the seventy-year-old woman - Smyth being shot dead by the Provisionals within three weeks.³¹

THE LEGAL UVF BOMBS DUBLIN AND MONAGHAN - THE FORMATION OF THE VOLUNTEER POLITICAL PARTY

On 4th April 1974 Secretary of State Merlyn Rees put forward proposals to remove both Provisional Sinn Féin and the Ulster Volunteer Force from the list of proscribed organisations in order to realign them within the democratic process. Legislation to remove the ban on the UVF was passed on 15th May 1974— the eve of the UWC strike.

The legal UVF's Belfast and Mid-Ulster Brigades are now historically accepted as the perpetrators of the Dublin-Monaghan bombings though the ULF would condemn them without reservation the following day.³² Speculatively the bombings could be seen as a UVF move to either limit socialistic tendencies within the organisation or else firmly display where the boundaries to such constitutional changes afoot would lie with regard to the Sunningdale experiment.³³

On June 22nd the UVF announced the formation of a Volunteer Political Party which they vainly aspired to affiliate to the UUUC despite opening salvos against the Ulster proletariat's failing unionist representatives. *Combat* magazine stated that the time was thus right :

...to come out of the shadows and into the bright sunlight and expose ourselves politically to the hostile pressures exerted by those politicians who had tried

unsuccessfully to castigate us by use of lies, to prove for once and for all that the Ulster Volunteer Force is a creditable organisation which can be trusted to act effectively and responsibly in any given type of situation. ³⁴

All volunteers were now urged to think politically and objectively about Ulster and use the VPP as new loyalist weaponry in the same way as they would utilise an SLR:

Therefore in order to ensure we have the right people using this weapon, we require immediately Volunteers to join this wing. It is not enough to know you can fight physically without knowing as to why you are fighting. ³⁵

VPP Chairman was Ken Gibson who was a member of the Free Presbyterian church and had been imprisoned on UVF-related charges as one of the first loyalist internees. ³⁶ Vice-chairman was Billy Davidson while Councillor Hugh Smyth, who had been engaged with the earlier ULF group, was also associated with the new party. The Ulster Loyalist Front disbanded in order to join the new body.

In July the UVF formally urged its members to join the VPP and in August it was claimed that 30 members of the group had taken part in discussions with Scottish and English Westminster MPs and mainland party members. ³⁷ The government also encouraged the UVF to talk over its political opinions with academics while in turn the Brigade Staff “doves” facilitated political discussion meetings of UVF volunteers.

Prior to the October General Election the VPP decided to withdraw candidates from both North and East Belfast leaving only Gibson to stand alone in predominantly nationalist West Belfast. ³⁸ The political manifesto of the VPP compared ex-UWC co-ordinating committee member Gibson to one of the 13 brave Apprentice Boys of Derry and noted how any future assembly should work for all the people of Northern Ireland and not for the regularly demonised “Fur Coat Brigade” alone. ³⁹

They aspired to the same level of devolutionary local government proposed for both Scotland and Wales and, with looming economic uncertainty ahead for the United Kingdom, they pledged to focus on Northern Ireland’s particular need for investment and social services spending. Being firmly unionist they were opposed to both a united Ireland and an independent Ulster because of the economic repercussions that would ensue. Only a local assembly or integration were valid alternatives as “UDI means anarchy and anarchy means Civil War the outcome of which is too horrible to contemplate.” ⁴⁰

Nevertheless their political stance was extremely hostile to unionist failings in the past with regard to the social and political security of the Protestant worker. The manifesto noted how:

In the old days the Unionists would vote slavishly with the Tories, whatever they did and the Tories did very little for the outlying regions of the UK. As long as a Unionist

shouted “No Surrender” he could vote against the introduction of a Regional Employment Policy which brought considerable benefit to Ulster’s economy. Those days are now over.⁴¹

Even more pertinently with regard to the dissipating Union:

If Ulstermen want to be more than second-class citizens of the UK they must send MPs who will behave like representatives of a first class region rather than at present where we have 11 indecisive representatives vainly pleading a special case for an area with which fewer and fewer Britons have sympathy anymore.⁴²

On security issues the VPP favoured expansion of the UDR and the return of the RUC to normal policing duties. Most radically, it also supported the release of all internees from paramilitary groups which had called a ceasefire. They were against the Diplock courts system and wanted an end to military harassment.

The manifesto was redolent of, and indeed influenced by, Northern Ireland Labour Party thinking. NILP members had taken a close interest in the UVF development in this period. Likewise individuals from the British and Irish Communist Organisation (BICO) were drawn towards the UDA in the 1970s despite the broadly integrationist focus of their “Orange Marxism”.⁴³

As clearly demonstrative of how Ulster unionism had now fractured along class lines - and of the UVF’s faith in a formal party to directly represent the loyalist working class - the VPP had no compunction in splitting the unionist vote in West Belfast against the popular local figure of Johnny McQuade. Conversely the party was pragmatically willing to withdraw their candidacy for Glenn Barr of the rival UDA in the same seat.

At the initial press conference launch they strategically expressed qualms over the “socialist” labelling of their policies from mainstream unionist politicians.⁴⁴ This indeed had been the fatal accusation thrown against earlier manifestations of purely political independent and progressive unionism. In turn such criticism of their loyalty to the Union would elicit stark rhetoric that edged towards political self-denial. Hence an October 10th 1974 statement would proclaim:

We have repeatedly attacked such communist doctrines as the redistribution of wealth, nationalisation of British industry, economic co-operation with communist dictatorships and the drastic cuts in defence spending. No loyalist organisation has done more to oppose the inroads of communism and liberalism than the UVF.⁴⁵

The statement thus underscored the complex pathways through which the VPP – as representatives of loyalist gunmen to whom the average Ulster Protestant had displayed significant reserve - would need to manoeuvre in order to embed themselves within mainstream unionist political space. Academic and journalistic commentary on the VPP has certainly been reflective of such a lack of political focus with Steve Bruce pertinently underscoring:

Rather than starting with a policy and then attracting members, the UVF's short-lived 1975 (sic) Volunteer Political Party enrolled its members and then asked them if they had any policies.⁴⁶

The VPP experiment was indeed directed from the top-down to men who had embarked as a lifestyle choice upon the road of political violence and who were thus expected to make radical reappraisals at a time of extremely high IRA violence. The Guildford pub bombings took place only days before the October 1974 election for example.⁴⁷ Likewise the heterogeneity of the UVF's makeup would also incur tangential difficulties as reflected in the spectrum of political opinion articulated outside of the constancy of the border issue. For one senior UVF figure quoted by Cusack and McDonald:

The UVF was a coalition of sorts – fascists, socialists, liberals, etc all under one umbrella. There was a Pol Pot approach to politics. If you wore a beard or glasses and read books you were suspect among some members of the organisation. There was a lot of confusion in the early days about politics, the conditions just weren't right.⁴⁸

As a final example, Sarah Nelson's study of the VPP campaign also underscored how the UVF from its beginnings had certainly attracted individuals from across the entire political spectrum. She was to earnestly analyse such a sociological crux in a loyalist club where many another stout-hearted researcher would have made promptly for the first departing Liverpool or Heysham ferry:

In one drinking session I witnessed an Antrim shop steward began singing a Republican lament about a defeat in battle. He found it moving and interesting that both sides could feel these emotions. A young man who had joined up in 1972, and who came to prominence after the 1974 coup, at first grew disturbed and then angry, drowning out the singer with triumphal Orange chants.⁴⁹

THE OCTOBER 1974 GENERAL ELECTION AND AFTERMATH

In the run-up to election day itself on the 11th of October the VPP received support from both the UDA's Charles Harding Smith and Glenn Barr who was to be suspended from the UUUC for doing so. The chances of attracting Catholic support was negligible despite the encouragement of the SDLP's Paddy Devlin. Likewise the sight of enthusiastic leatherjacketed Young Citizen Volunteers taking part in the street level electioneering process did not do much to convince what little wavering voters there were in West Belfast to plump for the party of the UVF.

The result was to prove highly disappointing in such clearly unfavourable circumstances as a first-past-the-post election and while running against a popular local unionist politician who had represented the Woodvale ward at Stormont between 1965 and 1972. The perennial fear of splitting the unionist vote being clearly illuminated once again.⁵⁰ Ken Gibson came in fourth

and polled 2,690 votes to Johnny McQuade's 16,265. Gerry Fitt's victory came with a 5,556 majority.

Ironically the figure so centrally associated with the political reappraisals within loyalism of this period had actually opposed the attempt to stand in West Belfast in the unfavourable context of a Westminster election. In typically eloquent fashion Spence felt retrospectively:

...the beauty of the Volunteer Political Party was that they thought that they were the first ones that had the ideas. Whenever one embraces enlightenment, whenever one suddenly has the scales from the eyes removed, you think this is the secret of the world. You think you're the only one with this particular secret and you are inclined to be euphoric.⁵¹

Following the October election the decision to end the ceasefire was narrowly defeated by 38 to 34 votes⁵² though the pages of *Combat* took on a more militaristic hue with talk of National Front linkages and the horrors of communism.⁵³ The UDA visit to Libya would be criticised in openly racist fashion:

British patriots have problems enough with the ever increasing influx of depraved or degenerate black immigrants into the United Kingdom. Now the UDA wishes to add insult to injury by bringing in a bunch of equally depraved and degenerate Arab terrorists to engineer the disruption of the United Kingdom.⁵⁴

Replacements on the Brigade Staff were less interested in politics and allegedly more interested in financial gain and the removal of the "doves".⁵⁵ Cusack and McDonald refer to a specific coup in this post-election period when armed members associated with the YCV and the Special Services Unit changed the Brigade Staff structure under military threat.⁵⁶ Nelson's overview of the VPP noted the discrepancy in this period between the UVF and the UDA in the ability of the Brigade Staff to take on the hardliners:

Certain UDA stalwarts would probably have said the 'doves' were not ruthless enough with their opponents: that cut-throats only understand their own tactics. Because the radicals did not kill, injure or intimidate out the hardliners, they had to co-exist with them in this small, claustrophobic organisation...⁵⁷

Whereas this indeed may have contributed somewhat towards the project's failure, the decision not to separate the political party from the paramilitary organisation in public presentation would also have negative consequences - the UVF having always been seen as a strictly military organisation as opposed to the obvious community underpinnings of the UDA from its early days. The continued open legality of the UVF certainly led to the increasing attraction of unsavoury elements into the organisation. Andy Tyrie was to note how the balance of the UDA share of such "hoods" was to swing to the older organisation in this period.⁵⁸ Billy Hutchinson of the Progressive Unionist Party in turn would bewail in hindsight how legality lead to the decline in the quality of volunteer attracted to the proverbial "Armed Vanguard of the Loyalist People".⁵⁹

On 9th November the UVF Brigade Staff decided not to contest the 1975 Convention elections as the West Belfast result had shown that there was no public support for such political engagement⁶⁰. Thus after only one solitary and uninspiring electoral performance - against hopelessly loaded odds and in the face of acute political opposition - the UVF would reappraise its role in light of the VPP failure and cease political involvement in Northern Ireland party politics.

In retrospect the move seems politically premature in light of the Convention's similarly domestic construct to the Council of Ulster proposals from earlier in the year in which the UVF had expressed such an empowering faith. Likewise with regard to the fact that the proportional representation voting system in use for that election would have seen the VPP fare more favourably than October 1974.⁶¹ From an external viewpoint however such a transitory political experience perhaps underscored to its many critics the frailty of both the VPP's political expectations and the sincerity at its core. Tony Novosel's 2013 study of early loyalist paramilitary political thought however directly links conceptual aspects of the VPP manifesto to the *Within The Context of Northern Ireland* document from the Red Hand Commando regarding unionist strategic considerations for the Convention.⁶²

The military principles elucidated upon in a UVF military policy document from that same November included seeking and destroying republican active service personnel while abhorring the killing and torture of innocents. The latter activity would "destroy the soul of the perpetrator as surely as the life and health of the victim". It also pointedly mentions the OIRA as the main long-term enemy: "To this end the UVF shall seek to expose the errors of doctrinaire socialism and to expose the myth of the supposed class struggle".⁶³

Gibson continued as a UVF spokesperson though the nature of his statements contrasted with the tone of earlier pronouncements. 1975 would see him placed in the hopeless position of "politically representing" the UVF in an Ulster Television interview following an earlier press conference where the paramilitary group had accepted responsibility for killing two UDA members and four Catholic civilians. A transcript of the programme uncovered during research at Belfast's Linenhall Library notes Gibson's own qualifications:

I deplore any act of violence, whatsoever, especially the loss of life in Northern Ireland at the present time. But I am not a military commander of the UVF. I am simply trying to bring the UVF in as a political party in Northern Ireland. If their military forces decide to take action against people, it is not my part to stop that action being carried out.⁶⁴

The constitutional quandary of 1975 was not of the same crisis-torn veracity and intensity of 1972 or even 1974. The unionist population thus viewed the mounting and openly sectarian paramilitary actions of the still legal UVF, under flags of convenience such as the Protestant

Action Force (PAF) of the Mid-Ulster UVF and the Ulster Protestant Action Group (UPAG) in Belfast, with genuine disgust. Such sentiments increased as IRA hawks engaged openly in tit-for-tat sequencing in the course of this year as the UVF raised the ante for war.⁶⁵ On 31st of July 1975 three members of the Miami Showband were murdered by Mid-Ulster UVF members posing as a UDR patrol near Banbridge - UVF volunteers Harris Boyle and Wesley Somerville also died in the same incident.⁶⁶

Combat warned of an autumn and winter offensive to come and was scathing in retrospect of the VPP experiment. It also scoffed at expressions of ethical concern about urban warfare:

We in the UVF hold that war is a relic of physical-force Republicanism and so long as Republicans, be they papists or socialists, are permitted to band together for the purpose of seeking a physical force solution, then the Protestants of Ulster cannot hope to escape the horrors of war.⁶⁷

Intra-loyalist feuding was also continuing throughout 1975 including attacks on the UDA's Sammy Smyth, Sammy Doyle and on Ken Gibson himself. The double murder of the UDA's Hugh McVeigh and David Douglas lead directly to the arrest and record-breaking sentencing of the East Antrim UVF including Billy Mitchell. As one loyalist paramilitary presciently expressed to Bruce regarding the internecine feuding:

The hostility, a lot of it was just bumming and blowing – our teams better than your team. I don't want to use the word but I would say that we didn't have the breeding. We didn't have the experience of handling men that could have sorted out those kinds of problems. We were just brickies and plumbers.⁶⁸

The UDA would fire the following barbed broadside against the oldest loyalist paramilitary group from within the pages of *Ulster Loyalist*:

...post-Spence the rot set in. In the following years of their faithful leader's imprisonment, the new UVF went from bad to worse and there was much weeping and wailing, and gnashing of false teeth. They were invariably late for work because they spent all night long polishing their leather-jackets, and robbing milkmen, old-aged pensioners and kiddies' piggy-banks.⁶⁹

The year was also to see several loyalist "own goals" in terms of fatalities caused by paramilitary bombs in transit which undermined belief in both the military leadership and the calibre of loyalist volunteers defending Ulster itself.⁷⁰ On 2nd October 1975 the "Big Push" heralded the Brigade Staff's decision to increase the level of violence even if it irrevocably entailed subsequent proscription.⁷¹ This one day left 12 dead including two middle aged Catholic sisters shot by Lenny Murphy's Brown Bear pub unit and four UVF members blown up by their own bomb in Coleraine.⁷² The UVF was proscribed again on October 4th under pressure from the SDLP though only days previously Rees had noted the lack of purpose in doing so.

On 21st October a counter-coup took place with a new Brigade Staff claiming that the present military policies were contrary to founding UVF principles.⁷³ However in the medium-term the previous lack of UVF support from the public was only to be copperfastened with the breaking waves of a criminalisation policy which would ultimately end the Special Category Status which had been brought in during 1972. Security force successes against loyalist paramilitaries would also mount sharply.

More immediately the re-imposition of centralised control from the new leadership would not be sufficient enough to temper the semi-independence of Murphy's platoon which in turn did not approach the Brigade Staff to sanction its own operations.⁷⁴ The first cutthroat killing of a Catholic civilian took place on November 25th with the death of Francis Crossan. The terrifying figures who constituted this murder gang proceeded to leave their own unforgettable mark on Irish criminal history and on the annals of group psychology.⁷⁵ One of Murphy's own UVF superiors would chillingly say of him: "Murphy doesn't frighten me but it is what he could do to my wife and kids if I crossed him and didn't dispose of him quickly".⁷⁶

However the long-term faith of some of the loyalist prisoners in the irrevocable currents of reconciliation was to remain. And this despite the qualification that they were insulated from so much of the Troubles' brutal realities and tensions – as the grating Great War-style military jargon employed by Long Kesh missives suggests.⁷⁷ Sarah Nelson's overview of the VPP experiment concluding:

The prisoners were almost alone in clinging to the belief that the UVF could be resurrected as a socially radical working class movement. This was partly because they were shielded from harsh realities beyond the prison gates, partly because their solidarity and heroic attachment to the group had been strengthened by their captivity and their militaristic regime.⁷⁸

Thus Spence's dynamic thinking would be transfused to other loyalist volunteers who would shortly find their way into Long Kesh within months of the collapse of the VPP experiment. The specifics of this are worth noting with regard to those who passed through Compound 21 and were later associated with the PUP in the run-up to the 1994 ceasefire – the year of Ken Gibson's death.⁷⁹ Crawford's study of paramilitary prisoners insists that such formulation of political thinking could only have taken place within the humane confinement of the compound structures as opposed to the brutalisation of the cellular H-Block regime – the harrowing nature of his interviews being reminiscent of the horrific testimonies of the Birmingham Six and Guildford Four prisoners.⁸⁰

The stark discrepancy in the fate of two other individuals in this period of modern UVF history is also worth consideration. Hugh Smyth, who objected to the detention of Lenny Murphy in June 1973 following his acquittal for the murder of gundealer Edward Pavis and who in November 1973 had criticised Protestant churchmen in West Belfast for refusing to bury UVF

Major Charles Logan, formed the Independent Unionist Group in 1978 which became the PUP the following year. Smyth, who is openly referenced as a “UVF city councillor” and “UVF Assemblyman” in early editions of *Combat* ⁸¹, served as Lord Mayor of Belfast in 1983 and 1993 and was awarded the OBE for his community and welfare work for the Shankill community.

Lenny Murphy and the actions of his platoon, quite literally “the worst corner boys in history” ⁸², were the subject of a best-selling study by Martin Dillon and the novel and motion picture *Resurrection Man*. Their story can indeed be referenced on many internet criminology sites alongside those of equally well-known aggressive psychopaths and serial killers.

The infamy of the Shankill Butchers is of such a veracious nature that the name alone has almost merged into a generic label to reference bloody loyalist violence of the 1970s.⁸³ The long metaphorical shadow would extend for decades in turn - a 2006 episode of the BBC drama series *Murphy's Law* starring James Nesbitt centred on two loyalist paramilitary brothers involved in a drugs war in modern-day Leicester. It would include a scene wherein the psychopathic character of Billy Johnstone would gruesomely murder an Asian rival before mutilating his body.

The anthropologist Allen Feldman would see the Butchers' actions as representing the outer limits of “symbolic genocide” in Belfast's war zones – which even other loyalist paramilitaries were quick to disassociate themselves from. ⁸⁴ Conversely, and in the worst example to date of loyalist inability to understand the potential quicksands of careless media presentation, a member of their platoon in Taylor's *Loyalists* documentary referred to them earnestly as “a decent bunch of lads”. ⁸⁵ Restricted government papers released in January 2005 meanwhile would note Secretary of State Merlyn Rees' opinion of individual UVF members taking a political path in the mid-1970s. He sensed they were genuine though “sadly naïve and ill-equipped to do so.” ⁸⁶

CONCLUSIONS: THE VPP AS A LIGHT IN THE DARKNESS?

The failed Volunteer Political Party experiment of 1974 - as set against truly terrible physical carnage across the province - was an extraordinary political development to have originated within Northern Irish paramilitarism and Ulster loyalism alike at that stage of the conflict. This by way of clearly defined political expressions from the UVF and the VPP that suggested the conflict between the paramilitaries had reached some unequivocal stalemate and that fresh new strategic thinking within unionism was urgently required as centred around historic class fissures within that bloc.

Their presentation of empowering social alternatives for the Protestant working classes - or at least empowering presentations of social alternatives - was nonetheless overwhelmingly unionist in outlook and did not foresee any political settlement as needing to devolve outside the Northern Ireland state. However its focus on the nature of political prisoners did foreshadow later loyalist thinking on inclusive and certainly unpalatable paths to conflict resolution.

The party openly associated itself with the UVF within the maelstrom of some of the worst years of killing. Indeed in many ways the VPP in comparison to the later Progressive Unionist Party was the literal electoral brand of the Ulster Volunteer Force itself - as an existent terrorist group - as opposed to an associated political party. Arguably more than any other period of the conflict - because of the tit-for-tat engagement of both republican and loyalist forces - 1974-76 was to see a shameful degree of collusion by a substantial sector of the Northern Irish public in accommodating and abetting political assassination of neighbour and work colleague. Such extremely suspect morality as despicable in fashion as the continued bellicosity of local politicians.

The VPP had also evolved against the background of no-doubt sincere attempts by paramilitary figures both inside and outside the prison system to forge some formalised socio-political space within which the paramilitary groupings could begin to move towards qualified negotiation and engagement. The aforementioned reassembling of political unionism around its Westminster representatives however dovetailed with ongoing post-strike confidence in the mainstream Ulster Protestant community to undermine the first attempt by a loyalist paramilitary-linked political body to enter the electoral fray with a comparatively radical political agenda. The historical accusations made against intra-unionist dissent would replay in the form of a regenerated middle class unionism's perennial distrust of Protestant working class grassroots empowerment - and this doubly accentuated within the context of its most powerful organisational and military display in sixty years.

This chapter has thus shown how in 1974 the Volunteer Political Party's fortunes would be fundamentally constrained by negative dynamics emanating from Protestant civic society itself - both the continual fealty of the majority of the unionist population towards the state and antagonism towards the nature of loyalist paramilitary activity to date. This crucial combination as clearly demonstrated by the qualification of their political credentials from other unionist parties or indeed the number of votes garnered in the literal West Belfast birthplace and power base of the modern UVF. As the coda upon the history of the VPP remains the actual paramilitary rank of Ken Gibson at the time of the political experiment, such future corroboration may significantly magnify the scope of such conclusions.

Although the sectarian shadow in the background on this occasion would represent the most extraordinarily amoral of its ilk to be located in the entire course of the Troubles, it may be

argued that essentially identical political and public forces would be ranged against loyalist experimentation in 1974 as two decades hence and indeed at all stages in between. The nature of the loyalist paramilitary war as it interfaced with existent security force combinations, Protestant public morality and criminal linkages ensuring that such qualifications would remain both static and fundamentally irreversible.

¹ Nelson, 1984, pp 188-192.

² Deutsch and Magowan III, 1975, p32.

³ Novosel, 2013, pp 90-93. Also pp 101-102 for information on the Ulster Loyalist Front.

⁴ Deutsch and Magowan III, 1975, p32.

⁵ *Combat*, V1 (2).

⁶ Bruce 1992a, p119.

⁷ *Combat*, V1 (4).

⁸ Roy Garland, *Seeking a Political Accommodation: The Ulster Volunteer Force - A Negotiating History*.

⁹ *ibid*.

¹⁰ *ibid*. Further analysis of reaction to the *Sunday News* statement in Novosel, *op cit*, pp 104-106.

¹¹ Taylor, 1999, pp 123-124.

¹² Myers, 2006, Chapter 13.

¹³ Nelson, *op cit*, pp 172-173 and p188. See also *Combat*, V1(5).

¹⁴ Taylor, *op cit*, p124.

¹⁵ Hall, 1988, p49. Long Kesh was formally renamed HMP Maze on 1st March 1976. Loyalist prisoners generally referred to their prison accommodation as compounds as opposed to the "cages" term used by republicans.

¹⁶ On one smuggled tape recording from this period Spence had noted: "There will come a day when the Loyalists of Long Kesh will be freed...This is their promise - the promise to contribute towards this country, to work, to engage in society, to politicise if necessary" ("Loyalist Ceasefire Ten Years On", BBC News Online, 13th October 2004). Another tape recording of Spence from Easter 1974 referenced by Taylor (*op cit*, p139) notes: "We need to sit down and hammer it out. We've been called 'fascists' and 'communists' but we have a singular title, 'loyalists'. We're loyal to a cause, a shining beacon. We're not afraid to be called 'fools' for freedom's sake. We don't promise revenge or retribution. We need to politicise people. For too long in Northern Ireland have hatred and bigotry been the overriding factors."

¹⁷ Greg, 2008, p107.

¹⁸ Roy Garland, *Seeking a Political Accommodation: The Ulster Volunteer Force - A Negotiating History*.

¹⁹ The 2010 study of paramilitary prisoners by Shirlow, Tongue et al includes an October 1998 *Combat* recollection of the burning of Long Kesh by republican prisoners: "Even when republicans burned down the camp on the evening of Tuesday 14th October 1974 the loyalist political prisoners lined up in full military formation and in full parade dress, handed over the compound intact to the army. Indeed, it brought a response from one officer who remarked 'Give me two battalions of men like these and the IRA would be out of business in a fortnight'" (p79).

²⁰ Garland, 2001, p159. David McClenaghan was a 15-year-old mentally retarded Catholic youth shot dead at his home in the Oldpark area of North Belfast by loyalists on the night of 11th July 1972. His mother had been raped in front of him by two of the gang previously and was also shot and wounded at the same time.

- ²¹ These included the author's former political science lecturer at Queens University Belfast - the late Frank Wright.
- ²² Roy Garland, *Seeking a Political Accommodation: The Ulster Volunteer Force – A Negotiating History*.
- ²³ "Ken Gibson, the UVF's former commander on the Shankill, used to go into bars on the 'Road' for a pint wearing the full military regalia of a British army colonel, complete with the correct pips and insignia on the lapels of his shirt" (McDonald and Cusack, 2004, p216).
- ²⁴ Garland, op cit, p160.
- ²⁵ Bruce, 1992a, p118.
- ²⁶ William "Plum" Smith of the PUP's commentary on the overlooked factor of early loyalist prisoner engagement with further education opportunities in prison notes that four of the first six Open University applicants were UVF and UDA prisoners. This against a boycott of the same by Provisional IRA prisoners. The first loyalist prisoner to obtain a degree was William Strain in 1975 (*Belfast Telegraph*, 19th January 2011).
- ²⁷ Martin Dillon's study of the Shankill Butchers gang (pp 32-33) notes how leader Lenny Murphy expressed disdain at the regimented routines in the compounds in February 1974. He would only escape expulsion from the compound following an assault on a UVF prisoner following the intervention of John McKeague. In October of that year loyalist prisoners provided sanctuary and operated "field hospitals" for republican inmates who had burnt their compounds during a pitched battle with the British Army. Murphy meanwhile took pragmatic advantage of such conflict to rifle his own stock of amphetamine-style drugs for personal use.
- ²⁸ Garland, op cit, pp 167-168 and Chapter 14.
- ²⁹ For analysis of the Downtown Office scheme and the loyalist paramilitary prison experience see Novosel, op cit, Ch 3.
- ³⁰ Moloney, 2010, p 367.
- ³¹ Dillon, 2003, pp 87-88.
- ³² Bowyer Bell, 1996a, Chapters 5-6. Mullan, 2000, Chapter 5. Tiernan, 2002, Chapters 3-4. See also Tiernan's article "Dublin and Monaghan bombings: Cover Up and Incompetence", *Politico*, 3rd May 2007 for commentary on alleged involvement of Ken Gibson, Jim Hanna and Billy Mitchell in 1972/73 Dublin bombings at Liberty Hall and Sackville Place.
- ³³ The UVF denied involvement in the Dublin-Monaghan attacks at the time and only accepted responsibility in 1993 (Gillespie, 2008, pp98-101)
- ³⁴ *Combat*, V1 (14).
- ³⁵ *ibid*.
- ³⁶ *Ulster Militant*, 24.
- ³⁷ Deutsch and Magowan III, 1975, p125 and p 129.
- ³⁸ *ibid*, p147.
- ³⁹ *Volunteer Political Party: A Progressive and Forward Thinking Unionist Party* as reproduced in *Combat*, V1(26).
- ⁴⁰ *ibid*.
- ⁴¹ *ibid*.
- ⁴² *ibid*.
- ⁴³ Nelson, op cit, p173. McGarry and O'Leary, 1995, Chapter 4. Davis, 1994 p 252 and pp 260-261. BICO's *Against Ulster Nationalism* critique of Tom Nairn's prediction of future Ulster independence stressed the fashion for "the English intelligentsia to salve their imperial guilt complexes by shitting on the Ulster Protestants" (p32).

⁴⁴ For consideration of the “Red Scare” reaction to progressive loyalism see Novosel, op cit, pp 144-150.

⁴⁵ Cusack and McDonald, 1997, p 150.

⁴⁶ Bruce, 1992c.

⁴⁷ The claim for the UVF murder of Catholic civilian Paul Edward Armstrong on November 8th 1974 in Belfast - made under the cover name of Ulster Protestant Action - directly mentioned the Guildford bombings (McKittrick, Kelters et al p491).

⁴⁸ Cusack and McDonald, op cit, p151.

⁴⁹ Nelson, op cit, pp 144-145.

⁵⁰ Nelson’s review of the VPP campaign also references the sound marketing advice given to a party worker who was driving through the loyalist Glencairn estate espousing the plight of loyalist prisoners - “More on houses and jobs, eh? It sounds too sectarian” (p187).

⁵¹ Cusack and McDonald, op cit, p151.

⁵² ibid, p186.

⁵³ Martin Walker’s study of the National Front (*The National Front*, 1977, Fontana/Collins, pp 158-160) references Andy Tyrie’s recommendation within an internal UDA memorandum of September 1974 that all links with a movement he considered neo-Nazi in nature to be broken. The latter part of this study also considers National Front electoral considerations following the defection of the populist wing in 1975 – in order for the movement to expand beyond their working class base- that are not dissimilar to problems that would face the future UVF political wing the Progressive Unionist Party in terms of long term political consolidation in the late 1990s and beyond.

⁵⁴ *Combat*, V1(30).

⁵⁵ An interesting insight into the fundamental grayness of loyalist paramilitary history - and the complex variables affecting corroboratory information to be gleaned from user-generated content in the digital age - can be found on a blog discussion about Martin Dillon’s Shankill Butchers study at www.observationdeck.org/weblogs/the-shankill-butchers/ which has received over 900 comments at the time of writing. The public feedback includes extraordinarily detailed information on paramilitary structures and paramilitary activity. It could arguably be construed that the level of knowledge suggested - if hypothetically genuine - would fall within the remit of active paramilitaries themselves, ex-paramilitaries, very well-informed local citizens or serving or retired members of the security forces. Aside from ongoing question marks regarding the verifiability and worth of such source material, an intriguing aspect of this extremely active example of social media debate and discussion is the inability of any correspondent to identify the UVF Chief of Staff who took control in the period following the Volunteer Political Party’s electoral failure.

⁵⁶ Cusack and McDonald, op cit, pp 152-153. Also noted in Moloney, 2010, p 376.

⁵⁷ Nelson, op cit, p175.

⁵⁸ ibid, p190.

⁵⁹ Garland, op cit, p153. The stirring “Armed Vanguard of the Loyalist People” title was used in *Combat* V2(5-6) during mid-1975.

⁶⁰ *Combat* V1 (31).

⁶¹ McKittrick and McVea’s *Making Sense of the Troubles* (2000, p 112) notes that six of the unionists elected to the Constitutional Convention had paramilitary connections to “Doomsday” or “respectable” extra-legal loyalist bodies.

⁶² Novosel, op cit, pp 113-118. The later January 1975 RHC document “A Ten Point Plan For Peace With Honour And Justice” is also considered in this work with regard to its relevance to the Good Friday Agreement pp 164-169. This particular paper reflects the sheer complexity of political conflict in Ulster alike the extraordinary notion of Orange Marxists as physically manifest in the British and Irish Communist Organisation. The RHC document predicts a future federal rearrangement of the full British Isles which will place the people of Ulster in the position of persuaders for the Irish Republic to associate with it.

⁶³ *Combat* VI (33). Also referenced in Sinnerton, 2002, p32.

⁶⁴ *Transcript of interview between Ken Gibson and Derek Murray and David Dunseith, UTV, 17/3/75* – Linenhall Library, Belfast.

⁶⁵ In April IRA revenge attacks followed UVF bombings at McLaughlins pub on the New Lodge Road on Grand National Day which killed two men and at the Strand Bar in the Short Strand which left two men and four women dead (Gillespie, 2008, pp105-108).

⁶⁶ One of the three Miami Showband members murdered in the incident – Brian McCoy – was a Northern Irish Protestant from County Tyrone. The “Ulster Central Intelligence Agency” had claimed that the detonated bomb was in transit within the group’s van and that gunfire originated from its occupants (Gillespie, 2008, pp 108-112). In revenge for the murders PIRA would attack the Bayardo Bar on the Shankill Road the following month. The pub had a large UVF clientele and the dead numbered four Protestant civilians and UVF member Hugh Harris. In 2003 the Ulster Museum exhibition in Belfast *Conflict: The Irish At War* included a variety of bitterly sad memorabilia from the modern Troubles. This included a battered RUC riot helmet from 1969, used teargas canisters and the Emerald Records vinyl LP of Fran O’Toole and the Miami Showband. A Maurice Linnane directed retrospective of the Irish folk-rock group Horslips released in 2005 - *The Return of the Dancehall Sweethearts* - includes commentary from bassist Barry Devlin regarding a concert the band played in 1975 at the Castle Ballroom in Banbridge. Following audience disturbances at the show the band cancelled the remainder of the performance and were given a police escort some way from Banbridge on the road to Newry. After the police left and while nearing Loughbrickland the band’s Range Rover was tailgated for some way by a car which proceeded to ram them before placing a light on the roof to replicate the emergency services. The high speed chase was terminated with the arrival of British Army vehicles from the opposite direction. Several months later the Miami Showband were to travel the same road - and from the same venue - to a waiting UVF-manned military roadblock. Devlin expressed his feelings that their pursuers that night may well have been of the same complement as the Miami killers.

⁶⁷ Dillon, 1989, p39.

⁶⁸ Bruce, 1992a, p127.

⁶⁹ *Ulster Loyalist*, 22nd March 1975.

⁷⁰ On April 11th 22-year-old Volunteer Robert Wadsworth was shot dead by the British Army while driving from the scene of a UVF assault on the Jubilee Bar in the Markets area in which the attackers’ bomb and submachine-gun malfunctioned.

⁷¹ Gillespie, 2008, pp 112-115.

⁷² The fatalities caused by the Coleraine bomb included Volunteer Mark Dodd whose involvement in loyalist paramilitarism followed the murder of his RUC father Ronald Dodd by Republicans in 1970.

⁷³ The sequencing of direct revenge would continue into early 1976 and climax with the Kingsmills murders of ten Protestant workmen following the assassination of six Catholics at Gillford and Whitecross by the Mid-Ulster UVF. See Cadwallader 2013, pp 164-167 for extraordinary loyalist paramilitary considerations regarding retaliation for the mass murders. Only by late 1976 would the UVF Brigade Staff and prison leadership theoretically speak as one on the need to tackle genuine republican targets. For reflections by the family of Kingsmills’ victim John McConville on the 30th anniversary of the murders see *Belfast Telegraph*, 6th July 2006 while for analysis of the Gilford and Whitecross attacks see Chris Thornton article in *Belfast Telegraph*, 4th January 2006.

⁷⁴ Harrowing recollections of the Shankill Butcher killings from the relatives of Stephen McCann and Joseph Morrissey were recounted in a BBC Northern Ireland documentary in March 2011 presented by Stephen Nolan (“Shankill Butchers held Belfast in grip of terror”, BBC News Online, 28th March 2011). Charlotte Morrissey recalled “After I had been told it was my father, I looked over to my mother and she was holding herself rocking back and forward in the chair. She was crying, ‘Jesus, not my Joe, not my Joe’. Her Joe was gone and I kind of knew by looking at her that it would probably have been kinder if God had taken her then...this wonderful vibrant woman had gone, all gone”. In the same programme Baroness May Blood suggested that up to 40% of the Shankill community at the time knew the identities of the perpetrators.

⁷⁵ Ed Moloney's 2010 *Voices From The Grave* includes a reference from former Provisional IRA leader Brendan Hughes that Shankill Butchers leader Robert "Basher" Bates pro-actively stood in the way of a loyalist assassination attempt being planned against him in the H-Blocks (p260). The David Ervine section of this work notes his personal feelings on the Dublin Monaghan bombings and on the Shankill Butcher killings (pp 347-349 and pp 382-384).

⁷⁶ Dillon, 1989, p29.

⁷⁷ The epitome of war-time analogies within the loyalist prisoner experience is arguably Spence's conversation at the wire with a republican prisoner during one bleak night in Long Kesh (Novosel, op cit, p67). Although undeniably worthy in content, Spence's famous Twelfth of July 1977 speech would certainly fall within a similar remit (Novosel, op cit, pp 169-176).

⁷⁸ Nelson, op cit, p191.

⁷⁹ *Combat*, June 1994 for article on Gibson's death. With regard to future leading PUP figures, on October 21st 1974 Billy Hutchinson and another UVF volunteer took part in an operation which lead to the murder of two Catholic half-brothers Michael Loughran and Edward Morgan at the Falls Road-Northumberland Street junction while on their way to work. In November 1974 David Ervine, who had joined the UVF in 1972, was arrested in transit with a carbomb and forced to defuse his own device with a rope tied between his foot and the bomb disposal officer. In March 1975 Martin Snodden and Eddie Kinner survived the premature explosion of a device a UVF team left at Conway's Bar on Belfast's Shore Road which lead to the death of UVF volunteer George Brown and a civilian customer Marie Doyle whose daughter was an IRA prisoner in Armagh gaol.

⁸⁰ Crawford, 1999.

⁸¹ *Combat*, V2 (4) and June 1975.

⁸² Cusack and McDonald, op cit, p 185.

⁸³ While referencing loyalist facebook pages for this research, the author noted a tribute to Lenny Murphy on a mainland group's site. The upload received the following reply from a Northern Ireland-based member of the public: "Speaking as an Ulster Loyalist, you mainland folks have no idea. Murphy was a sicko, pure and simple, that's why his own people had him fingered. Do your homework before you post shite. NS."

⁸⁴ Feldman, 1991, pp59-65.

⁸⁵ The Shankill Butchers story would return to the headlines at the turn of the century over the commemoration of the murdered Robert "Basher" Bates – amongst other fallen UVF volunteers - on a banner of the Old Boyne Island Heroes Orange Lodge of which he had been a member (*Republican News*, 4th March 1999). The lodge's membership included fellow Shankill Butcher Eddie McIlwaine. (*Republican News* 17th July 2003). McIlwaine would also parade in the UVF 100th anniversary parade to Craigavon House in 2013 (*Belfast Telegraph*, 22nd April 2013). One public commentator on the online edition of the story noted "A vicious sadistic sectarian killer. A man who selected his innocent victims for no other reason than they were Catholics. Then he took pleasure in marathon torture sessions, he and the Shankill Butchers took pleasure in keeping their victims alive for as long as possible. Now he marches down the road as a war hero cheered on by bystanders". See www.belfasttelegraph.co.uk/sunday-life/uvf-parade-shankill-butcher-and-terror-chiefs-join-anniversary-march-29212400.html#idc-cover. Murder gang leader William Moore died in May 2009 shortly before questioning by the Historical Enquiries Team about the 1974 murder of Catholic civilian John Crawford in Belfast (*Belfast Telegraph*, 18th May 2009). Lenny Murphy and Robert Bates are referenced by name in the loyalist paramilitary song *Battalion of the Dead* which emplaces Carson's volunteers and the modern UVF together in arms in either a dream or nightmare landscape.

⁸⁶ "Ministers encouraged IRA-UDA talks", BBC News Online, 1st January 2005.

VI: THE NEW ULSTER POLITICAL RESEARCH GROUP 1978-81

Three years to the month after the Ulster Workers Council strike a third major loyalist paramilitary stoppage took place across Northern Ireland with a diametrically different outcome. Within the context of unqualified defeat on this occasion the Ulster Defence Association would subsequently produce a blueprint on negotiated independence under the aegis of an internal think-tank - the New Ulster Political Research Group. This chapter considers the political background behind the formation of the NUPRG including the United Unionist Action Council (UUAC) strike, reflection upon its brief electoral engagement with local politics in Belfast and analysis of the strengths and weaknesses of the *Beyond The Religious Divide*¹ discussion document itself.

While certainly not dismissing the NUPRG as a mere curio or footnote within unionist history, this consideration of the think-tank's political rationale will clearly reflect the acute contrast between loyalist and republican paramilitary groups in terms of structuring attainable goals. For if radical loyalism is a qualified contradiction in itself, because of the fact that the Union remains inviolable, then the NUPRG was indeed the most radical of all the loyalist political fronts. They would argue that the time had come for the most sacred link of all to be broken for the sake of a final solution acceptable to all parties and that "The People" would willingly oblige them to that end.

The UDA initiative attracted much positive attention within media and academic circles and with Glenn Barr in particular receiving widespread individual praise. However the attraction of the broader independence policy was still highly limited in light of its political source and in circumstances of ongoing republican violence and concomitant loyalist militancy. Aside from its electoral forays, and in a further mirroring of the VPP experience, the dissolution of the advisory body into the Ulster Loyalist Democratic Party would preface an increase in UDA paramilitary violence similar to the surge in UVF activity after October 1974.

This period of UDA history and the main NUPRG document itself have been analysed by several academic writers (Aughey and McIlheney 1981; O'Malley 1983; Bruce 1992a; McAuley 1993 and 1997a; Wood 2006). I will underline here in turn how the framework within which any movement towards a goal of Ulster independence could be animated was fundamentally fractured not only by the perennial animosity towards loyalist paramilitaries from mainstream political unionism and its support base alone. For clearly the NUPRG proposals - alike political reflections within the Ulster Vanguard movement upon dominion status in February 1973² - tended to continually avoid any qualification on the fact that the Catholics who constituted such a significant percentage of the province's population had never considered themselves as anything but Irish in respect of identity.

Some latterday political loyalist paramilitary thinking in the 1990s and thereafter certainly claimed that *Beyond the Religious Divide*, and two other papers to be considered in turn from UDA and UVF sources, would prefigure the final political settlement in Northern Ireland. There are indeed political technicalities therein that would corroborate such assumptions. However I will once again argue in this chapter that even after only nine years of the Troubles - and at a relative ebb of political violence - the communal faith of Protestant society in supporting the legally constituted state security forces could not realistically interface with political initiatives emerging from organisations tarnished with random sectarian murder and criminality. The combination of the UDA's good intentions and external civic goodwill could not overcome mainstream unionist agnosticism at very best towards constitutional initiatives grounded on this occasion at least upon essentially unfeasible political developments.

GLENN BARR AND THE GENESIS OF ULSTER INDEPENDENCE

In March 1975 a cross-community conference was held at the Hotel Fromer near Schipol Airport Amsterdam - funded in large part by the Dutch government and organised by the European Council of Churches. Fifteen members of the UDA attended under the mantle of the UCAG. The party included Hugh McVeigh who would shortly be murdered in an internal loyalist feud with the UVF.³ The conference looked at Dutch social and political models and discussed the future direction of UDA welfare activities. Also in attendance were academics and economic advisors.⁴

An *Irish Times* report noted that by the end of the three-day meeting the UDA had moved from an admission that they were politically directionless to a decision that independence was the definitive political path to be taken. Whereas figures such as Barr had been positively enthusiastic about such a direction for some time, there was no broader consensus within the organisation that such an option was a practical alternative and indeed little was heard of the same for several months thereafter.⁵

Between 28th August and 3rd September 1975 senior UDA representatives including Glenn Barr and Andy Tyrie attended the Amherst political conference at the University of Massachusetts to put forward the case for negotiated independence. This was arranged by the Irish-American Committee for an Irish Forum and participants included Northern Irish political groups, journalists, academics, clergymen and trade unionists.⁶ At Amhurst Barr would reprise the defining 1973 Ulster Freedom Fighters statement in aspiring to the creation of a proud new Ulster identity - but this time for all the people to share:

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.⁷

Another *Irish Times* report of the conference noted that the UDA policy document on negotiated independence had been created by independent observers at the preceding Dutch conference and was a genuine attempt to remove sectarianism from Northern Ireland politics.⁸ Two months later however the policy document was relegated to the position of a discussion document when UDA leaders again met in Belfast to consider the results of the Dutch conference. As Brendan Clifford of the British and Irish Communist Organisation was to acerbically note at the time in its *Against Ulster Nationalism* booklet:

And it is there, on the supposed eve of a serious discussion, that the UDA's independence movement reached the end of its brief and exotic existence. The UDA on the ground in Ulster never took the Dutch-American carry-on too seriously. In the leadership Glenn Barr took it too seriously, and rapidly lost influence in Ulster, though he became Radio Eireann's favourite Loyalist.⁹

Thinking on Ulster independence can be traced back to South Tyrone unionist MP William Frederick McCoy who in the late 1940s called for dominion status for Ulster having presciently noted the faultlines of the 1920 settlement for the long term security of the northern state. His suggestions would even meet the approval of De Valera as a possible pathway towards political resolution while, in the same post-war period, other unionist cabinet ministers would consider such a constitutional change as a bulwark against "creeping socialism" from the mainland.¹⁰

Various flirtations with a fullblown unilateral declaration of independence for loyalist Ulster – as compared to the UDA proposals under discussion here for a carefully negotiated and internationally recognised agreement between Protestants and Catholics to that end¹¹ - can obviously be located throughout the earlier history of Ulster Vanguard. Its May 1972 policy statement *Ulster – A Nation* caused some support for the movement to be shed its wake¹² - the main exponent of this political option being Canadian-born Assembly and Convention member Professor Kennedy Lindsay.¹³

Barr's leaning towards independence could even be traced back to the 1973 Assembly debates when he had stated:

I have no intention of remaining a British citizen at any price... Ulstermen have got more pride than to accept a White Paper that has been thrown across the Irish Sea at them... an Ulsterman's first allegiance must be the state of Ulster.¹⁴

Support for independence grew in the late 1970s in both hard-line unionist circles and even amongst several SDLP members such as Paddy Devlin who had, as noted in the previous chapter, given qualified encouragement to the Volunteer Political Party. Of the small number of groups proposing independence at this time though it was only Lindsay's British Ulster Dominion Party who would contest elections.¹⁵

During the Constitutional Convention debates, which begun on the 18th of May 1975, William Craig's proposal for a voluntary coalition was supported by Londonderry Convention member and Vanguard vice-chairman Glenn Barr despite Craig's earlier acquiescence with the UUUC in passing over Barr as a potential Westminster candidate.¹⁶ Another supporter of the initiative was Vanguard's South Belfast Convention member and future Ulster Unionist Party (UUP) leader David Trimble.¹⁷

Barr's support for Craig was not replicated in the long run within UDA circles despite initial interest. Likewise the DUP and the Official Unionist Party (OUP) expressed scant regard with Paisley's "sellout" accusations allowing him to circumvent the Vanguard movement to claim suzerainty of right-wing unionism. Sarah Nelson's article on Andy Tyrie for a March 1976 edition of *Fortnight* magazine underscored how:

Tyrie's 'strong man' image disguises the fact that he has only been able to survive as leader by permitting a degree of internal democracy which some before him did not. But the price of this can be enforced retraction of positions, as over the voluntary coalition issue.¹⁸

Tyrie's reticence to adopt an openly political position for the organisation was based on the galling VPP experience and at this stage he could not foresee the day when a bricklayer would run Ulster – independent or otherwise. Hence the political game was deferentially delineated within the remit of strictly professional political actors.¹⁹

Barr announced on 28th February 1976 that he would be resigning from the UDA. With the constitutional experiment's collapse Tyrie blamed Harry West and Ian Paisley for the failure of the Convention's final report to fulfil cross-party acceptance and indeed for any future fatal consequences off the back of the political fallout. Paisley's consequent criticism of Tyrie's "brazen effrontery and confounded cheek"²⁰ was symptomatic of rolling friction in the mid-1970s between paramilitary and political wings of loyalism which would even include plans to assassinate the DUP leader himself.²¹

Travel writer Dervla Murphy included a seven-hour trip to UDA headquarters on the Newtownards Road during the middle of this year and subsequently presented some wistful memories in her renowned *A Place Apart* travelogue through wartorn Ulster:

On the way up I passed a young man on the landing engaged in carefully removing the Crown symbol from the huge Ulster flag on the wall. He smiled and nodded at me but said nothing. His task, however, said a lot.²²

Her interviewees articulated a pessimistic faith that sectarian polarisation in Ulster would remain cemented for the rest of the century while placing hope in a future independent state based on a Dutch-style sectarian division of social utilities. Furthermore Murphy noted:

In Orange districts a few brave UDA members told me, behind closed doors, that they hoped the organisation would eventually become a genuinely socialist and non-sectarian party. Then bigotry could be overcome not by wishy-washy Christians singing hymns together but by working-class unity which would automatically lead to power-sharing.²³

Merlyn Rees' departure in September 1976 and his replacement by Roy Mason as Secretary of State led to the prioritisation of economic and security initiatives over those pertaining to any political settlement. On 11th November the Ulster Loyalist Central Co-ordinating Committee - which the UDA had left in May - separately put forward a plan for Northern Irish independence called *Ulster Can Survive Unfettered*.

THE MAY 1977 UNITED UNIONIST ACTION COUNCIL STRIKE

UDA violence had remained at a high level throughout 1975 and 1976 though somewhat less than that of a reinvigorated UVF with its deadly explosives capability. Even the most notable UFF-claimed operation of this period - the 28th October 1976 assassination of ex-Sinn Féin Vice President Maire Drumm inside North Belfast's Mater Hospital - was actually the sole work of the UVF.²⁴ Drumm's death terminated the tentative contacts between loyalist paramilitaries and republicans concerning the perennial possibility of an autonomous Ulster jigsawing into a federated Ireland.²⁵

In 1977 came the UDA's doomed rapprochement with the very right-wing unionists who had turned their back so defiantly against loyalist paramilitary groups after the 1974 strike. The United Unionist Action Council was a subcommittee of the UUUC steering committee and included both Ian Paisley and Ernest Baird who led the Vanguard-splinter United Ulster Unionist Movement. Sarah Nelson's *Ulster's Uncertain Defenders* alludes to DUP grassroots pressures driving party involvement in the strike²⁶ though, unlike three years earlier, the UDA leadership were only willing to co-operate with these unionist political forces for the price of putting Paisley and Baird "in the frontline" itself.

In early spring of that year the UUAC had organised vigilante patrols of an Ulster Service Corps (USC). This was composed in part by ex-members of the Ulster Special Constabulary. This 500-strong body was active in South Londonderry, Armagh and Tyrone and allegedly operated in formal collaboration with both the RUC and UDR.²⁷

The UUAC strike against direct rule and failing security policies was assisted by the UDA and UVF, elements of the rump UWC, the Orange Volunteers, DOW, the Apprentice Boys of Derry, the Royal Black Preceptory and the IOO. It was however not given support by the OUP or the Orange Order. Neither was it aided, following a ballot in Ballylumford power station, by the power workers.

This attempt to match the success of May 1974 – as against the background of one of the largest air and sea troop transports by the British Army since Suez²⁸ - was to be a humiliating fiasco for all parties concerned. This was due to immediate and focused security force responses, divisions within political unionism over the use of the strike weapon and the lack of a single clearcut political aim. This amidst unquantifiable and unobtainable demands for heavier security and devolution respectively.

The failure of the strike, with RUC Special Patrol Groups forcefully scattering Newtownards Road UDA protestors, led to the end of the UUUC and a major parting of the ways between the UDA and the DUP. However in the following May district council elections the DUP would make significant gains over the OUP with a doubling of its seats to 74 and the winning of its first council in Ballymena. Baird's party became the United Ulster Unionist Party and won 12 seats.

Glenn Barr had been asked through an intermediary to return to UDA ranks to help run the strike. He refused but was willing to help the UDA out of its political and paramilitary imbroglio. Barr would pinpoint the crucial difference between 1974 and 1977 as the UDA not having the advantageous cushion-effect of a devolved administration standing between the head-on conflict of Ulster loyalism and the British government:

You don't have any basis for a strike – there's nothing tangible to hold onto. So there was no way they could win this thing. They just couldn't. And as I said to him, not only is it a disaster that you're going to fail, but it'll also destroy '74. So it did.²⁹

The ten-day strike period saw loyalist paramilitary murders of two Protestant civilians and an off-duty UDR member whose father was on the UUAC strike committee. Two UDA members were also killed in especially gruesome circumstances by their own bomb in Newtownabbey.³⁰

Despite the violence and intimidation associated with the strike, the following period saw a radical decline in loyalist violence due to the pro-active security policies of the time. The RUC resumed security primacy with its revitalised Special Branch and Criminal Intelligence Division. This would be focused against both loyalist groups and the IRA alike. Criminalisation thus proceeded apace with its Ulsterisation and normalisation counterparts.³¹ One loyalist paramilitary source for Bruce's *The Red Hand* would underscore the level of subsequent effectiveness at that time as follows:

There was no need for us then. We weren't doing any fucking good; just getting in the way. I said we should grease our guns and put them under the floorboards and send a big cheque to the RUC benevolent fund and let them get on with it.³²

THE NEW ULSTER POLITICAL RESEARCH GROUP

The UDA formed the New Ulster Political Research Group in January 1978 following discussions between Glenn Barr and Supreme Commander Andy Tyrie. Its terms of reference were to develop a constitutional and political framework for presentation to the people of Northern Ireland.³³ The main figures associated with the body were Chairman Barr, Harry Chicken, Tommy Lyttle and Bill Snoddy. John McMichael was Secretary and Tyrie was a committee member. Chicken had been offered leadership of the aforementioned UCAG by Tyrie. Funded by the Northern Ireland Office, this group was in turn linked to other local nationalist bodies through the Northern Ireland Association of Community Groups.

As work continued on the formulation the UDA would state in July 1978 that they would “no longer be the willing tool of any aspiring or ready made politician”.³⁴ The following month *Ulster* magazine stratified the raft of constitutional options afoot, from integration to direct rule, as follows:

We have given the various options serious consideration but rejected them for the reasons stated. We feel however that Direct Rule involves a dangerous drift, and that something will have to be done to put us, after ten years of uncertainty, on the road to a new era of stability and peace. It will have to be something that will persuade all or nearly all, the factions that is worth working for. We believe the answer lies in a special type of negotiated independence.³⁵

The UDA's interest in the writings of Ulster historian Dr Ian Adamson at this point no doubt underpinned their newfound political confidence and faith in cultural cohesion. Adamson's 1974 study *The Cruthin*³⁶ expostulated upon a pre-Gaelic Pictish population in the north of Ireland which radically contextualised the following 17th Century plantation. He saw Cruthin stock as having contributed significantly to an Irish Golden Age epitomised by Bangor Abbey and the missionary work of Columbanus. The panoply of Cruthin heroes would range from Cuchulain of the Ulaid right through to Commander-in-Chief of the United Army of Ulster Henry Joy McCracken. The concomitant call from the pages of *Ulster* magazine was impassioned and emotionally unrestrained:

...you are the children of the Cruthin, the sons and daughters of the Picts. This is OUR land, YOUR culture, YOUR heritage - You are indeed the people. You are older than the Gaels, older than the Welsh, older even than the English. You have a right to belong here, no less than the trees. You have a right to be HEARD here. You have a right to be FREE.³⁷

In December 1978 a NUPRG delegation discussed their proposals with Taoiseach Charles Haughey in Dublin while in February 1979 a deputation including both Barr and Tyrie visited the United States for talks with leading American politicians to promote the policy of independence. Meetings also took place in England and Holland.³⁸ Another group at this time who had talks with American politicians on independence alternatives was the Ulster

Independence Association. Its chairman was businessman George Allport and one of its deputy leaders was John McKeague.³⁹

On the 29th of March 1979 the UDA's formal plan for an independent Ulster was unveiled at a press conference at Corrymeela.⁴⁰ Cusack and McDonald's study of the UDA claim that it was constructed with the help of a Californian lawyer and local academics including then Queens University law lecturer David Trimble.⁴¹ The NUPRG viewed negotiated independence within the European Community as the only solution acceptable to both parties to the conflict and with no major political actor being seen subsequently as losers. The standby solutions of institutionalised power-sharing or voluntary coalition being untenable in the particular circumstances of Ulster.⁴²

Political scientist Arthur Aughey described the UDA political developments as a fundamental move away from "exclusion" to "recognition" of the nationalist community in an environment where bitter political violence had created a new bond based on shared suffering.⁴³ Hence copperfastening the oft-quoted Northern Irish social wisdom of "there's more unites them than divides them".

The NUPRG proposals envisaged a governance based on a fundamental system of checks and balances and a separation of powers between the executive, legislature and judiciary – and between church and state. A Prime Minister and his Deputy would have contested the election as a team before choosing an Executive which in turn would require the approval of the legislature. The Assembly itself would sit for four years, the Prime Minister could only hold the office on two occasions and both the Prime Minister and Deputy Prime Minister could hold executive office. A committee system from within the legislature would scrutinise the decisions of the cabinet. An elected Speaker of the legislature would appoint chairmen of the legislative committees on the basis of PR. A weighted majority requirement of two-thirds for the Speaker in turn ensured that the system could only work with minority participation.

A third branch of governance would be a Supreme Court with constitutional powers to protect the written constitution and Bill of Rights and which could overrule any law passed by the legislature if it deemed it unconstitutional. The constitution itself could only be changed by a two-thirds majority in a referendum while the new Bill of Rights would cover human, social and political rights as well as the workings of emergency legislation.

A "friendly international government"⁴⁴ would supervise and oversee the transitional period leading to independence within the EC. Within this radical collection of proposals the NUPRG preference was for the United States to act as guarantor for the new arrangements by agreeing to provide a senior judge to serve as the head of the Supreme Court for the first eight or twelve years. Indeed the entire paper would appear to have the United States political system – as

directly influenced historically by Scots-Irish pioneer stock - as its core model. Finally, both Britain and the Republic of Ireland would withdraw all constitutional claims on the six-county area and Britain would furthermore provide financial assistance for a period of not less than 25 years.

The document would be a blueprint for a new Northern Ireland that was both financially viable and in good political standing with all its neighbours in the community of European nations. Twin themes of political rationale would in turn underpin the technical minutiae under presentation.

Firstly, constitutional disagreement between the two communities would always cancel out any faint hope of political unity in a society bedevilled by manipulating sectarian politicians who exploit such fundamental cleavages. *Beyond the Religious Divide* stressed that :

The NUPRG disagree with those who believe that the evolution of proper politics is the answer to our constitutional problem. The vast majority of the Northern Irish people will never seriously accept the concept of voting for someone of the opposite religion, even if they agree with them on most political or social and economic issues, as long as there is a question of constitutional allegiance. ⁴⁵

Secondly, the independence option alone would be:

...the only proposition which does not have a victor and a loser. It will encourage the development of a common identity between the two communities, regardless of religion. It offers first class Ulster citizenship to all of our people, because, like it or not, the Protestant of Northern Ireland is looked upon as a second class citizen in Britain and the Roman Catholic of Northern Ireland as a second class Irish citizen in Southern Ireland. ⁴⁶

THE NUPRG AND LOCAL ELECTORAL ENGAGEMENT

The distance travelled between McGrath's pseudo-religious call to arms in 1971 and *Beyond the Religious Divide* was indeed profound. Following the publication of the document the NUPRG pursued a year of weekly meetings to sell their proposals to all UDA companies along with the need for restraint in paramilitary activity. *Ulster* magazine would note the wide variety of contacts that the NUPRG forged at this period including meetings at both Houses of Parliament and with senior members of the Methodist Church, the Northern committee of the ITUC, the Peace People and the Law Society of Queens University Belfast. ⁴⁷

Though Barr and Chicken received enthusiastic support from commentators as disparate as Birkbeck College's Professor Bernard Crick and the SDLP's Paddy Devlin again,⁴⁸ their proposals failed to engender positive responses from any of the mainstream unionist parties. The taboo of close association with loyalist paramilitary groups had solidified since 1974.

Indeed subsequently many writers have stressed how that highpoint of loyalist paramilitary influence could only have occurred under the covering label of the UWC as opposed to the UDA itself.

Seamus Lynch of the Workers Party, who also would hold military rank in the Official IRA, would engage both politically and socially with McMichael in later years. ⁴⁹ He provided the following positive critique of the UDA think-tank at the time:

From my point of view as a Socialist Republican, we must go back to the father of Republicanism, Wolfe Tone, who said we must break the connection with England, and here we have for the first time the NUPRG talking about breaking the connection with England...Elements within the UDA have learned that people who have been in politics have gained their power politically on the backs of young people in the Loyalist community who were engaged in paramilitarism...⁵⁰

Within the UDA however, including figures at senior level, there was dissension at the direction of funding into this political experiment at the expense of militant physical force alternatives. In particular South Belfast Brigadier John McMichael, who was involved with the UCAG and NUPRG as well as the military activities of the UFF, voiced open suspicion of the new direction embarked upon. He was particularly critical of the NUPRG's connection to the non-sectarian Northern Ireland Negotiated Independence Association to the extent that he wished it renamed with an Ulster-prefix. ⁵¹

During 1980 the UFF had taken part in several high-profile assassinations of figures involved with the National H-Blocks Committee. These murders included John Turnly of the Irish Independence Party and Miriam Daly and Ronnie Bunting of the Irish National Liberation Army (INLA).⁵² Early in 1981 a failed attempt was also made on the life of Irish Republican Socialist Party (IRSP) founder member Bernadette Devlin-McAliskey which lead to the imprisonment of future Ulster Democratic Party spokesperson Ray Smallwoods.

On an electoral level, in January 1981 Sammy Miller representing the NUPRG had won Area G of North West Belfast in the local government elections. In the full May 1981 council elections the NUPRG stood three candidates in Belfast. ⁵³ During this period of increased pressure surrounding the IRA hunger strikes in the Maze Prison⁵⁴ the UDA decided to concentrate their low-key political experimentation upon "bread and butter issues". This as opposed to the constitutional tampering of their independence agenda – let alone their support for political status for paramilitary prisoners. ⁵⁵

In East Belfast Louis Scott – who uniquely within UDA ranks was of mixed-race parentage⁵⁶ - would win only 434 first preference votes while Sammy Doyle of the WDA in West Belfast received 1,135 votes but was defeated by Hugh Smyth on the second-preference count. ⁵⁷ Only Miller, who was by now confined to a wheelchair following a March assassination attempt by

the INLA in revenge for McMichael's targeting of H-Block activists, was successful yet again with 1,420 first preference votes or 25 per cent of the unionist vote.⁵⁸

In the same period the UDA had staged several shows of strength on the Shankill Road and in the Fountain area of Derry's West Bank as the tension from the Maze prison hunger strike mounted. Earlier in the year Tyrrie himself had talked of sending UDA units over the border to "terrorise the terrorists"⁵⁹ though even the Supreme Commander himself would state after Francis Hughes' death that Thatcher should meet the prisoners' demands considering the special criminal legislation that placed them there in the first place.⁶⁰

As the space for discussion of independence narrowed fast within the UDA – and with especial discord towards the Catholic population focusing on the election of Bobby Sands as MP⁶¹ - Barr and Chicken would leave politics and with John McMichael succeeding as the organisation's main political spokesman. In June 1981 the NUPRG think-tank was superseded by the Ulster Loyalist Democratic Party.

Such an announcement took place as the shadow of proscription again fell over the UDA due to an arms find in the Belfast headquarters. Further negative publicity also attached itself to the organisation due to ongoing reports of linkages to the National Front.⁶² A semantic change of emphasis was thus noted as the hunger strike deaths embittered Northern Irish society to unheard of degrees and fatefully highlighted new electoral opportunities for Sinn Féin.

The independence flame was reinvigorated following the Anglo-Irish Agreement through the Ulster National Front who published an *Alternative Ulster* booklet on their ideas.⁶³ Two offshoots of the Ulster Clubs – the Movement for Self Determination and the Ulster Independence Committee – also supported the idea.⁶⁴ Reverend Hugh Ross' Ulster Independence Committee was formed in 1988 and aimed to end sectarianism through unity around a common Ulster identity. Along with the usual faith in a written constitution and Bill of Rights it also boldly went ahead with the creation of a striking Independent Ulster flag which can be seen on display to this day in loyalist areas of Northern Ireland.⁶⁵ Ross kept his deposit after polling 7,858 votes in the 1994 European election but the organisation was tarnished by Sean McPhilemy's *The Committee* documentary and disbanded in 2001.⁶⁶

Tyrie's moderating influence on the UDA, no matter how qualified with his close association with criminal elements, is historically unquestionable. Tim Pat Coogan's history of the modern Troubles references the UDA Supreme Commander's willingness to hold back loyalist assassinations if Provisional IRA leader Daithi O'Connell would respectively halt the republican carbombing campaign.⁶⁷ In 1977 he would even interview future Ulster Unionist Party MP David Burnside for a public relations post in order to turn around the UDA's flawed image.⁶⁸

Furthermore, declassified Irish state papers released in January 2011 include a personal note from Tyrrie to the Irish Taoiseach – dated December 1980 – in which Charles Haughey was praised for saving countless lives in Ulster due to his efforts to prevent IRA arms smuggling. This albeit in reference to both republican terrorist activity in the north and loyalist revenge attacks in the Irish Republic.⁶⁹ Tyrrie's growing faith in the possibility of valid political thinking emanating from within militant circles is also a crucial aspect of the Troubles narrative along with other comments on the fundamental breach within the unionist body politic: "We discovered when our members went to jail that there were no politicians in jail. And there were very few politicians in the cemeteries." ⁷⁰

Former Coolkeeragh power-station shop steward Glenn Barr – who would use the word "Brit" as if it was an expletive according to Professor Crick⁷¹ - replicated Hugh Smyth in undertaking an extraordinary political journey. Barr was UDA North West Brigadier ⁷² at a time of paramilitary activity by this brigade in both parts of Ireland – including the 21st December 1972 murders of five men at the Top of the Hill pub in the Waterside (four Catholics and one Protestant civilian). He became the political spokesman for the organisation and was then a Vanguard political representative in the 1973-74 Assembly.

In January of 1975 Barr took part in an ULCC convention at The Oval football ground in Belfast. The "War Effort Sub-Committee", which he chaired, recommended a full-scale war effort to commence on the collapse of the proposed Convention with "immediate retaliation" and the targeting of all republicans. The "War Effort" would necessitate the "tangible commitment" of the UUUC, UWC and all loyalist politicians and workers. ⁷³ Barr would also support the repatriation of loyalist prisoners to Northern Irish jails during one Convention speech where he again represented Vanguard. ⁷⁴

During the later part of the decade he would remain committed to the Ulster independence movement ⁷⁵ and later worked at a Derry training centre for unemployed youth and at the Community Relations Council. With the despairing upsurge of loyalist youth recruitment into the UFF ranks in 1993 he would even reconsider rejoining politics at one point. He became chairman of the Ulster Community Action Network and investigated claims of ethnic cleansing of Protestants. He would also briefly and controversially be a member of the Parades Commission in the new century. ⁷⁶ In 2005 he further mirrored Smyth's career when awarded an OBE for his work with the unemployed.

BEYOND THE RELIGIOUS DIVIDE – ANALYTICAL STRENGTHS AND WEAKNESSES

All analysis of this first serious political document originating from the Ulster Defence Association would naturally be overshadowed by the nature of its paramilitary source - in both positive and negative respects. Hence writer J Bowyer Bell's typically scathing commentary on loyalist political experimentation concluded dismissively:

Military operations in an alignment with the British army were what the volunteer has always wanted, not a chair at a roundtable discussion... ⁷⁷

The core nature of the independence concept, where the IRA and INLA were almost afterthoughts, would also be qualified by Richard Davis in his *Mirror Hate* study when he underscored that :

The Catholic community was generally unwilling to become Ulster Picts with the UDA and preferred to see themselves as Gaels in a United Ireland. Indeed once the amalgamation of cultures was admitted in Ulster, why not accept Irish identity. ⁷⁸

Conversely the independence option could indeed be presented positively as a radical diversion away from the zero-sum game of Ulster politics with both sides sacrificing their national allegiances and hence bringing the central political choices back to the Ulster people themselves. And this at a time when the Protestants were still demographically "ahead". With both paramilitary bodies no longer having a valid *raison d'être* - with the removal of Great Britain and the Republic of Ireland's constitutional promises - an *entrée* would thus be forged for paramilitaries to be included in the decision-making process.

This would in turn dovetail with the economic qualifications limiting nationalist aspirations north and south for immediate unity. Likewise it would provide a mutually beneficial "out" for the fractured constitutional relationship between a lukewarm British government and an Ulster unionist community under siege politically by unassailable Irish nationalism. The removal of the revanchist Irish articles would thus provide a dynamic for a revised unionist outlook on political relations with their Catholic fellow citizens in Ulster.

The most specific problem affecting and indeed arguably nullifying the independence option is of course the overarching reality of continuing republican violence. However other factors are important too. Hence all EC countries would have to agree to the creation and incorporation of a new member state. The security implications attendant to the secession of implacably republican areas on the border would also have to be considered. And of course there actually was no wider public support for the independence option outside the NUPRG at the time – even within the Protestant community. Therefore the likelihood of such an alternative intersecting

with Irish nationalist aspirations would be highly implausible at best following the half-century of Stormont “misrule” and the violence associated with loyalist paramilitarism since 1972.

Padraig O'Malley's definitive study of early 1980s Irish politics - *The Uncivil Wars* - would tackle several key elements undermining both the NUPRG and the later ULDP alternatives and are worth detailed quotation. Thus in terms of shared history he notes how the implicit cultural sacrifice following independence weighs heavier on the unionist community :

The Protestants of Ulster may be in search of an identity, but Catholics are not; Protestants may have only a disparate – even confused – sense of who they are, but Catholics have a very unambiguous sense... ⁷⁹

O'Malley also reflects upon how the broad termination of republican violence in the circumstances of independence would be unlikely to assuage unionist distrust. Many Protestants would envision such an agreement as a tactical manoeuvre on the republican movement's part only for the duration of British withdrawal itself. Finally although the two-thirds consent stipulation that would allow unity is perhaps the core key attraction for northern Catholics it would also engender even more uncertainty in a logical fashion:

Northern Ireland's instability comes in part from the fact that she is perceived as being impermanent. Ending the uncertainty that impermanence gives rise to is an argument for independence. But for independence to work it would have to be seen as a final solution, not an interim one. ⁸⁰

And all this without touching upon the fact that the institutional formalisation of independence would entail such a degree of radical communal reconciliation as a pre-requisite that the success or failure of the experiment would essentially be decided before it began! Hence one unnamed politician quoted in *Ulster* magazine gave his feedback to the NUPRG proposals as simply: “If the situation was ready for Ulster independence, independence would not be necessary”. ⁸¹

In turn however the UDA would respond with a rationale which underlies so much of the progressive thinking under discussion in terms of broadening the parameters of political discourse in Northern Ireland – this in order to aid loyalist paramilitary innovation and the qualification of adversarial tribal politics alike:

It is not a question of creating new politicians, but much more of widening the view of the political reality so that those politicians who wish to stay in business will have to take account of the groundswell of opinion that is coming, make no mistake about that. ⁸²

The essential radicalism of the project however was that for the first time a group originating from within militant loyalism had proposed a severance of the Union itself to defend the long term political security of the Ulster Protestant homeland. At the same time it offered accommodating gestures, no matter how hopelessly optimistic, to the northern minority.

Arthur Aughey would thus conclude on the experiment:

In fact, the UDA had taken the understanding of “self-determination” to lengths which no average Protestant could willingly follow. For the organisation was advocating, as a first negotiating step, the breaking of the Union. The “logic” of the independence proposals could not mask that fundamental irrationality.⁸³

Finally, and on a broader national level, the Marxist political writer Tom Nairn’s *The Break-up of Britain* in 1977 had also predicted how the disintegration of the United Kingdom could entail the creation of an independent Northern Ireland state. The UWC strike clearly demonstrating the Ulster Protestant worker’s assertion of a new national identity divorced in theory from bigoted Orangeism and bourgeois unionism.⁸⁴

The British and Irish Communist Organisation’s *Against Ulster Nationalism* booklet would conversely argue that the formation of a genuine Ulster nationalism in the mid-1970’s does not necessarily equate with the socio-cultural bonding consequent to the imminent threat of being expelled by the United Kingdom:

It was all very well for Narcissus to conduct a love affair with his own reflection. In personal affairs of the spirit such things are possible. But in politics – even in the topsy-turvy world of Westminster politics in Ulster – such things are only possible for the briefest of moments. Unless the reflection steps out of the mirror and gives signs of enthusiasm, unless the echo is transformed into a voice suffused with a passion of its own, the political affair must end. And so it was with Merlyn Rees and the faint, passionless echo of Ulster nationalism that he produced from the Protestant community.⁸⁵

Thirty years later political scientists McGarry and O’Leary would briefly exhume Nairn’s independence prediction before hasty re-internment:

If independence was ever realised, it would also be unlikely to result in the modernised society Nairn anticipates – where the Protestant Jekylls confront the Hydes. Entrapping two antagonistic communities within its frontiers, an independent Northern Ireland would experience ethno-national conflict over the organisation of political institutions and the allocation of scarce resources, and civil war – as occurred in Croatia, Bosnia and Serbia following the break-up of Yugoslavia.⁸⁶

CONCLUSIONS: ULSTER’S DREAMING?

The NUPRG’s *Beyond the Religious Divide* was grounded upon genuine themes of reconciliation, inclusiveness and parity for the people of Northern Ireland. Nevertheless with republican violence already on the increase from its 1977-78 lowpoint – as graphically demonstrated at Mullaghmore and Narrow Water – the independence option can so easily be portrayed in hindsight as a wildly Utopian and even more unfeasible political rebranding of Vanguard’s earlier constitutional musings. Likewise the brutal economic prospects for an

independent post-industrial Northern Ireland at the end of the 1970s would hold out significantly less promise than earlier pre-Troubles calls for an Ulster dominion at a time when its key industries were still financially buoyant.

As was so typical of the loyalist paramilitary experience, the earlier origins of the independence flirtation can also be seen as tying in with suspect political manipulation of the loyalist militants after the success of the UWC strike. Thinking towards separatist goals would quarantine the cancerous Ulster morass from the rest of British political life and also keep the Protestant militants away from political violence.

This seed of Ulster nationalism could thus be viewed as being cultivated for cynical and ultimately fateful ends following the definitive emotional and political break of May 1974. For as devolution with an Irish dimension was plainly now a non-starter - and integration an unspeakable alternative - by thus keeping the withdrawal option alive, and making it known as such to both Provisionals and wavering Ulster nationalists alike, it would in turn engender a change in the nature of violence. In 1975 and 1976 sectarian violence would indeed revive with the British seen as holding the moral high ground for the time being - albeit with less military casualties. And this ironically after the British Army and the Provisional IRA had instituted a monitored ceasefire at the lowest ebb of the latter's history.

In tandem with the political analysis of *Beyond the Religious Divide* as previously considered, there are obvious qualifications thrown up by the surprising source of the discussion document. This by way of the sectarianism and criminality the UDA was still symbiotically associated with at this point in its history by the broad Protestant public. Also in terms of the sheer complexity of the political solution being dissected by a working class paramilitary organisation. I would contend that the former qualification holds greater sway in that the history of loyalist paramilitary political thinking does indeed incorporate impressive intellectual input from ex-combatants and naturally the technical minutiae of the paper would devolve to outside academic advisors. This of course is not to overlook the fact that there are questionable gaps in political logic thrown up between the worthy analyses of religious division in Ulster and a solution grounded on independence - or indeed a shared citizenship with a community so recently targeted for random assassination and rompering.

This chapter has also underlined the ongoing inconstancy in the nature of loyalist paramilitary thinking in contrast to the focus of its republican opponents. Hence the UDA's verbalised hostility to Paisley and Craig both before and after May 1974 not deflecting it from involvement in a further strike within three years - this directly led by the Democratic Unionists and a Vanguard splinter and from which even the Official Unionist Party distanced itself. Or similarly the publication of a political document proposing the end of the Union a mere four years after

supporting the UUUC in their demands for the return of a Northern Ireland parliament under majority rule and with full security powers.

Barr, Tyrie and the NUPRG's faith in an independent international moderator and guarantor for a Northern Ireland settlement would indeed be fulfilled over two decades later by the influence of President Bill Clinton and George Mitchell on the Good Friday Agreement. Furthermore it should be crucially noted that a gathering sense of a distinct Northern Irish identity outside of Britishness and Irishness could indeed be said to have significantly evolved by the early part of the 21st Century in Northern Ireland though within the context of a partitionist solution to the Ulster Troubles.⁸⁷

However most importantly, in their brief existence the NUPRG was a fundamental agent in reducing the level of loyalist terrorist violence from assassination figures of over 100 in 1975 and 1976 to 25 in 1977 and 8 in 1978.⁸⁸ At this time ceaseless IRA activity continued to range from attacks on the Protestant civilian population - as at the La Mon restaurant⁸⁹ - to relentless targeting of off-duty members of the RUC and UDR. Criticisms which point to insidious political manipulation or academic mind games aside, this is surely the most lasting and impressive testimony to the UDA's brief flirtation with an Ulster loyalism outside the Union. Likewise, it remains a sobering legacy for a political failure.

¹ *Beyond the Religious Divide (Papers for Discussion)*, March 1979.

² Nelson, 1984, p112.

³ Inner Council member McVeigh and UDA companion David Douglas were abducted by the UVF in April 1975. Their bodies were found in shallow graves at the isolated Gobbins area of the Islandmagee peninsula in County Antrim in September - they had been shot at the site. David Irvine's testimony for the 2010 *Voices From The Grave* study (pp 372-374) alludes to subsequent linkages arising within Long Kesh between the UVF and Official IRA prisoners as opposed to those from the UDA and the INLA. This part of County Antrim is associated with a series of macabre incidents relating to witchcraft during 1710-11 which lead to the arrest of several women and to Ireland's last witchcraft trial in Carrickfergus. Eight were convicted and sentenced to one year's imprisonment and to be four times pilloried - as a result of which one woman lost an eye. During the 1641 rebellion the soldiers of the Carrickfergus garrison had thrown some Islandmagee residents from the nearby Gobbins Cliffs..

⁴ Clifford, *Against Ulster Nationalism*, p106. Also McDonald and Cusack, 2004, p88.

⁵ Clifford, *Against Ulster Nationalism*, p107. See also *Record of discussion by group of UDA men in Netherlands at Hotel Fromer March 1975* - Linenhall Library Belfast.

⁶ O'Malley, 1983, p319.

⁷ Bruce, 1992a, p231.

⁸ Clifford, *Against Ulster Nationalism*, p108.

⁹ *ibid*, p109.

¹⁰ Adamson, 1981, p70. Bew, Gibbon and Patterson, 1995, pp91-93.

¹¹ The b-side of Belfast punk band Stiff Little Fingers' first single release in February 1978 – *Suspect Device* – was the equally well-recalled track *Wasted Life* which also dealt with social fractures relating to the Troubles. The lyrics referenced the outcome of respective sectarian victories as ranging from “a united nation to an independent state with laws.” Both the UDA and the IRA were also referenced in The Sex Pistols' 1976 single *Anarchy in the UK* and in the 1979 *Do The Dog* album track by The Specials.

¹² *Ulster A Nation*, Ulster Vanguard document.

¹³ Flackes, 1994, p211. Professor Lindsay (1924-1997) authored an early Vanguard pamphlet advocating a Dominion of Ulster with the same legal status as Canada or Jamaica. During a demonstration in the Northern Ireland Assembly he stood on the Speaker's table and announced he had cleansed the temple - Brian Faulkner claiming that Lindsay had spat in his face during the same protest. Following the collapse of Sunningdale, Lindsay continued to argue for an independent Dominion of Ulster as an echo of the views of former Stormont speaker W F McCoy. He presented a policy document to the Convention in September 1975 to this end and set up the Ulster Dominion Group which later became the British Ulster Dominion Party. The BUDP contested several seats but were electorally unsuccessful. Lindsay is mainly remembered today as the author of the book *Ambush at Tully West* in 1979 which considered British Intelligence actions against Protestant political activists and citizens alike during the Troubles. Information sourced from obituary at www.ulsternation.org.uk website.

¹⁴ Coogan, 1996, p339-340.

¹⁵ *Ulster V2* (1) from January 1979 for background on groups supporting Ulster independence and various flirtations with the independence alternative as expressed by leading unionist figures.

¹⁶ The UUUC refused in 1974 to incorporate the VPP within the umbrella body. Neither would it select any loyalist candidates for the UUUC ticket in the Convention elections - unlike the 1973 Assembly experience. For the broadest overview of the Northern Ireland Convention proceedings and the political background of the period see Michael Kerr's *The Destructors: The Story of Northern Ireland's Lost Peace Process* (2011).

¹⁷ A BBC Radio 4 retrospective of David Trimble's career - transmitted 3rd August 2013 as part of the *Meeting Myself Coming Back* series - included a sound archive recording of William Craig from the period of the Convention. The former UUP leader appeared to sound emotional at this point in the programme when recalling Craig.

¹⁸ Reprinted in Robert Bell et al, 1991, p37.

¹⁹ *ibid.*

²⁰ Maloney and Pollak, 1986 , p369.

²¹ *ibid.*

²² Murphy, 1978, p150.

²³ *ibid.*, p151.

²⁴ McDonald and Cusack, 2004, p112.

²⁵ Taylor, 1999, pp 162-163.

²⁶ Nelson, *op cit*, p169.

²⁷ Maloney and Pollak, *op cit*, p368.

²⁸ Lindsay, 1979, p167.

²⁹ Stevenson, 1996, p85.

³⁰ During the UUAC Strike Catholic civilian Gerard McLaverty survived torture and attempted murder at the hands of the Shankill Butchers gang. The open mobilisation of loyalist paramilitaries on the Shankill Road during the protest aided positive identification of several members by McLaverty.

³¹ With the added ingredient of the Special Air Service into South Armagh this period saw the final activity of Down Orange Welfare and the original Orange Volunteers in the history of the Troubles.

³² Bruce, 1992a, p136.

- ³³ Adamson, op cit, p67.
- ³⁴ Flackes, op cit, p330. See also *Transcript of UDA meeting, Vulcan Bar 29/4/78, Discussion regarding Ulster Independence* – Linenhall Library, Belfast.
- ³⁵ *Ulster*, V1 (2).
- ³⁶ Adamson, 1974.
- ³⁷ Davis, 1994, p106
- ³⁸ Bruce, 1992a, p232. See also *Ulster*, V2 (2).
- ³⁹ Flackes, op cit, p333. Flackes also notes the existence of an Ulster Independence Party formed in October 1977 to secure “by democratic means, a sovereign, free and independent Ulster” based on frameworks of proportionality and power sharing.
- ⁴⁰ *Ulster*, V2 (3).
- ⁴¹ McDonald and Cusack, op cit, p105.
- ⁴² *Supplementary Introduction to Documents for Discussion* (September 1980) for NUPRG critiques of other proposed political solutions.
- ⁴³ Aughey, 1993.
- ⁴⁴ O’Malley, op cit, p320.
- ⁴⁵ *ibid.*
- ⁴⁶ *ibid.*
- ⁴⁷ *Ulster* V2 (6-8).
- ⁴⁸ Bruce, 1992a, p232 and Wood, 2006, p72. Crick had noted “Scepticism or dislike of such an objective has prevented British politicians and journalists from giving the contents of this remarkable though admittedly amateur document the attention it deserves” (O’Malley, op cit, 320).
- ⁴⁹ Hanley and Millar, 2009, pp 496-497. Also Wood, 2006, pp 91-92.
- ⁵⁰ O’Malley, op cit, p353-354.
- ⁵¹ Bruce, 1992a, p233.
- ⁵² Bunting and Turnly were Ulster Protestants. Another political figure associated with the H-Blocks campaign who was targeted for assassination in this period was civil rights activist and author of *The Orange State* Michael Farrell.
- ⁵³ Bruce, 1992a, p240. Bruce notes the re-appearance of John McKeague during these local elections when standing as a candidate in Belfast Area A. He received 99 first preference votes.
- ⁵⁴ The release of declassified files from the Public Record Office in Northern Ireland for 1980 at the beginning of 2011 references Northern Ireland Office scepticism of loyalist prisoners seeing through a hunger strike which began at the same time as the October 1980 IRA protest. They saw it as a “purely opportunistic move” that lacked conviction – a letter from loyalist hunger strike leader WJ Mullan having been intercepted in which he stated that there was “no way we are going to die” (“‘Dirty protest’ dominates 1980 classified files”, BBC News Online, 31st December 2010).
- ⁵⁵ See Aughey and McIlheney 1981 and also Shirlow, Tongue et al, 2010, p77.
- ⁵⁶ McDonald and Cusack, op cit, p110.
- ⁵⁷ Bruce, 1992a, pp239-40.
- ⁵⁸ McDonald and Cusack, op cit, p118.
- ⁵⁹ Aughey and McIlheney, op cit.

⁶⁰ Kelley, 1988, p338.

⁶¹ Interview with Jonathan Moore, London Metropolitan University, March 2007.

⁶² Aughey and McIlheney, op cit.

⁶³ *Alternative Ulster* - the second single by the Belfast punk group Stiff Little Fingers - is also the title of a successful Belfast independent music magazine. See *The Guardian*, 2nd November 2003. Website at www.iheartau.com.

⁶⁴ See www.ulsternation.org.uk/faqs.htm. Ulster Nation was a more radical Ulster nationalist organisation than the Ulster Independence Movement, evolved from the Ulster National Front and had links to the Third Way movement in mainland Britain. It supported the Ulster Third Way party which registered as a political party in February 2001 and stood candidates in West Belfast for the general election of that year and the 2003 Assembly election. Chief organiser David Kerr won 116 votes in the former election and the party deregistered in December 2005. Ulster Third Way was committed to securing independence for Northern Ireland from both the United Kingdom and the Republic of Ireland with Kerr claiming on the Ulster Nation website to having been influenced by the British and Irish Communist Organisation's writings.

⁶⁵ Press photographs of the Twelfth of July 2013 disturbances at the Woodvale Road-Ardoyne junction show an Ulster independence flag being carried close to police lines by a loyalist protestor (*Belfast Telegraph*, 13th July 2013).

⁶⁶ Flackes, op cit, p333.

⁶⁷ Coogan, op cit, p339. Also appendix to McDonald and Cusack 2004 – UDA “Collusion” document.

⁶⁸ *Republican News*, 9th January 2003. Also *Irish News*, 12th January 2003.

⁶⁹ *Belfast Telegraph*, 31st December 2010.

⁷⁰ O'Malley, op cit, p318.

⁷¹ Wood, 2006, p72.

⁷² McDonald and Cusack, op cit, p66.

⁷³ *Combat*, August 1975.

⁷⁴ *Ulster Loyalist*, 18th May 1975.

⁷⁵ *The Ulster Independent*, V1 (3).

⁷⁶ *Republican News*, 26th February 1998.

⁷⁷ Bowyer Bell, 1993, p536.

⁷⁸ Davis, op cit, p107.

⁷⁹ O'Malley, op cit, p346-347.

⁸⁰ *ibid*, p347.

⁸¹ *Ulster*, V2 (5).

⁸² *ibid*.

⁸³ Aughey, 1989, p125.

⁸⁴ Nairn, 1977, p245.

⁸⁵ Clifford, *Against Ulster Nationalism*, p102.

⁸⁶ O'Leary and McGarry, 2000, p166.

⁸⁷ 2012 Northern Ireland Life and Times Survey noted a rise in the percentage of the Northern Ireland population claiming an Irish national identity from 26% in 2010 to 32% in 2012. The amount of people describing themselves as Northern Irish stood at 22%. This figure had been as high as 29% in 2010 (*Belfast Telegraph*, 10th June 2013).

⁸⁸ Bruce, 1992a, p231.

⁸⁹ Suzanne Breen article in *The Sunday Tribune*, 27th January 2007 for memories of the La Mon bombing by those left bereaved and injured.

VII: THE ULSTER LOYALIST DEMOCRATIC PARTY 1981- 1987

In the mid-1980s John McMichael of the Ulster Defence Association became a prominent figure on both local and national television news coverage of Northern Ireland current affairs. He represents to this day a defining encapsulation of the Janus face of Irish political violence alongside Gerry Adams and Martin McGuinness.¹ For despite his role as the most prominent political spokesperson of the UDA as the largest loyalist paramilitary group, there did not seem to be a wider public awareness of his involvement in the darker constructs of the Ulster Freedom Fighters as overall military commander by 1986.² His handsome looks and nonchalant television manner no doubt being beneficial to that end. McMichael was also the leader of the Ulster Loyalist Democratic Party successor to the NUPRG - constructed as a formal political party to contest elections as opposed to an innovatory think -tank.

This chapter considers the political thought of John McMichael from the ending of the IRA hunger strikes through to the 1987 presentation of the *Common Sense*³ document in the midst of unionist pandemonium following the Anglo-Irish Agreement (AIA) in 1985. It will reference a defining electoral failure for the Ulster Loyalist Democratic Party in 1982, significant changes within the UDA leadership following McMichael's murder and analysis of this second major discussion document from the organisation. Alike the NUPRG experiment, the relevance of this phase of UDA history has been discussed in depth in several works and articles (O'Malley 1983; Aughey 1989 and 1993; Bruce 1992a; McAuley 1993 and 1997a; Cusack and Taylor 1993; Wood 2006).

Compared to 1974 and the Sunningdale Agreement's unfulfilled projection of an all-Ireland Council of Ministers and Consultative Assembly, the AIA had physically emplaced a permanent secretariat in East Belfast to monitor issues of political concern for the nationalist community. Yet despite the extenuated and accelerated threat to Ulster unionism, this narrative will again show that no mainstream unionist party would give succour to the UDA's political theses. In tandem, and as always with regard to Protestant public attitudes towards civil disorder and extra-legal activity, the validity of the UDA's political voice was hamstrung by rising communal violence in loyalist areas attendant to the AIA protests. These unrestrained against both Catholic civilian and off-duty police personnel alike.

John McMichael may be viewed as the defining fusion of political and physical-force loyalism during the Troubles by way of a paramilitary acumen uninterrupted by imprisonment, credible presentation skills and a sound political rationale ranged against militant republicanism and constitutional nationalism alike. This chapter will clearly show though how the ineradicable sectarian and criminal aspects of loyalist paramilitarism would not only undercut his electoral appeal but may well have terminated his own life. In parallel, republican opponents of equal

military rank - one of whom he had directly planned to murder - would proceed apace to future international political recognition and regard.⁴

ULDP ELECTORAL ENGAGEMENT AND THE ANGLO-IRISH AGREEMENT

The ULDP's all-encompassing and less-than-humble aim according to its initial 1981 manifesto was 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 by it with other nations, states or international organisations for the purpose of furthering international co-operation and world peace.⁵

Unlike the earlier NUPRG the Ulster Loyalist Democratic Party foresaw any future Ulster state as remaining constitutionally within the European Community and the British Commonwealth alike. McMichael explained the broader retreat in somewhat unconvincing terms and with reference to the then popularity of the House of Windsor:

We found that although people feel anti-Westminster and anti-English they still have a great affection for the monarchy. So it would be independence within the EEC and the Commonwealth, which we think would be acceptable to many Catholics.⁶

Padraig O'Malley's interviews with Tyrie, Lyttle and McMichael for *The Uncivil Wars* study took place around the time of the ending of the 1981 IRA hunger strike in August and then again in December of the same year. McMichael clearly qualifies independence here as the opposite of Sinn Féin-style Ulsterism. It would be based on principles of broad internal consent as opposed to a last desperate resort leading to the creation of an aimless sectarian state. This latter scenario would logically follow Paisley's alienating political manoeuvrings from which the UDA at this period pro-actively distanced themselves with several metaphorical and literal "fuck-offs".⁷

Although McMichael candidly accepted the unlikelihood of attracting Catholic votes as such he castigates the DUP for not even attempting the slightest moves towards cross-community dialogue. The UDA by not slavishly falling in line behind the unionist leadership will thus win Catholic respect while faith in his ability to win elections was theorised as follows:

We will continue to contest elections. We understand it will be years before people understand what we're trying to do politically, moving towards an Ulsterisation policy and then hopefully independence. It's going to take a fairly long time to sink in.⁸

O'Malley sourced positive feedback to the UDA's internal dynamics of the period from SDLP leader John Hume, Fine Gael's Garret Fitzgerald and Harold McCusker of the OUP. More

qualified responses would be elicited from Sinn Féin's Daithi O'Connell, Robert McCartney QC and OUP leader James Molyneaux⁹ who would conclude:

They fight council elections as democrats and all that, and they conceal very carefully their ambitions about independence. But underneath they have some very sinister figures and there's reason to believe they have linkages with bodies outside of the UK which wouldn't be to your liking or mine.¹⁰

In October of 1981 *Ulster* magazine underscored the main aims of the ULDP as being to educate the Ulster people into a greater knowledge of their ancient heritage and national identity and to seek a mandate from the people of Northern Ireland to negotiate full independence. Unlike the established loyalist parties the ULDP were primarily concerned with Ulster and the welfare of her people and not in preserving the crumbling Union.¹¹

As with the NUPRG predecessor therefore, representatives of Ulster's staunchest military defenders were now realigning future political projections against the brutal Anglo-Irish realities afoot in the present. With reward for loyalty to the Union having paid such scant dividends they would thus directly question the very bedrock of security – and even now the concomitant core of fused identity – that it had claimed to represent. With either laudible or witless frankness the December issue of *Ulster* in turn included a reproduction of a Rowel Friers cartoon of a loyalist paramilitary, whose arms were emblazoned with the legend “UDA political wing”, restraining a group of similarly attired loyalists from invading Catholic urban territory.¹²

Electoral success however would remain painfully elusive for the ULDP as shown at the 4th March 1982 by-election for South Belfast following the IRA murder of the Reverend Robert Bradford. South Belfast's overwhelmingly middle class complexion was only interspersed by such working class loyalist enclaves as The Village, Sandy Row and the once religiously-mixed Roden Street – the latter two areas having been highly redeveloped since the start of the conflict in the late 1960s. The Village meanwhile had a strong UDA presence from the early 1970s with an infamous sequence of four separate sectarian killings in West Belfast over two January nights in 1973 being launched from a base there.¹³

McMichael found himself standing against an Alliance candidate and two Protestant clergymen. His opposition could thus hardly have been more focused to his own detriment. The OUP's Reverend Martin Smyth was victorious over the Alliance candidate David Cook and the DUP's William McCrea came third. McMichael, who beneath his political persona was at the forefront of paramilitary activity to secure Ulster from republican subjugation, received a paltry 576 votes or 2 percent of the unionist vote in a 66% turnout.¹⁴

Grassroots unionist antipathy to political figures directly linked to loyalist paramilitary groups having thus reasserted itself again to circumvent both the UDA's attempt to overhaul its tarnished public image and indeed McMichael's own considerable presentational acumen.

Martin Smyth being the former deputy leader of a political organisation with its own paramilitary bodyguard wing and William McCrea belonging to a party who in late 1981 had sponsored the Third Force vigilante group claiming between 15-20,000 members.¹⁵

Autumn of 1982 saw elections for James Prior's doomed "rolling devolution" scheme. An elected Assembly would be given scrutinizing roles over Westminster legislation though the SDLP and Sinn Fein only fought the election on abstentionist tickets. The ULDP fielded two candidates in North Belfast and gained 1086 votes which translated to just five percent of the first preference unionist vote in the constituency.¹⁶

In August 1983 McMichael noted the existence of a "minority diktat" implicit in the SDLP boycott of the Assembly and how a political solution would never arise until it was fundamentally reassessed:

What we are saying basically is, that Ulster Catholics should be made aware of the position that they are forcing Protestants into; that if we come to accept that if there is no possibility of a political solution, the 'siege mentality', the natural instinct to survive, would force Ulster Protestants back into a shell. They would surely fight for their survival in the absence of any solution. The only alternative – and there must be an alternative to violence – is a political solution.¹⁷

At the beginning of 1984 the party's *The Way Ahead* document turned its back on integrationist solutions and focused again upon Ulster independence within the Commonwealth with the Queen as head of state, a Bill of Rights and the parallel withdrawal of Irish and British constitutional guarantees. The paper stressed that:

Violence is born of fear, mistrust, despair and the frustrations of going nowhere; the alternative is to set our sights on a mutually-agreed goal. Which does not demand the surrender, or loss of dignity, of either community in Northern Ireland.¹⁸

By mid-summer however McMichael returned again to the notion of mainstream unionist aimlessness as opposed to the ULDP's political, cultural and economic alternatives:

Our struggle must succeed in achieving the right of Unionist people to self-determination and self-expression. The creation of an Ulster society which is pluralist-democratic-law abiding, and with a social conscience...Set your sights on a New Ulster and go get it.¹⁹

A year of unionist drift later and the ULDP's leader's message would take on a much more hawkish tone against a background of perennial "Smash the IRA" promises by loyalist politicians standing at council election. The "distasteful and historically unpalatable realities" facing the loyalist people were a Westminster government who failed to protect the citizen, an RUC that did its paymaster's bidding and with one article in *Ulster* magazine clearly underscoring:

There is only one way to “smash” the IRA, of which every Sinn Feiner is a fully conscious and willing member. They have selected the war game and having committed themselves to play they must accept the penalties of the game. I support the right of every Unionist person to take up arms in the struggle against the oppression of Republican terrorist organisations. The IRA must be systematically eliminated.²⁰

The November 1985 Anglo-Irish Agreement would attempt to circumvent unionist intransigence with a programme of political reform which caused yet more fracturing instability on the streets of Ulster. With Irish government representatives ensconced in Maryfield in East Belfast to represent the Catholics of Ulster, many unionists would consider the AIA as a halfway house to unity or at best a Machiavellian manoeuvring of Ulster loyalists into powersharing alternatives.

DUP deputy leader Peter Robinson talked of the Protestant people being “on the window ledge of the Union”²¹ while the act elicited from Armagh MP Harold McCusker arguably the most acerbic political critique delivered in Irish political history:

I stood outside Hillsborough, not waving a Union flag – I doubt whether I will ever wave one again – not singing hymns, not saying prayers or protesting, but like a dog, and asked the government to put in my hand the document that sold my birthright. I felt desolate, because as I stood in the cold outside Hillsborough Castle everything that I held dear turned to ashes in my mouth.²²

The OUP and DUP began a series of protests beginning with the monster rally at Belfast City Hall on Saturday 23rd November which attracted over 100,000 people – the biggest loyalist demonstration since Ulster Day of 1912. Subsequently there would be suspensions of council business throughout the province, unionist withdrawals from meetings with British government officials and by-elections forced through unionist MPs resigning their seats. The ULDP did not contest any of these by-elections which were held in January 1986.

In February McMichael urged that Sinn Fein be included in any comprehensive constitutional conference.²³ However at the same time he was close to Peter Robinson’s thinking on the expansion of grassroots protest and saw the crisis of the AIA as the perfect conduit to funnel a “better class” of recruit into loyalist paramilitary ranks by such ends. One particularly caustic commentary delivered by former NILP politician David Bleakley for a Granada Television *World In Action* special on Peter Robinson in this period noted:

Mister Paisley marched the people up to the top of the hill and then down again. And if that’s been going on and on you feel that perhaps at the end of the day you will be brought down the hill. That’s not true of the newer generation of politicians that are beginning to emerge ...Peter Robinson would be one of those...you get the feeling if they march you up to the top of the hill they’ll take you over the precipice.²⁴

Organisational opposition to the AIA would come in the form of the Ulster Clubs which had already been set up in the autumn of 1985 to protest against the re-routing of controversial loyalist parades particularly around the Catholic Tunnel district of Portadown.²⁵ The body

claimed to have 8,000 members by the start of 1986 and 12,000 by October 1988.²⁶ As well as providing a Vanguard-style umbrella function they also incorporated an Ulster Corps paramilitary wing. Both David Trimble and McMichael sat on the Ulster Clubs' Grand Committee and were indeed in the same Apprentice Boys Club in Lisburn.²⁷

As in 1973 and 1977 however, violence would return to undermine the unionist cause. A Day of Action on 3rd March 1986²⁸ led to widespread intimidation, road blockages and the burning of cars often belonging to working class Protestant civilians.²⁹ Rioting would spread to Portadown and intimidation would be extended to both Catholics in Lisburn and serving police officers throughout the province.³⁰ The author clearly recalls graffiti on one local wall in the Ballysillan district of North Belfast in the period promising "Join the RUC - Come home to a real fire".³¹ *Ulster* magazine at this point would maintain:

The dream of a new society is all very well but presently we are ruled by Peter Barry, so the destruction of the Anglo-Irish Agreement must be our first aim. But as we have said it can only be the first step to something better.³²

Both loyalist paramilitary groups were galvanized by the distancing of unionist political figures from their attacks upon the police in the aftermath of the Agreement. Widening class cleavages within Protestant Ulster no doubt also played a part in police loyalty staying within the parameters of the service itself. The post-industrial landscape of the north, and indeed much of the entire public and private spectrum of British employment itself at this period of time, provided few career opportunities which could offer such lucrative financial remuneration as the Northern Ireland security sector. The economic reality of the British subvention, alike similar awareness engendered amongst the Protestant public during the 1977 strike, meant that exhortations for the RUC to resign and join the true vanguard forces of Ulster in the loyalist urban ghettos remained wildly optimistic. And where for the first time, even since 1969, the darkened streetscapes were descending by the month into areas as volatile and scarred as republican West Belfast. Indeed in some parts of Protestant Belfast such infrastructural decline has never been reversed to this day.

Hence in the midst of such communal turmoil - which trumped the hunger strikes in significantly alienating large sections of the Ulster majority on this occasion - there would arrive the second major UDA policy document. It would be a brave attempt to refocus resistance to the enforced Anglo-Irish "diktat" outside the self-imposed unionist quarantine. This despite the fact that the street level loyalist protests - particularly against RUC families - were yet again fatally tainting what little credibility the UDA still retained within the Protestant population as a broad social movement with a valid political alternative.

COMMON SENSE

On January 29th 1987 the UDA published its *Common Sense* document³³ - named in honour of Tom Paine and under the aegis of the Ulster Political Research Group. David Trimble had a direct input into the constitutional arguments contained within *Common Sense* as had been the case with *Beyond The Religious Divide* and the earlier Ulster Loyalist Co-ordinating Committee's *Can Ulster Survive Unfettered?* paper.³⁴ Civil rights lawyer Paul O'Dwyer and legal associates had also been involved in preparing the draft Bill of Rights it referenced.³⁵ The introductory preamble stated:

It is our firm conviction that the vast majority of both religious communities long for peace, reconciliation and the chance to create a better future for their children. But longing is not enough; there must be a mechanism created to harness the love, generosity, courage and integrity of Ulster people in both religious communities and direct its great powers towards the light of a new beginning.³⁶

Following an even interpretation of Ulster's descent into self-reinforcing communal conflict, it moved to various points already considered in the NUPRG precursor: namely a devolved legislative government for Northern Ireland, a written constitution that could only be changed by a two-thirds majority in a referendum, a Bill of Rights and a Supreme Court. Such developments would literally put Ulster in the vanguard of devolutionary experimentation within the United Kingdom. The UK constitution in turn was labelled as nothing more than "a flawed electoral dictatorship under strain from economic decline and racial tension and mounting demands for regionalisation."³⁷

The new ULDP framework entailed offering Catholics power-sharing in return for support for the Northern Ireland state – a return in part to Vanguard's voluntary coalition proposals at the time of the Constitutional Convention. Majority rule and institutionalised powersharing would be gone. Instead a Constitutional Conference called by the Secretary of State – and to include Sinn Féin – would draft a new constitution with expert external help.

If the constitution was ratified in turn by the Conference it would be put to the Northern Ireland electorate and Westminster for approval. A subsequent devolved Assembly elected under PR would use proportionality rules to elect committee chairmen and an Executive. Northern Ireland would continue to have Westminster representation. The document ended with a call for mainland parties to recruit and campaign in Northern Ireland itself to help rebalance civil society from its destabilising fissures and to provide genuine equality of citizenship with the rest of the UK.

On one particularly empowering and inclusive note the paper had maintained that :

There is no section of this divided Ulster community which is totally innocent or indeed totally guilty, totally right or totally wrong. We all share the responsibility for creating the situation, either by deed or by acquiescence. Therefore we must share the responsibility for finding a settlement and then share the responsibility of maintaining good government.³⁸

The UDA made no reference in *Common Sense* to the concept of negotiated independence despite their policy position on the same. However, as with *Beyond The Religious Divide*, the document contained twin underpinnings.

Firstly it counterpoised an easily envisaged civil war situation in a deeply divided Ulster society against political stability based on fundamental principles of consensus government, proportionality and shared responsibility. Such a solution would have to evolve with the Ulster people themselves as the AIA fallout had shown clearly the doomed prospects for any imposed settlement of a conflict in military stalemate.

Secondly, with opposing views on self-determination being held respectively by nationalist and unionist alike, the only bridge would be co-determination through an equitable political resolution. The siege would be lifted for the Protestants and the Catholics would be welcomed into an inclusive political framework. A fresh new devolutionary experiment would remove Ulster from the quagmire of the AIA, which unionism could never accept, and move towards a healing of society's bitter breaches.

Common Sense attempted to provide a positive counterpoise for a unionism in stasis, and in more fundamental ways that merely reheating the NUPRG blueprint³⁹, though in passing it worth questioning the attraction for UFF militants of both pithy quotations from Paine or dry political dissection of the D'Hondt Mechanism. The political scientist Arthur Aughey notes how it was in a sense displaying a new loyalist rulebook for Paisley and Molyneaux's attention in that their veiled threats about "hard men in the wings" were not technically exact on this occasion. The bitter experience of 1977 being neither forgotten nor forgiven.⁴⁰ Furthermore, aside from providing a dynamic for future unionist strategic considerations it was also a clear attempt to call the political bluff of the SDLP. As McMichael himself was to note:

If Unionists present a positive and reasonable package for devolved consensus government, it will put the Roman Catholic community under severe pressure, as it will be forced to consider whether the Anglo-Irish Agreement is preferable to a cross-community settlement for full-blooded devolution in Northern Ireland, because it can't have both....⁴¹

Positive feedback to *Common Sense* came this time from such an unlikely figure as Cardinal Thomas O'Fiach and the UDA initiative was indeed accepted as a genuine basis of negotiation by the SDLP who described the document as "constructive" despite the surprising source. The Northern Ireland Office welcomed the document but Paisley would remind the political

audience that negotiations were a non-starter while the AIA was in existence. Ironically this position was something the UDA at this time agreed with in terms of the pan-unionist front's guiding principles.⁴²

The effect of the *Common Sense* document was understandably limited with particularly negative feedback from Robert McCartney and the Campaign for Equal Citizenship on the contradiction of encouraging both mainland party organisation in Northern Ireland and devolution.⁴³ Simultaneously however there was certainly more focused thinking apparent in unionist circles which came to fruition in the cross-unionist Task Force Report of July 1987 to which the Progressive Unionist Party contributed.⁴⁴ *An End To Drift* was authored by Peter Robinson, Frank Millar and Harold McCusker and proposed a devolved assembly based on powersharing - both main unionist leaders ignoring the report's findings. Molyneaux had especially strong feelings against a proposed unionist Convention body⁴⁵ that would incorporate the UDA while Paisley himself would follow on from his sporadic condemnation of loyalist intimidation to become actively involved with another paramilitary body - Ulster Resistance - which held its inaugural Belfast rally in November 1986.

The UDA in turn would fill the vacuum with violence and ongoing plans to create a new leadership cadre by way of a more professional Territorial Army-style "doomsday" body the Ulster Defence Force (UDF). The UDF training in paramilitary technique and ideological analysis in North Antrim also allowed the rank and file of the individual brigades greater scope to exchange views on the current UDA leadership - a side effect which would have fatal consequences for Northern Ireland and the end of the entire conflict.⁴⁶

THE MURDER OF JOHN MCMICHAEL AND UDA LEADERSHIP CHANGES

Loyalist paramilitary activity book-ended the discussion paper's publication with minor UFF firebombings in the Republic of Ireland in November 1986 and February 1987 against the McMichael commentary:

It's not a matter of *Common Sense* in one hand and a firebomb in the other... We are interested in selling our proposals and further action by the UFF would only make that more difficult. But the reality of the situation is that there is a state of war in Ulster and they are fighting a war against the IRA.⁴⁷

On 22nd December 1987 John McMichael was murdered in an IRA carbomb at his house in Lisburn. Andy Tyrie would claim:

John was killed because he was the best person we had and the Republican Movement didn't like him. I didn't have anybody as astute in politics as he was... They also didn't like him because he was being listened to and they knew the loss that we would incur with John being killed.⁴⁸

The repercussions of the assassination would be profound in terms of the subsequent upheaval within the ranks of the UDA. Dissatisfaction within the lower and middle ranks of the UDA in the late 1980s, the latter being known as the "Outer Council", had grown substantially because of the vitriol heaped upon the organisation for its involvement in racketeering and the lack of a pro-active military dynamic from long serving Inner Council Brigadiers.

The epicentre of the UDA's criminal network was James Pratt Craig who had previously been UDA OC in the Maze Prison. Craig's fundraising acumen would satisfactorily bankroll the organisation in terms of materiel and prisoner support. However the sheer level of extortion from building companies in Northern Ireland had seriously damaged the public standing of the UDA organisation for the vast majority of Ulster Protestants.⁴⁹ Furthermore, long standing rumours had claimed that Craig was not only willing to divide the manifold spoils of Belfast urban regeneration with opposing fundraisers from the Official republican movement but also share out intelligence.⁵⁰

However it would be the galling performance of Mid-Ulster Brigadier Eddie Sayers in an exposure by Central Television's *The Cook Report* television series in August 1987 - in an episode entitled *Worse Than The Mafia* - that finally opened the lid upon institutionalised racketeering and criminality in Europe's largest paramilitary organisation to national opprobrium. Sayers, a signatory of the *Common Sense* document,⁵¹ was dismissed from the organisation following his demands for £9,000 protection cover per million pounds tendered for a Craigavon building contract. A full internal investigation under McMichael's auspices was promised after the unwelcome publicity given to Borderline Security - also known as "the fuckin' UDA".⁵²

Before such investigation could be completed McMichael was murdered and Craig in turn was absolved of collusion in a subsequent UDA inquiry despite RUC Chief Constable John Hermon hinting darkly at internecine scheming in a subsequent press conference. McMichael's murder and *The Cook Report* fiasco alike fundamentally undermined the position of Andy Tyrie - by way of the removal of his main supporter and as yet another notable error of judgement atop leadership changes which had engendered great disfavour among the rank and file. And this in parallel to ongoing disgruntlement by the more military minded volunteers about political experimentation.⁵³

Two weeks after McMichael's murder North Belfast Brigadier Davy Payne and two accomplices were arrested after three cars were stopped in the Portadown area while overloaded with most of the UDA share of a Lebanese arms shipment arranged by way of South African contacts. The importation had been planned by both major loyalist paramilitary groups and Ulster Resistance. The loss of the UDA arms in Portadown would fatally undermine the

Chairman's position. On 6th March 1988 Andy Tyrie found a "Loyalist People's Action Group" bomb underneath his car and subsequently resigned from the UDA. ⁵⁴

Several weeks later Michael Stone's penetration of republican West Belfast made the Northern Irish general public question more than ever the calibre of recruit into loyalist paramilitary forces in light of subsequent speedy denials of association from all loyalist groups.⁵⁵ Conversely younger militants like Johnny Adair would be invigorated by the incredulous scenes televised from Milltown Cemetery:

I remember watching it on TV and thinking 'That guy has balls'. When you mentioned the UDA before to young loyalists like me on the Shankill, you thought of fat bastards driving big cars who never went out of the office or the bar. Then this man Stone comes along and starts killing republicans on television. We all wanted to be like him and do what he did. ⁵⁶

Though Tyrie's position as sole Chairman would be replaced by a collective leadership, several of the older figures associated with the organisation's decline still remained in place such as Tommy Lyttle and Billy Elliott. Jim Craig himself, along with a Protestant pensioner bystander, would be murdered at the Castle Inn in East Belfast at the year's end by the UVF.

Ireland correspondent David McKittrick would return to the Janus-like qualities of McMichael in his obituary of the UFF and ULDP leader:

At the same time as he picketed Irish parliamentarians in Dublin, he was helping assemble teams of firebombers to attack the city. As he was holding secret meetings with leaders of the Catholic Social Democratic and Labour Party to discuss sharing power with nationalists, his men were shooting innocent Catholics in Belfast. McMichael saw nothing inappropriate about pursuing two contradictory policies at the same time. ⁵⁷

Certainly many grassroots loyalists viewed McMichael's removal from Ulster politics as beneficial to both the Northern Ireland political establishment and the unionist leadership alike. A commentary in the UDA's *Ulster* magazine some months after his murder would clearly note to this end:

...he was principled and a man of practice rather than preaching. Unlike them he was prepared to recognise that the 15th November 1985 was a day on which all the rules changed. He realised that a new radical plan for the future of Ulster was needed, and outside the constitutional ruins of the Union, if necessary. ⁵⁸

The loss to the UDA was indeed profound. Sixteen years after McMichael's death in 2003 political scientist Professor Paul Arthur would confirm the long term consequences of his murder upon the organisation:

He was a very astute thinker, and managed to keep the more militant and criminal UDA elements on board. Once he was assassinated, that generation was lost politically. ⁵⁹

POLITICAL EVALUATION OF *COMMON SENSE*

A diffuse range of interpretations would be drawn in subsequent political and academic analyses of this period of UDA history. Again O'Malley concluded that the positive advantages to be gained from such UDA experimentation could not fail to be to the organisation's benefit particularly with their constant stress on the reactive nature of their violence:

Thus the UDA's metamorphosis from ruthless sectarian paramilitary organisation to struggling political neophyte. Although its political forays have not brought a stampede of public support for its positions, they have won it a measure of respectability, which pays a handsome dividend: its past transgressions, if not forgotten, are for the most part largely forgiven; and its current lapses, if not forgiven, are for the most part largely excused.⁶⁰

Arthur Aughey noted the juxtaposition of the UDA's "constructive co-existence" aspirations within *Common Sense* - and other policy statements such as *Peace With Honour* and *The Way Ahead* - with the streamlining of UFF targeting onto specific republican figures and the formation of the UDF. Barr's earlier open-handed strategy towards the Catholic community during the NUPRG experiment had taken place during a time of low sectarian tension. Conversely McMichael and the UDA leadership, whilst being openly "recognitionist" of cross-community agreement as a peace pre-requisite, had no qualms about facing up militarily to the soaring IRA campaign of that period through selective assassination.

Nevertheless Aughey agrees with O'Malley in concluding that for all the qualifications implicit in such a twin-track approach - with its political development enthusiastically supported by the British and with the ULDP even considering submissions to the New Ireland Forum - that there is an undeniable degree of refreshing openness in the UDA's self-analyses:

It would be unfair to attribute such schizophrenia to the UDA leadership alone. It exists in every Protestant consciousness and every Catholic consciousness in Ulster's divided society. At least Tyrie and McMichael, whatever their shortcomings, conduct their mental wrestling in public....Perhaps in the struggle with the uncertainty of their own priorities, the UDA may achieve something worthwhile, a positive contribution to the politics of conflict resolution.⁶¹

Feargal Cochrane's impressive overview of unionist politics after the AIA surveyed radical unionist voices of the period that stood in contrast to Molyneaux's policy of "masterly inactivity"⁶² - be that the ULDP, the Campaign for Equal Citizenship or the pro-devolution Charter Group. He points to particular commentary within *Ulster* magazine in this period - on McMichael's belief in the inviolability of the Union - which tends to sit in contrast to some of the more fawning interpretations of a brave new loyalist alternative. Here the proposed government based on cross-community support would in reality only entail the qualification of majority rule for all of the freshness and openness of spirit that the development seemed to display:

At one level, *Common Sense* represented an effort to boost the political power of the UDA by holding out mouth-watering possibilities for the British government and the SDLP. On another level, it sought to portray itself as the one progressive voice within an otherwise politically stagnant unionist community... Yet the implicit message being given to the Protestant working class through publications such as *Ulster* was that power-sharing was the continuation of majority rule by other means.⁶³

Furthermore Cochrane also references an interesting *Fortnight* magazine critique by David Young and Mark Langhammer on how the UDA leadership may well have been running ahead of their grassroots in *Common Sense* and that their proposals represented institutionalised sectarianism by way of the proportionality principles⁶⁴. This criticism would also be made against the GFA's consociational construct for a regional Assembly.

The final paragraphs of *Common Sense* in particular could almost be a leitmotif for the entire loyalist paramilitary political experiment:

The pragmatic alternative to co-determination is to fight a bloody civil war and let the victor dictate the rules by which he will live. What we propose will probably be described by some as idealistic, ambitious, fraught with difficulties and even dangerous to attempt but then so has anything that was ever worth doing. The most dangerous thing to do, and unfortunately the most politically popular, would be to do NOTHING.⁶⁵

Conversely Steve Bruce's conclusions on loyalist political innovation in his 1992 *The Red Hand* study could be seen as a fitting epilogue at that particular time when ULDP electoral disappointments had mirrored the earlier failure of the VPP at the ballot box. The earnestness of the independence proposals in turn still standing in contradiction to their paramilitary source for many across and beyond the religious divide:

The logic of this argument is that there was and is no obvious political opening for the loyalist paramilitaries. Precisely because they are loyalists there is no possibility of acquiring a position analogous to that of Sinn Féin. When one is fighting to preserve the state from those who would destroy it and to maintain the status quo, one can complain about this or that element of the British government's policies, but one cannot present a radical alternative.⁶⁶

CONCLUSIONS: THE CAGOULE AS POLITICAL PLAYMAKER?

Whether or not loyalist paramilitary political innovation may be dismissed as fundamentally contradictory - alike Marxist republicans urging proletarian unity with the Protestant worker during an ongoing paramilitary campaign against their state in the early 1970s - John McMichael yet remains as defining and indeed unique a figure within political loyalism as Gusty Spence, Glenn Barr or David Ervine. This due to his senior leadership role and, as noted in the chapter introduction, the sheer length of a paramilitary career unimpeded by imprisonment.

McMichael's faith in long-term communal reconciliation may be construed as being as genuine as the others despite a strategic agenda based on the principle that an increase in loyalist violence against genuine IRA targets would engage a direct end to the conflict. Hence when the IRA were brought to a position of not killing Protestants then the unionist population in turn – from a position of peace and security – could approach such co-determination proposals openly. This was provided that such a political battle was started very shortly off the back of a paramilitary stalemate. Such brutal logic holding firm despite his widow's posthumous confirmation of his desire to become an MP or *Ulster* magazine's memorial rollcall of weighty "McMichael Principles" which stated that his political thinking had directly evolved from Ulster philosophers Francis Hutcheson and Francis Alison.⁶⁷

In the early 1980's McMichael, who was also clearly conscious of the cultural factors differentiating the respective support bases of the loyalist and republican paramilitary groups⁶⁸, directly referenced the IRA in regard to his attempt to reinvigorate the UDA's image. Bewailing the lack of professionalism within loyalist paramilitarism compared to the IRA – in terms of the need for political direction as well as focused targeting instead of reflexive sectarianism – McMichael clearly believed that a clear political plan married to a sophisticated military strategy would be a formidable combination. ⁶⁹

The support for such reasoning amongst loyalist militants was shown by the presence of Cecil Graham's signature on the *Common Sense* document as a pseudonym for Davy Payne and posthumous praise from Michael Stone. ⁷⁰ Certainly McMichael's train of thought was also the core logic which underlay the rise in violence during the 1990s from both the UFF and the UVF which will be discussed in the following chapter. Such clinical and focused rationale contrasted sharply with earlier comments by Andy Tyrie praising the lack of loyalist response to the La Mon firebombing of February 17th 1978. ⁷¹ Likewise for the UDA's refusal to dabble with the Carson Trail protests, mobilisations of the Third Force "cocktail terrorists" or indeed Ian Paisley's Day of Action on 23rd November 1981 following the murder of unionist MP the Reverend Robert Bradford.

Despite the positive feedback that *Common Sense* received, like the *Beyond the Religious Divide* predecessor, no major Ulster unionist party would either practically consider or enthusiastically adopt the radical innovations it suggested. The critiques of ULDP thinking replicated much of those attendant to the earlier NUPRG and as always the UDA name was not something likely to appeal to even the most politically pragmatic within the nationalist community.

Likewise, antipathy towards the UDA from the Protestant public because of criminal linkages since its very birth was directly reflected in the circumstances of McMichael's own death by

way of the UFF leader's investigation into Jim Craig's racketeering. This underscoring the radically divergent pathway that McMichael would take - as a fusion of paramilitary and political spokesperson - in comparison to Danny Morrison of Provisional Sinn Féin in particular.⁷² The latter, who certainly had a higher media profile than Gerry Adams on local television news in the early 1980s, holding rank in the Provisional IRA with equal circumspection.⁷³ On the 25th anniversary of his murder in October 2012 a John McMichael memorial debate took place between former paramilitaries of both political persuasions in Lisburn⁷⁴ in County Antrim including Andy Tyrie and Morrison who today is a respected media commentator and writer.

¹ Jill and Leon Uris' *Ireland A Terrible Beauty* - published in 1976 - includes photographs from the islands of Fermanagh. One of these is of the strange two-and-a-half-feet high double-faced idol of a pagan Celtic god in the ancient graveyard of Caldragh on Boa Island. The Janus statue shows two identical back-to-back faces with an indented socket on top suggesting use in human sacrifice. This is Seamus Heaney's "first god of the first people" in his *January God* poem. The Giant's Ring in South Belfast is another such archaeological site. During 1973 two UDA/UFF killings would take place at this location which had once been used for sacrificial ritual - the murder of 14-year-old Philip Rafferty on January 31st following his abduction in Andersonstown and that of 30-year-old Joseph Andrews on May 25th after he wandered drunk into a Donegall Pass bar.

² McMichael had been involved in planning the assassination attempts on leading members of the H-Block protest campaign. He was also linked to the failed murder bid against Sinn Féin President Gerry Adams in Belfast city centre on 14th March 1984 - the same day the UVF also unknowingly launched an assassination attempt against the same target. See Cusack and McDonald, 1997, pp 234-235.

³ *Common Sense*, Ulster Political Research Group, 1987.

⁴ Ed Moloney's *A Secret History of the IRA* (2002) references Gerry Adams as Chief-of-Staff from December 1977 to February 1978 with Martin McGuinness succeeding him in the role until the autumn of 1982.

⁵ *Constitutional Proposals*, Ulster Loyalist Democratic Party, 1981.

⁶ O'Malley, 1983, p332.

⁷ McDonald and Cusack, 2004, p120 and p134 for similar four-lettered reactions to Paisley's militant manoeuvrings.

⁸ O'Malley, op cit, p339.

⁹ For further elaboration upon Molyneux's feelings towards loyalist paramilitaries as influenced by his wartime service see Purdy, 1989, pp 131-133.

¹⁰ O'Malley, op cit, p353. Molyneux, alike many leading Ulster unionists of the 1970s, had served in the British military during World War Two. As a Corporal in April 1945 he took part in the liberation of Bergen-Belsen concentration camp in Lower Saxony (BBC News Online articles "Old soldier's return to Belsen", 6th November 2003 and "Looking back to Belsen", 30th December 2008). Vanguard leader William Craig had served as a rear-gunner on a Lancaster bomber in the Royal Air Force in the same conflict. Vanguard Service Corps leader Hugh Petrie was a Normandy veteran.

¹¹ *Ulster*, October 1981.

¹² *Ulster*, December 1981.

¹³ In between the two murders of Catholic civilians on each night of the 29th and 30th January 1973, UDA member Francis "Hatchet" Smith would be shot dead by the IRA in the Donegall Road area. It was rumoured that Smith was involved with the first night's assassinations. These five murders are considered in some strategic detail in Dillon and Lehane's *Political Murder in Northern Ireland*.

¹⁴ Bruce, 1992a, p241.

- ¹⁵ Flackes, 1994, p322.
- ¹⁶ Bruce, 1992a, p242. According to Flackes, op cit, p330 the ULDP did not contest the 1983 General Election or the 1984 election for the European Parliament. District council elections in 1985 saw two candidates gaining only 782 votes or 0.1 percent of the overall vote.
- ¹⁷ *Ulster*, August 1983.
- ¹⁸ *Ulster*, January 1984.
- ¹⁹ *Ulster*, July/August 1984.
- ²⁰ *Ulster*, July/August 1985.
- ²¹ O'Clery, 1996, p212.
- ²² McKittrick and Mallie, 2001, pp 57-58.
- ²³ Flackes, op cit, p330.
- ²⁴ *World In Action* special on Peter Robinson transmitted on 8th April 1986.
- ²⁵ Bruce, 1994, p104.
- ²⁶ Flackes, op cit, p326.
- ²⁷ McDonald, 2000, pp95-96.
- ²⁸ For political background to the Day of Action from the perspective of Molyneaux and Paisley see Purdy, op cit, pp 138-146.
- ²⁹ A car belonging to the author was stolen and burnt out during the 1986 Day of Action in the Ballysillan area of North Belfast. Several letters were subsequently dispatched to various unionist MPs complaining about their involvement with such events – in reply Cecil Walker expressed sympathy as an attempt had been made to burn his own car “with me in it”, James Molyneaux distanced himself fundamentally from any further protest action of that nature, Peter Robinson lay the blame for the day’s events fully at the door of the British government and Ian Paisley’s response is still pending at the time of writing.
- ³⁰ Ed Moloney’s 2010 *Voices From The Grave* references a “1986 Workers Committee” body incorporating loyalist paramilitaries and mainly associated with the DUP’s Peter Robinson. (p 400).
- ³¹ This graffiti was noted in the same Ballysillan district where loyalist paramilitaries had laid a landmine to attack the RUC during the Anglo-Irish Agreement protests.
- ³² *Ulster*, May 1986.
- ³³ *Common Sense*, Ulster Political Research Group, 1987.
- ³⁴ McDonald, op cit, pp98-99. Another academic linked to the UDA’s respective papers on independence was Queens University of Belfast Professor of Political Science Cornelius O’Leary. See obituary in *Irish Times*, 23rd September 2006.
- ³⁵ *Ulster*, March 1988.
- ³⁶ *Common Sense*, Ulster Political Research Group, 1987.
- ³⁷ *ibid.*
- ³⁸ *ibid.*
- ³⁹ Further consideration of *Common Sense* content in Spencer, 2008, pp 70-73.
- ⁴⁰ Aughey, 1989, pp 126-127.
- ⁴¹ *ibid*, p128.

⁴² Bruce, 1992a, p238. Some years earlier, on July 2nd 1981, the former British Prime Minister James Callaghan had also expressed positive feedback on the independence option in the House of Commons: "Britain should begin a new policy with the ultimate destination of giving the Northern Ireland people complete responsibility for their own affairs...the final step would be that the new Northern Ireland would emerge as a broadly independent state" (Adamson, 1982, p128).

⁴³ *Ulster*, April 1987.

⁴⁴ Cochrane, 1997, pp217-236. For consideration of PUP contribution to the Task Force see Novosel, 2013, pp 197-200.

⁴⁵ Purdy, op cit, p159.

⁴⁶ In 1983 the UDA had reorganised itself with a more clearcut separation of its military and political wings. A Promotion Department was sub-divided into education, politics and public relations divisions while the Protection Department consisted of the Ulster Freedom Fighters and Ulster Defence Force. See McAuley, 1993.

⁴⁷ *Ulster*, March 1987.

⁴⁸ Taylor, 1999, p198.

⁴⁹ Dillon, 2003, Chapter 4. Dillon alludes to how Craig, who was ran by E Department of the RUC Special Branch, had informed republican contacts of McMichael's involvement in the unsuccessful assassination attempt against Gerry Adams. The subsequent loss of McMichael to his own military intelligence handlers lead to a Special Branch videotape of one of Craig's meetings with a republican contact being passed on from the Force Research Unit to the UDA.

⁵⁰ This collusion on Craig's behalf was rumoured to have lead to the murders of loyalists such as William "Buckie" McCullough, George Seawright, William "Frenchie" Marchant, Lenny Murphy and John McMichael himself. This was directly alluded to by the widow of McCullough on *The Cook Report* special into paramilitary racketeering.

⁵¹ This episode of *The Cook Report* includes one scene showing Sayers sitting alongside McMichael and Lyttle at what appears to be either a press conference for the *Common Sense* launch or an associated event. Many copies of the document are on the table top and displayed on the wall behind them. This same documentary claimed that the expected nine million pound cost of the modern extension to the Belfast City Hospital - the hospital where the author was born in the mid-1960s - reached sixty five million pound costs due to the paramilitary extortion of the period.

⁵² Cook and Foster, 1999, p73.

⁵³ An attempt had been made to replace West Belfast Brigadier Tommy Lyttle with John McClatchey and Jackie McDonald had been appointed South Belfast Brigadier - both figures being associated with utilising UDA funds for personal gain and racketeering respectively. Less than two years after his appointment South Belfast Brigadier Jackie McDonald was imprisoned for demanding money with menaces and intimidating a witness. Following the expulsion of Johnny Adair and John White from the organisation in the following century he was associated with what were claimed to be the more "doveish" elements of the UDA leadership. A very candid McDonald speech on loyalist paramilitary dynamics and conflict transformation alike was given at the April 2012 Political Studies Association conference in Belfast: www.sluggeroole.com/2012/04/05/jackie-mcdonald-questions-orange-order-covenant-parade-taking-motorised-machine-guns-past-short-strand.

⁵⁴ This was actually a UVF operation in revenge for Craig setting up their volunteers for assassination (Cusack, 2004, p159).

⁵⁵ When told by police that the attack at Milltown had left at least two fatalities in its wake, Stone allegedly replied to police "Brilliant. I'm game for anything" (Bruce, 1992a, p258). In 2003 Stone claimed in an interview with the *London Evening Standard* that Labour politician Ken Livingstone had his movements monitored in London by loyalist paramilitaries pending an assassination attempt while leader of the Greater London Council. See *The Guardian*, 10th June 2003.

⁵⁶ McDonald and Cusack, 2004, p 172.

⁵⁷ McKittrick, op cit, p155.

⁵⁸ *Ulster*, March 1988

⁵⁹ *Guardian*, February 4th 2003.

⁶⁰ O'Malley, op cit, p354.

⁶¹ O'Day, 1993, p94.

⁶² For a further overview of Molyneaux's political strategy while Ulster Unionist Party leader see Bew, Gibbon and Patterson, 2002, pp 194-198.

⁶³ Cochrane, op cit, p226.

⁶⁴ *ibid*, p219.

⁶⁵ *Common Sense*, Ulster Political Research Group, 1987.

⁶⁶ Bruce, 1992a, pp243-44.

⁶⁷ The eighth of the McMichael Principles being "Religious liberty and pluralism are essential within a structured society". See *Ulster*, March and April 1988.

⁶⁸ Interview with Jonathan Moore, London Metropolitan University, August 2010.

⁶⁹ Dillon, 2003, pp91-92.

⁷⁰ Davy Payne is openly referred to by David McKittrick as "a psychopath with a taste for sadistic murders" (1989, p162). Despite his terrifying reputation Payne was linked to an earlier UDA political development in terms of his threat to the life of Charles Harding Smith following Smith's hostile reaction to Barr's Libyan trip. He had also been associated with the Peace People for a period. Stone's 2003 autobiography notes his refusal to work with "time wasters or the tea-and-biscuits paramilitaries" (p59).

⁷¹ O'Malley, op cit, p328.

⁷² Danny Morrison was the nephew of Northern Ireland Labour Party Stormont MP for Dock 1945-49 Hugh Downey.

⁷³ Dillon 2003, p103.

⁷⁴ *Belfast Telegraph*, 25th October 2012. UDA leader Jackie McDonald would note on the occasion: "It allows us to demonstrate to the whole province that we can share space, respect each other, exchange views and debate them".

VIII: THE ROLE OF THE PROGRESSIVE UNIONIST PARTY AND ULSTER DEMOCRATIC PARTY IN THE NORTHERN IRELAND PEACE PROCESS

During the early 1990s a fundamental and largely unforeseen seachange took place in the nature of paramilitary conflict in Northern Ireland with loyalist violence broadly equalling that emanating from militant republicanism. Indeed in both 1993 and 1994 fatalities caused by loyalist violence would supersede that of republican groups.¹ Yet this took place at a time wherein a new wave of political loyalism contemporaneously garnered unprecedented media attention for its conflict management initiatives and attempts to tackle the strategic failings of the unionist right head-on.

The telegenic ability of the Progressive Unionist Party's David Ervine to combine raw sincerity with cutting political articulation certainly made him a critical individual player-actor in Ulster's dramatic journey towards peace. Retrospectively too the socialist alternatives proposed by the PUP spokesmen in particular seemed to then herald a defining departure for working class political loyalism into the electoral battlegrounds of both unionism and the wider Northern Irish body politic. The multi-faceted populist appeal of their rhetoric appearing in stark contrast to an ageing Paisley and the dour Robert McCartney.

Copperfastening this would be a new UDA political front adding its own positive input into the strategic mix and, if not ridding itself of criminality, at least increasing their denials of it.² Ulster Democratic Party spokespeople incorporated individuals with no background in loyalist paramilitarism whatsoever - former grammar schoolboy David Adams and Gary McMichael who was the son of the murdered loyalist figurehead. It would also include Ray Smallwoods who would mirror the late Ulster Freedom Fighters leader in terms of his ability to cross from paramilitary action to political battle. Most dramatically, the presence within the leadership of John White suggested that figures involved in even the most brutal of paramilitary murders could now openly contribute to the conflict's final resolution.

With the unforgettable sight of Paisley's press conference at Stormont being stonewalled by ribald loyalist grassroots heckling in the early hours of Good Friday, a truly radical political transformation within Ulster unionism appeared fully underway at Easter 1998. Likewise a moment of genuine historical vindication for political loyalism, and political risk alike. A comprehensive raft of detailed narrative and analysis relates to this period of UVF and UDA political experimentation (McKittrick 1994, 1996 and 1999; Rowan 1995; McKittrick and Mallie 1996 and 2001; McAuley 1996, 1998 and 2000; O'Connor 2002; Wood 2006; Spencer 2008; Edwards 2010).

This chapter will consider the early development of the PUP and UDP prior to the pivotal 1991 loyalist ceasefire whereafter the scale of their public profile and levels of loyalist paramilitary activity alike radically altered. It will then trace both parties' crucial engagement in the complex pathways towards the cessation of all paramilitary violence and eventual political agreement in Northern Ireland. This will incorporate reference to the existence of a unique corridor for political dialogue between the UVF and the Irish government - forged in the context of parallel threats of mass murder from the former to the latter - and one UDA paramilitary whose public profile would have colossal repercussions for the future of political loyalism.

I will then analyse the strengths and weaknesses of both modern UVF and UDA political fronts - this separately in light of the differences in their relationship to the main paramilitary bodies, the clashing range of personalities as diffused through the mass media and the fact that their respective fates had diverged as early as 1998. My conclusion will once again reference the perennial failings attendant to the loyalist paramilitary experience that would clearly qualify political experimentation – patterns of internal paramilitary dissension and external political and public vilification reflecting upon a core of rank sectarianism and criminal enterprise.

Alike the experiences of the Volunteer Political Party and the Ulster Loyalist Democratic Party, political innovation would catalyse organisational ruptures with fatal consequences. This chapter covers a period of UVF and UDA paramilitary experimentation when expectations would be raised none higher in terms of political consolidation as a voice for the loyalist working class. Such hubris would be deflated entirely for the UDA alone in less than 25 months while much worse divisions and literal crises lay ahead in the new century for both loyalist groups. This by virtue of the nature of modern loyalist paramilitarism and, I shall contend yet again, its essential moral disfunctionality as perceived through mainstream unionist value systems.

DEVELOPMENT OF THE PROGRESSIVE UNIONIST PARTY

In a speech on the Twelfth of July 1977 UVF prison OC Gusty Spence called for a universal ceasefire of all paramilitary forces in Northern Ireland. This followed on from a joint statement in January of the same year from all five paramilitary leaders in the Maze upon the need for integration in Ulster.³ Spence's declaration - which referenced repressive security legislation, religious polarisation and the bigotry of Ulster's "super loyalists" - concluded:

Eventually Loyalist and Republican must sit down together for the good of our country. Dialogue will have to come about sometime, so why not now? There is no victory in Ulster, not for the IRA, or the UVF, the police or the army. There is only victory for humanity and common sense.⁴

He would also praise loyalist prisoners as follows:

Your official title is patriot-acting unpaid! How many soldiers, or policemen, or even prison officers, would do their duty without the inevitable pay as promised and delivered by the government for the services rendered. I suggest very few, if any. ⁵

A two-day UVF seminar in the Maze in September 1977 led to a report for the attention of the Brigade Staff on gangsterism, prison conditions, loyalist paramilitary division and the worth of constructing a political voice for the UVF.⁶ Spence however would resign as OC on Armistice Day in disgust at the sectarian nature of many UVF operations as well the perennial allegations of corruption and criminality.⁷ In October of the following year an extraordinary statement from a former UVF East Antrim leader sent to a local newspaper suggested yet again that elements of the loyalist prisoner population were continuing to dissect the brutal dynamics at the heart of the endless conflict ⁸ :

I make no apologies for being a member of the UVF because I was in it for what I believe in. But it has gone wrong and before any more young fellows waste their lives in a jail, I'm saying: stop it. I don't want to see them end up as H-Block prisoners offered remission for cleaning IRA H-Block cells....Get rid of the watered-down politicians and get staunch men instead who will represent your cause and not men who will jump off and visit the other side. ⁹

Spence would associate with the third political body associated with the UVF following his release in 1984. He joined the Progressive Unionist Party after hearing a speech by Hugh Smyth in which the councillor described himself as a "Protestant socialist". ¹⁰

The Independent Unionist Group, from which the PUP developed, had been formed in the Shankill Road in 1977 by Alderman Smyth who was its only elected representative. The change of name to the Progressive Unionist Group and then the PUP in 1979 had been made to differentiate the UVF-linked body from UDA flirtations with independence that were being floated at that time. Smyth would also note the specific linkage they thus made with Stewart's Progressive Unionists of the 1930s over the Unionist Party having turned its back on the working class. ¹¹

In 1980 the PUP unsuccessfully attempted to take part in Humphrey Atkins' Constitutional Conference ¹² while in 1981 Hugh Smyth in Belfast was the only successful party candidate at the local government elections.¹³ In this year their *Sharing Responsibility* paper - which had originated within Long Kesh in 1972¹⁴ and first took structural form as the Independent Unionist Group's 1977 *Devolution: The Plan for Ulster*¹⁵ - would receive a positive reception from Northern Ireland Secretary of State James Prior who felt however that it was "twenty years ahead of its time."¹⁶

In November 1983 *The Way Ahead* policy document proposed a full paramilitary ceasefire, the withdrawal of British troops to barracks, acceptance of the RUC as a police service for all areas and a delegate conference of all political parties. It noted that:

There is some agreement that the community is being divided by 'two totally conflicting political ideologies', but we contend that, serious as those difficulties are, they are of a totally constitutional nature and have not, so far, resulted in any marked social or political differences.¹⁷

Further electoral disappointment would follow for the PUP in 1985 when David Ervine stood in the Pottinger ward of Belfast and garnered 394 votes.¹⁸ In this year as well a formal PUP constitution was written with the party incorporating Clause 4 of the British Labour Party's own constitution regarding the workers' right to the fruits of their industry. The *Sharing Responsibility* document was also updated and abridged with Ireland's only unionist party of socialist persuasion soberly noting:

Of course there are ruthless and personally ambitious men who do not hold the interests of the community as a whole at heart. They will have to search their consciences now and decide whether they would consider these proposals or reject them and perpetuate by words or deeds the unending violence.¹⁹

Such proposals included the initial restructuring of the Northern Ireland Assembly with a broader tier of non-contentious local government in areas such as agriculture, tourism and the environment. The core of their agenda was a committee system of regional government – a central committee replacing cabinet government. There would be proportionality in chairmanships for the committees while a Bill of Rights would be overseen by eight judges – two each from Northern Ireland, the United Kingdom, the Republic of Ireland and Europe. Local conciliation on urgent communal issues would be engaged via a Belfast office and a cross-border committee of elected representatives could discuss non-constitutional matters. The central theme throughout would not be on sharing power but on the sharing of responsibility.²⁰

Spence gave an interview to Belfast's *Fortnight* magazine in September 1985 in which the first broadside was delivered against republicanism from a new construct of loyalism that appeared willing to strike out on radical paths to communal reconciliation. He would recall O'Neill's politically catalysing moves of the 1960s with aching candidness:

Sell-out? You must be joking. How much internal squirming I have done thinking how politically naive I was....Frightening people is nothing new in Unionist circles, because even then, immediately previous to elections, there was always a plot to assassinate a cabinet minister. In 1966 there was a plot to take over the City Hall and make another GPO, like 1916. What crap! But people actually believed it and here's one silly fool who really did believe that.²¹

The mid-1980s would see the revival of loyalist paramilitary fortunes following the signing of the Anglo-Irish Agreement - as discussed in the previous chapter. Both main groups had formed an Ulster Loyalist Front in response. Paramilitary figures in the UVF and UDA were also associated with the "1986 Committee" which helped organise the violence-wracked March 3rd 1986 Day of Action.

Some PUP figures felt particularly manipulated following their invitation to a Glengall Street meeting prior to the Day of Action at a time when both the UVF and UDA were firmly against the idea of using the strike weapon. Subsequent press reporting was slanted towards the insidious presence of the “hard men”.²² Many loyalist paramilitary figures saw the hamstrung unionist reaction to the AIA as the “defining moment within unionism”.²³ Westminster had made clear its intentions towards the Ulster Protestant community while unionist leaders in turn were reduced to repeating age-old vitriolic calls to arms while hesitating yet again from getting associated too deeply in the philistine specifics of resistance.²⁴

David Irvine’s Boston College testimony – as published in 2010 as part of the *Voices From The Grave* work – noted of this period:

I think the Anglo-Irish Agreement threw Loyalism and Unionism into a state of flux but the debates within paramilitarism were quite interesting, certainly those within the UVF...quite a number believed that the responsibility for the political conditions that lead to the creation of the Anglo-Irish Agreement lay with the Westminster MPs. The one card....they knew they had was the capacity to inflict violence and...rather than a reactive response in the Loyalist leadership, they seemed to be much more politically attuned in the use of violence.²⁵

In July 1986 the PUP’s *War or Peace, Conflict or Conference* policy document underscored the core flaws of the AIA’s implementation and the indefensible refusal of mainland parties to organise in Ulster.²⁶ In March of 1987 a party spokesman gave an address at Queens University Belfast which underscored the PUP’s “Honest Ulsterman” credentials and reflected upon the myopia of working class loyalism to date:

There will be no hypocrisy about our politics, no double standards...which reminds me of watching a Civil Rights march on the television and a fellow Unionist said to me, ‘Good God, look at them...slum dwellers marching arm in arm with slum landlords for Civil Rights’; and I replied ‘But are we not being used the same way...don’t we doff our cap to similar people...do you honestly think that we are better off than any of them, having come from the slums of the Shankill?’²⁷

THE POLITICAL REVIVAL OF THE UDA AND A PAN-LOYALIST CEASEFIRE

In April 1988, four months after the murder of John McMichael, the UDA had called on unionism to cast aside its programme of political chicanery against the AIA and forge a structured alternative to the imposed act. This could be by way of a democratic conference of all constitutional parties so that a devolved government could be created along the principles laid down in *Common Sense*. For the ULDP it was thus time for loyalism to begin setting the pace of change and to move from laboured reaction to pro-active innovation:

... the future campaign must be one to produce a settlement not to save the careers of failed politicians or to maintain outdated ideas...to this end it is essential that the carefully sculpted image of the UDA as being gangsters is laid to rest once and for all.²⁸

The relaunching of the ULDP was as an independent political party completely separate from the broader UDA. Gary McMichael would stress how the umbilical linkage of the earlier body with the broader UDA had significantly undermined electoral opportunities. Thus on this occasion the objective was “to create a political movement that was open to any person who supported our policies and aims”²⁹ while accepting that activists may well be former or current UDA members. At this stage the *Common Sense* proposals remained the mainstay of their agenda – overlying a rearguard faith in forging a coalition to fight for independence under the same political principles. This being a crystal clear example - alike the earlier New Ulster Political Research Group - of how so much loyalist paramilitary thinking was fatally unfocused in comparison to their republican counterparts.

The ULDP pinpointed the socio-economic concerns of the working classes as being of major importance alongside the need for the party to gain a foothold on the grassroots community level. *Ulster* magazine would note:

The historical failure of Stormont was not due to devolution or Unionism. It was due to a Conservative political establishment's refusal to introduce fair representation. We do not advocate devolution for the sake of having it. Or for playing at government – no matter how consociational it may be! Our search is for good government – one that will increase the quality of life for all our people....³⁰

In May 1989 party leader Ken Kerr was returned to the Waterside ward of Derry City Council for the ULDP.³¹ In December the ULDP renamed itself the Ulster Democratic Party in order to broaden its appeal and further underline that it was not specifically the political wing of the UDA.³² In the May 1990 Upper Bann parliamentary by-election, following the death of Harold McCusker, the UDP's Gary McMichael won 600 votes.³³

The turn of the decade would see further crucial leadership changes in the UDA as a consequence of the Stevens inquiry into loyalist paramilitary possession of classified security force documentation. This led to the trial and imprisonment of leader Tommy Lyttle in 1991 and the exposure of Force Research Unit operative Brian Nelson at the very heart of the UDA intelligence structure. The galling transparency thus revealed throughout the broader organisation led to a radical root and branch reform of its security structure and with Lyttle's departure a new Inner Council was emplaced.³⁴

One of the major riders to the new loyalist offensive that would emerge – from both UFF and UVF quarters – was an unequivocal quantitative increase in the amount of actual republican activists falling victim to loyalist assassination squads. In the BBC *Endgame* documentary Irvine would be more precise in terms of rumours that republican figures were approaching the

reactivated loyalists in this period to consider a limitation on offensive actions: “We were getting to the bastards, and the answer to the Provos, at that time was fuck off, no way”.³⁵

In 1991 loyalist paramilitary groups killed 39 people compared to 42 murdered by republicans.³⁶ In this year both loyalist groups had joined together as the Combined Loyalist Military Command. This would eventually consist of a Combined Loyalist Military Alliance (CLMA) and a Combined Loyalist Political Alliance (CLPA) – founded during the winter of 1992-1993 - which focused on political analysis. A hybrid of the two faces of militant loyalism being seen in the increasing enrichment of violent word power in loyalist paramilitary statements.³⁷ Even the updated *Sharing Responsibility in Northern Ireland* document of this year struck a sobering chord when noting that such reasonable offers of accommodation would now be placed on the negotiating table for the last time:

Moving from our established traditional and legitimate British position with its attendant aspiration of total integration into mainland mainstream politics, we have compromised a great deal. Nationalists should now also show magnanimity with compromises.³⁸

On April 22nd 1991 - prior to the Brooke talks between representatives of the UUP, DUP, SDLP and Alliance - the CLMC would produce a bold peacemaking initiative by ordering “a universal suspension of aggressive operational hostilities” for the timescale of the negotiations.³⁹ The period of the meetings and the groundbreaking two-month loyalist ceasefire of 1991 – between April 22nd and July 4th - would see 13 IRA murders (including UDP North West chairman Cecil McKnight in Derry City) and huge bombs planted in Protestant towns and villages. The ceasefire ended on the day of the collapse of the talks which had organically developed from Secretary of State Peter Brooke’s landmark 9th November 1990 speech which underscored that the British government had no “selfish strategic or economic interest in Northern Ireland”.⁴⁰

Following the collapse of the process and the increase in IRA violence came a widespread acceptance within militant loyalism that the war must now be accelerated to a point of closure in the same way that AIA protests had made loyalists realise that political unionism could no longer protect the Protestant population from what political scientists McGarry and O’Leary would class as “coercive consociationalism”.⁴¹ Strategic thinkers within both loyalist paramilitary bodies also agreed that the loyalist people could no longer be represented by mainstream unionism while genuine working class voices were excluded. Ervine would state in the *Loyalists* documentary, with a perhaps more overly candid insight than usual into PUP-UVF linkages, what the 1991 CLMC ceasefire represented in terms of a defining watershed:

We had people thinking politically, people thinking strategically. It’s always been perceived that Nationalists are the only people who can think strategically: that they know what a Loyalist or a Unionist is going to do at every turn. So it was vitally important that Unionism had to try and take agendas and whilst the theories around our

“kitchen cabinet” about escalating the war was to take the military agenda from the Provos, well it’s equally valid to take the political agenda from the Provos.⁴²

1992 was the year that the UVF and UDA came close to matching the fatalities caused by their paramilitary opponents – 39 attributed murders against 42 killings by republican groups.⁴³ However the aforementioned UVF “kitchen cabinet”⁴⁴, which had met frequently in Spence’s Shankill home since the turn of the decade, had for some time realised that behind the accusations of pragmatism and cunning that the republican movement had indeed fundamentally altered their thinking on nationalist aspiration and political strategy.⁴⁵

During the year the UVF were yet again responsible for the majority of loyalist murders including the killing of five Catholic civilians at Sean Graham’s bookmakers on the Lower Ormeau Road in January following the IRA murders of eight Protestant workmen at Teebane crossroads three weeks earlier. South Belfast UDA leader Jackie McDonald would stress the brutal underlining logic as follows:

It was a message to the IRA and the republicans or the nationalist community, ‘If they’re going to do that to us, we’re going to do this to you, so you tell them to stop’. And I believe it was the sheer violence and the escalation and the killings that brought about the ceasefires at the end of the day.⁴⁶

In 1992 the UDA were finally banned after years of SDLP prompting and concomitant reticence on the part of the security apparatus that this would make it less easy to monitor. In the run-up to the General Election, Ken Kerr was criticised in some loyalist circles for urging West Belfast unionists to vote for the SDLP. The following year Kerr lost his Derry City council seat but in the same local elections Gary McMichael was elected for Lisburn. David Adams, who also stood in the same constituency in 1993, would only garner 283 votes.⁴⁷

THE UVF DUBLIN CONNECTION AND AN ALTERNATIVE ALPHA AND OMEGA OF LOYALISM

In March 1993 a Republican Sinn Féin public meeting in Dublin provided the unlikely setting for the introduction of several Shankill UVF men to Dublin trade unionist Chris Hudson. Invited to Belfast some weeks later by Ervine he would meet the UVF’s two leaders where the paramilitary representatives pledged themselves to finding an equitable political solution alongside a willingness to bomb Dublin.⁴⁸ A conduit was thus forged between the UVF Brigade Staff and the Dublin government in the form of Fergus Finlay who was Tanaiste Dick Spring’s Special Advisor on Foreign Affairs and who monitored Hudson’s movements closely.⁴⁹ In the same month Hugh Smyth became Lord Mayor of Belfast and thus giving the PUP a higher political profile.

Bruce would note in a *Fortnight* article of May 1993 how the reinvigorated loyalist paramilitary offensive was powered by Protestant fears of further British government concessions and by gathering demographic change in North and West Belfast. One paramilitary thus quoted would note:

Political talks are a fuckin' sideshow. This is not about committees or assemblies. It is about our survival. The Protestant people have had enough and will strike back. We have sat on our hands for too long, and what has it got us? Don't believe anyone who tells you that violence does not work.⁵⁰

UFF military commander Johnny Adair was targeted by Ardoyne Provisionals in the Shankill bombing of October 23rd which left eight Protestant civilians dead, including women and children, at Frizells fish shop. Despite loyalist retaliation Ervine and the UVF's leaders would insist to Hudson at a November 10th meeting that peace was still the goal of the organisation. Hudson's linkages gave Dublin a radical counterpoise to the Hume-Adams axis at a time when it was being openly suggested that Major's government should be pro-active facilitators for the Protestants to accept unity at any price.

In his first television interview, a silhouetted Ervine would state the UVF bottom line in the aftermath of the Shankill bomb - an important clarification to note in light of what still remained the core rationale for the existence of the organisation itself:

Please lay down your weapons. The loyalist paramilitaries have said they will lay down theirs. Call their bluff. Let our people move on together.⁵¹

The respective UDA press statement following the mass murders however remains one of the most chilling commentaries put into the public domain over the course of the Troubles:

As from 6pm all brigade area active service units of the UFF across Ulster will be mobilised. John Hume, Gerry Adams and the nationalist electorate will pay a heavy, heavy price for today's atrocity, which was signed, sealed and delivered by the cutting edge of the Pan Nationalist front. To the perpetrators of the atrocity we say: 'You will have no hiding place. Time is on our side'.⁵²

The UFF mobilisation⁵³ climaxed with the "Trick or Treat" killings at Greysteel while recruitment into the ranks of the UDA's youth wing would also allegedly soar. This was in turn encouraged by the by now legendary status attained by the Lower Shankill C Company "Dream Team". Headed by Johnny Adair – the most famous loyalist militant since Buck Alec - its composite teams ranged against Catholic Belfast included fellow luminaries who had graduated from local skinhead groups with National Front connections⁵⁴ into the Ulster Young Militants (UYM) and then into UFF Active Service Units.⁵⁵

December's Downing Street Declaration contained six key principles for a broad political settlement that had been directly suggested for inclusion by the CLPA and agreed by the CLMC.

These were the maintenance of Northern Ireland's position within the United Kingdom, the guarantee of the right to self-determination for all the Northern Ireland people, the right of all groups to seek constitutional change through democratic and peaceful means, respect for the rights and aspirations of all law-abiding citizens of whatever religious or ethnic background, the standard faith in a written constitution and Bill of Rights and finally the fostering of neighbourly relations between north and south through political structures. ⁵⁶

In early 1994 the UVF had also become aware of IRA moves toward a ceasefire through ongoing contacts with southern politicians and Protestant clergymen of which the most important was Church of Ireland Primate Robin Eames. Eames had been asked to act as an intermediary by UDA-UFF liaison Reverend Roy Magee at the request of the CLMC themselves. The linkages with the Protestant churchmen⁵⁷ – and the greater openness of the PUP to engage with representatives of the Irish government in comparison to the UDA⁵⁸ - elicited a UVF ceasefire offer as early as March 1994 though this was scuppered by the fear of a “final bow” of IRA retribution. ⁵⁹

On June 16th 1994 INLA gunmen murdered the UVF's Trevor King and Colin Craig on the Shankill Road. ⁶⁰ Revenge was exacted in turn on the evening of June 18th at O'Tooles bar in Loughinisland when gunmen interrupted the Republic of Ireland World Cup fixture being televised there to murder five Catholics.⁶¹ Ervine at this point noted the insidious desire of the republicans to “swan the world's stage while Prods continued to kill Taigs” ⁶² as being the strategic undertone behind the final fusillade of IRA violence.

Tragically for the future fortunes of both the UDP and the wider UDA would be the IRA murder of Ray Smallwoods in Lisburn on July 11th 1994. McMichael would claim that he too was an assassination target at this time and that :

The role that Ray had been playing at that very crucial time was one that should have earned him reverence as he struggled to bring peace to our society in the most dangerous and challenging of environments. Instead, it earned him two cartridges from a sawn-off shotgun because the IRA saw his peace efforts as a threat to them. ⁶³

Smallwoods had introduced members of the UDA's Inner Council to the cross community church group which included Presbyterian minister Ken Newell and Clonard Monastery priests Alec Reid and Gerry Reynolds. The latter two Catholic clergymen attended Smallwood's wake alongside the UDA's John White, David Adams and Joe English. Both Redemptorists praised his attempts to keep dialogue going through periods of despondency while Reynolds lead the company in prayer.

Ray Smallwoods was a paramilitary figure who, like Gerry Adams, was certainly not a straightforward dove. While not being a military member of the UDA Inner Council, as claimed by the IRA following his murder, he did have notable reservations about automatically

following the Provisionals to ceasefire status. Likewise while particularly open to political advice from Archbishop Eames - and like fellow UDA leader Joe English being firmly set against the organisation's involvement in the drugs trade⁶⁴ - the study of the organisation by McDonald and Cusack would also note Smallwood's faith in perfecting the UFF's bombmaking capacity to the detriment of the Republic of Ireland's economy. They also pinpoint Smallwoods as being at the forefront of loyalist figures stressing how Sinn Fein was the republican movement's Achilles heel in terms of loyalist paramilitary targeting - the republican party's focused attempts to rival the SDLP with a highly public drive to secure support from disaffected and disenfranchised nationalist youth having raised their profile significantly. ⁶⁵

Nonetheless Smallwoods was truly one of the main architects of progressive loyalist thinking in this period which aimed in the long term at genuine constitutional security for Protestant Ulster, communal reconciliation within Northern Ireland and better relations between north and south. Both loyalist parties having steadfastly stressed the positivity implicit in the fact that the Stormont regime could never return whilst remaining cynical of Westminster pandering to a green-hued nationalist agenda. They were thus painfully aware of how that very pan-nationalist movement was strategically adjusting the political goalposts to fundamentally unbalance the unionist opposition. The murder of a figure such as Smallwoods therefore would indeed stand as the most notable testament to the failure of the UDA and UVF to seamlessly reassemble from war to peace alike the IRA. ⁶⁶

On August 31st 1994 the Provisional IRA declared their ceasefire - a subsequent three-day CLMC conference at the Park Avenue Hotel in East Belfast garnered advice from local academics and vintage loyalist personalities such as Barr and Tyrie on future strategy. ⁶⁷ UVF acquiescence from its prisoner wings was more easily facilitated than that attendant to the UDA-UFF as these Maze prisoners were treated as a fundamental battalion of the overarching organisation as opposed to a group with especial veto power over future development. Despite figures within the movement who wanted to end the loyalist war with a Powergel crescendo the voices of Spence, Ervine and Hutchinson prevailed.

The UDA claimed that their acceptance of a peace strategy lay finally within the remit of the loyalist prisoners. At this point UFF Maze OC Johnny Adair and Prisons Spokesman John White were both pushing hard to for the organisation to accept the peace strategy. They succeeded to such an extent that the UDA was willing to announce their own ceasefire in the Maze carpark some days before the official CLMC announcement.

Finally on October 13th at Fernhill House in West Belfast's Glencairn district, scene of many horrific sectarian killings of Catholic civilians, Gusty Spence would overlay his words of authority and assurance with deeply moving and dramatic sentiments of closure and regret at Ulster's rollcall of wasted lives.

We are on the threshold of a new and exciting beginning with our battles in the future being political battles, fought on the side of honesty and democracy against the negativity of mistrust, misunderstanding and malevolence, so that, together, we can bring forth a wholesome society in which our children, and their children, will know the meaning of true peace.⁶⁸

TROUBLED ROADS TO STORMONT BUILDINGS - ELECTORAL BREAKTHROUGH FOR THE LOYALIST FRINGE

Shortly after the CLMC announcement BBC security correspondent Brian Rowan interviewed the PUP leaders for some revealing insights into the strategic thinking of loyalism from the period of the collapse of the Brooke talks onwards. For Ervine the loss of unionist confidence had to be contextualised and turned into positivity:

When I was a boy the great saying was 'We are the People'. For 1994 most unionists would settle for being a people and gone is the sense of jingoism and triumphalism. I think tragically we are faced in some respects with a reversed triumphalism – a reversed jingoism which nationalism has to deal with. We need to calm the rhetoric on both sides and calm the absolutist language which in a divided society is the creation of further division ...⁶⁹

McKittrick's *The Nervous Peace* reportage collection references an angry exchange of words during a conference on Protestant identity in October 1994 between Hutchinson and the DUP's Iris Robinson. Hutchinson noted various examples in the past of DUP exhortations to the unionist masses to take militant action and how they then failed to stand beside Protestant ultras when imprisoned:

When you wear red berets and march in ranks it's a statement of militarism, and you scare the life out of young men who then think they have to go out and fight. This is hypocrisy.⁷⁰

The same conference produced yet another addition to the cavalcade of extraordinarily radical soundbites emanating from the UVF's political front at this period with Ervine utilising one of John Hume's most trustworthy adages:

The politics of division see thousands of people dead, most of them working class, and headstones on the graves of young men. We have been fools: let's not be fools any longer. All elements must be comfortable within Northern Ireland. We have got to extend the hand of friendship, we have got to get the peacelines down brick by brick, and somehow or other we have got to introduce class politics. You can't eat a flag...⁷¹

In October 1994 Spence would lead a loyalist delegation to the United States at the invitation of Bill Flynn who was chairman of the National Committee on American Foreign Policy. The mixed PUP-UDP grouping attempted to dispel the set notion of loyalists as puppets of military intelligence or bigoted backwoodsmen.⁷²

The electoral difficulties adherent to the political transformation of loyalism however was displayed just weeks after the ceasefire by the failure of the UDP's Tommy Kirkham to win a council seat at the Newtownabbey by-election. UUP councillor Chris McGimpsey saw this as an ominous pointer for the long-term prospects of the loyalist fringe:

With that type of candidate, fighting a vigorous campaign, who had a track record and was a nice guy, the best he could manage was 18 percent of the vote. That's as good a candidate as they have got in a sympathetic area – it's traditionally a strong UDA area. So if Tommy couldn't win a seat there, I don't think the UDP will win a seat anywhere.⁷³

On December 15th political representatives of the loyalist paramilitary groups engaged in formal discussions with civil servants at Stormont. The thread of progressive thinking in the opening statements continued on from the tone set at Fernhill House. However the government stand on the decommissioning of paramilitary weapons - alongside the lack of a PUP/UDP electoral mandate negating entry to the talks process - brought the light flight of political loyalism firmly to ground. At a press conference afterwards Hutchinson referred to the loyalist mandate as "the silence of the guns".⁷⁴

During these particular talks the government would refuse to deal with the UVF and UDA-linked political groups on a separate basis as they had initially desired. Some degree of further friction would emerge when PUP representatives Lindsay Robb⁷⁵ and Jackie Mahood insisted on raising issues in specific relation to Mid-Ulster loyalist paramilitarism to their colleagues' mortification. Northern Ireland Office Head of Public Affairs Chris McCable would compare the performance of the loyalist fringe with their Sinn Fein opponents in negative fashion:

Meeting the Loyalists was like meeting a sophisticated set of community groups with political aspirations, whereas Republicans operated like high-level international diplomats.⁷⁶

After the CLMC ceasefire relations between the PUP and DUP would deteriorate rapidly- the loyalist parties claiming that the DUP were put onto a vitriolic rearguard to secure their electoral base while the Democratic Unionists in turn accused the PUP and UDP as being used as political patsies to facilitate Sinn Fein entry into the negotiation process. At the PUP interim conference in February Ervine would respond with gusto:

What have these wretches ever done for Ulster? What will they ever do except shout at the dark from their trenches or dream up another crazy stunt? They talk a good fight but as my oul' Da used to say... 'Talk is cheap but it takes money to buy drink'. The tribal ritualistic incantation and shibboleth of the past are dead.⁷⁷

Following the Framework Document release in February⁷⁸, which in turn further qualified the relationship of Protestant Ulster to the United Kingdom as one of sufferance through contractual

obligation, the UDP became the first unionist party to attend the annual White House St Patrick's Day celebrations.⁷⁹ During the first Drumcree dispute in 1995 Fergus Finlay met UVF leader Billy Wright at his Corcrair Estate home during the stalemate over the Orange Order march down the nationalist Garvaghy Road. At this point Wright expressed his support for the political path being taken by the Belfast PUP leadership. On August 25th 1995 the CLMC proactively attempted to bring paramilitary closure one stage further with the publication of a "No First Strike" offer while retaining its arsenal for defensive reasons.

September saw David Trimble's election as UUP leader⁸⁰ while on January 9th 1996 a massive bomb in London's Docklands brought an end to the IRA ceasefire. Ervine would subsequently call for no retaliation following the collapse and despite a CLMC statement that: "We are poised and ready to strike to effect. We will give blow for blow. As in the past, whatever the cost we will gladly pay it."⁸¹ Grassroots loyalist opinion at this time was highly charged over so much blame being placed at the door of John Major for the resumption of violence though as a reward for the lack of retaliation the first formal meetings between David Trimble and the PUP and UDP took place shortly after the Canary Wharf bombing.

Late Spring 1996 witnessed credible electoral success for the PUP and UDP by way of the Forum elections for the All Party Talks. The PUP in manifesto and media appearance would challenge unionism from within - rejecting the notion of unionism as a political philosophy and instead regarding it as a statement of identity without any necessitous anti-Irish or anti-Catholic baggage. Likewise the most urgent political task ahead for Ulster was the creation of a future for a divided society with the PUP as a party of reconciliation and dialogue.⁸²

The UDP would seek entrance to the talks arena on the principles elucidated within *Common Sense* and on the model of co-operation suggested by a proposed Council of the British Isles – the latter to be founded upon unanimity in decision-making, subsidiarity principles and the absence of supranational bodies. Northern Ireland would thus cease to "a place apart" and unionism could allow itself a broader outlook within a devolving United Kingdom and expanding European Union.⁸³

Despite some mainstream unionist denigration of the loyalist fringe parties over class and paramilitary issues the May elections saw the PUP perform particularly well in Belfast. Across Northern Ireland they won 26,082 votes or 3.5% of the total vote. The UDP took 16,715 votes or 2.2% of the total. The PUP and UDP thus combined won nearly 10% of the entire unionist vote though this was surpassed threefold by the DUP.

Although failing to win a seat in any individual constituency the PUP did return two representatives to the Forum in Ervine and Smyth by way of the "Top-Up" quota system of overall votes gained for the ten leading parties. White and McMichael took seats for the UDP

under the same special electoral mechanism which to a significant degree had been gauged to facilitate an entrée for the loyalist fringe.⁸⁴

On 22nd July a loyalist delegation of Smyth, Ervine, McMichael and White met John Major at Downing Street. Much media attention focused on White's controversial attendance as Paddy Wilson's son was to graphically relate:

How could the British Prime Minister shake hands with a man who knifed my father to death thirty times? All I can think about when I see that man is how my father must have fought in vain for his life. When I look at his face, I think about the screams of pain he must have listened to when he was mutilating my father.⁸⁵

The second Drumcree dispute in 1996 saw the potentiality arise of live British Army bullets being used against Protestant militants.⁸⁶ An emergency CLMC meeting appealed to young loyalists to not let themselves be dragged into street protests though Hutchinson was forced to intervene directly in front of an AK-47 laden volunteer at North Belfast's Torrens-Heathfield interface with the Catholic Oldpark.⁸⁷

The murder of taxi driver Michael McGoldrick would lead to an August decision by the UVF Brigade Staff to stand down the Portadown unit and announce that Wright would have to leave Ulster on pain of death. It was in the aftermath of this threat that Wright publicly expressed his disgust at the disloyalty of a Belfast organisation whose socialist drift and rapprochement with working class republicanism had seen it lose touch with the heterogeneity of the UVF volunteer base. *Combat* in turn would equate Wright's compliant attitude to the DUP with that party's earlier acceptance of mainstream unionist approbation against the VPP. It also noted the irony of Wright's alliance with a Paisley-McCartney axis so fundamentally centred on rapid paramilitary disarmament.⁸⁸

On May Day 1997 Tony Blair's landslide victory brought Labour into power with a fresh commitment to remove every remaining roadblock standing in the way of a solution. Secretary of State Mo Mowlam's populist touch caught the mood of the times and on the 19th of July 1997 the PIRA ceasefire was reinstituted. In the General Election itself Ervine had stood against the Reverend Martin Smyth in South Belfast and polled an extremely impressive 14% to take third place. The PUP's Billy Donaldson won 5% of the vote in East Antrim and Hugh Smyth took 8% in South Antrim - all three candidates keeping their deposits. The PUP won 10,934 votes or 1.4% of the total while the UDP did not stand candidates.⁸⁹

A mere three weeks later the local government elections saw the PUP in Belfast almost equal the Alliance vote on 9 % - Smyth would be elected in Court, Ervine in Victoria and Hutchinson in Oldpark wards. Two PUP candidates – Stewart Currie and Ernest Steele - were also successful in North Down and William Greer in Newtownabbey . In the same local council elections the UDP won four seats – McMichael and Adams in Lisburn, Frank McCoubrey in

Belfast and Tommy Kirkham in Newtownabbey. The PUP polled 12,051 votes in total and the UDP 6,244.⁹⁰

On September 15th 1997 Ulster Unionist Party and loyalist fringe representatives walked symbolically together to the negotiating table at Castle Buildings Stormont to face the SDLP and Sinn Fein. Trimble himself lead the delegation into the talks as the Vanguard Unionist politician whose final Convention speech contained the insistence that: "We should look for our brave men in prisons and for the fools among politicians".⁹¹

THE GOOD FRIDAY AGREEMENT AND ASSEMBLY ELECTIONS

During the negotiations which lead to eventual political agreement in Northern Ireland, many critics saw the loyalist fringe presence as providing "cover" for Trimble against Paisleyite accusations of sell-out. Indeed at the negotiating table itself there was a tendency for the mainstream unionists to distance themselves from the loyalists by way of positioning the PUP and UDP into a strategically valuable negotiating space where they could be more open with republican figures. Such non-negotiable criticism from this quarter including "unacceptable, unreasonable, unworkable" and "We are talking about people going back to war".⁹²

Party leader Hugh Smyth elaborated on the influence they had on the UUP as follows:

We gave Trimble a back-bone. I don't mean this to undermine Trimble, but it is an inescapable fact that he would not have been able to sit with Sinn Fein without the backing of the PUP. There wouldn't have been a peace process at all. We made him strong.⁹³

Tensions between loyalist and unionist representatives would still be deeply engrained. The PUP and UDP were refused an invite to the November Hatfield House unionist unity conference as suggested by former IRA Southern Command leader and Trimble advisor Sean O'Callaghan – an individual who had been directly involved in the murder of UDR Greenfinch Eve Martin.⁹⁴

On 27th December Billy Wright would be shot dead by the INLA during a prison visit at the Maze. Revenge killings by the UFF and the new UVF-splinter Loyalist Volunteer Force began apace.⁹⁵ On 9th January Mowlam visited the Maze Prison to convince the UDA-UFF prisoners of the need to continue supporting the ongoing negotiations. The UDP left the Lancaster House talks on January 26th before being expelled for being in breach of the Mitchell Principles - McMichael himself feeling that this occurrence fatally damaged the long term fortunes of the UDP in comparison to the PUP. Despite close genealogical links between the UVF and LVF, the UDA would still be openly associated in the public mind with the loyalist "concession" on dissident terror in this period.

In January 1998 Senator George Mitchell had laid down an Easter deadline for completion of the talks process. Spence's stirring reflections on the new loyalist politicians faced up squarely to criticisms that the real opposition was absent in terms of Paisley and McCartney:

But listen, we are hard men who have been through the mill. We were at the coalface; we chopped that coal out and we sucked in that stinking dank air. We came out black at the coalface and I'm talking about a paramilitary sense. Nobody was going to pull the wool over our eyes. We came up in the back streets where you don't let your bone go with the dog and we monitored everything that happened.⁹⁶

At 4.45 pm on the afternoon of Good Friday 1998 Senator Mitchell received a phonecall from Trimble confirming that Tony Blair's intervention to assure the UUP that decommissioning would not be fudged had been enough to commit his party to signing up to the agreement package: a devolved Assembly, proportionality-based Executive, North-South Ministerial Council and other such cross-border bodies. This was underpinned with core moves on both decommissioning and prisoner releases.

On referendum day of 22nd May 1998 the pro-Agreement parties – as constituted in part by political representatives of both republican and loyalist paramilitary groups – passed the determining 70% figure by a single percentage point while the Irish Republic endorsed the Agreement by a 94% margin.⁹⁷ A truly historic realignment within unionist politics now seemed assured with the significant development of the loyalist fringe and their strategic incorporation within the pro-Agreement unionist bloc. They furthermore stood in fundamental opposition to a major political figure who they clearly portrayed as having centrally sustained the sectarian dynamics that had detrimentally driven so many working class Protestants into death and imprisonment consequent to engagement with loyalist paramilitarism. However, radically divergent fates would await at the June elections for the new Northern Ireland Assembly.

The PUP's Ervine and Hutchinson won seats in East and North Belfast respectively and thus provided the pro-Agreement unionists with a slight majority. In contrast the UDP would win no seats at all with the Single Transferable Vote electoral mechanism being less beneficial for minority party representation than the "Top-Up" quota system employed beforehand for the Forum elections to that specific end. Michael Stone's infamous 14th May appearance at a UDP rally perhaps being a major contributing factor in turn that finally cleaved a separate path for the UDA from the more politic Ervine and Hutchinson.⁹⁸

The PUP had essentially consolidated their 1996 Forum polling with 20,634 votes or 2.55% of the Northern Ireland total while the UDP's 8,651 saw their vote drop significantly to 1.07%.⁹⁹ John White won a mere 911 votes in North Belfast while party leader McMichael lost in the six-member Lagan Valley constituency with the party's highest poll of 3,725.¹⁰⁰ His brave attempt at the end of his *An Ulster Voice* reminiscences to stress how the grassroots work of the UDP

would continue, despite the fact that one of Europe's largest paramilitary groups would not now be represented in the chambers of the new devolved government, sounded hollow. Likewise for David Adams who attempted to sound stoical in his *Loyalists* documentary contribution concerning the fear that lack of representation for the UDA and UFF would undermine the wider process.¹⁰¹

This would indeed prove to be an ominous political development as the organisation who had maintained unity throughout the peace process to date, even as elements of the Mid-Ulster UVF turned against its parent body, would subsequently endure a sequence of damaging feuds that brought public support amongst the loyalist working classes for the UDA to the point of extinction.

THE PUP AND THE CONTRADICTIONS OF A PARAMILITARY PROGRESSIVE UNIONISM

Of all the loyalist political fronts over the course of the modern conflict the PUP unequivocally attained the highest profile due to its contribution to the loyalist ceasefires and the GFA as well as subsequent electoral success. To a certain extent this was centrally underpinned by the formidable attraction of David Ervine and the degree to which his political voice married the popular mood on the need for a broad-based agreement within the British Isles. Ervine's combination of emotional intensity, verbal dexterity and political acumen being made manifest in such cutting commentary as:

I went to Crumlin Road Prison where I found it a Dickensian hole. I was locked up by people who were defending the status quo – just like me. I think at some point, you've got to see the foundation of your justification rocked.¹⁰²

The PUP's political remit did indeed span a truly circular spectrum of issues which in fundamental respects positioned themselves outside the parameters of set unionist rhetoric and discourse whilst remaining at heart a firmly pro-Union party. Without diluting their British identity, and with Hutchinson even stating that he was not necessarily a monarchist¹⁰³, they attempted to forge conduits for constructive dialogue with their nationalist and republican rivals within a battleground of political traditions that they would not hesitate to label as irreconcilable. On a radical level this divergence from traditional unionist political constructs could be seen none more acutely than with William "Plum" Smith of the PUP and his battle to reveal the military planning behind the 1989 killing of UVF volunteer Brian Robinson - shot dead by a British undercover unit on the Crumlin Road following the murder of a Catholic civilian.¹⁰⁴

For this new brand of loyalism the conflict resolution goal was firmly qualified in the interim by what political scientist Eddie Moxon-Browne termed the need to "irrigate the desert until the landscape looks more inviting".¹⁰⁵ In the years preceding and indeed following the 1998

agreement the PUP tackled issues as diverse as gay rights and foxhunting. They would also engage in face-to-face political battle with Ulster unionism's then most steadfast believers in non-negotiation with republicanism in Paisley and McCartney. However limitations to the PUP's strategic development would always be acute, from the most malign interpretation that progressive unionism is literally a political oxymoron. This would be particularly associated with the myriad of moral and political complications attendant to their paramilitary origins and the interface with the DUP over eliciting the Protestant working class vote – within which there were few “floating voters”. Indeed inside the loyalist paramilitary ranks themselves the smear of “peace people” would often be made of political figures who were now crossing political rubicons once thought thoroughly sacrosanct.

The DUP would enthusiastically link the PUP's openness to negotiate the constitutional position with allegations of surrender, betrayal and sellout. Furthermore they would reiterate constantly the lack of an electoral mandate for loyalist political fronts – which logically in turn did indeed give the loyalist fringe parties more political dexterity. They also enthusiastically encouraged the rumours of wider government manipulation of the peace process. The DUP's Christian fundamentalist grassroots background would in turn appear in stark counterpoise to the more secular appeal of a party who often referred to the illiberal features of a Stormont regime which had failed all the people of Northern Ireland so sorely.

As regards DUP attacks on the party, Hutchinson would bring the Paisleyite appeal to its natural and dynamic conclusion:

What's Paisley going to do other than mouth? Is he going to take up a gun? Is he going to shoot somebody? What's he going to do? Now if these people want to continually rant and rave then I want to see them with guns in their hands, and I want to see them giving guns and money out to people who are prepared to fight the war. ¹⁰⁶

The PUP appeal in its broadest context certainly dovetailed with the necessitous micro-constructs of peacemaking in the 1990s. They clearly complemented the public desire at the time for a sustained peace and they were openly willing to engage in detailed negotiation over frequently emotive subjects. Their membership included figures such as Billy McCaughey who had been active during the 1970s at some of the more acute interfaces of security force collusion with loyalist paramilitaries. ¹⁰⁷ To this degree their contribution towards the securing of peace and the substitution of political violence with political competition is historically vindicated well beyond any subsequent electoral failings.

Stevenson's *We Wrecked The Place* in particular gathers together a wide spectrum of critiques of the socialistic brand of latterday loyalism. ¹⁰⁸ He locates the central flaw in the modern loyalist political strategy, for all their catalysing positivity, in the PUP's inability to directly mirror Sinn Féin. To this extent the Protestant populace naturally do not see the parties as working to a

invigorating revolutionary remit so they are often trapped between patronising unionist politicians and the anti-cosmopolitan backlash from the loyalist worker himself.

Another interestingly discordant note regarding the PUP can be found in Susan McKay's *Northern Protestants: An Unsettled People* which considers how the geographic context of conflict can affect the level of siege and sense of threat within specific unionist communities. In South Armagh, where Protestants are in an overwhelming minority, Willie Frazer of FAIR (Families Acting for Innocent Relatives) would note: "It's all very well David Ervine sitting up on the Shankill Road saying it is all over. How would he like to live on the Falls? That's what its like here."¹⁰⁹

Despite all the above qualifications - and indeed the seldom noted long-term problem that David Ervine himself through his own powers of articulation brought such a heavy personal attraction to the party - the future for the PUP in 1998 looked generally positive to many commentators. This despite the fact that Ervine would often be strategically manoeuvred into some painfully embarrassing corners through the PUP's paramilitary links. This none moreso than with the party's temporary support for the relocation of Glasgow sectarian killer Jason Campbell to serve his sentence in Ulster or the UVF attempt to bomb the Oul' Lammis Fair in Ballycastle in August 2001.¹¹⁰

Alan Finlayson's article on loyalist identity for the *Who Are the People* collection uses the example of a Spence speech at the 1995 PUP conference to note the predictable blurring of "The People" label in party discourse as the PUP aim to find a credible voice within unionism. "The People" thus described range from the entirety of Northern Irish civic society who want nothing but the best for their country to the specific unionist population. This label in turn covers the unionist population that the PUP represents to the working class Protestants alone. The author sees it as an encouraging, albeit faltering, step away from the sureties of the DUP's world view. Finlayson confirms that whereas loyalist fringe parties are not the only actors who could open up such new vistas for a broadly-based democratic vision that nonetheless the arrival of their voice is most welcome for the entire body politic:

There is a discursive space opened up in Northern Ireland and it is a space that need not be occupied by those emerging from a Unionist/Loyalist tradition. In this space it is possible to be both one thing and another and it is not necessary to capitulate to the dualistic demands that have ruled Northern Ireland for so long.¹¹¹

Furthermore Ervine's biographer Henry Sinnerton quotes a negotiator from an Irish-American delegation led by Bruce Morrison which visited Belfast before the GFA. He made reference to the PUP as such:

There's a striking difference between them and the kind of Provos I've met. It's in the eyes. Spence, Ervine and Hutchinson have the same kind of light in their eyes. And they are all men who, in my opinion, have gone through some kind of personal inner

redemption. They've come to terms with whatever they've done in the past, or whatever they've believed in, and they've learnt from it, where the Provos haven't. ¹¹²

Indeed one of the most refreshing aspects of the PUP experiment has been this underlying positivity thus described which has permeated so much of their political rhetoric. A particularly incisive example would be Ervine's opinion on integrated education:

It will not happen overnight, but it will begin with the creation of an integrated education system, because whilst it is ridiculous to expect me and my nationalist counterpart to become bosom buddies, it is not ridiculous to expect two five-year-olds to become lifelong friends, and to know each other as human beings instead of faceless demons. ¹¹³

By 1998 Ervine and Hutchinson were already emplaced within Ireland's historical narrative as key players who brought closure to the island's most horrific sectarian conflict and deservedly so. Fionnuala O'Connor provided a sympathetic and admiring critique of the two PUP representatives' contribution towards peacemaking in the final months of war while bewailing the transitory nature of their media appeal and the background of criminality from which they sprang:

The PUP duo in particular openly suggested from the start that only those who had tried to kill Catholics, or had actually served time for killing, could, with impunity from unionist criticism, denounce sectarian violence as a failed and immoral policy. ¹¹⁴

The words of Billy Mitchell in particular underscored how by the turn of the century a fundamental seachange would appear to have swept the Ulster unionist bloc and how much in theory the PUP could offer as regards a new definition of the Protestant community's Britishness. Mitchell being the UVF leader in the mid- 1970s who had tried to bring the conflict to closure in face-to-face meetings with IRA leaders of the time. Over two decades and two thousand murders later he wrote:

In Ulster here we've been moulded by Calvinism in the religious sense, we've been moulded by unionism, we've been moulded by all the ties of Ulster Scots heritage and culture. We've been moulded by English influences. And we've been moulded by Gaelic and Irish influences, you know; we can't deny that. What we're really doing at the moment, we're sitting down and analysing our past and our present, and getting rid of the bad baggage and keeping the good baggage. ¹¹⁵

THE UDP AND THE POLITICAL ART OF MARKETING CHAOS

For Gary McMichael the loyalist fringe could provide a unique insight into conflict dynamics as they originated from amongst the people located at the purest interface of the communal battleground. He would focus especial attention on Paisley for his catalysing role in carefully combining the ingredients of conflict into a truly incendiary mix:

I would argue that those who had had a proximity to the conflict, understand the consequences of words and deeds and suffering, and because of that have been forced, encouraged, to be more open minded and radical in dealing with the issues ...I've said before publicly, and I've come under severe criticism for saying it, that the problem is that the politicians haven't suffered enough. ¹¹⁶

The UDP undeniably aligned itself with novel and streamlined thinking within political loyalism in the 1990s which toned down the rhetoric of adversity and aimed instead towards a stratified middleground which could provide a bedrock for future political development. Hence their influence did indeed go well beyond the usual remit of an electoral mandate as McMichael would suggest in 1995:

We have electoral ambitions, but I don't think that we will become a major political party in the next ten years. Protestants don't vote for paramilitaries. It's as simple as that. But that doesn't concern us, because our involvement in this peace process isn't to get votes, it's to affect change, it's to bring about a settlement. ¹¹⁷

However the UDP and indeed the PUP, while successfully redefining unionist principles to marry changing political circumstances, were still centring themselves around a core faith in the benefits of the Union and what remained of the constitutional status quo. For all the flamboyance of their earthy political dialogue they were still essentially unionists. The associated problem with this being that with declining emotional ties to the Union in a rapidly transforming UK on one hand - and the cemented right of the Irish Republic to have a say in the political future of Northern Ireland on the other - that there is an undeniable and frequently desperate rhetorical timelapse continually in evidence within radical loyalism in their presentation of Ulster unionism as a valid and dynamic political construct. Hence Cochrane's note on how a principle of such high political virtue as "parity of esteem" actually means totally different things from a unionist and nationalist perspective in terms of legal and cultural interpretations of the same. ¹¹⁸The above also fails to touch upon the explosive fact that Ulster loyalists are loyal to a Britain that no longer exists in terms of the economic and socio-cultural changes of the past four decades on the mainland. Such explicit divisions and implicit contradictions within a stranded Ulster loyalism as always standing in contrast to a confident, strident and self-contained Irish republicanism.

On a more specific level the interim fortunes of the UDP were fatally undermined with Smallwoods' untimely death. For in turn McMichael's verbal delivery tended to project in a somewhat leaden manner - not unlike the way William Craig's violent rhetoric from the 1970s read more dramatically than they sound to the modern ear - and certainly compared to Ervine's verbal flamboyance the appeal of the same was significantly minimised. In Michael Stone's chilling revelations of his loyalist life he claimed that support for McMichael's position as party leader from UDA prisoners was highly circumscribed compared to that for the late Smallwoods:

John McMichael was a focused military man and an astute and intelligent politician. Gary McMichael was never a volunteer or street fighter and he couldn't grasp what motivates men like me because he could never be like me. He didn't have it in him.¹¹⁹

John White's negative appeal meanwhile needs no particular stress as Susan McKay underlined in the North Belfast section of her travelogue through Protestant Ulster:

The lampposts of Rathcoole bore posters of John White, the UDP's local candidate in the Assembly elections. Although this is the UDA's heartland, he did badly. White was an unattractive candidate. A double murderer, he had slit the throats of an SDLP politician and his woman friend in the seventies. Although he was on the UDP's talks team, with his grim face and dour manner he had not managed to shake off the sinister aura of his horrific past.¹²⁰

White, who had been encouraged to enter the political fray by Andy Tyrie, would often produce highly suspect dialogue which seemed to neither "marry the time" nor the wider dovetailing political constructs. This could be seen in his belief that "prisoners certainly are viewed as folk heroes, and they will be viewed as veterans".¹²¹ Thus for all of White's relative candidness regarding his paramilitary past, such casual verbal flippancy could so easily be translated as a strategically positioned mask slipping aside.

In the optimistic period preceding the post-GFA Assembly elections the centre of gravity of the UDP would often focus on the figure of John White - the dark shadows of the Hightown Road killings seeming to override even the most earnest reflections of his Shankill life in the late 1970s:

Half the young men in the Shankill were in prison in Long Kesh. Every day busloads of young women were being driven down the Shankill to see their men in the Kesh. Eventually you became affected by the sadness of it all. The Shankill Road was wrecked and run down, everybody lived in fear, and everywhere you looked you saw people's lives ruined. That's what the IRA did for my community.¹²²

Indeed there is an ironic juxtaposition thrown up with regard to the UDP in that for all of White's presentational failings he was certainly central to persuading the loyalist prisoners to accept the political deal on offer and later came close to delivering substantial UFF arms into the hands of the decommissioner's blowtorch. Conversely Smallwoods is regarded retrospectively as being more of a doveish figure that in reality he was in terms of how he took upon himself John McMichael's politico-military mantle.

In particular it was the different linkage which the UDP had with Ulster's largest paramilitary group, in comparison to the more symbiotic PUP-UVF relationship, that perhaps undermined the party's fortunes at such an early stage. It would also be a moot and indeed logical point of speculation to look beyond the frequent repetition of how the UDP were offering "political analysis" to the UDA. This by consideration of what particularly novel spin they could ascribe

atop of what media and academic commentators were already providing in one of the most politically researched regions in the world.¹²³

Former bodyguard of Andy Tyrie and Glencairn community worker Jimmy Creighton would touch upon the core problems facing a political group like the UDP in forging a consensual peace process from within an organisation which incorporated both the UFF's "Dream Team" and John White:

Community work you don't get medals for. You get a big slap on the back of the neck... You can do people ninety-nine good turns, and the hundredth time they come and ask you to do something and you can't do it, then you become the biggest bastard that ever walked. And maybe that's when they turn around and say, well, sure he was a UDA

****¹²⁴

The UDP unequivocally voiced legitimate and well-regarded political expressions during the endgame of the early 1990s yet at the same time they refused to travel down either of the two main routes which radical loyalism had historically embarked upon for political space by way of socialism or independence. The party also held an openly qualified position outside the remit of a much larger paramilitary organisation which in turn had been grounded on both regionalism and decentralisation since its foundation. Hence the ability of the party to drive the wider political engine of the UDA was affected by both this relationship and how other political groupings in Northern Ireland made value judgements upon the UDP's legitimacy.

Fallow ground was already in evidence with the lack of a political mandate and indeed their political analysis had changed little since the days of *Common Sense* aside from the aforementioned pointer towards a Nordic Council-style Council of the British Isles.¹²⁵ The only other main development was the fact that the political wing was now associated with much more effective paramilitary operators on both quantitative and qualitative levels. As James White McAuley would note:

Despite their public face, the contemporary UDP agenda does not appear to have been radically reconstructed. They still stress populist working class world views. While any widespread references to Cuchulainn have disappeared they still promote a particular notion of an "Ulster identity" which is largely exclusive. They remain overtly hostile to anything they perceive as leading to any form of a United Ireland.¹²⁶

The UDP contribution to the securing of peace in 1994 came against the background of a high level of UFF paramilitary activity which was proactively taking the war to the republican enemy's West Belfast doorstep.¹²⁷ Subsequent to the 1998 election debacle, particularly focused on the loss of David Adams to the Assembly, a gulf would open between McMichael and Adams and the UDA grassroots. As also to be referenced in the next chapter, various internal feuds associated with the UDA's involvement in the burgeoning Northern Irish drugs trade would bring the organisation to the point of fratricidal murder.

This would tarnish the latterday exponents of UDA political innovation with accusations of pragmatic Machiavellian scheming to empty the prisons of sectarian killers while the window of opportunity existed. A later *Belfast Telegraph* retrospective on political loyalism would note the words of one observer that: "The UDP isn't so much a political party as a typing mistake." ¹²⁸

CONCLUSIONS: THE END OF A VIOLENT CENTURY IN ULSTER - A NEW LOYALISM IN WAR AND PEACE

The electoral performances of the Progressive Unionist Party and the Ulster Democratic Party at the Forum elections - and their subsequent presence at Stormont negotiations - were seen by many as further proof that a vital new political force had established itself within working class unionism. Indeed even the now maligned UDP's Council of the Isles proposal - though clearly redolent of early Vanguard thought - was certainly suggestive of some political sophistication. This by way of a strategic awareness that the specific nature of the Ulster Troubles may necessitate some radical institutional reconstruction of political linkages between all the nations of the the British Isles in its resolution.

However their rising profile would attract strategic critiques that were every bit as barbed as earlier voices within unionism that had criticised loyalist paramilitary excesses. The immediacy and focus of such responses guaranteeing that the halcyon promise of fundamental political realignment afoot would be fleetingly associated with mid-1997 alone by way of electoral reward.

Both parties would claim to have originated from the frontline of the conflict and hence could speak freely of the repercussions and dynamics of political violence. Pitted against them would be the accusation that such a stance was nullified by their lack of electoral mandate, their paramilitary background and the historical fact that unionist political success (for all its claimed liberal heterogeneity of political and social opinion) was usually predicated on being as right wing and intransigent as possible.

The third UDA political grouping came to public notice at a time of soaring UFF militancy and in counterpoise to the era of corruption and drift in the previous decade. However with the UDA command structure being less centralised than that of the UVF there was more freedom for truly nihilistic patterns of violence to emerge. This in turn would forestall many of the long-term hopes for UDP consolidation and expansion in comparison to the PUP. At the same time, the hope of a Progressive Unionist Party foothold alone gaining ground in Northern Ireland party politics would be seriously undermined by the UDP's electoral failure in 1998 and the nature of the parallel internal UDA schisms. The division of manpower resources that undermined the scale and focus of loyalist paramilitary endeavour in the early Troubles being replicated in political form at its denouement.

The significance of loyalist paramilitary involvement in political initiatives would seem to have made clear choreographic sense to many outside observers of the Ulster problem during the 1990s. I however contend that the narrative of this period suggests that the inherent difficulties for the UVF and UDA in expressing a political voice would not only be replicated but actually refined. This would mainly take the form of acute political antipathy between the DUP and PUP in particular and parallel patterns of dissent towards the peace process within the UVF and UDA that would crystallise as the ideological basis for a fourth major loyalist paramilitary body emerging. At the same time loyalist paramilitary association with criminality began to incorporate the once taboo field of drug trafficking. Lastly Johnny Adair's ego-driven and mutually beneficial relationship with the mass media did little to reverse public attitudes towards loyalist paramilitaries - to their often uncontrollable sectarian dynamics and their malign sway over the post-industrial heartlands of loyalist Ulster.¹²⁹

The fortunes of the PUP and UDP would thus subsequently diverge in significantly radical fashion as to be discussed. Seven and a half years on from the first elections to the Northern Ireland Assembly - on 3rd December 2005 - David Ervine and Martin McGuinness would encapsulate the profound changes that had affected Northern Ireland's civic and political life by the early 21st century when seated beside each other at the Stormont funeral of the footballer George Best.¹³⁰ Meanwhile on the Shankill Road on the same day, at the junction with Bellevue Street and above the boarded up remains of the Ulster Prisoners Aid office which had been destroyed in the most vicious of all UVF-UDA feuds at the turn of the century, the map of the six counties of Ulster accompanied by the legend *Common Sense* would no doubt barely warrant a glance from the daily traffic of Troubles tourists.

¹ Loyalist paramilitaries were responsible for 48 fatalities in 1993 and 38 in 1994. Respective victims of republican violence numbered 39 and 27. See McKittrick, Kelters, et al, 1999, pp1475-1476.

² Anthony McIntyre's contribution to Edwards and Bloomer's *Transforming the Peace Process in Northern Ireland* (2008) collection focused on loyalist and republican dissident activity. He references senior UDA dissident Alex Kerr's qualification of the UDP as the Ulster Drugs Party.

³ Garland, 2001, p213.

⁴ *Combat*, Vol 4 (3).

⁵ *ibid.*

⁶ Garland, *op cit*, pp 218-219.

⁷ Spence's 1977 speeches considered in Novosel, 2013, pp 169-177.

⁸ *Combat*, Vol 4 (14).

⁹ Cusack and McDonald, 1997, p193.

¹⁰ McAuley, 2000.

¹¹ Sinnerton, p109.

¹² Flackes, 1994.

¹³ Results archived at www.ark.ac.uk/elections/73-81gbelfast.htm.

¹⁴ Novosel, op cit, p 180.

¹⁵ *Devolution: The Plan for Ulster* from 1977 is analysed in depth in Novosel, op cit along with its successor document - the Progressive Unionist Group's 1979 *Proposed Democratic Devolved Administration for Northern Ireland* (pp 178-192). The 1977 document is considered as having underscored the inability of the British government to enforce either power sharing or a military resolution. Likewise for the need for paramilitaries to be part of a encompassing solution.

¹⁶ Moloney, 2010, pp 396-397. *Sharing Responsibility* is further considered in Spencer, 2008, pp 69-70.

¹⁷ *Combat*, Volume 4 (55).

¹⁸ Results archived at www.ark.ac.uk/elections/85-89gbelfast.htm. The first PUP electoral success with the exception of Smyth in Belfast would be in 1989 when SJ Stewart won a seat on Carrickfergus Council.

¹⁹ *Sharing Responsibility :An alternative to foreign involvement in the internal affairs of a region of the United Kingdom*, 1985.

²⁰ Political analysis of the 1985 version of *Sharing Responsibility* in Novosel, op cit, pp193-195.

²¹ *Fortnight* 23rd September 1985.

²² Cusack and McDonald, 1997,p253.

²³ *ibid*, p254.

²⁴ The June 1986 edition of *Combat* included an hilarious overview of the unionist resistance strategy and was unflattering in the extreme: "For forty years Ulster was ruled by the biggest bunch of cretins outside Botha's Africa. They abused their mandate and the electorate allowed them to do so. All in the good name of Ulster of course. At first it was a Quasi-Military Junta. Captain O'Neill, Captain Long, Captain Ardill, Captain Lord Brookeborough, Major Lloyd Hall Thompson, Major Chichester Clarke, Captain Mitchell (ad infinitum). Now we are faced with a different form of leadership ... a vicars' junta. The Reverend Ian Paisley, Reverend Beattie, Rev Coulter, Rev Martin Smyth, Wm McCrea, Rev Ivan Foster (ad infinitum) plus an ambushcade of lay preachers and Salvationists. Now anyone with an ounce of sense and a titter of wit in the field of political acumen must know that there has to be a radical change from all that".

²⁵ Moloney, op cit, pp 404-405.

²⁶ *War or Peace: Conflict or Conference*, 1986. See also *Combat*, July 1986 and Garland, op cit, p266.

²⁷ *Combat*, Volume 6 (6).

²⁸ Cochrane, 1997, p 251.

²⁹ McMichael, 1999, pp 32-33.

³⁰ *Ulster*, November 1988. See also UDP pamphlet *Peace, Democracy, Jobs* and McMichael, 1999, pp32-33.

³¹ Results archived at www.ark.ac.uk/elections/85-89lgderry.htm. Ken Kerr, an ex-Royal Marine, was the alleged UDA figure who ran the north coast UDF camp where officer-material recruits would learn survival skills and undergo initiative tests and fitness training. See *Ulster*, March-June 1989. Also Lister and Jordan, pp42-43 and Larkin, 2004 pp 98-99.

³² The first victim of Provisional IRA violence in 1990 would be UDP member Harry Dickey who was murdered by a booby-trap car bomb at his East Belfast home on the second day of the year.

³³ Results archived at www.cain.ulst.ac.uk/issues/politics/election/rwby1990.htm. The Sinn Fein candidate in this election was Sheena Theresa Campbell - murdered by the UVF near Queens University Belfast on October 16th 1992.

³⁴ See *Belfast Telegraph* 8th February 2004, for details of torture of partially-sighted Catholic civilian Gerry Higgins by Nelson and up to thirty other UDA colleagues in a Belfast drinking den during the 1970s. Following an abduction Higgins had cigarettes stubbed out on his body, had his hair set on fire and suffered electric shocks to his genitals. The attackers included both men and women. One UFF leader following the Nelson exposure would provide the following oft-referenced epilogue on the period: "John Stevens did us a favour. He got rid of the touts and gangsters and we replaced them. We should have put up a mural on the Shankill in John Stevens' honour" (Cusack and McDonald, 1997, p263).

³⁵ McKittrick and Mallie, 2001, p76.

³⁶ McKittrick, Kelters et al, op cit, p1476.

³⁷ Following the March 1993 murder of an IRA volunteer and three Catholic workers in Castlerock in County Londonderry by the UFF a loyalist paramilitary spokesman noted: "It is a terrible thing that anyone should lose their life but, if you are talking in terms of success rates, yes, this week has been a success and it's still only Thursday" (Wood, 2006, p168).

³⁸ *Sharing Responsibility in Northern Ireland*, 1991.

³⁹ Cusack and McDonald, 1997, p277.

⁴⁰ O'Cleary, 1999, p200.

⁴¹ O'Leary and McGarry, 1993, p242.

⁴² Taylor, 1999, p217.

⁴³ McKittrick, Kelters et al, op cit, p1476.

⁴⁴ For consideration of the UVF "kitchen cabinet" and also CLMC and CLPC structures see Spencer, 2008, pp 74-80.

⁴⁵ Moloney, op cit, pp 408-409.

⁴⁶ Taylor, op cit, p219.

⁴⁷ Results archived at www.ark.ac.uk/elections/lgderry.htm and www.ark.ac.uk/elections/lglisburn.htm.

⁴⁸ During this meeting Hudson would tell the UVF leaders of his abhorrence of their paramilitary violence which had included the killing of his friend Fran O'Toole of the Miami Showband. One of the leaders would reply in turn "We regret we didn't do more". (Travers and Fetherstonhaugh, 2007, p241). For Hudson speech in April 2012 at the Political Studies Association conference in Belfast giving overview of his association with the UVF see: www.sluggerotoole.com/2012/04/05/jackie-mcdonald-questions-orange-order-covenant-parade-taking-motorised-machine-guns-past-short-strand. See also Hudson interview in McAuley and Spencer, 2011 including reference to a planned UVF "March on Dublin". The same collection of articles includes an interview with UDA Brigadier Jackie McDonald who notes "You know if we'd have had Semtex God knows what damage we would have done. If we had had the wherewithal the Provisionals had we would have bombed Dublin, we would have bombed so much of Dublin they wouldn't have wanted anything to do with it, because the infrastructure or their financial situation then would never have stood it".

⁴⁹ For changing attitudes within militant loyalism towards the Irish state see Shirlow, Tongue et al, 2010, p20. Hudson's role as a liaison between the UVF and the Dublin government discussed in Spencer, op cit, pp 90-94. The same work includes commentary from Ervine himself as to why the Irish government took loyalism more seriously than the British government in this period: "One also has to realise how governments will often listen to your concerns and then just ignore them, but we also knew if the if the UK didn't fancy another Canary Wharf, so the Dublin government wouldn't either. That was never threatened, but it was no doubt part of their dynamic. Both governments wanted to protect their respective concerns (p 177)".

⁵⁰ *Fortnight*, May 1993.

⁵¹ Taylor, op cit, p227.

⁵² Cochrane, op cit, p363.

⁵³ In October 2013 BBC Radio Ulster's "The Nolan Show" broadcast moving reflections from victims of both the Shankill bomb and the revenge loyalist attacks including that at Kennedy Way in West Belfast. Archived at The Nolan Show microsite at www.bbc.co.uk/programmes/b03f0v9f.

⁵⁴ The 2010 autobiography of Belfast's Good Vibrations record label boss Terri Hooley (*Hooleygan: Music, Mayhem, Good Vibrations*, Blackstaff Press, Belfast) includes reference to a physical beating the author received from individuals he believed to be loyalist militants associated with Johnny Adair. This was related to rumours of Hooley's antipathy to giving Adair's Oi band Offensive Weapon a record deal – a development he in turn denies ever having considered.

⁵⁵ Lister and Jordan's extraordinary 2003 history of C Company makes reference to the infamous presentation of the "Top Gun" award to Stevie McKeag at the Diamond Jubilee bar for being the year's top assassin and claims that Adair was strongly in favour of taking the loyalist offensive into South Armagh via links with Ulster Resistance. McKeag's bloody paramilitary career, including extraordinary details of the attack on the Devenish Arms in December 1991 and the murder of Sean Hughes on 7th September 1993, can be referenced in both McDonald and Cusack, 2004 (Chapter 9) and *The Guardian*, October 1st 2000.

⁵⁶ McMichael, op cit, p48.

⁵⁷ For further consideration of the role of Protestant churchmen in loyalist paramilitary liaison roles see Spencer, 2008, pp 80-89.

⁵⁸ *ibid*, Ch 4.

⁵⁹ Cusack and McDonald, 1997, p305.

⁶⁰ Colin "Crazy" Craig would posthumously be linked by the UVF with security force collusion that had lead to the death of Brian Robinson. Robinson's mother Margaret died of a heart attack on hearing of his killing by British undercover soldiers.

⁶¹ Ian Cobain's detailed consideration of the Loughinisland attack and loyalist paramilitary arms importations of the 1980s that fuelled violence from that quarter in the following decade in *The Guardian*, 15th October 2012.

⁶² McDonald, 2000, p134. Also Moloney, op cit, pp 439-440.

⁶³ McMichael, op cit, p57.

⁶⁴ Cusack and McDonald, 2004. p 217.

⁶⁵ *ibid*, p174 and p204.

⁶⁶ The summer of 1994 also saw the murders of UFF South Belfast leaders Joe Bratty and Raymond Elder on the Ormeau Road by the Provisional IRA - see Cusack and McDonald, 2004, p 267. The Ulster Freedom Fighters at this final stage of the conflict certainly represented a much more bellicose military formation as compared to the UVF. This could be seen with the reaction to a Hume-Adams statement days before the IRA ceasefire on 31st August 1994 or indeed the callous killing of Sean Monaghan earlier in the month. For UDA statement see Cochrane, op cit, pp 329-330. McKittrick, Kelters et al, 1999, pp1376-1377 for details of the Sean Monaghan murder. Monaghan had originally been abducted by the UFF in Belfast's Divis Street and brought back to the Woodvale district. He initially escaped and sought refuge in the home of a nearby female pensioner who contacted the local UDA who recaptured him. At the trial of his murderer a UFF volunteer jeered at the dead man's family: "I shot your son – four in the back of the head. I shot him – I'm proud of it".

⁶⁷ Taylor, op cit, p232.

⁶⁸ *ibid*, p233.

⁶⁹ Rowan, 1995, p142.

⁷⁰ McKittrick, 1996, p39.

⁷¹ McKittrick and Mallie, 1996, p336.

- ⁷² Irvine's contribution to the 2010 *Voices From The Grave* work by Ed Moloney notes comments from the US State Department's UK Desk Officer alluding to military agendas against Islamic fundamentalism as underpinning unequivocal US support for the peace process. This by way of the need for speedy termination of Britain's financial outlays against domestic terrorism (p 450).
- ⁷³ Stevenson, 1996, p189. Another memorable political analogy regarding current Protestant working class thought was given by Chris McGimpsey to Fionnuala O'Connor as regards the creation of a new university college on the Falls-Shankill peaceline in Belfast: "On the Falls the parents say it will be wonderful for the kids to go to university on their own doorstep. On the Shankill they wonder if their daughter will get a job as a cleaner...One commentary foresees its youth getting honours degrees; the other looks to its young people washing floors" (O'Connor, 2002, p251).
- ⁷⁴ Sinnerton, op cit, p175.
- ⁷⁵ Lindsay Robb would be imprisoned for his central part in a loyalist gun-running operation in 1995. On release he relocated to Scotland and was stabbed to death in Glasgow on Hogmanay 2005 ("Ex-paramilitary stabbed to death", BBC News Online, 2nd January 2006).
- ⁷⁶ Spencer, op cit, p123.
- ⁷⁷ *Combat*, April 1995.
- ⁷⁸ McKittrick, 1996, pp 77-87. Full analysis of unionist and loyalist political responses to the Framework Document in McAuley, 1997b.
- ⁷⁹ UDP party representatives McMichael and English did however make a diplomatically timely departure before the Hume-Adams duet on Phil Coulter's *The Town I Loved So Well* (Holland, 1999, pp1-15).
- ⁸⁰ Trimble had been close professionally and personally to the murdered Ulster Unionist Party's Law and Order spokesperson Edgar Graham. Graham's girlfriend would join the UDP and play a prominent role in the campaign to allow free access for Orange marches to the Lower Ormeau Road. She appeared in court in 1998 accused of explosives charges in relation to the fourth Drumcree dispute.
- ⁸¹ Wood, 2003, p109.
- ⁸² Sinnerton, op cit, pp186-187. For full overview of PUP and UDP Forum manifesto details see McAuley 1998b.
- ⁸³ *A Council of the British Isles: A proposal for meaningful co-operation* – Ulster Democratic Party pamphlet.
- ⁸⁴ Results archived at <http://www.ark.ac.uk/elections/ff96.htm>
- ⁸⁵ Taylor, op cit, p242.
- ⁸⁶ During the second Drumcree dispute the local UVF planned to use a tractor to spread poisonous slurry over RUC ranks. Other interpretations of the attack plan reference inflammable liquid fertiliser.
- ⁸⁷ Ryder and Kearney, 2001, p164. Also Cusack and McDonald, 1997, p345. The author's paternal grandparents lived at Torrens Road in the Torrens/Heathfield area of the Oldpark district in Belfast. In August 2004 ten Protestant families left the Torrens estate after claiming to have been intimidated by republican elements ("Families flee after intimidation", BBC News Online, 26th August 2004). For detailed discussion of the Belfast interface disturbances in 1996 including Torrens see the Neil Jarman-edited *On The Edge: Community perspectives on the civil disturbances in North Belfast June-September 1996* published by the Community Development Centre.
- ⁸⁸ McDonald and Cusack, 1997, p349.
- ⁸⁹ Results archived at www.ark.ac.uk/elections/fw97.htm.
- ⁹⁰ Results archived at www.ark.ac.uk/elections/flg97.htm.
- ⁹¹ Godson, 2004, p61.
- ⁹² McKittrick and McVea, 2000, p 308.
- ⁹³ McAuley, 2000.

⁹⁴ 28-year-old Greenfinch Eve Martin was killed in an attack by IRA gunmen on Clogher UDR post in County Tyrone on 2nd May 1974. The same day a UVF bomb at The Rose and Crown public house on the Ormeau Road in Belfast killed six Catholic men.

⁹⁵ These included the murder of hotel doorman Seamus Dillon in Dungannon on the night of Wright's assassination through to March of 1998 when LVF gunmen killed 34-year-old Protestant Phillip Allan and his Catholic friend Damien Trainor in a bar at Poyntzpass in County Armagh.

⁹⁶ Garland, op cit, p304.

⁹⁷ Results archived at <http://cain.ulst.ac.uk/issues/politics/election/ref1998.htm>.

⁹⁸ Wood, 2006, pp 226-231.

⁹⁹ Results archived at www.ark.ac.uk/elections/fa98.htm.

¹⁰⁰ For further consideration of the UDP's fateful electoral failure see Spencer, op cit, pp 166-169.

¹⁰¹ Taylor, op cit, p254.

¹⁰² Stevenson, op cit, p 133.

¹⁰³ Cochrane, op cit, p57.

¹⁰⁴ Rolston, 2000, p203. In June 2010 the brother of Brian Robinson appealed for the end of the annual UVF memorial parade in the Woodvale area in order that their family and that of the murdered Catholic civilian Paddy McKenna could "move on with their lives and remember their loss in a peaceful and dignified manner". He also expressed his wish that the organisers considered the format of the parade "in the interests of pursuing peace and reconciliation between the Shankill and Ardoyne communities" (*Belfast Telegraph*, 22nd June 2010).

¹⁰⁵ Whyte, 1990, 237.

¹⁰⁶ Cochrane, op cit, p383.

¹⁰⁷ John Weir's affidavit to author Sean McPhilemy on 1970s collusion archived at <http://www.geocities.com/CapitolHill/Senate/1922/index.html>. See *The Guardian*, 25th May 2003 for McCaughey and the Ballymena PUP's attempts to halt racist attacks by neo-Nazis in the Country Antrim town.

¹⁰⁸ Stevenson, op cit, pp83, 177-178 and 197.

¹⁰⁹ Mackay, 2000, p196.

¹¹⁰ *Republican News*, 27th November 199, *Belfast Telegraph*, 19th February 2004 and *The Guardian*, September 2nd 2001.

¹¹¹ Shirlow and McGovern, 1997, p90.

¹¹² Sinnerton, op cit, p170.

¹¹³ McAuley, 2000.

¹¹⁴ O'Connor, 2002, p134.

¹¹⁵ Stevenson, op cit, p157.

¹¹⁶ Cochrane, op cit, p 382.

¹¹⁷ *ibid*, p385.

¹¹⁸ *ibid*, pp380-381.

¹¹⁹ Stone, 2003, p280.

¹²⁰ McKay, 2000, p91.

¹²¹ Stevenson, op cit, p209.

¹²² *ibid*, p95.

¹²³ For a wry republican view on the dichotomy of David Adams offering “political analysis” to individuals of the calibre of Johnny Adair see *Republican News*, 22nd January 1998.

¹²⁴ Stevenson, *op cit*, p196.

¹²⁵ See *Council of British Isles: A proposal for meaningful co-operation* - Ulster Democratic Party pamphlet. Also *New Ulster Defender* V1(2).

¹²⁶ McAuley, 1997a.

¹²⁷ In January 1994 a UDA formulation to counter a doomsday situation in Ulster included ethnic cleansing plans not too far removed from the 1986 human geography research of understandably horrified academic Liam Kennedy.

¹²⁸ *Belfast Telegraph*, 4th October 2002.

¹²⁹ Johnny Adair’s very dark native wit would reach its apogee with a comment to Irish journalist Maggie O’Kane during a car journey that the only Catholics he usually had in his vehicle were in the boot (McDonald and Cusack, 2004, p163). Likewise for his suggestion to security force members on duty at West Belfast roadblocks that he was off to decide what would be on the Six O’Clock News that evening. This was noted by Det Sgt Johnson Brown in the BBC *Panorama* “Gangsters at War” episode in 2003. Appropriately the exiled Adair was the subject of an entire episode of Donal MacIntyre’s Channel Five series *MacIntyre’s Underworld* and also guest-starred in *Danny Dyer’s Deadliest Men*’s study of former UFF leader Sam McCrory for the satellite Bravo channel.

¹³⁰ During his childhood in East Belfast George Best had been a member of the Junior Orange Order. Best made reference to the Ulster Troubles and its disastrous social and physical effects on Belfast in many television interviews and written biographies. His cousin Gary Reid was killed during UDA clashes with the British Army during February 1974 - and is referenced as a member upon East Belfast paramilitary murals to this day. In the 1970 BBC documentary *The World of George Best* the footballer reflected himself on the likelihood of being drawn into loyalist paramilitary circles had he stayed in Belfast.

IX: DECLINE OF LOYALIST PARAMILITARY POLITICAL INNOVATION FOLLOWING THE GOOD FRIDAY AGREEMENT

For the loyalist political voices so warmly welcomed in many quarters as the conflict drew to closure, the internal contradictions implicit in their construct as previously outlined would coalesce painfully fast. The fall from grace in turn would be extraordinarily comprehensive in scope. Likewise the aching and unexpected delays in implementing political structures would in some way gradually erase from political memory much of their initial impact in the 1990s.

This chapter provides an overview of the years following the GFA which would see the entire loyalist political experiment experience disastrous decline amidst the crises engendered by feuding and the Holy Cross dispute in particular. It shall consider the main UVF-UDA conflict at the turn of the century and then organisational ruptures within the UDA that would arguably focus the most enormous media attention to date upon loyalist militants and their criminal linkages by way of sustainable accusations of involvement in Ulster's spiralling drugs traffic.¹ It will reference the collapse of the UDP and the formation of two new loyalist political bodies. The narrative will then consider the laboured moves toward loyalist paramilitary decommissioning and also political analysis regarding the unexpected scale of political collapse.

Academic, journalistic and popular interest in loyalist paramilitarism and residual political experimentation following the GFA has clearly been fundamentally sustained to date (McDowell 2001 and 2008; Lister and Jordan 2003; Rowan 2003, 2005 and 2008; Edwards and Bloomer 2004, 2005 and 2008; McDonald and Cusack 2004; Howe 2005; Wood 2006; Gallaher 2007; Spencer 2008; McAuley 2010; McAuley and Spencer 2011; Smithy 2011; Shirlow 2012).

Thanks in part to a particularly garish cast of UDA pantomime robber-barons the nature of the 2002-2003 UDA split in particular could be seen as dissolving the final residual claims upon political legitimacy for that organisation despite the hasty creation of the Ulster Political Research Group (UPRG). Proof to that end being made manifest with the UPRG'S subsequent decision to name their political initiative downgrading the wider organisation from public attention after a notorious sectarian killer.² Even for the UVF there would be ongoing media and legal attention doggedly focused upon their direct involvement in the vicious murders of Raymond McCord Junior in 1997 and John Allen six years later. Their Assembly representation was to be halved in 2003 while the second half of the decade saw the death of the PUP leader and the near collapse of the party itself following the resignation of his successor.

All the socio-political factors previously alluded to which affected the state and direction of loyalist paramilitarism and loyalist paramilitary innovation alike would still be in place at the turn of the century. Such handicaps would continue to resonate throughout a period when the UDA brought Protestant public opinion of loyalist paramilitarism to its unquestionable nadir

and when even a “critical friend” academic analysis of the UVF would interface with the reality of a shotgun blast to the face of a local loyalist on the Shankill Road.

LOYALIST DECOMMISSIONING CONSIDERATIONS - THE UVF AND UDA AT WAR IN A NEW CENTURY

The summer of 1998 saw the loyalist ceasefires teeter under the stresses of a fourth Drumcree dispute and the Omagh bombing. The murders of the Quinn brothers in Ballymoney by individuals associated with the UVF would qualify future protests on the right to march the Garvaghy Road – the mass-murder in Omagh eliciting UVF plans to assassinate the Real IRA leader Michael McKevitt in the Republic of Ireland.³ The aftermath of the bombing saw an LVF ceasefire and in turn the first destruction of any Northern Irish paramilitary arms when materiel from that organisation was offered for disposal on 18th December 1998 to General John De Chastelain’s International Commission on Decommissioning.⁴

The UVF were still unwilling to unilaterally decommission even after an approach from Sean O’Callaghan who had been the liaison between David Trimble and Pastor Kenny McClinton previously over the LVF handover. O’Callaghan would later impress upon the UVF leadership that PUP comments blaming Trimble for stalling the peace process were merely playing into the hands of Sinn Féin to the point where the UVF political wing eventually admitted that decommissioning was “an honourable goal” the following year.⁵ This period would however witness paramilitary attacks by renegade members of loyalist organisations still on ceasefire and as claimed under the Red Hand Defenders (RHD) flag of convenience.⁶

1999 was the year of final strategic jockeying towards a working political settlement in the north with the British and Irish governments signing treaties formally establishing north-south, British-Irish and inter-governmental bodies. However the decommissioning imbroglio remained resolutely in place with the UVF snubbing the Hillsborough Declaration’s suggestion of a Day of Reconciliation and insisting that the IRA must declare that the “war is over”.⁷

The Mitchell Review would provide an entrée for the December creation of an Executive. In the midst of such frenetic political activity Johnny Adair became the 293rd terrorist prisoner to be released under the GFA provisions on Tuesday 14th September. John White would earnestly tell the waiting press that:

Mr Adair has given his unwavering support to the peace process, even through the varying crises...I know he will continue to support dialogue to resolve our difficulties.⁸

Lister and Jordan’s C Company history notes how the decommissioning issue was radically dividing UDA councils at this time with White in particular favouring a unilateral gesture from

the UDA. His colleague Adair was also in favour of this initiative in the sure knowledge that the surrender of some obsolete weaponry could be instantly compensated from a new Amsterdam supply route being opened for C Company via a UDP member.⁹ It would be this extraordinary White and Adair ensemble, cemented with loaded commentary on their commitment to peace, that would do so much to destroy the last vestiges of serious regard for loyalist paramilitarism in all informed quarters.¹⁰

The democratic gamble to bring devolved government back to an Ulster at peace ended in February when Peter Mandelson suspended devolution prior to David Trimble's threatened resignation in the context of IRA stalling on decommissioning. However following further IRA statements confirming their wish to verifiably put weapons beyond use devolution was restored at midnight on 29th May.

As the peace process limped on in the year 2000 events were moving apace in the loyalist underworld. Trouble occurred again at Drumcree with Adair being seen at Portadown with loyalist colleagues and pet Alsatian bedecked in matching "Simply The Best" t-shirts. He stated to reporters that: "I have been working tirelessly 24 hours a day, seven days a week, for peace in Northern Ireland".¹¹ According to intelligence sources he had also been simultaneously involved in ongoing interface violence in North Belfast since his release.¹²

In this period there was increasing involvement by all loyalist paramilitary groups in the Northern Ireland drugs culture. In terms of qualified subjective analysis, and amid the welter of accusations and counter-accusations of which loyalist group was principally involved in the spiralling Ulster trade, it can be assumed that the UFF's entry into the fray at least entailed the breaking down of established barriers of criminal diplomacy.

Drugs were allegedly the main catalyst behind the original UVF-LVF split earlier in 2000 in Portadown and linked the murders of UVF commander Richard Jameson to the revenge stabbings of Andrew Robb, his politically unconnected companion David McIlwaine and also the killing of PUP worker Martin Taylor in North Belfast. To further muddy the waters, in the year when the final paramilitary prisoner releases took place, a murderous feud developed between the UVF and UDA between August and December which would lead to Adair's return to prison when Peter Mandelson suspended his release licence.

Adair was central to the initial outbreak of conflict after a "Loyalist Day of Culture" on the Shankill Road on Saturday 20th August lead to serious disorder between elements of the UDA's C Company and the UVF over the presence of LVF flags in the demonstration. The initial rally was addressed by the UDP's John White and Frank McCoubrey who was Deputy Lord Mayor of Belfast. In the subsequent chaos over 200 families were displaced from the Greater Shankill area including Gusty Spence. UDP and PUP offices were destroyed and in a matter of weeks

seven men were killed - four by the UVF and three by the UDA in Belfast and Newtownabbey. The murdered would include loyalist political figures from both sides – former UVF commander Bertie Rice who was 63 years old and had returned from South Africa to work for the PUP and also Tommy English from the UDP negotiating team at Stormont who was shot dead by the UVF after they pistol-whipped his wife who had attempted to protect him. One senior loyalist would conclude to BBC security correspondent Brian Rowan with regard to Adair's contribution to the year just past: "He did more damage in those few months than the Provos did in 30 years on the Shankill. It was a total disgrace." ¹³

HOLY CROSS 2001- REPLAY 2002

The political future of Northern Ireland now seemed to be mired in a blurred muddling of decommissioning initiatives with the formation of devolved institutions while the 2001 General Election results saw the DUP and Sinn Fein make significant progress against the UUP-SDLP centre ground.¹⁴ In parallel to such developments would be the ongoing UDA implosion. In January 2001 it was announced that up to 14 branches of the UDP, or approximately one-third of the party, had quit because of their opposition to the GFA including South East Antrim, North Antrim and Londonderry.¹⁵ Several months later in July the UDA claimed that the loyalist people now despised the agreement and that:

Whilst our ceasefire remains intact, the UFF from today have withdrawn our support for the Good Friday Agreement. We can no longer remain silent in our criticisms of an agreement which our membership have continuously voiced their opposition to and which the vast number of the loyalist community had grown to despise. ¹⁶

Within 48 hours Gary McMichael responded and admitted that the UDP was now fundamentally at odds with the position of the UDA and hence could no longer speak for it. On 20th July the UDA threatened to escalate its campaign against all nationalist targets and murdered Protestant teenager Gavin Brett at Glengormley while he was standing with a group of Catholic and Protestant friends. Following the assassination of journalist Martin O'Hagan in September by the LVF the Ulster Secretary of State would then specify both groups' ceasefires in October.

2001 will be remembered in the history of the conflict mainly for the violent clashes at North Belfast's Glenbryn district and as centred around Holy Cross primary school for girls. This as bound up in the demographic flux from the UDA-UVF feud, the tribal complications of broader population change in North Belfast and as fuelled to some degree by republican manipulation. During this dispute Billy Hutchinson, who had been centrally involved in the Shankill feud of the previous year, was embroiled in an unsettling manner that engaged him halfway between a mediator and as a spokesperson for loyalism under siege. Fionnuala O'Connor's peace process overview would note:

As Holy Cross became an arena for the degradation and poverty of loyalist tactics, the harshest of lights shone on the PUP's spokesperson, trapped in the contradiction between the fine words of loyalist politics and reality on the streets.¹⁷

An attempt to pipebomb the Catholic schoolgirls or at the very least their police protectors, following on from earlier tirades of scatological verbal abuse and alleged bombardment with bags filled with urine and the peculiarly Northern Irish "dogs dirt", lead to Hutchinson's comment on how he was ashamed to be a Protestant and reconsideration of having anything further to do with this dispute.¹⁸ The definitive study of Holy Cross would include eyewitness allegations that a suspiciously recognisable "unionist representative" was seen smirking in the aftermath of the bombing while one traumatised schoolgirl confided to her counsellor that she had nightmares involving: "Billy Hutchinson coming into the house and shooting my mummy and my daddy."¹⁹

On 28th November the UDP would cease political activity with a press statement noting how internal discussions regarding electoral viability had been concluded and that the party was now amicably dissolved. In local elections six months previously McMichael and Adams had polled just over 500 votes each – Adams losing his seat and McMichael being elected on the eighth count. The UDP had failed to register in time for these council elections and hence their candidates were forced to stand as independents.²⁰

On 12th January 2002 20- year-old Catholic postman Danny McColgan was shot dead in Rathcoole by John Gregg's South East Antrim UFF – as claimed by the Red Hand Defenders - in retaliation for the manslaughter of Protestant teenager Thomas McDonald by a female Catholic driver in White City. A new UDA political front formed in the same month - the Ulster Political Research Group - would formally call on the government to institute a review of the GFA because of declining Protestant support.

Johnny Adair was released from Maghaberry prison on licence in May 2002 and welcomed outside by fellow Brigadiers including Gregg and Jim Gray²¹ – both of whom he would shortly conspire to murder. The UFF leader strode proudly from confinement –fatefully clad in a t-shirt from Italian casualwear designers Replay - and greeted his awaiting supporters with a hearty "Quis Seperabit". At his Welcome Home party in Boundary Way he promised to retake the Shankill from the UVF and other "rotten Prods" despite being about to undertake a £16,500 a year position in the not-for-profit sector as a Prisoners Welfare Co-ordinator. Yet again he would follow the lead of White's political stratagems in what was a mutually beneficial relationship according to one police officer:

It was a relationship where they both realised they needed each other. Adair needed White to give him some semblance of credibility, precisely because White was the softer face of loyalist terrorism. White needed Adair because he was Johnny Adair. He had power.²²

In July a UDA delegation met Secretary of State John Reid under the mantle of the Loyalist Commission - an umbrella of churchmen, community workers and loyalist paramilitaries. Reid would tell the assembled UDA leaders²³:

If you want to work for a constructive political resolution to our problems and a better Northern Ireland, I will work with you. If you're wedded to the old ways and you are stuck to the path of violence, I will oppose you by every means at my disposal. ²⁴

Much attention was focused at this time on ongoing interface tension in North and East Belfast. The UVF were directly involved in trouble at the Lower Newtownards Road-Short Strand area and as centred on the loyalist Cluan Place. An angry Ervine would claim at this point that the UVF had reached a crossroads on the GFA and that in terms of decommissioning in such inflammable circumstances there would be "not a bullet – not a stick" on offer. ²⁵

Adair's subsequent attempt to take overall control of the UDA has been heavily documented throughout the media with the trail of events beginning with the murder of LVF drug dealer Stephen Warnock in September 2002 by the RHC. White and Adair's subsequent expulsion from the UDA - following an Inner Council meeting where Adair had initially planned to assassinate all his rival Brigadiers - heralded a confusing draft of internecine killings, attempted murders, bomb attacks and physical intimidation involving the UDA and LVF.

Adair returned to jail in January for breaking the terms of his early release licence while C Company would be directly linked to 1st February 2003 assassination of South East Antrim Brigadier John Gregg in Belfast docklands - the most senior UDA figure to be murdered since John McMichael in 1987. In prelude to Gregg's funeral the Lower Shankill estate would be purged of Adair's companions with leading C Company figures fleeing to the Larne-Cairnryan ferry.

With this final bloody tableau engrained on the Northern Irish national psyche the phenomena of loyalist paramilitarism could be said to have come to terminal grief within metres of the Malvern Street site where the loyalist war began in 1966. Nearly three decades of republican violence had not driven the Ulster Protestants into the Irish Sea after all. However the unravelling of extreme loyalism in the aftermath of the conflict would see the losers of the final internecine struggle leaving the province in that very direction to the gall of the Scottish Under Secretary, MPs and Executive members.

One UDA Brigadier provided the following postscript on the most disastrous of all loyalist feuds: "There's no doubt that Loyalism was in the gutter, and it was John White and Johnny Adair who put us there". ²⁶ The long term effects on public perceptions of loyalist paramilitary political innovation would indeed be profound. Billy Hutchinson later noted how media focus on loyalist feuding fundamentally undermined the success of the fringe parties beyond the

infrastructural limitations they were already contending with as a small party with a high profile:

That is why the media reacted so quickly to covering Johnny Adair, because he fulfilled the stereotype Loyalist as a Neanderthal with knuckles dragging on the ground. The articulate voice of Loyalism was just not interesting enough for them.²⁷

AFTERMATH OF THE UDA FEUD 2003-2005

Subsequently the Ulster Political Research Group would announce the John Gregg Initiative which put all members of the UFF, UDA and UYM in Northern Ireland and mainland Britain under a 12 month period of military inactivity. The Inner Council, now consisting of household names throughout the British Isles, would retreat from a public role and the entire organisation would become faceless. The UDA would continue to be the last line of Protestant defence while offering support to the new police service and promising to stamp down on any involvement in the drugs trade.²⁸

Thereafter the residual traces of the political face of loyalism would be broadly immobilised in complement to Belfast's institutionalised interface problem and the wider political stasis.²⁹ A new Protestant Interface Network would also develop alongside PUP and UPRG contacts to maintain peace at the rawest of Belfast shatterzones at Ardoyne, Whitewell and the Limestone Road.³⁰

Loyalist Commission members met Taoiseach Bertie Ahern in June 2003 to discuss the economic, social and security concerns of loyalist areas. Subsequently Archbishop Eames stressed how loyalist paramilitaries must end their involvement in drug dealing and criminality: "Lift the curtain of fear and let those communities find a political expression for their wishes".³¹ At year's end a further Loyalist Commission discussion paper on loyalist involvement in criminality stated that drugs: "do more to destabilise, demoralise and debilitate loyalist areas than the republican movement did in 30 years of attacks."³²

The fallout of public negativity towards loyalism would nonetheless continue despite the holding of the ceasefire by a disillusioned UDA. The BBC *Panorama* documentary "Gangsters At War" in June 2003 revealed UPRG leader Denis Cunningham to have been a masked UFF spokesman at an earlier press conference standing down the RHD.

UVF elements would also be linked to a series of racial attacks in South Belfast throughout the year against Asian, Muslim and black civilians. Both the PUP's David Ervine and Tommy Kirkham of the UPRG spoke out strongly in condemnation of them and the local UVF leader was stood down early the next year.³³ The UVF murder of Raymond McCord Junior over

cannabis possession in 1997 by the North Belfast Mount Vernon unit however would continue to haunt the PUP. The murdered man's father questioned the UVF ceasefire and the failure of the PUP to openly condemn it. The Ballyclare UVF were also implicated in an equally vicious murder of John Allen who had been outspoken in his hostility to loyalist paramilitarism .

Despite Ervine's condemnation of the Allen murder these incidents may well have significantly contributed to the loss of Billy Hutchinson's North Belfast seat in the 2003 Assembly election - McCord Senior standing against Hutchinson to spotlight the fact that two of the UVF Mount Vernon leaders at the time of the murder had been Special Branch informers.³⁴ Hence even years after the initial CLMC ceasefire would the acute interface of brutal loyalist paramilitary violence with the shadowy subterranean intelligence war further dissolve the already fragile appeal of the PUP to the law-abiding Protestant voter. Former RUC Detective Sergeant Johnston Brown would support McCord's investigations with the sobering warning that: "He's chasing some very, very evil people, people who are ... serial killers."³⁵

In April 2004 the Independent Monitoring Commission (IMC) recommended the imposition of financial sanctions on the PUP in light of the UVF activities including racist attacks and the Allen murder. David Ervine angrily stated that he would refuse to meet the IMC again :

If the IMC Report was meant to give a clear and precise understanding of the state of paramilitarist attitudes and violence within Northern Ireland, then there was a hell of a lot left out...The Progressive Unionist Party leadership does not determine these activities and may not be in a position to ensure prevention of them. But it can exert appreciable influence.³⁶

A subsequent PUP rebuttal to the IMC³⁷ recalled the efforts being made to tackle crime and the drugs trade as well as a new You-Can schools project to discourage young people from joining paramilitary groups. In October Ervine would be on the receiving end of a particularly vitriolic attack from Alliance Party MLA – and future East Belfast MP - Naomi Long with regard to his efforts at securing loyalist paramilitary disarmament:

David Ervine said that he feels it would be his responsibility to persuade Loyalists to give up their weapons once the IRA fully decommissioned. He needs to put down his thesaurus for a moment and pick up his copy of the Good Friday Agreement. It already is his responsibility.³⁸

The year would end with a third IMC report in November claiming that the UDA was still heavily involved in crime and also pinpointed UVF involvement in several murders. Subsequent financial sanctions would lead to a proposed closure of the PUP's Shankill Road office. Secretary of State Paul Murphy's recognition of the UDA ceasefire shortly thereafter followed a public promise at a Rathcoole meeting to end all violence in favour of community politics and to work towards complete decommissioning. The UPRG's Tommy Kirkham would claim: "From today we are prepared to move into a process. Our commitment to that process will be to work towards a day when there is no longer a need for the UDA and a UFF."³⁹

The main developments of 2005 would be the disastrous performance of the Ulster Unionist Party at the May Westminster elections and formal IRA decommissioning in September. Within loyalist paramilitary circles the galling fall from grace would continue. This would mainly centre around a further UVF-LVF feud throughout the year which would leave five dead and see a 15-year-old girl placed on a UVF hit-list in January.⁴⁰ The murdered included 21-year-old Craig McCausland whose mother Lorraine had been battered to death outside a North Belfast community centre by UDA men in 1987. In April Billy Hutchinson would lose his Belfast City Council seat in Oldpark.⁴¹

A May 2005 IMC report recommended the continuation of financial sanctions against the PUP because it was still not exerting enough influence on the UVF and RHC to stop illegal activity. Following the Craig McCausland killing the PUP was also asked to formally sever its links with the UVF by the SDLP's Alban Maginness while Ervine in turn felt that the organisation's ongoing debate on its future direction had been pro-actively derailed by the activities of the allegedly intelligence-controlled LVF.⁴² In September Ervine would leave Belfast City Council chamber before a vote on a motion condemning the McCausland murder and stated to the family that he could:

...condemn anything you want me to condemn. In real terms, you would have to worry about whether I meant it or not. I condemn all of it, it's tragic, it's shameful and I can tell you, eleven years after ceasefire, no one is more wounded and gutted than me and people in the Progressive Unionist Party who, I think, have risked life and tried really hard.⁴³

A sixth IMC report focusing on the LVF-UVF feud would finally "specify" the UVF ceasefire with the PUP criticised for its lack of influence on the UVF. While accepting that the PUP was not strong enough to do so, nonetheless the party "could not have it both ways."⁴⁴

Also in September loyalist paramilitaries were actively engaged against the security forces throughout Belfast in the aftermath of the Whiterock Orange parade. Secretary of State Peter Hain would subsequently issue a challenge to loyalist paramilitaries to abandon violence definitively while at the same time announcing a new raft of measures aimed at addressing alienation in loyalist working class areas.⁴⁵ The UVF-LVF feud would formally end in October with the standing down of the latter organisation and another PUP refusal to sever links with the UVF.⁴⁶

THE UVF AND UDA MOVE TOWARDS DISBANDMENT AND DECOMMISSIONING 2006-2007

Government contacts with both main loyalist paramilitary organisations would continue throughout 2006 with regard to decommissioning and disbandment. Encouraging signs in

January included an order by UVF and Red Hand Commando chiefs for members to “clean up” their act or face expulsion ⁴⁷ while the UDA announced that a formal standing-down of the UFF was now imminent. ⁴⁸

In February the UVF announced that it would formally dissolve at the time of the Somme commemoration in July ⁴⁹ though some months later a final decision would be qualified with regard to the outcome of the November 24th political deadline for agreement between the DUP and Sinn Féin in the Assembly. In a *Belfast Telegraph* interview the UVF outlined its hostility to the government’s alternative Plan B to the restoration of the Executive and underscored that while the organisation was the first onto the stage of the Troubles that it would also be the final organisation to leave it. ⁵⁰

UDA moves towards disbandment would likewise be hamstrung by ongoing conflicts with its North Belfast Brigade which would lead to the expulsion of the Shoukri brothers. ⁵¹ Scattergunned throughout the year would be familiar threads within the loyalist paramilitary experience: the outing of John White as a long-term Special Branch agent ⁵², the assassination attempt on former UVF leader and fellow agent Mark Haddock ⁵³ and loyalist paramilitary involvement in attacks on Northern Ireland’s rising migrant worker population ⁵⁴ and in human trafficking. ⁵⁵

The friction and controversy attendant to David Ervine’s decision to join the the Ulster Unionist Party’s Assembly group would underscore yet again the existent parameters within mainstream unionism in terms of formal political association with paramilitary linked bodies. ⁵⁶ Following the collapse of Ervine’s Stormont partnership with Empey, the PUP leader would reveal details of his UVF past – having had an active role in the organisation for 11 years following his release from prison. ⁵⁷ Weeks earlier the UVF published a booklet *The Fallen and the Brave* in commemoration of volunteers who died in the course of the conflict. It included the murdered firebrand loyalist councillor George Seawright. Ervine in turn stressed that the admission was a significant development:

Maybe there’s an optimum moment to do that, when you think that you have completed the list and the likelihood of your list being added to is minimised because of the conditions that operate in our country now. ⁵⁸

In October the UDA stated that it was now keen to stand down with a policy document outlining ways of transforming working class areas through positive community development. As for the tarnished organisation itself, *Loyalism in Transition* noted:

The UDA admits that they too have been part of the problem. Not only because of their involvement in the violent conflict, but because the retention of attitudes and tactics symptomatic of that conflict have become self-destructive and are even alienating those on whom the organisation is reliant for support. Sectarian attitudes within the

organisation and the wider community need to be identified, confronted and hopefully eradicated.⁵⁹

The timetable for devolution as choreographed at the St Andrews Conference would be dramatically interrupted on November 24th with Michael Stone's foiled attempt to storm the Northern Ireland Assembly and murder leading Sinn Féin politicians. As comi-tragic as the attempt itself would be the insistence by Frankie Gallagher of the UPRG that "The Ulster Defence Association has had absolutely no prior knowledge of what Michael was doing"⁶⁰ and his defence lawyer's subsequent claim that the incursion was merely a work of "performance art".⁶¹

With no less drama the new year of 2007 would begin with the death of David Ervine from a heart attack, stroke and brain haemorrhage at the age of 53 and the potentially terminal undermining of the PUP's political fortunes. Leading Sinn Féin figures would attend his Newtownards Road funeral – viewed by many as an historic vindication of the political risks fringe loyalism had made to secure an end to conflict.⁶² Ervine's final political commentary for the *Belfast Telegraph* at such a moment of fateful political destiny for the north stated:

The next phase of the peace process is parliamentary democracy. It would be a travesty to get stuck at this point. It has taken a long time to ensure that politics takes primacy over paramilitarism. The establishment of the Assembly is absolutely vital to finish the job.⁶³

Tributes were effusive from around the world and from across the political divide of Northern Ireland. Prime Minister Tony Blair stated "Brought up in sectarian politics, he ended up being a persistent and intelligent persuader for cross-community partnership and will be sorely missed." For Taoiseach Bertie Ahern "David Ervine was a courageous politician who sought to channel the energies of loyalism in a positive political direction".⁶⁴ However no more moving tribute would be made to David Ervine than a posting by Jackie and Valerie Redpath on the *Belfast Telegraph* tributes and condolences website:

We didn't see much of each other recently but anytime we did meet we would remember old times and ask after each others family. Well old friend you have moved on to a calmer place now but I wish you were still with us. You gave them all a run for their money. I hope they carry on your good work. A lasting peace would be a fitting tribute to one of the best friends and politicians this country will ever know. Goodbye old friend, till we meet again.⁶⁵

Two months after Ervine's death Ian Paisley and Gerry Adams announced at an historic joint news conference that power-sharing would resume on 8th May 2007 with the DUP leader as First Minister and Martin McGuinness as his Deputy. The dramatic political confluence of 2007 would arguably trump the entire raft of high political dramas since the 1994 ceasefires – be that as powered by cynical realpolitik, strategic genius, the high farce of Northern Irish political life or the most effective framework for any subsequent "pact of forgetting" to endure.

However in the 13 years since the loyalist guns fell silent the UDA's credibility lay broadly in tatters with even a "political" figure such as Tommy Kirkham having been expelled for his association with dissident elements.⁶⁶ Later UDA-inspired rioting in Bangor and Carrickfergus alongside the perennial feuding in the South East Antrim area would lead to the suspension of government funding of the Conflict Transformation Initiative by Social Development Minister Margaret Ritchie in October 2007.⁶⁷ Likewise the political odyssey of David Ervine stood as sobering testimony – as the "best throw" that the political face of loyalist paramilitarism is highly likely to ever historically produce - that unionist disdain for any political voice emanating from such a paramilitary source is bedded in deep cultural roots of pure antipathy.

On 3rd May 2007 – and in conclusion to a lengthy period of internal UVF discussion to create a new Code of Conduct under the aegis of "The Roadshow"⁶⁸ - Gusty Spence read the UVF statement declaring that it had renounced violence and would cease to exist as a terrorist organisation. The statement would "reaffirm the legitimacy of our tactical response to violent nationalism, yet reiterate the sincere expression of abject and true remorse to all innocent victims of the conflict."⁶⁹ A senior UVF figure would state in conclusion to a BBC correspondent: "The man who brought the UVF onto the stage is now the man who is taking it off the stage...This is the end, the war is over."⁷⁰

On Remembrance Sunday 2007 in turn – after a similar internal consultation process aimed at centralising the movement away from its status as a collection of "autonomous fiefdoms"⁷¹ - the UDA leadership announced the formal standing down of the UFF, made further warnings against criminality within the loyalist community and promised that the UDA would stay intact. The November statement had further claimed that: "It was these freedom fighters who brought the enemy to the peace table and established the first ceasefires in 1994." UDA Brigadier Jackie McDonald would voice support for Ian Paisley as head of the devolved government and elaborate: "You've seen the flag of the Ulster Freedom Fighters furled. Their job is done. Hopefully they'll never have to come back to do what they did before."⁷²

THE RETURN OF POLITICAL VIOLENCE TO NORTHERN IRELAND AND COMPLETION OF LOYALIST DECOMMISSIONING 2009-2013

In March 2009 two British soldiers and a member of the PSNI were murdered by the Real IRA and Continuity IRA respectively. There would be no loyalist paramilitary retaliation. PUP leader Dawn Purvis urged loyalists to not react to the killings while leading UDA figure Jackie McDonald praised the political response of Martin McGuinness to the events.⁷³ Communal acceptance of the political agreement would appear to have passed the most difficult test of faith imaginable.⁷⁴

On 27th June 2009 the Ulster Volunteer Force and Red Hand Commando stated that all arms and explosives were totally and irreversibly beyond use. The Ulster Defence Association would also disclose on the same day that it had started to decommission its own materiel.⁷⁵ The UDA would underscore that:

The dark days are now behind us and it is time to move on. There is no place for guns and violence in the new society we are building. It is time to work for a better future.⁷⁶

The UVF and RHC would comment in turn:

We have done so to further augment the establishment of accountable democratic governance in this region of the UK, to remove the pretext that loyalist weaponry is an obstacle to the development of our communities and to compound our legacy of integrity to the peace process.⁷⁷

In January 2010 the Ulster Political Research Group confirmed that the UDA had placed all weaponry under its control “verifiably beyond use” and as witnessed by General John de Chastelain as the head of the international decommissioning body.⁷⁸

Four months later, PUP leader Dawn Purvis would resign following the murder of loyalist Bobby Moffett on the Shankill Road by individuals suspected to be associated with the UVF. The murder was the 99th to be perpetrated by loyalists since the October 1994 CLMC ceasefire⁷⁹. Purvis’ resignation statement noted:

I believe the Progressive Unionist Party was founded by individuals who had a real vision for Northern Ireland and a positive and important contribution to make to politics and the peace process in this country. I have been honoured to be a part of that. However, I can no longer offer leadership to a political party which is expected to answer for the indefensible actions of others.⁸⁰

During September 2010, the same month IRA dissidents were reported to have engaged strategic thinking with the global *zeitgeist* in threatening to target mainland banking institutions⁸¹, an IMC report on the Moffett murder confirmed it had been directly sanctioned by the UVF leadership. This had been in order to “send a message to the loyalist community that the UVF would not tolerate its authority being flouted”.⁸²

By autumn 2010 the PUP as a political organisation appeared on the brink of collapse.⁸³ However the 16th October party conference would see the election of David Ervine’s brother Brian as party leader alongside the decision to retain links with the UVF. Brian Ervine would condemn the Moffett murder while underscoring that the radical decline in UVF violence was due to “progressive men in those organisations and the restraining influence of the PUP”.⁸⁴ The following month Gusty Spence himself made a call for final UVF disbandment as “there is no reason for them to exist”.⁸⁵

The May 2011 Assembly elections saw both Dawn Purvis⁸⁶ and Brian Ervine fail to be elected in East Belfast⁸⁷ while the following month serious sectarian disturbances broke out at the Newtownards Road-Short Strand interface in the constituency and as directly linked to the local UVF.⁸⁸ Ulster Television coverage of a local community group meeting in the aftermath of the trouble included commentary from Newtownards Road resident Jean McCracken:

Mr David Ervine says to me when he got my grills off he said to me y'know...that as soon as the grills comes off you can live in peace. We lived in peace for a few years so we have y'know and then all this is coming back...and I'm going...he's not there no more. Who do I go to?⁸⁹

On 25th September Gusty Spence died at the age of 78 – his funeral service on the lower Shankill was free of paramilitary trappings and his coffin draped in the regimental flag of the Royal Ulster Rifles. Media coverage of his death would incorporate commentary from the family of the first Troubles victim Matilda Gould with her granddaughter noting:

She is never mentioned because it happened at the start of the Troubles. Peter Ward is mentioned, maybe because Gusty Spence shot him. He is still the man who sanctioned my granny's murder. He killed her, it's as simple as that. I would just like people to know what he did. My granny suffered an awful death.⁹⁰

The following month Billy Hutchinson was elected as the new leader of the PUP⁹¹ - his subsequent time at the helm of the party has seen an £11.5 million UVF supergrass trial⁹² and major loyalist demonstrations in 2012 marking the anniversary of both the Balmoral review and the signing of the Ulster Covenant.⁹³ Political developments in the latter part of that year and and through 2013 - regarding street protests over the flying of the Union flag from Belfast City Hall and Parades Commission decisions - would find the PUP in the extraordinary position of potentially engaging with a committed political constituency within the Protestant Unionist Loyalist community at last. This ironically in the midst of staggeringly vitriolic animosity directed from segments of the loyalist working class towards the British government, Northern Ireland Assembly, PSNI, Alliance Party, Orange Order, UUP, DUP, SDLP, Sinn Féin, the Belfast business community and a large swathe of the Northern Ireland public - Protestant and Catholic alike. Whether such connectivity with a new support base in such strained *kulturkampf* circumstances⁹⁴ represents a continuity with the very specific and radical political narrative of this thesis is currently open to question and debate following the 100th anniversary of the UVF's foundation. ⁹⁵

POLITICAL ANALYSIS OF LOYALIST POLITICAL COLLAPSE

Political commentary on the collapse of the loyalist fringe presence would often focus on the perennial connectivity with criminal endeavour. Hence Fionnuala O'Connor would stress that the strengths of the loyalist fringe presence were constantly qualified by these specific

associations with the UVF and UDA. In turn the Holy Cross conflagration and the various loyalist feuds would prove fatal for any organic growth in this area.⁹⁶

Ervine broadened the scope of such explanations for why loyalism imploded following the GFA in Sinnerton's biography.⁹⁷ He suggested that the clandestine and surreptitious nature of the dealing between the British government and Sinn Fein gave succour to anti-Agreement elements within loyalism. He also felt that some elements within loyalism openly wanted to demolish the final restraints to outright criminal enterprise. At the same time some significant elements in the politico-security framework pro-actively wanted the CLMC's political analyses to cease and the two main loyalist paramilitary groups to remain separate. The latter concern replicates conclusions drawn by Tony Novosel regarding the first wave of UVF political experimentation in the 1970s - that alongside Protestant public antipathy, unionist political hostility, undeveloped Provisional IRA conflict exit strategies and aimless British government policy fluctuations.⁹⁸

James White McAuley's 2010 study of Ulster unionism in the 21st century clearly notes how the fracturing of the "existing symbolic order" in 1998 certainly opened up alternative political discourses to be heard – including those from paramilitary sources within loyalism. However the inclusive nature of new loyalist rhetoric could not outweigh the clear fact that other political actors "drew directly on existing collective memories and broad cultural frames that are understood and believed by a majority of unionists"⁹⁹. A new loyalism – and indeed a new civic unionism - would thus be marginalised by the DUP's ability to claim the highground of "truth" with regard to the complex political narrative of recent years.

The loyalist fringe's candid appreciation of the lack of unionist pluralism in the Stormont years certainly won significant Catholic sympathy. It would however also bring them many Protestant enemies. This would prove to be problematic in the long-term as the interface repercussions developed. Indeed there was always less cross-class social connectivity in Protestant Ulster as opposed to the traditionally beleaguered nationalist communities. Therefore few hands would reach out from comfortable middle class unionism to provide succour for loyalist districts like Glenbryn - so fundamentally bereft of social capital - apart from some political figures who clearly saw the violence as the natural fallout from a cynical republican gameplan.

In turn, with the shocking transformation of several parts of loyalist Ulster into sinister urban wastelands, the prospects of a 21st Century wave of radical and dynamic loyalist voices emanating from the UDA and UVF never seemed particularly likely to evolve. The UPRG's downbeat comments on the unveiling of the John Gregg Initiative were at best palliating and at worst Utopian with regard to tackling loyalist involvement in the drug culture. According to BBC security correspondent Brian Rowan, the criminal strain within a multi-fractured loyalist paramilitarism would even be considered as a central factor attendant to the strategic retention

of armouries after 2007.¹⁰⁰ Indeed even disparate figures such as Labour councillor Mark Langhammer and UDA Brigadier Jackie McDonald seemed to concur on the need for firm policing responses from the PSNI during the paramilitary endgame itself.¹⁰¹

Graham Spencer in turn noted how feuding and criminality in the post-conflict environment was due to loyalist paramilitary disassociation from the political process and an inwards fusion of combustible tensions accordingly. Both paramilitary exit strategies towards disbandment - the UVF's "controlled dispersal" of volunteers and the less centralised UDA's "containment" of volunteers atop redirection towards community work - faced equal risk by way of individual volunteers' dissatisfaction with leadership decisions and a lack of a long-term strategy for political transition.¹⁰²

As for the loyalist paramilitaries themselves, on 22nd May 1972 LAW leader Billy Hull had warmly praised loyalist Tartan gangs at a Carrickfergus rally as the "Ulster of the Future".¹⁰³ By conflict's end the sons and grandsons of those very same Tartans would be classified in an outstanding academic critique of loyalism by Stephen Howe as quite literally "the last of the Whiteboys".¹⁰⁴

CONCLUSIONS: THE ZERO SUM GAME OF ULSTER RECONFIGURED

By the time of the Leeds Castle talks in 2004 only David Ervine would retain a significant public profile from the ranks of those loyalist political figures who declared the CLMC ceasefire in 1994. Due to the inter-paramilitary feuding in the interim - and the corroborative accusations of UVF-UDA involvement in the drugs trade - there would be little insistence at this stage on the decommissioning of loyalist guns on a political as opposed to strictly criminal level.

Hence one year after the GFA, and with UDA support for the process waning fast, the more fragile UDP would gradually commence countdown to dissolution leaving the PUP as a solitary loyalist voice amongst a unionist population expressing ever increasing reservations about the direction of the process. This chapter has clearly outlined how a more wide ranging raft of worst case scenarios that came to pass would indeed be hard to envisage for the loyalist fringe by way of the sectarianism, criminality and unpredictability of their associated paramilitary groupings.

The wider inability of Ulster unionism to positively stress for its constituency that the GFA did not equal blinding political and military success for the IRA would in turn lead to debilitating social and cultural confusion within working class loyalism. This would be balanced against growing political confidence in working class Catholic Belfast.¹⁰⁵

For many working class loyalists in the years following the GFA - and for all the public and private goodwill showered upon the PUP and UDP - the stench of defeat would overpower the scent of qualified victory which was the political reward that all parties were permitted to extract from such a dishonourable draw. Hence the catastrophic collapse of the UDA in turn would convince even the most apolitical nationalist in Northern Ireland that the Catholics were surely on the winning side, without any tangible qualifications after all, in what had previously been politically analysed ad nauseum as a zero-sum game.

¹ The high media profile attracted to Adair – with his shaven head and penchant for gangsta fashion styles - would be reflected as late as the winter of 2010 on Scottish comedian Frankie Boyle's controversial *Tramadol Nights* series on Channel 4. During the initial stand-up comedy section in the first episode Boyle would abusively accuse a shaven-headed member of the audience in the front row of being a loyalist paramilitary suspect and gunrunner.

² The South East Antrim Brigade of the UDA, of which Gregg was Brigadier, was associated with a raft of sectarian attacks in the county in the years following the Good Friday Agreement. In February 2003 SDLP Assembly member Danny O'Connor claimed that in the period since the signing of the agreement 300 Catholics had left both Larne and Carrickfergus and 1,400 from Antrim town due to intimidation from loyalists. He pointed blame at both the UDA and the UVF but underscored that the former body had been behind the bulk of the attacks. (*Irish News*, 20th February 2003). Eight years later and members of the Polish community in Antrim were the victims of racial attacks with a pipebomb being left on the windowsill of a Polish couple's home at Seacash Drive. Local graffiti at this time ridiculed the PUP as the Polish Unity Party (*Belfast Telegraph*, 13th October 2011). Polish national flags were burned on some East Belfast 11th July bonfires during 2012 (*Belfast Telegraph*, 20th July 2012). Such inflammatory symbolism was arguably surpassed the following year however when a statue of the Virgin Mary briefly found itself atop a Lower Shankill equivalent (*Belfast Telegraph*, 12th July 2013). See also *Belfast Telegraph* columnist Malachi O'Doherty's commentary on the incident (13th July 2013) and Chris Donnelly analysis for Slugger O'Toole blog: <http://sluggerotoole.com/2013/07/15/grieving-for-a-lost-supremacism/>.

³ Spencer, 2008, pp 188-191.

⁴ McDonald, 2000, p275.

⁵ *ibid*, p291.

⁶ The murder of Portadown lawyer Rosemary Nelson in March 1999 by the LVF was claimed under the aegis of the Red Hand Defenders. The ongoing spate of atomised loyalist paramilitary activity, including a new County Antrim-based Orange Volunteers, was allegedly controlled by a triumvirate of Protestant pastors. See McDonald and Cusack, 2004, Ch 18. Also *The Guardian*, October 29th 1999, October 31st 1999 and July 9th 2000. Though two of the pastors have been clearly identified in media analysis, the identity of the third individual - allegedly long-linked to loyalist paramilitarism - remains unknown.

⁷ Rowan, 2003, p151.

⁸ Lister and Jordan, 2003, p215. This book includes an open recitation of autopsy details from the Hightown Road murders. It is claimed that Paddy Wilson had 32 stab wounds and had his throat cut from ear to ear while Irene Andrews bore 19 stab wounds and had her breasts mutilated.

⁹ *ibid*, p220.

¹⁰ Detailed portrait of Johnny Adair and Billy Wright as peace "spoilers and wreckers" in Chapter 4 of Shirlow, 2012.

¹¹ Lister and Jordan, *op cit*, p225.

¹² Accounts of Adair's paramilitary career associate him with only one direct murder - that of 26-year-old Protestant Noel Cardwell who had learning difficulties and had been accused by the UDA of being a police informer (McKittrick, Kelters et al p 1341. Also Wood, 2006, pp 181-182 and p 285).

¹³ Rowan, *op cit*, p210.

- ¹⁴ The Assembly was to be suspended between October 2002 and May 2007 due to police raids on Sinn Féin offices at Stormont investigating alleged IRA intelligence gathering.
- ¹⁵ "Loyalist party split over peace accord", BBC News Online, 23rd January 2001
- ¹⁶ Rowan, op cit, p 216.
- ¹⁷ O'Connor, 2002, p137.
- ¹⁸ During October in the Holy Cross dispute the Conservative Party's Shadow Northern Ireland Secretary Quentin Davies walked in solidarity with the schoolgirls during their morning journey from Ardoyne. He was berated by one irate loyalist protestor to "Go back to the Free State, you Fenian fucker" (*The Observer*, 7th October 2001).
- ¹⁹ Cadwallader, 2004, pp 79-80 and p138.
- ²⁰ McAuley, 2010, pp 119-120 for dismissive commentary on the UDP leadership from the loyalist magazine *Warrior*.
- ²¹ Jim Gray - who had initially aspired to be a professional golfer - was murdered by the UDA in October 2005. See Part One of Jim McDowell's *The Mummy's Boys* (2006) and Angelique Chrisafis article in *The Guardian*, 12th October 2005 for overview of his extraordinary career.
- ²² Lister and Jordan, op cit, p237.
- ²³ Full discussion of the 2000-2006 Loyalist Commission in Spencer, 2008, pp 200-205.
- ²⁴ Rowan, op cit, p221.
- ²⁵ *ibid*, p221.
- ²⁶ *ibid*, p226.
- ²⁷ Spencer, op cit, pp213-214.
- ²⁸ *The Guardian*, 23rd February 2003.
- ²⁹ Overview of loyalist paramilitary attempts to control interface tension in the Neil Jarman contribution *Ordering Transition: The Role of Loyalists and Republicans in Community Based Policing Activity* in Edwards and Bloomer, 2008.
- ³⁰ "Has the terror group really changed its spots", BBC News Online, 10th September 2010 for optimistic overview of relations between the UDA, the PSNI and the IMC in the Duncairn Gardens district of North Belfast.
- ³¹ "Loyalists must end criminality", BBC News Online, 26th June 2003.
- ³² "Document urges end to racketeering", BBC News Online, 15th October 2003.
- ³³ McDonald, 2004, p118 and David McKittrick article in *Belfast Telegraph*, 16th July 2003. With racist attacks in Northern Ireland becoming a daily occurrence by 2003 ("Race hate on rise in NI", BBC News Online, 13th January 2004) loyalist leaders would unite in February 2005 to condemn a right-wing website that was targeting anti-racist campaigners in Northern Ireland. Frank McCoubrey would acerbically note: "Where were these people during the Troubles when there was 30 years of war going on? Not many of them came to the Shankill Road to help defend it." (*Daily Ireland*, February 17th 2005). The following month the Loyalist Commission launched an anti-racist campaign with the circulation of a "Loyalist or Racist? You can't be both" leaflet. (*Belfast Telegraph*, 9th March 2005).
- ³⁴ For positive consideration of the role played in the Assembly by Ervine and Hutchinson see article "Bastards and Traitors" by Billy Mitchell in *The Blanket* web journal -www.lark.phoblacht.net/bastards.html. This is in reply to comment from trade unionist Sean Smyth that the couple were "bastards and traitors who betrayed the working class over a prawn sandwich and a glass of chardonnay."
- ³⁵ *Belfast Telegraph*, 4th December 2003.
- ³⁶ "PUP to boycott Commission", BBC News Online, 26th April 2004.
- ³⁷ "Rebuttal of the IMC's first report" – www.pup-ni.org.uk

- ³⁸ *News Letter*, 11th October 2004.
- ³⁹ *The Guardian*, 15th November 2004.
- ⁴⁰ *Belfast Telegraph*, 30th January 2005.
- ⁴¹ For discussion of the PUP decision to retain links with the UVF following the local election defeats of 2005 see Stephen Bloomer article *Bridging the Militarist-Politico Divide: The PUP and the Politics of Conflict Transformation* in Edwards and Bloomer, 2008. Also Edwards, 2009b and 2010.
- ⁴² "Party is urged to sever UVF link", BBC News Online, 19th July 2005. Also "Loyalist feud sees debate put on hold", BBC News Online, 23rd July 2005.
- ⁴³ "PUP criticised over murder vote", BBC News Online, 2nd September 2005.
- ⁴⁴ *Belfast Telegraph*, 22nd September 2005.
- ⁴⁵ "Hain to challenge Loyalist groups", BBC News Online, 21st September 2005. Full text of Hain's speech - regarding the positive implications of the Belfast Agreement for the unionist community and fractures within loyalism - reproduced in *Belfast Telegraph*, 21st September 2005.
- ⁴⁶ "PUP to maintain links with UVF", BBC News Online, 16th October 2005. See *Belfast Telegraph*, 2nd November 2005 for columnist Lindy McDowell's acerbic view of the military "standing down" of the Loyalist Volunteer Force in light of the organisation's links to the Northern Ireland drugs trade.
- ⁴⁷ *Belfast Telegraph*, 20th January 2006.
- ⁴⁸ *News Letter*, 29th January 2006.
- ⁴⁹ *Belfast Telegraph*, 19th February 2006.
- ⁵⁰ *Belfast Telegraph*, 13th April 2006.
- ⁵¹ *Belfast Telegraph*, 8th March 2006. Ihab Shoukri would later die of a suspected drugs overdose in November 2008 at a time when his brother Andre was imprisoned on extortion charges. Another wry Lindy McDowell commentary on Shoukri and UDA culture in *Belfast Telegraph*, 26th November 2008.
- ⁵² *The Times*, 21st February 2006.
- ⁵³ *Belfast Telegraph*, 31st May 2006.
- ⁵⁴ *Guardian*, May 30th 2006.
- ⁵⁵ "Northern Ireland progress threatened by crime", BBC News Online, 5th July 2006.
- ⁵⁶ *Belfast Telegraph*, May 15th 2006.
- ⁵⁷ Irvine's paramilitary career included being the East Belfast Provost Marshal between 1988 and 1991 - he would clearly state "I've never resigned from the UVF". *Belfast Telegraph*, September 15th 2006.
- ⁵⁸ *News Letter*, 24th August 2006. The list of deceased volunteers in *The Fallen and the Brave* would contain several omissions. These included Jim Hanna and Billy Hanna who were alleged to have liaised with British Intelligence and also internecine victims of feuding with the Shankill Butchers gang. In counterpoise to Irvine's sober commentary it should also be noted that Lenny Murphy is referenced as having repelled republican criminals from the community "by any means necessary", that Robert "Basher" Bates was a "true and dedicated Ulster soldier" and that the Miami Showband were "Irish Republican gun-smugglers".
- ⁵⁹ *Conflict Transformation Initiative, Loyalism in Transition 1, A New Reality?*
- ⁶⁰ "UDA distances itself from Stone", BBC News Online, 28th November 2006.
- ⁶¹ "Stone's attack 'performance art'", BBC News Online, 19th December 2007.

⁶² The funeral of former UVF leader and Dublin-Monaghan bomber Billy Mitchell would also witness the attendance of figures from both the republican movement and the Catholic church. See Roy Garland article "Never too late to talk to Billy" archived at www.pup-ni.org.uk. Mitchell is referenced in Cairan MacAirt's study of the 1971 McGurk's Bar as the UVF leader who ordered the operation itself (pp 125-128). As another example of radical political changes in 21st Century Northern Ireland the former Red Hand Commando leader Winston "Winkie" Churchill Rea – jailed during the 1970s for his role in the assassination of two Catholics - attended the funeral of Michaela McAreavy in County Tyrone following her murder on honeymoon in Mauritius in January 2011. Rea personally brought condolences from the First Shankill Northern Ireland Supporters Club to the father and husband of the deceased who were well known in GAA circles. See *Belfast Telegraph*, 22nd January 2011.

⁶³ *Belfast Telegraph*, 9th January 2007.

⁶⁴ "Reaction to PUP leader's death", BBC News Online, 8th January 2007.

⁶⁵ See also Ervine tribute from Security Correspondent Brian Rowan in *Belfast Telegraph*, 9th January 2007: "David Ervine gave a credible voice to political loyalism, and he did so much more than that. He was able to listen and talk, not just within his community, but outside it, and not just in this peace process, but in conflict areas across the world. Gerry Adams would have called him occasionally, and so too did many others. I can't find the words to say all I want to say about him, about the David Ervine I knew. He's the one who swallowed the dictionaries, and many times that gave us a laugh. I'll cry a tear for him. I'll miss him, and so will this place and this process. Somebody told me 'He wasn't the worst'. It's our strange way of saying he was one of the best. David Ervine didn't ask people to forget about his past. He didn't pretend it didn't happen. But in the present and in our peace, he made a hugely significant contribution, and that is something his family can be proud of."

⁶⁶ *Belfast Telegraph*, 30th April 2007.

⁶⁷ See BBC News Online articles "£1m is confirmed for UDA Project", 22nd March 2007 and "Minister stops loyalist project", 16th October 2007.

⁶⁸ Spencer, op cit, pp227-234 for discussion of the three-year UVF programme to stand down the organisation incorporating The Roadshow. This also includes further reference to the proposed March on Dublin in 2005 by loyalist militants associated with the group.

⁶⁹ *Belfast Telegraph*, 3rd May 2007.

⁷⁰ "Loyalist veteran's path to peace", BBC News Online, 3rd May 2007. In January 2011 it was reported that the Criminal Cases Review Commission had been asked by Spence to review new evidence made available to his family through a third party in relation to the 1966 Ward murder. This by way of a letter allegedly sent to the Home Office months after the trial raising concerns about the guilty verdict. In relation to the developments Spence, who had also denied the murder of Ward, claimed "The overriding thing, I don't want that wee gentle lady Mrs Ward (Peter Ward's mother) hurt any more than she has been" (*Belfast Telegraph*, 24th January 2011).

⁷¹ Spencer, op cit, p235-245 for details of UDA Conflict Transformation Initiative including consideration of the benefits of forming a lobbying group as opposed to a reconstituted political party.

⁷² *News Letter*, 12th November 2007. For a cynical journalistic view of the formal UDA military stand-down see Lindy McDowell column in *Belfast Telegraph*, 14th November 2007.

⁷³ *Belfast Telegraph*, 10th, 12th, 23rd March and 3rd April 2009.

⁷⁴ Stewart, 1986, p16. Subsequent to the March 2009 murders of the two British soldiers in Antrim by the Real IRA a Catholic member of the PSNI Ronan Kerr was killed by a booby trap car bomb near Omagh in April 2011. The attack was undertaken by a dissident group of former members of the Provisional IRA and as claimed by "the IRA". In October 2012 a serving Protestant prison officer David Black was shot in his car on the M1 motorway between Lurgan and Portadown by another dissident group calling itself "the IRA" and as believed to include members of the Real IRA.

⁷⁵ See Graham Spencer speech at the April 2012 Political Studies Association conference in Belfast for analysis of the labyrinthine loyalist post-conflict organisational and community initiatives – including the UDA's Conflict Transformation Initiative and the UVF's Action For Community Transformation: www.sluggeroole.com/2012/04/05/jackie-mcdonald-questions-orange-order-covenant-parade-taking-motorised-machine-guns-past-short-strand. On the same political blog there is interesting public commentary on a late 2010 UVF conference on civilianisation - www.sluggeroole.com/2011/04/03/loyalist-paramilitaries-and-civilianisation.

⁷⁶ *Belfast Telegraph*, 27th June, 2009.

⁷⁷ *ibid.* For further analysis of decommissioning practicalities and loyalist paramilitary assurance that republican weaponry is unequivocally not disposed of in full see Neil Southern article *Loyalism: Political Violence and Decommissioning* in McAuley and Spencer, 2011.

⁷⁸ *The Guardian*, 6th January, 2010.

⁷⁹ See Rights Watch website (formerly British and Irish Rights Watch) at www.rwuk.org

⁸⁰ "Purvis quits PUP over murder of loyalist Moffett", BBC News Online, 3rd June 2010.

⁸¹ *The Guardian*, 14th September, 2010.

⁸² *Belfast Telegraph*, 15th September, 2010.

⁸³ *Belfast Telegraph*, 16th September, 2010.

⁸⁴ "Ervine's brother is elected new PUP leader", BBC News Online, 16th October 2010.

⁸⁵ "Gusty Spence calls for UVF to disband", BBC News Online, 9th November 2010.

⁸⁶ Dawn Purvis and Brian Ervine pre-election interviews with informed public discussion at www.sluggeroole.com/2011/02/16/catching-up-with-dawn-purvis/ and www.sluggeroole.com/2011/03/06/catching-up-with-brian-ervine/. Subsequent debate about their respective defeats continues at www.sluggeroole.com/2011/05/08/the-defeat-of-the-pup-and-dawn-purvis/.

⁸⁷ Results archived at <http://www.ark.ac.uk/elections/aeb.htm>. East Belfast contained six Assembly seats - Purvis and Ervine's combined first preference vote was higher than that achieved by fourth placed Sammy Douglas of the DUP. Brian Ervine resigned as PUP leader in June 2011 following the defeat and was replaced by interim leader Dr John Kyle. For Kyle's reflections on the role of the church within loyalist communities see www.sluggeroole.com/2012/23/john-kyle-on-faith-and-loyalism/.

⁸⁸ "Belfast violence flares again as police attacked" and "Loyalist view of East Belfast flashpoint violence", BBC News Online, 21st -22nd June 2011. *Belfast Telegraph*, 23rd June 2011 for discussion of East Belfast UVF leadership and analysis of the civil disorder by Liam Clarke and Brian Rowan on 24th June and 30th June respectively. Also Henry McDonald article in *The Guardian*, 12th July 2011 for overview of loyalist and republican summer rioting.

⁸⁹ Ulster Television news website footage from 23rd June 2011. See also public discussion at www.sluggeroole.com/2011/06/24/we-lived-in-peace-for-a-few-years-and-then-all-this-is-coming-back/.

⁹⁰ "Granddaughter of victim says Gusty Spence was not a peacemaker", BBC News Online, 26th September 2011. See also obituaries in *The Guardian*, 25th September 2011 and *The Independent*, 28th September 2011. Also Radio Ulster's "The Nolan Show" broadcast of 25th September 2011 and public discussion at www.sluggeroole.com/2011/10/09/thoughts-on-the-death-of-gusty-spence/.

⁹¹ For 2011 PUP conference see www.sluggeroole.com/2011/10/16/round-up-of-the-pup-conference-including-audio-from-speeches/.

⁹² "North Belfast UVF supergrass trial lasted 171 days", BBC News Online, 31st October 2012. For further commentary on a potentially more significant supergrass trial which may involve the UVF leadership itself see *Belfast Telegraph* report on the 100th anniversary march to Craigavon House, 22nd April 2013.

⁹³ *Belfast Telegraph*, 22nd May 2012 and 29th September 2012.

⁹⁴ Following serious disorder at North Street in Belfast city centre on 9th August 2013 between loyalists and the PSNI Billy Hutchinson claimed "I think that the disorder that happened in Belfast last night actually shows how far we are away from 15 years ago, whenever we all thought that we had a peace process, a political one that worked. It isn't working and the reason for that is working class unionists, or loyalists as some people would describe them, are being trampled into the ground. This whole de-Britification that is being carried out by republicans, and helped by others I have to say, in terms of doing all this and then blaming paramilitary organisations that are not involved - that was people's anger last night, and they don't need paramilitary organisations to show people's anger" ("Reaction to riots in Belfast", BBC News Online, 10th August 2013).

⁹⁵ 2012-2013 Belfast flag protests analysed in Henry McDonald article for *The Guardian*, 6th January 2013 and Andrew Gilligan commentary in *Daily Telegraph*, 12th January 2013. For differing opinions towards the protests from Billy Hutchinson and Jackie McDonald see *Belfast Telegraph*, 15th December 2012 and 2nd January 2013. Loyalist paramilitary involvement in unrest at "Belfast flags trouble: PSNI chief says senior UVF members are involved", BBC News Online, 7th January 2013. Also *Belfast Telegraph*, 11th January 2013. Public debate can be referenced at www.sluggeroole/2012/12/06/uvf-campaign-of-flying-riots-leaves-unionists-isolated/ and www.sluggeroole/2012/12/07/loyalist-rampage-continues-myth-of-confident-unionism-exposed/ and www.sluggeroole/2013/01/09/thoughts-on-the-flag-protests/. Gilligan's article for the *Daily Telegraph* as noted above references the arguable nadir of the protests when in January 2013 Newtownabbey loyalists refused a pensioner passageway when on the way to see his dying wife. He shouted at them "If your wife was dying, what would you be doing? Protestants? You don't own us. Take yourselves home - show a bit of respect for people." He was allegedly met with silence, derision or laughter. The anniversary of the original UVF formation was marked on 20th April 2013 by a march to the now-derelict Craigavon House ("Thousands mark UVF 100th anniversary in Belfast", BBC News Online, 20th April 2013). Several days later a new loyalist party was formed - Protestant Coalition - as lead by former National Front fundraiser James Dowson and associated with flags protest organiser Willie Frazer. A mission statement on the party's website pledged its willingness to co-operate with the Progressive Unionist Party, Traditional Unionist Voice and the UK Independence Party - www.protestantcoalition.org.

⁹⁶ O'Connor, op cit, pp132-137.

⁹⁷ Sinnerton, 2002, p230.

⁹⁸ Novosel, 2013, Ch 5.

⁹⁹ McAuley, 2010, p 189. See also pp 191-193.

¹⁰⁰ Rowan, 2008, pp 177-179.

¹⁰¹ Gallaher, 2007, p 214. Also Jackie McDonald interview in McAuley and Spencer, 2011 for thoughts on the crucial need for PSNI manpower resources to be maximised against loyalist criminality following completion of an inclusive political deal.

¹⁰² Graham Spencer article "Why loyalism needs role in peace process" in *Belfast Telegraph*, 18th March 2008.

¹⁰³ *The Troubles*, Issue 13, Glenravel Publications, Belfast.

¹⁰⁴ Stephen Howe, 2005.

¹⁰⁵ For further analysis of how loyalist working class communities positioned themselves within civil society during the strained period following the GFA see McAuley, 2010, pp 150-161.

X: NEW LOYALISM - CARTOGRAPHERS OF PEACE OR CULTIVATED MOB LEADERS?¹

The conflagration that swept Ulster in the summer of 1969 was not a forgone case of “unfinished business” that had merely been put on a strategic hold since the end of the republican border campaign seven years earlier. Likewise not all social engagement in the interim between the communities of Northern Ireland - and particularly that pertaining to residential segregation² and a shared youth culture³ - had evolved against the surety that ancient conflicts would resume like a tidal flow. History, whether in broadly populist or narrowly academic manifestation, tends to steamroller through such subtle prisms of time, space and social reality. Likewise for certain strands of historical revisionism propagated by the Ulster Defence Association and Sinn Féin in the new century. ⁴

A clear definition of the constituent dynamics which drove the civil conflict in Ulster – along with its core rationale as a literal “war” – would be angrily debated as late as February 2008 in the Northern Ireland Assembly.⁵ The same month an obituary of the IRA leader Brendan Hughes noted his sense of betrayal at republican concessions alongside the despondent quotation: “I keep wondering – what was it all about?”⁶ However in clear essence, through the unfortunate dovetailing of profound socio-economic upheaval with a doomed sequence of ill-informed political decision-making, would Northern Ireland be hoisted in the late 1960s into a quarter century of terrorism and communal cleavage that nobody could have foreseen from any vantage point in the early to mid-part of the decade.⁷

The reticence of Ulster unionist political culture to countenance open support for loyalist paramilitarism - as clearly noted in the previous six chapters - would prove a critical factor in limiting the scale of violence just as how the small geographical size of Northern Ireland itself made a literal blanket security presence feasible. For the bloody loyalist war, whose major focus would be inflicting as much cold terror as possible on the northern minority, would have little connection with the bravery and selflessness of Ypres and Beaumont-Hamel. A black and white newspaper photograph of a 1972 UDA march in Derry ⁸ would underscore the ad hoc nature of much loyalist paramilitary organisation throughout. Paunchy middle-aged men donning sunglasses and carrying swagger sticks would not easily replicate the street fighters of Budapest or the Left Bank.

Indeed so much in the history of loyalist paramilitarism – alike the geopolitical musings of the French Algerian Organisation Armée Secrète - seems to rest on the central political contradiction of the utilisation of revolutionary warfare techniques on behalf of a deeply conservative cause. A pointer to this end being demonstrated by the candid admissions of so many of the interviewees in Taylor’s landmark *Loyalists* documentary slipping frequently from the refreshingly frank to the naïvely over-revealing. Nevertheless the loyalist fringe presence in

the political battleground of the 1990s would clearly seemed to have succeeded in both relocating the peace locus from conflict resolution to conflict management (and conflict transformation) while at the same time generating much-needed self-respect for working class loyalism at a profoundly difficult period for unionism.

This paper will now contextualise the collective historic political voices originating from the UVF and UDA by way of the often overlooked cultural and paramilitary dynamics underpinning success or failure throughout and as fundamentally sourced to Stormont's dramatic fall. This having engendered a raft of questioning within the unionist grassroots as to the social, physical and political security provided by the state in return for fifty years of such staunch communal loyalty.

The subsequent attempts by loyalist paramilitary groups to enter such vacated political space by way of a physical electoral presence or as a background political catalyst would be radically mould-breaking – be that with or without central government encouragement. Running in parallel opposition throughout though would be the scant likelihood of a genuine class analysis emerging from paramilitary groups whose sectarian violence and dubious constructs would thoroughly alienate the very working class communities they claimed to defend. A notable Jack Holland article from 1998 on collusion would specifically note how so few active Provisional IRA or INLA members actually fell victim to loyalist paramilitary violence - a mere 10 from the former organisation between 1972 and 1992 by his informed estimation.⁹ Likewise for the contradiction of the state's most loyal bastions embarking upon rebellion against precepts of law and order which their host community set so much historical stock by in comparison to Catholic political violence against the same system.

The chapter will first review the historic pathways the modern loyalist paramilitary groups and their political representatives separately traversed. It will next consider the specific presentational reservations adherent to the rhetoric the political fronts produced and then the broader ethical and strategic strictures surrounding the concept of new loyalism in general. The miniscule spatial room for manoeuvre remaining in light of the disastrous sequence of events since the year 2000 will also be considered.

On 1st July 2003 the British government would give the Somme Association a £400,000 grant to buy Thiepval Wood in perpetual memory of the fallen of the 36th Ulster Division - forged from the volunteers of Carson's UVF.¹⁰ Overshadowing all analysis of the Ulster loyalist paramilitary experience would be the radically different linkages and bonds between these people's armies and mainland Britain in the first and final third of the 20th Century. For the paramilitary renaissance of the late 1960s would be forced to proceed without any leader of British conservatism preaching sedition on their behalf, the cream of Sandhurst queuing up to

join the UVF or indeed the worthy burghers of Kensington and Mayfair eagerly funding loyalist paramilitarism.¹¹

THE SETTLING DAYS¹²

Detailed research into the UVF and UDA has been fundamentally circumscribed by the brutal and random nature of early loyalist paramilitary violence, its symbiotic connection to criminal enterprise, assumed strategic direction by security agencies and the aftershocks of early 21st Century feuding. Thus little has been written about the UVF and UDA's support base in England¹³, loyalist paramilitary youth wings or the alleged intelligence proffered by anti-republican Catholics. There has also been only limited research on the involvement of women in loyalist paramilitary violence¹⁴ despite the picture of Gina Adair in matching black balaclava and miniskirt having been reproduced so often as to match the iconographic status of Ulrike Meinhof and Gudrun Ennslin's wanted posters.¹⁵

Likewise there has been little clarification to this day on the specific socio-economic backgrounds of loyalist paramilitaries over the course of the conflict - though the kind of higher profile "hard man" who rose to the top of the organisations suggests that such questions fall beyond the remit of serious political analysis. Nevertheless it is intriguing to consider what percentage of the membership was involved in skilled or semi-skilled trades or professions as compared to the standard portrayal of loyalist paramilitaries as unemployable hoods and psychopaths. This is especially pertinent with regard to individuals involved with the rural UVF.

Glenn Barr would expand upon this central nuance of modern UVF and UDA history when considering the lack of middle class input into their proletarian military constructs:

The problem is that we've lost the talents from that community, which was making a major contribution to our political life. At the end of the day, basically you need those academic classes. But the middle class, particularly on the Protestant side, all pissed off...And ordinary working-class guys were left leaderless.¹⁶

Herculean personnel management problems would certainly attach to the creation, development and denouement of modern loyalist paramilitarism. This by way of self-reinforcing judgements being made upon such organisations because of the activities of an uncontrollable minority¹⁷ or the more overlooked fact that the vast majority of loyalist activity was of a part-time nature. One of Colin Crawford's interviewees stressing:

The Provos were full time professional terrorists – all they had to do was lie in bed, claim British benefits, and go out and kill British citizens. We were paying bloody tax to finance their full time terrorism. They took our money first, and our lives secondly. If our boys had been full time there wouldn't have been a contest. We would have nailed them.¹⁸

Suspicion of close collusion with the security forces also runs as a seam throughout the history of militant loyalism. In 1974 one junior military officer would write in the conservative *Monday Club's* magazine of the quagmire the British Army and police had become enmeshed in because of their attempt to avoid a war on two fronts:

In order to combat this threat, the Army chose, quite deliberately, to give the UDA tacit support. The UDA virtually ran East and North Belfast...Almost too late, in the winter of 1972, that Army realised that it had assisted in the birth of a monster. It sought to act, but was only able to cage the beast; the secret of its destruction had been lost with its birth.¹⁹

Documents released into the public domain in January 2003 seem to corroborate such a strategic design. A letter from the Ministry of Defence to Prime Minister Edward Heath – dated November 29th 1972 - on government policy to the UDA would read: “An important function of the UDA is to channel into a constructive and disciplined direction Protestant energies which might otherwise become disruptive.” This was sent on the same day that UDA gunmen murdered Catholic barman Gerard Gearon on the Crumlin Road in Belfast after initially sharing his taxi.²⁰

The extraordinarily degraded nature of the earlier period of sectarian assassination in particular would often be redolent of infamous examples of cinematic excess – as the details of the internecine UVF killing of Noel Shaw or the torture of partially blind Catholic civilian Gerry Higgins by the UDA's Brian Nelson and up to 30 men and women makes painfully plain.²¹ Indeed much of the paramilitary mural iconography of the late 1990s – focusing on “special forces” stylisation of clothing and military operation- tends to obscure the casual and ad-hoc nature of the early Troubles manifestations.²² The often grotesque adaptation of military jargon to accompany this violence – with Long Kesh being held up as a loyalist Colditz to mirror republican propagandists' portrayal of it as their Dachau - would also span the entire conflict in counterpoise.²³

Throughout the Ulster Troubles the nature of UVF and UDA violence would be anchored in large part to a dark sectarianism which undercut both political credibility and their aspirations to be viewed as clinical and independent military actors. During 1980 for example – the year when the UVF killed John Turnly, Miriam Daly and Ronnie Bunting in carefully planned and executed operations in nationalist districts – other victims of UDA violence (alongside two ubiquitous “own goals”) were a republican ex-prisoner murdered in Larne beside his wife and two random assassinations of Catholic civilians in Belfast. 37-year-old John Morrow was shot dead in the Lower Ormeau Road on the way home from a pub while 20-year-old Alexander Reid was beaten to death with a breezeblock in a derelict garage in the Shankill area.²⁴

Nonetheless the revitalisation of both the UVF and UDA in the early 1990s unequivocally contributed towards nationalist public support for the broad political moves by Sinn Féin

towards the closure of the Troubles. Likewise loyalist murals clearly display a self-regard in themselves as crucial military players in the conflict beyond the more obvious aping of the IRA. And that up to and including the loyalist volunteers who shouted “Tiocfaidh ar la” at the court that had sentenced them to 12 years for arms offences in Coleraine in 2003.²⁵

However the biggest irony overriding the mirrored development of terrorist groups in Northern Ireland would always be the qualified level of working class support given to the UVF and UDA as compared to the IRA. This being due to engrained attitudes in Protestant Ulster to law and order and as based on the tradition of a community grounded in military service. Thus Henry McDonald would juxtapose modern-day loyalist paramilitary leaders with Ulster-born Lieutenant Colonel Tim Collins’ Churchillian speech to his troops prior to battle in Iraq:

You could never imagine a loyalist paramilitary “commander” or “Brigadier” (on paper a higher rank than Collins’s!) warning his goons that when they go out to hunt down a Taig, any Taig, that the mark of Cain will fall upon them. He is more likely to offer them an Ecstasy tablet or a round of drinks at the bar once the deed is done.²⁶

The overwhelmingly negative feelings aroused in the unionist population towards loyalist paramilitarism was thus a straightforward and natural response because of the state’s monopoly of force during the Stormont era. This soured relationship meant that Protestant militants would be broadly condemned throughout the conflict for descending to the level of republican violence. No loyalist paramilitary group subsequently emerged during the Troubles, or theoretically could have emerged, that would have mirrored the IRA in terms of ideological acumen and hence circumvented this “Queen’s Rebels” imbroglio. This would be encapsulated perfectly in a lacklustre commentary by the former UDA quartermaster and Special Branch agent William Stobie in an interview for Ulster Television’s *Insight* programme:

I didn’t join the UDA to be part of a gang or anything like that there, I joined them because I felt there was a bit of war on so there was you know...Being in the UDA, when you start think back on it so you do, you know, what was it all about, I mean it was senseless at the end of the day you know, actually senseless.²⁷

Thus the ongoing dynamic behind loyalist paramilitary activity in the modern era would be the republican terrorism of the period while the attitudes of the mainstream unionist community towards its proletarian defenders would range from ambivalence to outright hostility throughout. Only after a lengthy gestation would a political voice emerge from within the confines of the loyalist war to articulate the long-held sense of anger that a segment of the Protestant working classes felt. As the teenage character of Tom Allen would exclaim to his former English teacher in the Graham Reid play *Hidden Curriculum*:

It’s those other bastards who’re doing it all. They’re doing all the murdering and blowing up factories. Look at me, do I look like a rich, influential member of the Protestant ascendancy? I’ve got nothing...I live in a slum...I can’t get a job...I’ve no fancy car...my ma ran off with her fancyman...my sister got knocked up the shoot by a Brit...my brother’s in jail...and my da’s dying in agony. Now you go out onto the Falls

Road and see how many of the poor underprivileged minority want to change places with me.²⁸

Nevertheless the UVF and the UFF did the literal romperings and throatcuttings no matter what subtle political elicitations transported them to the backstreet entries in the first place. This in turn would be the defining context within which loyalist political experimentation would succeed or fail.

WHEN HOPE AND HISTORY FAIL TO RHYME- THE FAILURE OF THE LOYALIST PARAMILITARY POLITICAL ALTERNATIVE

In one of his later interviews David Ervine had noted with extreme candidness:

In some ways the Agreement was shit, but I was a great advocate of it because it helped to establish a core process, which society was invited to share. It also started to establish a sense of common purpose - which is not the same as core allegiance - which if realised through a functioning assembly would help to reduce fear.²⁹

Such pathos and sincerity aside, the political voice that threads throughout the history of modern loyalist paramilitarism would mirror the broader Protestant community in holding fast to the end in the core priorities and principles affecting a unionist community under siege. Thus for all the introspective regret at the suffering of innocent Catholic civilians and the institutionalised discrimination of the past there is no especial remorse to this day in the distancing that kept Ulster apart from a southern state irrevocably linked in northern Protestant minds with the negativities of Roman Catholic social morality, emigration, poverty, censorship and the demographic fate of its Protestant minority. Likewise a grounded faith in the misdirection of the civil rights movement to republican ends remains unaffected along with no obvious retrospective qualification upon the grim nature of IRA violence against the Protestant worker.³⁰

As one loyalist paramilitary quoted by Lyndsey Harris in an article on strategic demilitarisation considerations clearly underlined in this light:

No, we were in combat with these people and we are not prepared to sit down and have dialogue with them in terms of bringing them into our community. We don't want them to understand us, we just want to be left alone, thank you very much. We have no wish to form friendship with them or cups of tea or go down the pub for a drink with them and the vast majority of unionists and our community feels the same way.³¹

Nevertheless the political voice of loyalist paramilitarism over recent decades – as fundamentally grounded in the traditions of public banding, conditional loyalty and rank suspicion of treachery afoot- must be judged uniquely within the confines of Irish political history. A dissenting message empowered with a bottom-up dynamic so typical of the democratic centralism of Protestantism itself and certainly reminiscent of earlier examples of

intra-Protestant class conflict which originated in political or religious dispute before transmuting into forms of socio-economic opposition – from William Johnstone of Ballykillbeg through the IOO and Tommy Henderson up to Paisley's Protestant Unionists.³² Originating directly from the most savage interfaces of Belfast and Ulster, it would be laced with sentiments which went beyond standard pragmatic reassertions of class interest to replicate those radical historical expressions within northern Protestantism which focused upon a shared commonality of all the Ulster people.

Yet fundamental difficulties would face the loyalist political alternative throughout. Hence the extremely short-lived Volunteer Political Party experiment of 1974 stands alone from other examples of loyalist paramilitary experimentation as being grounded at the very nadir of the Troubles. When violent men briefly talked in radical voices against the most hopelessly loaded odds that any UVF or UDA-linked body would face. The later New Ulster Political Research Group would emerge from within a broader UDA organisation that by the mid-1970s had experienced such significant numerical defections from its ranks, for the various reasons discussed beforehand, that in truth little attendant public respect remained for any political analysis emanating from this quarter. The Ulster Loyalist Democratic Party would be the group most resembling Sinn Féin by way of the paramilitary status of its leader and whose electoral failings would foreshadow that of later UDA political experiments - divisive repercussions following on from the crushing of raised expectation. As one UDA leader who stood for election would note:

When the Taigs was running up the streets with guns, then I was the boy. Just the ticket. Come and save us. But when it settles down, it's thank you and goodbye. It comes to voting and the Protestant people would rather elect some respectable wanker.³³

The move from war to peace – at a time of profound division within Protestant Ulster - would see both the highest media attention and indeed central government promotion given to the political face of loyalist paramilitarism. 1998 in turn would witness a defining ceiling descending upon the face of loyalist dissent with the fourth Drumcree standoff. The passion and fury captured in perpetuity by the stunning television footage of a loyalist volunteer aiming rifle shots in the Portadown night directly at RUC ranks would not compensate for the unequivocal neutrality of the highly paid local security forces or the colossal political cost to Ulster unionism.

Rory Fitzpatrick's history of the Scots-Irish concludes with the poet John Hewitt's observation that a people must know its past in order to decipher its future path. And indeed many pointers within Ulster loyalism in the 1990s suggested that this introspection was gaining ground in a positive fashion.³⁴ This could be seen with the creation of the People's Museum at Fernhill House, the work of the Somme Association in memory of all the Irish Great War dead and the growth of internet communities such as Ulster Loyalist, Ulster Community Action Network,

Ulster Protestant Movement for Justice, etc. Many of these websites appeared semi-orientated towards an American audience with great emphasis placed on the Scots-Irish link with the United States and – particularly after 9/11 - the paramilitary curriculum vitae of leading Sinn Féin figures.³⁵

Most importantly the Progressive Unionist Party, Ulster Democratic Party and a host of community forums in loyalist areas seemed to have enthusiastically committed themselves to the guiding principles of conflict resolution in terms of communal reconciliation, parity of esteem, accommodation, inclusion, equality, empowerment, participative democracy, community ownership, social justice and mutuality.³⁶ Jonathan Stevenson's compendium of paramilitary viewpoints collated at the time of the 1994 ceasefires noted that:

The Provos have always had a larger-than-life tradition, they always have had a jaunty buzz about them. The loyalists went straight from sullen to earnest and skipped the swagger.³⁷

However pitted against the shining plaudits heaped upon the new loyalist political fronts – by both media and central government alike - would be a trio of fatal drawbacks. These in turn existing against the broad strategic reality that copious goodwill toward the loyalist fringe was unlikely to last without timely political development.

Firstly, the political aspirations of the loyalist fringe would fundamentally clash with the tradition of Protestants refusing to vote for individuals associated with paramilitary groupings guilty of the most gruesome of sectarian killings and attacks. These activities seemingly devoid - albeit in the most qualified respect with regard to the taking of human life - from the ideological thrust and direction of much republican violence and indeed being regarded in general by the unionist population as a disgrace to Protestant culture and morality. Such aversion as described lying atop a distasteful distancing of the law-abiding unionist citizenry from moments of particularly volatile loyalist street agitation such as in February 1973 and March 1986.

Hence the nature of northern Protestant culture – as centred around its attitude towards political violence - ensured that the loyalist political presence could never directly replicate the relationship of Sinn Féin to the IRA. Indeed outside the context of the ballot box many within the loyalist fringe groups would bewail the lack of any positive feedback at all from the established unionist groups for their political endeavours. This especially so since having remained genuinely sceptical about the direction of the peace process and certainly having not considered the deeper fears of the wider unionist community as groundless in any way.

Also, for all the success of loyalism's political voice in public forums, there would be continual media focus on the depths of collusion in the loyalist war and the involvement of both main

loyalist paramilitary groups in criminal activities - such as ex-Shankill Butcher William Moore in the Edinburgh drugs trade.³⁸ The Drumcree dispute and the onset of fatal paramilitary feuding would obviously not reverse the logical connotations being drawn from the above.

Thus at conflict's end, with the standing down of the UFF in November 2007, the view in many Protestant eyes that loyalist paramilitary activity was indeed little more than an amateurish ersatz version of Irish republican terrorism would still hold fast. Likewise for its political voice being nothing more than a convenient mask for brutal and sectarian murder machines. This being made manifest shortly before the Remembrance Day statement itself by the arrest of Billy Hutchinson for questioning in relation to the murder of schoolboy Thomas Devlin³⁹ and the fact that formal newspaper obituaries for the UDA's Sammy Duddy would reference his drag queen credentials with equal prominence alongside those of political activist and paramilitary.⁴⁰

Secondly, the electoral rewards for both the PUP and UDP would be paltry compared to that of the DUP who in turn actively vilified the loyalist fronts for their terrorist links. As centred most emotively around the issue of paramilitary prisoner amnesties this intra-unionist conflict left the loyalist fringe at a profoundly acute strategic disadvantage.⁴¹ Aaron Edwards' study of the PUP as a left wing group in an ethnically split society notes the political discrepancy of the PUP not even being able to guarantee a vote from the UVF constituency itself.⁴²

The Paisleyites may have been casually dismissed as "dinosaurs" but in the highly charged period between the ceasefires and the GFA their essentially political credentials still held considerable sway against broadsides from the representatives of loyalist paramilitary untouchables. And this despite the fact that the various strands of dissident violence from the LVF and RHD/Orange Volunteers dovetailed conveniently with the anti-Agreement voice.⁴³ The front cover of the UDA's *New Ulster Defender* magazine of April 1992 would feature a black and white archive photograph from the 1970s of James Molyneaux in Orange regalia beside sinister uniformed UDA figures. Sandwiched between this picture and another of Paisley in Ulster Resistance beret would be the caption: "Dear Ken Maginnis, Does your proposed selective internment include all paramilitary leaders?"⁴⁴ An Ervine speech delivered in the Northern Ireland Assembly on 15th February 1999 would particularly concentrate on this crux:

They need to remember, when they talk about honour, integrity and decency, how many of them had long and meaningful debates with me – when I was a representative not of the Progressive Unionist Party but of the Ulster Volunteer Force – in meetings all over the country and, indeed, in some of their houses. I do not want to do it, nor do I want to give Nationalism or Republicanism a cudgel with which to beat Unionism, but I am not prepared to see the holier-than-thou attitude prevail.⁴⁵

The political cartography of Ulster 2007 however would not include a progressive bloc of loyalist fringe representatives in the Northern Ireland Assembly with David Ervine as Speaker.

Rather a figure perceived as a major mentor of loyalist paramilitary activity would be sharing power with a former IRA Chief-of-Staff in such effusive fashion that his positive standing in European political history was now assured forever.⁴⁶

Thirdly, the loyalist fringe and the paramilitary bodies from which they developed could not affect the fealty of the Ulster Protestant masses to state institutions of Stormont or Direct Rule vintage. This is most directly associated with the attraction of service in the RUC or UDR over involvement in loyalist paramilitary formations even in the most troubled of periods. Likewise, and despite a broad ideological convergence between the Orange Order and loyalist paramilitary groups, there would be no formal linkage in support of Protestant political violence. As noted in Chapter 4, the Order would defend the state system in this regard just as it had politically minimised Protestant class conflict during the Stormont years.

THE POLITICAL DISCOURSE OF NEW LOYALISM

Belfast Telegraph columnist Malachi O'Doherty once noted that the hidden agenda behind all conflict resolution processes was essentially as follows:

And if the long game means that you never settle your differences, well that's because you have decided that peace processing is still better than the alternatives. Recognise that peace processing is a game and play hard. Resist all appeals to forgiveness and compassion. You really hate these people at the other side of the table. That's ok. They hate you too.⁴⁷

Whereas it is obvious that new loyalism clearly faced up to such brutal realpolitik with open minds and intelligence, there were yet fundamental flaws of varying degree located within their specific rhetoric that undermined electoral viability and political credibility for the unionist voter. I consider six discursive traits are being particularly noticeable.

Firstly there seemed to be oversimplified qualification of Protestant economic advantage within the patronage or gatekeeper system of industrial Belfast⁴⁸ and a subjective lack of appreciation as to the cross-class nature of stagnant social mobility in modern Britain that educational attainment can do little to circumscribe. Indeed the effects of economic deindustrialisation, global recession and open labour markets on Northern Ireland have interfaced hugely with regard to the political space new loyalism and particularly the PUP attempted to occupy as representatives of a now almost uncategorisable working class constituency as a latterday NILP.⁴⁹ Furthermore some of the more heated and contemptuous comments to be sourced on internet user generated content regarding loyalist "Danegeld" for decommissioning and disbandment directly tie in with such strained financial times.⁵⁰

Another recurrent theme was a tendency to often fall back on somewhat parochial repetition of how the working class Protestants, nurtured into low expectation, were manipulated and

exploited by their unionist betters every bit as much as the northern Catholics.⁵¹ Thus political scientist Lee Smithy references UDA and UPRG member “Adam”:

And our people said ‘Don’t get involved with community development. Don’t get involved with education. Don’t get involved with human rights. They’re another IRA-Irish Republican plot. So don’t run to them.’ So, for 38 years, we haven’t. But it’s left us with an awful deficit. It’s left us, I would say, on a playing field where we’re not even in the dressing room yet, all the other teams are on the playing pitch.⁵²

The Ulster Unionist Party’s Chris McGimpsey would provide a particularly cutting analysis of this trend across the pained landscape of post-industrial and post-feud loyalist Ulster:

There is an undercurrent in Protestant working-class thinking that you always blame somebody else. It’s the Catholics, the Brits, it’s the unionist government in Stormont, it’s the Protestant middle classes. And I always say, well, fair enough, you’re right in all your criticisms, but it’s about time we start blaming ourselves as well. If we didn’t want to vote for a unionist who lived in a big house and had no empathy with people who lived in mill houses, why did we? Oh, well, they come down and waved the flag at us. You know, that’s not a rational argument.⁵³

Thirdly, there is a sense that a worldly and self-aware tone often lies beneath the expressed critiques of political violence. This would suggest scant explicit recognition that the war that was waged actually bore little resemblance to any standard military conflict in terms of the accompanying themes of criminality, torture and random assassination. Thus with Billy Hutchinson’s commentary in August of 1997 on the then UVF-LVF feud: “I think the UVF will wipe out the LVF. They will get into them”.⁵⁴ The following year Waterside UDP chairman David Nicoll would respond to a UFF attack on two Catholic civilians with the statement: “I am very concerned about Catholics living in mixed communities in the Waterside. I have to urge them to consider these grave threats with due seriousness. I can’t guarantee their future well-being.”⁵⁵ At a 1998 Remembrance Day oration by Billy Hutchinson in the Woodvale district the PUP politician would even juxtapose the Great War dead of Flanders and Picardy with the modern loyalist fallen in terms of the similarity of gravestone names such as King, Robinson and even Bates: “The names bear the same courage, discipline and dedication, whether they be the men of 1914, or the men of the present day Ulster Volunteer Force”.⁵⁶

During 2000 Tommy Kirkham of the UDP made note of public disquiet on the flying of paramilitary flags as follows: “The flags (in Newtownabbey) have cost in the region of £1,500 to £2,000. If it wasn’t being spent on flags what do you think it would be spent on? They could have used it to buy weapons.”⁵⁷ A final example would be Hutchinson’s response in September 2002 to *Belfast Telegraph* allegations of UVF re-arming following interface violence in East Belfast: “My understanding of what happened in the East is that the UVF quite clearly said they were involved but it was active defence. The UVF is a paramilitary organisation. They don’t collect stamps, they collect weapons.”⁵⁸ With such questionable rhetoric already in evidence the later attempt by loyalist paramilitary figures to dissuade Protestant militants from attacking

immigrant communities with the adjuring “Loyalist or Racist? You can’t be both” leaflet in 2005 invited an affronted response from many parties.⁵⁹ This in terms of a mixed metaphor too far from the already highly-stretched dictionary of the loyalist fringe.⁶⁰

A fourth point which ties in with the above and is particularly pertinent with regard to the loyalist endgame - whose longevity has been in significant disproportion to any active republican threat or the foregone aim of disbandment - is the recurrent need for loyalist paramilitary leaders and political spokespeople to continually consider stratagems for minimising criminal activity. This within organisations allegedly grounded upon military discipline and moral tenacity in the first place.⁶¹

A fifth and rarely mentioned factor is that the definition of “loyalist” within the lexicon of Irish political discourse has fundamentally changed over the course of the conflict – from a label for any class constituency with a fierce loyalty to the Union or attachment to Orange principles to a byword for working class sectarianism and violence. The inability of the new loyalist actors to differentiate the political loyalty which they were willing to pay such a high price for from cultural loyalty to urbanities so fundamentally scarred and maladjusted in no small part by loyalist paramilitarism itself would naturally limit the remit of their political appeal.

Though certainly a somewhat obtuse point, several commentators in Spencer’s 2008 survey of the loyalist paramilitary endgame – Tom Roberts of the EPIC ex-prisoners group, Ervine and the UVF Second-in-Command in turn - would indeed note the insidious changes underpinning the use of the terminology and by default the effect this would have on how the latterday “loyalist parties” would be viewed within unionism itself.

My view about the term Loyalist is that it was a name used by middle Unionism to distance itself from the more unsavoury elements of Unionism...at the start of the conflict 30 years ago, I don’t recall anybody being called a Loyalist.

There are many of us who believe that the modern concept of Loyalism was really invented by Unionists to distance themselves from the excesses of what they perceived to be the Protestant working class.

Loyalist was not a term commonly used in the 1960s and has emerged within the present conflict.⁶²

Finally, there would be scant clarity within the loyalist fringe over their interpretation of the Ulsterman’s nationality conundrum as it interfaces with loyalty to a Britain that may no longer exist.⁶³ Mainstream unionist commentary over the preceding decades from devolutionists and integrationists alike had also failed to unravel such multifarious webs of contradiction and confusion - the Ulster Protestant’s British-Irish hybrid identity being continually complicated by the nature of the IRA’s quarter-century war and with mainland incomprehension of the political motives of all restless Irish natives involved still widespread.⁶⁴

Nevertheless even within the remit of working class loyalist communities the essential British nature of the northern Protestant identity would always balance up against flarings of an independent Ulster sentiment as propounded at periods by the UDA. Brian Graham's contribution to the *Who Are The People* collection also notes how the development of a separate Ulster identity by way of Adamson's Cruthin in truth opens up an even more problematical vista with the notion of a variety of micro-Irish identities necessitating consideration in a modern political context.⁶⁵

Brave attempts have nonetheless been made by modern loyalist figures to tackle this complex identity issue. Hence Gary McMichael in April 2000:

I am not a dysfunctional Irishman. I am British, and it is me, not the 18-year-old soldier from Lancashire, sitting in an army base in South Armagh, who is the British presence. I am the British presence in Ireland, and I will not be going back to England, because that is not my home.⁶⁶

Eddie Kinner in turn would pinpoint the heart of the dilemma with a concise though telling overview:

As a result of the unique situation post-partition, the Unionist population of Northern Ireland have been forced to exaggerate their Britishness and deny their Irishness. By the same token, the Nationalist population have been forced to exaggerate their Irishness and deny their Britishness.⁶⁷

More light-heartedly Ervine would note: "I don't want to have to wake up every morning and ask myself am I British or Irish? I want to think 'Am I late for work'?"⁶⁸

A clear and agreed definition of the Protestant Ulsterman's standing within the British and Irish cultural traditions would escape the loyalist fringe every bit as much as mainstream unionist endeavours to clarify the same. The gulf between provincial loyalty of the British in Ireland to a proud commonwealth of nations on one hand and the socially fraught reality of modern mainland Britain on the other remaining profound. Even Billy Mitchell's worthy *Principles of Loyalism* which aimed to reinvigorate loyalist thinking by redirecting it to the key components of the Ulster Covenant – civil and religious freedom, equal citizenship and the right to resort to armed resistance – still seemed to hark back to a Great Britain of the 1950s with its imperial and Christian reference points.⁶⁹

CONTRADICTIONARY DYNAMICS OF NEW LOYALISM

Of the various factors limiting the growth potential of the loyalist fringe – and indeed overriding government hopes that a new unionist political realignment could be forged within the Protestant working classes - it would be the distasteful reaction of the unionist population to the very specific nature of modern loyalist paramilitarism that would prove the most inhibiting.

The latterday attempt to promote a non-sectarian and populist alternative to traditional unionism from loyalist paramilitary roots would thus be viewed with more blind faith outside the province as within.

The failure of the loyalist political experiment would seem less anachronistic to the Protestant voter *in situ* in Northern Ireland as opposed to the casual external spectator of the endgame. The latter being less attuned to the historical reality of how Ulstermen had not flocked organically to an Independent Ulster flag or how *Hansard* failed to reference Westminster speeches by Ken Gibson and John McMichael as West Belfast and South Belfast MPs.

Ulster Protestants from whatever class background would be painfully aware that the proletarian defenders of the modern era bore little resemblance to the flat-capped and bandoliered predecessors of historical lore - be those on the aristocratic training grounds of East Ulster or the battlefields of the Western Front. Likewise the average politically informed unionist - while naturally contemptuous of republican violence by default - would nonetheless have been cognisant of the many historical and cultural differences between the loyalist and republican paramilitaries which made any comparison between their political fronts innately invalid.

Robert Cooper of the Alliance Party would contextualise loyalist paramilitary political innovation against a blanket social reality whereby, alike vicious dogs, "you are very glad to have them, but you don't want them in your house."⁷⁰ No less terse, though focused more to the practicalities of electoral performance as would indeed transpire, would be the cutting epitaph thus delivered by Newtownabbey Independent Labour councillor Mark Langhammer. A victim of UDA intimidation in the Rathcoole district himself, Langhammer noted "the privacy of the polls are the only place where working class Protestants can punish paramilitaries, and they never fail to take the opportunity to do so."⁷¹

Indeed by 2010, when political passions had cooled to such a degree that even a musical history of Long Kesh would be widely feted in Northern Ireland,⁷² the cynical public perception of the UDA in particular would remain comprehensively negative. Its South East Antrim Brigade - who would separately decommission in January of that year - having transposed the testosterone-driven language of bloody battle into the murdering of a postman (and two "Catholics" who happened to be Protestants) before constructing their own "Beyond Conflict" NGO to implement the £8.5 million worth of conflict transformation initiatives they expected funding for.⁷³

Therefore a variety of interpretations were attendant to the two loyalist fronts when the drama of 1998 subsided. In the most positive respects they could be portrayed as legitimate inheritors of the radical Protestant political mantle, direct descendants of earlier working class populist

alternatives or indeed a genuine third force in unionism situated between retrograde Paisleyism and the befuddlement of Trimble.

A less glowing interpretation would view new loyalism as a more pragmatically upbeat “roots” version of unionism with a darker backwoodsman inheritance in tow. This as demonstrated by the untenable position which Ervine would be placed into in 2001 when having to qualify the fallout from the discovery of a Mount Vernon UVF bomb factory and the attempt to bomb the Oul Lammas Fair at Ballycastle.⁷⁴

In unequivocally negative fashion others saw the loyalist parties as mere fronts for a culture of unreconstructed and rampant sectarianism still stubbornly entrenched within the laager. Or even as a cosmetic smokescreen for unscrupulous criminal cartels with connections to the high rolling drugs trade and the British Far Right.⁷⁵ The level of discord to be viewed on loyalist internet forums such as ULISNET⁷⁶ or Scottish Loyalists, with regard to accusations of drugs dealing and ongoing political violence, would provide little clarification as to which particular group was mainly drawn to such involvement. Even the UVF-RHC, who would come off lightest from the waves of rumour and accusation, still had to carry the burden of the Shankill Butchers and the gruesome killings of female civilians Anne Marie Smyth and Margaret Wright⁷⁷ beyond any whitewashing of their stance against drugs and random sectarian murder.

Yet more laterally, others saw the return of a radical loyalist voice as a cunning strategic manoeuvre by the British security services in putting two conveniently placed pawns on the chessboard for the well choreographed endgame and to every newsgathering departments delight. Such a counterargument opens up a whole spectrum of retrospective analysis of the manipulation of the political face of loyalist paramilitarism. This would certainly tie in with the crucial numbers of Protestants who left the paramilitary groups with the security reforms of the Mason era and thus well before the days of *Beyond The Religious Divide* or *Sharing Responsibility*.

Likewise some would argue that the plausible political voice of loyalism all along can only be placed at the individual feet of a mere handful of political actors from Barr onwards. Indeed the degree of verbal articulation displayed by an Ervine, Spence or Mitchell would be truly difficult to replicate outside the confines of an expensive private education or long-term incarceration as a political prisoner.

Even the ex-prisoners groups themselves would be subject to some harsh analysis - as in this broadside from Henry McDonald:

Thus you have the unseemly, endless caravan of complaint-fest involving “prisoners groups” (Loyalist and Republican) talking about their pain. This, however, is merely a psychological mechanism to avoid the idea of human agency, the notion that they were

free to choose between a life of terror and a life outside of that brutal universe, to elude their own personal responsibility in the carnage.⁷⁸

Conversely Billy Mitchell – who helped produce the magazine *The Other View* with former loyalist and republican prisoners⁷⁹ and himself contributed many impressive pieces of sound political analysis for *The Blanket* journal - would note the insidiousness implicit in media presentations which actively caricature such individuals in a negative fashion:

Ex-prisoners involved in community work are depicted by them as “Flash Harry” characters – the typical confidence trickster who lives off his wits and obtains a living by leeching off the naïve and vulnerable in society.⁸⁰

The profile of the loyalist paramilitaries’ political alternative - born in the crisis of unionist identity subsequent to Stormont’s collapse and as first formally constituted in 1974 – would remain low prior to the early 1990s. The revitalisation in turn however – empowered in part by open government promotion of such political endeavour - would inherit the same qualifications based on the nature of UVF and UDA violence. Namely how loyalist paramilitaries could claim to be “loyal” while stepping outside legal remits of social control and how proponents of base sectarian murder could be formally qualified to produce a cogent class critique of Northern Ireland society. The historical parameters between Ulster’s defence tradition and its radical voices of dissent remaining stratified beyond interpretation, good intent or even base need.

The nature of the UDA’s 2002-2003 feud, as narrated throughout by the doublespeak of John White, would sadly qualify much of the earlier work of the advisory UDP and indeed the legitimacy of its UPRG successor. Already fundamentally undermined in 1998 by an electoral system which stymied any prospect of political reward for an organisation grounded on too geographically widespread a support base – and with the alternative of a single loyalist party merging the PUP and UDP together being impractical for historical reasons - the attempt to forge political space for the UDA would rapidly run aground. This by way of contradictory dialogue between the Inner Council and the UDP and with many grassroots UDA members expressing anger at the UDP’s hostility to Paisley and in particular his treatment during the GFA press conference by PUP supporters.⁸¹ Likewise the lack of paramilitary credentials of some leading UDP members would stand in contrast to the historical profiles of many PUP leaders.

However the PUP alternative in turn could never jigsaw easily into the wider political framework due to the twin contradictions of a socialist party with an umbilical linkage to an essentially right-wing terrorist group - *The Ragged Trousered Philanthropists* tending to sit uneasily with reserves of Powergel explosives. As always this would be reinforced by the long-term unionist refusal to vote for individuals linked to loyalist paramilitary groups they had often labelled in the past as wildly incompetent anyway. Or indeed the likelihood of garnering wider

unionist support for enquiries into the state killings of UVF activists William Miller or Brian Robinson.

Satirist Newton Emerson would draw the following tongue-in-cheek – albeit politically shrewd – conclusion from the constancy of this political balance within Ulster Protestantism and its linkage to the failure of the loyalist paramilitary alternative:

Every reformed Loyalist since Gusto Spence has claimed they would never have run around killing people if Ian Paisley hadn't stirred up the Protestant working class to fight the Troubles on behalf of the Protestant middle class. This conveniently allows ex-Loyalists imply they were only following orders, albeit orders issued subliminally from the nearest garden centre. But the theory died an embarrassing death at the 1999 Assembly Elections when Tony Blair, Bill Clinton, Bertie Ahern and every media outlet in Northern Ireland explicitly ordered the Protestant working class to vote for David Ervine. This hugely insulted the law-abiding lower orders and they all voted for Ian Paisley instead.⁸²

And thus the Ulster loyalists, as the key British actors in the waves of conflict and division, would secure their political future in large part through decades of vicious sectarian violence from loyalist paramilitary groups. However at conflict's end the political representatives of the UVF and UDA in turn did play a fundamental part in the choreography of peacemaking and in opening up crucial political space for the UUP to negotiate.

James White McAuley's analysis of the latterday loyalist paramilitary search for an inclusive political outlook within a framework of ongoing ethno-political conflict concluded:

That is not to say that those within the PUP or UDP, taking this position have superseded sectarianism or replaced it. Rather, it should be seen in the context of negotiating the ideological terms within contemporary loyalism which still seek to express ideas of "Britishness" and defend a "British way of life", albeit perhaps in a different form. It is the negotiation of this settlement which will determine the loyalist reaction, not just to the contemporary "peace process", but also the future of Northern Ireland.⁸³

Thus Billy Hutchinson would selflessly note shortly after the CLMC ceasefire:

If we can redefine Unionism and our party doesn't get a vote, then we'll be happy. We've always argued that it is our country before our party. And if the DUP and the OUP want to do all these things we say should be done, then we'll step aside and allow them to do it..... We know that along the road somewhere that the Official Unionists and the DUP are going to steal our clothes because they have more money than us.⁸⁴

Ervin too would speak in a similarly frank tone to lay bare the brutal realities of the political loyalists' role as circumstances had evolved by the conclusion of the GFA:

We'll get our footnote in history. We're effectively a piece of capital investment: to be used to break the ground so that others can walk on it.⁸⁵

The spatial room for political manoeuvre for the loyalist fringe however – for all its apparent thematic historical linkages to Protestant radicalism from the IOO to independent unionism and the political and ideological space certainly opened up by Stormont's collapse - would be fatally and overwhelmingly undermined by the criminal, sectarian and unideological core of the paramilitary groups they represented. Likewise by the rafts of loyalist paramilitary feuding wherein the “politicos were criminalised and the criminals were politicised” to fatefully disastrous ends.⁸⁶

The sincerity of the articulated political voice - and the credible social critique casting back through Northern Irish history to expose the dynamics behind class and sectarian conflict - could still not forge beyond the twin contradictions of the loyalist paramilitary experience. Loyalty to a state which withholds any recognition of its political rationale in turn and defence of a community – and even an Orange culture - which has significantly reserved material and public support. Each factor would affect the bloody trajectory of loyalist paramilitary activity in different respects as it originated and developed in the modern conflict. Likewise for the latterday attempt by the loyalist fringe to qualify both social and political division in such inclusive fashion while being so self-effacing and solemn about the appalling nature of the loyalist war.

Malachi O'Doherty's obituary of David Ervine thus acerbically underscoring such a dark and defining reality when referencing the delighted reaction of a group of Catholic women from Strabane who spotted the PUP leader lighting his pipe at a hotel in Budapest:

Had they seen Gerry Adams they might have tiptoed past in hushed reverence. Had they seen Alex Maskey or Billy Hutchinson they might have worried first about what mood he was in before approaching him. But Davey was all right. Even though he wasn't.⁸⁷

The longevity of serious academic interest in the subject through to present day conferences and workshops cannot negate the lack of public regard the loyalist paramilitaries were held in by the Protestant community throughout - for the reasons stressed above - or indeed how at conflict's end all major figures associated with new loyalism were still fundamentally associated by default with organisations associated with criminality ranging from narcotics to vice. This certainly was apparent on social media forums even on Spence and Ervine's death⁸⁸, when a medical doctor took over at the helm of the PUP⁸⁹ and particularly in opposition to Dawn Purvis' widely feted feminist credentials⁹⁰. Similarly exasperated if not openly ridiculing public commentary relates to the loyalist paramilitary endgame whose duration would only appear beneficial to the job security of local newspaper security correspondents.⁹¹ I consider the scale, nature and consensus of extremely articulate public commentary attaching itself to the subject on well-moderated and highly respected political forums in the digital media domain - while naturally subject in itself to manifold academic qualifications - to be clearly corroboratory to the points raised in this thesis.

THE FUTURE OF POLITICAL LOYALISM IN NORTHERN IRELAND

Whether or not the loyalist paramilitaries themselves will remain in existence in future - with regard to criminal responsibilities or as community guardians of whatever malign or benign hue⁹² - there are seemingly only six directions which the political path may now take. This within the context of the PUP having stood no candidates whatsoever in the May 2010 General Election and their long term political credibility remaining open to question in the aftermath of the Bobby Moffett murder. Likewise for it remaining highly unlikely that the UDA will enter the electoral battleground again with a formal political party.

Firstly for the PUP itself to expand it would obviously need to attract votes outside of the constituency of urban working class loyalism and with regard to the cross-class unionist middle-ground. However despite the fact that the party representative for Pottinger ward in East Belfast following Ervine's death was medical doctor John Kyle⁹³, the political rhetoric of the PUP often sounds double-bolted into the specifically post-industrial working class experience – as with Kinner's fiery commentary on unionist calls for the death penalty for terrorists or the fact that RUC personnel no longer reside domestically in working class areas.⁹⁴ In similar fashion would be Dawn Purvis' Assembly speech in April 2009 where she claimed that young Protestant men are failing for life because of mainstream unionists' education stance.⁹⁵

Likewise there was little evidence in the early part of the century of Ervine being succeeded by a raft of younger and equally articulate cadres to preach in similar tones of energy, resolve and reflection. To that extent Ervine's position within the PUP could be construed as being similar to that of Paisley in the 1970s and 1980s when he was viewed as so quintessential to the fortunes of the DUP that the party's success and even existence was often linked to his personal lifespan.

Hence the retaining of the East Belfast Assembly seat by PUP leader Dawn Purvis following Ervine's death could be seen as being underpinned in large part by a vote in homage to his political legacy as opposed to any ongoing dynamic appeal of the party itself at that point. Furthermore generally positive feedback to Purvis' insistence in 2009 that mainstream unionist resistance to a Bill of Rights was failing Protestant communities would still be starkly qualified the following year. This both by her warning that loyalist paramilitaries will not disappear while police investigations continue into historical cases and her resignation following the Moffett killing on the Shankill Road.⁹⁶

Secondly there is the standpoint described by Ervine as merely holding onto the advances already made while pegging themselves to wider developments in the peace process. This being in parallel to the splintering of loyalism into what the former PUP leader saw as those who truly feel their services are no longer required, those who are prepared to move actively from defence

into working for the good of their country and those for whom “patriotism is the last refuge of scoundrel”:

The more there is bad news, the less likely the PUP is to develop. Against a backdrop of angst and bitterness, I don't know that we can offer anything other than a holding position; I don't think we can develop our policies against a backdrop of negativity. But if there is to be a calm in our society and if you like a crossing of the divide, a realignment of politics in our society, then the PUP's position would change.⁹⁷

A third prediction would see the PUP paralleling the path of the Workers Party in distancing itself gradually from its loyalist paramilitary origins over a long-term period. In this respect Alan Finlayson's contribution to the *We Are The People* collection notes how the PUP approach unionism less from a sense of rooted ethnicity than in a pragmatically wise choice for responsible citizenry.⁹⁸ And indeed some of the “New Dawn” rhetoric surrounding the March 2007 election of the PUP leader to the Assembly was indeed suggestive of the realisation that the UVF was now a literal albatross around PUP hopes for consolidation and expansion.

A fourth and more downbeat forecast for the PUP would even see it formally subsumed into some brand of Ulster unionism – unlikely however in light of the 2006 furore over Ervine's decision to join the UUP Assembly group - and that as mainly focused on providing a labour wing of the DUP. Other commentators have even speculated on direct association with the reconstituted Labour Party of Northern Ireland in this respect.⁹⁹

Fifthly there is the vision of all loyalist political fronts finally retreating to the lower profile level of grassroots community forums – or as “lobbying groups”¹⁰⁰ for their constituencies - as all paramilitary activity fades from Northern Irish life. And this despite the fact that the loyalist paramilitaries were so obviously wrongfooted by the Provisional IRA's decommissioning that genuine exit strategy considerations from the conflict were relatively hastily constructed between 2004 and 2006.¹⁰¹ Hence Tommy Kirkham of the UPRG responded to the recognition of the UDA ceasefire in November 2004 with a reiteration of faith in a new political strategy focusing on “community development, job creation, social inclusion and community politics”.¹⁰² Three years later UDA accusations of Sinn Féin “racism, ignorance and bigotry” following protests against the Royal Irish Regiment's homecoming parade in Belfast would still be qualified by insistence that retraining for the new “battlefield” consisted of developing skills in education, politics, social and community work, media promotion and business.¹⁰³

Lastly, off the back of PUP support for the late 2012-2013 Belfast protests regarding the flying of the Union flag and against the Parades Commission decision to halt a Twelfth of July Orange Order march at Woodvale (an area formerly represented in Stormont by the NILP), a political vista may yet arise where that party will finally engage with a genuinely loyal electoral support base from within a segment of the Protestant Unionist Loyalist working class. That in turn expanding exponentially off the back of ongoing political friction in the province from

perceived denigration of British cultural identity.¹⁰⁴ As discussed earlier with regard to commentary on social media forums, only the PUP and Traditional Unionist Voice seem to have avoided extreme political hostility emanating from this protesting loyalist constituency towards the unionist parties. At the time of writing however it is difficult to contend whether such an eventuality would represent a continuity or aberration from the narrative thread of this thesis. This especially so with regard to general cross-community public support for the PSNI policing of the protests in light of devastating financial consequences to Belfast trade and tourism during the current prolonged recession.¹⁰⁵

CONCLUSIONS: THE RIGHT MESSAGE FROM ULSTER'S BAD MESSENGERS¹⁰⁶

On May 9th 2007 Ian Paisley's speech on becoming First Minister of Northern Ireland – shortly after Captain William Johnston formally ended the war he had theoretically launched in 1966 - made reference to the memorable loyalist grassroots barracking in 1998 which seemed to then herald a definitive rebalancing within Ulster unionism with the high-profile arrival of the political faces of the UVF and UDA.¹⁰⁷ Whether the reality of DUP-Sinn Féin powersharing be viewed as either "The Miracle of Belfast" or pure political pragmatism, it would succeed or fail with only a solitary representative in the Stormont Assembly to then articulate the radical voice of loyalist paramilitarism - and with the UVF and UDA armouries still intact at that point. Two months later an internal British Army document examining the 37-year deployment in Northern Ireland included both an admission that the Provisional IRA were "a professional, dedicated, highly skilled and resilient force" while their loyalist equivalents were "little more than a collection of gangsters".¹⁰⁸

This chapter has attempted to definitively contextualise the raft of voices from political loyalism - and the reasons behind its qualified failure - by analysing the unique course of modern loyalist paramilitary history and its interface with Northern Irish political battle. It has considered significant qualifications regarding new loyalism's political rhetoric and the dynamics within Protestant civic society and pro-state terrorism that affected its construction and course. There has also been consideration of the remaining parameters within which the residual political imprint of new loyalism may evolve.

This thesis has put stress throughout on how Protestant public antipathy towards the specific nature of modern loyalist paramilitary activity fundamentally affected the course of the UVF and UDA campaigns and their ability to engage politically. I have furthermore underlined that any analysis of loyalist paramilitarism in the modern era must be approached with clear comprehension of this distancing as much as an awareness of the random and sectarian nature of most violence from this quarter.

Yet despite the ongoing civic qualms surrounding government funding for community groups linked to paramilitary organisations with no credible electoral mandate¹⁰⁹, one may yet concede that the political balance sheet of new loyalism contains three clear moral and ethically positive outcomes. This in a period when the number of fatalities caused by some of the most infamous terrorist attacks during the Troubles – two murdered in the Abercorn Restaurant and six in Donegall Street in March 1972 - are now dwarfed by obscene death tolls caused by car bombings in another sectarian war to which Britain has become militarily engaged.¹¹⁰

Firstly, at conflict's end they would proffer both sincere admonition for their actions and offer political alternatives that were genuinely inclusive and reconciliatory.¹¹¹ Secondly, although the thought of the UVF and UDA bringing peace to Northern Ireland by reflective social analysis was difficult to envisage, the PUP and UDP in turn did succeed in flagging up at an early stage how painfully slow the programme of conflict resolution was likely to be. This as gauged upon the substitution of political violence by political persuasion and constructive competition and while being more brutally realistic than mainstream unionism about the unfavourable conditions afoot in which such positive developments could blossom. Finally, the political representatives of loyalist paramilitary groups did arguably take a brave and humbling step back from the tiresome blaming of external parties to the conflict and reflect the wider disfunctionality of Northern Ireland – of which paramilitarism itself is its major component – back onto the Northern Irish themselves.

¹ The character of Rabbie White would use the phrase “cultivated mob leaders” to describe a well-presented and well-spoken extreme loyalist in Sam Thompson’s classic *Over The Bridge* play set in the Belfast shipyard (Thompson, 1997, p74).

² At the latter part of the 1960s the Ardoyne, Ligoniel and Lower Oldpark districts in North Belfast and the Grosvenor Road area of West Belfast - now completely nationalist areas - were demographically mixed in terms of religion. Finaghy - where the Twelfth of July marches traditionally took place to at this historical point - would also have fell within this remit. Conversely the Ballysillan area of North Belfast and parts of Newtownabbey had mixed communities at this time but became overwhelmingly Protestant at an early stage of the conflict.

³ Most major recording artists of the 1960s appeared in Belfast and Northern Ireland in this period including The Beatles at the Ritz Cinema on 8th November 1963, The Rolling Stones at the ABC Theatre on 7th January 1965, The Who at the Ulster Hall on 8th June 1967 and Jimi Hendrix at the Whitla Hall on 27th November in the same year. The Who also played at the Golden Slipper Ballroom in Magilligan on 9th June 1967 while the previous year they could be seen in concert at the Top Hat Ballroom in Lisburn on 6th May 1966. Even shortly before the Troubles broke out, on 5th July 1968, the Small Faces - supported by The Soul Foundation, Mystics and The Cousins - appeared at the Ards Pop Festival in Newtownards in County Down (information provided by John Hellier of *The Darlings of Wapping Wharf Laundrette Small Faces'* fanzine). East Belfast-born Van Morrison's Astral Weeks was recorded in mid-1968 and received its UK album release in September 1969. Belfast poet Gerald Dawe has commented on the dichotomy of the album's metaphysical subject matter dovetailing with the onset of civil war in Ulster (*The Rest Is History*, Abbey Press, 1998). The narrative of one of the key longer tracks - *Madame George* - mentions a train journey from Dublin through to the Protestant heartland of Sandy Row in South Belfast. At the junction of Sandy Row and the Lisburn Road the UDA shot dead Protestant fireman Brian Douglas during the loyalist anti-internment strike of February 1973. The other lengthy track *Cyprus Avenue* references a residential street within walking distance of the former Kincora Boys Home on the main Upper Newtownards Road. Long before *Moondance*, *Brown Eyed Girl* and *Gloria*, Van Morrison had been a saxophonist with Northern Irish showband The Monarchs. Keyboardist Wesley Black was shot dead on 27th February 1975 by a republican gunman fleeing the scene of an attempted murder of a UDA commander on Belfast's West Circular Road. It was believed Black was killed as a potential witness. A biography of Morrison by Johnny Rogan (*No Surrender*, Secker and Warburg, 2005) attempts to place the singer's entire musical development against the background of both East Belfast, Protestant Ulster and a Northern Ireland lost forever to The Troubles - including the juxtaposition of Morrison's beautiful *Linden Arden Stole The Highlights* with the Shankill Butchers.

⁴ Henry McDonald articles for *The Observer* (October 14th 2001, April 21st 2002 and 15th June 2003) and 2008 overview *Guns and Mirrors: How Sinn Féin Dressed Up Defeat As Victory*. For reflections upon the reality of loyalist paramilitary violence see Lindy McDowell column, *Belfast Telegraph*, November 14th 2007. Also Malachi O'Doherty's cutting critique of post-Troubles communal guilt issues in Northern Ireland, *Belfast Telegraph*, 1st August 2012.

⁵ *Belfast Telegraph*, February 19th 2008.

⁶ *Belfast Telegraph*, February 18th 2008.

⁷ Examples of such fatal decision making in this respect would include the People's Democracy's symbolic invasion of what was perceived as inviolable loyalist territory in early 1969 and indeed Westminster's decision to not suspend Stormont in parallel to the dispatch of British soldiers onto the streets of Ulster later the same year. Similarly, see Purdy 1989 for Ulster Unionist Party leader James Molyneaux's thoughts on what he considered Brian Faulkner's premature decision to resign as Northern Ireland Prime Minister in March 1972 (pp 59-60).

⁸ As reproduced in *The Troubles*, Glenravel Publications, Issue 14, Page 21. See also Victor Patterson Picture Archive - www.victorpatterson.photoshelter.com - for "Ulster Defence Association members parade in Duke Street, Londonderry" (Ref 19720603002).

⁹ *Irish Echo*, 14th April, 1998. Holland further qualifies this discrepancy in that of the 10 PIRA members killed by loyalists four died in general gun battles and one was a current police informer.

¹⁰ "Grant to secure Somme site", BBC News Online, 1st July 2003.

¹¹ In 2002 Raymond McCord Senior criticised a parade down the Shankill Road to the Ulster Hall in Bedford Street under the aegis of The Great Wars Historical and Cultural Society. This marked the 90th anniversary of the UVF's foundation and of Ulster Day. McCord would underscore: "Belfast city centre isn't their community. Belfast city centre is full of Protestants and Roman Catholics, decent people, who don't want to see this parade. And its no use Ervine and the PUP saying: Stay out of Belfast City centre. This is our city. This isn't a UVF city" ("UVF Parade Through Belfast City Centre", BBC News Online, 27th September 2002).

¹² During the fourth Drumcree standoff in 1998 Paisley would predict that the 12th of July would be "the settling day" (O'Clery, 1998, p257).

¹³ See Bruce 1992a, Chapter 6 for discussion of loyalist paramilitary relations to Scottish and English loyalists, Canadian supporters, fascist organisations and apartheid-era South African intelligence. Also Wood, 2006, Chapter 13 for overview of the Scottish UDA.

¹⁴ Rachel Ward's 2006 study of female political activity within unionism and loyalism contains some commentary on the highly limited engagement of women with loyalist paramilitarism.

¹⁵ The first edition of *Ulster Militant* claims that autonomous female loyalist paramilitary groupings were involved in active service duties during the early part of the conflict. Rosemary Sales' article "Gender and Protestantism in Northern Ireland" for the *Who Are The People?* collection notes that a Woman's UDA was in existence until 1974 when it disbanded after the Anne Ogilby murder. The July 1997 *Combat* magazine has a detailed obituary of a female UVF member Georgina "Martha" Nelson who became involved in the organisation in 1969.

¹⁶ Stevenson, 1996, p78.

¹⁷ Colin Crawford notes of this early period of loyalist paramilitary activity how the intentionally intimidating vision of combat-uniformed and verbally unsophisticated UDA men at press conferences provided willing confirmation of negative media portrayals. This dovetailed with Skolnick's "riff-raff theory" of blanket criminal labelling of mass organisations based on the activities of a minority. (Crawford, 2002, pp31-32)

¹⁸ Crawford, 1999, p124.

¹⁹ Farrell, 1980, p298.

²⁰ *Irish Echo*, January 15th -21st 2003.

²¹ Dillon, 1989, pp83-84. Also *Sunday Life*, 15th February 2004.

²² The apogee of such special forces styling was displayed on an infamous UVF mural painted in 2011 at the junction of Dee Street and the Newtownards Road in East Belfast. Three black-clad and armed paramilitaries were pictured within the quotation "We are the pilgrims master - we shall always go a little further". The same words of the poet James Elroy Flecker from "The Golden Journey to Samarkand" being the motto of the Special Air Services. See www.sluggerotoole.com/2011/05/21/potd-poster-and-mural. During that year of serious civil disorder in the east of the city, an equally threatening mural would follow at the junction of Ballymacarett Road and Frazer Pass showing armed UVF volunteers in front of a paramilitary funeral (Belfast Telegraph, 3rd October, 2011).

²³ *The Observer*, July 28th 2002.

²⁴ McKittrick, Kelters et al, 1999, pp812-845. See also Crawford, 2003, p190 where UDA volunteer Alex Calderwood is interviewed under the pseudonym "Ken": "They had been found in the Shankill but they weren't carrying weapons. We reckoned they were doing intelligence work and 'sussing' out a bar or whatever. One of them (the Protestant men) shouted over to me, '- have you got a gun?' I shouted back 'No but I can get one, hold them there'. Then one of the guys escaped, so I went over and led the other one away. - went off to try and get a gun. I waited for a while but no gun arrived so I killed him with a breeze block. I hit him on the head with it and knocked him down, then I finished him off." An equally appalling murder was that of 71-year-old Protestant farmer Samuel Millar on January 14th 1976 prior to this testifying against a loyalist gang who had used his land to hide a vehicle used in a robbery. After being beaten with a shaft of wood Millar was driven to the shores of Lough Neagh. A defendant at the trial claimed "We lifted him out of the boot and he was moaning. He was in agony and I did not want to leave him like that so I hit him with an iron bar three or four times on the head and we put him in the bushes". See McKittrick, Kelters et al, op cit, p 1070.

²⁵ *Irish Echo*, February 19th-25th, 2003. One piece of highly-charged online commentary seen on a loyalist Facebook page at the time of the Woodvale/Ardoynce riots of July 2013 was the admonition to "Bring back home rule". An equally interesting insight into the cultural complexity of Ulster Protestantism was given by one war-weary and obviously exasperated Protestant youth to Susan McKay: "I don't think Ulster was ever meant to be a place - it was only ever meant to be the Protestant people" (McKay 2000, p11). In not dissimilar vein an *Irish Times* article quoted by Robert Fisk during the UWC strike included the following dialogue at a roadblock: "'They are they doing it?' said the soldier. 'To stay British' said the driver. 'But they aren't fucking British said the soldier'" (Fisk, 1975, p102). Arguably the defining resolution of such an identity crux was provided in the September 1971 *Fortnight* magazine with a cartoon of Brian Faulkner and Edward Heath gazing wistfully at each other over the caption "If we can just wait a few years all our problems will be Europe's" (Bell et al 1991, p22).

²⁶ *The Observer*, March 20th, 2003.

²⁷ O'Brien, 2005, p 84.

²⁸ Byrne, 2001, p69.

²⁹ Spencer, 2008, p 177.

³⁰ A *News Letter* story on collusion between the security forces and the UVF referenced the involvement of the murdered Trevor King and another major UVF figure with a "spy ring". When the newspaper contacted the latter he refused to discuss the allegations beyond a conclusive "No comment, no regrets, no surrender". (*News Letter*, May 12th 2004).

³¹ Lyndsey Harris article *Quis Seperabit: Loyalist Transformation and the Strategic Environment* in McAuley and Spencer, 2011.

³² Wright, 1973, pp257-258 and 261-263.

³³ Bruce, 1994, p282.

³⁴ Fitzpatrick, 1989, pp274-275.

³⁵ *Belfast Telegraph*, 9th September 2002. As a pointer to the radical vein within Ulster Protestant history it is interesting to note how some of the great Ulster-Scots listed on the Ulster-Scots Agency website - and with reference to a set of pamphlets authored by local historian Gordon Lucy - incorporates both pro and anti-Union figures. Thus United Irishman leader Henry Joy McCracken or Reverend John Brown Armour the Liberal Home Ruler are talked of with equal due and respect as Lord Castlereagh or organiser of the 1892 Ulster Convention Thomas Sinclair. See www.ulsterscotsagency.com/greatulsterscots.asp

³⁶ Practical examples of loyalist conflict transformation in action - through Northern Ireland Alternatives, the Conflict Transformation Initiative and the Re-Imaging Communities Programme - are discussed in Chapters 5 and 6 of Shirlow, 2012.

³⁷ Stevenson, op cit, p129.

³⁸ *Daily Record*, July 25th 2002. Further investigation into the spread of loyalist paramilitary-linked criminality from Glasgow, Lanarkshire and Ayrshire to Edinburgh estates such as Wester Hailes and Sighthill discussed in *The Guardian*, July 28th 2002.

³⁹ "Two released in boy murder probe", BBC News Online, 21st October 2007.

⁴⁰ *The Independent*, October 19th, 2007. *Belfast Telegraph*, October 19th, 2007. *The Guardian*, October 22nd, 2007.

⁴¹ Fractures between the DUP and new loyalism analysed in full in Spencer, op cit, Chapter 2. See also McAuley articles 1998b, 1999 and 2002.

⁴² Edwards, 2010.

⁴³ Historical overlap between the Democratic Unionist Party and individual loyalist paramilitaries has included DUP councillor Billy Baxter being convicted in 1993 of demanding money on behalf of the UVF (*Irish News*, 8th November 2002), DUP Assembly candidate and convicted UVF volunteer John Smyth claiming in his 2001 election literature that he had been involved in the "cutting edge of the struggle to keep Ulster British" (*Belfast Telegraph*, 21st November 2003) and the DUP decision to elect Gary Blair as Ballymoney branch officer despite his part in the UVF murder of Sinn Féin member Malachy Carey in 1992 (*Irish News*, 20th January 2004).

⁴⁴ Molyneux picture in *New Ulster Defender* magazine April 1992 V1/1.

⁴⁵ Hansard for Northern Ireland Assembly. Also www.pup-ni.org.uk

⁴⁶ See also *Belfast Telegraph*, 9th May 2008 for details of Ian Paisley's friendly meeting with Taoiseach Bertie Ahern at the Boyne when they were outgoing as First Minister and Taoiseach respectively - both had met previously at the site in May 2007. Moving speeches were given by both leaders and Eileen Paisley with Ahern's speech concluding "The past will remain important to us all. We cannot change what has gone before. We should not and must not forget our history. But as we gather on this famous battlefield, it is not history that concerns us now. It is the future. In the future, let us respect each other and our different identities. In the future, let us value each other and our rich traditions. In the future, let us understand each other and our shared history. Let us work together for all of the people of this island. Let us be reconciled with each other. Let us be friends. Let us live in peace." With somewhat less success in providing a definitive coda on the Troubles - as elaborated by The Consultative Group on the Past in January 2009 - came plans to distribute £12,000 compensation from public funds to the families of all Troubles victims including Lenny Murphy, John Gregg and the Miami Showband killers (*Belfast Telegraph*, 24th January 2009).

⁴⁷ *Belfast Telegraph*, 14th February 2005.

⁴⁸ O'Connor, 2002, p136

⁴⁹ For detailed comparison between the PUP and NILP see Edwards, 2007.

⁵⁰ Slugger O'Toole public commentary at <http://sluggerotoole.com/2011/04/03/loyalist-paramilitaries-and-civilianisation/>.

⁵¹ See also Novosel, 2013, pp 53-60.

⁵² Smithy, 2011, p206.

⁵³ Stevenson, op cit, p197

⁵⁴ *Republican News*, 28th August 1997.

⁵⁵ *Republican News*, 30th July 1998. In 2004 a UPRG statement urged Protestants in North Antrim to boycott Catholic-owned bars and shops in order avoid the fate of Derry Protestants driven from the City side of the Foyle (*The People*, 22nd January 2004).

⁵⁶ *Combat*, December 1998. Another piece of questionable rhetoric from Hutchinson - in this instance with regard to his thinking on community activism - may be found in Tony Novosel's 2013 *Northern Ireland's Lost Opportunity* study of early UVF political thought: "In many ways it was a socialist view...it was about looking after the community. That could mean doing something for the most vulnerable or the elderly...if the elderly need coal we procured the coal and gave it to them rather than let them freeze. It was a whole new way of looking at society" (p32).

⁵⁷ "Loyalist Paramilitary Flags Explosion", BBC News Online, 21st June 2000.

⁵⁸ *Belfast Telegraph*, 30th September 2002. In July 2010 Billy Hutchinson gave public support to an ASDA supermarket employee who had been dismissed from his post for making a throwaway comment about the loyalist song "The Sash" to a member of the public on the 12th of July. The employee was subsequently revealed to have been UVF killer William Hunter who had shot dead two Catholic brothers - John and Thomas McErlane - in a Mount Vernon flat in May 1975 after they they had been lured there with the promise of a game of cards. Hutchinson had claimed that Hunter was "really well liked" and not the type of person likely to act in a sectarian manner (*Belfast Telegraph*, 21st July 2010). The following month Hutchinson, employed as a community worker in the Mount Vernon area, had charges of withholding information withdrawn for lack of evidence in regard to the sectarian murder of catholic schoolboy Thomas Devlin in 2005 in North Belfast (*Sunday Life*, 22nd August 2010). Two years later in August 2012 William Hunter committed suicide on the Ards Peninsula by dousing himself in petrol and setting himself on fire (*Belfast Telegraph*, 30th August 2012).

⁵⁹ In 2004 the latterday UDA political analysis grouping the UPRG would use the North Antrim press to alert Protestants to the growth in the Catholic population in Northern Ireland. Their statement included the advice "So the next time you shop or drink think who you are supporting, because more than six thousand people voted for a party linked to people who have bombed, shot, killed and maimed people" (*The People*, 22nd January 2004).

⁶⁰ *Belfast Telegraph*, 9th March 2005.

⁶¹ Davy Adams' commentary on how paramilitary leaders who are often feared in their own communities must be dissuaded from criminality in Spencer, 2008, p 182. EPIC Director Tom Roberts and Billy Mitchell's opinions on criminal activity within the UVF in Gallaher, 2008, pp 201-208.

⁶² Spencer, op cit, pp 44-51.

⁶³ For recent analysis on split unionist identities see Thomas Hennessey's article *Allegiance, Patriotism, Irishness and Britishness in Ireland* in McAuley and Spencer, 2011. Hennessey notes that amongst Ulster Protestants there are "three national consciousness, Irish, Ulster and British, alongside an Irish territorial patriotism, an Ulster/Northern Irish regional patriotism and a British state patriotism".

⁶⁴ In June 2004 Peterborough City Councillor Neville Sanders refused to support Carrickfergus District Council's campaign for an enquiry into a Royal Irish Regiment soldier's suicide at a County Armagh army barracks. When pushed on the matter he stated "I think it is an absolute cheek when one of their own commits suicide they come to me and ask me and our council for support. I want an apology from Northern Ireland for hundreds of British policemen and soldiers they have killed." He would further claim to be "fed up paying taxes to cover the lazy Irish" and that "Northern Ireland could fuck off and run its own affairs". (*The Observer*, June 29th 2003).

⁶⁵ Shirlow and McGovern, 1997, pp34-55.

⁶⁶ Gary McMichael speech to a Friends of the Good Friday Agreement conference, April 2000. Sourced from defunct UDP website, Linenhall Library Belfast.

⁶⁷ "Inside Loyalism" – Shane O'Doherty interview with Eddie Kinner, *The Big Issue*, November 1994.

⁶⁸ *The Guardian*, 8th December 1994.

⁶⁹ *The Principles of Loyalism* by Billy Mitchell, Internal Discussion Paper November 2002, www.pup-ni.org

⁷⁰ Stevenson, op cit, p83

⁷¹ Gallaher, 2007, p180.

⁷² *The Chronicles of Long Kesh* by Martin Lynch.

⁷³ Former South East Antrim Brigadier John Gregg would boast that the only words he would deliver to Gerry Adams were instructions preparing the latter for execution. Gregg had been imprisoned following a 1981 assassination attempt on the Sinn Féin leader in Belfast that led to the wounding of one of the UFF attackers by his own colleague. He was also South East Antrim UDA leader during the sectarian murders of Gavin Brett, Danny McColgan and Trevor Lowry in Glengormley and Rathcoole – Brett and Lowry being Protestants mistaken for Catholics. For information on the Beyond Conflict group which the local UDA supported see "UDA group wants £8m to disband", BBC News Online, 2nd October 2006. Beyond Conflict claimed to be "an amalgamation of 10 community associations from the South East Antrim area, from Whitewell right through to Ballymena. The purpose of this group is to assist the transformation of one section of loyalism, namely the South East Antrim Brigade of the UDA, from conflict into an organisation that uses community development as their tool" (Smithy, 2011, p160).

⁷⁴ *The Guardian*, February 13th 2001. Also *The Observer*, September 2nd 2001.

⁷⁵ Henry McDonald article on loyalist links with the mainland Far Right in *Belfast Telegraph*, 15th September 2011 as a book review of Matthew Collins' recollections of his life in the National Front and British National Party.

⁷⁶ One of the most interesting of all loyalist websites was the short-lived ULISNET associated with the Loyalist Volunteer Force and which often included outrageously scurrilous commentary on the PUP and UVF leadership - the very equal indeed of the late John McGuffin's infamous and thoroughly libellous *Dispatches*. Counterfactually it is indeed intriguing to consider the potentially history-changing influence that higher end social media in its current scope, professionalism and magnitude could have had on loyalist paramilitary dynamics during the 1990s and particularly regarding the peace process, Drumcree disputes and loyalist feuds.

⁷⁷ Five particularly gruesome murders of female civilians took place at the hands of individuals connected to the UVF or UDA over the course of the conflict prior to the high-profile Lisa Dorrian disappearance in North Down in February 2005. Protestant Ann Ogilby by female members of the Sandy Row UDA in July 1974, Protestant Lorraine McCausland by UDA members at a loyalist club in North Belfast's Tyndale in March 1987, Catholic Anne Marie Smyth by a group of East Belfast men and women with UVF links in February 1992, Protestant Donna Wilson by a South Belfast UFF punishment squad following reports of continual anti-social behaviour in November 1992 and Protestant Margaret Wright by Red Hand Commando members at a Donegall Road hall used by a loyalist flute band in April 1994. See *Belfast Telegraph*, 27th July 2003 for details of the latter murder and subsequent killing of the RHC leader in The Village Billy Elliot. This was allegedly at the hands of the vintage loyalist gunman Frankie Curry for "war crimes".

⁷⁸ *The Observer*, October 21st 2004. Similar commentary comparing the profile of former paramilitaries with civilian victims in the Alan Kane column, *News Letter*, 22nd April 2013.

⁷⁹ "Life after the Northern Ireland conflict", BBC News Online, 13th June 2003.

⁸⁰ "Stereotyping ex-prisoners", Billy Mitchell, www.pup-ni.org.uk. For further analysis of the difficulties facing loyalist ex-prisoners see Tongue, Shirlow and McAuley, 2010.

⁸¹ Graham Spencer (University of Portsmouth) at Political Studies Association conference *Reviewing the Good Friday Agreement – Effects, Impact and Prospects* – University of Wolverhampton 27th June 2007. See also Spencer, op cit, pp 184-185 for UDA meeting in Ballymoney where McMichael and Adams were berated for their hostility to Paisley and UPRG member David Nicoll's hostile commentary on the Paisley barracking.

⁸² *Irish News*, September 26th, 2003. Newton Emerson, creator and editor of *The Portadown News* satirical website, left his job as a technical author at a computer company in 2001 due to complaints from the pro-republican *Andersonstown News* that the website contained sectarian material. (*The Guardian*, 30th December 2001).

⁸³ McAuley, 1998a.

⁸⁴ *The Citizen*, February 1995.

⁸⁵ *New Statesman*, 14th August 1998.

⁸⁶ David Ervine quotation on loyalist feuding as referenced by Graham Spencer (University of Portsmouth) at Political Studies Association conference - *Reviewing the Good Friday Agreement – Effects, Impact and Prospects* – University of Wolverhampton 27th June 2007.

⁸⁷ *Fortnight*, February 2007. Interesting public commentary on the *Sluggie O'Toole* political weblog - with regard to Ervine's contribution to Ed Moloney's *Voices From The Grave* work - can be referenced at: <http://sluggerotoole.com/2010/11/29/hearing-the-other-voice-from-the-grave-why-should-we-listen-to-david-ervines-stories/>.

⁸⁸ Sluggie O'Toole public commentary at <http://sluggerotoole.com/2010/11/29/hearing-the-other-voice-from-the-grave-why-should-we-listen-to-david-ervines-stories/> and also <http://sluggerotoole.com/2011/09/25/gusty-spence-1933-2011/> and <http://sluggerotoole.com/2011/10/09/thoughts-on-the-death-of-gusty-spence/>.

⁸⁹ Sluggie O'Toole public commentary at <http://sluggerotoole.com/2012/01/23/john-kyle-on-faith-and-loyalism/>.

⁹⁰ Sluggie O'Toole public commentary at <http://sluggerotoole.com/2011/02/16/catching-up-with-dawn-purvis/> and <http://sluggerotoole.com/2011/05/08/the-defeat-of-the-pup-and-dawn-purvis/>.

⁹¹ Sluggie O'Toole public commentary at <http://sluggerotoole.com/2011/10/16/round-up-of-the-pup-conference-including-audio-from-speeches/> and <http://sluggerotoole.com/2012/10/13/pup-conference-irish-language-welfare-reform-parading-matt-baggott-and-the-leaders-speech/>.

⁹² In November 2002 Belfast joyrider Harry McCartan was the recipient of a punishment attack by West Belfast loyalist paramilitaries. The 23 year-old-Catholic had his hands nailed to wooden posts near the Seymour Hill estate while his legs and face were beaten. He had previously had his ankles smashed by hammers by the IRA for car theft. Local graffiti noted "Seymour Hill Romans 1/Joyriders 0" and "All joyriders will be crucified". See *The Guardian*, 10th November 2002.

- ⁹³ Kyle became temporary PUP leader following Dawn Purvis' 2010 resignation.
- ⁹⁴ "Inside Loyalism" – Shane O'Doherty interview with Eddie Kinner, *The Big Issue*, November 1994.
- ⁹⁵ *Belfast Telegraph*, 21st April 2009.
- ⁹⁶ *Belfast Telegraph*, 4th November 2009, 24th March 2010, 31st May 2010 and 3rd June 2010.
- ⁹⁷ *Future positive* – David Ervine, March 3rd 2003, www.sluggerotoole.com
- ⁹⁸ Shirlow and McGovern, op cit, pp89-91.
- ⁹⁹ See both Graham Spencer and Chris Hudson speeches at the April 2010 Political Studies Association conference in Belfast: <http://sluggerotoole.com/2012/04/05/jackie-mcdonald-questions-orange-order-covenant-parade-taking-motorised-machine-guns-past-short-strands>.
- ¹⁰⁰ Spencer, op cit, pp248-249 considers the practical limitations upon the UPRG's expressed desire to act as a lobbying group and not return to electoral competition.
- ¹⁰¹ Graham Spencer (University of Portsmouth) at Political Studies Association conference *Reviewing the Good Friday Agreement – Effects, Impact and Prospects* – University of Wolverhampton 27th June 2007.
- ¹⁰² "Murphy to explain UDA decision", BBC News Online, 15th November 2004.
- ¹⁰³ *News Letter*, 11th November 2008. See also "UDA in 'battle ready' statement", BBC News Online, 11th November 2008,
- ¹⁰⁴ The nature of cultural conflict in post-Troubles Northern Ireland is discussed in Kevin Bean's article *The Politics of Fear? Provisionalism, Loyalism and the 'New Politics' of Northern Ireland* in McAuley and Spencer, 2011. Bean notes: "Bestowing formal recognition and equal legitimacy upon the antithetical aspirations of Unionism and Nationalism, the Agreement transformed them from opposing political projects to irreconcilable cultural differences. Although conducted in the dynamic language of process and movement, this repudiation of universalism and embrace of particularism has given rise to a culture of stasis and stabilisation, informed by a key assumption of the new political dispensation, that existing identities and communal allegiances cannot be transformed, just as political conflict in the North cannot be resolved, but only managed and regulated by the state".
- ¹⁰⁵ Comprehensive overview of the crisis of loyalist identity in mid-2013 by journalist Eamonn Mallie - in reply to PUP councillor John Kyle - at <http://eamonnmallie.com/2013/08/enough-is-enough>.
- ¹⁰⁶ For David Ervine reference to new loyalism as "the right message being delivered by bad messengers" see *The Guardian*, 8th December 1994.
- ¹⁰⁷ Paisley's speech referenced how he was "kicked and cursed" by "certain loyalists who supported the Belfast Agreement" though concluded with the pragmatic, introspective and deeply moving assertion "that was yesterday, today is today, and tomorrow is tomorrow" (see David McKittrick lead article "The Miracle of Belfast", *The Independent*, 9th May 2007). Paisley's emotional speech at the Assembly was an extraordinary mixture of Protestant non-conformism, realpolitik and Bible Protestantism with the inclusion of political sideswipes at interference in Ulster affairs by outside parties, stress that the occasion was merely the beginning of political agreement and a quotation from the Book of Ecclesiastes in conclusion: "I have sensed a great sigh of relief amongst all our people who want the hostility to be replaced with neighbourliness. The great King Solomon said 'To everything there is a season, and a time to every purpose under heaven. A time to be born and a time to die. A time to plant and a time to pluck up that which is planted. A time to kill and a time to heal. A time to break down and a time to build up. A time to get and a time to lose. A time to keep and a time to cast away. A time of love and a time of hate. A time of war and a time of peace'. I believe that Northern Ireland has come to a time of peace, a time when hate will no longer rule. How good it will be to be part of a wonderful healing in our province. Today we have begun to plant and we await the harvest." ("Ian Paisley's speech in full", BBC News Online, 8th May 2007).
- ¹⁰⁸ "Army paper says IRA not defeated", BBC News Online, 6th July 2007.

¹⁰⁹ Following rioting in Bangor's Kilcooley estate in August 2007 involving UDA elements the PSNI Chief Constable Sir Hugh Orde made scathing reference to government funding for the organisation's Conflict Transformation Initiative with the comment "If that was value for money then the people of Kilcooley got very poor value for their money....if you want my personal opinion, I wouldn't give them 50 pence" ("Minister wants PSNI rioting talks", BBC News Online, 2nd August 2007). Subsequently the PSNI Assistant Chief Constable Peter Sheridan voiced support for a deadline to be set in tandem with the devolution of policing to reclassify such illegal activity as emanating from "criminal gangs" as opposed to paramilitary organisations, *Belfast Telegraph*, 3rd August, 2007. Social Development Minister Margaret Ritchie would then place a 60-day deadline on UDA decommissioning before funding for the programme would terminate ("Funding threat over Loyalist arms", BBC News Online, 10th August 2007).

¹¹⁰ David McKittrick analysis of the lessons that the Northern Ireland conflict holds for military engagement in Iraq in *Belfast Telegraph*, 1st August 2007.

¹¹¹ For further analysis of retrospective loyalist paramilitary viewpoints on the use of political violence see articles *Bound by Oath and Duty to Remember: Loyalism and Memory* by Kris Brown and *Loyalist Perspectives on Apology, Regret and Change* by Graham Spencer in McAuley and Spencer, 2011. One former loyalist paramilitary interviewed by Brown notes "If future generations of loyalists are reliant on the inherently simplified memory of murals, monuments and political orations, will they absorb only a sanitised view of ethnic conflict, in which paramilitaries are lionized with little understanding of the inevitable, bloody logic of gunplay in a divided society". On a more personal level, one of Spencer's interviewees senses "I think the paramilitary knows that if he crosses the line into self-examination about his own history, his part in conflict, the things he has done, about the atrocities and whether they were unnecessary he will face some serious problems. So I think he hangs onto the traditional position because he is fearful of what he might do to himself and that position tells him his actions were justified."

CONCLUSIONS

They'll sit back, armchair generals, they'll send the wee lads out. As soon as the wee lads end up in prison they'll be forgot about. He'll be forgot about, and that's the message I want to send to the rank and file. Don't listen to these people. The war's over. Go home to your families. Enjoy your lives - Ulster Democratic Party leader John White interviewed for BBC Panorama "Gangsters At War" documentary.¹

The sustained period of relative peace in Northern Ireland since 1994 - which has seen the consolidation of devolved government and paramilitary decommissioning - has certainly opened up the opportunity for more incisive critiques of the Ulster problem's especial dynamics. Also the qualification of the scale of the Troubles and the morality of political violence post 9/11 allows us to take a more detached look at a conflict so essentially shrouded by parochialism and populated by such overwhelmingly mediocre player-actors.

The resolution of the broader political conflict itself in 2007 seemed to starkly confirm earlier diagnoses suggestive of an essentially ethnic struggle being fought out in Ulster. The core nature of which would doom by necessity and logic both liberal prescription or loyalist paramilitary experimentation to the advantage of the Protestant fundamentalist bedrock. Thus allegations of Lundyism could be thrown against unionist leaders such as O'Neill, Faulkner and Trimble. Likewise for labour, independent or even loyalist paramilitary figures who ventured outside the claustrophobic world of constitutional certainty.²

This thesis has examined those modern voices of political loyalism from the UVF and UDA within the long tradition of Protestant extra-legal activity in the north of Ireland and also the political and economic dissent between the Protestant working class and the unionist leadership before the outbreak of the modern Troubles. It has also underscored the fatal fractures within the unionist bloc between 1963 and 1972 that eventually engendered a unique political voice to arise from the Protestant working class that would in time reach out inclusively to the Catholic community in Ulster while reserving the right to defend their communities from the IRA with extreme force.

The physical methodology of that defence however - by way of random sectarian murder and brutality - would inculcate a crucial distance between Protestant civil society and Ulster's new volunteer citizen armies in light of the criminality the groups became enmeshed in. That with almost immediate effect in the case of the UDA. The crucial political space that existed between the Protestant community and the loyalist paramilitaries fundamentally affected organisational constructs, calibre of membership, the nature of paramilitary engagement and targeting and indeed the general capacity for such groups to be effectively policed and monitored.

The aspirations of all political groups originating from the UVF and UDA as discussed would be limited by broad Protestant antipathy to the nature of loyalist paramilitary violence, its lack

of focus on genuine republican targets and its relationship to a myriad of both sophisticated and plebeian criminality. The experiences of these loyalist political formations have all borne witness to this particularly negative public reaction which, while certainly not essentially invalidating the worth of the experimentation or the sincerity of its core, yet proves that this crucial factor must be seen as the major qualification surrounding a new loyalism.

This thesis has also presented the three crucial riders undermining loyalist paramilitary political innovation as being Protestant public antipathy to the brutal and sectarian nature of much UVF and UDA violence, competition with the DUP in particular within political unionism and the fealty of the Protestant community to state institutions. The latter qualification being particularly associated with the legal security bodies within which Protestant civilians could combat the terrorist threat. That irredeemable space between loyalist paramilitarism and the history of the RUC and UDR in turn being further accentuated by the very existence of the RUC Reserve and part-time UDR itself. No presentation of the loyalist war - even the most unquestioning portrayal of loyalist imprisonment as a study in stoical military discipline - can equate with Protestant public appreciation of what they would perceive as extraordinarily heroic risks the security forces ran on and off-duty for three decades.

Another aspect of the loyalist war that has not been overly emphasised in this paper - as it remains impossible to corroborate - is the notion of clear intelligence direction throughout of what were essentially "counter-gang" formations. It may however be noted that a securocrat matrix is a highly unlikely source from which left-wing thinking on bread-and-butter economic issues or internationally transferable conflict resolution stratagems may organically arise.

The author has however noted three genuinely positive aspects of loyalist paramilitary experimentation too by way of sincere public apologies, a correct stress on the lengthy time parameters needed for the evolution of peace in Ulster and a willingness to confront the social disfunctionality of Northern Ireland and the Northern Irish over three bloody decades. Also, despite all the reservations and qualifications that may eventually relegate new loyalism to a Troubles footnote, it certainly remains historically important in two quite different respects. Firstly as providing proof that highly literate political voices can originate from an extreme right wing political milieu. Secondly since the UVF and Red Hand Commando prison leadership of the early to mid-1970s certainly warrant a credible footnote in the history of British socialism alongside the Official IRA.

In general however the history of political thought within loyalist paramilitarism is still anchored to the dark nature of the UVF and UDA campaigns and its connectivity to criminality. It is highly unlikely that any individual loyalist paramilitary career spanning the Troubles would not have involved experience or knowledge of random sectarian murder, non-accountable

fundraising, acquaintances of dubious character and questionable relationships with state security bodies.

A key argument of this thesis is that recent secondary sources that attempt to interpret new loyalism outside this overarching spatial division between the defenders and the defended are accordingly reaching highly subjective, ethically questionable and factually selective conclusions. The preceding analysis has clearly focused on historical and existent fractures within Ulster unionism over the use of political violence and shown how UVF and UDA political fortunes since the GFA have clearly mirrored earlier failings and for similar organisational and cultural reasons.

The paramilitary peace that the military and political faces of the UVF and UDA forged in 1994 will, in the best case scenario, lead to nothing more malign than Loyalist Old Comrades Associations³ - commemorating their fallen safe in the knowledge that Ulster is still theoretically British and that the loyalist war contributed *An Ulster Badge*, *We'll Fight in the Bogside* and *Number One Platoon* to the litany of sterling Irish folk songs. Yet the modern loyalist and republican paramilitary campaigns in Ulster - and certainly their continuity beyond the mid-1970s - produced little of positive note for the people of Northern Ireland beyond religious division, communal hatred, infrastructural obliteration, economic decline, cultural shame, mass murder and the physical destruction of one of Europe's great port cities.

This paper has stressed continually that the political voice which emerged from the loyalist variant of Ulster paramilitarism was fundamentally qualified by Protestant public hostility to the existence of extra-legal political violence within their own community and culture in the forms that emerged. Therefore objectively the ongoing question for debate regarding paramilitary-linked political loyalism must surely be whether mainstream unionist hostility was on such a scale as to negate the entire credibility of that very source. Similarly whether that distancing of the Protestant community from the UVF and UDA was indeed the definitive moral marker in the history of the entire Troubles in Northern Ireland itself.

Pending such academic resolution, the various faces of UVF and UDA political experimentation are retrospectively emplaced against Spence's sweeping political coda on David Ervine's death that if the loyalists ruled out mass extermination and mass evacuation then all that was left was mass accommodation.⁴ That political voice providing a kaleidoscopic narrative throughout of truths, faiths, hopes, visions and alternatives across a dark incendiary period of Irish history. From the affability, eloquence and self-assurance of Ervine through to the cynical, machismo and revisionist bluster of John White. White's words being sadly reflective of far too much of the rhetoric surrounding the squalor and degradation of political murder in Northern Ireland - be that violence from loyalist or republican sources and which had respected neither worship, prayer, burial nor even interment.⁵ As forged in circumstances which could turn sociopaths into

psychopaths and “hard men” into record-breaking killers - a commentary so sound in surface theory but constituting all sorts of wrong on closer analysis.

¹ Taken from the transcript of BBC *Panorama* documentary “Gangsters At War” - transmitted 22nd June 2003. The actual footage of White’s conflict resolution narrative transmitted on the programme included a clip of Johnny Adair sarcastically applauding White’s empowering teaser. On a similar note Paul Daley of the *Sydney Morning Herald* would interview White during 2002 in the Lower Shankill with the loyalist politician voicing fears that “the political void will be filled with violence”. During the course of the discussion Adair would burst through the door of the room and earnestly enquire “How do I join this political group, this Ulster Political Research Group?” (“Peace in pieces and hell welcomes just the other side of the wire”, 16th October 2002).

² Bruce, 1986, pp 257-270.

³ Spencer’s 2008 overview of the loyalist endgame notes UVF plans to create Somme Associations following organisational disbandment (p 229).

⁴ *Belfast Telegraph*, 12th January 2007.

⁵ Two major Troubles atrocities were the republican murders of five Orange Order members at Tullyvallen on 1st September 1975 and three Protestant worshippers at Darkley Pentecostal Church on the night of November 20th 1983. The Provisional IRA killings at Tullyvallen took place during a bible reading while the INLA attack at Darkley occurred during hymn singing. On February 9th 1975 two Catholic students were murdered by the UFF in a gun attack on St Bridget’s Church in South Belfast’s Derryvolgie Avenue. Over a decade before Michael Stone’s attack on republican mourners at Milltown cemetery in 1988 the UVF killed two Catholic teenagers with a carbomb attack on an IRA funeral in Ardoyne on April 20th 1977. On March 19th 1989 the UVF murdered 63-year-old Catholic convert David Braniff while he knelt saying the rosary with his wife and daughter at their Alliance Avenue home in North Belfast. According to the *Lost Lives* listing, police would note how his loyalist killer subsequently had cried every time he “thought of the wee man saying his prayers.” For discussion of disrespect shown to graves of Troubles victims see www.politics.ie/forum/northern-ireland/12055-vandals-damage-republican-graves-belfast.html.

GLOSSARY

AIA – Anglo-Irish Agreement

BICO – British and Irish Communist Organisation

CLMA – Combined Loyalist Military Alliance

CLMC – Combined Loyalist Military Command

CLPA – Combined Loyalist Political Alliance

DOW – Down Orange Welfare

DUP – Democratic Unionist Party

GFA – Good Friday Agreement

IMC – Independent Monitoring Commission

INLA – Irish National Liberation Army

IOO – Independent Orange Order

IRA – Irish Republican Army

LAW – Loyalist Association of Workers

LPA – Loyalist Prisoners Association

LPWA – Loyalist Prisoners Welfare Association

LVF – Loyalist Volunteer Force

NILP – Northern Ireland Labour Party

NUPRG – New Ulster Political Research Group

OIRA – Official Irish Republican Army

OUP – Official Unionist Party

PAF – Protestant Action Force

PIRA – Provisional Irish Republican Army

PSNI- Police Service of Northern Ireland

PUP - Progressive Unionist Party

RHC – Red Hand Commando

RHD – Red Hand Defenders

RIC – Royal Irish Constabulary

RUC – Royal Ulster Constabulary

SDA – Shankill Defence Association

SDLP – Social Democratic and Labour Party

UAC – Ulster Army Council

UCA - Ulster Citizens' Army

UCAG – Ulster Community Action Group

UCCL – Ulster Citizens' Civil Liberties

UCDC – Ulster Constitution Defence Committee

UDA – Ulster Defence Association

UDF – Ulster Defence Force

UDP – Ulster Democratic Party

UDR – Ulster Defence Regiment

UDU – Ulster Defence Union

UESA – Ulster Ex-Servicemen's Association

UFF – Ulster Freedom Fighters

ULCC – Ulster Loyalist Central Co-ordinating Committee

ULDP – Ulster Loyalist Democratic Party

ULF – Ulster Loyalist Front

UPA – Ulster Protestant Association

UPA – Ulster Protestant Action

UPAG – Ulster Protestant Action Group

UPL – Ulster Protestant League

UPRG – Ulster Political Research Group

UPV – Ulster Protestant Volunteers

USC – Ulster Special Constabulary

USCA – Ulster Special Constabulary Association

USC – Ulster Service Corps

UUAC - United Unionist Action Council

UUC – Ulster Unionist Council

UULA – Ulster Unionist Labour Association

UUP – Ulster Unionist Party

UUUC – United Ulster Unionist Council

UVF – Ulster Volunteer Force

UVSC – Ulster Volunteer Service Corps

UYM – Ulster Young Militants

UWC – Ulster Workers Council

UWU – Ulster Workers Union

VPP – Volunteer Political Party

VSC – Vanguard Service Corps

VUPP – Vanguard Unionist Progressive Party

WDA – Woodvale Defence Association

WCDC – Workers Committee for the Defence of the Constitution

YCV – Young Citizen Volunteers

BIBLIOGRAPHY

Adair, J., Mad Dog, London, 2007

Adamson, I., The Cruthin: A History of the Ulster Land and People, Belfast 1974

Adamson, I., The Identity of Ulster: The Land, the Language and the People, Belfast 1987

Anderson, C., The Billy Boy: The Life and Death of LVF Leader Billy Wright, Edinburgh 2002

Anderson, D., 14 May Days: The Inside Story of the Loyalist Strike of 1974, Dublin 1994

Arthur, P., Government and Politics of Northern Ireland, Essex 1989

Aughey, A. and McIlheney, C., "The UDA: Paramilitaries and Politics", Conflict Quarterly 11/2, 1981

Aughey, A. and McIlheney, C., "Law Before Violence: The Protestant Paramilitaries in Ulster Politics", Eire Ireland, 19 (2), 1985

Aughey, A., Under Siege: Ulster Unionism and the Anglo-Irish Agreement, London 1989

Aughey, A., "Between Exclusion and Recognition – The Politics of the UDA", Conflict Quarterly 5 (1) as published in O'Day, A. (ed), Dimensions of Irish Terrorism, Aldershot 1993

Bardon, J., Belfast: An Illustrated History, Belfast 1982

Bardon, J., A History of Ulster, Belfast 1992

Barton, B., Brookeborough: The Making of a Prime Minister, Belfast 1988

Barton, B., The Blitz: Belfast in the War Years, 1989

Barzilai, D., The British Army in Ulster Vol 1-2, Belfast 1973 and 1975

Beattie, G., We Are The People: Journeys Through the Heart of Protestant Ulster, London 1992

Beattie, G., Protestant Boy, London 2004

Beckett, J.C. et al, Belfast: The Making of a City 1800-1914, Belfast 1983

- Belfrage, S., *The Crack: A Belfast Year*, London 1987
- Bell, G., *The Protestants of Ulster*, London 1976
- Bell, R., Johnstone, R. and Wilson, R. (eds), *Troubled Times: Fortnight Magazine and the Troubles in Northern Ireland 1970-91*, Belfast 1991
- Bew, P., and Gillespie, G., *Northern Ireland: A Chronology of the Troubles 1968-1993*, Dublin 1993
- Bew, P., Gibbon, P. and Patterson, H., *Northern Ireland 1921-1994: Political Forces and Social Classes*, London 2002
- Bishop, P., and Mallie, E., *The Provisional IRA*, London 1987
- Black, J., *Killing For Britain*, Scotland, 2008
- Boulton, D., *The UVF 1966-73 An Anatomy of Loyalist Rebellion*, Dublin 1973
- Bourke, R., *Peace in Ireland: The War of Ideas*, London 2003
- Bowman, T., *Carson's Army: The Ulster Volunteer Force 1910-22*, Manchester, 2007
- Bowyer Bell, J., *The Secret Army: The IRA 1916-79*, Dublin 1979
- Bowyer Bell, J., *The Irish Troubles: A Generation of Violence 1967-1992*, Dublin 1993
- Bowyer Bell, J., *In Dubious Battle: The Dublin and Monaghan Bombings 1972-1974*, Dublin 1996
- Bowyer Bell, J., *Back to the Future: The Protestants and a United Ireland*, Dublin 1996
- Boyce, D.G. and O'Day, A. (eds), *Defenders of the Union: A Survey of British and Irish Unionism since 1801*, London 2001
- Boyd, A. *Brian Faulkner and the Crisis of Ulster Unionism*, Tralee, 1972
- Boyd, A., *Holy War in Belfast*, Belfast 1987

- Brown, J., *Into the Dark: 30 Years in the RUC*, Dublin 2005
- Bruce, S., *God Save Ulster: The Religion and Politics of Paisleyism*, Oxford 1986
- Bruce, S., "Protestantism and Terrorism in Northern Ireland" in *Ireland's Terrorist Trauma – Interdisciplinary Perspectives*, Hertfordshire 1989
- Bruce, S., *The Red Hand: Protestant Paramilitaries in Northern Ireland*, Oxford 1992
- Bruce, S., "The Problem of Pro-State Terrorism: Loyalist Paramilitaries in Northern Ireland", *Terrorism and Political Violence* 4:1, 1992
- Bruce, S., "Northern Ireland: Reappraising Loyalist Violence", *Conflict Studies* 249, 1992
- Bruce, S., "Loyalists in Northern Ireland: Further Thoughts on Pro-State Terror", *Terrorism and Political Violence* 5:4, 1993
- Bruce, S., *The Edge of the Union: The Ulster Loyalist Political Vision*, Oxford 1994
- Bryan, D., *Orange Parades: The Politics of Ritual, Tradition and Control*, London 2000
- Buckland, P., *Irish Unionism I: The Anglo-Irish and the New Ireland 1885 to 1922*, Dublin 1972
- Buckland, P., *Irish Unionism II: Ulster Unionism and the Origins of Northern Ireland 1886 to 1922*, Dublin 1973
- Buckland, P., *James Craig*, Dublin 1980
- Buckland, P., *A History of Northern Ireland*, Dublin 1981
- Byrne, O. (ed), *State of Play: The Theatre and Cultural Identity in 20th Century Ulster*, Belfast 2001
- Cadwallader, A., *Holy Cross: The Untold Story*, Belfast 2004
- Cadwallader, A., *Lethal Allies: British Collusion in Ireland*, Cork 2013

Campbell, F., *The Dissenting Voice: Protestant Democracy in Ulster from Plantation to Partition*, Belfast 1991

Clayton, P., *Enemies and Passing Friends: Settler Ideologies in Twentieth Century Ulster*, London 1996

Clifford, B., *Against Ulster Nationalism*, Belfast 1975

Cochrane, F., *Unionist Politics and the Politics of Unionism Since the Anglo-Irish Agreement*, Cork 1997

Coogan, T. P., *The Troubles: Ireland's Ordeal 1966-1996 and the Search for Peace*, London 1996

Cook, R. and Foster, H., *Dangerous Ground: The Inside Story of Britain's Leading Investigative Journalist*, London 1999

Cox, M., Guelke, A and Stephen, F. (eds), *A Farewell to Arms? Beyond the Good Friday Agreement*, Manchester 2006

Crawford, C., *Defenders or Criminals: Loyalist Prisoners and Criminalisation*, Belfast 1999

Crawford, C., *Inside the UDA: Volunteers and Violence*, London 2003

Crawford, R., *Loyal to King Billy: A Portrait of the Ulster Protestants*, London 1987

Cusack J. and Taylor, M., "Ulster Defence Association: The Resurgence – A Case Study", *Terrorism and Political Violence* 5:3, 1993

Cusack, J. and McDonald, H., *UVF*, Dublin 1997

Davies, N., *Ten Thirty Three: The Inside Story of Britain's Secret Killing Machine in Northern Ireland*, Edinburgh 1999

Davies, N., *Dead Men Talking: Collusion, Cover-Up and Murder in Northern Ireland's Dirty War*, Edinburgh 2004

Davis, R., *Mirror Hate: The Convergent Ideology of Northern Ireland Paramilitaries 1966-1992*, Aldershot 1994

- De Breadun, D., *The Far Side of Revenge: Making Peace in Northern Ireland*, Cork 2001
- De Paor, L., *Divided Ulster*, London 1970
- Deutsch R., and Magowan, V., *Northern Ireland: A Chronology of Events Volumes 1-3*, Belfast 1973/1974/1975
- Devlin, P., *The Fall of the N.I. Executive*, Tralee 1975
- Devlin, P., *Yes We Have No Bananas: Outdoor Relief in Belfast 1920-39*, Belfast 1981
- Devlin, P., *Straight Left: An Autobiography*, Belfast 1993
- Dewar, M., *The British Army in Northern Ireland*, Middlesex 1973.
- Dillon, M. and Lehan, D., *Political Murder in Northern Ireland*, Middlesex 1973
- Dillon, M., *The Shankill Butchers: A Case Study of Mass Murder*, London 1989
- Dillon, M., *The Dirty War*, London 1990
- Dillon, M., *Stone Cold: The True Story of Michael Stone and the Milltown Massacre*, London 1992
- Dillon, M., *God and the Gun: The Church and Irish Terrorism*, London 1997
- Dillon, M., *The Trigger Men*, Edinburgh 2003
- Doherty, R., *The Sons of Ulster: Ulstermen at War from the Somme to Korea*, Belfast 1992
- Downing, T., *The Troubles: The Background to the Question of Northern Ireland*, London 1980
- Dudley Edwards, O., *The Sins of Our Fathers: Roots of Conflict in Northern Ireland*, Dublin 1970
- Dudley Edwards, R., *The Faithful Tribe: An Intimate Portrait of the Loyal Institutions*, London 1999

Edwards, A., *Democratic Socialism and Sectarianism: The Northern Ireland Labour Party and Progressive Unionist Party Compared*, Politics Vol 27 (1) 2007

Edwards, A., *A History of the Northern Ireland Labour Party: Democratic Socialism and Sectarianism*, Manchester 2009

Edwards, A., *Abandoning Armed Resistance?: The Ulster Volunteer Force as a Case Study of Strategic Terrorism in Northern Ireland*, Studies in Conflict and Terrorism, 32:2 2009

Edwards, A., *The Progressive Unionist Party of Northern Ireland: A Left-Wing Voice in an Ethnically Divided Society*, British Journal of Politics and International Relations 2010

Edwards, A., and Bloomer, S., *A Watching Brief?: The Political Strategy of Progressive Loyalism since 1994*, Conflict Transformation Papers Volume 8, LINC Resource Centre 2004

Edwards, A., and Bloomer, S., *Democratising the Peace in Northern Ireland: Progressive Loyalists and the Politics of Conflict Transformation*, Conflict Transformation Papers Volume 12, LINC Resource Centre 2005

Edwards, A. and Bloomer, S (eds)., *Transforming the Peace Process in Northern Ireland: From Terrorism to Democratic Politics*, Dublin 2008

Ellis, P., *A History of the Irish Working Class*, London 1985

English, R and Walker, G (eds)., *Unionism in Modern Ireland: New Perspectives on Politics and Culture*, London 1996

Farrell, M., *Northern Ireland: The Orange State*, London 1980

Farrell, M., *Arming the Protestants: The Formation of the Ulster Special Constabulary and the Royal Ulster Constabulary 1920-27*, London 1983

Faulkner, B., *Memoirs of a Statesman*, London 1978

Feldman, A., *Formations of Violence: The Narrative of the Body and Political Terror in Northern Ireland*, Chicago 1991

Fisk, R., *The Point of No Return: The Strike That Broke the British in Ulster*, London 1975

- Fitzgibbon, C., *Red Hand: The Ulster Colony*, London 1971
- Fitzpatrick, R., *God's Frontiersmen: The Scots-Irish Epic*, London 1989
- Flackes, W.D., *Northern Ireland: A Political Directory 1968-1993*, Belfast 1994
- Foot, P., *Who Framed Colin Wallace?*, London 1989
- Foster, R.F., *Modern Ireland 1600-1972*, London 1988
- Gallagher, C., *After the Peace: Loyalist Paramilitaries in Post-Accord Northern Ireland*, New York, 2007
- Garland, R., *Seeking a Political Accommodation: The Ulster Volunteer Force – A Negotiating History*, Belfast 1997
- Garland, R., *Gusty Spence*, Belfast 2001
- Gibbon, P., *The Origins of Ulster Unionism: The Formation of Popular Protestant Politics and Ideology in Nineteenth Century Ireland*, Manchester 1975
- Gillespie, G., *Years of Darkness: The Troubles Remembered*, Dublin 2008
- Godson, D., *Himself Alone: David Trimble and the Ordeal of Unionism*, London 2004
- Gray, J., *City in Revolt: James Larkin and the Belfast Dock Strike of 1907*, Belfast 1985
- Greg, P., *The Crum: Inside the Crumlin Road Prison*, Dublin, 2007
- Haines, K., *Fred Crawford: Carson's Gunrunner*, Donaghadee, 2009
- Hall, M., *20 Years: A Concise Chronology of Events in Northern Ireland from 1968-1988*, Newtownabbey 1988
- Hall, M., *Ulster: The Hidden History*, Belfast 1989

- Hall, M., (compiler) Conflict Transformation Initiative, Loyalism in Transition 1, A New Reality? Belfast, 2006
- Hamill, D, Pig in the Middle: The Army in Northern Ireland 1969-1984, London 1985
- Hanley, B. and Millar, S., The Lost Revolution: The Story of the Official IRA and the Workers Party, Dublin 2009
- Harden, T., Bandit Country: The IRA and South Armagh, London 1999
- Hezlet, A., The B Specials: A History of the Ulster Special Constabulary, London 1973
- Holland, J. and McDonald, H., INLA: Deadly Divisions, Dublin 1994
- Holland, J., Hope Against History: The Course of Conflict in Northern Ireland, London 1999
- Holroyd, F. (with Burbridge, N.), War Without Honour, Hull 1989
- Howe, S. Mad dogs and Ulstermen: the crisis of loyalism, www.opendemocracy.net 2005
- Hyndman, M., Further Afield: Journeys From a Protestant Past, Belfast 1996
- Jackson, A., Home Rule: An Irish History 1800-2000, Oxford 2003
- Johnson, P., Ireland: Land of Troubles, Aylesbury 1980
- Johnston, K., In the Shadows of Giants: A Social History of the Belfast Shipyards, Dublin, 2008
- Jordan, H., Milestones in Murder: Defining Moments in Ulster's Terror War, Edinburgh 2002
- Kaufmann, E.P., The Orange Order: A Contemporary Northern Irish History, Oxford 2007
- Kee, R., The Green Flag Volumes 1-3, London 1987
- Kee, R., Ireland A History, London 1995
- Kelley, K., The Longest War: Northern Ireland and the IRA, Dingle, 1982
- Kelly, H., How Stormont Fell, Dublin 1972

- Kenna, G.B., *Facts and Figures: The Belfast Pogroms*, Dublin 1922
- Kennaway, B., *The Orange Order: A Tradition Betrayed*, London 2006
- Kennedy, L., *Two Ulsters: A Case for Repartition*, Belfast 1986
- Kerr, M., *The Destructors: The Story of Northern Ireland's Lost Peace Process*, Dublin 2011
- Larkin, P., *A Very British Jihad: Collusion, Conspiracy and Cover-up in Northern Ireland*, Belfast 2004
- Leitch, M., *Silver's City*, London 1981
- Lindsay, K., *Ambush at Tully-West: The British Intelligence Services In Action*, Dundalk, 1979
- Lister, D. and Jordan, H., *Mad Dog: The Rise and Fall of Johnny Adair and C Company*, Edinburgh 2003
- Lord Longford and McHardy, A., *Ulster*, London 1981
- Lowles, N., *White Riot: The Violent Story of Combat 18*, Bury 2001
- Lundy, D., *Men That God Made Mad: A Journey Through Truth, Myth and Terror in Northern Ireland*, London 2006
- Lustick, I. S., *Unsettled States Disputed Lands: Britain and Ireland, France and Algeria, Israel and the West Bank-Gaza*, New York 1993
- Lyons, F.S.L., *Ireland Since The Famine*, London 1985
- Marrinan, P., *Paisley: Man of Wrath*, Tralee 1973
- MacAirt, C., *The McGurk's Bar Bombing: Collusion, Cover-up and a Campaign For Truth*, Belfast, 2012
- McAuley, J. W., *Cuchullain and an RPG-7: The Ideology and Politics of the Ulster Defence Association as published in Hughes, E. (ed), Culture and Politics in Northern Ireland 1960-1990*, London, 1993

McAuley, J.W., (Re) Constructing Ulster Loyalism: Political Responses to the 'Peace Process', Irish Journal of Sociology Vol 6, 1996

McAuley, J. W., From Loyal Soldiers to Political Spokespersons: A Political History of a Loyalist Paramilitary Group in Northern Ireland, *Etudes Irlandaises* 21:1, 1997

McAuley, J.W., Divided Loyalists, Divided Loyalties: Conflicts and Continuities in Contemporary Unionist Ideology as published in *Peace or War? Understanding the Peace Process in Northern Ireland*, Surrey, 1997

McAuley, J.W., The Ulster Loyalist Political Parties: Towards a New Respectability, *Etudes Irlandaises* 22:2, 1998

McAuley, J.W., A Process of Surrender? Loyalist Perceptions of a Settlement as published in *Dis/agreeing Ireland: Contexts, Obstacles, Hopes*, London 1998

McAuley, J. W., Still No Surrender? New Loyalism and the Peace Process in Northern Ireland as published in *Politics and Performance in Contemporary Northern Ireland*, Massachusetts, 1999

McAuley, J.W., Many Roads Forward: Politics and Ideology Within the Progressive Unionist Party, *Etudes Irlandaises* 25:1, 2000

McAuley, J.W., "The Emergence of New Loyalism" as published in *Changing Shades of Orange and Green: Redefining the Union and the Nation*, Dublin, 2002

McAuley, J.W., Whither New Loyalism? Changing Loyalist Politics After the Belfast Agreement, *Irish Political Studies* 20 (3), 2005.

McAuley, J.W., *Ulster's Last Stand? Reconstructing Unionism After The Peace Process*, Dublin 2010

McAuley, J.W. and Spencer, G., *Ulster Loyalism After The Good Friday Agreement: History, Identity and Change*, Basingstoke 2011

McCallion, H., *Killing Zone*, London 1996

McCann, E., *War and Peace in Northern Ireland*, Dublin 1998

- McDermott, J., Northern Divisions: The Old IRA and the Belfast Pogroms 1920-22, Belfast 2001
- McDonald, H., Trimble, London 2000
- McDonald, H., Colours: Ireland - From Bombs to Boom, Edinburgh 2004
- McDonald, H. and Cusack, J., UDA: Inside the Heart of Loyalist Terror, Dublin 2004
- McDonald, H., Gunsmoke and Mirrors: How Sinn Fein Dressed Up Defeat As Victory, Dublin 2008
- McDowell, J., Godfathers: Inside Northern Ireland's Drugs Racket, Dublin 2001
- McDowell, J., The Mummy's Boys: Threats and Menaces From Ulster's ParaMafia, Dublin, 2008
- McGuinness, F., Observe the Sons of Ulster Marching to the Somme, London 1986
- McIlheney, C. J., "Arbiters of Ulster's Destiny? The Military Role of the Protestant Paramilitaries in Northern Ireland" as published in O'Day, A. (ed), Dimensions of Irish Terrorism, Aldershot 1993
- McKay, S., Northern Protestants: An Unsettled People, Belfast 2000
- McKay, S., Bear In Mind These Dead, London 2008
- McKenna, G.B., The Belfast Pogroms 1920-22, Dublin 1922
- McKittrick, D., Despatches From Belfast, Belfast 1989
- McKittrick, D., Endgame: The Search For Peace in Northern Ireland, Belfast 1994
- McKittrick, D., The Nervous Peace, Belfast 1996
- McKittrick, D., Through the Minefield, Belfast 1999

- McKittrick, D., Kelters, S., Feeney, B and Thornton, C., *Lost Lives: The stories of the men, women and children who died as a result of the Northern Ireland Troubles*, Edinburgh 1999
- McKittrick, D. and McVea, D., *Making Sense of the Troubles*, Belfast 2000
- McKittrick, D. and Mallie, E., *The Fight For Peace: The Secret Story Behind the Irish Peace Process*, London 1996
- McKittrick, D. and Mallie, E., *Endgame in Ireland*, London 2001
- McMichael, G., *An Ulster Voice: In Search of Common Ground in Northern Ireland*, Colorado 1999
- McPhilemy, S., *The Committee: Political Assassination in Northern Ireland*, Colorado 1998
- Mitchell, B., "Principles of Loyalism", 2002, www.pup-ni.org.uk
- Miller, D., *Queen's Rebels: Ulster Loyalism in Historical Perspective*, Dublin 1978
- Mitchell, G., *As the Beast Sleeps*, London 2003
- Moloney, E. and Pollak, A., *Paisley*, Dublin 1986
- Moloney, E., *A Secret History of the IRA*, London, 2002
- Moloney, E., *Voices From the Grave: Two Men's War in Ireland*, London, 2010
- Moore, C., *The Kincora Scandal: Political Cover-up and Intrigue in Northern Ireland*, Dublin 1996
- Mullan, D., *The Dublin and Monaghan Bombings: The Truth, the Questions and the Victims' Stories*, Dublin 1984
- Munck, R. and Rolston, B., *Belfast in the Thirties: An Oral History*, Belfast 1987
- Murphy, D., *A Place Apart*, London 1978
- Murray, R., *The SAS in Ireland*, Dublin 1990
- Myers, Kevin., *Watching the Door: A Memoir 1971-78*, Dublin 2006

- Nairn, T., *The Breakup of Britain*, London 1977
- Nelson, S., *Ulster's Uncertain Defenders: Loyalists and the Northern Ireland Conflict*, Belfast 1984
- Novosel, T., *Northern Ireland's Lost Opportunity: The Frustrated Promise of Political Loyalty*, London, 2012
- O'Brien, C.C., *States of Ireland*, St Albans 1974
- O'Brien, C.C., *Ancestral Voices: Religion and Nationalism in Ireland*, Dublin 1994
- O'Brien, J., *Killing Finucane: Murder in Defence of the Realm*, Dublin 2005
- O'Clery, C., *Ireland in Quotes: A History of the 20th Century*, Dublin 1999
- O'Connor, F., *Breaking the Bonds: Making Peace in Northern Ireland*, Edinburgh 2002
- O'Doherty, M., *The Telling Year: Belfast 1972*, Dublin, 2007
- O'Leary, B. and McGarry, J., *The Politics of Antagonism: Understanding Northern Ireland*, London 1993
- O'Leary, B. and McGarry, J., *Explaining Northern Ireland*, Oxford 2000
- O'Malley, P., *The Uncivil Wars: Ireland Today*, Belfast 1983
- O'Malley, P., *Northern Ireland: Questions of Nuance*, Belfast 1990
- O'Neill, T., *The Autobiography of Terence O'Neill*, London 1972
- Orr, P., *The Road to the Somme: Men of the Ulster Division Tell Their Story*, Belfast 1987
- Parker, S., *Three Plays For Ireland*, Birmingham 1989
- Parker, T., *May The Lord in His Mercy Be Kind To Belfast*, London 1993

- Parkinson, A.F., *Ulster Loyalism and the British Media*, Dublin, 1998
- Parkinson, A.F., *1972 and the Ulster Troubles: "A Very Bad Year"*, Dublin 2010
- Patterson, H., *Class Conflict and Sectarianism: The Protestant Working Class and the Belfast Labour Movement 1868-1920*, Belfast 1980
- Patterson, H., *Ireland Since 1939: The Persistence of Conflict*, Dublin 2006
- Porter, N., *Rethinking Unionism: An Alternative Vision for Northern Ireland*, Belfast 1996
- Probert, B., *Beyond Orange and Green: The Political Economy of the Northern Ireland Crisis*, London 1978
- Purdy, A., *Molyneaux: The Long View*, Antrim 1989
- Rees, M., *Northern Ireland: A Personal Perspective*, London 1985
- Riddell, P., *Fire Over Ulster*, London 1970
- Roberts, H., *Northern Ireland and the Algerian Analogy: A Suitable Case for Gaullism*, Belfast 1986
- Rolston, B., *Unfinished Business: State Killings and the Quest for Truth*, Belfast 2000
- Rolston, B., *Children of the Revolution: The Lives of Sons and Daughters of Activists in Northern Ireland*, Derry 2011
- Root, N and Hitchings, I., *Who Killed Rosemary Nelson?*, London 2011
- Rowan, B., *Behind the Lines: The Story of the IRA and Loyalist Ceasefires*, Belfast 1995
- Rowan, B., *The Armed Peace: Life and Death After The Ceasefires*, Edinburgh 2003
- Rowan, B., *Paisley and the Provos*, Belfast, 2005
- Rowan, B., *How The Peace Was Won*, Dublin, 2008

- Ryder, C., *The RUC: A Force Under Fire*, London 1989
- Ryder, C., *The Ulster Defence Regiment: An Instrument of Peace?*, London 1992
- Ryder, C., *Inside the Maze: The Untold Story of the Northern Ireland Prison Service*, London 2001
- Ryder, C. and Kearney, V., *Drumcree: The Orange Order's Last Stand*, London 2001
- Scoular, C., *James Chichester-Clark: Prime Minister of Northern Ireland*, Killyleagh 2000
- Scoular, C., *John M Andrews: Northern Ireland's Wartime Prime Minister*, Killyleagh 2004
- Shirlow, P. and McGovern, M. (eds), *Who Are The People: Unionism Protestantism and Loyalism in Northern*, London 1997
- Shirlow, P. and McEvoy, K., *Beyond the Wire: Former Prisoners and Conflict Transformation in Northern Ireland*, London, 2008
- Shirlow, P., Tongue, J., McAuley, J and McGlynn, C., *Abandoning Historical Conflict? Former Paramilitary Prisoners and Political Reconciliation in Northern Ireland*, Manchester 2010
- Shirlow, P., *The End of Ulster Loyalism?*, Manchester 2012
- Sinnerton, H., *David Ervine: Uncharted Waters*, Dingle 2002
- Smithy, L., *Unionists, Loyalists and Conflict Transformation in Northern Ireland*, Oxford 2011
- Spencer, G., *The State of Loyalism in Northern Ireland*, Hampshire, 2008
- Stevenson, J., *We Wrecked The Place: Contemplating an End to the Northern Irish Troubles*, New York 1996
- Stewart, A.T.Q., *The Ulster Crisis: Resistance to Home Rule 1912-14*, London 1979
- Stewart, A.T.Q., *Edward Carson*, Dublin 1981
- Stewart, A.T.Q., *The Narrow Ground: Patterns of History*, Belfast 1985

Stone, M., *None Shall Divide Us*, Great Britain 2003

Sunday Times Insight Team, *Ulster*, London 1972

Sutton, M., *Bear In Mind These Dead: An Index of Deaths From the Conflict in Ireland 1969-1993*, Belfast 1994

Taylor, P., *Families At War: Voices From the Troubles*, London 1989

Taylor, P., *Loyalists*, London 1999

Thompson, S., *Three Plays: Over the Bridge, The Evangelist, Cemented with Love*, Belfast 1997

Tiernan, J., *The Dublin Monaghan Bombings and the Murder Triangle*, Privately published 2002

Tongue, J., Shirlow, P. and McAuley, J., *Conflict Transformation and Former Loyalist Paramilitary Prisoners in Northern Ireland*, *Terrorism and Political Violence* 22 (1), 2010

Tongue, J., Shirlow, P. and McAuley, J., *So Why Did the Guns Fall Silent? How Interplay, Not Stalemate, Explains the Northern Ireland Peace Process*, *Irish Political Studies* 26 (1), 2011

Travers, S. and Fetherstonhaugh, N., *The Miami Showband Massacre: A Survivor's Search for the Truth*, Dublin 2007

Ulster Volunteer Force Regimental Association, *The Fallen and the Brave*, Belfast 2006

Urban, M., *Big Boys' Rules: The Secret Struggle Against the IRA*, London 1994

Uris, J. and Uris, L., *Ireland: A Terrible Beauty*, London 1981

Wallace, M., *Drums and Guns and Revolution in Ulster*, London 1970

Walker, G., *The Politics of Frustration: Harry Midgley and the failure of Labour in Northern Ireland*, Manchester 1985

Ward, R., *Women, Unionism and Loyalty in Northern Ireland: From Tea-Makers to Political Actors*, Dublin, 2006

- Whyte, J., *Interpreting Northern Ireland*, Oxford 1990
- Wilson, T., *Ulster: Conflict and Consent*, Oxford 1989
- Winchester, S., *In Holy Terror*, London 1974
- Wood, I.S., *God Guns and Ulster: A History of Loyalist Paramilitaries*, London 2003
- Wood, I S., *Crimes of Loyalty: A History of the UDA*, Edinburgh 2006
- Wright, F., "Protestant Ideology and Politics in Ulster", *European Journal of Sociology* XIV, 1973
- Wright, F., *Northern Ireland: A Comparative Analysis*, Dublin 1987