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For God, Ulster and the "B"-men"

The Ulsterian Revolution, the Foundation of Northern Ireland and the Creation of the Ulster Special Constabulary, 1910-1927

Seán Bernard Newman

2020

PhD

Birkbeck, University of London

Department of History, Classics & Archaeology

I declare the work presented in this thesis is my own.

Seán Bernard Newman

Abstract

This thesis, centring on the formation and early years of the USC argues for the development during and after the First World War of a distinct 'Ulsterian' identity which combined elements of Protestantism, Unionism and Loyalism and underpinned the newly separate political entity of Northern Ireland. Straddling notions of Britishness and Irishness but also having aspects which can be seen as revolutionary, this Ulsterian identity was expressed in particular through the creation of the USC and the consequent partial militarisation of Ulster in the 1920s. In its first chapter, the thesis looks at constructed national identities and Ulsterian social and cultural forces. Discussing religious ideas of covenant and chosenness, it moves to the second chapter exploring other religious justifications for Ulsterian behaviour not least the theology of resistance legitimising rebellion and ultimately revolution. Chapter three applies the Reformist theology and historical memory of Ulsterian resistance to events during the Orange Agitation to argue that the distinctive identity of Ulsterians and their legitimising theology of resistance means historians need to analyse their actions between 1910-1927 as revolutionary. The mobilisation of paramilitary forces was integral to the Ulsterian Revolution with the UVF reformed in 1920 as the USC which, using sectarian violence, consolidated the revolution and the new state of Northern Ireland, the subject of the fourth chapter. Chapter five discusses how

the USC moved far from its policing duties after 1920 and planned military operations and performed military duties unthinkable in the rest of the United Kingdom. The militarisation of Northern Ireland seen so clearly in the creation and operation of the USC affected many facets of Ulsterian society, and chapter six focusses on the continued militarisation of Ulsterian masculinities and the performance of 'manhood' through the institution of the USC.

Abbreviations and Initialisms

ADRIC Auxiliary Division Royal Irish Constabulary
BMH Bureau of Military History
BPA Belfast Protestant Association
CASPA Civil Authorities (Special Powers) Act (Northern Ireland) (1922)
CID Criminal Investigation Department
CSA Confederate States of America
DORA Defence of the Realm Act (1914)
FVF Fermanagh Vigilance Force
GAA Gaelic Athletic Association
GOLI Grand Orange Lodge of Ireland
GPO General Post Office
ICA Irish Citizens Army
IHR Institute of Historical Research
INV Irish National Volunteers
IOO Independent Orange Order
IPHRA Irish Protestant Home Rule Association
IPP Irish Parliamentary Party
IRA Irish Republican Army
IRB Irish Republican Brotherhood
IV Irish Volunteers
JP Justice of the Peace
OC Officer Commanding
PR Proportional Representation
PRONI Public Record Office Northern Ireland
PSNI Police Service of Northern Ireland
RAMC Royal Army Medical Corp
RIC Royal Irish Constabulary
RICSR Royal Irish Constabulary Special Reserve
RICUD Royal Irish Constabulary Ulster Division
RM Resident Magistrate
ROIA Restoration of Order in Ireland Act (1920)
RUC Royal Ulster Constabulary
SRF Service Reserve Force
SSF Special Service Force
TCR Territorial Constabulary Reserve
TNA The National Archives
ULA Ulster Liberal Association
UPG Ulster Provisional Government
UPP Ulster Parliamentary Party
USC Ulster Special Constabulary
UUC Ulster Unionist Council
UULA Ulster Unionist Labour Association
UVC Ulster Voluntary Constabulary: Territorial Special Constabulary
UVF Ulster Volunteer Force
WELCA War Emergency Laws (Continuance) Act (1920) ('War Powers Act')

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Introduction

I: Ulster Special Constabulary and History

'Their [the USC's] activities have yet to be examined in detail: a vital but unenviable task for some future researcher.[1]'

The Beginnings

In the autumn of 1920 on the rural backroads of County Tyrone, through the townlands of County Armagh and in the country villages of County Fermanagh Ulstermen, Protestant, Unionist and on the alert. Armed with German, Austrian and Italian rifles smuggled in before the First World War and army revolvers issued to them in the trenches of Flanders they now took their orders from the commanders of the Ulster Volunteer Force (UVF), a private army which had checked and threatened the Imperial Government during the Orange Agitation a few short years before. In 1920 these bands of vigilantes had changed little, but since 1914 the context had transformed. Thousands of the UVF men from 1911-1914 lay dead and mangled in unmarked graves in Belgium, France and Turkey. The bodies of thousands of more had evaporated in high explosive blasts and sunk, lost forever, into oceans of mud. Fear of Irish self-government was realised by 1920. A fear which motivated, mobilised and radicalised over 100,000 Ulstermen during the Orange Agitation now played out as the Dáil Government

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[1] Peter Hart, 'Definition: Defining the Irish Revolution', in Joost Augusteijn (ed), *The Irish Revolution, 1913-1923* (Basingstoke: Palgrave, 2002), p.25.

of the Irish Republic sat at the negotiating table with the Imperial Government to deliver a more advanced and radical answer to the Irish question than was ever thought possible in 1914. For decades devolutionist Irish Parliamentary Party (IPP) men dominated Irish elections and manipulated parliamentary procedure to get the Imperial ear. The 1918 election saw the IPP decimated. The new Republican and Nationalist men (and some women) took their seats at the table after a postwar landslide election victory and nearly two years of bloody and grinding guerrilla warfare in Ireland's south and west.

Temporarily excluded from Home Rule in 1914, after the Easter Rising of April 1916 all Ulsterians and nationalists, for the duration of war accepted the temporary exclusion of Ulster from Irish devolution. In spring 1920 Ulster Unionists politicians performed a *volte-face* and accepted partition (of both Ireland and the province) and their own Home Rule government in six out of nine Ulster counties. Ulster, the crucible of agitation and revolution from 1911 until 1914, watched from behind the provincial border as war ravaged the south and west from 1919. An uneasy sense of security prevailed in much of Ulster; if war with Crown forces pinned down and occupied the Republicans in the south and west, then Ulstermen might be left alone. The UVF had transformed into the 36th (Ulster) Division on the outbreak of hostilities with the Central Powers. While most UVF men of fighting age flocked to the colours in 1914, anxious commanders tried to slow down recruitment out of fear of an utterly hollowed-out force.[2] Never disbanded, the organisation remained intact but depleted of men throughout the war and even offered stretched Crown forces the use of their smuggled weapons and to reform to maintain security in Ulster during Easter

[2] [PRONI], D/1327/4/3, File of UVF orders from the Assistant Quarter-Master General (AQMG), (September 1913).

week 1916.[3] In July 1921 truce between the Republicans and the Crown forces ended any sense of security in Ulster as a new fear arose that Republicans, no longer preoccupied with the Imperial Government, would direct their aggressive and violent attention to Ulster.

For a year before the Truce, all nine counties of Ulster heard the stamp of marching boots worn by the re-formed vigilantes of the UVF. Election success by Sinn Féin in Derry City and other Nationalist-leaning districts and counties in Ulster in early 1920 led to a resurgence of sectarian violence that summer at levels not seen since before the First World War. Paranoia, anxiety and fear saw the UVF re-formed and active long before the Truce. Intrinsically linked as the events north and south were, it was events and drivers in Ulster that led to the formation of the Ulster Special Constabulary (USC). By July 1920 a sectarian fire engulfed Belfast's tinder box, and the vigilante groups from the borderlands emerged in the streets and meetings rooms of Belfast and its suburbs. Ulster's leaders directed the fresh growth of new groups and harvested the fruits. A 'special force' in the mould of the UVF allowed the élite to both canalise the unpredictable energy of Ulster's rank-and-file and to harness it to pressure the Imperial Government into concessions at the birth and early years of the new state of Northern Ireland. The 'special force' would do the new régime's bidding.

By November the Imperial Government reluctantly agreed to put the vigilantes on an official footing. Strikes in Britain and insurgency throughout the post-war British Empire meant the battalions of Crown forces in Northern Ireland were needed elsewhere. The Imperial Government accepted the risk of arming one side (Ulster's Unionists, Loyalists and Protestants) over the other as

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[3] [TNA], CO 904/99, 'File of UVF orders from the Assistant Quarter-Master General (AQMG)', April 1916.

worth taking in order to release the military forces it needed and extricate itself from the quagmire of Ireland. Renamed the Ulster Special Constabulary, the UVF transformed for the second time since its foundation in 1911 and remained a fixture of Northern Ireland's security apparatus and source of sectarian tensions until 1971. The sound of marching boots heard in the summer of 1920 echoed long into Northern Ireland's troubled future.

Definitions

Many textbooks and monographs on modern Irish history open with a standardised rubric lifted from FSL Lyons' seminal study, *Ireland Since The Famine*, from 1971:

NOTE ON TERMINOLOGY

> In the course of this book I have spelt the words 'nationalists' and 'nationalism' with a small 'n' when referring to general matters connected with the needs and demands of Irish nationalists. But I have used Nationalist with a capital 'N' whenever it seemed necessary to identify a specific party and its supporters – as for example, in Northern Ireland after 1921. This is not to suggest that any party had a monopoly of Irish nationalism, which it obviously has not; the term is simply used as an aid to quick and easy identification.

F.S.L.L.[4]

Forty-nine years after Lyons' publication, research and scholarship on modern Ireland definitions have moved on, and what Lyons called 'terminology' remains central. Nearly five decades old the explicit weakness in the 'terminology' is the lack of attention on Irish Unionism and definitions that arose from the 'revolutionary' era reflecting the newness in those historiographical ideas. This research on Ulster between 1910-1927, finding the existing 'terminology' out-of-date and irrelevant, must set out new definitions germane to the events and period.

Lyons defined the terms for Irish 'Nationalists' and 'nationalists', and it is essential that, on the other side of the Irish history coin, a definition of 'Unionism' is drawn early on. Within a few years of the new nineteenth century, 'Irish Unionism' lost its political potency as the focus moved to Ulster. Irish Unionism had always opposed Home Rule across the whole of Ireland, but the process of 'Ulsterisation' of Irish Unionism led to its territorial and organisational concentration in the province, from 1900 Irish Unionism withered away and political potency shifted almost entirely to Ulster and transformed into 'Ulster Unionism'. 'Ulster' is the historical Province of Ulster consisting of the nine counties of Antrim, Armagh, Cavan, Donegal, Down, Fermanagh, Londonderry, Monaghan and Tyrone and the County Boroughs of Belfast and Derry. Ulster Unionism is opposition to Home Rule in Ulster. From 1900 with the pragmatic acceptance of Home Rule in the rest of Ireland. While 'Ulster Unionists' are the

[4] FSL Lyons, *Ireland Since The Famine* (London: Fontana, 1987), p.12.

proponents of that position, the term is often used synonymously with 'Protestant' and 'Loyalist'. 'Protestant', however, is more properly a term which defines all adherents and sects of reformed western Christianity. The terms 'Loyalist' and 'Loyalism' are rarely used in this thesis, except in as far as they are quoted in contemporary sources. In *The Contested Identities Of Ulster Protestants*, the social scientists Thomas Paul Burgess and Gareth Mulvenna have attempted to define what they call the 'Protestant-unionist-loyalist bloc' with the initialism 'PUL':

> The term PUL itself is a modern concoction which has been used by commentators as shorthand to describe the entire community while reflecting the class and cultural differences inherent within it.[5]

While the initialism itself may be thought to achieve this objective in the context of the present day, it is ahistorical and etic so far as the 1910s and 1920s are concerned. Another recent coinage, David Fitzpatrick's term 'Ultonian', is a demonym for any Ulster inhabitant including Catholics and Nationalists, making it inappropriate as a shorthand term for Ulster Unionists, Loyalists and Protestants.[6] Reflecting the communal identity (argued as being a distinct national identity in chapter one) and political movement of Ulster's unionists, the current analysis coins the neologism 'Ulsterian' to define the identity, politics and culture of Unionists, Loyalists and Protestants. Chapter One explores Ulsterian identity and justifies the use of this new term.

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[5] Thomas Paul Burgess and Gareth Mulvenna, *The Contested Identities Of Ulster Protestants* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2015), p.1.
[6] David Fitzpatrick, *Descendancy: Irish Protestant Histories since 1795* (Cambridge: CUP, 2014), p.134.

First debated in the Imperial parliament in 1912, the Government of Ireland Act (1920) formalised the exclusion of Ulster from the operation of Home Rule and brought about Irish partition. Exclusion also led to the partition of Ulster as the nine-county historical Province of Ireland became the six-county state of 'Northern Ireland'. Northern Ireland defines the six counties of Antrim, Armagh, Down, Fermanagh, Londonderry and Tyrone and the County Boroughs of Belfast and Derry from the introduction of the Bill in 1920. 'Six Counties' is that area before 1920. 'North of Ireland' is not a term used here. 'The south and west of Ireland' (including Dublin) is the area outside of Ulster and Northern Ireland later referred to as the 'Provisional Government' in 1922 and the 'Irish Free State' from 1923. 'Southern Ireland' as the putative sister state of Northern Ireland under the British Crown as set out in the Government of Ireland Act (1920), existed only on paper and never came to practical fruition. Outside the period of research, the same area became 'Éire' from 1937-1949 and 'Ireland' (or 'Republic of Ireland' in Great Britain) from then.

Following Lyons' 'terminology' 'Irish nationalism' is the general cultural and social demand for Irish autonomy. 'Irish Nationalism' denotes organised political moral force demands for Irish autonomy and the sectarian adherents of that in Northern Ireland. 'Irish Republicans' used physical force to press for Irish independence. The term 'advanced Nationalist' applied to those ready to use physical force to deliver Irish independence without explicit links to 'Fenianism' with both terms merging into Irish Republicanism after 1918.

'Revolution' is a term used throughout this analysis. It is explored thoroughly in chapter three. There are three terms for revolution in Ireland during the period. 'The Ulsterian Revolution' is the resistance to Home Rule by Ulsterians from 1911 involving the mobilisation of the population, armed

volunteers, the use and threat of force and then the consolidation of the state of Northern Ireland from 1920. 'The Nationalist Revolution', although not explored in detail here, is the mobilisation of the population, armed volunteers in the south and west of Ireland by Republicans and the use and threat of violence to bring those demands about and then consolidate the new Irish Free State. Inseparable and driving each other, the Ulsterian and Nationalist revolutions and the period they spanned are known together as 'The Irish Revolution.' Anaesthetised by the First World War, the Ulsterian Revolution as analysed here has distinct pre- and post-war phases. Referred to elsewhere as 'The Ulster Crisis' the pre-war period is defined as 'The Orange Agitation' in this thesis. The Ulster Crisis is the high-political and constitutional crisis that encompassed the political class across the United Kingdom.[7] The Orange Agitation, a contemporary term, was the mobilisation against Home Rule in Ulster and the efforts by Ulsterians during the period to stop the implementation of devolved Irish government. The Orange Agitation drove the Ulster Crisis, which in turn affected the United Kingdom political system.[8] 'Orange' and 'Orangeism' comes from the Loyal Orange Institution or 'Orange Order', founded as a pan-Protestant organisation in 1795. Orange symbolises the colour and house of King William III, who came to the British and Irish thrones during the Glorious Revolution (or Dutch Invasion) of 1688/89. Incorporating all reformed sects and denominations and exclusively Protestant in membership, the Orange Order sought (and still seeks) to maintain the Protestant ascendency in Ireland, protect Protestant religious liberty and maintain the Union. Following the Orange Agitation and after the hiatus of the First World War, Ulster and Northern Ireland entered a particularly bloody

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[7] See Ronan Fanning, Fatal Path: British Government and Irish Revolution 1910-1922 (London: Faber & Faber, 2013).
[8] TNA, CO/904/88, 'September-December 1912'.

period of sectarian violence and cross-border conflict at the same time as the nascent state consolidated its position, imposing Ulsterian sectarian dominance through the revocation of protections for Nationalists contained in the Government of Ireland Act (1920) and establishing the USC from the revived UVF. The period 1919-1927 is known here as 'The Outrages', the contemporary term for the violence and cycles of unrest.[9] At times the level of sectarian violence, especially in Belfast in 1920-1921, reached such high-levels and cycles of recrimination that 'The Northern Irish Civil War' seems apposite. However, the concurrent and connected border violence involved so much intervention by forces from outside Northern Ireland, controlled by both pro and anti-Treaty leaders and often without coordination or discussion with Northern Irish Nationalists, that the term 'Civil War' does not reflect the reality of what took place. Although parallels between USC and 'Black & Tan' violence become apparent in chapter four, the term 'The Specials War' mirroring 'The Tans War' for the south and west also mirrors the highly partial nature of the term so is not used. Also, the term 'The Troubles' is apposite for the period but confuses the period with the future 'Troubles' of 1968-1998 and likewise is not used here.

Finally, the subject of this research is the 'Ulster Special Constabulary': the 'USC'. They were widely known as the "B' Specials', but that term is inexact. As formed in 1920, the USC consisted of three classes, 'A' Class, 'B' Class and 'C' Class. A fourth 'C1' Class was added in 1922. A fifth class proposed in the same year, the 'Zone Police', never materialised. The term 'USC' is used throughout to refer to the organisation as a whole and the particular class referred to as and where necessary. After December 1925 only the 'B' Class remained of the USC

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[9] See Pearse Lawlor, *The Outrages, 1920-1922: The IRA and the Ulster Special Constabulary in the Border Campaign* (Cork: Mercier Press, 2011)

and the organisation became properly known as the 'B' Specials. A very small number of 'A' Class Constables transferred into the organisation on full rates of pay to act as custom officials and a ceremonial guard at Stormont.

With the relevant terms set out, the next section explores the historiography of Ireland, Northern Ireland and the topics and debates explored throughout this thesis.

II: Historiography

Contradictions

History is a process of revision. Drawing on new sources and synthesising existing scholarship, each new piece of historical work revises what went before. This research rejects two-nation, determinist and reductionist historiography. Despite setting out an Ulsterian national identity distinct from a broader idea of 'Irishness', this analysis is not Partitionist. It argues that Ulsterian national identity emerged in the early-twentieth-century to maintain the ascendency of Ulster's landed and commercial élite. Far from being natural and organic, Ulsterian identity fits firmly into the 'imagined communities' and 'invented tradition' models of national identity. Through imagined and invented Ulsterian identity Ulster Protestants, Unionists and Loyalists advocated nationalism and a distinct national identity.

The thesis also challenges the idea of Ulsterians as inherently loyal in the analysis of the Orange Agitation of 1911-1914 and the Outrages from 1920-1927. Throughout the period 1910-1927, with a hiatus period of anaesthetisation during the First World War, Ulsterians were revolutionaries. We must see the Orange Agitation and the consolidation of Northern Ireland, the Outrages, as a long

period of revolution. The Ulsterian Revolution of 1910-1927 drove events and attitudes across the island of Ireland, and much of the mobilisation and eventual agitation by Irish nationalists and Republicans came in response to Ulsterian revolutionaries. The Irish Revolution contained two distinct, irreconcilable, but inseparable parts: the Ulsterian Revolution and the Nationalist Revolution. Whether the Nationalist Revolution started in 1913 with the Lock-Out, in 1916 with the Easter Rising, or in 1918 with the Conscription Crisis, or was even fostered by the pre-revolutionary generation of late Victorian and Edwardian Ireland, the Irish Revolution, started in 1911 when Ulsterians committed themselves to a no-compromise, no-surrender, militant and treasonous rebellion against the Imperial Government.[10] That rebellion came full circle by 1927 at the end of the Ulsterian Revolution with the state of Northern Ireland firmly established. While it is famously difficult to locate the exact date when a revolution ends, this research is clear that the Irish Revolution with its two distinct but existentially connected parts, the Ulsterian Revolution and the Nationalist Revolution, did not end with the conclusion of the Irish Civil War in 1923 but instead at the earliest with the settlement of the border issue in 1927 which copperfastened the partition of the island and made permanent the Irish border as well as relieving the Irish Free State of its obligation to pay down a share of the Imperial debt. Raising and arming the UVF as an illegal army; mobilising the Ulsterian population in the Solemn League & Covenant in pledging to resist the Imperial Government 'by any means necessary'; declaring and forming an Ulster Provisional Government (UPG), agitating against the Army Bill and fomenting the Curragh mutiny on the eve of the First World War;

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[10] R.F. Foster, *Vivid Faces, The Revolutionary Generation in Ireland, 1890-1923* (London: Penguin, 2014).

engaging in extensive sectarian violence and threatening all-out civil war at the hands of the UVF; partitioning Ulster from nine to six counties to maintain sectarian control in Northern Ireland; transferring the UVF lock, stock and barrel into the USC; introducing and making permanent the Civil Authorities (Special Powers) Act (Northern Ireland) (1922) (CASPA) and then abolishing proportional representation and gerrymandering Stormont and local authority boundaries deleting the safeguards for the Nationalist minority in the Government of Ireland Act (1920) Ulsterians, advocated revolution.

Describing and analysing Ulster Unionists as Ulsterian Nationalists or Ulster Loyalists as Ulsterian Revolutionaries may lend itself to claims of this research being tendential and contrarian. Perhaps challenging those shibboleths, wrongly seen as axiomatic of Ulsterian identity, may even lead to accusation of this work as Nationalist. Such accusations would be inaccurate. Historians take sides and activists, politicians and even entire communities misappropriate labels as diacritics and even wear them as a badge of honour. In the zero-sum game of Irish (especially Northern Irish) reductionist history if one side is 'revolutionary' or 'rebellious', the other must be 'loyalist.' If one side supports independentist 'nationalism', the other has to be 'unionist.' Remove the partisan blinkers of Irish history and it is soon apparent that the labels which historians have applied to the protagonists are challengable. Only a cursory look exposes the weakness in the labelling. Before 1917-1918 the IPP held a hegemonic grip on Irish Nationalist politics, however, as a party that campaigned for devolution, not independence and agreed to three Home Rule Bills that maintained the Union of 1800, how 'nationalist' they were is open to debate. Is Devolutionist-Unionists not a more accurate label? Further, the term 'Republican' is less than watertight when we remember Arthur Griffith's Sinn Féin campaigned against the Union but not

against the British monarchy, instead he called on a dual-monarchy on the Austro-Hungarian model. Even when Griffith gave up on the Hanoverian House of Saxe-Coburg & Gotha, 'Republicans' did not propose a republican alternative but lobbied Prince Joachim Hohenzollern of Prussia to take the Irish crown. There is good reason to call 'Republicans' 'Monarchists'.

This thesis challenges the labels used to describe Ulsterians. It does not set out to challenge the labels of Irish 'nationalists'. But all such labels are easy to challenge and it is wrong to place them on a pedestal or treat them as paradigms. If we do not challenge them, we risk keeping the partisan blinkers on reducing our ability as historians to ask the pertinent questions and be critical of the protagonists in our research and their descendants who use history to legitimise themselves and their beliefs to this day. The next section explores the historiography, including scholarship which this research challenges.

Extant Scholarship

Only four histories of the USC are published, they are often sectarian and biased. None is written by an academic historian but instead by activists or veterans, who produce value-laden accounts. Despite that, each of them help to build a narrative account of this under-researched subject. Michael Farrell's *Arming the Protestants* presents the USC within the classically nationalist framework of Protestant vigilantes, terrorising the Nationalist community and exploiting the 'Orange State' to secure patronage and maintain cultural, political and social dominance.[11] The USC was an Ulsterian paramilitary group, events during the partition period show

[11] Michael Farrell, *Arming the Protestants: The Formation of the Ulster Special Constabulary and the Royal Ulster Constabulary 1920-27*, (London: Pluto Press, 1983).

that the USC was a paramilitary organisation, but Farrell seems to have written his conclusion before he started researching his book. Individual motivations for joining the USC are assessed as almost universally cynical and financially grasping. However, examination of the accounts of individual Special Constables which is set out below demonstrates that they had a genuine belief in and commitment to their activities that went beyond an annual financial Bounty or any conscious attempt to subordinate Nationalists. While Farrell does not have to agree with those motivations, an objective historian would acknowledge them and let the reader make their own judgement. More recently Pearse Lawlor's *The Outrages* narrates the clashes between the USC and the Irish Republican Army (IRA).[12] Lawlor's work is a narrative in the nationalist historiographical tradition, and it is without any historical analysis. Sources from the USC are not used, and it is dependent on less than impartial newspaper sources which make the research highly flawed. Nonetheless, it provides a useful reference for dates and places during partition and in engaging different sources, including newspapers, gives an original although not a scholarly assessment of the USC and its activities.

From the Partitionist side Arthur Hazlet's *The 'B' Specials*' is the most comprehensive of the four accounts but also the most flawed and frankly, dull. It is an important work, but Hazlet seems determined to put anyone interested in researching the USC into a torpor, and as the most widely available of the three histories, it may go some way to explaining why, with graduate researchers firmly put off, no comprehensive scholarly research has been undertaken. Wearing his heart on his sleeve, the former naval commander describes himself as 'an Ulsterman and proud of it'. In explaining his motivation Hazlet is clear, 'I wanted, of course, to produce a history which ex-members of the USC would wish to

12 Lawlor, The Outrages.

possess', before explaining that the book is admittedly, under-researched and rushed.[13] Hazlet provides a useful chronological overview of the 'B' Class and their former 'A', 'C' and 'C1' Class colleagues. There is little depth to the writing, and much of it based on what we can only assume (because the book is unreferenced) is payroll and terms of service notices, as the focus is on pay and Bounties. Deliberately biased, it offers little in the way of useful analysis, but a close reading can tell historians a good deal about the motivations and priorities of the Special Constables and their proponents. In the historiographical darkness that is the USC, Hazlet offers some light for researchers to find their way. Subtler and more useful to historians is the local history of a County Londonderry USC unit written by its sometime commander Wallace Clark.[14] Although sectarian, *Guns in Ulster* gives a real and genuine sense of what it meant to Protestant men to join the USC and patrol their townlands over five decades. Lauding 'Shinner' commanders as brave and experienced, Clark gives a more balanced account, as someone who was there and directly involved, rather than Hazlet who had no first-hand experience. The microhistorical account gives texture and richness to a topic which is otherwise a blank canvas. However, the afterword of the 2002 edition quickly descends into an angry rant which quickly reminds the reader, who probably had not forgotten, of Clark's bias and agenda. These books are analysed in greater detail below.

Irish and Northern Irish history is a contemporary battleground, and there are entire scholarly volumes dedicated to historical arguments, written by historians about historians, but there is very little written on the Solemn League & Covenant

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13 Arthur Hazlet, *The 'B' Specials: A History of the Ulster Special Constabulary* (London: Tom Stacey Ltd., 1972), foreword [n.p.].
14 Wallace Clark, *Guns in Ulster* (Londonderry: Wallace Clark Booksales, 1963, 2002).

or USC.[15] It can sometimes feel that there is more written about Irish historiography than there is actual Irish history. A contested past (and contested present) has meant historians can elect to take a side if they chose to[16]. Instead, this thesis is a history of Ulsterian identity and political Ulster Unionism and not an Ulster Unionist history.[17] Overshadowing that important distinction is the decades-long debate over historical revisionism throughout the island of Ireland a debate that is not just confined to seminar rooms but played out in the pages of newspapers and political magazines.

Theodore W Moody and Robert D Edwards founded Irish historical revisionism at the Institute of Historical Research (IHR) in Bloomsbury, London during the inter-war period. Revisionist history in the French Revolution means challenging Marxist ideas that its causes were based on class (perhaps correctly) while in the history of the Third Reich revisionist historians seek to contextualise and even deny the atrocities of Nazism.[18] Revisionism has taken on a different form in Ireland, and is widely used as a weapon or shield in current affairs and contemporary politics. Nationalist history dominated the Irish academy, justifying the events of the Irish War of Independence, and seeking precedent in earlier periods. Irish history is often written backwards, and Moody has set out the destructive myths of Irish history, 'the separatist sectarian myth', which he

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[15] For examples see: Ciaran Brady, "Constructive and Instrumental': The Dilemma of Ireland's First 'New Historians", in Ciaran Brady (ed), *Interpreting Irish History: The Debate on Historical Revisionism, 1938-1994* (Dublin: Irish Academic Press, 1994) and, D George Boyce & Alan O'Day (eds), *The Making of Modern Irish History: Revisionism and the Revisionist Controversy* (London: Routledge, 1996).

[16] For examples of some of many Nationalist histories see: Tim Pat Coogan, *Michael Collins: A Biography* (London: Arrow Books, 1991) and Dorothy McArdle, *The Irish Republic* (London: Corgi, 1968) and, for examples of Partionist histories see: Brian Follis, *A State Under Siege: The Establishment of Northern Ireland, 1920-25*, (Oxford: Clarendon, 1995) and, A.T.Q. Stewart, *The Narrow Ground: The Roots of Conflict in Ulster*, (London: Faber & Faber, 1989).

[17] Jackson, *Unionist History*, p.254.

[18] For examples see: Jane Caplan, *Nazi Germany* (Oxford: OUP, 2008) and Rod Kedward, *La Vie en Bleu: France and the French since 1900* (London: Penguin, 2006). Clearly, the reference to Caplan relates to her as a revisionist in the broader historiographical sense of reassessing history rather than suggesting she is in league with the discredited Holocaust denier David Iriving.

associated with Ulster loyalism, and, the unitary, nationalist myth which was the hallmark of southern republicanism.'[19]. Critics of Irish revisionism accuse scholars of writing a history that removes agency from Nationalists and even accuses them of 'regurgitating' British propaganda.[20] 'Anti-revisionists' are lauded 'Meda Ryan's *Tom Barry, IRA Freedom Fighter*, is an unquestioned masterpiece of anti-revisionist historiography that should be read by all Republicans.'[21] Revisionists are derided as attempting to undermine the legitimacy of Sinn Feín by misquoting facts and figures from the War of Independence, the so-called 'The Tan War', so that they can undermine 'the struggle in the north of Ireland' today. Note the use of the term 'north of Ireland'. The article accuses revisionists of having a political agenda before signing off, with no hint of irony, 'Our weapon today, as during the Tan War is accurate information. Only the truth shall set you free, that and An Phoblacht.'[22]

Marnie Hughes-Warrington points out that all new history is ultimately revisionist. New archives and analysis change what went before, but revisionism is not the destruction of the history what went before, it is the offering of an alternative: the antithesis of the original thesis that together creates a new synthesis.[23] Those that criticise 'revisionists' as egoists should look at the Irish example. Any attempt to revise or amend the reconstruction of the past or analysis of it that does not fit into a predetermined narrative is publicly derided in papers and online. Irish history is the Irish present. Irish historical revisionism must invariably confront existing defensive narratives which are deeply entrenched. There is no doubt that the re-examination of the Irish case that

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[19] Ciaran Brady, 'Constructive and Instrumental' (p.7).
[20] An Phoblacht, 'Revisionism exposed as recycled propaganda', *An Phoblacht* (28 October 2004), <http://www.anphoblacht.com/contents/12503>, [8 November 2017].
[21] Ibid.
[22] Ibid.
[23] Marnie Hughes-Warrington, *Revisionist Histories* (London: Routledge, 2013), p.9.

Moody and Edwards pioneered has done a service to scholarship by developing the present historiography. However, defensiveness is not the sole reserve of historians: that trait often exists among the depositors of archives.

Archival Obstacles and Opportunities

Defensive and restricted historiography causes problems and considerable challenges to the research and analysis in this thesis, especially as the USC remains such a controversial organisation in the memory of Northern Irish people on both sides of the sectarian divide. A further problem for this research is that many "B' Men' survive to this day with their own Ulster Special Constabulary Association and Orange Lodge so that publication can implicate people living today. The 2017-2019 political impasse that shut down the devolved government in Northern Ireland made those problems greater. Before then, an academic researcher could gain special access to the closed and uncatalogued USC archive at the Public Record Office Northern Ireland (PRONI). However, by 2017 with 'legacy' issues high on the political agenda, access became more difficult. The Police Service of Northern Ireland (PSNI) produce forms that hamper access which is only eventually granted after signing an undertaking that nothing will be published without PSNI checking the research first. Similarly, researchers will find obstacles placed in their way at the Royal Ulster Constabulary (RUC) museum. What access is gained at PRONI excludes personnel files so comparative and demographically based work is not immediately possible. There is an irony that what comes across as defensiveness is probably the result of depositors not knowing what is in the files but until researchers gain access, depositors and historians never will. Lacking a central command much of the

USC files, appear to have been 'lost' somewhere between the townlands and the archive and what there is seems dominated by reams of files on drill hall maintenance. Ulster Unionist Council (UUC), Ulsterian Revolution and Stormont régime documents are available and catalogued and can be as useful if not more useful than the USC. The files illuminate periods and topics in Northern Irish history better understood within a context and narrative set out in the following section.

III: Narrative

The Orange Agitation

Events must contextualise the analysis of this thesis. The narrative history of Ireland and Northern Ireland tends to fall into the reductionist schools of Nationalist or Partitionist historiography. This part of the thesis reconstructs the events of the Ulsterian Revolution and discusses events that historians often omit, such as the St Mary's Hall conference and events such as the Solemn League & Covenant that are inadequately researched. Elisions are used, often intentionally, to present a biased history. It also joins up some of the disconnected scholarship. Political events in London, such as the People's Budget, are not widely understood in the Irish context, and where it is, the focus is on London and not on the consequences in Ireland and Ulster.[24] This narrative is far from complete, but without it, the analysis of later chapters lacks context. Focussing on conceptual questions and new analysis the later chapters do not have narrative sections which instead are in this section.

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[24] Fanning. *The Fatal Path*.

The Orange Agitation preceded the partition of Ireland. That rebellion, the initial episode of the Ulsterian Revolution, formed the first stage in a more general Irish Revolution and created an acrimonious energy and a lack of compromise that led to the creation of Northern Ireland. The Irish Revolution did not start outside Dublin's General Post Office (GPO) on 24 April 1916 but instead with the Parliament Act of 1911 and then in Belfast City Hall on 28 September 1912 with the signing of Ulster's Solemn League & Covenant.

The mythical signatures in blood on that day—'Ulster Day'—in September 1912 have their origins in the slow march towards Irish independence. Nationalist historians date the popular awakening of an Irish nationalist consciousness to the Great Famine of 1845-1852, apparently ascribing to coincidence the fact that the rest of Europe was simultaneously on fire with proto-nationalism during revolutions of 1848. Much the same might be said of historians of Britain who make no connexion between the Continental events of 1848 and the massive Chartist revival of that year. Such 'coincidences' might suggest an exceptionalism to Irish history that scholars must confront. Comparative and transnational perspectives can aid understanding and open up the cul-de-sac of Irish history.

From 1885 the IPP had an almost hegemonic grasp on Irish parliamentary representation in Westminster. Only the university seats in Dublin and the Ulster constituencies in the north-east of the island offered any resistance. The ebb and flow of late Victorian politics saw the IPP hold the balance of power in the House of Commons. In 1886 and 1893 they were able to use their leverage to force the hand of minority Liberal governments and introduce the first and second Home Rule Bills respectively. The first Bill fell in the Commons and the second in the Lords. On both occasions, Irish Unionism felt sure the measures

would fail through its influence in the Conservative & Unionist Party and considerable representation in the House of Lords, halting proposals to devolve power to a Dublin parliament.[25] The People's Budget and curbs on the power of the House of Lords ended that security, with a distinct effect on Ireland. Lloyd George's budget caused a constitutional stand-off. The Lords faced an ultimatum to give up the absolute veto or have its benches swamped by Liberal peers. The Parliament Act (1911) gave peers a two-year suspensive veto. Although conflicted by the measures in the People's Budget, including surcharges on alcohol production which particularly affected Irish commerce, the IPP saw an opportunity. With the House of Lords enervated the absolute block to Home Rule had gone. The IPP held the balance of power and with every prospect, this time, of succeeding Prime Minister Herbert Asquith introduced the third Home Rule Bill in April 1912.

It is important to understand how the Parliament Act (1911), caused by the People's Budget, radically upped the tempo in Ulster.[26] Before there was a slow march to independence, but after 1911 a sprint of events and crises would lead to Home Rule for Ireland, and separately for Ulster too. Pan-Irish Unionism in the period collapsed. The locus of Irish Unionist activity moved from the infrequently scattered Ascendency big houses and Dublin law clubs to the industrial and commercial crucible of Belfast. The Ulsterisation of Unionism dictated the outcome of the coming struggles. No longer able to rely on the uncodified constitution to block Home Rule, Ulsterians seized the initiative and showed their revolutionary zeal. Led by Sir Edward Carson, the Conservative &

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[25] Graham Walker, *A History of the Ulster Unionist Party: Protest, Pragmatism and Pessimism* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2004).
[26] Patrick Buckland, *Irish Unionism 2: Ulster Unionism, and the Origins of Northern Ireland, 1886 to 1992* (Dublin: Gill and Macmillan, 1973).

Unionist MP and Dublin lawyer famous for prosecuting Oscar Wilde, and organised by James Craig, Boer War veteran and whiskey magnate, popular Ulster Unionism, now cross-class but no longer cross-country, became the driving force of events in Ireland.[27]

In 1911 groups of men began drilling and parading across the province using ancient legislation and sympathetic Justices of the Peace (JPs) to authorise their action. Just as in 1641 when Protestant planters had protected themselves, Ulsterians prepared to do so again three and a half centuries later.[28] Carson was at the head of a nine-county mobilisation, speaking in more moderate tones in the Commons than to the Ulsterian public in Carrickfergus, Coleraine or Cookstown. The UUC led the mobilisation coordinated by Craig. 28 September 1912 was declared 'Ulster Day'. On a table draped in a Union Flag in Belfast City Hall Carson put his name, the first of nearly half a million, to Ulster's Solemn League & Covenant:

> BEING CONVINCED in our consciences that Home Rule would be disastrous to the material well-being of Ulster […] hereby pledge ourselves […] throughout this our time of threatened calamity, to stand by one another in defending […] our cherished position of equal citizenship in the United Kingdom, and in using all means which may be found necessary to defeat the present conspiracy to set up a Home Rule Parliament in Ireland. And in the event of such a Parliament being forced upon us, we further solemnly and mutually pledge ourselves to

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[27] **James Craig, 1st Viscount Craigavon (1871-1940):** Prime Minister of Northern Ireland 1921-1940, leader of the Ulster Unionist Party, 1921-1940.

[28] Jonathan Bardon, *The Plantation of Ulster: War and Conflict in Ireland* (Dublin: Gill & Macmillan, 2011) and, for a discussion on the banding and covenanting tradition among Ulster Presbyterians see: David Miller, *Queen's Rebels: Ulster Loyalism in Historical Perspective* (Dublin: UCD Press, 2007).

> refuse to recognise its authority. In sure confidence that God will defend the right, we hereto subscribe our names […].[29]

'All means', were to be used to resist a piece of constitutional legislation passed by the democratically elected legislature with the monarch at its head, the Crown-in-Parliament. Further to the Solemn League & Covenant, 'The Declaration' formed a second part exclusively for women, who signed in higher numbers than the men, stating their 'desire to associate ourselves with the men of Ulster in their uncompromising opposition to the Home Rule Bill'. To many Pearse's Declaration of the Irish Republic at the GPO is the founding document of modern, independent Ireland. The Solemn League & Covenant is as strong if not a stronger claimant to that mantle.

1913 saw the promises of the Solemn League & Covenant come to fruition and revolution gathered pace. Across Ulster 'volunteerism' in the form of drilling squads spread. The UUC centralised the volunteers into the UVF that threatened 'all means' to 'defeat the present conspiracy'.[30] Although mostly unarmed in 1913 (but widely armed within a year), they numbered over 110,000 by 1914 and constituted a private army loyal to the Carson, Craig and the UUC.[31] In 1921, the UVF woke from the First World War to become the USC. By that autumn it became clear that the UUC intended to be more than a movement to lobby Westminster and mobilise in Ulster. Carson announced in the Commons, 'We must be prepared . . . the morning home rule passes, ourselves to become

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[29] Patrick Buckland (ed), *Irish Unionism 1885-1923, A Documentary History* (Belfast: HMSO, 1973), p.224.

[30] Ibid.

[31] Timothy Bowman, *Carson's Army: The Ulster Volunteer Force, 1910-22* (Manchester: MUP, 2007).

responsible for the government of the protestant province of Ulster.'[32] It was more than parliamentary rhetoric. The UUC laid out detailed plans for the capture of key infrastructure; railways, post and telegraph. Plans also included the UVF disarming the Royal Irish Constabulary (RIC).[33] In September Carson declared a provisional government to come into force at the implementation of Home Rule with power assumed by a UUC committee of the council and backed up by the UVF. With no hint of irony, Ulster's *loyalists* began their revolution quickly spreading across the whole of Ireland. As the spectre of the UVF grew, Nationalists responded with the establishment of the Irish Volunteer (IV) to ensure the implementation of Home Rule. James Connolly established the socialist Irish Citizens Army (ICA) in 1913 to ensure, without success, that any future Irish nation would be socialist. Across the thirty-two counties militancy that began in Ulster prevailed.

The Orange Agitation firmly took hold in 1914. Hard-line Conservative & Unionist parliamentarians prepared to defeat the annual Army Bill, as a means to scupper Home Rule, leaving the Empire without armed forces. In County Kildare, the cavalry officers' corps based at the Curragh barracks threatened to resign their commissions *en masse* unless given a guarantee that armed force would not be used to compel Ulster into Home Rule. John Seely, Secretary of War, feared the collapse of military discipline and conceded to the officers who then withdrew their threat. Prime Minister Asquith promptly had Seely resign, took over the War Office himself and rescinded the guarantee. It is essential to understand the link between events at the Curragh and in Westminster and what happened in Ulster but too often, history does not connect them. More important

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[32] Francis S L Lyons, 'The Developing Crisis, 1907-14' in William E Vaughan (ed), *A New History of Ireland VI: Ireland Under the Union, II. 1870-1921* (Oxford: OUP, 2010), pp.121-144, (p.131).
[33] [PRONI], D/1295/2/17, 'Contingencies if Home Rule comes into operation', (1914).

events were unfolding in Ulster and the North Sea. Having agreed to arm a 3,000 strong Special Service Force of the UVF in late 1913, the UUC looked for weapons. With a general prohibition of arms importation to Ireland imminent, the UUC authorised the purchase of around 25,000 rifles and 1,000,000 rounds of ammunition from Austria, Italy and, Germany.[34] Arms transformed the UVF from a political prop into a credible military force after the royal proclamation to prohibit arms, the Larne gun-running affair, took place. Never merely rhetorical, Carson's threats and the actions of the UPG were backed up by force. As the harbourmaster slept, or indeed closed his eyes, Frederick Crawford and Wilfred Spender, critical figures in the establishment of the USC, unloaded their haul into vans and motorcycles that distributed the rifles to revolutionary forces across the whole of Ulster.

As Ulsterians prepared the use of force, it became apparent to the Imperial Government that the implementation of Home Rule could only happen if special statutory arrangements, 'exclusions', were negotiated for Ulster. Although Ulsterians had cast off their southern cousins in 1911 and would cut off their brethren in Cavan, Donegal and Monaghan over the coming years, Nationalists were reluctant to give up on the idea of a united Ireland. An amending Bill, temporarily excluding the six easternmost counties of Ulster, (the 'Six Counties' option); Antrim, Armagh, Down, Fermanagh, Londonderry and Tyrone passed the Commons and then the Lords. Ulsterians dismissed the exclusion of all nine counties, (the 'Nine Counties' option), fearful of their sectarian majority being too thin and excluding only Antrim, Armagh, Down and Londonderry (the 'Four Counties' option) because the state would be too small to

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[34] Charles Townshend, *Political Violence in Ireland: Government and Resistance since 1848*, (Oxford: OUP, 1984), p.253.

be viable. By 1914, partition, first proposed by Liberal backbencher Thomas Agar-Robartes, made its way onto the statute books. In June 1916 the UUC, and then Ulster's Nationalists agreed to partition Ireland. It is one of many politically motivated misconceptions, even untruths, of Irish history that Michael Collins and Arthur Griffiths proposed partition and imposed it on Ireland through the negotiations of the Anglo-Irish Treaty in December 1921.[35]

Carson's provisional government met when the amended Home Rule Bill passed the Lords, just days after the assassination of Archduke Franz Ferdinand. Short of the King refusing Assent, there appeared to be nothing to stop the devolution of government to Ireland and consequently the effective unilateral declaration of independence by Carson and the UUC in Ulster. Armed to carry out their revolutionary business, the UVF identified locations and listed points where they planned to seize and disarm the RIC. Home Rule legislation was before the King and Ulsterians prepared to live up to their Covenant by force of arms and any means necessary to resist devolved government in Ireland. In the south and west the Irish Volunteers awaited their shipment of arms and ammunition to arrive at Howth. A special conference at Buckingham Palace chaired by the King failed to broker a compromise for a febrile Ireland. Temperatures ran highest in Ulster, and it seemed only forcing the issue with violence could offer a solution. Loyal Ulsterians readied themselves for their

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[35] As Chairman of the Provisional Government of the Irish Free State (16 January 1922-22 August 1922) **Michael Collins (*Mícheál Ó Coileáin*)** (16 October 1890-22 August 1922), President of the Irish Republican Brotherhood, former Minister of Finance and Minster of Home Affairs in the 1st Dáil Government, led all and any negotiations between the Provisonal Government and the Government of Northern Ireland until his assassination in August 1922. President of Dáil Éireann **Arthur Griffith (*Art Seosamh Ó Gríobtha*)** (31 March 1871-12 August 1921) died ten days before Collins' of a brain hemorrhage. Griffith had been an influential advanced nationalist before the Easter Rising, a plenipotentiary at the Treaty negotiations and leading pro-Treaty Republican along with Collins.

revolution. The United Kingdom stared with both eyes at the prospect of civil war. Then, Germany invaded Belgium.

Even if the Orange Agitation phase came to a close, the Ulsterian Revolution did not end with the declaration of war in 1914. Instead, it spread to the rest of the island and continued through the Irish War of Independence and, partition and the consolidation of the state of Northern Ireland. With the UVF at its van, the UUC achieved both a revolutionary situation and a revolutionary outcome. That outcome, effectively an independent dominion of Ulster, sectarian in design and practice, was consolidated and secured by the men of the USC, transferred lock, stock and barrel from the UVF and issued with armlets and warrant cards from 1920 until the government in Whitehall prorogued the Stormont régime in 1971. The Troubles of the period from 1968 are not distinct from the revolution but intrinsically related to it. The 2017 failure of Power Sharing (and an alliance between hardline Ulster Unionists (DUP) and an embattled and precarious Conservative & Unionist government at Westminster from 2017-2019) is the most immediate and current crisis in a series of crises that have run in Ulster since its revolution began over a century ago.

The Anaesthetisation

Ulster was not just in crisis by the outbreak of the war, events there led to a revolutionary situation, and eventually a revolutionary outcome in the creation of the Home Rule state of Northern Ireland. It would be glib to say the First World War was a 'mere' interruption of the Ulsterian Revolution. There was nothing 'mere' about the mechanised death of 1914-1918 and its longer-lasting political and social consequences. However, it was an interruption, and in Ulster, the

conditions before the invasion of Belgium remained the same after the Armistice, albeit in a different hue. War anaesthetised the Ulsterian Revolution until it woke after the Armistice. Ireland did not rest quietly between 1914 and 1916. For constitutional Nationalists and revolutionary Ulsterians, the war was an opportunity to prove their respective points. For Nationalists, flocking to the colours demonstrated they could be trusted with devolved government. For Ulsterians, enthusiasm for the war showed that they were so intrinsic a part of the United Kingdom that they were willing to sacrifice all for King and Empire and deserved their continued place within the Union. The UVF, the Ulsterian myth would have us believe, became the 36th (Ulster) Division which left its best men in the fields approaching Thiepval on the Somme. In fact, it was the UVF that became the USC.

'England's difficulty is Ireland's opportunity', neatly sums up the attitude of the fringe group of Fenians as the First World War carried on.[36] Since the Fenian Rising of 1867, another in a line of Irish Nationalist failures turned mythical triumph, the Irish Republican Brotherhood (IRB) scattered to the winds (or deported). America became the centre of advanced nationalist and physical force Irish Republican activity. Old Fenians lauded in their new homes in Boston, Chicago and New York sat impassively as the moral-force constitutional Nationalists seised the initiative and directed the agenda: devolution not revolution. Some old hands remained in Ireland including Thomas Clarke and guided a new generation of IRB men sat at the table during the establishment of the Irish Volunteers. However, the IRB was small and marginal. Conscious of the influence of the Irish Volunteers, the IPP successfully insisted that they nominate the majority of the Irish Volunteer council. Soon after, John Redmond, the leader

[36] A slogan of Irish Republicans throughout the First World War.

of the IPP made his infamous Woodenbridge speech pledging the Irish Volunteers to fight for King and Empire, 'wherever the fighting line extends' and caused the Irish Volunteers to split. Redmond kept the vast majority of volunteers and renamed them the Irish National Volunteers (INV). Eoin MacNeill split with the small minority as an IRB dominated force keeping the name the Irish Volunteers.

At Easter 1916 a dubiously constituted sub-committee (the War Council) of the Executive Committee of the IRB, a fringe within the margins of a minority launched the last of Irish Republicanism's triumphant defeats. The revolution that began four years earlier in Belfast City Hall saw the locus shift south. The 'Aprilists' who seised a handful of points across Dublin only just exceeded a thousand men and women. Like all Fenian glories, it resulted in a swift defeat which was greeted more with scorn than enthusiasm by war-weary Dubliners. Only counterfactual speculation could lead us to ask, 'what if General Sir John Maxwell had not responded so harshly?' He declared martial law and executed the fifteen ringleaders after courts-martial. The sixteenth, Sir Roger Casement, was hanged as a traitor in Pentonville gaol four months later.

Ulster then reappeared in the story. Fearful of further unrest during the total war of 1914-1918, Lloyd George, the Secretary for War, proposed the implementation of Home Rule with the Six Counties excluded. Seeing it as their loyal duty during wartime, on 12 June 1916 the UUC accepted the proposals for the duration of the war and firmly set themselves apart from pan-island Irish Unionism. What many Nationalists have since forgotten is that eleven days later, on 23 June a convention of Nationalists in the nine counties met at St Mary's Hall, Belfast and voted to accept partition for the duration of the war. Those who

remember it refer to it as 'Black Friday'. Lloyd George's plan, never implemented despite widespread agreement, meant Ulster retook a back seat.

Conscription was unpopular among Irish nationalists and Catholics. The Catholic hierarchy opposed it but moreover, Ireland depended on agriculture and a rural economy dominated by family small-holdings. Perhaps fathers may have volunteered one son (or maybe not) to fight but to send them all meant one man ran the farm by himself which he could not do. Ulsterians used the lack of enthusiasm for conscription among nationalists as further proof of the distinctive Ulsterian identity. The Conscription Crisis in Ireland arguably did more to advance advanced nationalism than the ham-fisted repression of the Easter Rising. Sinn Fein had been as marginal as the IRB, an unorganised political party less geared up to fighting elections than it was to theorising about the 'Hungarian solution' to the Irish question or identifying petty Hohenzollern princes as contingency monarchs of Ireland if Germany did win the war. A series of parliamentary by-elections in 1917 saw Sinn Fein emerge from obscurity to become an umbrella organisation of Irish Republicanism well able to turn up in a constituency and take IPP strongholds from a standing start. Standing interned Republicans as candidates under the slogan, 'Vote him in to get him out', caught the headlines. However, the sclerotic condition of the IPP in constituencies where their hegemony had meant decades without a parliamentary poll, and the self-interest in stopping conscription, were likely more significant in Sinn Fein taking North Roscommon, East Clare and Kilkenny City that year. Tellingly the IPP only held South Armagh, an Ulster seat where the constitutional Nationalists had always had to limber up to fight Ulsterians. In the following June, Sinn Fein took the Ulster seat of East Cavan. As the war ended, for Redmond and the IPP, in an age without opinion polls, the writing was on the wall.

The Outrages

December 1918 was the first general election for eight years, and much had happened in Ireland since. 'All changed, changed utterly'.[37] John Dillon, the new IPP leader, saw his party's grip on Irish politics released with a loss of 61 seats (including his own), down from seventy-four to six. Sinn Feín, not having contested the December 1910 poll, gained sixty-seven having held none before. Further demonstrating the distinctiveness of Ulster, Carson's UUP took twenty-two seats, including one of Trinity College Dublin's two (the other went to an Independent Unionist.) The rest were in Ulster. Twenty of the twenty-eight Six County Ulster seats went UUP; the IPP held four (two others in East Donegal and Wexford City), Sinn Feín took two but enjoyed a significantly higher vote share than the IPP. The final three seats went to 'Labour Unionists' from the Ulster Unionist Labour Association (UULA), discussed in chapter one, established by Carson to fend off the independent Labour Party.[38] Sinn Feín, mandated by the general election, did not take its seats in Westminster but instead constituted themselves as the first Dáil Éireann of the largely conceptual 'Irish Republic'. Unionists could have sat in Dublin, but they, of course, did not. When the chair of the Dáil roll-called all elected Irish MPs (Deputies) the chamber burst into laughter when the clerk got to 'Carson'.[39] The idea of a devolved government likely run by constitutional Nationalists pushed Ulster to a revolution that only the First World War interrupted and anaesthetised. Carson instead got an 'Irish Republic', run by Republicans who would use the same force he had threatened,

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[37] William Butler Yeats, 'Easter, 1916', *Michael Robartes and the Dancer* (Dublin: Cuala Press, 1920).
[38] B. M. Walker (ed), '*A New History of Ireland. Ancillary Publications IV: Parliamentary Election Results in Ireland, 1801-1922*' (Dublin: Royal Irish Academy, 1978).
[39] Ferriter, Diarmaid, *The Transformation of Ireland, 1900-2000* (London: Profile, 2004), p.199.

to get their republic. As the first Dáil sat for its opening day, in County Tipperary, those men of violence opened fire on two constables at Soloheadbeg. The revolution caught fire and Ireland combusted.

The thesis is not a history of the revolution in the south and west, although the northern and southern revolutions are two halves of the same whole. It also provides the context for the rapidly separatist line taken by the UUC and seeks to contextualise and bring together events that historians often write about entirely separately. The south and west lived 1919 through a series of escalating crises. The Dáil established itself as a parallel state, and through much of Ireland, the King's Writ did not carry. Dáil courts dispensed justice, and Dáil Bonds funded the guerrilla war fought by the Irish Volunteers turned into the Dáil-ordained IRA. Boycotts and intimidation, as well as violence and outright murder, forced resignations among the mostly Catholic RIC, creating the circumstances for the eventual foundation of the USC. The Imperial Government maintained that the conflict in Ireland, the War of Irish Independence, was a police action with troops not widely deployed.

By January 1920 it was necessary to recruit police officers from outside of Ireland. Thousands of unemployed and underemployed demobilised conscripts and troops in Great Britain created a fertile recruiting pool. They were recruited as Temporary RIC Constables in the Special Reserve (RICSR) quickly becoming known as the infamous 'Black & Tans', so-called for their mismatched uniforms and subject of scrutiny and myth remaining as, if not more, controversial than the USC. In 2020 proposals by the Fine Gael minority government saw thousands take to the street in protest across Ireland. RICSR take the blame for the actions of their unscrupulous *confrères*, the Temporary Cadets of the Auxiliary Division of

the RIC (ADRIC).[40] So infamous are the 'Black & Tans' that to Irish Republicans the War of Independence is known as the 'Tan War'. The religious and sectarian make-up of the Ulster Division of the RIC (RICUD) meant widespread recruitment of Special Constables would not happen until later in the year, but 'Black & Tan' recruitment set a precedent.

In February the Imperial Government introduced the Fourth Home Rule Bill. It proposed two Home Rule Parliaments—one in Dublin and one in Belfast. Without irony, on 20 March the UUC accepted Home Rule for the Six Counties, soon to be 'Northern Ireland' and in so doing cut off their kin in Cavan, Donegal and Monaghan. Pushing Ireland into a violent revolution to avoid devolution, the Ulsterians then embraced devolved government for themselves. The new state of Northern Ireland would become, in effect, a Dominion but send members to the Imperial Parliament. Its abortive sister state, Southern Ireland, would never be born. Instead, Truce and Treaty would deliver the Irish Free State, a Dominion without members in the Imperial Parliament. The summer of 1920 saw mass sectarian violence, not for the first time in the history of modern Ulster, in Derry and then Belfast with Catholics, and 'rotten Protestants', expelled from the shipyards and houses burnt, forcing minority groups out of mixed neighbourhoods.[41]

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[40] For a more balanced history of the RICSR and the more controversial ADRIC see: David M. Leeson, *The Black & Tans: British Police and the Auxiliaries in the War of Independence, 1920-21* (Oxford: OUP, 2011).

[41] For discussion on communal and sectarian violence in Ireland and Northern Ireland see: David Fitzpatrick (ed), *Terror in Ireland, 1916-1923* (Dublin: Lilliput Press, 2012), Colm Fox, *The Making of a Minority: Political Developments in Derry and the North 1912-25* (Londonderry: Guildhall Press, 1997), Ronan Gallagher, *Violence and Nationalist Politics in Derry City, 1920-1923* (Dublin: Four Courts Press, 2003), Peter Hart, *The I.R.A. & Its Enemies: Violence and Community in Cork 1916-1923*, (Oxford: OUP, 1998), Peter Hart, *The I.R.A. at War 1916-1923* (Oxford: OUP, 2003) and, Robert Lynch, *The Northern IRA and the Early Years of Partition, 1920-1922* (Dublin: Irish academic Press, 2006).

In protest, that August, the Dáil ordered the Belfast Boycott as an economic sanction against Northern Ireland. More ominously the Imperial Parliament passed the Restoration of Order in Ireland Act (1920) (ROIA). This piece of emergency legislation implemented during the War of Independence became the basis of CASPA that remained in place in the north until direct rule in 1971.[42] On the 22 August, Detective Inspector Swanzy was shot in Lisburn by IRA men in retribution for his involvement in violence in Cork. For Ulsterians, the southern 'murder gangs' were now operating in the heart of Ulster. Sectarian violence erupted in Lisburn, and the RICUD and troops were unable to stop the forced expulsion of Catholics from the town. Further sectarian rioting erupted in Belfast. Lisburn Town Council used ancient law to appoint a Special Constabulary.

Fearful of the consolidation of Irish Republicanism south of the partition border and growing sceptical of an Imperial Government that seemed intent on ending the war through negotiation and not the crushing of the IRA, in 1920 many Ulsterians took matters into their own hands. At the same time, James Craig had taken over from Carson as leader of political Ulster Unionism and was dealing with the minutiae of forming an *ex nihilo* state. Even before the formal recruitment of the USC, 800 Special Constables were recruited in Lisburn: twenty had been charged with rioting and five convicted of the same offence.[43] Similar but less formal groups existed across Ulster based in the UVF with Crawford's rifles pulled out of cattle sheds and piggeries as the force reorganised. In the border county of Fermanagh, Sir Basil Brooke established the 'Fermanagh

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[42] Laura Donohue, 'Regulating Northern Ireland: The Special Powers Acts 1922-1973', *The Historical Journal*, Vol.41, No.4 (1998), 1089-1120.
[43] Lawlor, pp.51-56.

Vigilance Force' on his estate using the guns from Larne.[44] Earlier in the year, Lieutenant Colonel George Liddell set-up an Ulsterian self-defence group based at his linen factory in Lisbellaw.[45] The Imperial Government refused Basil Brooke permission to formalise his force, and the conviction of the Lisburn Specials caused mass protests, but Spender carried on organising regardless.

In July 1920 Winston Churchill and General Tudor, the military commander in Ireland, proposed to Lloyd George the arming of the Ulsterians as Great Britain looked to scale back its commitment to the War of Independence. Churchill and Tudor hoped armed Ulsterians would counter the IRA in the north allowing the deployment of Crown forces in post-war hotspots across the Empire. Lloyd George was resistant to an idea that would arm one side over the other in a febrile sectarian environment in a new state with a history of bloody religious violence. He would not accept the proposals. By July, a mix of vigilance *cum* vigilante forces, the revived UVF and locally appointed Special Constables drilled and patrolled across Northern Ireland. Imperial pressures mounted, and Craig firmly had his hands on the machinery of government of a nascent Northern Ireland, handpicking the under-secretary sent from Whitehall. The Prime Minister of the United Kingdom had not the will to challenge the incoming Prime Minister of Northern Ireland. In the autumn Craig warned of growing Ulsterian disaffection that could boil over at short notice. Fearful of the growing unauthorised forces across his new domain, Craig proposed a force of 2,000 Special Constables under his control.[46] For Lloyd George, it was more expedient to let Craig run Northern Ireland as he wanted. What the Imperial Prime Minister

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[44] [PRONI], D/1022/2/3, 'Sir Basil Brooke's Fermanagh Vigilance Force. Correspondence from Clark to Anderson' (28/9/1920) and, Lawlor, pp.46-49.
[45] Lawlor, p.45.
[46] Ibid. p.51.

had dismissed as a bad idea in July he acceded to in September, formally announcing the establishment of the USC on 22 October 1920. With this narrative sketched, the next part of the introduction discusses the way in which how the thesis uses the research to analyse the events, and engages with the historiography and debates.

IV: Signposting

Ulsterian National Identity

The first chapter explores ideas of Ulsterian national identity. Extant scholarship focusses on the development of Irish national identity. But there is nothing on the creation of Ulsterian cultural, social and, ethnic identity., and this thesis attempts to fill that lacuna. The established scholarship on historical national identity built a framework to assist that endeavour. Anthony Smith's work on the historical idea of *ethnie*, Benedict Anderson's on imagined communities and Eric Hobsbawm's critique of the valorisation of modern and modular nation-states are all relevant to the construction of Ulsterian identity.[47] Thomas Paul Burgess and Gareth Mulvenna look at PUL (Protestant, Unionist and Loyalist) identity in twenty-first-century Northern Ireland. That social scientific study is of only limited relevance to this research, but the study of Northern Irish sectarian identity today opens the question of historical sectarian identity in the period of the Ulsterian Revolution. ATQ Stewart's Partitionist scholarship on Ulsterian identity is teleological, and the research and analysis here conclude that Ulsterian identity is distinctive but a modern and imagined creation, refuting Stewart's

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[47] Benedict Anderson, *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism* (London and New York: Verso, 2006), Eric Hobsbawm, *Nations and Nationalism Since 1780: Programme, Myth, Reality* (2nd Ed) (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2013) and Burgess & Mulvenna.

determinist historiography.[48] The thesis explores recent work by Okan Ozseker and Robert Lynch, who suggest a distinctive Ulsterian identity.[49] Ozseker points to the Ulsterian threat of rebellion during the Orange Agitation as 'a means of asserting their right to self-determination'.[50] Looking at that idea in greater depth, the analysis here argues that once the Ulsterian élite mobilised the population to resist Home Rule, they created a national identity that soon needed a state to control its future. Lynch looks cautiously at Ulsterian identity as a creation of Partitionist historians ploughing their determinist furrow.[51] This research also rejects a determinist approach to Ulsterian identity and instead contends that, much like Irish Nationalist identity, Ulsterian identity came from the manipulation of an élite. Like Irish identity, Ulsterian identity is an imagined modern creation. As Lynch says, 'Irish people have been locked into imagined communities of their own making for almost a century.'[52]

Ulsterian Resistance Theory

The second chapter looks at early-modern resistance theory that overlaps both ideas of national identity and revolution among Ulsterians. First exploring the relevant facets of early-modern reformist ideas of resisting ungodly authority the thesis then applies those ideas to contemporary opinions that George V behaved in such an ungodly way, by imposing Home Rule on Ulster through his counsellors in government and parliament, that he could be legitimately resisted.

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[48] ATQ Stewart, The Ulster Crisis: Resistance to Home Rule 1912-14 (London: Faber & Faber, 1979).
[49] Okan Ozseker, *Forging the Border: Donegal and Derry in Times of Revolution*, 1911-1925 (Newbridge: Irish Academic Press, 2019) and Robert Lynch, *The Partition of Ireland 1918-1925* (Cambridge: CUP, 2019).
[50] Ozseker, p.40.
[51] Lynch, *The Partition of Ireland*, pp.9 and 161.
[52] Lynch, *The Partition of Ireland 1918-1925*, p.227.

For Ulsterians, the precedent of the National Covenant in Scotland in 1643 led by their Presbyterian forebears, was an example to follow and an event in history placed in the national *mythomoteur*. The research compares Laura Stewart's recent work on the National Covenant of 1643 with the Ulsterian Revolution and places Ian McBride's research on early-modern events and history in Ulsterian culture in the strain of resistance running through the movement to stop Home Rule.[53]

Ulsterian Revolution

Ideas of resistance translated into the tangible Ulsterian Revolution. There is a direct line of causation between the Ulsterian organisations of the Ulsterian Revolution, most obviously the UVF and the USC. The USC sits firmly within a line of Ulsterian paramilitary continuity with the drivers and motivation of the force found during the Orange Agitation. The thesis explores the crises within political Ulster Unionism and Ulsterian identity during the Ulsterian Revolution. Historians such as ATQ Stewart, Paul Bew and Alan O'Day established a high political narrative of the Ulsterian Revolution, without terming it so, and building on that the thesis examines the paradox of 'Loyalists' threatening rebellion against the Crown-in-Parliament, their planned and organised use of physical force and the unilateral declaration of independent government.[54] Research challenges Nationalist and Partitionist historiography and analyses Ulsterian resistance as the catalyst of the Irish Revolution. Revolutionary Ulsterians triggered the broader

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[53] Laura Stewart, Rethinking the Scottish Revolution: Covenanted Scotland, 1637-1651 (Oxford: OUP, 2016) and Ian McBride, The Siege of Derry in Ulster Protestant Mythology (Dublin: Four Courts Press, 1997).

[54] Paul Bew, *Ideology and the Irish Question: Irish Unionism and Irish Nationalism*, 1912-1916 (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1998), Alan O'Day, *Irish Home Rule, 1897-1921* (Manchester: MUP, 1998) and Stewart.

Irish Revolution, including the Nationalist Revolution part: so ultimately the Irish Republic and eventually, present-day Ireland owes its existence to Ulsterians.

The contested term 'Irish Revolution' is used in more recent historiography. Joost Augusteijn's *The Irish Revolution, 1913-1923* is the seminal collection of essays on the applicability of 'revolution' as a concept to Ireland and exploration of the extant scholarship on the topic.[55] A highly useful collection, the title belies the fundamental problem starting its assessment in 1913, the year after the signing of the Solemn League & Covenant and excluding the Orange Agitation from the analyses: Ulster and Ulsterians are excluded from ideas of revolution. Irish history, often written in isolation, with southern history not referencing the north and vice-versa, is disconnected. Exceptionalism, that Irish history should or could not be compared or contextualised, within the scholarship means important analytical tools and comparisons are set aside. The exclusion of Ulster and Ulsterians from the already narrow field of Irish revolutionary historiography compounds the felony. Charles Townshend's chapter, 'Historiography: Telling the Irish Revolution', problematises the term 'revolution' which is often used without definition or context.[56] Townshend ably defines 'revolution' while accepting it is largely undefinable. His historiographical essay does not include Ulster, but that is understandable in a review of the extant scholarship of revolution because in 2002 writing on revolution in Ulster did not exist.

Peter Hart's 'Definition: Defining the Revolution', is the last relevant chapter before the book becomes entirely southern-centric.[57] Hart first defines his

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[55] Joost Augusteijn (ed), *The Irish Revolution, 1913-1923* (Basingstoke: Palgrave, 2002).
56 Charles Townshend, 'Historiography: Telling the Irish Revolution', in Joost Augusteijn (ed), *The Irish Revolution, 1913-1923* (Basingstoke: Palgrave, 2002) (pp.1-16).
57 Hart, 'Definition: Defining the Irish Revolution'.

term 'revolution' with particular emphasis on the work of Charles Tilly, looking at 'revolutionary situations' and distinctive 'revolutionary outcomes' and the idea of 'multiple sovereignty'. Tilly defines revolution, discussed in chapter three, as including circumstances where there are competing and incompatible claims on state authority and popular loyalty and support which gain significant and powerful followings in the divided polity.[58] Hart acknowledges the pitfalls of separately addressing northern and southern history, warning that doing so 'reduces the 'northern' narrative to a matter of (abnormal) sectarianism' and then addresses the idea of revolution during the Orange Agitation directly.[59] For Hart, although acknowledging the raising of the UVF as a *de facto* army and Ulsterian preparations to declare a provisional government, the Orange Agitation was not even 'potentially revolutionary'. He goes on firstly, to state that the Ulsterians did not seek to overthrow the state and were, in fact, seeking to maintain it; secondly that if the UVF and the Irish Volunteers had confronted each other under arms it would have been 'little more revolutionary than the standard Belfast riot'; thirdly, that if the UVF had engaged with the RIC or Crown forces the result would have been little more than a local rebellion and, fourthly; there would only have been a United Kingdom-wide crisis had the Liberals and Conservatives engaged in a power struggle as a result of the Orange Agitation.[60]

To refute each point in turn; the UUC did indeed seek to overthrow the existing state. Explicitly, the Solemn League & Covenant and the UPG demonstrate the UUC intended to usurp the civil and military authorities and defy the Writ of the Crown. As Townshend pointed out in an earlier piece two decades before, the United Kingdom constitution is not static and changes to it,

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58 Ibid., p.18.
59 Ibid., pp.19 and 31.
60 Ibid., p.19.

in the decades before proposals to devolve government to Ireland were significant. He makes the point that Ulsterians had no more right to use force than did opponents of the Reform Bill.[61] Ulsterians were no less revolutionary because they were seeking to maintain the status quo, indeed that it was not the status quo is discussed in chapters four and five. In fact, at the likely point of hostilities at the implementation of Home Rule in later 1914, devolution would have been the statutory status quo and the legitimate constitutional settlement in Ireland, and Ulsterians would have been attempting to overthrow the devolved state. The UVF numbered more than 110,000 men at its peak and violated the royal proclamation prohibiting the import of arms; the UUC authorised the illegal shipment of tens of thousands of rifles and a million rounds of ammunition in 1914. Smuggling from Germany and Austria (and Italy) in the months preceding the outbreak of the First World War, Ulsterians traded and dealt with people that soon became the King's Enemies.

Hart's chapter is insightful and the only piece of scholarship addressing the idea of revolution in Ulster, but his comment that a confrontation between the UVF and Irish Volunteers would have been little more than a sectarian riot is crass. Both sides were well organised and drilled in Ulster. While the UVF carried smuggled arms the Irish Volunteers carried little more than *camáin* and any other weapons and firearms they could easily acquire.[62] The UVF would have likely emerged victorious from any bloody and organised clash between themselves and the poorly armed Irish Volunteers. Although frequent and violent, sectarian riots before the Orange Agitation had rarely involved more than an exchange of paving stones. Drilled and armed platoons of militia had never fired on each other, nor

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[61] Townshend, *Political Violence in Ireland,* p.248.
[62] **Camáin**: hurling sticks.

had unarmed civilians been targetted by paramilitaries. Sectarian violence in Belfast in the summer of 1920, not organised on the scale of UVF resistance during the Orange Agitation, demonstrates the scale and intensity of potential violence had the First World War not anaesthetised the Ulsterian Revolution.

An unprecedented 110,000 drilled, organised and armed men volunteered for the UVF. Battles between the Ulsterian UVF and Crown forces would have been a rebellion with the revolutionary objective of overthrowing the state and administering Ulster with an independent provisional government. A dozen or so bewildered Dubliners witnessed Patrick Pearse read out the Proclamation of the Irish Republic outside the GPO, and the Easter Rising, orchestrated by a fringe, within the margins of a minority received little public support in April 1916. In Ulster, however, nearly half a million men and women signed the Solemn League & Covenant. They vowed to use 'any means' to resist a legitimate piece of legislation passed by a democratically elected parliament. With significant support in both the Commons and the Lords and the armed forces, Ulsterian commitment to resisting devolution was massive; it was widespread and it was popular. More than a rebellion, the Orange Agitation fits clearly within Tilly's definition of a revolution.

The Orange Agitation did not have to spread to the corridors of Westminster or the streets of London to become revolutionary, but it did. Hardline Conservative & Unionist MPs and peers threatened to block the annual Army Bill and leave the country and Empire defenceless in the months running up to the First World War. Two million signed the 'British Covenant' on the mainland in sympathy with the Solemn League & Covenant. The Conservative & Unionists 'played the Orange Card' in the general election, making the Irish Question a key issue in the campaign. The 'Curragh Mutiny' threatened military

authority and discipline, forced a concession from a cabinet minister and in turn forced his resignation and the Prime Minister directly taking over the War Office. By Hart's definition, Ulster was in a revolutionary situation in 1918 and by 1920 had achieved, perhaps more by accident than intent, a revolutionary outcome.

Ulsterians drove the Irish Revolution that resulted in Irish independence and before the First World War Irish Nationalists and Republicans only followed the path Ulsterians had trodden and responded to the lead of their Ulsterian adversaries. The Ulsterian Revolution responded to a series of crises within Ulsterian society and politics as it faced challenges, firstly from Irish Nationalism and Republicanism pursuing Irish independence, and secondly from Imperial Government attempts to impose its will on Ulster in the shape of Home Rule, and a crisis from within Ulsterian society as class cleavages opened up in the early part of the twentieth century.

In the two decades since Augusteijn published the historiographical collection on the revolution in Ireland, historians have directed little attention to the revolutionary potential of the Orange Agitation. A small amount of scholarship published during the Decade of Centenaries talks of 'revolution' in the context of Ulster and Northern Ireland without seeking to define or research the term. Ozseker plays down the level of unrest in the north-west of the province but does highlight Jalland's assertion that 1911 (as opposed to the more established date of 1916) was the year of a new direction in the Irish Question because of events in Ulster.[63] Ozseker also points out that the Ulsterian failure of elections and constitutional politics to scupper Home Rule meant 'drilling and the threat of rebellion increasingly became the unionists' means of asserting their

[63] Ozseker, p.26.

right to self-determination.'[64] Research here takes that idea further, linking the distinct identity of Ulsterians explored in chapter one with the religious and political justification for rebellion and revolution examined in chapters two and three. In asserting their right to self-determination Ulsterians made an effort to control their destiny vis-a-vis the unreliable Imperial Government, finally achieving their revolutionary objective in 1920 with the founding of Northern Ireland. Ozseker also challenges notions that the UVF were ineffective and unable to deliver on the Ulsterian threat of rebellion.[65] Pointing to the Curragh Mutiny, Ozseker argues assumptions that Crown forces would easily defeat the UVF are misguided and maintains 'The RIC and INV would have been easily defeated, particularly after the Larne gun-running'. This point also challenges Hart's statement that any violence would have been a run-of-the-mill Belfast sectarian riot. Without discussing the motivations of Ulsterians Ozseker is clear that with the UVF armed, and even perhaps beforehand, Ulsterians had the potential to defy the Imperial Government successfully in battle to achieve their revolutionary aims.

Robert Lynch surveys Irish partition and early on in his book sets out that Ulsterians and nationalists drove events as 'two dominant revolutionary parties.'[66] Lynch goes on, although like Ozseker without defining the term, to talk of 'the twin revolutions' in north and south-west Ireland during the partition period.[67] This research sets out, using a degree of detail which is lacking in Lynch's work but in general agreement with it, to show why the Ulsterian Revolution did indeed

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[64] Ibid., p.40.
[65] Ibid., p.57.
[66] Lynch, *The Partition of Ireland*, p.7.
[67] Ibid., p.30.

act as one of the twin dynamos of the Irish Revolution. Lynch then turns to the post-partition period and, describing the two new states, explains:

> Power had been placed in the hands of small revolutionary elites whose legitimacy and practical authority was tenuous and vociferously challenged from both within and without.[68]

and:

> both states were formed by insurrectionary movements [...] [and led by] the revolutionary leaderships of both states.[69]

Again, although correct, Lynch fails to explain what is meant by his assertion of an Ulsterian revolutionary élite controlling Northern Ireland. Chapters four and five explore these ideas in detail analysing the consolidation of Northern Ireland by Ulsterians and describing the revolutionary steps taken and prepared for.

Opening the way for a more general reperiodisation of the Irish Revolution Roy Foster explores the idea of an Irish 'pre-revolution' starting in the 1890s with a prosopography of women and men who either preceded the Easter Rising or were excluded from the consolidation of the Irish Free State.[70] Although Nationalists and Republicans embarked on a pre-revolution during the Orange Agitation, Foster does not explore the behaviour of Ulster's revolutionary

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[68] Ibid., p.135.
[69] Ibid., p.137.

vanguard in any detail. He nevertheless suggests the revolutionary potential of the Ulsterian movement.

> the Ulster Volunteer Force, pledged (by covenant) to fight against the government in order to stay in the union. Under the charismatic leadership of Edward Carson, their movement increasingly displayed the trappings of threatened rebellion.[71]

Chapter three examines that threatened rebellion within an analysis of revolution. Foster's prosopographic approach reveals fresh insights into the revolutionary and pre-revolutionary generation in south and west Ireland. A similar prosopography of the Ulsterian revolutionaries, Carson, Craig, Spender, Crawford, Brooke &c. (Foster considers at least Carson and Smith treasonous) waits to be written with all the useful insights it will undoubtedly reveal.[72]

Later chapters of this thesis explore how the revolutionary state of Northern Ireland struck out for security and stability. In the south and west, the pre-revolutionary generation played a highly limited part in the consolidation of the Irish Free State. In Northern Ireland the revolutionary generation of the Orange Agitation and the Outrages became the founding fathers of the new state and sclerotically clung to power beyond the end of the Second World War, with Craig remaining Prime Minister until he died in 1940. Debate continues on the transformative effect of revolution, or lack of it, in Ireland but not in Northern Ireland where no transformation took place beyond Ulsterian élites taking possession of the levers of power to assert their political, social, economic and

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[71] Foster, p.188.
[72] Ibid., p.215.

cultural ascendency over the Nationalist Other. The lack of a post-revolutionary transformation does not make the constitutional settlement and new government any less revolutionary. As Foster notes, across the whole of Europe the 1920s saw widespread revolution followed by the reassertion of traditional ideas. That is what also happened in Northern Ireland.[73]

More recent scholarship, especially that written during the ongoing Decade of Centenaries begins to challenge older historiography which excluded Ulsterians from a revolutionary analysis of the Irish Revolution. While failing to provide definitions or engage in new and original research, more recent scholarship is nonetheless important in opening up the prospect of a re-periodisation of the Irish Revolution to include the Orange Agitation from 1910/1911 and also posing questions about the revolutionary potential of Ulsterians. The current thesis asks those questions in a deliberate and structured way before concluding that Ulsterians possessed all the means and potential to threaten revolution and in the creation of Northern Ireland and establishment of the USC delivered a revolutionary outcome. Chapters four and five consider that revolutionary outcome.

Ulsterian Special Policing and Militarisation

Peter Hart's comment, '[Belfast's civil war] of 1920-2 consumed almost as many lives as were lost in the whole of southern Ireland in 1922-3' demonstrates the violence and force used during the Outrages to consolidate the new Northern Irish state.[74] Elsewhere focus is rightly on the sectarian nature of that violence,

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[73] Ibid., p.7.
[74] Peter Hart, 'The Geography of the Revolution in Ireland', *Past & Present*, No.155 (1997), 142-176, p.155.

but this research also explores the militarisation of the USC as the security apparatus of the Ulsterian Northern Irish government. As a militarised force parading as a constabulary, the activities of the USC strayed from those expected from a police force. They regularly engaged in cross-border shoot-outs and pursuits, and plans existed to create a force capable of invading the Free State. Archives extensively document this military role, and this thesis offers the first comprehensive study of the USC as a military force. Previously unused sources engage directly with the sectarian nature of violence and the unofficial role of the USC, especially the 'B' Specials, in committing extensive violence against Nationalists to assert Ulsterian dominance in the new sectarian state. That analysis challenges Patrick Buckland's work that suggested the Northern Irish government intended USC recruitment to be non-sectarian and that the non-co-operation of the Free State government turned a cross-community force into a notoriously sectarian force.[75] Primary sources demonstrate Ulsterians created the USC as a revived UVF and wholly sectarian force. Lynch argues that both Northern Ireland and the Irish Free State consolidated their nascent states and demonstrated power and authority through the new security forces.[76] This thesis supports that view. New archival research and analysis explore how Ulsterians used the USC to consolidate the state, the final stage of the Ulsterian Revolution, through attempts to both secure the new border and assert sectarian dominance over the Nationalist 'Other'.

Ulsterian Masculinity

[75] Buckland, Patrick, The Factory of Grievances: Devolved Government in Northern Ireland 1921-39 (Dublin: Gill & MacMillan, 1979).
[76] Lynch, The Partition of Ireland, p.136.

The final chapter looks at masculinity as part of the militarisation of Ulsterians and Northern Ireland and also to glimpse at the private motivations of Special Constables in joining the force. The First World War was an opportunity for Ulsterian men to prove their commitment to their cause. Ulster masculinity is underresearched, but in understanding masculinity, the historian will be better able to probe the motivations of Ulstermen, in a patriarchal society, as Ulster Unionists and Special Constables.[77] By developing theoretical and conceptual ideas with which to analyse Ulsterian masculinities, the thesis both addresses the lacuna and creates an original framework to carry-out that assessment. A gendered approach offers original analysis of Northern Irish history. The history of masculinities was developed in response to feminist history and the gendered analysis created for the history of women.[78] As surveying a homosocial network, the thesis concerns itself with the relationship between men, not between men and women and develops a new theoretical and conceptual framework with which to analyse the public and domestic motivations of Ulsterian men. The last chapter places a particular focus on the hegemonic form of masculinity in Ulster and the importance of understanding gender performativity among Ulsterian men and Special Constables. The events of the Ulsterian Revolution, especially the foundation of the UVF, demonstrate to historians what form of masculinity was expected of Ulsterian men in the period before the First World War. Through the 36th (Ulster) Division the trauma of the mechanised war is seen, but the response in Ulster was different to that in Britain. The USC in the period of partition is

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[77] See: Fidelma Ashe, 'Gendering War and Peace: Militarized Masculinities in Northern Ireland', *Men and Masculinities*, Vol. 15, No. 3 (2012), 230-248, Sean Brady, 'Why Examine Men, Masculinities and Religion in Northern Ireland?', in Lucy Delap and Sue Morgan, *Men, Masculinities and Religious Change in Twentieth-Century Britain* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2013) 218-251 and, Jane G. V. McGaughey, *Ulster's Men: Protestant Unionist Masculinities and Militarization in the North of Ireland*, 1912-1923 (Montreal: McGill-Queen's University Press, 2012).
[78] Sonya Rose, *What is Gender History?* (Cambridge: Polity, 2010), p.16.

part of a continuity that suggests that a distinctive form of hegemonic masculinity was constructed in Northern Ireland but instead of being exclusively a tool to dominate the sectarian and gendered Other, service in the USC also supported a man's domestic role.

1. Ulster Farà Da Sé: Ulsterian National Identity

'L'Italia è fatta. Restano da fare gli italiani', wrote Massimo d'Azeglio as Italy emerged on the maps of Europe although not necessarily in the minds of the inhabitants of the Po Valley and the rest of the peninsula and archipelago of the new Italy. [79] 'We have made Ulsterians. Now we must make Ulster', would have been a fitting mission statement for Edward Carson and James Craig as from 1911 they mobilised their cause, the Orange Agitation, triggering the Irish Revolution half a century after *Risorgimento*.[80]

Ulsterian leaders fostered Ulsterian identity and pushed to create it. This identity was not organic but invented and constructed like all modern national identities. Ulsterian leaders and organisers manipulated and fabricated an identity many might have already recognised into a national identity. Having created Ulsterian identity, Ulsterian leaders looked to create an Ulsterian state. Northern Ireland existed as a sectarian Protestant state by the end of the Ulsterian Revolution. Carson and Craig transformed Ulster Unionism from a political movement to a national Ulsterian identity and then into the new state of

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[79] 'We have made Italy. Now we must make Italians'.

[80] *Risorgimento* or *Unita d'Italia* translated as 'The Resurgence' or 'Italian Unification' was the nineteenth-century process of unifying the various and many realms and republics in the Po Valley and Italian Peninsula into a single nation-state. Although traceable to the 1820s *Risorgimento* began during the European revolutions of 1848 with radicals and liberals using force to remove the Metternichian settlement which had been imposed by the Congress of Vienna without any 'Italian' representation. Taking political, cultural and social action over the next two decade the process was mostly complete in 1866 when Prussia compelled Austria-Hungary to cede Venetia and Mantua to the Kingdom of Italy (via the Second French Empire), ruled by the Savoyard Vittorio Emanuele II of the former Kingdom of Piedmont-Sardinia.

Northern Ireland. Whether that identity was a regional identity, a communal identity, an ethnic identity or a national identity made little difference: the result was a *de facto* Ulsterian nation. Ulsterians pursued a contradiction of loyalty to Britain while Britain insisted on an anathematic policy of Irish Home Rule. The Orange Agitation was as much a crisis of Ulsterian politics and society, forced to choose between Britain with Home Rule or Northern Ireland separated from Britain and outside of the operation of Home Rule. Ulsterians may have denied their form of 'Ulsterian' Ulster nationalism, but by 1920 it was the solution to their dilemma. Building a nation around their distinctive identity kept Ulsterians out of a *de facto* independent Ireland while maintaining the link with Britain in the United Kingdom. Ulsterians believed they had long existed and believed the only way to exist any longer was to build a separate state for themselves.

Ulsterians considered themselves to be British, but Britain did not consider Ulsterians to be British. For Britian, they remained Irish. The essence of Ulsterian identity was an antagonistic articulation and amplification of its difference from Leinster, Connacht and Munster. Hemmed in between Britain (which pushed Ulster away by accepting and pursuing Home Rule) and Ireland (equally pushed away by Ulsterian hostility to Home Rule) politically mobilised Ulsterians had to go their own way: *We have made Ulsterians. Now we must make Ulster*. This chapter will explore the distinctiveness of Ulsterian identity and how it needed a separate state to prevent a united Home Rule Ireland and minority status within devolution. Ulsterians, in their quest, opened up a further fundamental contradiction: Unionist-separatism. Ulsterians so forcefully pursued their agenda that they became separatists while loudly, and without a hint of irony, standing for Union. Their deed not only resulted in Northern Ireland but so quickly heated the political temperature of the island that, ultimately and

unintentionally, they were among the Founding Fathers of an independent Ireland too.

This chapter explores, for the first time, Ulsterian identity within the framework of national identity. Along with the chapters below on religion and revolution, national identity is a key concept with which to examine Ulsterian identity during the Ulsterian Revolution. Seen as the antithesis of Irish nationalism and because it so vocally claimed to be 'British', there has yet to be historical research or critically incisive analysis on Ulsterian national identity. A reaction to emergent Irish nationalism in the early-twentieth-century, a period seen as a the high-summer of nations an assessment of the place of Ulsterian identity within nations and nationalism is long overdue. Northern Ireland became a state within the asymmetrical union of the United Kingdom of Great Britain & Northern Ireland.[81] Statehood, often the ultimate ambition of nationalists, is discussed in the penultimate chapter of this thesis.

Against the poverty of research on Northern Ireland, scholarship on nationalism and national identity blushes with an embarrassment of riches. Firstly, the chapter looks at a conceptual framework of national identity as a tool to investigate the communal identity of Ulsterians and how those concepts are problematised by the Ulsterian movement. The second part of the chapter weaves empirical research through the framework of nationalism and demonstrates that the distinctiveness of Ulsterian identity became far stronger than regionalism or localism and can be considered a national identity. The third part compares

[81] The name remained 'The United Kigdom of Great Britain & Ireland' for some time after partition and the establishment of the Irish Free State. Imperial officials rebuked Northern Irish ministers for suggesting a name change to the 'United Kingdom of Great Britain & Northern Ireland' concerned it might risk the precarious peace in the 1920s.

Ulsterian identity with other identities, both national and communal: Flemish, Dixie and, of course, British and Irish, justifying Ulster's seat at the table of nations.

Research and analysis here use the neologism 'Ulsterian'. Not used elsewhere it is not innovation for innovation's sake but more a useful shorthand to describe 'Ulster unionism' as a communal, ethnic and cultural identity.[82] Sociologists may find the term PUL useful but historians surely cannot.[83] An alternative term 'Ulsterism' is not appropriate as 'isms' infer a political and ideological motivation better attached to 'Ulster Unionism'. No doubt political and ideological motivations were at the van of the Ulsterian movement, however, 'ism' is not appropriate for historical, cultural and religious discussions. As set out in the introduction 'Ulsterian' has no historical or political baggage and is used as a neutral term to explore the ideas and research making up this thesis.

I: Concepts of communal and national identities

This part of the chapter explores concepts of national identity and evaluates them in the context of Ulsterian identity and the events of the Ulsterian Revolution. To think of Ulster and Ulsterian as a type of national identity is not counterintuitive; it is not sideways thinking, nor is it tendentious. Ulsterian as a national identity is the logical and rational destination of a conceptual and empirical journey if only the traveller disinhibits themself of the mutually supportive prejudices of Irish Nationalists and Ulster Unionists. It is in the interest of the identity of both

[82] Fitzpatrick, p.134. 'Ultonian' refers to Ulster not Northern Ireland and includes all the inhabitants of the province including Catholics and nationalists making it an inappropriate diacritic for the Protestant, unionisist and loyalist community.
[83] For 'PUL' definition see: Burgess & Mulvenna, p.1.

sectarian communities to deny that Ulsterian-ness is culturally distinct, let alone a national identity. Denying Ulsterian national identity allows Irish Nationalists to dismiss Ulsterians as *gall*, Anglo-Saxon invaders (despite being culturally more Scottish) with no legitimate claim to Ireland while allowing Ulsterians to emphasise their British identity to distinguish themselves from the Irish.[84]

This first part of the chapter looks at concepts of national identity and associated ideas of communal identity. Ideas of imagined communities and simultaneity are crucial in understanding national identity. So too is the idea of 'creole pioneers' and its relevance to Ulster in demonstrating a national identity.[85] Secondly, we investigate ethnicity. Perhaps the difficulty in understanding Ulsterian as a national identity has been that its roots are early-modern and its characteristics are less evident than the modern, Jacobin style of nations scholars discuss more widely. Ulsterian-ness, like Britishness, is asymmetrical. Based on ethnic distinctiveness, it is different from the modular nationalism of nineteenth and twentieth-century Europe and that older, ethnic heritage has to be understood to understand Ulsterian identity.[86] A later chapter will consider the system of belief and organisation of faith among Ulsterian revolutionaries but linked to that is the idea of Covenanting which is a crucial dynamic in national identity among Ulsterians.[87] We explore this idea in the next section. Finally, we look at ideas that problematise national identity because Ulsterian is an atypical type of nationalism.[88] Some of those ideas that are problematic for scholars of nationalism are very useful in a discussion of Ulsterian national identity. The next section looks at how some Ulsterians did not fit into the hegemonic identity but

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[84] *Gall* is the standardised Irish language word for 'foreigner'.
[85] Anderson.
[86] Anthony D. Smith, *The Ethnic Origins of Nations* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1987).
[87] Donald Harman Akenson, *God's Peoples, Covenant and Land in South Africa, Israel and Ulster* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1992).
[88] Hobsbawm.

demonstrates that despite containing various strands, Ulsterian identity remained dominant in Northern Ireland.

'Rotten Prods'

Hegemonic but not homogenous among the Protestants, unionists and loyalists of Ulster, Ulsterian identity faced challenges from small minorities in the community. This section explores the issue of non-hegemonic Protestant, Unionists and Loyalists in Ulster and Northern Ireland during the period and concludes that, while important, the liberal and labour challenges from within never seriously threatened Ulsterian dominance from 1910. Ulster Liberalism enjoyed electoral dominance in the 1868 general election but became marginal before the Orange Agitation. Ulster Labourism, limited to the Belfast working-class, posed a threat to Ulsterian hegemony before and after the First World War, but with the Ulsterian régime firmly ensconced in government and able to manipulate the electoral system and appeal to the sectarian-interest over the labour-interest, that threat quickly lost its potency too.

Conor Morrissey's research on 'Rotten Prods' sets out the diversity of opinion in the Protestant, unionist and loyalist community but importantly for this thesis stopped at the 'polarisation' of the Ulsterian revolution when hegemony took hold.[89] Morrissey's research focuses on the Irish Protestant Home Rule Association (IPHRA) formed in 1886 as a group of pro-Home Rule Gladstonian Liberals and the Ulster Liberal Association (ULA) which in turn formed in 1906 from the IPHRA. The general election of 1886, the year which

[89] Conor Morrissey, "Rotten Protestants': Protestant Home Rulers and the Ulster Liberal Association, 1906-1918', *The Historical Journal*, Vol.61, No.3 (2018), 743-765.

saw the introduction of Gladstone's First Home Rule Bill, sectarianised Ulster politics along the lines still seen to this day. Although the Dublin branch of the IPHRA remained active and committed to a romanticist Irish nationalism, the Belfast branch largely avoided the Irish Question, concentrating on Gladstonian land reform. Although the Belfast IPHRA enjoyed support among non-conformist tenants cum landholders, it fell into abeyance until the Liberal Unionist Reverend James Brown Armour defected to Home Rule, saying the Union benefited Anglicans, not Presbyterians and other non-conformists.[90] At the same time in 1906, Liberal politician Thomas Wallace Russell began to organise support among rural Protestant Liberals who sought land reform and joined with the Armour wing to reinvigorate the ULA, although tensions existed between the 'Liberal Unionists' and the pro-Home Rulers. Morrissey claims that by the 1910 general election 10% of Ulster Protestants, unionists and loyalists supported Home Rule – the proportion who supported the ULA at the election which committed itself to Home Rule as a check to more advanced forms of independentist nationalism which set out to break the Union. In 1911, the Parliament Act sectarianised Ulster politics even further than in 1886 and the vehement and violent reaction by Belfast Ulsterians to Winston Churchill's (then a Liberal) planned speech in favour of Home Rule at the Ulster Hall left many of them in a precarious position and fearful of their safety. Captain Jack White, an English Boer War veteran and cultural nationalist, responding to the Solemn League & Covenant organised a 'Counter Covenant':

> Being convinced in our conscience that Home Rule would not be disastrous to the national well-being in Ulster and that, moreover, the

[90] Ibid., p.748.

> responsibility of self-government would strengthen the popular forces in other provinces, would pave the way to a civil and religious freedom which we do not now possess and give scope for a spirit of citizenship, we, whose names are underwritten, Irish citizens, Protestants, and loyal supporters of Irish nationality, relying under God on the proved good feeling and democratic instinct of our countrymen of other creeds, hereby pledge ourselves to stand by one another and our country in the troublous days that are before us, and more especially to help one another when our liberties are threatened by any nonstatutory body that may be set up in Ulster or elsewhere. We intend to abide by the just laws of the lawful Parliament of Ireland until such time as it may prove itself hostile to democracy. In sure confidence that God will stand by those who stand by the people, irrespective of class and creed, we hereunto subscribe our names.[91]

White represented marginal and minority opinion within Ulster Protestantism, unionisms and loyalism but the ULA also opposed the Solemn League & Covenant and found itself cast with White's fringe. The ULA had already retreated, forced into the shadows by the anger caused by the Churchill speech and the violence meted out to five hundred 'Rotten Prods' expelled from the Belfast shipyards in 1912-1913. Twelve thousand people signed the 'Counter Covenant', but 471,414 people (93% of the Protestant population of Ulster) signed the Solemn League & Covenant and 10% of Ulster's Protestants voted for the pro-Home Rule ULA in 1910, but 90% voted for anti-Home Rulers. The

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[91] Ibid., p.762.

limited success of the ULA between 1906-1910 owes more to the lack of urgency in the Home Rule question during a period of a Conservative & Unionist government in Westminster. With the Orange Agitation breaking out the first phase of the Ulsterian Revolution in 1911, pro-Home Rule Protestant Liberalism fell to the ground from its not very high perch. It is essential to understand Armour, Russell and the ULA but with their very limited support and in a rapidly changing political climate, they never posed a serious risk to Ulsterian dominance.

A more potent threat came from the Belfast Protestant Association (BPA) and Independent Orange Order (IOO) which worked with parts of the Labour movement and occupied much of its political ground. Thomas Sloan, a working-class Belfast Unionist, bemoaned the lack of attention paid to social questions by the Westminster-centric Ulster Parliamentary Party (UPP).[92] Sloan rose to prominence during Arthur Trew's incarceration (see chapter 3), being elected to the South Belfast parliamentary seat in 1902, forcing the London based UPP to pay attention to their heartland. Sloan's election caused a rift in Orangeism when several Belfast and nearby lodges endorsed Sloan's independent candidature.[93] Sloan attacked the UPP candidate Charles William Dunbar-Buller as anti-Protestant, anti-Orange, anti-temperance and anti-trade union while supporting the tenants' right-to-buy, old-age pensions, improvements to factory conditions, better living conditions and legal rights for trade unions. After his success, the Grand Orange Lodge of Ireland (GOLI) demanded Sloan apologise to Dunbar-Buller for the campaign trail remarks, but on refusing the Order expelled him and revoked the warrant for the endorsing lodges. On 11 June they formed the IOO

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[92] Reid, *Protestant Challenges to the 'Protestant State'*, p.420.
[93] John W Boyle, 'The Belfast Protestant Association and the Independent Orange Order, 1901-10', *Irish Historical Studies*, Vol.13, No.50 (1962), 117-152, p.121.

which grew to one hundred active lodges within a year. Sloan stood astride the Orange and Labour divide, a foot firmly on each side. The UPP reacted with modernisation forming the UUC in 1905 to fend off the twin threats of Sloanite Labourism/Independent Orangeism and the ULA. A younger generation of parliamentarians, foremost among them Charles Craig, the brother of Northern Ireland's first Prime Minister James Craig, staged the 'Ulster Revolt' and took on the landed and titled UPP oligarchs.[94] Middle-class and 'local', these new leaders pulled the UPP away from the British Conservatism to which aristocratic and titled bonds had previously connected it. 'Constructive Unionism' aimed to kill Irish nationalism with kindness, but the new UUC leaders rejected the strategy using local government reforms to hold positions reversing the policies at a local level. Popular Orangeism replaced Constructive Unionism as the new leaders pursued a new policy: *Ulster First*. The Conservative & Unionist Party would soon have to choose between Constructive Unionism and Popular Orangeism deciding to 'play the Orange-card' and plunging the Imperial Government into a constitutional crisis that brought the Ulsterian Revolution to the brink of a United Kingdom-wide civil war. Choosing popular Orangeism allowed UUC leaders to appear responsive to the demands of Sloan's working-class supporters and neutralised the challenge. Sloan however, only posed a threat to the Ulsterian leadership and élite, not the Ulsterian movement and formed part of the Ulsterian hegemony, not a challenge to it.

Post-war working-class urban social and economic radicalism potentially posed a more significant threat to Ulsterian hegemony containing a socio-economic potential much vaster than non-conformist Liberalism ever did. Never

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[94] David Burnett, 'The Modernisation of Unionism, 1892-1914?, in Richard English & Graham Walker (eds), *Unionism in Modern Ireland, New Perspectives on Politics and Culture* (Basingstoke: MacMillan Press, 1996), 41-63, p.54.

too serious, the 'Labour' threat in certain light looks like a more fervent form of dominant Ulsterian identity. Graham Walker identifies four strands within the Northern Ireland Labour Party founded in 1917: firstly an extreme left group associated with the southern Soviets and revolutionary socialism; secondly democratic-Connellyite socialism, dominated by Catholics, that rejected revolution but looked for closer links to the Irish Labour Party than the British Labour Party; thirdly the largest strand, Northern Irish trade-unionists, Co-operators and moral socialists that sought closer ties with the British Labour Party post-partition and fourthly, 'Unionist Labour' which, almost identical to the third strand, also voiced strong sectarianism.[95] Walker concludes that, unable to take anything other than an ambiguous stance on the 'national question', mainstream Labourism failed to gain purchase in the Ulsterian community that voted overwhelmingly on the sectarian 'national question'. Beyond its own political failure, the post-war Labour threat encountered an organisational challenge from the UULA. Formed in June 1918 by Carson, the UULA set out to bring the Labour threat into the Ulsterian mainstream as part of the UUC. With the UULA as its own Labour section, the UUC and the UUP successfully outflanked the Belfast Labour Party and remnants of the Sloanite challenge, reducing the independent Labour Party to a mere 1,887 first preferences and loss of all deposits against the UUP's 126,000 preferences and a landslide victory at the inaugural Northern Ireland parliamentary elections in May 1921.[96] £500,000 for social projects and relief from the Craig-Collins Pact allowed the Ulsterian régime to spend on initiatives aimed at working-class demands. The Local Government

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[95] Graham Walker, 'The Northern Ireland Labour Party in the 1920s', *Saothar*, Vol.10 (1984), 19-30, pp.24-26.
[96] Christopher Norton, 'The Left in Northern Ireland 1921-1932', *Labour History Review*, Vol.60, No.1 (1995), 3-20, p.4.

(Northern Ireland) Act (1922) abolished proportional representation for local elections and the House of Commons (Method of Voting and Redistribution of Seats) (Northern Ireland) Act (1929) for Northern Ireland parliamentary elections eliminated Labour's opportunity to win seats through tactical and low preference voting. Designed to counter the Labour threat foremost and the Nationalist threat second-most, abolishing proportional representation enhanced and reinforced UUP electoral successes based on political messaging which turned all Northern Irish elections into 'regular plebiscites of loyalty.'[97] Labour in Northern Ireland failed to pose the significant threat that the large working-class and urban population of Belfast gave it the potential to be, as the focus on sectarian interests demoted the Labour interest to a poor second, third or even lower priority. Brought together the Labour and sectarian interests came to buttress Ulsterian hegemony not undermine it.

Both Labourism and Liberalism failed to break Ulsterian hegemony and never posed a real threat to it. It is, however, essential to understand the various strands of heterodox Protestant, unionist and loyalist thought before examining the Ulsterian national identity which came to be dominant and hegemonic through the period of the Ulsterian Revolution with both the nationalising and revolutionary processes enabling and supporting each other. Ulsterian identity contained different traditions, faiths and opinions. A heterogeneous rather than homogenous bloc, Ulsterian remained nonetheless dominant and hegemonic. The next section explores the construction and nature of Ulsterian national identity within established theories of national identity.

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[97] Colin Reid, 'Protestant Challenges to the 'Protestant State': Ulster Unionism and Independent Unionism in Northern Ireland, 1921-1939', *Twentieth Century British History*, Vol.19, No.4 (2008), 419-445, p.438.

Imagined Nations

Benedict Anderson is foremost among the scholars of historical nationalism. Anderson's ideas, like all others on nationalism, have not been applied to Ulster but are useful in understanding Ulsterian identity. At the centre of Anderson's ideas on national identity is the creation of epic structures of mutual understanding and connectedness in the mid-nineteenth-century. Mass print and production of novels and newspapers caused a process of 'simultaneity'.[98] Simultaneously consuming print media and the ideas and bias media contained brought together, although neither literally or physically, all the readership in that territorial community in an imagined community. Before simultaneity and before mass print news and ideas only went as far as gossip could carry them. If they went further, through a process of 'playground whispers', the news changed and distorted on the journey being received so differently in every ear it was not simultaneous. Based on newspaper sources and popular books published for an Ulsterian audience, much of the research in this chapter demonstrates simultaneity in the community.

The technological innovations in printing revolutionised communication and directly challenged the divine order. Discussed below, religion was core to Ulsterian national identity. However, challenges to and the eventual demise of religion from the Rennaissance onwards was a key conceptual shift that led to the rise of imagined nations.[99] Simultaneity in imagined communities is one half of Anderson's definition of nations, with the process of the demise of religion, or 'divinity' the second half, 'it is [the nation] an imagined political community – and

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[98] Anderson, p.29.
[99] Ibid., pp.6-7.

imagined as both inherently limited and sovereign'.[100] Nations are limited by borders and by the lack of will for a single universal nationality encompassing the global population. Nationalism's sovereignty comes from it replacing the divine hierarchy and through ideas of nationalism being emblematic of that reasoning. The religious hierarchy was vertical, the nationalist hierarchy that replaced it is a communal, 'deep, horizontal comradeship'.[101] Religion further shaped conceptual nationalism from the Age of Exploration in the twelfth-century when encounters with other faiths relativised and territorialised religious communities.[102] Faith and religion were no-longer universal when European Christians met adherents of different religions while exploring and waging war eastwards. Anderson explains the rise of nationalism at the same time as the demise of divinity as the replacement and transformation of 'fatality into continuity'.[103] Humans stopped believing in eternal life, but through the eternal nation, they could live forever. Ulsterian nationalism is defined by an atypical adherence to divinity, even in the contemporary period, shaping its conceptual framework. Ulster's asymmetrical and atypical nationalism problematises modernist ideas of modular, even 'flatpack' nationalism since the French Revolution.[104] Ulsterian identity remains beholden to early-modern ideas that pre-date the modernism of Jacobin based national identity that came to dominate the world from the 1790s.

Anderson's work on the rise of 'Creole pioneers' in colonial South and Central America is also applicable to the Ulsterian case. Ulster's national origins share part of a pattern with New World nations such as Brazil and Bolivia. Sometimes months away under sail, the Spanish and Portuguese empires needed

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[100] Ibid.
[101] Ibid., pp.6-7.
[102] Ibid., p.17.
[103] Ibid., p.11.
[104] For discussion on modular nationalism see: Anderson, p.135.

to create a form of government for their new overseas colonies. Although Iberian settlers assumed all the critical colonial functions of imperial government, they settled so far away, and through miscegenation with the native population, they became distant and distinct from the western European metropole. Largely excluded from imperial patronage and confined to the administrative portion of the empire in which they were born, a Creole class developed.[105] Ulster Planters likewise governed a new domain. Ulster was as far away from the London metropole as anywhere else in the British Isles. Despite eschewing miscegenation, the Planters (Ulster Creoles) governed a native population at the direction of the exclusivist and exclusionary metropole and became distant and distinct like the Iberian Creoles in the new world. Within this Ulster Creole class, they worked together but competed to find patronage and advancement and took on roles as Grand Jurors, magistrates and administrators which made them distinct from both the native Irish and metropolitan English populations.[106] Having explained the relevance of Anderson's 'imagined' nations, the next section examines ideas of ethnicity and their applicability to Ulsterians.

Ethnic Ulster

Imagined communities give a clear conceptual base to nationalism and national identity. Asymmetrical Ulsterianism, however, requires an approach more nuanced than modular nationalism and a discussion that goes further back than

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[105] Anderson, pp.55-59.
[106] Bardon, *Plantation of Ulster*.

the effect of the French Revolution. Anthony Smith's work on *ethnie* and ethnic nations is an excellent tool to explore Ulsterian identity.[107]

Smith defines a non-modern nation as a politically convenient 'site' for ethnicity and nationalism on which to create mass support for a wealthy and powerful élite. Élites use ethnicity to coordinate, commit and mobilise the masses and combine the ethnicity's cultural *raison d'être* with élite political and economic imperatives to mobilise mass action against rival élites.[108] In the Ulsterian case, the wealthy and powerful élites are the early-modern Creole functionaries described above, and in the period of the Ulsterian Revolution the country landholders and Belfast industrialists that funded the UUC, underwrote the UVF and commanded the USC. The ethnicity is the Ulster-Scots and Anglo-Saxon cultural heritage distinct from Irish culture from the early-modern period and becoming distinct from Britishness in the intervening centuries. Stopping Home Rule to ensure constitutional continuity and the maintenance of financial stability and economic and trading privileges with the Empire and the preservation of the land system against land reform were the political and economic imperatives of the Ulsterian ascendency élite. Middle-class Irish nationalist businessmen and landowning farmers were the Ulsterians' rival élite which had to be defeated.

Anderson explains that nations are not merely ideological constructs but an anthropological phenomenon and system of belief similar to kinship and religion.[109] Similarly, Smith distinguishes between 'primordialist' ideas of nations and 'perennialist' ones, i.e. sociobiological 'natural' primordial nations and perennial nations that are not natural but analogous to communal units found

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[107] Smith, *Ethnic Origins of Nations*.
[108] Ibid., pp.8-9.
[109] Anderson, p.5.

throughout human history.[110] Ulsterian national identity sits outside the modernist concepts of the nation and is deeply rooted in pre-modern ideas that remain fundamental to understanding Ulsterian national identity. Smith rejects primordial nationalism and seeks to further refine the gradation between perennialist nationalism and modernist nationalism by introducing the concept of *ethnie*: 'the collective cultural units and sentiments of previous eras' with a 'myth-symbol' complex or, '*mythomoteur*' at its centre.[111] A further definition is a 'peculiar cultural individuality and shared historicity'.[112] Ulsterianism is, by Smith's definition, an *ethnie* and has, firstly, a common myth of descent from Protestant settlers from either England or Scotland.[113] Secondly, it has a shared history: the common descent and the early-modern histories of massacre, battles and, brotherhood.[114] Research in this chapter and chapter three explores the constant referencing of early-modern history in Ulsterian culture to present an origin myth which also highlights the pre-modernist and ethnic character of Ulsterian nationalism. It has a 'similarity-dissimilarity pattern': a common difference with the Irish Catholic 'Other'.[115] Ulsterian identity is ethnocentric and ethnically exclusive. In the nine counties of Ulster (and later artificially six counties of Northern Ireland) it has a deep emotional attachment and association with a specific territory.[116] Ulsterians share a sense of solidarity: their shared history, common territorial belonging, distinct culture and attachment to Ulster supersedes any other social identity.[117]

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[110] Smith, p.12.
[111] Ibid., pp.13-15.
[112] Ibid., p.22.
[113] Smith, pp.24-25 and Ian McBride, *The Siege of Derry in Ulster Protestant Mythology*, (Dublin: Four Courts Press, 1997).
[114] Smith, pp.25-26.
[115] Ibid., pp.26-28.
[116] Ibid., pp.28-29.
[117] Ibid, pp.29-30.

Organised religion has a crucial role in the communal identity of Ulsterians.[118] Smith also suggests an *ethnie* should have a collective name.[119] Coining the term 'Ulsterian' does not suggest that a collective name did not exist before. Whether, 'Unionist', 'Loyalist', 'Protestant' or, any or all three prefixed with 'Ulster' there existed an, albeit cumbersome, set of collective nouns all of which are inappropriate here. Ulsterian, therefore, does satisfy Smith's definition of an *ethnie*, an ethnic community as a 'named human population with shared ancestry myths, histories and cultures, having an association with a specific territory and a sense of solidarity'.[120] Although the self-denial of national identity appears at times and is a crucial aspect to Ulsterian identity, ethnicities often become politicised even if they do not wish to become nations.[121] To emerge from the Ulsterian Revolution victorious, Ulsterians had to mobilise as a nationalist movement to survive. In the period after partition that was even more the case, as Northern Irish ministers had to compete for resources from the Imperial exchequer and maintain a sense of existentialist crisis in defence of Northern Ireland against the Irish Free State and Republican guerillas.

Smith, like Anderson in the assessment of Creole settlers, addresses colonial nationalism.[122] Colonies, or units of the imperial periphery, can become so detached from the imperial centre, the metropole, that they become ethnicised and as time passes come to satisfy the definition of *ethnie* above. Territorial nationalism is dominant in Europe and its former empires. Northern Ireland, the state defined and immutably joined to Ulsterian nationalism, is a colonial successor state. Constitutional links maintained by the Government of Ireland

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[118] Ibid., pp.35-37.
[119] Ibid., p.23.
[120] Ibid., p.32.
[121] Ibid., p.157.
[122] Ibid., pp.38-40.

Act (1921) cannot disguise that Ireland continued on its journey to independence and placed Ulsterian Northern Ireland on the same constitutional footing. After the Irish Revolution, the Kingdom of Ireland ceased to exist, and Northern Ireland was one of two successor states. Chapter five discusses the consolidation of the Northern Irish state. Religion is key to the emergence of *éthnie,* which is discussed briefly in this chapter but more fully in chapter two.

Religion, myth and simultaneity are hallmarks of national identity and *éthnie,* and the following section looks at how each developed as part of Ulsterian national identity.

Nation and Covenant

Religion is crucial to understanding communal identity among Ulsterians. Protestantism was a central diacritic and a significant motivator for Ulsterians in the period of the Ulsterian Revolution. The chapter on communal religious identity explores the particular theology and religious observance. This section analyses the elements of Ulster Protestantism that informed ethnic and national identity, especially the practice of covenanting. 471,414 Ulsterian men and women signed the Ulster Solemn League & Covenant from 13 September 1912. A sign of epic mobilization, there is little that compares with the success of the Solemn League & Covenant. The monster petition, national holiday and, festival of defiance in 1912 was rooted in Old Testament theology. Donald Harmen Akenson's comparative study of covenanting in Ulster, South Africa and Israel is prescient.[123]

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[123] Akenson, *God's Peoples*.

It is important to understand the theology and tradition of covenanting as a human phenomenon, not just an Ulsterian exercise. Chapter two explores the Scottish National Covenant of the seventeenth-century in detail. Still, it and the Solemn League & Covenant is part of a longer religious practice over millennia and; 'It is to one such covenant that the government of Northern Ireland owes its existence.'[124] Covenants are a contract between a person or a people and a god. The terms of the bargain are simple: *if* you worship me, *then* I will bless you.[125] This deal is the essence of the 'if-then' covenant of the Old Testament. Yahweh of the Old Testament was a merciless punisher of transgressors of the covenant and heathens alike. For Iron Age societies, the covenant was an insurance policy against the caprice of a vengeful and bellicose god. To be a chosen people, the Elect, in the pre-Axial world, ensured protection against other deities and assured good grace.[126] Fundamentalist and literalist reading of the Bible shows that God is obeyed out of fear of His wrath, not for the moral good. The Elect live good and faithful lives, not for goodness's sake but because doing otherwise would bring wickedness and chastisement upon them.[127] Ulsterians considered themselves an Elect. Theologically, the Elect have a singular (or corporate) identity that passes through each generation through the blessing of the seed (semen).[128] The purity of the Elect gives a theological justification for Ulsterians' rejection of the Other. Corporate identity explains the cohesiveness and solidarity of Ulsterians while communal disdain for miscegenation demonstrates the importance of maintaining the purity of the corporate seed. An impure seed is a breach of the covenant and invites the appalling wrath of God.

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[124] Ibid., p.4.
[125] Ibid., p.16.
[126] The Axial world saw the emergence of modern philosophy and thinking in the 8th-5th centuries BCE.
[127] Akenson, pp.19-20.
[128] Ibid., p.22.

Covenanting forms an important facet of the Ulsterian Revolution because the mobilisation of the Solemn League & Covenant proved pivotal to the Ulsterian Revolution's success and demonstrated a mass and communal Ulsterian identity. Based on the pre-modern scriptural beliefs Akenson describes the main facets of modern covenanting societies which adhered to the ancient Hebrew, Old Testament scripture:

> Emphasis on social law enforced by the congregation not civil society
>
> Clear definition of their enemies. 'Love thy enemy' not a tenet of Judaism
>
> God as anthropomorphic and warlike
>
> Strong attachment to sacralised land
>
> Belief in group purity.[129]

The thesis looks at those points in greater detail. Bringing together the ideas above, Akenson gives a definitive account of modern covenanting societies, Ulsterian being one of them. So, Ulsterian identity and *mentalité* in the period from 1910-1927 is summed up neatly:

> These societies will not be given to easy compromise, committed to religious or racial pluralism, or overly concerned about keeping the good opinion of the outside, profane world. To keep the deal with the covenant, a society must be uncompromising, adamantine, self-contained.[130]

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[129] Ibid., p.42.
[130] Ibid.

Anti-Home Rule mobilisation was driven by a vocal refusal to compromise and a threat of revolution if the Imperial Government dared attempt to force one. Protestantism was central to Ulsterian identity at the time as both an identifier and informer of political action, insolubly wedded as it was to anti-Catholicism and rejection of inter-confessional marriage. Their agitation on the British mainland, their importation of German and Austro-Hungarian weapons, their hypocrisy in maintaining 'loyalism' while preparing for separation, and even more their cutting adrift of Cavan, Donegal and Monaghan Ulsterians all demonstrate how unconcerned six-county Ulsterians were with outside opinion. Action became legitimised in theology and the scripture during the Ulsterian Revolution and Ulster, a covenanting nation, became increasingly 'uncompromising, adamantine and self-contained'.

Based on early-modern, even pre-axial, ideas and theology, Ulsterian national identity challenges modernist concepts of nationalism. How Ulsterian problematises modern national identity is the subject of the next section.

Agnostics to the Faith of Nationalisms

Nationalism is not a structure. Despite commonality between nations, the differences are significant, and there is no universal model, no flatpack with instructions and bits and pieces of institutions and cultural mores bolted together. In a world where nation-states hold a monopoly on legitimate power and every human is entitled to national citizenship and where political discourse is carried

out on a national or international level, it is easy to think of nationalism as being universal. Eric Hobsbawm warns students of nationalism to be 'agnostic.'[131]

Hobsbawm highlights as few others do that there are both subjective and objective definitions of nationalism, and neither is adequate.[132] Objective definitions of nationalism lend themselves well to evaluations of Ulsterianism because of the self-denial of Ulsterians of their national identity. A closer look at Ulsterian identity strengthens Hobsbawm's critique of conceptual nationalism.[133] Hobsbawm's criticism is of reified national identity, and its models being too widely accepted as permanent and universal, not that national identity does not exist or that it is insignificant. Hobsbawm accepts nations and nationalism as a reality, and so we must accept the reality of Ulster as a nation. There are five characteristics to Hobsbawm's analysis of nationalism the first being that it is 'primarily a principle that holds that the national and political units should be congruent', with citizens' duties to it being paramount.[134] Secondly, nations are modern, engineered and imaginary and created by nationalism and not vice versa, thirdly, that analysis of nationalism as a phenomenon should be in very broad terms, fourthly, there must be a bottom-up, not élite-centric approach and fifthly, there must be an examination of the evolution of national consciousness. The definition is the basis of Hobsbawm's critique. Taking each point of Hobsbawm's assessment *in seriatum*, Ulsterian identity mostly satisfies the first point but it and Britain's asymmetrical identity problematise ideas of congruity. Ulsterianism is not a modern phenomenon but based on early-modern ideas and mores and grounded in Old Testament theology. Thirdly, looking at Ulsterian identity

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131 Hobsbawm, *Nations and Nationalism*, p.8.
132 Ibid., p.8.
133 Hobsbawm, not restricted to modular ideas of nations and reified structures of nationalism, comes closest to considering Ulster Protestant cultural and communal identity as a national identity.
134 Hobsbawm, pp.9-13.

outside of the modern and modular structures, it does fit into a broad evaluation. Fourthly, this analysis does attempt, within the confines of the sources available, to look beyond the views of the élite, albeit as an élite-led construction, and fifthly, the crux of this research is about the emergence of distinct national consciousness in Ulster. Hobsbawm's argument that conceptual national identity must be critiqued and broadened beyond the dominant modern and modular structures is the essence of the conceptual framework this chapter constructs.

Even to the critical Hobsbawm, there are some fundamental attributes which make a nation. Firstly a nation must be economically viable, which Hobsbawm labels the 'threshold principle'.[135] Ulsterians understood this, leading to the partition of Ulster and debating the four, six and, nine-county options.[136] Balancing the demographic dominance of Ulsterians against economic viability was a fraught process for Ulsterian politicians. Pre-modern nations or communities have proto-national bonds: 'supra-local bonds', conceptually very close to Anderson's 'simultaneity', which bring people to the spatial world outside of which they live and political bonds that link them to state institutions.[137] As it is crucial to Ulsterian identity, so too is a religion to national identity more generally. Religion provides rituals important to proto-national bonds, that are 'common collective practices which alone give a palpable reality to the otherwise imaginary community.'[138] Religious observance and the symbolism and praxis of religion and religiously centred institutions are fundamental to Ulsterian identity in modern and pre-modern periods. As discussed in this thesis, the Marxist Hobsbawm also sees the rejection of proletarian socialist movements as common to all versions of

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[135] Ibid., p.31.
[136] [PRONI] D/627/435/14A, 'Printed hand bill: 'Why I voted for the Six Counties. What was my Object in Signing the Covenant?' by Col. 'Fred' H. Crawford, Cloreen, Belfast' April 1920.
[137] Hobsbawm, p.47.
[138] Ibid., p.71.

nationalism.[139] Dismissing class division to accent sectarian differences was essential to Ulsterian solidarity and remains so today. The next part of this chapter looks at contemporary sources within the ideas laid out in this part to demonstrate that Ulsterian should be considered a national identity distinct from Britishness and Irishness.

II: Ulsterian National Identity: Ulsterian Revolution, Partition and State Consolidation

How the period between 1910-1927 defined and determined the character of Ulsterian identity is the subject of the second part of this research chapter. Empirical work demonstrates that the conceptual discussion above does define Ulsterian identity as a type of national identity in practice.

Ulsterian media and culture in the period show that Ulster existed as a *de facto* nation in the imagination of Ulsterians and *de jure* as a new constitutional state after 1920. Print media and written culture were well established and widespread, ensuring simultaneity across the national community. Despite being an atypically religiously adherent group, and because of the nature of Presbyterianism, Ulsterians embraced the challenge to divine authority that left space for nationalism to become a civic religion. As culturally distinct and separate people on a remote part of the British Isles, Ulsterians were a 'Creole' community and after 1921 and the passing of the Government of Ireland Act (1920) the dominant group in Northern Ireland, a colonial successor state. During the period of the Ulsterian Revolution, the political élite mobilised the mass of

[139] Ibid., p.123.

the ethnically Ulsterian population to defy and reject Home Rule with the threat and effective organisation of extra-constitutional and physical force. At its peak, the UVF numbered 110,000 men and the USC 24,000 (with plans for more than 60,000) out of a population of just over 1,200,000.[140] Ulster was a highly mobilised ethnic nation. Ulsterianism had (and still has) a strong sense of its collective history and ahistory. Communal solidarity and political urgency in the period derived mostly from a common history and the founding *mythomoteur* which guided Ulsterian identity through the turbulent period and internal crisis. Historically and constitutionally separate from Britain, the period saw Ulsterian distinctiveness accelerate as the uncompromising stance and plans for separation and against Home Rule further peripheralised Ulster from ideas and concepts of Britishness, just as other peripheral colonies ethnicised themselves during the decline of empires.

Ulster's Solemn League & Covenant is a literal example of how Ulster was a covenant nation. The centrality of religious belief, practice and symbolism further demonstrate the importance of belief in themselves as the Elect which drove Ulsterian defiance and determination. Severing Cavan, Donegal and Monaghan and the thousands of brother covenanters in those counties from Northern Ireland shows the ruthless self-interest of Ulsterians and their commitment to survival just as their abandonment of Southern Unionists had done shortly before. That Ulster did not become a Four County state owes less to fidelity to the brother covenanters of Fermanagh and Tyrone than it does with the acceptance among Ulsterians that Northern Ireland had to be economically viable. Religion demonstrates coherence among Ulsterians, and it also shows the

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[140] W E Vaughan & A J Fitzpatrick (eds), *Irish Historical Statistics: Population, 1821-1971* (Dublin: Royal Irish Academy, 1978), p.4, puts the population of Northern Ireland in 1926 (the first available date for the new state) as 1,256,561.

importance of supra-local bonds, that like simultaneity, bring together people and communities that do not know each other and link them with authorities and institutions. Religion was not the only example of those supra-local and proto-national bonds in the period; the UVF and USC being others. Particularly during the consolidation of Northern Ireland Ulsterian political leaders loudly rejected socialism as a means to shore up a national front against Irish Nationalism.[141] Obsession with a permanent and existential constitutional crisis meant social cleavages were demoted and even banished.

Ulsterian national identity challenges modular and modernist ideas of national identity. That does not mean that Ulsterian identity cannot be considered a national identity but instead highlights the weaknesses in an excessively structuralist and determinist approach to the study of national identity. Ulsterian asymmetry, mixing loyalty with rebellion and unionism with separatism, within the uncodified and inconsistent constitutional arrangements of the United Kingdom show that nations and nationalism do exist beyond the Jacobin model of post-1789 European nations. Research on national identity among Ulsterians is not an exercise of fitting a square peg in a round hole, instead a demonstration that the round hole need not be so fixed in its shape. The next section explains how print and political organisation mobilised Ulsterians and simultaneity played a central rôle in the construction of Ulsterian national identity.

The Covenant: A Nation in Print

[141] See, [PRONI], D/1327/16/1, 'Election material: Local Government', 1920-1981.

A quick search of the online British Newspaper Archive between 1900 and 1949 returns twenty publications for Northern Ireland.[142] Belfast had five newspapers while Derry had two. Tyrone and Ballymena each had a brace of newspapers and Carrickfergus, Coleraine, Lurgan, Newry and Portadown one each as well as other regional titles. Of course, the online archive has not digitised the entire print catalogue of Northern Ireland. Many Nationalists read papers published in the south and west of Ireland, so many relevant titles remain uncounted here. Newspapers were widely available in the period of the Ulsterian Revolution with weekend and weekday audiences targetted. As clearly demonstrated by the variety of titles of the Belfast papers Nationalists and Ulsterians had their separate sectarian news-sheets to read.

Politics featured prominently in news coverage and advertising. '**UNION IS STRENGTH, THEREFORE, NO SEPARATION.**', read the text next to the banner of the Belfast News-Letter on Ulster Day, 28 September 1912.[143] Perhaps it was unremarkable that a staunchly Ulsterian newspaper would take such a line. On the other side of the banner, the Red Hand of Ulster (black for want of a colour printing press) further signalled which side of the fence (or interface wall) the *Belfast News-Letter* sat. What was remarkable however was that 'Union is strength' was not a headline of a newsarticle or an editorial leader.

UNION IS STRENGTH,

And ***McLELLAN'S*** celebrated "Union"

Table and Dessert Knives certainly

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[142] <www.britishnewspaperarchive.co.uk>, [12 November 2018].
[143] *Belfast News-Letter*, Saturday 28 September 1912, p.1.

Illustrate this truth.

They are made on a new principle,

which makes it impossible for the

handles to become loose in wear and it is

THEREFORE

to your advantage to call and inspect

these goods, which I offer in various

qualities at lowest cash prices and

guarantee that between handle and

blade there can be

N O S E P A R A T I O N.

8. CASTLE PLACE.

Ulsterian determination to forestall Home Rule was so pervasive that by September 1912 it was used as an advertising technique for cutlery salesmen. Between the tiny printed article detailing the plans for Ulster Day and Carson's preceding tour around Ulster there sits another black-bordered box with a Red Hand (again printed black):

ULSTER DAY.

"AND this day shall be

unto you a memorial

for ever." -Exodus.

The Covenant[144]

During the period publicists and salesmen turned the Red Hand of Ulster into a commercial success used not only to mobilise the Ulsterian population during the Orange Agitation but to sell products to Ulsterians. There is debate as to the origins of the Red Hand and whether it signifies *dextera Dei* (God's right hand) or the bloodied hand of a mythical Ulster chieftain who cut off his left hand throwing it to touch the shoreline before his competitor in a race to claim dominion over the territory.[145] Ambidextrous, some versions of the symbol are left-handed while others are right-handed seemingly suggesting the symbol sometimes represented the hand of God and at other times the hand of a chieftain or both at once. Ewan Morris explains that during the Orange Agitation, the Red Hand took on further meaning.[146] During the Solemn League & Covenant, it represented an oath-taking hand held up to God, and throughout the period it also symbolised a stop sign. Held flat-out the Red Hand invoked a shared identity and said firmly, 'Not One Inch'.

As discussed in the next chapter Old Testament narrative fits easily into the language of Ulsterian resistance to Home Rule, but this was not a call to sign the deal between Him and a chosen people, rather an offer of a deal between

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144 Ibid., p.8.
145 See letters in, *History Ireland*, Vol.18, No.2 (2010).
146 Ewan Morris, *Our Own Devices: National Symbols and Political Conflict in Twentieth-Century Ireland* (Dublin: Irish Academic Press, 2005), p.110.

Robinson & Cleaver, Eason & Son, C. Porter & Co. and all comers. '**The Covenant** Men's and Women's Beautifully printed on parchment paper suitable for framing. Size 9x11½ in. **1D Each**.' Ulsterians would cite their business mind and enterprise as a difference between themselves and the south and west of Ireland, but the use of the political crisis to make a few shillings demonstrates this better than any stump speech at a Unionist Club rally. Newspapers advertised goods but also political rallies that took place in the weeks preceding Ulster Day. Both the promotion and coverage of those rallies further highlight the strength of Ulsterian identity in the period.

Tours and Rallies

It is through Ulsterian newspapers, in this case during the summer and autumn of 1912 that historians can see a clear articulation of Ulsterian identity. As the *Ballymena Observer* noted Ulsterians were distinctive, 'a million industrious Protestant Irish people of all classes' would resist Home Rule, but they would do it together and as industrious Protestants.[147] Future Lord Chancellor, Frederick (F E) Smith, later Lord Birkenhead, characterised Ulsterians as 'a free, industrious, and a loyal community'.[148] At a time when the Gaelic League grew in importance among Irish Nationalists, Smith juxtaposed Ulsterians, an 'Anglo-Saxon' community with their south-western neighbours.[149] Ulsterians saw industriousness and prosperity as distinct from the rural and impoverished south and west Ireland, Carson put it directly, 'why is it that they who are settled in the most difficult part of Ireland have brought about a state of prosperity and contentment

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[147] *Ballymena Observer*, Friday 27 September 1912, p.6.
[148] *Ballymena Weekly Telegraph*, Saturday 28 September 1912, p.11.
[149] *Ballymena Observer*, Friday 27 September 1912, p.5.

that is unequalled in any other part of the country.'[150] The *Northern Whig*, in contrast to their south and western neighbours, reported Ulsterians as being 'the most progressive community in Ireland'.[151] In September 1912 the *Belfast News-Letter* reported that Ulsterians gave 'Ulster the commercial and industrial supremacy which has made her name known in every part of the civilised world.'[152]

At the same time, the *Ballymena Observer* noted the solidarity and togetherness of the covenanting nation, 'In the whole Unionist population – he might also say the whole Protestant population – of the North East corner of Ulster there was not one dissentient voice.'[153] Not only was Ulsterian national identity displayed through newspapers but also in popular contemporary books. Unionist politician Ernest Hamilton wrote of the character of Ulsterians in his popular 1923 history *The Soul of Ulster*. Emphasising the importance of the purity of the seed among an Elect people Hamilton described a history of carnal resistance by Ulsterians:

> A standing testimony to the stern resistance of the colonists to the allurements of the native girls is to be found in present-day Ulster's 800,000 Protestants, all of whom would to-day be profitable member of the Church of Rome, had their forbears [sic] at any time through the centuries yielded to the charms of the native daughters of Erin.[154]

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[150] *Ballymena Weekly Telegraph*, Saturday 28 September 1912, p.11.
[151] *Northern Whig*, Monday 30 September 1912, p.9.
[152] *Belfast News-Letter*, Saturday 28 September 1912, p.7.
[153] *Ballymena Observer*, Friday 27 September 1912, p.5.
[154] Ernest Hamilton, *The Soul of Ulster* (New York, NY: E P Dutton & Co, 1917), p.71.

Hamilton went on to further emphasise Ulsterian national distinctiveness:

> They speak a half-Scotch lingo with an Irish brogue; their forbears [sic] have been in Ireland for over three hundred years, but for all that, they have not a drop of Irish blood in their veins.[155]

Furthermore, prominent Dublin-born Unionist, Alexander Leeper the principal of Trinity College, University of Melbourne made explicit his belief in the nationalist character of Ulsterian identity:

> … the district comprised within the four counties of North-east Ulster, inhabited mainly by a homogeneous population united by religion, by race, by political traditions and aspirations. If anywhere there is to be found in Ireland a community entitled to call itself a "nation", it is in North-east Ulster.[156]

Rallies, tours and public events, all well attended by leading Ulsterians and their British supporters, accompanied the signing of the Solemn League & Covenant. Carson's tour across Ulster's principal towns in the week before Ulster Day was a physical example of simultaneity. Reports of mass rallies read at the same time through Ulsterian newspapers and with Carson's tour, or a surrogate tour, likely only a short distance away in that week, meant across Ulster Ulsterians were

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[155] Ibid., p.118.
[156] [PRONI] D/989/C/1/19, 'Pamphlet "The Story of Ulster" by Alex. Leeper (a lecture given in Victoria, Australia)', May 1913.

connected by the excitement of current events. Carson made it clear that to him Ulster was a nation. When addressing the rallies, as the *Ballymena Weekly Telegraph* reported, Carson proclaimed that the tour, 'exhibited to him the great soul-inspiring DETERMINATION OF A NATION resolved to protect its rights.' Ulsterian mobilisation was 'the soul of a nation fighting against injustice'.[157] Not merely inferred at these mass rallies speakers made explicit professions of nationhood to thousands who attended them and more who read the extensive newspaper reports.

This section demonstrates through contemporary sources that Ulsterian national identity was far more than an abstract. Through marketing, newspapers, books and rallies Ulsterians engaged in nationalism led by an élite that published newspapers and made speeches highlighting the distinctiveness of their identity and even making claims to national identity explicitly. Irish and Northern Irish history suffers from a self-imposed delusion of exceptionalism, and the next section places the concepts and examples laid out above in an internationally comparative framework.

III: Comparative Ethnic National Identity

Belgium: Your Majesty, there are no Irish

Ulsterian author Ernest Hamilton talked unequivocally of the ethnic nature of Ulsterian national identity when he addressed religion and race. Ulsterians and Irish were separate with only the ground beneath their feet in common. They

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[157] *Ballymena Weekly Telegraph*, Saturday 28 September 1912, p.11. Capitalisation original.

were 'two races living side by side on the one island.'[158] For Hamilton sectarianism in Ulster was more than just denominational observance with religion acting as a diacritic of racial difference:

> the mutual antipathy is racial and not religious, only - as has already been explained - the religion marks the race, so much so, in fact, that religion actually stands for nationality.[159]

Hamilton echoed contemporary conflict in Belgium between French-speaking Walloons and Dutch-speaking Flemish. Jules Destrée's, '*Sire, il y n'a pas de Belges*' became a damning statement on Belgian unity in the twentieth century.[160] Established as a homogenous Catholic realm in 1830, Belgium began to exhibit linguistic fissures after just a few decades, with a Francophone élite excluding the mainly rural and more impoverished Dutch-speaking Flemish from power within the young state. By 1912 the Wallonian Socialist Destrée was moved to write an open letter to King Albert of the Belgians:

> 'Sire, *allow me to tell You the truth, the large and horrifying truth: there are no Belgians*. By that I mean that Belgium is a political state, somewhat artificially constructed, but that it is not a nation.'[161]

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[158] Hamilton, p.85.
[159] Ibid., pp.113-114.
[160] 'Sire, there are no Belgians'. Jules Destrée, 'Lettres au Roi sur la séparation de la Wallonie et de la Flandre' (Letter to the King concerning the separation of Wallonia and Flanders), (1912), in Theo Hermans (ed) and Louis Vos & Lode Wils (co-ed), *The Flemish Movement: A Documentary History, 1780-1990* (London: Atlantic Highlands, 1992), pp.206-217.
[161] Ibid., p.206. Emphasis original.

Destrée was asking the king to accept that Belgium did not exist and to treat Flemings and Walloons as distinct communities. Flemings had in the preceding decades gained linguistic concessions which, drawing parallels between Irish Protestant and Catholics, made Walloons fearful that their Francophone ascendency was under threat. Hamilton and other Ulsterians were attempting a similar feat during the Ulsterian Revolution. Political Ulster Unionism, wrong-footed by the success of Irish Nationalism which, by the end of the nineteenth century claimed to speak exclusively for the entire, island was in the period of the Ulsterian Revolution distinguishing itself from Irish Nationalism and saying that there were no Irish, but separate Irish Catholics and Ulsterian Protestants. Just as Destrée was arguing that Walloons should not be made to accept the will of the Flemish political movement, Hamilton was laying out the case that Ulsterian Protestants could not be made to accept Home Rule which he and others considered the will of Irish Nationalists.

The antagonism between Flemings and Walloons show similarities with divisions between Catholics and Protestants in Ireland. Lode Wils explains the shifting communal identities in Belgium through Deutsch's definition of a nation, 'a nation constitutes a network of links which allows its members to communicate more effectively amongst themselves than with outsiders.'[162] Flemish Belgians' inability to speak to Francophone Belgians explains, for Wils, why the Belgian nation was fundamentally weak and continues to weaken. Such a problem did not exist among Irish Nationalists and Ulsterians who were able to communicate universally in English, even if both sides made failed attempts at linguistic

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[162] Lode Wils, 'The Two Belgian Revolutions' in Kas Deprez and Louis Vos (eds), *Nationalism in Belgium: Shifting Identities, 1780-1995* (Basingstoke: Macmillan, 1998), p.39.

separation.[163] A national language is more shibbolethic than practically necessary for emergent nations, but Ulsterians did speak English as a common national language.

André Lecours discusses the role of élites in the formation of Belgium. Politicisation and manipulation of cultural markers by a political élite created new administrative structures which in turn received loyalty from a community further transforming the identity of a group.[164] A similar process took place in Ulster during the revolution. Belgium was created suddenly in 1830 by a Francophone Catholic élite in the southern provinces of the United Kingdom of the Netherlands. Ireland was created, after a longer campaign for independence, in 1920 by a politicised Catholic class in the western provinces of the United Kingdom of Great Britain & Ireland. Before the Belgian Revolution Flanders did not exist as an administrative or political unit just as Northern Ireland did not exist politically and administratively before the Irish Revolution. Belgium's three national parties, Christian Democrat, Liberal and Socialist had by the 1960s fractured into six regional parties with each of the former national parties splitting into two linguistic parties. Belgian voters, just like those in Northern Ireland could no longer vote for national parties, only linguistic parties.[165] That universal 'communitarisation' has close correlations with Northern Ireland's universal sectarianism. Even if a person does not self-identify as 'Unionist' or 'Nationalist' housing, schooling and voting forces everyone in Northern Ireland to choose between one or the other.[166]

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[163] Promoting the Lallands dialect of Ulster-Scots as a language of Ulsterians has become a key parity of esteem issue since the signing of the Good Friday Agreement but Ulster-Scots did appear in newspapers of the period: *Ballymena Observer*, Friday 27 September 1912, p.7.
[164] André Lecours, 'Political Institutions, Elites, and Territorial Identity Formation in Belgium', *National Identities*, Vol.3, No.1 (2001), 51-68, p.54
[165] Ibid., p.61.
[166] This is not the place for a discussion on the cross-community appeal, or lack of, of the Alliance

A false comparison with Belgium would be the more recent emergence of Brusseler identity. Rejecting both Walloon and Flemish identity, Brussels has become a separate administrative unit, and in response to growing cultural sentiments among Dutch and French speakers, Brusseler identity has recently grown. For Lecours Brusselers, defining themselves as being not Flemish and not Francophone, are a 'subtraction identity.'[167] Ulsterianism is not a subtraction identity. Of course, geographically, it sits between British identity and Irish identity. However, being Ulsterian is more than not being either Irish or British, as this chapter explores. It is not possible to impose a single, structurally reified model of national identity on any community. Ulsterians play neither the part of Flemings nor Walloons in the conceptual comparison. Nineteenth-century Flemings sought to support and strengthen Belgian identity by adding Flemish identity to the structures of the state. Only after repeated frustration by the *Francophonie* did some Flemings become radical and militant.[168] There were pro-Belgian Flemish democrats, but Ulsterians never developed a pro-Irish tendency, moving straight to extra-constitutional, anti-Irishness before an Irish state was established. Like Flemings, in the period Ulsterians created new institutions: national holidays, anthems and flags.[169] With workers let go early and services across the province, Ulster Day was a *de facto* national holiday.[170] Notwithstanding the adoption and adaption of *God Save Our King* by Ulsterians as an official

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Party of Northern Ireland.

[167] Lecours, p.63. A group that defines itself as neither of two dominant conflicting identities but as a separate 'third' identity is known as a 'subtraction' group: the remainder left over when the other two are removed from the theoretical equation.

[168] Vos, pp.87-92. Such was the level of militancy among some radical Flemings that they supported German occupation in both World War One and World War Two discrediting the wider Flemish movement.

[169] Vos, p.87.

[170] Jon E Fox, 'National Holiday Commemorations: The View From Below', in Rachel Tsang & Eric Taylor Woods (eds), *The Cultural Politics of Nationalism and Nation-Building: Ritual and Performance in the Forging of Nations* (Oxford: Routledge, 2014).

anthem, *Derry's Walls*, *Dolly's Brae*, *The Protestant Boys* and *The Sash* and are all unofficial anthems of Ulsterians. Flags played a crucial role in Ulsterian identity, and do to this day.[171] A further useful comparison in understanding Ulsterian identity is found in the southern states of the USA.

Southern United States of America: Away Down South in Dixie, Away Up North in Ulster

Ulsterians, during the Ulster Revolution, drew similarities between themselves and the American colonists during the American Revolution. In the run-up to Ulster Day at a demonstration in Cullybackey, County Antrim, platform chairman William Young drew direct parallels, discussed further in chapter two, between the plight of Ulsterian revolutionaries and American revolutionaries nearly one hundred and fifty years before:

> The present crisis in Ulster reminded him [William Young] of one event in history that was the declaration of American Independence. When the meeting was held in the Boston Hall to sign the declaration which practically declared them as rebels, there was a great deal of uncertainty on the part of some present as to whether they should sign or not. At least one of them came forward and said–"Gentlemen, this is a time for us to all hang together–or all hang separately." (Laughter and applause.)

[171] Mulvenna & Burgess.

> He thought that applied to the present crisis in Ireland, and they were all determined to stand together in defence of the Union. (Applause.)[172]

Carson himself drew parallels between Ulsterians and American revolutionaries in 1913 when justifying the establishment of the UPG.

> One cannot help going back in history to the nearest analogy that I at all events know when the Americans who had left Ulster went grovelling to the Throne with expressions of their loyalty and were discarded as we are being discarded, and in the end they set up a Provisional Government…[173]

Not only were Ulsterians keen on establishing historical precedent through their *mythomoteur* but through analogies with other groups of rebels. There are other correlations between Ulster and the United/Confederate States of America. James Cobb's work on historical Southern identity presents facets that are similar to those in Ulsterian identity.[174] Like Ulster, Southern identity is distinct from that of the nation to which it is constitutionally bound. Cobb argues that in the eighteenth and nineteenth-centuries the South had more in common with the West Indies than it did with Pennsylvania.[175] New Englanders were able to exclude the South below the Mason-Dixon line from their Northern identity. Linda Colley's seminal work on historic British identity straightforwardly excludes Irish identities from the framework arguing that Ireland's relationship with British

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[172] *Ballymena Observer*, Friday 27 September 1912, p.8.
[173] *Belfast News-Letter*, Thursday 25 September 1913, p.8.
[174] James C Cobb, *Away Down South: A History of Southern Identity* (Oxford: OUP, 2005).
[175] Cobb, p.14.

identity is parenthetical, inconsistent and impermanent even by the impermanent and fluid nature of historic British identity.[176] If a line on a map allowed New Englanders to exclude Southerners from their 'American' identity, it seems likely that Britain's ever-evolving identity, consciously or otherwise, excluded Ulsterians 240km away on the other side of the Irish Sea.[177]

Reinforcing earlier theological ideas of slavery as providentially ordained, Southerners considered the Confederacy as a Christian nation'.[178] As an Elect nation, Ulsterians considered themselves and their nation providentially ordained. At an Ulster Campaign Tour rally, William Moore MP talked of 'the Protestant Province of Ulster.'[179] The markedly religiously toned *Northern Whig* demonstrated further similarities with Cobb's analysis of Southern identity, almost in duplicate. Antebellum slavery, justified in the South as a means to avert a race war and maintain white supremacy, was ended nominally by the defeat of the Confederate States of America (CSA). Postbellum, Southern focus moved to defeat the 'Radical Party' imposing Reconstruction on the South. Southerners objected to the will of Northerners being imposed on them just as Ulsterians opposed t0 the Irish will imposed on them through Home Rule. The leader in *The Northern Whig* laid its fire on 'Radicals' too:

> Home Rule Radicals are raving in 'Ercles' vein, and declaring that the signing of the covenant following upon the recent campaign in Ulster is an act of treason and rebellion. And Ulster replies it is the Radical Government who are the destroyers and the traitors […] and now their

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[176] Linda Colley, *Britons: Forging the Nation 1707-1837* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 2012), pp.xxviii-xxix and p.8.
[177] <https://www.britannica.com/place/Irish-Sea>, [13 November 2018].
[178] Cobb, pp.49-50.
[179] *Ballymena Observer*, Friday 27 September 1912, p.8.

> Nationalist and Labour mercenaries are clamouring to "Down with Ulster!"[180]

In the same edition, the refrain of 'Ulster only wants to be let alone' is repeated.[181] Two days earlier *The Belfast News-Letter* published a five-stanza long poem, *Ulster Day*, written by a Samuel Cowan. Among the customary vainglorious rhymes of Protestant resistance and threat of armed insurrection the theme of being 'let alone' is repeated:

> Heirs of glorious Liberty-
>
> Prosperous, and Protestant-
>
> Loyal, and Content, are we!
>
> Let us be!
>
> Loyal to Old England's Throne,
>
> Let us alone-
>
> For no other Rule we'll own!
>
> Never, of the thrall of Rome
>
> Shall the free-born Sons of Ulster
>
> Bear the galling chain!
>
> Shielding Conscience, Hearth and Home,
>
> As our sires, of old, repulsed her,
>
> So shall we, again!
>
> Ulster's sons shall never

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[180] *Northern Whig*, Monday 30 September 1912, p.7. 'Ercles is a translation of Heracles of classical mythology, and the term 'in 'Ercles vein' refers to a bombastic speaker.
[181] *Northern Whig*, Monday 30 September 1912, p.7.

Hold, or brook, communion

With Disloyalty![182]

Wishing to be left to their own devices, to be allowed to enjoy their culture and not to have the will of the North imposed on them is a significant theme of Southern identity, drawing strong parallels to Ulsterian concerns and identity during the Orange Agitation and the Outrages.

IV: Conclusion

Constructed and invented by an élite, the Ascendancy in Ulster, Ulsterian national identity mobilised the Protestant, unionist and loyalist population firstly in Ulster and then in the successor territory of Northern Ireland. Research and analysis in this chapter demonstrate that with an ethnic and communal identity distinct and straddling Irishness and Britishness, Ulsterian constitutes national identity in its own right. Too often, national identity is a reified concept. Modular and overly prescriptive concepts of nationalism exclude communities and ethnicities that fail to tick each box of the modernist schema. A broader look at what keeps the people of a nation as a coherent unit challenges modular nationalism and the universality of what is ultimately, merely one of many political ideologies.

Nation and national identity, Northern Ireland and Ulsterianism included, are engineered and at the bottom the result of manipulation and fabrication. Manipulation and fabrication is seen in Italian Unification, seen by many as Piedmontification. Cavour manipulated events in the Po Valley and on the

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[182] *Belfast News-Letter*, Saturday 28 September 1912, p.7.

peninsula fabricating an Italian identity to enlarge his Piedmontese state and the Savoyard domain - that is what is meant by, 'We have created Italy, and now we must create Italians'. In 1870 the Italian government was unified but national identity and allegiance were not. Carson and Craig also invented an Ulsterian-ness to maintain their ascendancy. However, they lacked a state. Having created Ulsterians, they needed to create Northern Ireland and by 1916 accepted partition and by 1920 the creation of the new state of Northern Ireland. That state not only excluded them from Home Rule but allowed them to control their futures. Although imagined and invented and lacking contemporary self-definition Ulsterian national identity is emic, sincerely held and a core motivator in the behaviour of Ulsterians across all classes of society during the Orange Agitation and the Outrages. Modern concepts of national identity are modular, emphasising Jacobin ideas of administration and romantic ideas of language, but Ulsterian national identity is pre-modern.

As a *de facto* Creole ethnicity, the inventors of Ulsterian identity found it easy to point to early-modern historical origins that geographically set themselves apart from the British metropole. A separate Protestant religious heritage including communal mythology fraught with bloody struggle and enduring sectarian conflict allowed Ulsterians to imagine themselves as detached from Irish Catholic neighbours with whom they shared a contested island. It is an ethnic construction. The creators of Ulsterian identity, the Ulster Ascendancy, proclaimed a common myth of descent where ancestors came from England and Scotland, not from Ireland where they fought as brothers-in-arms and brothers-in-Christ against the Irish Catholic 'Other'. Exploration of the highly contested nature of Belgian national identity and exclusivist characteristics of 'Dixie' identity in the United States places Ulsterian nationalism within a modern framework of

nations emerging from a definition of the 'Other'. Strength in war and faith from the seventeenth-century, claimed Carson, Craig and the men booming from the stages, was a strength passed down to Ulsterians in the early twentieth-century steeling them during the Orange Agitation to fend off Home Rule.

Brotherhood-in-Christ (in reality pre-Christian Old Testament theology) not only provided a crucial element to the myth of common descent but in theories of Covenant and Chosenness a model for contemporary national identity. If God gave Ulsterians grace and guidance in the past, He would do so again and into the future. The Hand of God created Ulsterians as a distinct, cohesive and Elect nation and obedience to His word guaranteed His continued protection. Faith in God and Election brought Ulsterians together during the period as it had in times past. The next chapter looks at the importance of theology in contemporary Ulsterian mentality and how a heritage of faith and Election provided more than just a common history and identity but justification for acts of collective resistance that together made the Orange Agitation more than just agitation but national revolution, the Ulsterian Revolution.

2. My God Hath Sent His Angels: Ulsterian Theology of Resistance

Ulsterians firmly believed that no monarch, government, or parliament was entitled to command loyalty if their statutes and edicts violated the laws of God. Darius, king of Babylon, corrupted by jealous courtiers, decreed that the worship of any god but himself would mean death. Daniel however would not worship false idols and continued to pray to the God of Israel and was found the next morning in devotion facing Jerusalem, sending him to his fate in the lions' den. Daniel had obeyed God's law and defied the heretical human prince. God's angel came to shut the mouths of the lions and Darius, realising his mistake and confirming his faith in the God of Israel, had Daniel lifted from the den while his accusers, their wives and children were ravaged by the lions.[183]

To Ulsterians a devolved Home Rule Ireland would have been the jaws of Babylonian lions. Catholics, the feared majority, were idolators who would chastise and savage them, like the faithful in a lions' den, into error unless like Daniel they resisted. No king could command them into that heresy and Ulsterians were duty-bound to not only say 'no' but to defy ungodly authority.

This chapter looks at the centrality of resistance theology to Ulsterian identity and as a motivation and justification for the Ulsterian Revolution. Through works of the religious scholars of the sixteenth and seventeenth century, Ulsterians found

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[183] Daniel 6:22 (Coverdale Bible): 'My God hath sent his angel, which hath shut the lyons mouthes, so that they might not hurte me. For why: myne ungiltynesse is founde out before him. And for the (o kynge) I never offended the.'

religious authority to defy the King. Earlier examples showed how if a monarch defied God's law without being checked by the covenant, the nation and the Elect the consequences for all were catastrophic and eternal. This chapter looks at the Scottish National Covenant of 1643 as a precedent not only for an elect body defying an error-prone monarch, but as the national ancestors of the 'Ulster-Scots' defying the King in London for the preservation of their nation under God. It also examines the merging of religious and historical precedent in the use of Ulster-specific examples of resistance to an illegitimate King, the Glorious Revolution and Williamite Wars, formed a *mythomoteur* that promoted not only the Ulsterian national identity but also its resistance and the revolution it accomplished in the early twentieth century.

I: Theology and Ideology in Ulsterian Resistance

The use of pre-modern ideas and theology and of seventeeth-century precedent was a significant element of Ulsterians' justification for resistance. Seventeenth-century resistance and atrocity formed a crucial plank in Ulster's resistance platform but why that was the case has been neglected by historians. The resistance theory formulated in the counter-Reformation of the sixteenth century informed and authorised Ulsterian revolution in the twentieth century. Instead of being merely an intellectual and theological exercise in early-modern Protestantism, this research goes some way to explain why Ulsterians talked as much about Kings James and Charles as they did about King George V. The following section explores the theology of Calvinist resistance.

Non Nisi Homo Est [184]

Ulsterian identity and 'loyalism' are synonymous. Ulsterians were loyal to the Crown, to the Empire and the 'constitution' of the United Kingdom, with each institution safeguarding the privileged position, legally and economically, that Ulsterians enjoyed in the province. Even the briefest of studies of Ulsterian behaviour in the period shows that those claims of loyalty rang hollow, even being outright hypocritical. From the signing of the Solemn League & Covenant in September 1912, the establishment of the UVF in January 1913, the announcement and establishment of the UPG in September 1913, precipitating the Curragh Incident in March 1914 to the Larne gun-running in April 1914 palpably demonstrated that Ulsterians' loyalist rhetoric was revolutionary. However, those claims of loyalty were shouted and printed without any irony. Ulsterians believed themselves to be the most loyal of the loyal. In 1912 Nationalist newspaper, *The Derry Journal* summed up the behaviour of the 'agitators', albeit in the sectarian language we come to expect, and the contradiction of Ulsterian loyalism:

> Protestant ascendancy [sic], by which of course, is meant Tory Protestant ascendancy, meets one in every department of Irish life. And in no way is it better exemplified than in the licence accorded to the Ulster agitators at the present time. Had nationalists made similar threats in the Land League days they would have been in jail in twenty-four hours. The same fate would await Labour leaders if they spoke in a like manner. But Sir Edward

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[184] 'He becomes nothing more than an ordinary man'.

> Carson and his fellow-rebels go scot free. They belong to the ascendant class, and ascendancy throws about them its cloak of protection.[185]

How was Ulsterian normative so different that they could not conceive of their revolution? Chapter four explores the regularity and ability of Ulsterians to construct a parallel-narrative during the Outrages, entirely separate from objective evidence and the weight of evidence. In investigating the protestations of loyalty during a time of active revolution, historians can find answers in the theology, even ideology, of Ulsterians' Calvinist belief system.

'Resistance theory' was developed by Calvinist and Knoxian thinkers in the sixteenth and seventeenth-centuries. At its essence was the assertion that no temporal power could command obedience from the faithful if it erred and ruled in contravention to the laws of God. Furthermore, the faithful should resist the heretical temporal power and even owed a duty to overthrow it if it did not correct its ways. As Calvin himself commented in interpreting the Book of Daniel:

> Earthly princes lay aside all their power when they rise up against God, and are unworthy of being reckoned in the number of mankind. We ought rather utterly to defy than to obey them whenever they are so restive and wish to spoil God of his rights.[186]

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[185] *Derry Journal*, Monday 30 September 1912, p.7.
[186] Richard L Greaves, 'John Knox, the Reformed Tradition, and the Development of Resistance Theory', *The Journal of Modern History*, Vol.48, No.3 (1976), 1-36, p.9.

Idolatrous Catholics were to be the majority in Home Rule Ireland. Ulsterians would not bear the risk of breaking the Decalogue (Ten Commandments) and their covenant with God. So for Ulsterians the Government of Ireland Act (1914), and the two Bills (1886 and 1893) that had failed before it were ungodly. It was, however, godly to defy George V and resist his, 4 & 5 Geo 5 cap 90 (Government of Ireland Act (1914)). They even had a duty to oppose. A prince who governed against the honour of God, according to Calvin, lost his authority and became '*non nisi homo est*' ('nothing other than an ordinary man').[187]

Developed in the context of the crisis of mid-sixteenth-century European Protestantism, resistance theory fitted well into the worldview of early twentieth-century Ulsterians. Catholic powers and states began to reverse Protestant reforms after the Siege of Vienna of 1529 which forestalled the threat of Ottoman conquest in Europe. In the same year, Holy Roman Emperor Charles V convened the Diet of Speyers announcing the persecution as heretics of Reformers across the Empire: the princes who protested against the Emperor became known as 'protestants'. During the subsequent years, defection weakened Germany's Protestant Schmalkaldic League; Mary Tudor ascended to the throne in England; Mary Stuart became Queen of Scots with French Catholic Mary of Guise acting as regent while Guise influence increased in the French court after the death of Francis I bringing about the persecution of Protestants across the realm.[188] Luther and other Reformist thinkers (by that point 'Protestant') felt a genuine sense of existential threat. Resistance theory was not an abstract but a practical justification to resist princes (and princesses) who would slay and burn

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[187] Quentin Skinner, *The Foundations of Modern Political Thought: Volume 2 The Age of Reformation*, (Cambridge, CUP: 1979 [2013]), p.220.
[188] Skinner, pp.191-195; and established in February 1531 the **Schmalkaldic League** consisted of Lutheran realms within the Holy Roman Empire in military alliance.

Protestants for their beliefs. Initially, Calvin promoted non-resistance. Predestination meant suffering the worst and most dishonourable princes as punishment from God and part of His grand design for humankind.[189] Instead it was Lutherans rather than Calvinists who developed resistance theory. It was not until the Dutch Revolt, from 1566 to 1648, that Calvinists accepted the doctrine. Ulster settlers were faced with the Irish revolt in the same period and confronted with slaughter at the hands of the Gaelic-Catholic population.

> Without any provocation, and equally without any warning, the native Irish […] fell upon the isolated colonists, and stripped them literally to the skin. In this condition men, women and children were turned out into the cold […] and at the end of the week, nature's processes were voted too slow, and the hunting down and butchery of these naked wretches became a recognized form of sport. In its turn mere killing began to pall, and tortures of various kinds were resorted to […] for the mere sake of torturing.[190]

Hamilton went on to itemise the atrocities on each side of the River Bann. Although left out of the scholarship contextualising the evolution of resistance theory, the Rebellion of 1641, albeit overstated in the memory of Ulsterians, realised Calvinist's worst fears. Mary Tudor's burnings, the St. Bartholomew's Day massacre, the Council of Troubles in the Spanish Netherlands, the Piedmontese Easter against the Waldensians each sit in a persecution narrative that justified the practice of resistance theory. The Irish Rebellion of 1641 sat

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[189] Ibid., p.194.
[190] Hamilton, pp.36-37.

firmly in that narrative and was foremost in the minds of Ulsterians during the Revolutionary period. Early-modern fear permeated modern Ulster. Ulsterian newspapers during the Orange Agitation included the headline, 'The Mediaeval and the Modern' and in the same issue under the headline 'Ulster's Ultimatum' the *Northern Whig* commented on a threat perceived greater than the massacres of the seventeenth-century:

> But to-day the position is ten times more acute, and the attitude in Ulster is ten times more significant. In '92 it was as if King James and his army were marching from Dublin to the Boyne. We could only hear the drum far off as the Protestants mustered to resist him. To-day it is as though the Jacobite forces had crossed the Boyne and were marching on the Bann. And we can hear the enemy's drum reverberating along the banks of Lough Neagh.[191]

Examining resistance theory allows historians to see Revolutionary period Ulsterians as more radical and revolutionary in their motivations than previously thought. Sixteenth-century Calvinists and Lutherans at first developed a 'constitutional' resistance theory and afterwards a 'private-law' resistance theory. Less radical, 'constitutional' resistance theory determined that God ordained all magistrates to keep His law whether they were emperors, kings, princes, dukes or barons. If the highest magistrate failed in that duty, then the lower magistrates had the right to resist 'being no less ordained of God'.[192] Martin Bucer went further to say that God would not place his authority in a single magistrate but

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[191] *Northern Whig*, Monday 30 September 1912, p.7.
[192] Skinner, pp.204-205.

disperse it throughout the realm.[193] For Bucer, the divine authority of the king was parcelled out to many *magistratus inferiores* (inferior magistrates) as well as a single *potestas superior* (superior power) all of whom were ordained to exercise *ius gladii* (law of the sword). Bucer posed a dilemma: if all law is divinely ordained then the hierarchy of power must be headed by the divine God whose laws demand obedience before that of any human *potestas superior*. Released from loyalist obligations if the *potestas superior* became tyrannical or heretical, the *magistratus inferiores*, 'must attempt to remove him by force of arms'.[194] The Government of Ireland Act (1914) was heretical and promulgated by the superior power of George V.[195] The *Northern Whig* places Ulsterians' modern resistance and communal identity beneath the headline 'An Unchanged Spirit' in a line and narrative arc reaching back to the 1640s, to 'Charles's time':[196]

> Under the brilliant Orange uniforms, under the smart suits of the "clubmen", are hearts as sound and as constant, spirits as proud, as obstinate, and as indomitable as any that in the days of the Stuart tyranny took their stand after counting the cost and drew the sword of the Lord and of Gideon in defence of faith and freedom […] There is a simple declaration of a unified Protestant community to the British people, "We are united in our loyalty to you and the flag. We are united in our

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[193] **Martin Bucer** (1491-1551) born in Schlettstadt on the western extent of the Holy Roman Empire (modern day Selestat, Bas-Rhin, France) and a Dominican who renounced holy orders becoming a leading Protestant thinker during the Reformation.
[194] Skinner, p.206.
[195] **George V** (1865-1936) King of the United Kingdom reigned from 6 May 1910 until 20 January 1936.
[196] *Northern Whig*, Monday 30 September 1912, p.7.

> determination to resist the attempt to put us out of the Union and under Roman Catholic domination.[197]

Conditionality in the final part of the *Northern Whig* commentary is instructive. Ulsterians' loyalty to earthly princes was conditional just as early-modern loyalty across Reformed Europe was conditional and subject to revolution. Ulsterians looked to early-modern examples to frame their early-modern theology. Just as the *Northern Whig* cited the Battle of the Boyne and 'Charles's time' to contextualise justification for resistance, Ronald O'Neill MP (famous for throwing a book at Winston Churchill during parliamentary questions on the Orange Agitation) used the early-modern example of the Siege of Derry of 1689 to demonstrate the necessity of their resistance and lengths they prepared to go:[198]

> some would not be committed and would fall short, 'the great Siege of Derry, there was none who hung back, none who lacked courage? Did they not think there must have been many who said: "After all, King James is the lawful King, and, although he is a Papist and a liar - (laughter) - nevertheless it will be illegal to oppose him."[199]

Linking resistance theory and a national *mythomoteur* explored in chapter one, the Siege of Derry remains central to Ulsterian identity, and Ian McBride explores the

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[197] *Northern Whig*, Monday 30 September 1912, p.7, and **Gideon** the Israelite prohet and general who returned his people to Yahweh (the God of Israel) and defeated the heathen Midianites with a much smaller force at the direction of an angel.
[198] Paul Bew, *Churchill & Ireland* (Oxford: OUP, 2015), p.65.
[199] *Ballymena Observer* - Friday 27 Sept 1912, p.7.

place of the events of 1689 in collective memory in detail.[200] For McBride the siege is emblematic of Ulsterian siege mentality, 'defiance, solidarity, sacrifice, deliverance' and also of pan-Protestant unity setting an example for Orangeism and Protestant political cohesion in the centuries that followed.[201] It is a similar mentality and set of characteristics seen in Akenson's fundamental adamantine characteristics discussed above. Importantly to this analysis, McBride identifies resistance theory theology that made Presbyterians much more active in defence of the town against the Jacobites than their Anglican confreres. Just as in the Orange Agitation of 1910-1914, in 1689 Presbyterians drove all Protestants, including reluctant Anglicans, to resist temporal power even if it crossed the line between resistance and rebellion (and in the twentieth-century the line between resistance and revolution). In McBride's evaluation, 'The shutting of the gates was an overt act of rebellion against royal authority, setting a vital precedent for the replacement of pusillanimous leaders with new hardliners.'[202] Ulsterians used the same rhetoric and justification, a weak Crown, a radical government unable and unwilling to confront 'Romanism' and unreliable metropolitan government during the Orange Agitation to justify those later acts of revolution. For centuries the disparate Protestant confessions argued over and contested the history of the Siege, and that went some way in keeping fractured Ulster Protestants apart until 1910: 'a distinct Ulster Protestant identity did not fully develop until Home Rule became a real possibility.'[203] With the perception of Home Rule as an existential crisis, the Siege of Derry and the myths surrounding it helped Ulsterians come together and jointly claimed the legacy of the Dutch Invasion, of victory over

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[200] McBride, *Siege of Derry*.
[201] Ibid., pp.12 and 21.
[202] Ibid., p.16.
[203] Ibid., p.80.

James II and the security of Protestantism in Ireland, to construct an identity with a common past to stand united against Home Rule. McBride argues, as does the analysis in chapter one, that a myth of common descent and shared heritage is central to Ulsterian national identity, but that through a partial reading of Irish history it denies its distinct nationalist character. As a result 'There has been a tendency to denigrate the cultural identity of Ulster Protestants by classifying it as a garrison mentality rather than a genuine form of nationalism.'[204] Early-modern theology and the historical context gave a potency to Ulsterian identity that provided the required unity and drive that powered the Ulsterian Revolution. In the myths of the Siege of Derry and similar seventeenth-century events Ulsterians found the common descent across the various confessions to form a united front to resist Home Rule, with justification from their past and theology, and to revolt against the King and his Imperial Government.

'Constitutional' resistance theory denied an inherent right to rebel, allowing it only when the superior power was tyrannical, and excluded commoners from resistance. Inferior magistrates were local nobles, not peasants or merchants. Quentin Skinner argues that Calvinists in the British Isles were more likely to argue the radical 'private-law' resistance theory as they did not fear the King of France or the Holy Roman Emperor's flames. Philip Melancthon had argued that any man would have the right to resist a magistrate if, as private individuals, the magistrate was doing 'atrocious and notorious' injury to the man 'in a case of private danger'.[205] Melancthon offered an example of the right of any man

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[204] Ibid., p.81.
[205] Skinner, p.202 and **Philip Melanchthon** (1497-1560), born in the County Palatine of the Rhine, contemporary of Martin Luther and leading theologian of the Reformation.

(peasant, merchant or lord) to strike down any magistrate (judge, captain or lord) whom he found in bed with his wife or daughter because that judge, captain or lord, at that moment, had lost his authority as a magistrate. If a magistrate ruled contrary to God's law, then the magistrate was doing 'atrocious and notorious' injury to his subjects. 'Private-law' theory went one step further than 'constitutional' theory in positing that the divine ordination of any magistrate was conditional on obeying God's law. Subjects no longer owed obedience to a magistrate if they broke the condition. Without divine ordination, they lost their authority and became merely a private individual who other private individuals should resist for doing 'atrocious and notorious injury'. Melancthon, like all other Calvinist and Lutheran theorists, denied a right to rebellion and sedition *qua* a right to rebellion and sedition, and placed emphasis on the role of magistrates, and enumerating 'four grades of injury'. However by arguing any magistrate could become a private individual Melancthon legitimised popular rebellion, not just that of the nobility.[206]

Resistance theory was not limited to Swiss Calvinists, French Huguenots or the oppressed reformers of the Holy Roman Empire. English and Scottish Marian exiles gave the most radical accounts of resistance theory.[207] The works of John Ponet, Christopher Goodman and John Knox show the proximity of influence on Ulster, and moreover where the line between the theology of resistance theory and the ideology of natural law blurred.[208] Research since Skinner places resistance theory at the beginning of the development of

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[206] Skinner, pp.218-219.
[207] Protestant **Marian Exiles** fled England during the reign of Catholic monarchs Mary I and Philip, 1553-1558.
[208] Glen Bowman, 'Early Calvinist Resistance Theory: New Perspectives on an Old Label', *Journal of Law and Religion*, Vol.23, No.1 (2007), 309-319, and David VanDrunen, 'The Use of Natural Law in Early Calvinist Resistance Theory', *Journal of Law and Religion*, Vol.21, No.1 (2005/2006), 143-167.

revolutionary natural law which in subsequent centuries was used to justify the overthrow of the *ancien régime* and struggles for decolonisation. David VanDrunen explores the similarities between Calvinist ideas of resistance and natural law. For those theorists, God's law was the law of nature, and VanDrunen conceptualises the term as 'the law of God inscribed upon the heart and known through conscience.'.[209] Goodman and Ponet sought to solve the problem that if all magistrates, including tyrannical ones, were appointed by God, how could resisting them not be akin to resisting Him?

Marian exiles retorted that it was blasphemous to say that God would use evil tyrants. God could do no evil, and echoing Melancthon, in their evil magistrates lost their ordination. Resisting them was not resisting God.[210] Goodman, writing at the end of the sixteenth-century, blamed humankind for the rise of evil magistrates as God had allowed His people 'to choose and procure themselves princes and, kings after their own fantasy.' Being chosen in ignorance and error, tyrannical magistrates had to be 'deposed and punished'.[211] Ponet and Goodman may not have seen a difference between God and nature but were aware that others did and with some foresight, that in the future humankind would too. Ponet was clear that the law of God was the law of nature and that it was, therefore, natural to depose tyrants as even heathens knew that natural law allowed the killing of tyrants.[212] Goodman was equally clear: 'what God's law forbids, nature abhors.'[213] Ponet's definition of natural law, paired with his insistence that even heathens knew they could 'kill' tyrants, is much more radical than what had gone before.

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[209] VanDrunen, p.143.
[210] Skinner, p.227.
[211] Ibid., p.229-230.
[212] VanDrunen, p.160.
[213] Ibid., p.162.

> [natural law is] not written in Bookes, but grafted in the hearts of men ... which we have not learned, received, or read: but have taken, sucked and drawne it out of nature; whereunto we are not taught, but made; not instructed, but seasoned ... This Law testifieth to every mans conscience ...[214]

That radicalism, to dare to think of killing the monarch, was not based on mainland Europe but emanated from the British Isles. Ponet's definition of the right and duty to kill a magistrate was broad even if it still was highly conditional, applying only to ungodly and tyrannical rule. Both literalist interpretations of the Old Testament legitimised Ulsterian resistance to Home Rule and the work of Marian exiles. Ponet's radicalism is less important than it is surprising. Strict Calvinism was enough for Ulster's biblical literalists. However, during the Ulsterian Revolution talk of tyranny and rebellion at hustings and in press coverage was understood among the biblically literate Ulsterian population as natural and godly. Whether justified by faith or political ideology, by 1912 Edward Carson had made it clear that whatever its form, Home Rule was to be resisted:

> There was no ambiguity about it, and he [Carson] did not care twopence whether it was treason or not; it was what they were going to do. (Cheers.)[215]

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[214] Ibid., p.155.
[215] *Ballymena Weekly Telegraph*, Saturday 28 September 1912, p.11.

Resistance theory theology justified the sentiments of Carson's revolutionary stump speech, but so too did historical precedent, as discussed above in the work of McBride. Justification of the Ulsterian Revolution came from precedents not only in Irish history but from Scottish history, binding Ulsterians and Scots together in common descent as well as in faith. The next section explores this in more detail.

1643: Scotland's Early Modern Precedent

The geographical proximity of Scotland and Ulster is significant and the close relations between Scots and Ulsterians is discussed in chapter one. Seventeenth-century travellers commented on how villages on the shore of the Northern Channel would be empty on Sunday save for a watchman. The rest of the inhabitants had taken a boat to Scotland early in the morning for Sunday services and were expected back before dusk. Ulster's distinctive dialect, a form of Lallans, is called 'Ulster-Scots'.[216] Ulster-Scots is a cultural signifier that is growing in importance as a diacritic in the identity politics of post-Troubles Northern Ireland. The significance of the Scottish connexion is crucial in the context of the Orange Agitation as it provided a precedent for the actions of Ulsterians resisting Home Rule.

Hugh Smith Morrison opened his seminal *Modern Ulster* with a description of the Scottish connexion: 'The Ulster Scot is a Scotchman improved by three hundred years' residence in Ulster.'[217] James Logan took a softer approach to Ulster's perceived superiority to its Scottish neighbour while still coming down on Ulster's side, 'The Ulstermen who came over from Scotland improved by

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[216] **Lallans** derives from 'Low Lands' referring to the Scottish language of the Scottish Borders and Midland.

[217] Hugh Smith Morrison, *Modern Ulster: Its Character, Customs, Politics, and Industries* (London: H R Allenson Ltd, 1920 [2015]), p.17.

transplanting as most people do: […] the Scotsman is better for living in Ireland.'[218] A T Q Stewart in his Partitionist account of Ulster's modern rebellion, *The Ulster Crisis: Resistance to Home Rule, 1912-14*, gives the Scottish National Covenant of 1643 as the early roots to Ulster's early-twentieth-century resistance:

> These Ulster Scots turned in sympathy to the followers of the National Covenant who were resisting the rule of Charles and Archbishop Laud, and during the next few years their Presbyterianism was hardened in the fires of the 1641 Rebellion and the Civil War.[219]

David Miller dedicates pages of his work, *Queen's Rebels* to the significance of the Scottish National Covenant in the mid-seventeenth-century to demonstrate the origins of Ulster 'banding' which is necessary for understanding the rise of the UVF, vigilantes and ultimately the USC.[220] Banding originated from the early modern period where Planters settled too far from the metropole to rely on the monarch to provide for their defence against the native Irish. Instead, they banded together, 'arrayed in arms' to protect their settler community and became self-reliant in matters of security in Ulster throughout the seventeenth and eighteenth-centuries. Similarities between the early-modern bands and eighteenth-century 'Volunteerism' and with the UVF and USC of the twentieth-century are apparent: the monarch and later Imperial Government could not be relied on or trusted to provide defence for Planters and their Ulsterian successors, so they took matters into their own hands. Never shy to reference Christianity and offer

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[218] James Logan, *Ulster in the X-Rays: A Short Review of the Real Ulster, its People, Pursuits, Principles, Poetry, Dialect and Humour* (London: A. H. Stockwell, 1923), p.16.
[219] ATQ Stewart, , p.27.
[220] David W Miller, *Queen's Rebels, Ulster Loyalism in Historical Perspective* (Dublin: UCD Press, 1978 (2007)), pp.11-24.

a historicist account of biblical stories, the *Northern Whig* in 1912 drew a direct and almost immediate line of causation between the resistance of seventeenth-century Scots and early-twentieth-century Ulsterians:

> The dangers which induced the Scottish Covenanters to meet at Greyfriars and enter into a Covenant which changed the whole history of Scotland is the danger which confronts the Protestants of Ulster to-day, and is only natural that the descendants of those old heroes should meet in precisely the same way. The words of LOUDON, "that they should carefully keep themselves together in a cause that was common, and in which all and everyone was so deeply interested" are now being acted on in Ulster. If the National Covenant "sealed freedom's sacred cause" in Scotland, the Ulster Covenant will seal freedom's sacred cause in Ulster.[221]

For Ulsterains the events in Edinburgh and across Scotland in the 1630s and 1640s were not a distant myth but a highly relevant guidebook to negotiating the Ulsterian Revolution and a justification from their Scottish ancestors. Ideas on resistance theory, developed above, were almost contemporary for the Scottish National Covenanters. The closeness Ulsterians felt for their Scottish ancestors, and confreres demonstrated how close they were to Calvinist and Lutheran resistance theory.

Despite the elision of Ulster in her recent research, Laura Stewart's *Rethinking the Scottish Revolution* is instructive in exploring continuities and likenesses between the

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[221] *Northern Whig*, Monday 30 September 1912, p.6.

two covenants separated by two hundred and seventy-four years.[222] Stewart establishes the critical role played by the Scottish nobility, the 'heritors' or 'gentlemen', in organising the National Covenant.[223] Ulster's landed nobility, élite and clerics were central to not only the Solemn League & Covenant but also the organisation of the UVF, the setting up of an indemnity fund in the case of conflict and the establishment of the UPG. The Ulsterian Revolution took place after political reforms that opened up direct participation for most men. Stewart writes of an age where only the recognised Estates of the realm could proffer an opinion, let alone govern. As an early-modern example of mass Protestant mobilisation Scotland's National Covenant allowed 'commoners', to use an early-modern term, to play an active role in the affairs of state. In Largs in Ayrshire supplicants claimed the 'remnat people of the parish [sic]' were consulted in the writing of their petition.[224] In Burntisland, Fife the entire congregation, men, women and children swore the National Covenant in an unusual act of social inclusivity.[225] Similarly, the Solemn League & Covenant gave a voice and a role to people across all social classes even if most men were already enfranchised. In Scotland, Burntisland was not the only presbytery (parish) where women had sworn the National Covenant. In 1912, 228,991 Ulsterian women signed the supporting Declaration, giving many of them their first taste of active citizenship.[226]

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[222] Laura Stewart, *Rethinking the Scottish Revolution: Covenanted Scotland, 1637-1651* (Oxford: OUP, 2016).
[223] Laura Stewart, p.5.
[224] Ibid., p.68.
[225] Ibid., p.110.
[226] **The Declaration** We, whose names are underwritten, women of Ulster, and loyal subjects of our gracious King, being firmly persuaded that Home Rule would be disastrous to our Country, desire to associate ourselves with the men of Ulster in their uncompromising opposition to the Home Rule Bill now before Parliament, whereby it is proposed to drive Ulster out of her cherished place in the Constitution of the United Kingdom, and to place her under the domination and control of a Parliament in Ireland.
Praying that from this calamity God will save Ireland, we hereto subscribe our names.

Bucer's idea of a *magistratus inferiores* checking the error-prone *potestas superior* was played out in practice in seventeenth-century Scotland and twentieth-century Ulster. After the general mobilisation of swearing the National Covenant Scotland's clerics and heritors distanced themselves from the commoners to make a popular movement into an élite-led régime conforming to contemporary aristocratic norms.[227] A similar process of élite distancing from mass mobilization took place in Northern Ireland during the 1920s, with the UUC holding a particular fear of 'Bolshevism' and the urban Ulsterian working-classes in Belfast. Magistrates whom Bucer and other mainstream Calvinists claimed had the exclusive right to resist princes resisted. In September 1913, the UPG was established with an influential and élite dominated 'Ulster Military Committee', quickly renamed 'Ulster Volunteer Committee'.[228] Of the eighty-three members, sixteen (19%) were peers of the realm; nineteen (23%) were members of parliament; fourteen (17%) were deputy lieutenants; eight (10%) were justices of the peace and; seven (8%) were King's Counsels or bachelors-of-law. Even in 1913, the UPG would have exercised the *ius gladii* through a socially exclusive and élite group of nobles, legislators, officers-of-the-crown and men-at-law. In Scotland in the 1640s the nobility took control of a popular movement to govern. In Ulster in 1913 the same happened as *magistratus inferiores* led the resistance to Home Rule.

Organising for the Solemn League & Covenant was a crucial moment in the mobilisation of Ulsterian national identity. Discussed below, the practical importance of the Solemn League & Covenant lay in the organisation of 471,414 Ulsterians to sign the two gendered documents. From the newspapers report of

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[227] Laura Stewart, p.86.
[228] [PRONI] D/1327/2/12, 'Ulster Unionist Council and Ulster Union of Constitutional Associations, Agenda for Special Meeting', 24th September 1913.

the time, there is a definite sense, not least in the Ulsterian press, of frenzy across the province. Carson's motorcade stopped in principal towns to deliver stump speeches, and even if the 'leader' only passed through a town there was a real sense of excitement. If the main motorcade did not go through the town, then it is likely there would have been a locally organised event. Clerics promoted the signing and employers were encouraged to call a half-day on Saturday, Ulster Day. Novels, popular history books, papers and the pulpit exposed Ulsterians to an intense sense of Anderson's theory of simultaneity.[229] Stewart too argues that the Scottish National Covenant fostered an incipient sense of nationalism in Scotland where through appeals to and the participation of the common people, the covenant enabled the Estates to claim to represent not only their interest but that of the entire nation.[230] Furthermore, the National Covenant campaign allowed the small but emerging 'middling sort' to have a transformative role in the developing Scottish polity, proving themselves to be worthy of consideration.[231] In an age before rapid, let alone instantaneous communication, with no widely distributed newspapers, simultaneity operated in a different way. Proclamation Crosses were the local venue for the issuing of decrees and the sharing of news. Across Scotland, there was competition for control of those spaces. Royal officials would declare and post their decrees on the crosses. Covenanters would often be waiting in the assembled crowd and would remove the decree and replace it with their own.[232] Scuffling for the Crosses not only challenged royal authority, just as Ulsterians were challenging Imperial authority, but the repeated performance throughout the realm demonstrates an act of simultaneity.

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[229] Anderson.
[230] Laura Stewart, p.5.
[231] Ibid., p.16.
[232] Ibid., p.74.

Just as the UUC organised the Solemn League & Covenant (and for the UPG in 1913) at a local level in seventeenth-century Scotland, the 'Tables' organised the National Covenant.[233] Stewart argues that the creation of the Tables very quickly eroded and replaced the power of the Scottish Privy Council. From the seisure of Crosses to the creation of proxy government the National Covenant created parallel structures of authority in the same way that the UPG planned to do in Ulster. It was less extensive and less organised, but government and authority were less extensive and less well organised in the mid-seventeenth century. 'Private-law' resistance theory paved the way for natural law and popular participation in the resistance of magistrates, and during the National Covenant, some articulated those ideas explicitly. George Buchanan talked of princes being 'un-kinged' in the same way as Melancthon spoke of losing ordination.[234] Buchanan's conditions for un-kinging were less strict or theological than those of earlier Calvinists. Buchanan's view was that 'the welfare of the people is the supreme law'.[235] Any prince who broke that law should be un-kinged. Here are ideas that may not be explicitly religious to modern ears but this was a period of universal religiosity, and Buchanan's supreme law sounds quite similar to the 'natural law' of the Marian exiles. There was a supreme law, like divine law, and breaking it broke the condition of kingship. The Solemn League & Covenant also gave legitimacy to the élite that had organised it. Just as the Scottish heritors were able to claim to represent the interest of the entire Scottish nation through the National Covenant so too the socially unrepresentative organisers of the Solemn League & Covenant could claim to represent Ulsterians. Stewart argues that the National Covenant, became the source of popular sovereignty in Scotland, in

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[233] Ibid., p.29.
[234] Ibid., p.156.
[235] Ibid.

effect usurping the Caroline monarchy: 'National tyes perpetually obligeing, before God, the King, Nobles, & People of all ranks; and will do, so Iong as *Scotland* is *Scotland*.'[236] Concepts of sovereignty had developed in the two and a half centuries between the National Covenant and the Solemn League & Covenant. However, what is apparent by the action of Ulsterians was that by 1912 they too had dismissed ideas of monarchical sovereignty even if they would articulate that idea quite differently.

Despite the gap in time and the Straits of Moyle, there are clear continuities between Scottish National Covenanters and Ulsterians. Ulster's Solemn League & Covenant was crucial in mobilising national identity in 1912 just as it was crucial in developing a national identity and popular sovereignty in early-modern Scotland. Both covenants drew their legitimacy from the religious resistance to heretical kings: Charles I's attempts to bring the kirk into Episcopalian conformity and George V's attempts to impose devolution on Ireland. Heretical behaviour by both princes meant that they had lost their ordination and claim to obedience. Both could be un-kinged without breaking God's law of obedience. In both cases, the nobility and élite used the commoners and plebeian population to claim sovereignty and legitimacy. In so doing they established parallel systems of authority to check and then usurp the prince. Once that sovereignty had been claimed, and resistance had succeeded, then the élite rebuffed the lower-classes to establish themselves as the new government. In Ulster, the plebeian classes had to be brought into the state through the establishment of the USC in 1920. Frequent citing of the National Covenant as precedent and the pointing to 'Scotch' heritage makes the similarities between National Covenanters and Ulsterians useful in

[236] Ibid., p.327.

both conceptual and practical terms. Ideas that justified the events of Greyfriars also legitimised the events of 1912 but the National Covenant provided a playbook for the Ulsterian Revolution passed down from their ancestors.

II: Conclusion

In the early twentieth century, early-modern theology and events held currency for Ulsterians. Biblical literalists read the Old Testament not as an abstract or rough guide to their faith but as a set of instructions and commands to be followed without compromise. Comparing historical and contemporary events, Ulsterians justified their actions and proved the applicability of early-modern ideas to the Orange Agitation. Born of a time of Protestant persecution and anxiety, sixteenth-century resistance theory suited a contemporary mood of persecution and anxiety with the imposition of Home Rule looking inevitable by 1914.

Resistance theory legitimized defiance of a King and his counsel who through their subjugation of Ulsterians with Home Rule erred and defied the Law of God. Just as Daniel defied Darius, so Ulsterians defied George V. In his defiance of God's law, the King became nothing more than an ordinary man to be punished and usurped for his error. Although resistance theory contained subtleties and conditions, Ulsterians chose resistance, and the next chapter demonstrates the breadth and radicalism of the Ulsterian Revolution. Ulsterian popular culture at the time pointed to the early modern period as an example of how to resist and often cited the religious justification of the actions of their ancestors. Chief among the precedents, the Scottish National Covenant of 1643

provided historical example, theological justification and affirmation of Ulsterian national identity. Parallels between the National Covenant of Scotland and the Solemn League & Covenant of 1912 are evident, but beyond covenanting, the similarities between the 'Tables' and the UPG indicate closeness between the two periods. Scottish ancestry set Ulsterians apart from their Irish neighbours and the centrality of the Scottish National Convention linked Ulsterians to their past, faith and distinctiveness during the Orange Agitation.

Commemoration of resistance to the Irish Rebellion of 1641 and resistance to Stuart restoration at the Siege of Derry in 1689 and the Battle of the Boyne in 1690 made a past period of universal religiosity current to the particularities of early-twentieth-century Ulster. Reinforcing the myth of common descent, explored in chapter one and forming the crux of the Ulsterian *mythomoteur*, early-modern events and religious belief sat at the core of Ulsterian national identity. Throughout the period Ulsterian leaders, the press and preachers cited the early modern-period, inherent with its resistance theology, as an example to be followed during the Ulsterian Revolution.

At the heart of Ulsterian national identity was a shared past, shared faith and shared distinctiveness. For more than most communities that past and faith, early-modern and biblically literalist, held current value and relevance and so resistance theory which justified disobedience to an ungodly King in the seventeenth-century justified disobedience in the early-twentieth-century too. Past, faith and distinctiveness were fundamental characteristics in the 'uncompromising, adamantine, self-contained' Ulsterian national identity;

characteristics which enabled and motivated them to engage in the Ulsterian Revolution discussed in the next chapter.[237]

[237] Akenson, p.42.

3. No Mere Crisis But A Revolution: Ulsterian Revolution

Ulster's newspapers barely mentioned the final passing of the Parliament Act on 18 August 1911. Perhaps it had all been said. Perhaps the pressmen were saving their ink for the revolution to come. Ulster's Revolution started that day as the Lords' definitive veto, the final check against Home Rule, was signed away by the King. Peers could suspend Ireland's devolution for two years, but the impetus behind Home Rule was too great. Sooner or later, and it would be sooner, Ireland would have its autonomy and Ulster would have its fight. Within the year Prime Minister Asquith would introduce the Third Home Rule Bill. Ulster responded with a massive and popularly supported political and military mobilisation. Less than six months after Asquith had stood at the Despatch Box proposing the Government of Ireland Bill more than 440,000 Ulsterian men and women signed the Solemn League & Covenant and the Declaration to do all that was necessary to stop Home Rule coming into operation. In January 1913 the UUC established the UVF while it created a commission to draft constitutional articles for the UPG. Before the year was out Edward Carson, Ulsterians' chisel-jawed hypochondriacal leader established the UPG and announced it was ready to seise power the moment the Home Rule Bill became law.

This chapter looks at concepts of revolution and applies them to the Orange Agitation, concluding that events and situations during the period were

revolutionary. Ulsterians clung to their 'loyalist' label despite their revolutionary behaviour, and the first part of the chapter looks at why the denial of the obvious and not self-identifying as revolutionaries do not mean Ulsterians were not revolutionaries. The first part also adds to the place of Northern Ireland and Ulsterians in Irish revolutionary historiography, discussed in the introduction to the thesis. Part two looks at how the challenge to the Imperial Government through the mobilisation for the signing of the Solemn League & Covenant brought about a revolutionary situation, with the use of force and the revolutionary outcome (the holding of territory and consolidation of a new state) the subject of chapters four and five. Part three uses new sources and explains that government law officers prepared advice and drafted indictments against Ulsterians, and their British colleagues, of all ranks and levels for treason. It is easier to see the Nationalist Revolution as revolutionary, not only because Republicans wear the 'revolutionary' badge, but because the Imperial Government responded with repression, arrests, imprisonment and executions. In Ulster, the Imperial Government sat passively concerned at the reaction from its anti-home Rule backbenchers and the military if it enforced Home Rule on Ulster. Outward passivity from the Imperial Government suggests a lack of concern and therefore, lack of threat from Ulsterians. Sources in this chapter show that behind the scenes in Dublin very senior Imperial law officers prepared and recommended treason charges against leading Ulsterians and senior British politicians. A political decision let the revolutionaries get away with action the Attorney-General for Ireland clearly considered acts of treason.

The first part looks at the paradox of Ulsterian loyalist-revolutionaries and why denying their revolution does not mean Ulsterians were not revolutionaries.

I: The Ulsterian Revolution

Une Révolution Refusée[238]

Change alone does not make a revolution. Charles Tilly defines revolution as 'any abrupt, wide-reaching, popular change in a country's rulers'.[239] Government and the nation are key to Tilly's state-centred approach.[240] State and politics were the focus of wide-reaching change in Ulster between 1910-1927. With hundreds of thousands of Ulsterian men and women mobilised, it was a popular revolt, but it was not a social revolution. Land systems remained unaltered, ownership and money stayed with the same élite, and the disempowered remained disempowered. Before 1920 Ulsterians only sent MPs to Westminster but by 1921 Ulsterians had their government (and importantly local county, borough and district councils) and their state. No longer ruled by London-centric civil servants in Dublin or Britishmen from Westminster, popular mobilisation and the use of force meant Ulsterians ruled Ulster and the new state of Northern Ireland. It was a quintessential revolutionary outcome. This section looks now at what made the events of the Orange Agitation in Ulster revolutionary and not merely a crisis.

Historians have yet to apply theories of revolution to the events in the nine counties. 'People do run through streets, guns get fired, prisons do get razed and monarchs do lose their heads, but only through an act of conceptual will are

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[238] The term ***Une Révolution Manquée*** (lit. 'a lacking revolution') refers to a revolution's outcome failing to reach its potential or the aspirations of the revolutionaries. Similarly, ***Une Révolution Perdue*** ('a lost revolution') refers to a revolution that through compromise and concession failed to deliver the hopes of the revolutionaries and, to all-intents-and-circumstances, is lost. Here, ***Une Révolution Refusée*** ('a refused revolution') refers to the refusal of the Ulsterian revolutionaries to accept they behaved as revolutionaries and engaged in a revolution, the Ulsterian Revolution which acted as a catalyst to the wider Irish Revolution.

[239] Charles Tilly, *European Revolutions, 1492-1992* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1993), p.4.

[240] Jeff Goodwin, 'State-centred Approaches to Social Revolutions: Strengths and Limitations of a Theoretical Tradition', in John Foran (ed), *Theorizing Revolutions* (Abingdon: Routledge, 1997), p.14.

such disparate real events roped together to "become" a revolution', and this chapter is an act of 'conceptual will' to reevaluate history.[241] Historians have chronicled, discussed and explored events in early-twentieth-century Ulster but not 'roped [them] together' conceptually. When 'roped together' it is clear that there is a strong case for calling the Orange Agitation and the foundation and consolidation of Northern Ireland a revolution which in turn triggered the broader Irish Revolution. Nationalist historians have no interest in looking at the revolutionary potential of those events in case it dilutes the potency of the Republican revolution. Likewise, Partitionists cannot contemplate Ulster Loyalists as rebellious revolutionaries. This original analysis looks at the Ulsterian response to Home Rule as revolutionary as passively accepting the Ulsterian label of 'loyalist' mask the events and the context where Ulsterians behaved as revolutionaries. Perhaps we feel it is necessary for the makers of change to self-identify as 'revolutionaries' before we can look at their actions as a revolution, but Alexander Motyl dismisses that notion: 'self-identification [...] [is] completely irrelevant to whether rapid, fundamental, and comprehensive change should be termed a revolution and someone promoting it a revolutionary.'[242]

If someone holds a piece of orange paper and everyone can see the piece of paper is orange, but the person holding it insists the paper is green, the piece of paper is still orange. The paper does not change colour, but we can doubt the acuity and straightforwardness of the orange-piece-of-paper-holder. Similarly, just because Ulsterians deny and refuse their revolutionary character despite behaving as revolutionaries does not mean the revolution did not take place or that they were not revolutionaries. If a person, group of people or popular movement arm

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[241] Alexander J Motyl, *Revolutions, Nations, Empires: Conceptual Limits and Theoretical Possibilities* (Columbia, NY: Columbia University Press, 1999), p.2.
[242] Ibid., p.30.

themselves, threaten and use force, declare a provisional government, disobey the incumbent ruler and create and rule a new state but say, 'I am a loyalist and do not identify with revolutionaries; therefore I am not a revolutionary' similarly, we look at their efforts, behaviour and actions and the events that followed and conclude there was a revolutionary outcome brought about by their revolutionary situation. They are revolutionaries. Self-identification is subjective, and historians should look at the facts objectively.

Force is an integral ingredient to revolution. Change can come about without force as it does in elections and referenda, but it is force or at least the threat of it that transforms change into revolution. Government officials were not hanged *à la lanterne* in Donegall Square as they were in Paris in 1793 during *la Terreur*, there was no rasing to the ground of Belfast City Hall as of the Bastille, and local landlords were not hustled into sheds in Antrim and shot through the head during the Ulsterian Revolution as they were in Russia. Where was the storming of the Winter Palace or the levelling of the Bastille by Ulsterians? Although the signing of the Solemn League & Covenant and the Declaration was akin to a popular Tennis Court Oath, Ulsterian revolutionaries did not need to use violence against existing local administration and élites.[243] Purging of local officials was unnecessary as by and large they supported the Ulsterian cause. Burning Belfast City Hall would have been anathema as Ulsterians built and controlled the symbolic building of local autonomy and Ulsterian identity themselves. Shooting landlords would have meant cutting the head of the revolution. Establishing and arming the UVF was a threat of force. Detailed plans

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[243] At Versailles on 20 June 1789 representative of the Third Estate, the commoners, swore **The Tennis Court Oath** (*Serment du Jeu de Paume*) committing themselves to remain together wherever and for however long until a constitution for France had framed and settled. A significant moment in the French Revolution, the representatives of the Third Estate formally mobilised together and asserted that power rested in numbers not wealth and privilege.

for the UPG laid out the seisure of power by the UVF. Founding the USC in the autumn of 1920 transferred that force from the UVF to the USC, its direct descendant, to consolidate the revolution, protect its legacy and defend its territorial borders.

Force was threatened against the Imperial Government, and both threatened and used against Nationalist communities across Ulster. Sectarian violence and persecution by the UVF and USC both formally and by individual members against Nationalists demonstrate extensive and sustained use of violence and force to bring about Ulsterian aims. The Ulsterian Revolution was violent and bloody.

Despite noting the usefulness of Tilly's definition of revolutions, particularly concepts of multiple and incompatible claims to sovereignty, Peter Hart repeatedly states that the 'Home Rule Crisis' in Ulster was not a revolution.[244] Hart based his assertion on Ulsterians, unwillingness to overthrow the British state in Ulster. Instead of seeing the forming of an army, the UVF, and proclaiming a provisional government as a challenge to Imperial rule in Ireland Hart saw them as 'quite the opposite'.[245] Arming the UVF and establishing the UPG was in some way a buttress to Imperial rule. It is wrong to accuse the revisionist Hart of falling into a reductionist two-nation historiographical trap, but the intellectual somersault needed to turn a direct challenge to the state into direct support for the state are worthy of a podium finish at the Olympic Games. Going further, Hart takes a counterfactual leap into the dark when talking about the prospect of the 'Home Rule Crisis' turning violent; 'even in so far as it pitted the

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[244] Hart, 'Definition: Defining the Irish Revolution', pp.18-24 and Hart., *The I.R.A. at War*, p.11.
[245] Hart, 'Definition: Defining the Irish Revolution', p.19.

UVF against the nationalist Volunteers, it would have been little more revolutionary than the standard Belfast riot."[246] It is nonsense to compare spontaneous mob rioting with organised and armed paramilitary groups. Fundamentally Hart is wrong because, even if conflict broke out before August 1914, the principal violence would not have been between Ulsterians and Nationalists as it was from 1920, but between Ulsterians and the Imperial Government. Hart has misidentified the Ulsterians' main adversary. Even when addressed directly, the potential conflict between Ulsterian and Crown forces is referred to as 'a local rebellion' with readers referred to a footnote citing Alvin Jackson in Niall Ferguson's counterfactual volume on 'what-if' history.[247] It is extraordinary that any weight is given to a counterfactual and passed off as supporting Hart's argument.

Hart makes a further error when saying violence in Ulster would have to have spread across the United Kingdom to have been considered a revolution.[248] Revolutions do not need to engulf an entire polity to be considered revolutionary, and all start in a region or locality and many remain within that region or locality. Revolutions are not modular, and their localism often determines their characteristics.[249] In a sixteen-page chapter, Hart's consideration of Ulster's revolutionary potential takes up only two separate paragraphs. It is, despite its brevity and reflecting the paucity of work on Ulster and revolution, a significant intervention. However, it is not thought out and offers no empirical research. Separately mentioning the use of the USC as a paramilitary force from 1920, which is correct, Hart describes Ulsterian paramilitaries as 'counter-

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[246] Ibid.
[247] Ibid.
[248] Ibid.
[249] Tilly, p.58.

revolutionary'.[250] The label strengthens Hart's argument but ignores, as the contemporary Nationalist commentator Eoin MacNeill acknowledged at the time, that 'the north begun'.[251] For MacNeill, the introduction of violence into the Irish politics of the 1910s (even though Irish politics had contained plenty of violence before) came from Ulsterians agitating against Home Rule with the UVF and Larne gun-running. Assessing the counter-revolutionary potential of Ulsterians from 1920 rather than 1911 misses the period of revolutionary challenge and much of the struggle. It is nonsequential and ignores the chronological development of events.

What we take from Hart's comments is that without intent there can be no revolution. We must dismiss that notion, particularly when it is clear, as has already been discussed, that to self-identify as a revolutionary is not a prerequisite to revolution. Ulsterians had the means and capacity to create a revolutionary situation and produce a revolutionary outcome. They had intent as understood in its very elementary legal meaning. While legal culpability does require both an *actus reus* ('guilty act') and a *mens rea* ('guilty mind' or intent), it does not require original intent at the beginning of the carrying out of a deed.[252] Intent can evolve as the deed is prepared and carried out. Prosecutors do not need to prove a defendant intended to wound their victim when they left the house in the morning only that there was the intention when the blow was struck late that evening. Even if Ulsterians did not begin their venture with a view to revolution there was a revolutionary outcome. At any point, Ulsterians could have changed direction and prevented their sedition, rebellion and disloyalty from becoming a

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[250] Hart, 'Definition: Defining the Irish Revolution', p.25.
[251] Eoin MacNeill, 'The North Began', *An Claidheamh Soluis* (November 1913)
[252] Edward Coke, *The Third Part of the Institutes of the Laws of England* (London: W Lee & D Pakeman, 1666). Coke laid out that culpability requires both a 'guilty act' and a 'guilty mind': 'an act does not make a person guilty unless their mind is also guilty'.

revolution, but they did not and instead carried on and went further until they achieved their revolution. Offering defences of duress, self-defence or despair (diminished responsibility) would only reduce the charge not absolve culpability. Protesting that Ulsterians did not mean revolution when they set out on their venture in 1911 does not alter the fact that at some point they did mean it and did do it.

Consideration of Ulster is used by Hart to support his thesis on the revolution in the south and west: that the arming of the Irish Volunteers was new to Ireland and revolutionary (in fact Ulsterians were armed and prepared for violence first). Not meant as original or significant history, the lack of other research means that it has become significant. This research hopes to give historians something to consider more purposeful and substantial than Hart's work. The next part of this chapter looks at the events of the Orange Agitation, paying particular attention to the Covenant, and how they created a revolutionary situation in Ulster that led to revolution across Ireland.

II: Revolutionary Situation and Outcome

Roping together the events in Ulster after 1911 with Tilly's conceptual thread, a distinctly Ulsterian Revolution connected and within the broader Irish Revolution appears. This part looks at phases of the Ulsterian Revolution and binds them with conceptual ideas of revolution. Firstly, there is a challenge to the incumbent ruler; secondly, there is a struggle for power; thirdly, there is forcible change; fourthly, the new régime holds some territory for some time; and fifthly

revolutionaries then consolidate the new state, so there is a 'revolutionary outcome'.[253] These five phases took place in Ulster between 1911-1927. The credible revolutionary challenge to incumbent Imperial rule mobilised 471,000 Ulsterians, proclaimed the UPG, enrolled 110,000 Ulsterian men in the UVF, and armed them with 25,000 rifles. Secondly, the struggle is seen in the Curragh Mutiny, and sectarian violence throughout Ulster. Police surveillance, breaking laws to arm and train the UVF as well as violence connected with the Nationalist Revolution in the south and west, demonstrates the second phase. Thirdly, extensive sectarian violence, especially after 1919, supported the forcible change. Fourthly, the holding of territory through the creation of two new states defined by the Government of Ireland Act (1920) and the Anglo-Irish Treaty (1921). The fifth and final stage, consolidation, is demonstrated in the recruitment of the resurgent UVF as a state-sponsored paramilitary force, the USC, implementation of CASPA, the abolition of proportional representation at the local and regional level and the disbandment of the Boundary Commission in 1925. Chapters four and five examine the third, fourth and fifth phases. Exploring each phase and the concomitant events and by 'roping them together' the next section explains that there was an Ulsterian Revolution within the Irish Revolution.

UVF and Covenant: The Challenge

The first phase of revolution is challenge to the incumbent government, and in 1912 93% of the adult Protestant population of Ulster signed the Solemn League & Covenant and the Declaration.[254] At its peak in 1914 110,000 men had enrolled

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[253] Tilly, p.8.

[254] 1911 Census of Ireland gave the total population of Ulster as 1,581,696. The Roman Catholic population was 690,816 (43.67%). Added together, the Church of Ireland (366,773 (23.19%)),

in the UVF representing 46% of the adult male Protestant population.[255] Carson, flanked by the UUC leadership and supported by the Ulsterian élite and rank-and-file alike organised and proclaimed the UPG to usurp Imperial rule. Less than six months before the United Kingdom declared war on Germany and the other Central Powers Fred Crawford sailed for Larne from Hamburg with 25,000 rifles and 3,000,000 rounds of ammunition to defy Home Rule and resist Crown forces in implementing it.[256]

Ulster Day editions of Ulsterian and Nationalist newspapers gave an insight into the phrensy and mobilisation of the Solemn League & Covenant and the Declaration. Events at Ulster Hall and Belfast City Hall filled the pages of the *Belfast News-Letter,* but events took place across the province.[257] County Armagh's *Portadown News* reported Solemn League & Covenant events in Cullybackey, Dunmurray and Portadown.[258] In County Tyrone, the *Strabane Chronicle* detailed meetings in Derry City and Ballymena while the *Fermanagh Herald* carried news on speeches and rallies in Enniskillen.[259] The Ulsterian *Mid-Ulster Mail* printed in

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Presbyterian (421.410 (26.64%) and Methodist (48,816 (3.09%)) totalled a 'defined' Protestant population of 836,999 (52.92%). A further 53,881 identified as 'Other' most of whom were Baptist, Brethren and other Protestant denominations but I have excluded them from the 'defined' Protestant numbers. People aged 20 years old or over represented 952,903 (60.38%). Although 21 was the age of majority the census statistics are banded in groups of five and nine years. These figures are extrapolated to create an adult (20 years old or over) 'defined' Protestant population of 505,380. 237,368 men signed the Solemn League & Covenant and 234,046 women signed the supporting Declaration: a total of 471,414 which represents 93.28% of the adult 'defined' Protestant population of Ulster. For population statistics see: Vaughan & Fitzpatrick (eds), and for the Solemn League & Covenant and the Declaration see: <https://www.nidirect.gov.uk/articles/about-ulster-covenant> [accessed 11 May 2019].

[255] See: Vaughan & Fitzpatrick and, Bowman, p.1. 1911 Census of Ireland gave a total male population for the province of 770,862 (48.74%) of whom 454,005 (28.7%) were 20 years old or over. Adjusting the figure to 52.92% of the population which was 'defined' as Protestant gives a 'defined' Protestant adult male population of 240,259 (15.19%). At its peak in 1914 the UVF volunteers numbered c.110,000 based on the most up to date and best researched figures produced by Timothy Bowman which represents 45.78% of the 'defined' Protestant adult male population.

[256] Fred Crawford, *Guns For Ulster*.

[257] *Belfast News-Letter*, 28 September and 30 September 1912, passim.

[258] *Portadown News*, 28 September 1912, p.9.

[259] *Strabane Chronicle*, 28 September 1912, pp.6-8, and *Fermanagh Herald*, 28 September 1912, pp.7-8.

Cookstown listed no less than fifty local church services across Counties Tyrone and Londonderry and brought readers news of meetings in Desertmartin and in Cookstown itself.[260]

Articles included lists of élite-led platform parties flanking Carson or his various substitutes and unexceptionally the *Portadown News* report contained thirty-six lines enumerating the great-and-the-good of the British establishment and Ulsterian élite starting:

> Sir John B. Lonsdale, Bart., M.P. for Mid-Armagh presided, and amongst others present were the Marquis of Londonderry, the Right Honourable F.E. Smith, K.C., M.P.; the Right Honourable James H. Campbell, K.C., M.P.; Captain James Craig, M.P.; Mr Wm. Moore, K.C., M.P.; Mr. James Chambers, K.C., M.P.; Mr. Charles C. Craig, M.P.; Mr. Ronald McNeill, M.P. […][261]

Continuing for the rest of the column inches there were enough honorifics and post-nominal titles to test the patience of County Armagh's calmest linotype-setters. Portadown's platform party included a 'Very Reverend' Doctor of Divinity, seven Deputy-Lieutenants, enough Justices of the Peace to field a football team, eight commissioned officers including a colonel, majors and captains, and a roster of medical doctors and lawyers. Just as the Tables amply represented the Scottish élite during the Scottish National Covenant nearly three centuries earlier, Ulster's élite was amply represented in the Ulsterian Revolution and led it both at a regional level in the UPG or a local level in platform parties.

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[260] *Mid-Ulster Mail*, 28 September 1912, p.8.
[261] *Portadown News*, 28 September 1912, p.9.

At the same rally and exposing the partiality of local government officers, a resolution signed by the town clerk of the Urban District Council of Portadown was presented to Carson thanking him for his leadership. In his response, Carson addressed the town clerk personally. What we can see from the Portadown rally, one of the dozens that took place across the Province in the run-up to Ulster Day, was a cross-class but élite led movement committed to stopping Home Rule. In one of many demonstrations of mass-support the Ulsterian population of the town lined and decorated the streets as the leaders processed through the district: 'never before has the town looked so brilliant and beautiful'.[262]

Demonstrating the militancy of Ulsterians a year before the establishment of the UVF, Carson's visit to Portadown included meeting a detachment of drilled volunteers: 'the unionist leader inspected a guard of honour which was composed of a very smart and well set-up body of men'.[263] In an open-top coach, Carson and the Marquis of Londonderry were escorted by a mounted escort led by a commissioned officer and greeted in the station square by armed riflemen in slouch hats.[264] Ulsterians paraded down the high-street including an ambulance, while 'the members of one Unionist club dragged two field guns in their wake, and nearly all clubmen carried dummy rifles on their shoulders.'[265] Eighteen months before the gun-running it is unsurprising to see descriptions of dummy rifles, but extraordinary that Ulsterians had acquired artillery. The Portadown rally is evidence that the mass of the Ulsterian population from all classes, led by the landed, the titled and monied élite, were engaged in a festival of militancy aimed at the incumbent Imperial rulers to whom they loudly espoused loyalty. Drilling

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[262] Ibid.
[263] Ibid.
[264] Ibid.
[265] Ibid.

and war-gaming were stepped up after the gun-running, replacing dummy rifles with German, Austrian and Italian arms.[266] County Armagh received at least 2541 Italian Vetterlis (with an unspecified number of rounds) along with thirty-six .303 rifles (with 4500 rounds of .303 ammunition).[267] During the Ulsterian Revolution, the UUC appeared to be in the market for heavy weaponry, but the field-gun pulling Portadown Unionist clubmen seemed to have beaten them to it.[268]

III: Sedition

With such a strong case for revolution against Ulsterians, it should follow that those prosecutors at the time would have secured, or at least attempted to secure, convictions for seditious behaviour. Scholarship makes little mention of charges or prosecutions, and understandably, we assume that without contemporary legal accusations historians cannot, with the benefit of hindsight, accuse Ulsterians of sedition.[269] How can a historian today charge Ulsterians with treason if prosecutors did not bring charges during the Ulsterian Revolution?

Further bolstering the case of revolution, Ulsterians were indeed charged and even convicted of sedition during their Revolution. Edward Carson, Lord Abercorn, future Attorney-General and Lord Chancellor Frederick Smith, many of the Ulsterian élite and tens, if not hundreds of thousands of ordinary Ulsterians only escaped a summons for sedition or treason through the inaction of the Imperial Government, acting against the advice of its Irish Law Officers.

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[266] [PRONI], D/1327/4/3.
[267] [PRONI], D/1327/4/13, 'File containing details of UVF ammunition returns', 1914.
[268] [PRONI], D/1327/4/26, 'Bundle of explanatory leaflets on machine guns etc., sale literature from various armaments companies and photographs of UVF weapons in storage', u/d [catalogues dated from 1910 with handwritten marginalia from September 1912].
[269] McGaughey references Trew.

This part of the chapter lays out how new archival work shows beyond doubt that senior government Law Officers, including the Attorney-General for Ireland, prepared summonses and advice to prosecuting Ulsterian Revolutionaries at all levels of the revolutionary movement.

To Levy War Against The King

Before the Orange Agitation phase of the Ulsterian Revolution, early-twentieth-century reports from Dublin Castle to the Chief Secretary for Ireland on the rule of law rarely reported anything of interest in Ulster.[270] Gripped with boycotts, agrarian outrages and rent strikes, reports from the other provinces were a more lively read. Apart from the annual 'Orange Anniversaries' in July and August and the limited rioting that often followed, Ulster seemed settled and peaceful. The picture changed dramatically and suddenly from 1911. By 1913 the Judicial Division annual report included an extensive legal report on the 'Ulster Movement Against Home Rule.'[271]

Two years before the Larne gun-running in 1914 the authorities in Dublin Castle were wary of arms being imported to Ulster by Ulsterians to thwart Home Rule. Gun control in early-twentieth-century Great Britain and Ireland was less strict than in 2020. Musketry and rifle practice had become commonplace since the mobilisation of the Ulster Clubs in 1911. Government lawyers grew concerned that existing gun control legislation in Ireland was wholly inadequate in stopping Ulsterians. 'The Gun Licence Act of 1870 is the only Act now in force in Ireland which in any way interferes with the use or carrying of fire-arms […]

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[270] [TNA], CO 903.
[271] [TNA], CO 903/17, 'Chief Secretary's Notes, Judicial Division, Intelliegnce Notes, 1912-1913', (1912), pp.106-129.

[and] for the purposes of the present consideration, is of no practical use.'[272] Legislation did not exist to control the possession of arms or even armed processions and drill. In August 1913 the Attorney-General for Ireland, John Moriarty, had to resort to an ancient statute, 2 Edw III, cap 3 (Riding or Going Armed Act (1328)) to bring prosecutions for the discharging of a weapon in public or taking weapons to a meeting.[273] Although the Riding or Going Armed Act (1328) secured two convictions at the Ulster Winter Assizes in 1913, the Court for Crown Cases Reserved dismissed another prosecution under the equally ancient Statute of Northampton (1328) in February 1914.[274] Despite genuine concerns about the legality of their behaviour, an absence of legislation meant the government was unable to deal adequately with armed Unionist Clubs and the UVF as a gun control issue. Ulsterian revolutionaries could possess weapons without any real fear of successful prosecution as Ireland's legal framework was ineffective and reliant on mediaeval statutes.

Dissatisfied at the legal ineptitude to control guns in Ulster, Moriarty found firmer ground to prosecute the Ulsterian movement for their armed parades and mass demonstrations. In August and September 1913 Ireland's chief prosecutor issued two pieces of advice on confronting the increasingly militarised Ulsterian Revolution dealing in particular with parading and increasingly massive demonstrations. Judicial intelligence notes set out the situation in Ulster. On September 23 1911, 18,000 Ulsterians had taken part in a procession in Craigavon, County Armagh while 300,000 people attended in support. The intelligence notes reported 33,000 attendees at a demonstration at Dundonald, County Londonderry in March 1913 and 18,000 attendees at a further

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[272] Ibid., p.113.
[273] Ibid., p.114.
[274] Ibid., pp.125-126.

demonstration in Craigavon, four months later.[275] One section described the UVF parade on 29 September 1913 in the agricultural grounds at Balmoral, Belfast:

> The four regiments known as the North, South, East and West Belfast Regiments, consisting of 14 Battalions, and numbering over 11,000 men, took part in the parade. General Sir George Richardson was in command. In addition to the Volunteers about 50,000 persons were present.[276]

Significantly, when taken with the advice that followed, the intelligence notes named leading Ulsterians including Sir Edward Carson, Frederick Smith, James Craig ('Captain Craig MP'), Marquess of Londonderry, Duke of Abercorn, Earl of Leitrim, General Sir George Richardson and, 'practically all the members of the Irish Unionist Parliamentary Party.'[277] Ireland's prosecutors had identified their suspects.

Concerned at the rise of the increasingly militarised Ulsterian movement by summer 1913, Ireland's prosecutors sought legal options against the Ulsterian Revolution and its leaders, options they found in Moriarty's advice. Referred to in indictments as 'the Attorney-General for Ireland of Our present Sovereign Lord the King', and 'who for our said Lord the King in this behalf prosecutes', Moriarty, the King's Attorney-General, gave emphatic advice charging Ulsterians with treason:[278]

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[275] Ibid., pp.109-115.
[276] Ibid., p.121.
[277] Ibid, pp.119-121.
[278] [TNA], CO 903/18, 'Chief Secretary's Notes, Judicial Division, Intelligence Notes, 1914', (1912), p.36.

> These operations are absolutely illegal and the parties advising and openly encouraging them as well as those taking part in the drilling, marching and other military operations are guilty of felony within the meaning of the 11 and 12 V., c.12, s.3.[279]

Sensationally, Moriarty laid out that not only the members of the UVF and their drill sergeants but the platform speakers, organisers and fundraisers from the UUC and beyond, including but not limited to those listed in the intelligence notes, had a charge of treason to answer under the Treason Felony Act (1848). Ulsterians' claim of loyalty to the crown became suspect when the King's own Attorney-General prepared prosecutions for treason against them. Moriarty continued:

> It is a levying war [sic] against the King in order by force and constraint to compel him to change his measures and counsels, and in order to put force and constraint upon, and in order to intimidate and overawe, both Houses or either House of Parliament.'[280]

The chief prosecutor couched the treason charges in the language of the Treason Felony Act (1848), under which it was unlawful for any person to 'compass, imagine, invent, devise, or intend to deprive or depose Our Most Gracious Lady the Queen [of the crown]', or, 'to levy war against her Majesty', to force, compel or constrain her to change her orders or counsels or do the same to overawe Parliament, 'shall be guilty of felony, and being convicted thereof shall be liable

[279] [TNA], CO 903/17, p.122.
[280] Ibid., p.122.

[…] to be transported beyond the seas for the term of his or her natural life.'[281] Moriarty advised prosecutors that the militancy of the Ulsterian movement, drills, marches, parades, platform speeches and massive demonstrations, the hallmark of the Ulsterian Revolution, was war against the crown.

A month later in September 1913, Moriarty gave prosecutors further options. The Attorney-General was explicit that revolutionaries had a case to answer, advising 'All the parties identified and named can be proceeded against by Summons and indictment […].'[282] Along with the Treason Felony Act (1848), and the Riding or Going Armed Act (1328) Moriarty identified 20 Richard II, cap 1, (Riding Armed, Liveries, Justices of Assizes, &c. Act (1396)) and 60 Geo III, and 1 Geo IV, cap 1, s 1, (Unlawful Drilling Act (1819)) as options for prosecuting Ulsterian revolutionaries. Despite the absence of effective gun-control legislation, the chief prosecutor made the legal case against Ulsterians through breaches of various laws and equipped prosecutors with a wide array of options to bring prosecutions. The next section of Moriarty's advice all but directed that prosecutions should commence:

> There should be separate Summons in each case and each Summons should contain three counts as above.
>
> The accused should be returned for trial when depositions have been taken.
>
> The [Crown] and [Executive] Authorities should also be requested to proceed for penalties against each man under the Act of 1870.

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[281] <www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/Vict/11-12/12/section/3> [accessed 17 July 2019].
[282] [TNA], CO 903/17, p.122.

N.B.—The prosecution should not be commenced without the express authority of the Executive.[283]

Moriarty's advice on treason in August 1913 encompassed the entire Ulsterian movement with the September advice seemingly directed at those directly involved in drilling and the possession of arms. If convicted, the Forfeiture Act (1870) would have stripped offenders of public office or military position and stopped any government pensions. With so many drill sergeants and UVF members reservists or retired military personnel, the penalty would have had a significant effect and highlights that any convictions for treason would not only have seen the revolutionaries transported (where to in 1913 is anyone's guess) or imprisoned, but stripped of their titles, honours and pensions. However, the fourth section of the advice is crucial. Ultimately, prosecutors could prepare their cases, but formal proceeding would have to wait until the Imperial Government gave 'express authority'. As the next section made clear, 'Government decided that no action should be taken on the matter.'[284] It was a political decision not to prosecute for treason, illegal possession of arms and unlawful drilling. The Attorney-General for Ireland was emphatic in his opinion and clear in his advice that the behaviour of the Ulsterian movement was treasonous and unlawful. Politicians saved Ulsterian revolutionaries, from Carson down to the individual members of the UVF, from an appearance in Court, transportation and the stripping of their titles not because their behaviour was legal but because there was no political will to confront them. However, prosecutors did not limit their

[283] Ibid. The three counts included; i) 'going about armed' under the 1328 and 1396 Acts; ii) 'Going about armed in public without lawful occasion' (*R v Meade* (1903)) and; iii) 'unlawful drilling' under the 1819 Act. The 'Act of 1870' likely refers to 33 and 34 Vict, cap 22, (Forfeiture Act (1870)) dealing with the punishment for treason.
[284] Ibid.

activity to the official Ulsterian movement, its leaders and armed volunteers. The next section explores Ulsterian sedition through a particularly infamous and popular Ulsterian character.

'What Do You Think Of Arthur Trew? He'll Be Out In A Day Or Two.'[285]

In the winter of 1969, as Paisleyism forced a wedge through Ulsterian hegemony in Northern Ireland, the *Belfast Telegraph* ran a feature, '99 Who Made Their Mark On Ulster'.[286] Under the entry for the letter 'T' the feature ran, 'If there was ever such a thing as an archetypal Protestant extremist it was surely Arthur Trew'.[287] Born in Barbados in 1870 Trew moved to Belfast aged ten and was a regular feature in the pages of Ulster's regional newspapers, both in and out of court, during the first two decades of the twentieth century. Founder of the first BPA, self-taught preacher and vehement anti-socialist Trew first came to attention in the late 1890s when challenging a labour speaker to a public debate on the steps of Belfast's Custom's House.[288] After numerous court appearances and convictions in the preceding decade, Trew received another conviction for 'seditious language' in October 1912.[289]

In 1901 attention turned to fame, or infamy, when Trew, convicted of inciting religious violence, was gaoled for a year. The events are closely linked to the pre-war rise of Belfast labour discussed in chapter one. Along with three co-defendants appearing at Belfast Summons Court in June 1901, Trew was charged,

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[285] *Belfast Telegraph*, Monday 27 January 1958, p.3.
[286] *Belfast Telegraph*, Monday 17 November 1969, p.12.
[287] Ibid.
[288] Ibid.
[289] [TNA], CO 903/17, p.18.

'for illegal conspiracy and inciting to riot, and illegal assembly.'[290] During the year Belfast Catholics organised a march to raise funds for the Mater Hospital in June 1901, including the procession of priests, nuns and relics. Trew took objection to a Catholic procession in the city, even if it was to raise funds for a good cause and called on the 5,000 strong crowds not to support the hospital and encourage others to do likewise. Police constable witnesses referred to Trew's description of priests and nuns as 'offensive'.[291] Mater Hospital fundraisers organised a further march some weeks later. Not content to discourage charity towards a Catholic hospital Trew announced he and the BPA would stop the procession, 'in spite of the Pope or the police, be the consequences what they may.'[292] The magistrate, perhaps, unable to judge the case adequately or impose an appropriate sentence, sent the case up to the Assizes.

Arraigned at the Ulster Assizes in Belfast in July Trew and his three co-defendants found themselves before Christopher Palles, Lord Chief Baron of the Irish Exchequer and one of Ireland's most powerful and influential jurists. Not only were the prisoners charged with inciting riot through Trew's inflammatory speeches at 'The Steps' of Belfast's Customs House, but with posting inflammatory placards and handbills around Belfast. Restrained by contemporary mores and reluctant to repeat Trew's language the Crown prosecutor addressed the all-male jury: 'He [Trew] described the procession as illegal and spoke of nuns and convents in language so filthy and loathsome that any honourable man would regard his lips as soiled and degraded by even its repetition. Convents were described as 'priests brothels."[293] A prosecution witness and RIC sergeant noted

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[290] *Cork Examiner*, Saturday 22 June 1901, p.7.
[291] Ibid.
[292] Ibid.
[293] *Larne Times*, Saturday 27 July 1901, p.6.

that there were 4,000 people present at The Steps when Trew addressed the Belfast crowd on 12 May 1901. Much of the case focussed on the posting of bills and placards after the meeting with Trew's inflammatory message spread beyond the thousands who watched him on that Sunday morning. Trew's co-defendants found themselves charged with pasting and handing out the material with jurors asked to judge as inciting and procuring riot:

> Protestants, be on the alert! The Pope's brigade is preparing for an illegal procession through the streets, carrying crucifixes, wafer gods, and other Pagan emblems, on Sunday first, June 9th. Remember the deeds of your forefathers at Derry, Aughrim, Enniskillen and the Boyne. Rouse yourselves, Protestants, and see to it that Popery does not again gain the upper hand. God Save the King.[294]

Trew used the tried and tested device of early-modern precedent and peril to justify the use of force. Prosecutors took particular offence at their references to the King in their speeches fomenting violence against his subjects. Ulsterian mobs stoned Catholic marchers on both 2 and 9 June. At neither procession did marchers carry poles, crucifixes or banners but, highlighting the religious element of the violence, witnesses testified to hearing Ulsterian rioters shout 'Fenians' and 'blackguards' at fundraising marchers on 9 June. Trew's defence rested on a point-of-law, not a point-of-fact or of denial of events. Defence counsel did not contest the language used by Trew at The Steps and written in the handbills handed out by his co-defendants. Defence barristers argued the legal meaning of

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[294] Ibid.

the charge of conspiracy telling the jury, even if they found the language extraordinary and distasteful, 'the only issue was whether these men conspired to use the community to rise in rebellion to strife, riot, attack on this procession, or other breach of the law.'[295] Finding all men guilty jurors attached a rider of mercy to their verdict and found three of the four defendants (including Trew on all counts) had conspired to incite the Ulsterian community to rise in rebellion. Chief Baron Palles had tried, convicted and sentenced rioters at each and every one of his recent visits to Belfast and was in no mood for leniency this time. The judge accepted that the men may not have known they had broken the law, but they were aware of the fractious religious atmosphere in Ulster and of the likely consequences of their actions, and the Chief Baron considered those who incited riot worse than rioters. Noting the law would not allow him to attach hard labour to the custodial sentences, Trew was sentenced to a year in prison and his two convicted co-defendants to six months each.

The following July *The Scotsman* reported that on Trew's release from gaol, 'fifty thousand people marched in procession, and Mr Trew addressed a great meeting.'[296] Perhaps unsurprisingly Trew was unrepentant, telling the Belfast demonstration that 'he came out the same as he had gone in, and, if anything, more determined to uphold the good cause.'[297] Trew was as good as his word. In the sixteen years between 1903 and 1919 the search term 'Arthur Trew' returns 821 results on The British Newspaper Archive.[298] In each of the nine years before

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[295] Ibid., p.7.
[296] *The Scotsman*, Monday 21 July 1902, p.5.
[297] *Belfast News-Letter*, Monday 21 July 1902, p.9.
[298] <www.britishnewspaperarchive.co.uk>, [accessed 29 July 2019]. The term 'arthur trew' was run against the regional filter 'Northern Ireland, Northern Ireland' which gave monthly breakdowns of returns for 'arthur trew' totalling 821 between 1903-1919. This is indicative and not conclusive as the transliteration of the original images into software readable text is not entirely accurate.

his conviction for 'seditious language' in 1912 Trew features in hundreds of articles and court reports. In May 1903, less than a year after his release from gaol Trew appeared in court for threatening the life of a Mrs Galbeaith when he came to the door of her house with two-hundred rowdy children threatening her with a stick.[299] Every year Trew featured in various reports of violence or political controversy: 1904, 'abusive, threatening and insulting language'; 1905, 'street obstruction'; 1906, 'indecent behaviour' on the Custom House steps; 1907, 'indecent behaviour' designed to foment disorder; 1909, using threatening language on the visit of James Larkin to Belfast telling a crowd, 'save your rotten eggs boys'; 1910, 'entertained' an overspill crowd outside Ulster Hall during an address by Sir Edward Carson on the Home Rule question; 1911, used conduct and language 'calculated to lead to a breach of the peace'. In the same year a James Hamilton was alleged to have assaulted Trew 'alleging that a nasty expression had been used about his mother [by Trew]'.[300]

By 1912 and his conviction for sedition Trew had become a habitual offender. Trew may have been extreme, but he was far from peripheral. Fifty thousand people greeted his release from gaol, and his weekly speeches from 'The Steps' drew crowds of thousands. Any reader of the regional press could hardly fail to notice his regular controversies and allegations of petty, and not so petty, crimes. Reports in 1910 of Trew outside the Ulster Hall during a speech by Carson read as though Trew, a convicted instigator of religious riot, was the leader of Ulster Unionism's warm-up act. Carson riled the Ulsterian élite and middle-classes in revolution in the hall while Trew stood nearby, firing up the

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[299] *Belfast News-Letter*, Saturday 30 May 1903.
[300] In order of listing above: *Belfast News-Letter*, Saturday 30 May 1903; *Irish News and Belfast Morning News*, Saturday 5 March; *Northern Whig*, Thursday 9 March 1905; *Northern Whig*, Thursday 6 December 1906; *Derry Journal*, Friday 9 August 1907; *Northern Whig*, Thursday 30 January 1908; *Northern Whig*, Thursday 14 January 1909; *Irish News & Belfast Morning News*, Tuesday 18 January 1910; *Londonderry Sentinel*, Saturday 2 September 1911; *Belfast News-Letter*, Tuesday 20 June 1911.

masses. It is while addressing a crowd form the Ulster Clubs in Lisburn, one the same night as Carson, that Trew fell foul of the law yet again, later being convicted of using seditious language.

Carson's address to Lisburn Ulsterians on 12 October 1912, reported in the regional press, was unremarkable by the remarkable standards of the Ulsterian Revolution.[301] It followed the usual formula of accusations of conspiracy against Ulster and a pledge to fight Home Rule with its implicit threat of violent revolution. Although there was no mention of Trew's speech in the press reports and it seems unlikely that he was part of the official platform party, intelligence reports to the Chief Secretary for Ireland place him in Lisburn at that time.[302] Carson's implicit threats were made explicit by the infamously inflammatory Ulsterian street preacher who again used early-modern references to make his seditious point:

> In the course of of his remarks Trew said that if the King signed the Home Rule Bill before Parliament went to the country he would be committing an unconstitutional act and that they would be justified in doing what Cromwell did when he rose against King Charles and cut off his head, or what King William did when he drove King James from the throne.[303]

At Lisburn, a vociferous 'loyalist' addressed a crowd who claimed 'loyalty' to the King, against 'disloyal' Irish nationalists who were only campaigning for a limited

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[301] *Belfast News-Letter*, Monday 14 October 1912.
[302] [TNA], CO 903/17, p.18.
[303] Ibid.

form of devolution within the United Kingdom, justified the beheading of that same King to whom he claimed loyalty. Trew's words echo the regicidal theology of revolutionary Calvinist monarchomachs of the sixteenth-century.[304] Despite their keen interest in Trew throughout the period, Ulster's pressmen failed to cover the speech and barely mentioned the trial for seditious language. Away from the platform party perhaps reporters did not hear Trew's sedition, but someone kept a record as John Moriarty, Attorney-General for Ireland, not the Lisburn RIC, prepared the charges against the street preacher.[305] Although the intelligence report gave a flavour of Trew's sedition in October 1912 seven months before in April 1912, the *Fermanagh Herald* reported on another speech. Again, as he addressed an Ulsterian crowd on the Home Rule question, the paper reported that Trew said, 'take it from him [Trew] that the first Roman Catholic King that would sit on the Throne in England would find his head in a bucket.'[306] At a crucial time in the radicalisation of the Ulsterian Revolution regicide and decapitation appeared to be stock-and-trade of Trew's rabble-rousing and, despite this, he still found a platform at UUC events amidst influential Ulsterian leaders.

So in the context of Trew's extraordinary rhetoric, it is less than remarkable that he called for the King's head in the event of Home Rule becoming law. What is remarkable is that Trew, despite his track record, made his speech at, or at least on the fringe of an official UUC demonstration addressed not only by Carson but Frederick Smith, the next two Attorneys-General for the United Kingdom and in Smith's case a future Lord Chancellor as well. In Trew's comments, the veil slipped. Carson and his élite colleagues had been able to dress up the violence of their revolutionary intent in the language of desperate necessity

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[304] Skinner, p.234.
[305] [TNA], CO 903/17, p.18.
[306] *Fermanagh Herald*, Saturday 20 April 1912, p.3.

and radical conspiracy by the allies of Irish nationalists. Carson and the UUC's revolutionary intent remained only partially veiled, as the vehemence and uncompromising rhetoric turned to action in the establishment of the UVF and creation of the UPG. At Lisburn Trew bared all.

The Barbadian cum Belfast street preacher was notorious and convicted for inciting riot in 1901. He had been bound over to keep the peace by Belfast magistrates on countless occasions since. Instead of being expelled from the Ulsterians 'loyalist' fold Trew remained firmly on the scene despite his dangerous, extreme and violent behaviour. A movement that hoped, sincerely or otherwise, to persuade others of their loyalty would have pushed Arthur Trew as far from their cause as possible. Instead, he was lauded by crowds for his unlawful antics, reported on feverishly by the Ulsterian press and listened to by thousands every Sunday. Sedition was committed in Lisburn while Carson spoke nearby in a different tone but a similar vein. It was tone and class, not content and intent, that separated Carson from Trew. When, in 1969, the *Belfast Telegraph* called Trew an 'archetypal Protestant extremist' the Ulsterian paper succeeded in being simultaneously right and wrong.[307] Trew was extreme but only in his tone. His content was much closer to the Ulsterian mainstream than some would like to admit. He was popular. His speeches, including those that saw him convicted of inciting riot and sedition, represented a current of opinion that was far from peripheral but instead ran strongly through the centre of the Ulsterian movement and revolution.

The Attorney-General for Ireland John Moriarty's charges against Trew were not exceptional. Throughout the Ulsterian Revolution, he prepared prosecutions for sedition and treason, not just against provocateurs like Arthur

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[307] *Belfast Telegraph*, Monday 17 November 1969, p.12.

Trew but against the Ulsterian élite and the entire revolutionary movement. Inaction by the Imperial Government prevented Carson, Smith and their colleagues from an appearance in court, but without friends in high places Trew felt the force of the law.

IV: Conclusion

Northern Ireland is a revolutionary state: conceived, delivered and nurtured in revolution. A lack of Ulsterian self-identification with revolution does not preclude Ulsterians from a historical analysis of revolution. Failing to analyse Ulsterians as revolutionaries allows the false label of 'loyalist' to mask events, context and the revolutionary behaviour of Ulsterians. Chapter Two demonstrated that past, faith and distinctiveness sat at the heart of Ulsterian national identity and fundamental to those themes are early-modern theories of resistance justifying Ulster's revolution as instruction from God. This chapter has applied the revolutionary predisposition of Ulsterians to the events of the early twentieth-century.

Irrespective of historical and theological justifications the events of the Orange Agitation and the Outrages alone stand out as revolutionary. Even without resistance theory and a shared heritage of opposing Kings, 1911-1927 was the period of the Ulsterian Revolution. In 1911 the nine counties of Ulster were as much a part of the United Kingdom as Northumberland, Surrey or Wiltshire but by 1927 three of those counties formed part of a Dominion outside of the United Kingdom and the remaining six made up the new devolved state of Northern Ireland: there had been an abrupt and wide-reaching change in the

state's rulers, supported by violence and by popular action in the street and elsewhere, that make a revolution.

Revolution challenged the incumbent rulers, the Imperial Government, when 110,000 Ulsterian men formed the UVF and 93% of the adult Ulsterian population signed the Solemn League & Covenant. Revolution struggled with the Imperial Government as Carson and the UUC formed the UPG, armed the UVF and along with their allies in Britain pushed the Curragh Mutiny and opposed the Army Bill. Revolution forced change as Ulsterian shipyard workers violently expelled Nationalists and 'Rotten Prods' from the shipyards, textile mills and factories, forced their Nationalist neighbours from their homes and rioted in Belfast and towns across Ulster. Revolution territorialised itself when the UUC accepted the 'Six-County Option' and partitioned both Ulster and Ireland. Revolution consolidated when the UVF transformed into the USC, and the Northern Ireland Parliament passed CASPA, abolished PR and gerrymandered electoral boundaries. In 1925 Cosgrave and Craig secured as permanent the Irish Revolution, both the Ulsterian Revolution and Nationalist Revolution parts, disbanding the Boundary Commission, setting the Irish border in stone, and relieving the Free State of its share of United Kingdom debt. Revolution ended, and two new revolutionary states emerged from the turmoil and bloodshed.

Throughout the Ulsterian Revolution authorities prepared briefs, issued legal advice and convicted Ulsterians, from the platform party dignitaries at rallies to the extremist street preachers and corner boys, for offences from breach of the peace, to riot, seditious libel and treason. Only political interference prevented the Attorney-General for Ireland laying formal treason charges against high-level figures in both the Ulsterian movement and the United Kingdom establishment. At first, lawyers cited ancient statues to check UVF drilling before finding more

up-to-date gun control legislation. As the movement mobilised beyond drilling and authorities looked on anxiously as an avowedly 'loyalist' group mobilized, almost the entirety of the community government lawyers reached for treason legislation and forfeiture sentences. It proved too much for politicians who feared a backlash from not only the Ulsterian grassroots but their establishment kin if convictions, forfeiture and transportation followed. 'Loyalist' sedition and treason went hand-in-hand with the Ulsterian Revolution.

As the Ulsterian Revolution looked sure to ignite and battle be joined, the First World War swept across the globe, calming the flames of the Orange Agitation. Anaesthetised, the sleepy revolution rested through the chaos of 1914-1918 only to revive barely altered into the transformed post-war world. Winston Churchill neatly summed up the constancy of the Ulsterian Revolution in 1922:

> as the deluge subsides and the waters fall short we see the dreary steeples of Fermanagh and Tyrone emerging once again. The integrity of their quarrel is one of the few institutions that has been unaltered in the cataclysm which has swept the world.[308]

As church spires in Fermanagh and Tyrone reemerged so to did sectarian violence in Belfast, Lisburn, Derry and Banbridge. The UVF had never gone away and it too woke from its half-slumber, along with sectarian violence, to continue forcing revolutionary change in Ulster. Ulster soon became Northern Ireland as Ulsterians took hold of their future by accepting partition and the UVF soon

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[308] Winston Churchill, Secretary of State for the Colonies, House of Commons, *House of Commons Debate* (16 February 1922, vol.150, col.1270) <https://api.parliament.uk/historic-hansard/commons/1922/feb/16/irish-free-state-agreement-bill> (accessed 7 December 2018)

became the USC, forcing the hand of Ulsterian fate and making permanent partition and the new revolutionary state of Northern Ireland.

4. The Specials – Ulster's Vanguard: Ulsterian Special Policing

The Irish Revolutionary War, although far from separate, was distinctive, different and particular in Ulster from the south and west of Ireland. Intelligence-led urban warfare in Dublin and mobile IRA flying columns striking at Crown forces in Munster contrasted with sectarian outrages in Belfast and the Ulsterian occupation of the forces of law and order across Northern Ireland. Seemingly quieter than the rest of the island, Northern Ireland at first glance appeared to escape the worst of the violence, but a closer look tells a different story. Belfast was the bloodiest district in the whole of Ireland during the period.[309] Instead of an insurgency aimed at removing a colonial government, the war in Northern Ireland was a war of Ulsterian consolidation. Violence was repressive and aimed at creating a new sectarian state securing the Ulsterian Revolution and consolidating the Home Rule Northern Irish state as explicitly and uncompromisingly Ulsterian. At the fore of the consolidation was the USC, an exclusively Protestant sectarian paramilitary force with enhanced police powers which emboldened its members, while putting themselves in the firing line, to play out their worst excesses in the name of law and order.

This chapter looks at the transformation of the UVF into the USC and at reports of the violence which it committed. The first part briefly considers the nature of this violence and how Special Constables perpetrated it to secure and

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[309] Hart, *The IRA at War*, p.36.

assert Ulsterian hegemony and superordination over the Nationalist 'Other'. Part two investigates the practical formation of the USC and details the transformation of the UVF into the USC, the perceived threat of 'Socialism' within and outside Ulsterian society and the local responses to feared and actual Republican violence that justified the creation of the USC. Part three looks in detail at the accounts of suspected USC violence in the 1920s using material the Northern Irish Ministry of Home Affairs, with examples, to evaluate the patterns of the violence which the USC perpetrated both to suppress Nationalists and, in the final phase of revolution consolidate the nascent state of Northern Ireland.

I: Superordination and Collective Violence

Violence by Ulsterians, including the USC, during the period of state consolidation, demonstrated a concerted effort by them and the new state they had helped to create to protect and proliferate their ascendancy and superordinate position within the universally sectarian environment (where to be anything other than 'Protestant' or 'Catholic' was unheard of) of Northern Ireland. Violence aimed at the USC and outrages perpetrated against Ulsterians were real.[310] However, the narrative that placed 'law and order' front and centre of state policy and politics for decades also acted as cover for Ulsterians to use violence and coercion under the sanction of the state to assert their cultural, economic and social dominance over their Nationalist neighbours.

In the Western world, the Reformation created religious cleavages while in the next historical wave, the Enlightenment created fractures between

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[310] **'Outrage'** during this period referred to 'indictable' crimes as opposed to less serious, misdemenours, larceny or 'summary offences'.

religiosity and secularity while finally industrialisation caused class cleavages to develop. As demonstrated by the early-modern imperatives of contemporary Ulsterian identity highlighting Northern Ireland's break with modernity, the Province of Ulster largely failed to move beyond Reformation period conflict. Like Rip van Winkle Ulster's Catholics and Protestants slept through continent-wide and global transformations.[311] Sectarianism in Northern Ireland was (and remains) an example of what Donald Horowitz calls a 'ranked ethnic system'.[312] Here two separate ethnic blocks existed with one, in this case, superordinate Ulsterians, sitting on top and the other, subordinate Catholics, sitting beneath. Even the most destitute and marginal Ulsterian remained superordinate to the wealthiest and most influential Catholic. In non-ranked systems, entrepreneurs or politicians can look each other in the eye and do business as peers despite their cultural, economic and social differences but in Northern Ireland status cannot cross boundaries and ideas of cross-community parity of esteem are impossible. No matter how wealthy and influential a Catholic might become, they cannot cross up into the superordinate Ulsterian block. Likewise, the poorest and most marginal Ulsterian cannot drop down into the subordinate Catholic block. Although there is ranking within the separate blocks promotion and relegation between the two is impossible.[313] It is within that framework that the UVF transformed into the USC and became a tool of Ulsterians and their government

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311 The principal character in Washington Irving's eponymous 1819 short-story, **Rip van Winkle** retreats from his wife to the Catskill Mountains, New York. Van Winkle drinks with a group of unknown men and quickly falls asleep. He finds his musket rusty when he wakes and back in the village pictures of Geroge III are replaced with Geroge Washington. Having slept for twenty-years van Winkle missed the American Revolution and the founding of the United States of America. The **Rip van Winkle Effect** refers to any person, body or community that is unaffected by a significant and world changing event or transformation.

312 Donald L Horowitz, *Ethnic Groups in Conflict* (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 1985 [2000]), p.22.

313 Ibid., p.25.

to use violence to repress Nationalists and maintain their superordination. The next part looks at how the UVF became the USC.

II: Directed Spontaneity: Formation of the Ulster Special Constabulary

Summer 1920 saw ongoing war in the south and west, expulsions of Catholic workers from Belfast shipyards and rioting following Nationalist victory in the Derry City council elections. The Ulsterisation of Irish Unionism, the Ulsterian Revolution (merely anaesthetised during the First World War) and the distinctiveness of Ulsterian national identity made, in the context of Irish Nationalist electoral success and then Irish Republican militancy, a separate Ulsterian state very likely. February 1920 saw the introduction of the Government of Ireland Bill (1920) into the Imperial Parliament setting out two distinct states on a partitioned island: Southern Ireland and Northern Ireland. By the summer and autumn of 1920, eighteen months after the firing of shots at Soloheadbeg opened the Irish War of Independence (the armed phase of the Nationalist Revolution), Ulsterians looked to their new state to insulate themselves from the 'Irish Republic' rising across the border with Northern Ireland created as a state where they could remain masters not only of their destiny but of all people behind the border.

Some force of coercion, greater than the regular RIC, and independent of London and Dublin Castle, was required. 'Carson's Army', the UVF, still existed on paper and in the field. Across Ulster magistrates, priests, landlords and businessmen armed revolutionary 'Loyalists' to protect property, enforce borders and secure Ulsterian superordination. What became the USC started as local

initiatives without central coordination; although, through the UUC and Orange Institutions, a means of coordination always existed. The Ulsterian élite feared their 'rank and file' as much if not more than the Sinn Féin bogeyman which would be used to legitimise their violence and repression in the decades that followed. The USC protected the new state but also put the Ulsterian masses 'under discipline'.[314] With these twin fears, of Republican violence and of an Ulsterian rank and file uprising, in July 1920 Carson and Craig asked Colonel Wilfrid Spender to reactivate the UVF and establish a security force for Northern Ireland.[315]

The 'Red' and the 'Green' of Craig's Nightmares

Wilfrid Spender, later Cabinet Secretary to the Northern Ireland government, arrived in Belfast in July 1920 as 'Brevet Lieutenant-Colonel, Commanding UVF'.[316] He explained his reasons for going to William Coates, Lord Mayor of Belfast: 'Sir Edward Carson and Sir James Craig asked me to come over and re-organise the U.V.F.'[317] Looking to his retirement from frontline politics, Carson was gradually handing over the leadership of the Ulsterian movement to Craig, his second-in-command and the organisational genius behind the Ulsterian Revolution. As Spender was setting up office at the Old Town Hall in Belfast, Ulster's new leader set out his assessment of the conditions in Ireland and

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[314] [PRONI], CAB/5/1, 'Correspondence in connection with the possibility of the Ulster Volunteer Force being used in Northern Ireland for official police duties', (July 1920).
[315] Farrell, p.21.
[316] [PRONI], D/1295/2/12, 'Printed memorandum of the Officers Commanding Battalions, Belfast Regiment UVF', (20 July 1920) and **Wilfrid Spender**: (6 October 1876-21 December 1960) leading Ulsterian organiser and administrator involved in the establishment of the UVF and then the USC in 1920 after which he became Cabinet Secretary to the Government of Northern Ireland (1921-1925) and Permanent Secretary to the Northern Ireland Ministry of Finance (1925-1944).
[317] [PRONI], CAB/5/1, (30 July 1920).

Northern Ireland. It was up to Spender to devise a solution. Craig's 'Appreciation of Situation in Ulster' memorandum enumerated four clear points that underlined his thinking and highlighted the crisis-bound mindset of Ulsterians who concluded their own militarised force was essential. Firstly and unequivocally, he started:

> The Loyalists in Ulster believe that the Rebel plans are definitely directed towards the establishment of a republic hostile to the British Empire, and that they are working in conjunction with the Bolshevik Forces elsewhere towards that end.[318]

Craig articulated the twin fears of a hostile Irish Republic and Bolshevism. Whether it was socialists working within Sinn Féin or the labour organisers mingled among the Ulsterian rank-and-file at the Belfast shipyards, Craig feared the 'reds' as much as the 'greens'—if not more, as the labour movement had every chance of taking hold among working-class Ulsterians.[319]

Secondly, he went on, any demonstration of conciliation from Republicans was disingenuous with their objective being 'gaining ground' in Northern Ireland as they were successfully doing in the south and west. Craig acknowledged that the Republican campaign was 'skillfully directed' but aware of the three obstacles to establishing an independent united Ireland; the RIC, the Crown forces and 'the Loyalists in Ulster.' Republicans, he said, first and foremost had successfully targeted the police, forcing them to withdraw from isolated areas which they then occupied and in which they installed their own

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318 [PRONI], CAB/5/1, [u/d but late August/early September 1920].
319 For use if the term 'red and green' see: Richard Dawson, *Red Terror and Green* (London: New English Library, 1972).

form of authority. He was concerned that troops would be needed elsewhere in the United Kingdom and Empire and withdrawn from Ireland, allowing Republicans to mount a rising. In Ulster, Republicans had implemented a 'policy of unrest' which nightly called exhausted Imperial troops onto the streets. Moreover, Ulsterians did not trust an Imperial Government that was unresponsive to their fears and determined to deny them the ability to defend themselves while not taking necessarily aggressive action against Republicans. Craig was clear that owing to the lack of trust in the Imperial Government, rank-and-file Ulsterians were determined to take matters into their own hands even though their leaders were advising caution. Complaining that Crown forces treated Republicans more favourably than Ulsterians, he cited the prosecution of Ulsterians 'for technical breaches', including carrying arms without a permit. Furthermore, recent promotions of Nationalists within the RIC and police bias meant that Republicans had been allowed to raid barracks and homes holding arms and build up their arsenal while the UVF had surrendered their arms to the military. Quickly contradicting himself, Craig noted that where Ulsterians had not surrendered their weapons they had successfully defended themselves and kept the peace between both communities.

Thirdly, Craig assessed that 'Sinn Fein [sic] is already the predominant factor over a considerable portion of the province' and that Republican influence was spreading owing to inaction by Crown forces. He reiterated that the Ulsterian rank-and-file would soon take matters into their own hands, if the Imperial Government did not grant Craig and his fellow leaders' 'tangible measures' to persuade them otherwise. He warned of the consequences if those measures were not forthcoming:

> They [the Ulsterian leaders] now feel that the situation is becoming so desperate that unless the Government will take immediate action, it may be advisable for them to see what steps can be taken towards a system of organised reprisals against rebels, mainly in order to defeat them, but partly to restrain their own followers from acts which are regrettable, and in a large measure ineffective.[320]

Craig's fourth and final point was that the Imperial Government hesitated to use firmer measures in Ulster than they had in other parts of Ireland. For Craig Republicanism and Bolshevism threatened Ulster; the Republican campaign was skilful and effective; Ulsterians did not trust the Imperial Government and saw it as biased and as ineffective, with the rank-and-file prepared to take matters into their own hands including reprisals; Sinn Féin was already ascendant in many parts of Ulster and Crown forces had been less firm in Ulster than they had been elsewhere in Ireland. It was Spender's task on his arrival in Belfast to find a solution to those challenges.

The UVF Redivivus

From the outset, Spender saw the solution in establishing a 'Special Force'.[321] A Special Force allowed the transfer, lock, stock and barrel, of the UVF to a sanctioned force and it also followed on from the vigilance groups that emerged from the middle of 1920 across Northern Ireland. There are accounts or references to no less than seven of these groups in archives and scholarship. First

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[320] [PRONI], CAB/5/1.
[321] Ibid., (22 July 1920).

was future Northern Ireland Prime Minister Basil Brooke's 'Fermanagh Vigilance Force'.[322] Established sometime in the first half of 1920, Brooke laid out the Fermanagh Vigilance Force's (FVF) rationale in September 1920 in a letter to Sir Ernest Clark, the Belfast-based Assistant Under-Secretary in the Ireland Office responsible for the new Northern Irish state. Brooke said:[323]

FERMANAGH VIGILANCE.

The Scheme originally started for the following reasons:

1. I felt that the hotheads on the Ulstermen's side might take the matter into their own hands, if not organised.
2. The threat of raids was increasing.
3. There appeared to be a possibility that those of the Ulstermen who wished for a quiet life and finding no support elsewhere might turn to Sinn Fein.

While using the material of the Ulster Volunteer Force, I did not call it by the old name. "Vigilance Force" seemed to meet the situation. The reasons for this were:

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[322] [PRONI], D/1022/2/3, 'Fermanagh Vigilance Force', (September 1920) and **Basil Brooke**: (9 June 1888-18 August 1973) leading Fermanagh Ulsterian and landowner. Later 1st Viscount Brookeborough and third Prime Minster of Northern Ireland (1943-1963).

[323] **Sir Ernest Clark:** (13 April 1864-25 August 1951) civil servant who served as Assistant-Under Secretary for Northern Ireland from 1920. Clark worked at every level to implement the Government of Ireland Act (1920) and established the government departments, negotiated funding from the Exchequer and rented desks for the the new offices in Donegall Square. Later Governor of Tasmania (1933-1945).

U.V.F. implied political aims. In my opinion the situation is too serious for that.

Being more or less political, the Government could not possibly take sides.

I wished to enrol law-abiding Roman Catholics, who could not do so under the old name.

N.B. Originally there were three working for us. Two have since dropped out; one – an ex-police sergeant – remains. In theory it was right, but owing to distrust in practice it failed.[324]

Brooke, like Craig, identified the organisation of the Ulsterian rank-and-file as a critical reason for setting up a force. Although less explicit in rural Fermanagh, in Belfast, the fear of the rank-and-file was connected to the fear of Bolshevism. It is noteworthy that, based in County Fermanagh on the North/South border, Brooke placed the necessity to keep the rank-and-file disciplined at the top of his priorities list. Brooke too was concerned at the ineffectiveness of security forces to prevent raids. If he was confident they could have stopped Republican attacks he would not have seen fit to establish his force. Interestingly, Brooke hoped to attract Catholics to the FVF. While other Ulsterian leaders, including Spender, were explicit that the 'Special Force' should be exclusively 'Loyalist', Brooke looked to work across sectarian boundaries not only to strengthen his force, but to keep more moderate Catholics out of supporting Sinn Féin. Perhaps this is in character for a man described by Clark as 'an eminently level-headed, active and

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[324] [PRONI], D/1022/2/9/1, 'File entitled, 'Special Constabulary: table of progress, S.C. scheme', including correspondence and notes dealing with the progress in recruitment, accommodation, etc, of the force; also included in this file are three maps', (28 August 1920).

moderate man […].'[325] Despite his efforts, however, attempts at a cross-community force failed.

These new sources counter partitionist Patrick Buckland's thesis that the Ulsterian founders of Northern Ireland framed an impartial constitution and made attempts at creating a non-sectarian state.[326] Buckland argues that the failure of the USC as a cross-community police force owes more to Collins's unwillingness to appoint members to the committee overseeing recruitment, and encouraging Catholic JPs to withdraw from the Catholic enlistment panels. This research sets out that the Northern Irish government did not attempt to stop sectarianism in the security forces. The UVF, merely rebranding itself as the 'USC', were issued with rifles from the Imperial arsenal (while retaining some arms from the Larne gun-running) and kitted out in War Office surplus stocks dyed black. While Spender and the other UUC leaders with Clark, formulated the USC, they were clear with their Ulsterian confreres that the force would be exclusively Protestant and sectarian in both composition and command.

Ulsterians, lacking trust both in the Imperial Government in Whitehall and in Dublin Castle as its executive arm, demanded that there be a senior civil servant who was not only responsible for Belfast but also actually based there. Spender too pushed for 'the immediate appointment of a Government Authority in Belfast to represent the Government in the six Counties.'[327] This was the role taken by Ernest Clark, whose appointment as Assistant Under-Secretary allowed Ulsterian power-brokers to have their decisions ratified in London without recourse to the much-maligned 'Castle'. Thus effectively appointed at the behest

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[325] Ibid.
[326] See Patrick Buckland, *The Factory of Grievances: Devolved Government in Northern Ireland 1921-39* (Dublin: Gill & MacMillan, 1979), p.ix: 'the book was favourably disposed [...] to partition [...] The preference for partition survived both the research and the writing'.
[327] [PRONI], CAB/5/1, (28 August 1920).

of the Ulsterian movement, Clark was to play a crucial role in the establishment of the USC. The formation of the USC and the creation of the Northern Irish state went hand-in-hand, with the success of the force seen as essential to the viability of the new government. Luckily for Spender, who had recommended its creation some weeks before a meeting between Brooke and Clark, the new Assistant Under-Secretary was also supportive of a Special Force and had recommended its formation to his superiors.

A fresh trawl of the archives at PRONI sheds light on no less than six vigilance groups across Ulster in 1920-1921. Each group was a model for and reason to form the incoming USC. Each was separate and different from the others but had the UVF in common. This section explores those six vigilance groups; the FVF, the Lisbellaw 'Carsonite Volunteers', Tyrone's re-formed UVF, the Lisburn Council Specials, Reverend Redmond's Peace Pickets and the Lord Mayor of Belfast's 'Special Force'. Pearse Lawlor describes the FVF as fourteen men strong and armed with rifles from the Larne gun-running[328]. Brooke's Memorandum and Clark's covering letter imply it was larger than fourteen men. Brooke detailed the organisation from Townlands up to Districts and the County, and each of the FVF's Townland Patrols comprised fourteen men under a Townland Leader.[329] Clark described the FVF as, 'to all intents and purposes a Special Constabulary' implying a force much larger than the fourteen man patrol Lawlor described.

The *Dublin Evening Telegraph* of Thursday 10 June 1920 carried details of another vigilance group based in Lisbellaw, County Fermanagh.[330] The newspaper reported 'Carsonite Volunteers on Duty' in an 'almost exclusively Orange village'

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[328] Lawlor, pp.46-49.
[329] [PRONI], D/1022/2/9/1, (28 August 1920).
[330] *Dublin Evening Telegraph*, (Thursday 10 June 1920), p.1.

when suspicions were 'aroused by the steady tramp of some 50 men coming down the road.'[331] According to the *Dublin Evening Telegraph,* 300-400 shots were fired, and two 'Carsonite Volunteers' (also described as 'the Orange patrol' and 'the Ulster Volunteer force') wounded. From the description, the Lisbellaw force patrolled at night and in the early hours of 9 June 1920 when confronting the raiders rang the church bell as a tocsin. Men left their homes, and some cycled into the village to mount a defence. The 'Ulster Volunteer force' in Lisbellaw were likely armed with UVF weapons not surrendered to security forces. Even before Spender had arrived in July 1920 the UVF marched on the cobbled paths of County Fermanagh and not merely on paper.

Farrell references a local vigilance group in County Armagh without any details and another in County Tyrone led by former UVF commander Brigadier-General Ambrose St. Quintin Ricardo, but details are scarce.[332] However, the papers of the coal merchant Newton family deposited at PRONI shed some light on the County Tyrone vigilance group.[333] Unsigned, the family papers include a 'Highly Confidential' memorandum to UVF battalion commanders, General Ricardo, Colonel McClintock and Major Stevenson from an unknown member of the Newton family who was intimately involved with the UVF. The undated memorandum was written following a meeting with Sir Ernest Clark by members of an Ulsterian deputation from County Tyrone, placing it in early autumn 1920, and its author evidently saw some shortcomings in Clark's 'Special Force' scheme though he was willing, in the crisis-bound atmosphere, to set them aside:[334]

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331 Ibid.
332 Farrell, *Arming the Protestants*, p.15.
333 [PRONI], D/1678/6/1, 'Personal papers, rent books, notes, correspondence, Special Constabulary papers, etc'.
334 [PRONI], D/1022/2/9/1, (29 September 1920), this file show Clark received a deputation from Derry and noted he had received others.

> [W]e are rapidly approaching an absolute crisis, and if we turn down this scheme on account of any one particular condition the powers that be may say, "very well you will not help us help yourselves and you have got to accept the rule of the Sinn Feiner."[335]

Only 'well disposed citizens' were eligible for the County Tyrone scheme and 'Newton', addressing why Catholics were not excluded, explicitly blamed the 'Labor [sic] Party in England' for raising objections to a sectarian force but concluded, 'It is fully recognised that at first at any rate no Roman Catholics will respond.'[336] Further countering Buckland's 'cross-community policing' thesis, any suggestion of Catholics joining was for appearance sake only and 'will be looked upon as camouflage.'[337] 'Newton' explained details of three categories within the scheme that would become very similar to those of the USC. 'No.1 Category' would be used to reopen closed police barracks in Northern Ireland and No.1 Constables would enlist on full pay for six months. 'No.2 Category' would perform duty one night a week on reliefs (shifts) working under their own elected officers. No.2 Constables would be unpaid but armed and indemnified. 'No.3 Category' was to be a mobile emergency force, and motor cars were requested to enable the No.3 Constables to carry-out their duty when called. 'Newton's' memorandum requested battalion commanders to pass information to company commanders and take an indication of how many UVF volunteers would be willing to take part in the 'Special Force'.

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335 [PRONI], D/1678/6/1.
336 Ibid.
337 Ibid.

'Battalion Order No.1/482', Tyrone UVF Regiment, dated to a few weeks or the month before the County Tyrone deputation met Clark and within days of Spender landing in Belfast, can leave no doubt of the proximity to and link between local vigilance groups and the UVF. The order states, 'Officers will quietly and without delay reorganise their company bringing company Rolls up to date.'[338] Going on the order required that each company establish, echoing Spender's words below, two 'Special Service or Emergency Sections' of 'young and stout men' able to be mobilised at immediate notice company commanders were ordered to establish despatch networks and intelligence officers. Commanders were to receive accounts of company rolls, rifles, shotguns and ammunition. Ending with a rallying call, the order closed:

> The absolute necessity now for drawing closely together for our mutual safety and protection should be insisted upon. Unless we help our selves, we need never depend on present government coming to our aid.[339]

'Special Forces' were permitted and encouraged by the Ulsterian élite across the area of Northern Ireland in the coming months and the UVF became the USC. Ulsterians banded together for their 'mutual safety and protection' and 'helped themselves' often at the expense of their Nationalist neighbours.

District-Inspector Oswald Swanzy's killing after Sunday service in Lisburn, a town bisected by the Counties Antrim/Down border, demonstrated how closely linked the war in the north and south were. Outside Christ Church Cathedral on 22 August 1920, 'Sinn Fein' [sic] gunmen shot Swanzy dead in

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[338] Ibid.
[339] Ibid.

retaliation for his role in the April 1919 killing of Tomás Mac Curtain, Lord Mayor of Cork.[340] Alan Parkinson describes the ensuing pursuit as 'Keystone Cops', with one of the assailants left behind forced to jump into a speeding motor car and the following police car taking a corner so hard that the wheel of the vehicle came off.[341] The immediate violence that engulfed the town was far from comical as Catholic businesses and homes were burnt to the ground, causing most of the Catholic residents to flee. Responding to the breakdown of law and order in the town, councillors held a meeting on Monday 30 August to 'form a corp [sic] of special constables', which would eventually number 800.[342] Lisburn's 'unofficial' special constables, although sworn in by magistrates, proved a liability with prosecutions brought against them in November for sectarian riot.[343]

Belfast was home to two local vigilance groups; 'Reverend Redmond's Peace Pickets' and the Lord Mayor's 'Special Force'. July 1920 saw considerable sectarian violence in Belfast sparked by Carson's inflammatory 'Finaghy speech' to mark the Twelfth, where he suggested using the UVF as an auxiliary police force.[344] Fired up by their leader from 21 July onwards the Ulsterian rank-and-file began violently expelling Nationalists and 'Rotten Prods' from the shipyards. The Sirocco works and linen mills were targeted for the same treatment the next day as Ulsterian shipyard workers formed vigilance committees stopping expelled workers returning to the yards.[345] Ulster Protestants suspected of being involved in the labour movement, the 'Rotten Prods' discussed in chapter one, came under

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[340] *Belfast News-Letter*, (Monday 23 August 1920), p.6.
[341] Alan Parkinson, *Belfast's Unholy War*, *The Troubles of the 1920s* (Dublin: Four Courts Press, 2004), p.34.
[342] Lawlor, p.56 and *Belfast News-Letter*, (Tuesday 31 August 1920), p.6.
[343] Hazlet, p.19.
[344] Parkinson, pp.26-27. Parkinson ably and thoroughly describes the violence in Belfast in the opening years of the 1920s including outrages carried out by the various forms of Special Contabulary.
[345] Parkinson, p.34.

attack in a political climate where Ulsterian leaders mixed anti-socialist and anti-Republican rhetoric at will. Over the next few days, nationalists attacked trams loaded with Ulsterian workers en route to the shipyards; while Ulsterians responded by attacking Catholic churches, pubs, spirit-groceries and homes.[346] As the city descended into violence Reverend Redmond, a Protestant minister, sought to cool Ulsterian's heads by organising them into unarmed pickets.[347] Instructed to 'form up' in areas at risk of violence, Redmond's vigilance group were to wait peacefully for the security forces to arrive. Redmond's concern, like Craig, Brooke and Spender, was the discipline of the Ulsterian rank-and-file encouraging them to enrol as special constables and not take matters into their own hands.[348]

On 27 July with relative calm in the troubled city the Lord Mayor of Belfast, William Coates wrote to Major-General Hugh S. Jeudwine, the officer commanding the 5th Division in Ireland responsible for Belfast, to propose civilian support for the security forces. Perhaps with 'Reverend Redmond's Peace Pickets' in mind, Coates wrote:

> We all admit that the special patrols organised by some of the citizens in the various districts were responsible for most excellent work in assisting very materially in the restoration of law and order […][349]

The Lord Mayor suggested that a 'Special Force' be prepared in anticipation of future violence. Members of the 'Special Force' would take the Oath of

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[346] A **spirit-grocery**, particular to Ireland, sold and served alcohol like any public house but also supplied gorceries and hardware as an ancillary business.
[347] Parkinson, pp.47-48.
[348] Ibid.
[349] [PRONI], CAB/5/1, (27 July 1920).

Allegiance (therefore excluding most Nationalists); be indemnified and compensated like the RIC; not take part in industrial disputes; only be called on duty when fully armed with rifles or revolvers; their weapons would be stored in an armoury; and be an emergency territorial force. Although Major-General Jeudwine agreed with Coates, he did not have the authority to sanction the 'Special Force', so passed the Lord Mayor's proposals to the Commander-in-Chief.[350] It is clear from a letter from Spender to the Lord Mayor on 1 September that Coates had been lobbying Craig and Carson for the 'Special Force' also, which encouraged them to dispatch Spender to Belfast in the first place.[351]

On Monday 30 August, the day Spender wrote to Coates laying out the 'Special Force' scheme, the *Belfast News-Letter* again carried an urgent notice from the Lord Mayor to assist the security forces in returning law and order to Belfast. Coates requested that citizens enrol as 'Special Constables'. [352] As mentioned above, Spender made clear he had been sent to Belfast to reorganise the UVF and offered the services of the force to the city:

> The U.V.F. will be prepared to assist the authorities in the maintenance of order in Belfast, by recommending their members to join the Special Constabulary […] I think that each Battalion in Belfast could turn out 100 men, probably in Relief and I would see that steps were taken that the arms were not used against the Roman Catholic population as such, but are merely used in the necessary maintenance of law and order in restricted areas. The number of U.V.F. Battalions in Belfast is 20.[353]

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[350] Ibid.
[351] Ibid., (1 September 1920).
[352] *Belfast News-Letter*, (Monday 30 August 1920), p.5.
[353] [PRONI], CAB/5/1, (30 August 1920).

Spender, future Northern Ireland Cabinet Secretary, acted with two hats during this period. He was the commander of the UVF *and* a leading member of the incoming Northern Ireland government. While offering the services of his force to the military and local dignitaries he also formulated the 'Special Force' scheme, a bedrock policy of the government of Northern Ireland: in 1920 the UVF were designing longlasting Northern Irish security policy.

The Lord Mayor's 'Special Force' appeared to be shortlived. Less impressed with the scheme, Major-General Jeudwine's commander, Major-General Edmund Guy Tulloch Bainbridge was concerned that 'arming small bodies of civilians in the manner suggested will only lead to more trouble and excitement, more nerves and consequently more attacks on the part of the Nationalist population.'[354] Spender organised with Jeudwine an unarmed patrol to support military forces on the evening of 31 August, but the UVF commander grew increasingly impatient at the lack of progress with his scheme and frustrated at the unwillingness of the army to release UVF weapons back to the force. Emphasising the influence of the Ulsterian rank-and-file a disheartened Spender wrote to Craig on both 9 and 10 September to warn him that the 'less steady element' was turning towards socialism in desperation at the lack of Imperial Government action and that soon even 'the steady men will be our greatest danger'. Craig had 10-14 days to persuade the Imperial Government to take dramatic action (some Orange Lodges had already raised their own forces); otherwise Ulsterians would turn against the authorities and Spender would have to resign.[355] The next day, without waiting for Craig's reply, an even more

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[354] Ibid.
[355] Ibid., (9 September 1920).

desperate Spender wrote to say, having met a delegation from County Tyrone who told him conditions in the rural districts were worse than in Belfast, it was too late to save the situation and he would, therefore, return to London the following week.[356] Spender did not return to London, Lloyd George agreed the principle of a scheme on September 8, and in October his 'Special Force' received sanction. The UVF commander became the founder of the USC.

Spender's 'Special Service Force'

During August 1920 Spender sketched out his 'Special Force' scheme which became the USC.[357] Organised 'on a Military basis' it was hoped that the relationship between the 'Special Force' and the police would mirror the relationship between the military and the police. Emphasis on the military nature of the 'Special Force', and Craig's and Spender's concerns of imminent military withdrawal from Ireland, confirms the force was not designed as a police force but as a replacement for Crown forces.[358] The USC would be an army parading behind the name 'constabulary.' Two years after the end of the First World War recruiters targeted ex-servicemen. Continuing the military theme, the nomenclature of junior ranks in the 'Special Force' was in line with military rather than police practice.

The 'Special Force' was to have two parts: a 'Special Service Force' (SSF) and a 'Service Reserve Force' (SRF). Carrying out 'general duty', the SSF were to serve only 'in the Province of Ulster'.[359] The SSF deployed to areas the RIC had withdrawn from during the conflict and cover the half of the Province where,

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[356] Ibid., (10 September 1920).
[357] Ibid., (u/d).
[358] Ibid.
[359] Ibid.

according to Spender, 'loyalists' were too sparse to form their own 'local Reserve force', would reopen barracks closed during the War of Independence. The scheme proposed the raising of an unpaid, part-time but fully armed and fully indemnified SRF to reinforce the police, military and SSF. Working in reliefs, the number of SRF would be 'very considerable' with weapons stored by the SSF.[360] As an emergency support force, a system of alarms would be installed and activated by local SRF leaders when necessary. Spender's plans ruled out using the SSF and SRF during industrial disputes, but required military uniforms and the taking of the Oath of Allegiance. Further emphasising both the force's military nature and sense of urgency, Spender's proposals ended, 'The Machine Guns, Lewis Guns, Bombs, and other equipment in the event of Battalions being organised should be made available in Ulster at once.'[361]

On 28 August 1920 Spender wrote a further memorandum, 'Suggested Steps for Government Action in Ulster.'[362] In a wide-ranging missive he returned to the subject of Ulsterian distrust of the Imperial Government and, before Clark's appointment, the need for a separate strand of authority in Belfast and a staff to transfer power from Dublin Castle to the incoming Northern Irish government in Belfast. Northern Ireland required a separate police commissioner for the 'Special Force' and the RIC and a separate military commander working with the constabularies. Foretelling future problems with Nationalist-controlled local authorities, the memorandum proposed government officials take an oath of allegiance or face dismissal. Auguring CASPA, the UVF commander, suggested:

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360 Ibid.
361 Ibid.
362 Ibid., (28 August 1920).

> Government regulations dealing with Motor Traffic, restrictions of movement by night, and reprisals for destruction of Government property, should be put into force as soon as can be done effectively, but it should not be applied to the loyal portions of Ulster until they can be effective in the more disaffected part of the six counties.[363]

Spender revisited the SSF and SRF scheme. As a further benefit, the scheme 'would also ensure that a large proportion of the population is brought under discipline.'[364] Ulsterian leaders' fear of the spectre of Republicanism was, as ever, eclipsed by the spectre of the rank-and-file challenging their authority.

When recruitment to the USC began on 1 November 1920 the SSF had become Class 'A' and the SRF Class 'B' however the scheme made no provision for what became Class 'C'. It is in the second memorandum, on the only point marked 'not approved' that we see the origins of Class 'C'. Spender called on the Imperial Government to immediately announce the arming of the UVF in the event of a general rising or withdrawal of Crown forces; in preparation the UVF would begin to drill. Arming the SSF and SRF first (under Spender's scheme the 'Special Force' would in part be armed by the Imperial Government) the balance of UVF weapons were to be distributed to local UVF companies.[365] Reorganising and rearming the UVF outside of the 'Special Force' scheme was a step too far for the Imperial Government. The vague terms laid out in the second memorandum; no recruitment figure, infrequent and irregular duty and emergency call-up match those of Class 'C' published two months later. Spender

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[363] Ibid.
[364] Ibid.
[365] Ibid.

had found a way to enrol the whole of his UVF, even those unwilling and unable to commit to one patrol a week. Spender's force began to take shape. By the time Clark met with the County Tyrone deputation, it was complete in all but name. 'No.1 Category', 'No.2 Category' and 'No.3 Category', described to the Tyrone UVF in autumn 1920, were merely renamed Class 'A', Class 'B' and Class 'C' by November.[366] Whether pre-empting the official formation of the USC or incredulous that the Imperial Government would ever approve it, recruitment forms began appearing in the Belfast UVF.[367] Serving in a restructured force, the form asked volunteers to sign up to 'Category A', 'Category B' or 'Category C' of the UVF under 'appointed UVF authority'. The synergy between the organisation of the UVF and USC was unmistakable. Writing to the battalion commanders of the Belfast UVF two days before the official USC terms of service were published Spender made clear his expectation that the UVF alone would provide enough recruits for the USC. The Imperial Government had finally recognised the difference between 'Loyalists' and rebels, and it was now their duty to maintain law and order in their new state:

> The government has definitely recognised that there are two distinct elements among the population:-Those who are loyal to the British Crown and Empire, and those who are not. The Government is asking the help of all Loyalists in Ulster, and proposes to arm with Firearms all those called on for duty, to confer certain privileges, to recognise them, and to indemnify them for injuries incurred by the performance of their duties. […] There is no reason why the U.V.F. should not furnish all the

366 [PRONI], D/1678/6/1.
367 [PRONI], CAB/5/1, (u/d).

> number required, and I confidently hope that this will prove to be the case […].[368]

The USC formally came into being on 1 November 1920. It was not a new organisation. It was the UVF rebranded. Formed from the local vigilance groups armed by, commanded by, organised by the UVF and in some cases even called an 'Ulster Volunteer force', and directed by UVF commander Wilfrid Spender, the USC was an Ulsterian paramilitary force, not a special police constabulary. Beyond the organisational and personnel continuities the USC already existed in practice before 1 November. From Tyrone to Belfast, from Lisburn to Lisbellaw throughout the summer and autumn of 1920 Ulsterian paramilitaries had patrolled, drilled and carried and fired weapons. From 1 November those same groups wore police uniform, carried warrant cards and were legitimised by the state. Reborn as a police force the UVF could consolidate Ulsterian Northern Ireland, and complete the revolutionary mission put on hold and anaesthetised by the outbreak of war in 1914.

III: On Patrol: The Experience of the USC

Once accepted by the Imperial Government, it was up to Clark as Northern Ireland's chief civil servant to implement Spender's proposals. Lieutenant-General Henry Hugh Tudor, police advisor to the Ireland Office in Dublin and Sir Winston Churchill, Secretary of State for War and Air until February 1921 and

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[368] Ibid.

Secretary of State for Colonies from February 1921 to November 1922, proposed a Special Constabulary in Ulster to David Lloyd George, Imperial Prime Minister, in July 1920.[369] It is no coincidence that Spender arrived in Belfast at the same time to reestablish the UVF and draft the 'Special Force' scheme. Tudor wanted troops deployed elsewhere in Ireland while Churchill wanted the troops for the Empire, but Lloyd George, concerned at arming one sectarian group over the other, was reluctant. Pushed on by Spender, Craig who remained as a junior minister at the Admiralty until 1921, made a case for the force. Agreeing to the principle on 8 September 1920, on 22 October Lloyd George announced that the scheme would begin enrolment on 1 November.[370]

Poster-bills bearing the royal crest appeared on 1 November for each county.[371] Signed by the Deputy Lieutenant for the county, Clark as Assistant Under-Secretary and the Divisional Police Commissioner gave notice that 'their Excellencies the Lords Justices and General-Governors of Ireland have approved […] the enrolment of Special Constables under the Authority of the Special Constables (Ireland) Act, 1832 […]'.[372] The bill went on:

> All law-abiding citizens between the ages of 21 and 45 are invited to apply for enrolment for the purposes of assisting the Authorities in the maintenance of order and the prevention of crime.[373]

Echoing Spender's scheme and Clark's description to the County Tyrone deputation, the bill detailed three classes of Special Constables; Class 'A', Class 'B'

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[369] Lawlor, p.44.
[370] Ibid., p.50.
[371] [PRONI], D/1022/2/9/1, (1 November 1920).
[372] Ibid.
[373] Ibid.

and Class 'C'. Reinforcing the force's military nature, Class 'C1' was added in 1922.

Responding to applicants for headquarter staff positions on 29 September, Spender described Class 'A' as 'a "Black & Tan" Force for the six counties' advising the applicant to write directly to the Belfast RIC if they, 'wished to join the Special Ulster Constabulary force, which are commonly called "Black & Tans"'.[374] Not mentioned in the Terms of Service, Clark acknowledged two categories of 'A' Specials, a 'Barracks' category to reinforce existing RIC stations and a 'Mobile' category to work under their own officers tasked with striking Republicans across Northern Ireland.[375] Such delineation of 'A' Special duties mirrored that of the RICSR, the 'Black and Tans' bolstering falling RIC rolls in the south and west, and the ADRIC, 'the Auxiliaries', striking at the IRA as highly mobile units across the twenty-six counties.[376] Full-time recruits on a six-month contract 'A' Specials, like the whole USC force, would serve only 'within the Divisional Areas in which recruited' i.e. Northern Ireland.[377] Unlike the RICSR and ADRIC which recruited from Britain, only local Ulsterians joined the 'A' Specials. When the Irish Civil War broke out in the Free State in June 1921, 5,500 constables had enrolled into Class 'A'.[378] At varying rates of pay and bonuses, the terms of service varied for each class. At the same rate as the regular RIC, 'A' Specials received £3.10s.0d each week in pay, 1/6 in boot allowance and 6/- in bonus totalling £3.17s.6d. An annual bounty of £25 was paid in lieu of pension. Married men received a further bonus of 6/- each week, 5/- to 11/6 in rent and 14/- in separation allowance bringing the potential total to £5.9s.0d. Armed and

[374] [PRONI], CAB/5/2, 'Correspondence from applicants wishing to be considered for service in proposed Ulster constabulary forces, July 1920 - May 1921', (29 September 1920).
[375] [PRONI], D/1022/2/9/1, (18 November 1920).
[376] For a details on the RICSR and ADRIC see: Leeson.
[377] [PRONI], D/1022/2/9/1, (1 November 1920).
[378] Farrell, p.143.

uniformed as the RIC, 'A' Specials also received compensation for death and injury including funeral expenses. Rates of pay changed regularly (decreasing in value) until the effective disbanding of Class 'A' in December 1925.[379]

Class 'B' drew no comparisons with the RICSR or ADRIC. 'B' Specials performed 'occasional duty' of one night each week but were liable for additional patrols and day duty in emergencies. They received caps and armlets. Although 'unpaid', 'B' Specials received a six-monthly bounty of £5 for wear and tear (they eventually received service uniforms) and 2/6 for each additional weekly patrol.[380] The Northern Irish government reversed planned cuts to the bounty in 1922 after resistance from the 'B' Specials.[381] In April 1923 the £5 allowance was replaced, with 'B' Specials instead paid 2/6 for each night patrol, 1/6 for each drill, an annual 5/- musketry allowance, 5/- for attending summer camp and 7/- if fully mobilised.[382] Cutbacks in 1924 saw a reduced annual allowance scheme reintroduced at £10 Full-Patrol, £7 Half-Patrol and £3 Reserve.[383] Further cuts in 1927 reduced all 'B' Specials to Reserve with the Bounty paid at £2 a year.[384] In November 1920 Class 'B' were armed in the same way as the regular RIC and Class 'A'. Working 'under the direction and control of the Police Authority of the Area' (i.e. the local RICUD), 'B' Specials nonetheless selected their own officers.[385] Like the RICUD and Class 'A', 'B' Specials received compensation for death and injury in the line of duty. In August 1924 Class 'B' numbered 20,171 constables.

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[379] Ibid. p.261. 90 'A' Specials acting as border, prison and ceremonial guards were transferred as 'mobilised 'B' Specials' to Class 'B' in January 1927.
[380] [PRONI], D/1022/2/9/1, (1 November 1920).
[381] Farrell, pp.168-169.
[382] Hazlet, p.101.
[383] Ibid., p.103.
[384] Farrell, p.265.
[385] [PRONI], D/1022/2/9/1, (1 November 1920).

Mobilised in Belfast in the height of sectarian violence between 1921-1922, Class 'C' was a paper force throughout the rest of Northern Ireland providing its members with the opportunity to hold a gun permit and little else.[386] 'C' Specials only served in their home district during emergencies but received no pay or allowance, drilling very occasionally and provided only with caps and armlets. Like Class 'B', 'C' Specials selected their own officers and received compensation for death or injury.[387] Its vague and decentralised structure means it is unclear how many 'C' Specials there were at any time. Disbanded along with the 'A' Specials in December 1925, Class 'C' never acted beyond Spender's original plan of bringing the entire UVF under state sanction and ready to serve in the event of an emergency that never came.

The entire USC was militarised, but Class 'C1' demonstrated the extent to which Ulsterians hoped to use the force as a Northern Irish army. Craig appointed Major-General Arthur Solly-Flood as Military Adviser to the Government of Northern Ireland in April 1922. Enhancing further the military nature of the USC, Solly-Flood became determined to establish a territorial army force in Northern Ireland as explored in chapter five. To be called up only in emergencies, Class 'C1' was to be the revolutionary guard of the Ulsterian movement: better armed and better trained than the other classes, highly mobile, equipped with speed-boats, coastal vessels, tanks and even aircraft, 'C1' Specials were the crack force of Northern Ireland's paramilitary USC.[388] Disbanded in December 1925, at its peak in the summer of 1924 8,299 men had enlisted as 'C1'

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386 [PRONI], CAB/9/G/7/1, 'Suggested augmentation of Special Constabulary Forces at Strabane. Correspondence from James White, Ch of Selection Cttee', (August 1924).
387 [PRONI], D/1022/2/9/1, (1 November 1920).
388 [PRONI], CAB/6/41, 'Military Adviser's Proposals', 1922.

Specials with a permanent headquarters and training staff.[389] At full establishment strength, 1 in 4 Ulsterian men would have been under arms in the USC and much smaller RICUD/RUC of around 3,000.[390]

Quickly growing beyond the local patrols of 1920, the USC was a large and complex paramilitary organisation encompassing full-time police, part-time paramilitary patrols, a potentially vast and self-armed paramilitary reserve force and a highly trained, highly mobile and highly armed army reserve force. Neither on their own as Classes 'A', 'B', 'C' or later 'C1' (or the planned 'Zone Police'), nor together as the USC, did the force resemble a police force. Just as Spender had planned, the USC was a paramilitary force at the full disposal of the government of Northern Ireland. The next section discusses patterns of violence perpetrated by the paramilitary police force.

Patterns of Violence and Cultures of Cover-Up

In this section original research uses available case-files and accounts from the HA/5 'General 'H" series at PRONI to explore the experience of the USC by Special Constables and the wider Northern Irish public, especially the Nationalist 'Other'. Geographically and temporally spread, the files are representative of the place and time, but it is unlikely that the series is either total, exhaustive or comprehensive and it offers only a glimpse into the activities of the USC. Of the eighty-eight files relating to the USC, twenty-one of them are 'Missing' from the archive. Documents that would help historians understand the force and their activities are inaccessible: 'Unauthorised B Special Raids', 'List of Special Constabulary Outrages', 'Arrest of Special Constables for Arms Possession'

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[389] Farrell, p.222.
[390] Ibid., p.144.

'Ambush of B Special Constabulary at County Down' and, 'Assault on B Special Constable at County Fermanagh.[391] When a researcher orders those documents, a file waits at the Collection Desk aptly marked **'DUMMY'**. Nonetheless, the sixty-seven files that are available give a clear picture not only of USC violence against Nationalists and Republicans but of Nationalist and Republican violence against the USC. The second part of the next chapter discusses violence against the USC while the rest of this chapter looks at patterns of violence and indiscipline by USC patrols, complicity by USC commanders and institutional injustice at the Northern Ireland Ministry of Home Affairs.

Violence and cover-up at all levels is evidence that the USC worked as a tool to assert Ulsterian superordination of the Nationalist 'Other' in the new sectarian state. A structural process of 'Othering' Nationalists to assert superordination had real and practical consequences, exercised on the tip of Special Constables' bayonets in the townlands of Northern Ireland. In the scores of accounts and hundreds of tables and statistics, it is easy to see sectarian violence as an anonymised abstraction, but these cases show the real life-and-death consequences of 'Othering' in the pursuit of Ulsterian superordination during the Ulsterian Revolution. 'Outrage', 'reprisal' and even 'accidental death' are terms that mask what was more often than not nothing other than outright murder of innocents living in the wrong place at the wrong time. Only the case of Martha Rogers, shot in a crime of passion by her 'B' Special boyfriend, sits outside the framework of sectarian killing. It is clear that without any real justification or immediate risk of harm to the Special Constables, and noting the

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391 See as example of 'Missing'/'Dummy' files: [PRONI] HA/5/280, 'Unauthorised B Special Raids', [PRONI] HA/5/323, 'Ambush of B Special Constabulary at County Down' [PRONI] HA/5/473, 'List of Special Constabulary Outrages', [PRONI] HA/5/487, 'Assault on B Special Constable at County Fermanagh and, [PRONI] HA/5/657, 'Arrest of Special Constables for Arms Possession'.

almost universal Nationalist identity of the victims, a policy of shoot-to-kill existed: as examined in the case of John McCann who on the verge of being let go by raiders (identified as Special Constables) told them he was Catholic, when one of the armed men immediately shot him three times, killing the elderly farmer in cold blood.

A distrust of Crown forces, and violence as a profession of loyalty to the new Northern Irish state, forms a key part of the structure of USC violence. Lack of trust in the Crown forces runs as a theme through every aspect of the force from legitimising its creation in 1920, justifying sectarian violence as a release valve of frustrations at Crown force inaction, and taking matters of policing and security into the unprofessional hands of the USC in anticipation of too soft an approach by Crown forces. Distrust, when coupled with professions of loyalty to the Northern Ireland state, justifies sectarian violence with protagonists explaining their bloody actions as essential to the survival of their community and by extension Northern Ireland, against aggressive Nationalist 'Others'. The complicity of an inattentive Imperial Government can be summed up as, *if the USC does not do the necessary dirty work then who will?* This summing up reminds us that to Ulsterians only the USC were trusted as a reliable and loyal force for 'law and order'.

The cases also expose inherent indiscipline and recklessness in the USC, especially among the 'B' Specials. Standing out among the cases of indiscipline and recklessness is that of James McGleanan explored below, shot for no discernible reason by seven 'B' Specials in volley fire while turning a street corner on St Patrick's Day. The original terms of service for the 'B' Class required each patrol to be accompanied by an RUC constable to oversee the patrols' activities and instil and maintain a level of professionalism in the force; this rarely

happened. The gift of arms and emergency powers without any oversight by professional police constables on the ground created space for indiscipline and recklessness that the USC ably occupied. Structures of command within the force, particularly the 'B' Class, proved inadequate without scrutiny and control from the RICUD and RUC, which regularly chided and despaired of the USC's behaviour. With USC officers present the force recklessly shot at women's cars, fired drunk from trains at Nationalist homes and mowed-down unarmed civilians without good reason, even if the 'higher-ups' often excused their conduct.

Complicity by the 'higher-ups', District Inspectors, County Commanders and even ministers, forms another essential part of the pattern of USC violence. While RICUD and RUC officers wrote aghast of the USC's excesses, USC commanders excused the behaviour of their charges as instinctive in the febrile environment of 1920s Northern Ireland, or as wrong but allowable for the discipline of the force as a whole and the greater good. Politicians, without any qualms and in support of USC commanders, interfered in prosecutions of Special Constables by RICUD and RUC County Inspectors, delaying them to the point that a conviction became unsafe, moving cases from professional Resident Magistrates (RM) to easily influenced and sectarian petty juries and JPs, or having the Attorney-General for Northern Ireland enter *Nolle Prosequi* on the charge sheet, pulling the conviction and letting the prisoner go free despite evidence from witnesses and the RICUD and RUC. The cases below explore each of these scenarios. Accompanying minute sheets offer glimpses of the concerns of senior police and of civil servants and ministers, but never concern themselves with the harm done to victims and their families whose voice is rendered silent to their deaf ears. Victims and their families had scant hope of justice. Even when prosecutors secured a conviction,

as in the Katie Green case, it was on a lesser charge. Special Constables created parallel and false accounts of events, creating the first obstacle for victims seeking justice. There then followed justification of violence as acts of loyalty, with complicity and obstruction from local commanders holding cases back. If the RICUD and RUC Inspectors managed to wrest the case from the townland commanders and piece together enough evidence to prove the Specials' accounts were false, political interference from Ulsterian civil servants and ministers provided the USC with a 'get out of gaol free card'.

The next two sections look at cases of violence. The first, short section looks at the 'A' Class and the much longer second section looks at the 'B' Class, placing the examples in the patterns of violence described above. The third section looks at recklessness and indiscipline across the USC and the culture of cover-up, excuse and disinterest from senior USC officers and political interference from the Northern Irish ministers and civil servants.

Ulster's Black and Tans?: The 'A' Specials

Magherafelt Town Hall

At PRONI there is stored a rarely foliated series, the 'General 'H' Files' deposited by the defunct 'Ministry of Home Affairs, Northern Ireland'.[392] Amidst the thousands of files, historians find (if they look) reports of 'Outrage' during the period of partition. Complaints and enquiries concerning 'B men' and 'Specials' lie among accounts of IRA potshots fired across the County Monaghan border,

[392] See [PRONI] HA/5.

taking the life of unsuspecting USC men, and nighttime raids reducing Special Constables to Republican hostages. 'A' Specials did not behave like the 'Black & Tans' but nor did the RICSR[393]. The RICSR was responsible for many reprisals and outrages, but the ADRIC were most liable and their behaviour more terrible. Just as the RICSR have been tarred with the same brush as the ADRIC, so the 'A' Specials, no innocents, have been tarred with the same brush as the 'B' Specials, who were culpable for most of the outrage and bad reputation of the USC.

In one of those files Richard Dick Megaw, Parliamentary Secretary for Home Affairs (and Unionist member of the Northern Irish Parliament for Armagh) commented on a minute sheet, 'The more I see of this case the less I like it.'[394] Shots fired at Magherafelt town hall during a 'Sinn Fein' [sic] dance came at the same time as regular constables of the RICUD and witnesses reported seeing drunk 'A' Specials harassing local people. Emphatically, the RICUD District Inspector reported:

> There is no doubt S/Cons from the platoon had been in the town that night drinking and stopping persons and asking them if they were going to the dance, and am sorry to say in my opinion the S/Cons were the instigators of the trouble.[395]

Not only does the case demonstrate indiscipline and sectarian violence on the part of the Magherafelt 'A' Specials, but a lack of respect for and trust in the RICUD by the USC. Reporting one of their platoon was shot, the 'A' Specials

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[393] Leeson.
[394] [PRONI] HA/5/158, 'File relating to shooting by Special Constables at a dance at Magherafelt, Co. Londonderry', (8 December 1921).
[395] Ibid.

refused to give their particulars to the RICUD constable on the scene instead giving him a mouthful of abuse. Faced with such an uncooperative, abusive and hot-tempered group of 'A' Specials, the District Inspector ordered them confined to barracks for the rest of the evening.

On the evening of 8 December 1921 local Nationalists had organised a dance in the town hall. Based in the Magherafelt workhouse was a platoon of 'A' Specials, from the description likely a 'Mobile' platoon. As the crowd gathered for the dance a number of the platoon, drunk, split into two small groups. One group stopped and harassed residents in the streets approaching the hall challenging local man John O'Kane to 'box', asking for names and what they were doing out. James Kearns was stopped for a light by a man in a Burberry overcoat with a revolver hanging from the pocket. That same man moved off towards where the shooting began a couple of minutes later. Other witnesses saw four plainclothes 'A' Specials run into the crowd outside the dance when shooting followed. Bernard Henry was standing outside the dance and on hearing the shooting ran away and into the first group who kicked him. Henry was sure that they were 'A' Specials. John Tohill also stated that the plainclothesmen were 'A' Specials, while Joseph McKey saw one of the men fire a shot that narrowly missed him. Magherafelt's Nationalist publican reported shots fired through the window of his public house. Several local witnesses agreed that there were two groups of ununiformed men; one in the streets approaching the dance and another directly outside who fired the first shots.

Five statements from RICUD constables all pointed to the liability of the Magherafelt 'A' Specials. Immediately after the shooting RICUD Head Constable McCullough encountered three 'A' Specials, 'one of whom was considerably

under the influence of drink.'[396] They said two of their men were shot but refused to give further information, including their own names, saying they would avenge the shootings and begin searching houses. McCullough went on, saying one of the 'A' Specials was 'Most filthy and insulting in his language' and generally very scornful of the RICUD constables there: going further, 'Instead of being an assistance he was a menace to the public peace.'[397] RICUD Constable John Harvey noted the 'A' Specials 'used some filthy expressions' when questioned.[398] RICUD Sergeant Tiernan investigated the broken window of the pub and found a Special Constable's baton outside. Unable to find the bullet inside the pub, he concluded that the baton was used to smash the window. Patrolling with RICUD Sergeant Patrick Kelly that evening was 'A' Special Constable B Thompson, attached to the local RICUD unit and separate from the 'Mobilised' platoon based in the workhouse that appeared to have caused so much trouble. Significantly, the 'barracked' 'A' Special's statement was the only one which did not identify the two groups as 'A' Specials. RICUD officers sent Thompson back to barracks to fetch reinforcements, and his statement was similar to that of the RICUD officers, but perhaps indicating an Ulsterian loyalty higher than he owed his colleagues, he did not say the shooters were 'A' Specials.

In a pattern which will become familiar throughout this chapter the statements of the 'A' Specials conflict with those of civilians and RICUD. Each statement collaborates others from the 'A' Special Constables and is very similar in language, but constructs a parallel narrative to events and motivations and an obvious fabrication. 'A' Special Constables John Thompson and W Mitchell claim a crowd appeared from the darkness in the streets approaching the town hall

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396 Ibid.
397 Ibid.
398 Ibid.

(with a second crowd at the convent) before rushing at and shooting at 'A' Special Constables Spring and William Kilpatrick. Hit with stones, 'A' Special Constables John Thompson (not the 'barracked' B Thompson above) and Mitchell reported shots were fired from all around the hall before a man ran from inside the hall and opened fire in the opposite direction from the dance. Despite eyewitness statements from five RICUD constables, they claimed no RICUD patrolled the town that evening. In what will become a familiar excuse, both claimed it was too dark to identify anyone they saw. 'A' Special Constable Spring did not produce a statement, but 'A' Special Constable Kilpatrick did. Like John Thompson and Mitchell 'A' Special Constable Kilpatrick claimed to see a large crowd of 30-40 men, shouting 'There he is' before firing on him and Spring.[399] John Thompson and Mitchell, helped the wounded (but silent in the records) Spring back to barracks. 'A' Special Constable Kilpatrick also saw no RICUD on patrol that evening but did state he conducted house-to-house searches on his own after returning from the barracks but when asked which houses he replied, 'I was excited and cannot remember.'[400] Perhaps 'A' Special Constable Kilpatrick was the same 'A' Special who refused to give his name to RICUD Head Constable McCullough, but used insulting language and vowed to conduct house-to-house searches to avenge the uncorroborated and unproven wounding of an anonymous 'A' Special. Perhaps that wounded 'A' Special was the silent Spring, but the evidence suggests the wounded 'A' Special received his wounds from accidental fire by his colleagues. The only discharged bullets found that evening were the sixteen marks on the door of the town hall. An IRA liaison officer quickly arrived at the scene and threatened to 'shoot the bastard Specials' if the RICUD could

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[399] Ibid.
[400] Ibid.

not provide suitable protection in the town.[401] The decision of the RICUD that evening to confine the 'A' Specials to barracks does not appear to have been based on that threat but on the fact that the 'A' Specials presence 'was a direct menace to the public peace.'[402] In the weeks that followed internal disciplinary action was taken against an 'A' Special Head Constable and four 'A' Special Constables as a result of the events of 8 December. The immediate assessment by the RICUD that the 'A' Specials were at fault, drunkenly stalking the streets of Magherafelt, out of uniform, and firing indiscriminately into a Nationalist crowd and dance hall, proved correct.

The case of the 'Mobile' 'A' Specials at Magherafelt is one of a very small number of complaints protesting at the behaviour of 'A' Specials. The conduct that evening falls in line with the behaviour more often seen among the 'B' Class.

McGuills and the Altnaveigh and Lisdrumliska Massacres

In June 1922 the Colonial Office telegrammed Spender, now Cabinet Secretary, to the Government of Northern Ireland requesting, on behalf of their minister, Churchill, Secretary of State for the Colonies, that an independent investigation take place over the alleged raid by 'A' Special Constables on the home of Sinn Féin councillor James McGuill.[403] Without providing particulars, it was alleged the 'A' Specials killed two other men (almost certainly Patrick Creggan and Thomas Crawley) on the same night, 13/14 June 1922. Churchill's intervention demonstrated both the seriousness of the allegations and his role as arbiter

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401 Ibid.
402 Ibid.
403 [PRONI] HA/5/249, 'File relating to alleged raid on house of James McGill/McGuill, Dromintree, Co. Armagh, by A Specials, with newspaper cuttings and note of interest in this case by Winston S. Churchill, M.P.', (13 June 1922).

between Collins and Craig. Although the relationship between the Chairman of the Provisional Government and the Prime Minister of Northern Ireland ebbed and flowed, they often contacted each other directly on specific cases such as this. Going through the correpondence Churchill shows either exasperation at earlier inaction, momentary freezing of relations, or the need for leverage somewhere else. In the McGuill case it demonstrates the seriousness of the incident. Churchill arbitrated in this incident because of the proximity of the McGuill and the Dromintee residence in the Altnaveigh and Lisdrumliska massacres on 17 June 1922. Writing to the County Inspector the District Commander noted all the 'A' Specials could account for themselves and that the local people thought the allegations untrue. Further, the District Commander noted, the IRA used McGuill's house as a staging post to launch ambushes and attacks and that the raid carried out against McGuill's house, where they alleged one of the two women was 'outraged' and an attempt made on the other, was staged by the IRA dressed in greatcoats. McGuill had fallen on hard times, the District Commander reported, and the entire incident was a fabrication, a propaganda ruse and an attempt to claim financial compensation by McGuill and his wife. Ending his report, the District Commander notified his Inspector that McGuill's house was burned down and rased 'as a matter of military necessity.'[404] Richard Dick Magraw concurred with the police report: the allegations against the 'A' Specials were a fabrication.

Robert Lynch and Matthew Lewis have both researched the Altnaveigh and Lisdrumsliska massacre, highlighting the connexion to the Dromintee raid.[405]

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[404] Ibid.

[405] For details on the Altnaviegh and Lisdrumliska massacres and the events surrounding it see: Robert Lynch, 'Explaining the Altnaveigh Massacre', *Éire-Ireland*, Vol.45, Nos.3&4, (2010), 184-

Even if Lynch's revision concludes the raid on Forkhill barracks was in reprisal for Dromintee and Altnaveigh was motivated by the counter-reprisal of that, the murders of Creggan and Crawley and the seriousness of preceding events would not have been lost on the police when they wrote their report on 20 June. Moreover, the 'outrage' allegations against the 'A' Specials was the rape of McGuill's pregnant wife, Onah and attempted rape of their servant. Despite the intervention of Churchill and the lives lost, in what was accepted at the time as a reprisal at Altnaveigh and Lisdrumliska, there was no independent investigation, the statements of the 'A' Specials were taken at face value and the incident dismissed as rumour and fabrication from the District Commander up to the junior minister at the Ministry of Home Affairs.

The conduct of the 'A' Specials at Magherafelt appears more in line with that of the 'B' Specials discussed below. They, like their 'B' Special colleagues, lacked a RICUD escort and lacked discipline. After Altnaveigh the Ministry of Home Affairs failed to carry out a full and independent investigation discussed below. It is the comparative brevity of this section against the section on the 'B' Specials that stands out most. 'A' Specials drew far fewer complaints despite being mobilised full-time and being more active during the period of the Outrages. Fewer complaints suggest 'A' Specials behaved better than the 'B' Specials, but as we see below it is a low benchmark against which to judge them. We can assume, reading against the grain, that the 'A' Specials performed their role with more discipline and with less violence than the 'B' Specials because they worked closely

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210, and Matthew Lewis, *Frank Aiken's War: The Irish Revolution, 1916-23* (Dublin: UCD Press, 2014), p.150.

with the professional RICUD who complained vigorously at USC indiscipline elsewhere. 'A' Specials committed outrage and sectarian violence, but on a far lesser scale than 'B' Class who, as the next section explains, deserved their notoriety as the perpetrators of widespread sectarian violence in Northern Ireland.

'The 'B-men"

Lacking the close supervision of the RICUD, the 'B' Specials, a decentralised and mostly unaccountable force, lacked discipline and professionalism. Each class of the USC contributed to the bad name of the force, but without doubt, the 'B' Specials were responsible for most and the worse violence by the USC. This section of the chapter explores the files kept by the Ministry of Home Affairs on the 'B' Specials. Focus is on the rural areas outside of Belfast where rioting was infrequent and the sparse population meant outrage could take place in isolated areas where help for the victims was a long way away. The cases that follow describe and shed light on the ideas of superordination, ethnic violence and patterns of behaviour established above.

Rose and Margaret Gallagher

Typical of the reports against the 'B' Specials was the case of Rose and Margaret Gallagher of Dromore, County Tyrone.[406] The case demonstrates indiscipline and sectarian motive in 'B' Special violence. On 13 October 1921, twenty armed and disguised men raided the Gallagher home looking for Rose and Margaret's two

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406 [PRONI] HA/5/157, 'File relating to attack on house of Michael Gallagher, Dromore, Co. Tyrone, by members of Special Constabulary, and attempt to prosecute them', (October 1921-February 1922).

brothers. The District Inspector's Outrage Report noted that during the raid the sisters were forced to stand outside in their nightclothes while the raiders stole £100 from the property. Both sisters, who alleged to have been searched as many as 35 times by the security forces, refused to give a statement but stated all the raiders were 'B' Specials looking to kill the Gallagher brothers whom the police knew as active Republicans. Some days later the sisters provided statements naming the 'B' Specials to the RICUD through the IRA liaison officer appointed during the Truce. In turn the sisters received a written threat:

> Beware it has come to our knowledge that you have sworn information on five of our "B" men in connection with the raid on your house. If any arrests are made both your brothers will be shot by day or by night should it be seven years hence.
>
> Signed – "B" Specials[407]

The 'B' Specials were alerted to the accusations when the RICUD Sergeant for the Dromore sub-district took statements from the men named by the sisters. Writing to the District Inspector the Sergeant assured his superior that the 'B' Specials' statements put them in the clear and dismissed the Gallaghers' evidence because it came through a liaison officer.[408] Reproached in the District Inspector's reply for not following procedure by taking statements from the alleged perpetrators before speaking to the victims, the Sergeant was reminded to take the statements and berated, 'This is elementary police work.'[409]

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[407] Ibid.
[408] Ibid.
[409] Ibid.

With Margaret in Dublin with her new husband, Rose made her statement on 28 October alleging they were both woken by a bang on the door and gunfire at 01h00 on 13 October.[410] After 20 minutes of commotion 16-20 disguised men kicked the door through shouting, 'Send out your brothers until we riddle [shoot] them', while those who remained outside shouted to the raiders inside, 'Rush on, drag out the whores until we shoot them.' With windows broken and the house left in disarray, the raiders had stolen all the cash and coins along with a revolver holster. Betraying a sectarian motive to the raid the last two remaining raiders left shouting 'To Hell with the Pope'. Rose Gallagher identified the raiders as 'B' Specials who were well known to her and lived close to the house. Margaret Gallagher's statement provided further details.[411] Confirming the raiders were looking for the brothers, she reported they shouted, 'Drag them bastards out until we riddle them if we don't get them tonight we will be back for them.' One raider refused to enter the house, reluctant to take part in the outrage and was upbraided by his comrade, 'Get to your work. What did you come here for!' After standing outside in their nightclothes, the sisters were ordered in to unlock the press containing valuables but when they protested they had lost the key one raider with his face covered and painted ordered another, 'Take that revolver out and it will make her remember where the keys are.' As the raiders left with the cash one said, 'The Black and Tans will give you your fill of it before this winter is over.' Margaret named the raiders as 'B' Specials and reported the threatening letter she and her sister had received. Unlike many other 'General 'H' Files' the Gallagher case does not contain witness statements from the 'B' Specials. At face value, the Gallaghers' testimony, accepting potential bias from their family's politics,

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410 Ibid.
411 Ibid.

demonstrates that beyond the venal motivation of robbery and hints at sectarianism the 'B' Specials aimed to terrorise suspected Nationalists/Republicans and their families. The theft of the considerable sum of £100 doubled as an economic attack against a Republican family holding some wealth while the sheer aggression of the physical attack demeaned the Gallaghers reminding them that the Ulsterian 'B' Specials were superordinate.

If the local security forces were reluctant to accept the sisters' statements at face value, Lieutenant-Colonel Charles Wickham, commander of RICUD until June 1922 (and Inspector-General of the RUC from then until 1945) considered them sufficient to prosecute the six named 'B' Specials for unlawful assembly, saying, 'Action such as this cannot be tolerated.'[412] It was not unusual for high ranking RICUD officers to show a willingness to check and punish unruly and violent 'B' Specials although they rarely followed through with the threat. Although the adjutant to the County Tyrone Commissioner agreed to the prosecution, the County Commissioner wrote to Wickham cautioning against legal action.[413] County Commissioner McClintock was anxious to take the 'B' Special's testimony at its word as disbelieving it 'may cause serious trouble' among the local force and warned of the 'difficulty there may be in keeping the only defence Force for the Six Counties in being.'[414] The USC commander's apparent disregard for the RICUD and Crown forces, and fellow elements of the security forces, deployed to defend Northern Ireland highlighted the lack of confidence in any force other than the USC. To many Ulsterians the perceived loyalty of the Specials counted for much more than the better trained and better equipped RICUD and Crown forces. Unmoved by McClintock's concerns, replying,

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412 Ibid.
413 Ibid.
414 Ibid.

Wickham said it was better to proceed and the accused clear their names than there be a cover-up. Separately the RICUD Commander wrote to the Inspector-General of the RIC, Sir Hugh Tudor recommending prosecution. Richard Best MP, Attorney-General for Northern Ireland agreed with the Ministry of Home Affairs notifying the Ireland Office in December.[415]

Margaret and Rose Gallagher did not attend the hearing in January 1922, and the prosecution issued warrants for their arrest for non-attendance. The RM dismissed the charges against the 'B' Specials but with the arrest warrants against the Gallaghers outstanding Collins intervened. The sisters were, the Chairman of the Provisional Government complained, intimidated into not attending as an unusually large number of 'A' Specials deployed to Dromore on the court day.[416] It is noteworthy that unlike the 'B' Specials, a large number of 'A' Specials did not cause trouble. Craig acknowledged the extra deployment but assured his Southern counterpart the additional 'A' Specials were deployed to prevent unrest in the village where a large group of 'civilians' appeared on the day of the hearing. The police would not, however, execute the warrants against the sisters. Noting the dismissal of the charges against the 'B' Specials local security forces disregarded the claims of intimidation as 'merely propaganda' by known Republicans.[417] Although dismissing the claims from the day of the hearing additional USC patrols were ordered to protect the sisters. It was insensitive in the least to assuage the fear of Margaret and Rose Gallagher by assigning USC patrols, the same USC as the 'B' Specials who had allegedly raided their home and threatened them in writing and the 'A' Specials who had arrived in Dromore in force on the day of the hearing, for their protection. The case demonstrated how local USC

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[415] Ibid.
[416] Ibid.
[417] Ibid.

and Ulsterians would defend and support the 'B' Specials even from allegations brought by senior police officers. If the letter did not work and the RICUD Commissioner supported the prosecution, then other more drastic means would be used to deter their appearance in court. Craig legitimised the additional USC in Dromore when writing to Collins and in dropping the arrest warrants cast himself as a *bonhomme* doing Collins a good turn.

Joseph and James Hayden

The shooting of the Hayden brothers provides a further example of indiscipline and sectarian motivation in 'B' Special violence as well as the coordinated construction of a parallel narrative. On the night of 18/19 May 1921, four brothers named Hayden turned into bed on their County Tyrone farm in the townland of Claggan near Cookstown. Dominick and Thomas remained in the large house with the servant girl, and James and Joseph as usual retired to the smaller 'far house' where they shared a bed.[418] With elections taking place the next week 'party feeling' across Northern Ireland was high.[419] In his testimony, James said they woke to the house door being kicked through.[420] He went to see what was happening, and was rushed by men who hit him with their rifle butts before stabbing him in the chest. Joseph lay in bed when some of the men began to beat him with rifles, but as he woke he grabbed one of the muzzles. One of the two men next to the bed produced a revolver and shot Joseph who sat up, leant against the bedroom window and died. The other men in the small bedroom told James to face the wall before bayonetting him. He collapsed and passed out. In

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418 [PRONI] HA/5/161, 'File relating to proposed prosecution of B Specials for the murder of James Hayden, Co. Tyrone', (May-December 1921).
419 The term **'party feeling'** is the contemporary equivalent of the modern 'sectarian tension'.
420 [PRONI], HA/5/161.

their testimony, Dominick and Thomas said the servant girl woke them at 01h30 and they went to investigate the 'far house'.[421] A dog attacked Dominick in the lane, and he heard men marching away.

Dominick and Thomas found Joseph dead, but James was eventually able to talk. Dominick fetched Dr Owen. Thomas found two oil bottles and two rifles, one broken, the next day. Dominick also fetched Edward Falls between 03h00-04h00, a local farmer and JP to whom Thomas gave the evidence, Falls reporting, 'It is a bit of rifle' before he handed it over to the RICUD sergeant.[422] Dr Owen attended the scene and James, who suffered shock and multiple stab wounds.[423] Joseph had already died of shock having suffered multiple stab wounds consistent with a weapon such as a bayonet, a cut over the eye, bruised eye and chest and a bullet wound to the abdomen.

Initially, the RICUD arrested Jeremiah and Hugh McMinn and William Devlin for the murder and assault, but neither James Hayden (who did not identify any of the defendants) or the local 'B' Special platoon, 'Hutchinson's Squad', placed the McMinn brothers at the scene, and other reports placed Devlin outside the house. Magistrates dropped the charges against the three. However, James Hayden alleged, 'That they were all dressed in policemen's black rainproof coats and caps' and soon after five 'B' Specials had charges preferred against them which magistrates sent-up to the next Assizes.[424] As with the Magherafelt case above and other cases in this chapter, the testimony of the 'B' Specials, who admitted to being at the house and carrying out a 'search', constructs a consistent

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[421] Ibid.
[422] Ibid.
[423] Ibid.
[424] Hugh McMinn and Jeremiah McMinn (not members of the USC) were arrested along with 'B' Special Constable William Devlin all of whom were discharged by magistrates. 'B' Special Constables James Hutchinson, Robert Black, Willaim Crookes, Howard McNeill and William Jordan were charged with murder, attempted murder and grievous bodily harm indicted and sent-up to the Assizes for trial.

but parallel narrative.[425] 'B' Special Constable Robert Hutchinson, who lent his name to the platoon, stated that RICUD Head Constable Hegan had ordered him and around fourteen other 'B' Specials to conduct searches for arms in the district. According to Hutchinson's account, who did not know the Haydens, he knocked on the door of the 'far house' saying 'Special Police'.[426] Although James Hayden said he heard no warning only the door being put through, Hutchinson stated that the occupants denied the Special Constables entry but went on to warn the people inside, 'We are not coming to do you any harm, and if you don't let us in we'll have to break in the door.' The 'B' Specials put the door through with Hutchinson and 'B' Special Constable William Jordan at the front. William Jordan, followed by his brother Duncan Jordan, dropped his rifle and James Hayden attempted to grab it. Hutchinson and one of the Jordan brothers (possibly Duncan Jordan as William Jordan was knocked out) struggled with Joseph as he lay in bed, with Hutchinson dropping his revolver which Joseph Hayden picked up and pointed at him. In the struggle to control the revolver, a single shot went off without causing any injury before Hutchinson reclaimed the revolver and replaced it in his holster. There followed a struggle for the rifle of the Jordan brother at Joseph Hayden's bed when Joseph Hayden forced the muzzle against Hutchinson. Allegedly, James Hayden shouted, 'Joe fight' and Joseph, with the muzzle against Hutchinson, unknowingly with the safety on, pulled the trigger several times. Hutchinson ordered 'Pass out' and the squad left the property with, according to Hutchinson, only the single harmless revolver shot fired. The platoon accounted for all their ammunition on returning to barracks, but Hutchinson claimed most of the men on the raid were lent to him,

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425 [PRONI], HA/5/161
426 Ibid.

and he did not know who they were so could not account for their ammunition. Dr Owen recalled a fatal gunshot wound to Joseph Hayden, but in Hutchinson's testimony, no one suffered a gunshot wound during the raid.

'B' Special Constable Duncan Jordan corroborated Hutchinson's account, adding that his brother William had given the warning through the door and forced entry before being knocked unconscious and losing a tooth as he entered.[427] He heard no scuffle with James Hayden, leaving the second brother's serious but non-fatal wounds unaccounted for. He testified only the single shot was fired, and that on leaving the Haydens' property no one had suffered wounds or injury. His brother, William Jordan, after giving the warning deposed he was knocked out and had not entered the bedroom where the struggles took place.[428] Corroborating Duncan Jordan's statement and leaving the wounds and injuries of the Hayden bothers unexplained, William Jordan said no one was hurt when they left the property. 'B' Special William Crooks' testimony followed the others, and like William Jordan said he waited outside the bedroom adding that the 'B' Specials entered the bedroom with bayonets fixed.[429] 'B' Special Constable Cuthbert Tomb stood outside the bedroom with William Crooks and William Jordan as the violent and dangerous scuffle Hutchinson testified to unfolded inside.[430] 'B' Special Constable Howard McNeill corroborated all the other depositions but later added, 'The Hayden I and my party were holding up, might of hurt himself up against our bayonets in the struggle.'[431] Despite the conditionality of the additional statement, McNeill testified no one was injured by the time the platoon left. Statements made by the men of 'Hutchinson's Squad'

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[427] Ibid.
[428] Ibid.
[429] Ibid.
[430] Ibid.
[431] Ibid.

were backed up by 'B' Special Constable Robert Black of 'Irving's Squad', perhaps one of the unknown 'B' Specials lending themselves to the raid that evening. McNeill's additional statement followed the discharge of the McMinn brothers and Devlin, and with the screw tightening on two of the remaining defendants, on 11 June 1921 Hutchinson and Black further deposed. Hutchinson modified his statement to say in the struggle for Duncan Jordan's rifle Joseph Hayden let go of the gun and fell back on the bed, assuming he had fainted.[432] Hutchinson could not account for James Hayden's wounds. Robert Black added that he knew the Haydens but had no quarrel with them. Cuthbert Tombs, as a witness but not a defendant, deposed he could not account for the wounds inflicted on James Hayden.

With the men remanded in custody, the trial had not begun by December with James Hayden too unwell to attend court.[433] 'B' Special Constable Howard McNeill's mother wrote to Craig protesting at the long period spent in remand as 'the opposing attorney there [in court] presented a health certificate signed by an R.C. doctor'.[434] There is an implicit dismissal, here and in other cases, of the doctor's advice to the court because he is Catholic. For Mrs McNeill, qualifications and experience did not matter. The doctor is Catholic, so his advice must be biased. In the universal sectarianism of Northern Ireland, religious difference is always paramount no matter the circumstances or context: doctor or not the Catholic is the enemy. Further, in the ranked ethnic structure of Northern Irish society the professional opinion of a Catholic doctor should count less than claims of any unqualified Ulsterian: whatever the situation the Protestant's view is most credible and should be accepted. Asserting her Ulsterian credentials vis

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[432] Ibid.
[433] Ibid.
[434] Ibid.

those of the Catholic doctor Mrs McNeill signed off her letter to Craig, 'I remain, Sir, a loyal subject of Northern Ireland'.[435] In every transaction between Ulsterians, an implied test of loyalty is taken and proved. This test of loyalty is also apparent in demonstrations of masculinity discussed in chapter six.

As with the Gallagher case, the charges against the 'B' Specials were dropped. There was much evidence that the men of 'Hutchinson's Squad' were responsible for the killing and wounding of the Haydens. Accepting that they conducted the raid and had the means to inflict injury, the 'B' Special's defence rested on the occupants being fit and well when they left the 'far house'. Whether a jury would believe that in the short time between the 'B' Specials leaving and Dominick and Thomas Hayden arriving, seconds or minutes later, somehow someone else beat, stabbed and shot Joseph Hayden dead and bayonetted James Hayden is unknown. Minutes at the Ministry of Home Affairs in December give no clear reason why the Attorney-General entered *nolle prosequi* against the defendants ten days after Craig received Mrs McNeill's letter. Wickham had the last word, commenting that it 'is highly undesirable' for armed patrols to conduct raids without RICUD officers in attendance.[436] 'B' Specials were required to be accompanied by a RICUD officer when on duty. Confirming the pattern of indiscipline of 'B' Specials across Northern Ireland seen in the 'General 'H' Files' Wickham ended, 'I am not convinced the B men of this district are sufficiently under control'.[437] The Hayden case is proof of that.

Francis Kelly

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[435] Ibid.
[436] Ibid.
[437] Ibid.

Francis Kelly's case placed on record what is evident through implication elsewhere. Although an official policy of reprisal existed in the south and west which the RICSR and ADRIC executed, no such policy existed explicitly in Northern Ireland. From 1920 Ulsterians suggested, often thinly threatened, less than harsh security measures would see spontaneous reprisals by Ulsterians. The fear, or threat, of rank-and-file reprisals remained a justification for the USC enabling the Ulsterian élite to canalise the sectarian energy of the rank and file into activities that could be presented as security policing. Reporting the shooting of Kelly, the police reported it as a reprisal for the death of 'B' Special George Chittick.[438]

Unidentified raiders killed George Chittick and wounded his brother Charles Chittick at their home in Realton, near Trillick, County Tyrone on 22 March 1923.[439] Raiders attacked other 'B' Specials that evening. The Coroner's Jury returned a verdict of murder by person or persons unknown.[440] Gunmen fired through the door of the Chitticks' house, shouting 'Hands Up', hitting Charles Chittick who lay motionless for an hour before finding his brother dead at the gate from gunshot wounds. The next night at 01h00 armed men knocked at the door of Francis Kelly, a local Catholic shoemaker, marched him to a field and shot him dead with rifle ammunition. Despite noting that 'Kelly held Sinn Fein views and the murder was evidently a reprisal for the murder the previous night of George Chittick 'Unionist' same townland', the Coroner's Jury did not actually rule that Kelly's death was murder, bringing in a verdict of 'gunshot wound in

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[438] [PRONI] HA/5/187, 'File relating to the fatal shooting of shoemaker Francis Kelly, Realton, Trillick, near his home. Reprisal for the death of George Chittick?', (March 1922).
[439] [PRONI] HA/5/186, 'File relating to the attack and shooting of Charles and George Chittick, the latter being shot dead, at their home, Realton, Trillick, Co. Tyrone.', (March 1922).
[440] Ibid.

head inflicted by some person or persons unknown' caused the death.[441] This highlights the possibility of sectarian bias by lay juries in Northern Ireland, and it was left to officials at the Ministry of Home Affairs to file the case as a 'reprisal?'. Kelly's case is evidence that Ulsterians, through the 'B' Specials, practised a policy of reprisal, especially in remote rural areas where the only qualification a potential victim needed was to be a Catholic or Nationalist.

Archie and John McCann

The case of uncle and nephew Archie and John McCann demonstrates a clear sectarian motive in 'B' Special violence and indiscipline by an unprofessional force allowed to patrol without an RUC escort. Dragged from their beds in the early hours of 8 June 1922, uncle and nephew Archie and John McCann fell victim to the violence of local 'B' Specials in Mounthamilton, near Cloghmills in County Antrim.[442] Despite evidence from multiple sources linking a 'B' Special sergeant to the scene a jury later acquitted him. In the telegram immediately following the outrage, the Ballymoney District Inspector reported that disguised men raided the home of the Catholic men shooting both and killing Archie McCann.[443] Two days after the outrage the District Inspector reported raiders woke the McCanns at 03h00 and took John McCann outside.[444] Initially, the raiders said the younger of the McCanns was under arrest for involvement in an attack against a police barracks, but then asked him how he wanted to be shot. As

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441 [PRONI] HA/5/187.
442 [PRONI] HA/5/234, 'File relating to murder of Archie McCann and shooting of John McCann, Manorhamilton, Co. Antrim, allegedly by B Specials.', (June 1922). [The file incorrectly transposed the location as 'Manorhamilton']. The spelling of the 'Mc' names in this case is inconsistent with some documents using 'M" instead of 'Mc', e.g. 'M'Dowell' instead of 'McDowell' and 'M'Aleese' instead of 'McAleese'. They are the same people but the various note takers and adminstrators have applied different spelling rules.
443 Ibid.
444 Ibid.

they waited for the car to take John to the barracks, the raiders shot Archie McCann three times, killing him, and shot and wounded John McCann before he made his way to neighbours. The District Inspector noted that neither McCann was involved in politics, Sinn Fein or the IRA. The RICUD charged 'B' Special Sergeant Thomas McDowell with murder and magistrates remanded him in custody on 10 June 1922. Although substantial evidence linked McDowell to the outrage, the RICUD remained conscious of his strong alibi: the now predictable 'B' Special parallel narrative. In his statement after the shooting John McCann identified McDowell as being at the scene but was unable to recognise anyone else.[445] Later, at the Antrim Assizes on 5 July 1922 John McCann deposed that when outside the cottage:

> I recognised M'Dowell whom I had known for some time previously. I heard him being called "Sergeant," and in answer to a question from one of the men he replied that "he thought they might let the M'Cann's [sic] go." One of the men said, sure you are Protestants anyhow," and we said "No". We were told to put up our hands, and one of the men, whom I did not know, fired a shot, wounding me on the side. I fell, and then three or four more shots were fired. I learned afterwards that my uncle had been shot.[446]

From the deposition, a clear sectarian motive is identifiable. Just as the raiders prepared to release the McCanns they realised they were Catholic and shot them out of hand. Also, the reference to McDowell as 'Sergeant' gives a strong hint

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[445] Ibid.
[446] *Belfast News-Letter*, Thursday 6 July 1922, p.6.

that his accomplices were also 'B' Specials used to addressing him within the conventions of police discipline.

The USC (RICUD arrested an 'A' Special Constable along with McDowell) constructed a parallel narrative which, despite being undermined by evidence from multiple and seemingly uncoordinated witnesses, saw the McCanns' assailants avoid justice. 'B' Special Constable Thomas Skinner, Barracks Orderly, stated McDowell, 'A' Special Constable John Johnston and two other unknown 'B' Specials left the police barracks at about 23h00.[447] A group of USC, 'A' and 'B' Class remained in the barracks, later providing useful alibis for the Specials. The patrol returned for tea at about 01h30 and slept in the dayroom until about 05h00, two hours after the McCann shooting. 'A' Special Constable Johnston patrolled with McDowell and 'B' Special Constables Daniel Gage and William Boyd with Johnston commenting, 'The three "B" men who came in with me were quite sober and correct.'.[448] McDowell carried a revolver and the 'B' Special Constables carried rifles. The group patrolled close to the Post Office in Corkey and remained in Johnston's sight at all times. Johnston's statement placed the patrol some distance from the outrage. Specials who remained in the dayroom accounted for the patrol and corroborated that they were in the dayroom at the time of the shooting.[449] A few days later and under caution 'B' Special Constables Gage and Boyd testified they cycled out to Mounthamilton at about 05h00 passing the McCann's cottage noticing a crowd of people but nothing else unusual nor blood.[450] 'B' Special Constable John Scott cycled with the group, including McDowell and said although they discussed the group outside the

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[447] [PRONI] HA/5/234.
[448] Ibid.
[449] Ibid.
[450] Ibid.

McCanns' cottage they cycled on.[451] Hugh McCann, the younger brother of John McCann, stated he saw the patrol pass at about 05h00. In the McCann case the USC's parallel narrative rested on McDowell's patrol venturing no further than the Corkey Post Office and having returned to barracks ninety minutes before the shootings happened. Witnesses testified otherwise.

Local tailor John Douds received a knock at the door from Johnston and his patrol at around 23h40 on the evening in question.[452] The patrol wore police caps and said they were looking for a man who they thought may have gone into the Douds' house. Asking them into check the tailor testified that they found nothing and left and that he did not see Johnston carry a revolver. Although Douds' testimony is consistent with the timing of the USC narrative, living a quarter-mile away from the town it demonstrated that contrary to their statements the patrol did move beyond the immediate vicinity of the police barracks and Post Office. John Doud's wife corroborated her husband's testimony but explained that she did see a revolver on Johnston.[453] Testimony from Catherine McAleese weakened further the USC's defence.[454] Men knocked at McAleese's door at 01h45 asking for Paddy McGowan (who they visited later) and they promptly left when she told them he did not live there. Her stepson, in the house said, 'That is like Johnston's voice, the policeman.'[455] The McAleeses lived in Ballyveeley some distance outside Corkey. McAleese's statement not only demonstrated the patrol moved beyond the vicinity of Corkey but that they had not returned to barracks by 01h30. Further undermining the USC narrative, the statement of Lizzie McGowan, who knew Johnston from her shop, placed the

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[451] Ibid.
[452] Ibid.
[453] Ibid.
[454] Ibid.
[455] Ibid.

patrol in Ballyveeley at 02h40 on the evening of the shooting.[456] Lizzie and her brother Patrick McGowan stayed up late waiting on a cow to calve when at 02h40 she saw three policemen. Lizzie McGowan asked what they wanted to which they replied that Dan McClements wanted Paddy so that he could 'shoot him in the lane'.[457] Lizzie McGowan shouted, 'Get away out of that Johnston, don't I know you', to which the men ran away.[458] Patrick McGowan corroborated his sister's statement but added he found bootprints and bicycle tracks heading away from Corkey barracks the next morning.[459] Although Ballveeley is 2 ½ miles from the McCann's cottage evidence of bicycles (which they testified they did not use until 05h00) shows means for the patrol to get there in time for the shooting. Lizzie McGowan's statement shows that the patrol was not looking specifically for the McCanns and asked for Patrick McGowan. Chance determined who their victim would be that evening, and the McCanns had terrible luck. Taken with John McCann's deposition that the patrol prepared to release him and his uncle only shooting them when raiders realised their Catholic religion further supports the theory that the 'B' Specials employed a reprisal policy with victims being determined solely by their Catholicity. If Lizzie McGowan had revealed her brother was with her, perhaps the 'B' Special would have shot him instead that evening, and Archie McCann would have lived. Either way, the USC would have had blood that evening.

On 16 June RICUD arrested Johnston in connexion with the shootings, but the RM discharged him on 24 June. McDowell was remanded until trial at the Antrim Assizes on 5 July. The file does not include the outcome, but the *Belfast*

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[456] Ibid.
[457] Ibid.
[458] Ibid.
[459] Ibid.

News-Letter reported the Assizes session where the judge directed the jury to consider the safety of any conviction based on only one witness (John McCann) identifying McDowell at the scene.[460] The defence rested on the strength of the alibis provided by the other Specials and along with the judge's direction proved successful. The jury found McDowell not guilty and acquitted him, leaving more victims of 'B' Special violence without justice.

Catherine and Katie Green

Not only restricted to groups of 'B' Special Constables, the Katie Green case demonstrates how indiscipline pervaded all ranks of the force and that individual 'B' Specials, not just groups, carried out violence. On 2 December 1922 in Clabby, near Fivemiletown, County Fermanagh, masked men attacked the home of a Catholic mother and daughter, Catherine and Katie Green. Convicted of the outrage, 'B' Special Instructor James Allen received six weeks hard labour.[461] As with other cases, the 'B' Specials created their parallel narrative of events. Catherine Green, a 63-year-old widow and mother of Katie, heard a loud knock on the door at about midnight.[462] Katie asked who was there and hearing no reply opened the door at which point a masked man grabbed her and tried to drag her from the property shouting, 'Your' [sic] the very one I want.'[463] With a revolver held to her head, Katie Green held up her hands to push the man away when the gun went off. Catherine threw the weapon to the ground, and the masked man beat the older woman with a stick. In in the struggle his mask was pulled away.

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460 *Belfast News-Letter*, Thursday 6 July 1922, p.6.
461 [PRONI] HA/5/281, 'File relating to attempted murder of Catherine and Katie Green, Co. Fermanagh, by a B Special', (December 1922-January 1923).
462 Ibid.
463 Ibid.

All the time a tall pale man watched the commotion from the door and the unmasked man (James Allen) shouted at him, 'Whats the use of bringing yous out when you won't help to do whats to be done [sic].' The other man went outside, and Allen followed blowing a whistle before turning back and demanding the Greens return the revolver he had dropped during the scuffle. He was thrown the revolver through the kitchen window and picked it up, shooting through five of the kitchen windows. The kitchen table set alight when one of the rounds hit two of the oil lamps that sat on it. Katie Green's statement corroborated her mother's, but she saw eight men standing a few yards away on the road outside the cottage.[464] RICUD Sergeant Moulton attended the scene the next morning finding bullet holes in the door and ceiling.[465] Katie Green told him the assailant kicked her in breast and stomach, and her head was bleeding. Wounded behind her ear and on her hands, Catherine Green handed over an ashplant cane and wax candle as evidence. That afternoon Sergeant Moulton arrested Allen, discovered a fully loaded and recently fired revolver which had plaster stuck to it. Allen also had the Greens belongings with him and a blackened right eye.

According to the 'B' Specials' parallel narrative shots were heard on the evening and 'B' Special Instructor Allen was alerted by a patrol knocking at his lodgings in the early hours. 'B' Special Sergeant Robert Morrow deposed that between 00h00-01h00 he heard shots while patrolling between Clabby Cross and Morley Cross and then went to wake 'Sergeant' Allen.[466] They then woke 'B' Special Sergeant Robert Weir asking him to help investigate the shooting they heard before then waking Special Head Constable Samuel Beattie to do the

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[464] Ibid. [HA/5/281]
[465] Ibid. [HA/5/281]
[466] Ibid. [HA/5/281]

same.[467] Beattie testified that he heard shooting about 00h30, giving it no heed before retiring for the evening.[468] Allen and Morrow knocked at the door at around 03h45 to tell Beattie about the shooting. Beattie, Allen, Weir and Morrow cycled out to the scene and despite seeing damage at the Green's cottage passed-by to wake local man Tom Graham who said, 'he did not hear anymore shooting than was usual.'[469] According to their testimony, most of the 'B' Specials were in bed during the raid, while the others patrolled some distance from the Greens' cottage. The only reason they had been about the following morning was to investigate the shots they had heard. It seemed an ineffectual investigation to cycle past the scene despite recognising that a disturbance had occurred. Interviewed under caution that day Allen claimed, contrary to the evidence of the Greens and the 'B' Specials' that 'This is the first I heard of it.'[470] The RICUD charged Allen with attempted murder. The next day, 3 December the RICUD District Inspector for Lisnaskea reported:

> I am not satisfied with 'B' Sergt. Morrow and his patrol and consider he ought to have gone direct to the scene of the occurrence […] I can give no reason for this very brutal attack on two defenceless women, there is a son but he is not at home at present. I have no reason to think these people are Sinn Feiners.

As with other cases, higher ranking RICUD officers saw at least deficiencies in the professionalism of local 'B' Special forces and at worst malicious and violent

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[467] Ibid.
[468] Ibid.
[469] Ibid.
[470] Ibid.

behaviour. The following week the District Inspector informed the Inspector General of Allen's indictment and that the RICUD successfully opposed bail before ending:

> I am very much of the opinion that the men seen outside the house by Miss Green were Head Const. Beattie, Sergt. Weir, Sergt. Morrow, and some of his patrol all of the "B" S/Constabulary, but of course I have no evidence regarding that.

Convicted of a lesser charge under 46 & 47, Vic, cap 3, (Explosive Substances Act (1883)) Allen received just six weeks hard labour and a referral to the Inspector General but the rest of the patrol were never arrested or interviewed as suspects. Unlike most of the 'General 'H' File' cases the Greens received some justice and £300 for malicious injury and damage.[471] However, a lack of evidence owing to the 'B' Special parallel narrative meant the other men seen on the night of the raid evaded due process.

John Kelly

John Kelly's case demonstrates how despite the proximity of groups of Specials, complicity allowed perpetrators to evade justice with evidence held back from prosecutors. On 12 April 1922, uniformed men shot John Kelly in Keady, County Armagh.[472] As was the usual procedure, the District Inspector sent a telegram to the Ministry of Home Affairs addressed to the Minster of Home Affairs Bates

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[471] Ibid.
[472] [PRONI] HA/5/207, 'File relating to alleged shooting of John Kelly, near Keady, Co. Armagh, by B Specials.' (April 1922-January 1923).

immediately. As the police who investigated the outrage noted, men stopped Kelly, took him half a mile and then shot him. He remained in hospital.[473] The file contains no witness statements, but the report from the County Inspector to Wickham includes some detail.[474] Although the doctor and priest who attended Kelly refused to assist the police in their investigation, the RICUD interviewed local IRA man and former internee T J Hughes.[475] Earlier Hughes said men in an unmarked car wearing police issue overcoats stopped and searched him. The men carrying revolvers searched Hughes and asked if he was Catholic. The car moved on but stopped when Hughes heard voices and a gunshot and saw a man running towards him. Hughes hid behind a fence until the car passed. The RICUD then interviewed a Mrs Merry, who said that Kelly knocked at her door at 22h00 saying 'Specials' had shot him. Kelly, who said he had been out fetching a doctor for his sick mother asked Mrs Merry to send for a priest and a doctor. Before the doctor arrived and drove him to hospital in Monaghan Kelly said a car stopped him, driving him half a mile (in the direction Hughes reported) and then shot him.

Reporting that Kelly, a 'leading Sinn Feiner' had previous charges for burglary but refused to recognise the authority of the court and was acquitted, the County Inspector noted that while authorities accounted for all of the USC at Keady separately, No. 40 platoon was stationed at Carnagh House.[476] RICUD HQ instructed the County Inspector to make enquiries of No. 40 platoon who responded swiftly that they could account for all of the men and none drove the type of car in question.[477] Concluding that the police were not involved in the shooting, the report ended with the District Inspector closing the case with 'No

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[473] Ibid.
[474] Ibid.
[475] Ibid.
[476] Ibid.
[477] Ibid.

clue' to what happened. Whether the doctor and priest refused to assist the RICUD because of fears of intimidation or other reasons remains unclear but a key question in the failure of the investigation to reach a successful conclusion. The men who shot Kelly, who searched Hughes and asked his religion, allegedly dressed in police issue coats, remained at large.

Charles McCann

The July 1924 case of Charles McCann never made it to the RUC. The Ministry of Home Affairs minute noted sixteen masked men raided the McCann residence and told the entire family to leave the Magherafelt area, which they did.[478] Despite there being no 'B' Special patrols on duty at that time, witnesses reported that one of the men wore a 'B' Specials uniform. The minute dismissed McCann's report of injury because his character was 'not very good' and he previously held sympathies with Sinn Féin. The detailed file is untraceable and only the minute sheet remains in the archive.

John Barber

John Barber's case shows that a lack of discipline, even as late as 1926, continued to plague the USC even as late as 1926. Once again, despite available evidence, the perpetrators never came to justice. Robbery, as in the case of the Gallagher sisters demonstrates that USC criminality extended beyond violence to include theft as a means to assert economic superordination over the Nationalist 'Other'. Only a minute sheet records the case of John Barber from Tullyvallen near

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[478] [PRONI] HA/5/475, 'File relating to raid on house of Charles McCann, Magherafelt, Co. Londonderry, allegedly by 'B' Specials; minute sheet only', (July 1924).

Beesbrook, County Armagh, on 12 March 1926.[479] All that is known is that two armed and masked men knocked at Barber's door and demanded he turned out his pockets. Local police took casts of the footprints from the scene with one official noting, 'These raids are becoming more frequent of late.' Local RUC officers suspected the 'B' Specials who attempted to create fear and unease in the district to justify their active patrols during a time of cutbacks by the Ministry of Home Affairs.

Hugh Loughran

On 13 June 1926, the County Tyrone home of Hugh Loughran was raided by three 'B' Specials in Donaghmore near Dungannon.[480] Taking place, like the Barber case, in a period of relative sectarian calm, the case demonstrated how 'B' Specials could remain a threat to peace and order in rural communities. Imbued with a sense of power and authority over their neighbours and armed with the means to commit serious crime, if unchecked and indisciplined, the presence of 'B' Specials created the potential for trouble. 'B' Special Sergeant McMullan and 'B' Special Constables Smith and Logue raided Loughran's home make away with 16/9 in cash along with other possessions. Taking casts of the footprints, the RUC arrested the three 'B' Specials and found the stolen goods at McMullan's home. Magistrates returned all three to the next Assizes. The RUC found the government-issued revolver Loughran described when the raid happened. The court sentenced McMullan and Smith to hard labour with Logue bound over to keep the peace. In view of their convictions, McMullan and Smith were

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[479] [PRONI] HA/5/534, File relating to the house of John Barber, Tullyvallen, Bessbrook, Co. Armagh, visited by armed and masked men - 'B' Specials suspected', (12 March 1926).
[480] [PRONI] HA/5/540, 'File relating to prosecution of 'B' Specials for armed robbery, Donaghmore, Co. Tyrone', (June1926-August 1926).

discharged from the service of the 'B' Specials, but Logue was not. Despite his involvement in a raid with other 'B' Specials using USC arms the view was taken that Logue was of sufficiently good character to remain a 'B' Special.

The section describes how acts of 'B' Special violence and outrage formed a pattern of violence and highlights a culture of cover-up and parallel narrative in the USC. The next section how, while not always premeditated or planned, even reckless and careless behaviour by the USC cost lives, especially among the Nationalist community of Northern Ireland.

Homicidal Recklessness

Alongside cases of premeditated sectarian violence, which on a case-by-case basis amount to nothing other than murder and vicious assault, the 'General 'H' Files' contain accounts of dangerous and fatal recklessness and negligence. Even if less planned and more opportunistic than raiding, there often remained a sectarian motive.

The *Belfast Telegraph* reported on the death of James McGleanan on 18 March 1922, shot by 'B' Specials for failing to stop at Dundrum Crossroads near Keady in County Armagh.[481] On the evening of 17 March, St Patrick's Day, McGleanan a 60-year-old unmarried farmer and beetler walked home from his sister's house.[482] The patrol called on him to 'Halt' twice but carrying on the 'B' Specials shot McGleanan seven times as he turned the corner.[483] Either the officer carrying a revolver emptied the entire cylinder into the unsuspecting beetler, or

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[481] *Belfast Telegraph*, Saturday 18 March 1922, p.7.
[482] A process of the Irish textiles industry, beetling involved the mechanical beating of a fabric to give it the appearance and feel of being smooth with a **beetler** operating the machine.
[483] *Derry Journal*, Monday 20 March 1922, p.3.

the seven-man patrol fired a volley into him. A Coroner's Jury, who heard that McGleanan had no involvement in politics, returned a verdict of justifiable homicide.[484] A senior official at the Ministry of Home Affairs commented:

> I think a patrol of seven men might with safety have stopped one man walking along the public road at a short distance from them without having recourse to fire arms.[485]

Junior minister Megraw replied that he agreed but that 'B' Specials 'can hardly be blamed for not taking risks.'[486] What risks an unarmed 60-year-old beetler posed to a patrol of seven armed men is unclear. The shooting of William Elliott is a further example of a disproportionate response from the 'B' Specials. On 17 April 1922, the 'B' Special patrol, without a RICUD accompaniment, noticed a light coming from the Clough National School near Ballymoney, County Antrim. The 'B' Specials surrounded the building and called for all and any inside to come out. The District Inspector for Ballymoney reported 'A man bolted out of school door and took to his heels. The B men called on him to halt, and he failed to answer the challenge and was shot dead.'[487]

Relaying the Coroner's jury's verdict of justifiable homicide to the County Inspector the District Inspector provided more detail of events on the evening. On surrounding the building the 'B' Specials shouted they would burn the school down if those people inside of the school did not come out. Reinforcements had arrived, and after knocking on the windows, which were (it was claimed) too high

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[484] *Belfast Telegraph*, Monday 20 March 1922, p.7.
[485] [PRONI] HA/5/184, 'File relating to the shooting of James McGleenan shot dead by 'B' Specials at Dundrum cross roads, Co. Armagh, on 17 March.', (March 1922). [Emphasis original].
[486] Ibid.
[487] Ibid.

to look into, the officer fired a revolver shot into the air. Then the man bolted from the building with warning shots fired over his head and commands to halt shouted. The man continued to run, and the officer gave the order to fire a volley at him. The patrol fired six or seven shots, and the man, identified as William Elliott, fell to the ground. Suffering a head and leg wound, a doctor attended Elliott who died in the local Orange Order Hall. The year before an attempt had been made to break into the school, and Elliott had a house-breaking kit on him. Jurors unanimously found that the 'B' Specials were doing their duty and no blame for Elliott's death could be attached to them.[488]

Writing to the District Inspector, the County Inspector wrote how dangerous he felt it was if 'B' Specials thought they could resort to firearms with such easy pretext. As in other cases a high ranking RICUD officer strongly criticised the cavalier attitude of a local 'B' Special squad:

> It is true they did not know who might be inside but surely 17 armed men could have found this out. It is not as if the locality had been in any way disturbed. It has been absolutely quiet for a number of months. I think it quite unnecessary for these "B" patrols to go about with rifles in this locality.[489]

Wickham noted at the bottom of the report that the patrol should have detained Elliott without firing at him, but the Divisional Commissioner would not agree to 'B' Special patrols going on duty without being fully armed. At the Ministry of Home Affairs, the same unidentifiable senior official who commented on the

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[488] Ibid.
[489] Ibid.

McGleanan case commented that it was unnecessary to open fire so readily. Junior Minister Megraw wrote, 'This is a sad case – I think the B men might have looked thro' the window before they demanded admittance or fired any shots.'[490]

Both the Elliot and McGleanan cases demonstrate a reckless disregard for life by 'B' Specials. There was no apparent threat to the 'B' Specials in either case, but they quickly resorted to a shoot-to-kill policy and two men lost their lives without good causes, despite the exonerating verdicts of the Coroners' Juries. The non-compliance of Elliott and McGleanan, in the context of the research of this chapter, is easily understood. 'B' Specials readily and without provocation shot and murdered people and so they were feared. There could be no guarantee that if Elliott or McGleanan had halted or given themselves up, they would not have been shot out of hand – numerous cases here show that this occurred regularly. It is not surprising that, fearful of their safety, people and especially Catholics ran and attempted to get away from 'B' Specials. These cases show that getting away could be as dangerous as complying.

The death of Teresa McAnuff on 5 July 1921 in Ardarragh near Rathfriland in County Down demonstrated how negligence could be fatal.[491] 'B' Special Constable William Bell killed McAnuff when his tampered rifle went off and misfired a single fatal shot. Bell absconded when charged with manslaughter, and when found five years later the Attorney-General for Northern Ireland, directed that no further action should be taken. Teresa McAnuff's mother, Margaret, stated that she had heard banging at the door of her house followed by a shot

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[490] Ibid.
[491] [PRONI] HA/5/550, 'File relating to accidental fatal shooting of Teresa McAnuff, by William Bell, Special Constable, Co. Down', (July 1921-October 1926).

through the window.[492] When the door opened she heard a friendly conversation with the 'B' Specials then heard one shot followed by three more. Gilbert McIlveen, either a RICUD or USC armourer/quartermaster, inspected the rifle and concluded it had been tampered with and was useless with the trigger liable to go off at the slightest touch and the safety was not working. 'B' Special District Commandant Robert Stevenson admitted that the German Mauser, a relic of the Larne gun-running, was in poor condition but issued to the patrol which had been ordered after a police ambush nearby.[493] 'B' Special Company Commandant Joseph Heaslip reported Bell's rifle hit the frame of the McAnuff's door as he turned to leave with the single shot fired.[494] Bell was a changed man since the shooting and immediately after McAnuff's death seen in tears: he was no longer fit for service. At the foot of the County Commandant's report, a handwritten minute directed the prosecution of Bell for manslaughter owing to the failure to preserve life and duty when using a dangerous firearm. Bell's response, 'I have never handled a rifle at all' if accurate, is telling and demonstrated dangerous institutional negligence. Bell then absconded with his mother reporting three months later that he left his work being psychologically affected by the incident. Five years later Bell was traced to Rathfriland, but the Attorney-General closed the case. Teresa McAnuff and her family never had their day in court. Demonstrating negligence in both weaponry issued and inadequate training of the 'B' Specials questions remain as to the five shots Margaret McAnuff heard and whether the hair-trigger provided the perfect defence in another case of 'B' Special outrage and violence.

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[492] Ibid.
[493] Ibid.
[494] Ibid.

Martha Rogers's case, from 1924, stands out as the only example found of an Ulsterian killed by a 'B' Special but not the only person killed by their recklessness. Most cases in this section are explicitly sectarian in their motivation or lack of due care and attention. Her case was different.[495] Killed in a crime of passion by her 'B' Special Constable boyfriend, the Ulsterian Rogers, like the Catholic Teresa McAnuff, was a victim of institutional negligence and a cavalier attitude to the issuing of arms by the USC. Martha Rogers and her boyfriend Thomas Kennedy planned to marry, until the disapproval of her family led to her ending the relationship. Some days later she and Kennedy met near his home where he tried to reconcile with her but to no avail, the pair agreeing to remain friends. As a 'B' Special, Kennedy kept his service rifle at home and asked Rogers to wait for him. Returning to her with his rifle, he shot her once through the chest admitting to the attending police that he had meant to kill her and wanted to kill himself. Jurors at the Coroner's Inquest laid full liability with former serviceman Kennedy ending their verdict, 'The Jury are very dissatisfied with the want of control of firearms by the Special Constabulary as disclosed at this inquest.'[496] Responding directly to the jurors' dissatisfaction, the Inspector-General's office wrote to Watt saying:

> I have to state that I fail to see that if this man intended to murder the woman the regulations as regards the keeping of arms can be said to have been the cause.[497]

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[495] [PRONI] HA/5/472, 'File relating to prosecution of 'B' Special Constable Thomas A. Kennedy, Co. Antrim, for the murder of Martha Rogers' (July-December 1924).
[496] Ibid.
[497] Ibid.

The availability of a service rifle at his home provided Kennedy with the means to kill Rogers. It was incredible that the senior RUC officer reporting to the Ministry of Home Affairs was unable or unwilling to acknowledge that. Despite initially accepting the murder of Rogers Kennedy later entered a defence of insanity providing witnesses testifying to his erratic and unstable behaviour in the aftermath of the shooting.[498] He withdrew the contemporaneous admission of guilt, saying he only admitted to the murder because, in grief, he too wanted to die. Defence counsel attempted to disprove intent to kill by arguing that Kennedy charged the rifle before meeting Rogers and that it went off accidentally. In December the court found Kennedy guilty on the lesser charge of manslaughter by reason of insanity. Sentenced to four years penal servitude the 'B' Special escaped the gallows.

Both the Rogers and McAnuff cases show negligence on behalf of individual 'B' Specials and of the USC as an institution. In McAnuff's case the USC issued an unstable rifle to a 'B' Special, and in Rogers's case issued a rifle to an unstable 'B' Special. As the Coroners' Jury pointed out in Rogers's case, insufficient checks and controls were in place to prevent tragedies such as these from happening. Usually, the victims of the negligence, deliberate or otherwise, were Catholic but Rogers's case demonstrated that ultimately negligence could be tragically fatal for anyone acquainted with the 'B' Specials.

A complaint by John Clarke, like Rogers an Ulsterian, from Aghalee, County Antrim further demonstrates a pattern of recklessness on the part of the 'B'

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[498] Ibid.

Specials.[499] On the Eleventh Night 1923, Clarke reported drunk 'B' Specials fired into the air so close to his yard that it forced him to evacuate his workshop out of fear of being hit.[500] Writing to the Ministry of Home Affairs, the Inspector General of the RUC's office confirmed that a 'B' Special was under investigation for firing near to the house of a local JP. Just as Mrs McNeill applied a test of loyalty to undermine medical advice of a Catholic doctor in the Hayden case, the Inspector General's office dismissed Clarke's complaint because he had written to Nationalist newspapers.[501] Clarke was, in other words, a 'Rotten Prod'. The letter noted that Clarke had become disgruntled with the 'B' Specials and RUC after being booked for a bicycle light infraction but there was evidently more than a minor falling between him and the police since, as the RUC explained, Clarke had been burnt in effigy by the local Ulsterian community. As seen elsewhere, Clarke's failure to pass a test of loyalty- just as was the case with all Catholics, who failed the test by default - meant dismissing his complaint without any other explanation. Despite there being enough evidence to investigate a 'B' Special for the same misconduct in the district on the same evening Clarke had his complaint dismissed because he failed the test of loyalty, being 'Othered' as a 'Rotten Prod'.

In August 1923 the Inspector General's office had again to respond to the Ministry of Home Affairs over the reckless behaviour of 'B' Specials.[502] On returning from a training camp in Portrush, County Antrim 'B' Specials fired from the train while idling at seven stations between Portrush and Antrim on 28

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499 [PRONI] HA/5/398, 'File relating to complaint of John Clarke, Aghalee, regarding shooting of 'B' Specials on 11 July.', (July 1923).

500 **'The Eleventh Night'** precedes the **'Twelfth'** on the 11 and 12 July each year. These **'Orange Anniversaries'** commemorate the victory of William III at the Battle of the Boyne in 1690. Bonfires and fireworks are lit on the Eleventh Night followed by marching bands and processions on the Twelfth. 'The Apprentice Boys of Derry' parade takes place annually on 12 August in the city marking the lifting of the Siege of Derry in 1689.

501 [PRONI] HA/5/398.

502 [PRONI] HA/5/406, 'File relating to shots fired by 'B' Specials from train returning from training camp at Portrush, Co. Antrim', (August 1923).

July 1923. Unhappy not to have had the incident reported to him directly and only hearing of it second hand, Bates had Watt look into the case. Confirming what had taken place, the RUC secured enough evidence to commence disciplinary action against a 'B' Special Sergeant and four 'B' Special Constables. Echoing other concerns over the 'B' Specials carrying arms while off duty, the Inspector General's office commented that 'B' Specials carried arms between home and camp as they were needed for training. Although investigating five men, the RUC were finding it difficult to collect information. Just as in other cases, it is easy to imagine the 'B' Specials constructing a parallel narrative to create plausible deniability and an element of reasonable doubt. Despite firing in at least seven stations all the ammunition could be accounted for, raising questions over the accuracy or veracity of the ammunition audit or whether the 'B' Specials had their own unauthorised weapons on the train. Nevertheless, the firing from a train in a station shows a familiar recklessness and lack of discipline by the 'B' Specials already set out in this section.

'B' Specials fired from transport as well as firing at it. The shooting of Francis Reilly in Rahoney, near Fintona, County Tyrone on 17 April 1922 demonstrated a readiness by 'B' Specials to resort to lethal arms already seen in the McGleanan and Elliott cases.[503] Driving home from a cockfight, Patrick McGuigan along with four passengers, Francis Reilly, William Irvine, Peter Rafferty and William Moore came across a 'B' Special picket. McGuigan stated that after being hailed he stopped within 5 yards of the 'B' Specials with two shots fired at his vehicle. The first shot broke the windscreen, cutting the drivers face and splitting his ear with

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[503] [PRONI] HA/5/205, 'File relating to inquest on Francis Reilly, Rahoney, Co. Tyrone, shot dead by B Specials', (April 1922).

the second shot coming from behind.[504] According to Moore, the 'B' Specials fired two shots before the vehicle came to a complete stop and the picket came over to take the names before telling them to move on.[505] Irvine also said the shots came before the vehicle made a complete stop.[506] Indicating that the 'B' Specials and the men in the car knew of each other, the passengers recognised the picket commander as 'B' Specials Sergeant Elkin. The second round hit Reilly in the side of the face with the passengers only realising when the wounded McGuigan began to drive off. An unknown man, either 'B' Special Constables Andrew Cooke or Joseph Barr told McGuigan to get him to a doctor quickly. McGuigan, claiming he had been driving quickly to get the men home 'in time' (likely before curfew), asked 'B' Special Sergeant Elkin for an escort which he refused.

Contrary to the evidence of the passengers, 'B' Special Constable Cooke stated the car passed him, the first picket for 100 yards, before passing Elkin and Barr fifty yards further on.[507] Barr fired the first shot in the air and Moore fired the second shot at the car. Either Barr did not shoot in the air and hit McGuigan, or Moore's shot passed through Reilly's head before hitting the driver's ear, face and windscreen. McGuigan's statement is evidence that the first shot, fired by Barr, was not fired in the air in warning but at the car. Barr's statement corroborates Cooke's, with both saying the vehicle only stopped after Moore had shot at the vehicle. Reporting the incident, the District Commander said the first

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[504] Ibid.
[505] Ibid.
[506] Ibid.
[507] Ibid.

shot (Barr's 'shot in the air') broke the windscreen, hit the driver and then blew the top of Reilly's head off.[508]

Returning a verdict of justifiable homicide the Coroner's Jury refused Moore's evidence and, as Elkin fell off his bicycle en route to the hearing, took no account of the 'B' Special Sergeant's statement. The Ministry of Home Affairs laid the blame with McGuigan for failing to stop.[509] The District Commander, as in the Hayden and Clarke cases undermined evidence from McGuigan, who failed the loyalty test, saying, 'McGuigan in a well known Sinn Feiner and I have little doubt that he endeavoured to run past the patrol.'[510] It is more difficult to see malicious intent in this case with McGuigan still moving, albeit he said to a standstill when Barr and maybe even Moore fired. Once stopped no search for arms took place with the men only asked for their names before being allowed to move on. Whether fast-moving or slowing down the vehicle did not pose a threat to the picket and the shots fired at the car recklessly endangered the lives of the occupants killing Reilly. At the very least Reilly died from disproportionate and reckless shooting by the 'B' Specials. However, McGuigan was known to the security services, and he and his passengers knew 'B' Special Sergeant Elkin, and even by the RUC's own account Barr never gave the warning shot, shooting instead directly at the car. Other cases in this section show a shoot-to-kill policy without warning, and the evidence in the Reilly case indicates the pickets did the same even if their motive remains unclear.

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[508] Ibid.
[509] Ibid.
[510] Ibid.

Although with less tragic consequences but as reckless, if not more so, was the case of Katie Cassidy near Castlewellan, County Down on 9 July 1924.[511] 'B' Specials returning from a training camp in Ballyroney, 11 kilometres from Castlewellan fired at Cassidy's car at it travelled through the countryside. Cassidy's passengers were women and children, and they arrived at the local police barracks in hysterics.[512] As with other cases, the Ministry of Home Affairs learnt of the case through the press, in this case, the *Irish News*. The Inspector-General's office assured the Ministry, who commented that 'This is a scandalous case', that although enquiries continued they had dismissed one 'B' Special for firing either live or blank ammunition at the car. As with the Portrush train shooting the year before, the 'B' Specials were off-duty but remained armed and behaved recklessly. If McGuigan's car in the Reilly case posed no threat, then a vehicle carrying woman and children posed less of a threat still. The case showed not only recklessness, but contempt for life amply demonstrated in the shoot-to-kill policy employed by the 'B' Specials throughout this section.

IV: Conclusion

The Armistice ended both the First World War and the hiatus in the Ulsterian Revolution. Quickly the revolutionaries picked up from where they had left-off four years before. Partition seemed very likely before the war and the Easter Rising only made it more likely. With the UUC and Ulster based Nationalists accepting Lloyd George's solution to prevent further violence, the

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511 [PRONI] HA/5/474, 'File relating to alleged shooting at car by 'B' Specials near Castlewellan, Co. Down', (July 1924).
512 Ibid.

implementation of the Government of Ireland Act (1914) (the Third Home Rule Bill) with the exclusion of the six-counties, for the duration of the war the future of partition seemed even more secure. The Imperial Government never implemented Lloyd George's solution. From the end of the war, Ulsterians saw statehood as the only effective means to control their fate against a newly militant Irish Nationalism/Republicanism and a habitually unreliable Imperial Government. The pre-war Orange Agitation phase of the Ulsterian Revolution tested notions of loyalty to the United Kingdom while at the same time promoting a distinct Ulsterian national identity. The next, post-war revolutionary phase, 'the Outrages' moved Ulster further away from the unitary United Kingdom and gave nationhood to Ulsterian national identity.

In what was emphatically a sectarian state, Ulsterians looked for tools to exert their dominance and superordination. The UVF served that purpose excellently and while local units reformed, uncovering the smuggled rifles from behind wardrobes and out from the back of piggeries, the Ulsterian élite coordinated the organisation's restoration. Fear of Republican militants across the proposed border and their colleagues within Northern Ireland paired with a fear of the 'Bolshevik' potential of the Ulsterian 'rank-and-file' meant the new state needed a military force to counter the threat from the south and the west, suppress (and repress) the potentially problematic Nationalist 'Other' behind the border, and importantly, to occupy and canalise the threat within the Ulsterian community. Arming the UVF with government-issued weapons, organising them officially, putting them on the state payroll and putting them under government discipline and command provided the perfect solution. Spender created a military organisation masquerading as a police force in the summer and autumn of 1920.

Sectarian, indisciplined and reckless, the new 'Special Force' remained doggedly loyal to the new state. Renamed the USC, it went about its work enthusiastically, successfully nullifying any threat to the Ulsterian élite from within the community. As this chapter shows, the USC practised reprisal and sectarian motivated murder and Outrage to repress Northern Ireland's Nationalist community.

However successful it was at enforcing the will of Northern Ireland's partisan and sectarian Ulsterian government, the USC nevertheless often failed to fend off organised Republican action along the border, failed to secure border areas and failed - despite Special Constables being personally armed - to protect the Ulstermen answering the call. The next chapter explores how Northern Ireland's militarised police force, created for battle, failed to perform under fire.

5. Ulster's Army: Ulsterian Proxy Military Forces

I: Ulster's Revolutionary Guard: Solly-Flood and Class 'C1'

Class C1, Ulster's Army

In autumn 1920 Spender attempted to hide the naked paramilitary nature of his Special Service and Special Reserve Forces by calling them a 'Constabulary'. Never a police force, the USC was an uneasy combination of police, paramilitary and military elements. Major-General Arthur Solly-Flood arrived in Belfast on 2 April 1922 as Craig's Miltary Adviser: not Police Adviser or Security Adviser but Military Adviser. Within days the former commander of army education and training during the First World War laid out proposals for the USC that clarified the ambiguity between paramilitary and military. Solly-Flood ripped off Spender's figleaf, and Craig would have an army.

A month before Solly-Flood's arrival, Craig invited Field Marshal Sir Henry Wilson, recently elected Unionist Westminster MP for North Down and until then Chief of the Imperial General Staff and former First World War commander on the western front, to the Ministry of Home Affairs in Belfast to advise on the security situation in Northern Ireland.[513] Wilson recommended the Government of Northern Ireland remain firm to instil confidence in law-abiding citizens; allow only oathbound Special Constables to carry arms; reorganise the

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[513] [PRONI] CAB/6/89, 'Correspondence and papers re Field Marshall Sir Henry Wilson', (1922).

USC; encourage Catholic recruitment into the force; and expand the 'A' Specials to compensate for the likely withdrawal of Crown forces from Northern Ireland.[514] On the same day, 17 March 1922, Wilson wrote a report to Craig informing the Northern Irish Prime Minister about the catastrophic situation which faced Ulsterians on the other side of the Northern Ireland border. Blaming Lloyd George, Wilson described the area of the Provisional Government as a 'welter of chaos and murder difficult to believe, impossible to describe.'[515] Noting that chaos and murder had already spread to Northern Ireland the Field Marshal looked back pessimistically at Irish history, divining little prospect of peace or safety in the future and instead predicting the intensification of 'murder and anarchy'.[516] Just as Craig laid out the threat of Irish Republicanism from the south and west in autumn 1920, Wilson echoed it in spring 1922.

Derisory of Lloyd George, Wilson urged a propaganda campaign to get the British public onside before reiterating the advice he offered at the Ministry of Home Affairs earlier that day. Repeating Ulsterian scepticism towards the RIC Wilson soon suggested the expedited abolition of the RICUD and replacement with a new constabulary force.[517] Although referred to as 'Military Adviser' Wilson only held the part-time post temporarily. He seemed uninterested in the details of Northern Irish security policy. By 3 April, two weeks after the conference at the Ministry of Home Affairs the Field Marshall's expenses claim totalled £41.10s.7d.[518] In lieu of a salary, Wilson received a per diem of 10gn but quickly returned £27- to the Ministry of Home Affairs, refusing the daily allowance, reluctantly accepting £14.10s.7d in out of pocket expenses 'to make

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514 Ibid.
515 Ibid.
516 Ibid.
517 Ibid.
518 Ibid.

ends meet'.[519] Perhaps the honour of serving the Ulsterian cause was payment enough for the Field Marshal (seemingly unaware of differences between the 'A', 'B' and 'C' Classes) who produced little else than the vague two-page memorandum of 17 March 1922 and persuaded Solly-Flood to relocate to Belfast and take up the Military Adviser's post full-time.

A veteran of the guerrilla fighting of the Second Anglo-Boer War, Solly-Flood threw himself into the role of Military Adviser. Instrumental in the training of Britain's conscript army (there was ultimately no conscription in Ireland) during the First World War, the Military Adviser had experience in setting up armed forces from scratch. Writing to Spender in the second week of his tenure he advised shifting the constabulary force to a militia or territorial one.[520] In reality, as a paramilitary force from the beginning, no shift was needed. There followed a detailed and secret preliminary report on the situation in Northern Ireland. Like Craig, Solly-Flood saw a twin threat, the red and the green, to Northern Ireland, advising Craig's government to plan for the worst:

> Owing to the various malign influences which are now at work throughout the Empire - such as Strikes, Revolutionary, Communistic and Bolshevik Agencies, besides Political and Religious strife - it is highly probable that the shock will fall at time [sic] when the Regular Troops of His Majesty's Government have left Ulster.[521]

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[519] Ibid
[520] [PRONI] CAB/6/41, 'Military Adviser's proposals and related', (1922).
[521] Ibid.

The nascent state faced the threat of, 'internal trouble, or malicious injury and damage', 'invasion from over the Frontier from the South and West' and the threat of 'the unforeseen'.[522] Although the RICUD and USC could deal with internal threats, the Government of Ireland Act (1920) laid responsibility for defence from invasion and border incursions with the Imperial Government. Solly-Flood continued undeterred, surveying the security forces at his disposal: 3,000 Royal Ulster Constabulary ((RUC) transferring from the RICUD on 1 June 1922); 5,000 'A' Specials; 20,000 'B' Specials and; 7,000 'C' Specials.[523] Owing to the vague set-up of the 'C' Specials, the figure of 7,000 could only be an estimate at best. The 25,000 men in the security forces had to prepare themselves for an attack from across the border with the RUC and 'B' Specials charged with the defence of their barracks with an additional 5,000 'A' Specials and 7,000 'B' Specials required for the defence of Derry and 'the unforeseen'. Giving a flavour of what followed in the subsequent months the Military Adviser requested 31,000 rifles and trench mortars for the security forces. Solly-Flood planned to deploy the RUC and 'B' Specials defensively but had much more ambitious designs for the 'A' and 'C' Specials.

Solly-Flood opened his recommendations with a quote, 'In order to ensure peace he made himself ready for war' and he readily prepared himself for war. [524] Although a few thousand 'C' Specials, mainly elderly and physically unfit men would remain in their original role of back-up reservists permitted to keep personal arms a new force emerged from the Military Adviser's scheme. Recommending the recruitment of 20,000 extra 'C' Specials to form a new 'C1' force Solly-Flood began unveiling what he meant when he advised pivoting the

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[522] Ibid.
[523] Ibid.
[524] Ibid.

USC away from a constabulary force to a militia force. In the section 'Plans to meet the attack' Solly-Flood organised taking the 'Monaghan Salient' and cutting-off the 'Donegal Promontory.'[525] The north of the lozenge-shaped County Monaghan cuts a triangle into the centre of Northern Ireland, the northern point of which lies only 30 kilometres from the southeastern bank of Lough Neagh. Surrounded by County Tyrone to the east and County Fermanagh to the west the salient provided an excellent jumping-off point for IRA raids into Northern Ireland from Newtownbutler and Lough Erne to the southwest, Crossmaglen and Carlingford Lough to the southeast and Augnacloy and the Clogher Valley to the north. The county-seat of Monaghan Town sits roughly in the middle of the triangular salient. Donegal, in a kind of geographical irony, projects further north than any of the territory of Northern Ireland, with Malin Head, County Donegal, the most northerly tip of the whole island being in 'the South' and County Donegal's southern border with County Leitrim being 40 latitudinal kilometres north of the most southerly tip of Northern Ireland at Drumboy Lough on the Counties Monaghan/Armagh border. The whole of County Donegal is a promontory. Even with a few thousand extra USC, trench mortars and 31,000 rifles, it is difficult to see how the USC could have put Solly-Flood's plans into effect. However, correspondence written in the days that followed showed how the Military Adviser meant to carry out his designs, fantastical though they may seem.

Standing out from the 183-page file on Solly-Flood's plans is a short paragraph written on 15 April to Air Marshal Major-General Sir Hugh Trenchard at the Air Ministry:

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[525] Ibid.

> I want them [a squadron or flight of planes] at once for purposes of communication, later I might ask to be allowed to use them offensively, of which bombing under carefully prepared plans might form a part.[526]

The *de facto* commander of the USC, an ostensibly civilian police force, requested aircraft to carry out bombing raids and airstrikes. The planes would have taken off from the existing aerodrome at Aldergrove, County Antrim (present-day Belfast International Airport). On 19 April, Solly-Flood referred to the new force as 'C.1's' and in the same letter asked Spender to request on his behalf further supplies from Major-General Sir Gerald Francis Ellison, Deputy Quarter Master General at the War Office in Whitehall:

> As they have no whippet tanks I am prepared to take some Mark V so long as they are serviceable, and so long as they send workshops and spares. 48 Tanks would be a great help.[527]

Even by the standards of the militarised USC, with its extraordinary paramilitary duties, it is difficult to think of a role for the battle tanks that broke the German lines in the battles of Hamel and Amiens in the final summer months of the First World War. There is no doubt that Solly-Flood planned to use the bombers and tanks offensively. A few days earlier he had sent Ellison three pages of equipment required from army surplus stores including 10,000 rifles and bayonets, 40,000 grenades, 10,000 steel helmets, 3,000,000 rounds of rifle ammunition, 80,000 rounds of pistol ammunition along with equipment for hundreds of Lewis guns

[526] Ibid.
[527] Ibid.

and enough sundries, camp equipment and uniform for 20,000 men.[528] The list for the War Office followed an initial request to Sir Nevil McCready for 20,000 rifles, 8,000 revolvers, 150 machine guns with 300,000,000 rounds of machine gun ammunition, 100 armoured cars and 100 Crossley Tenders.[529] He explained to the Commander-in-Chief for Ireland that the lack of time and available men necessitated 'mechanical contrivances' including air service, tanks and mortars.[530] Solly-Flood successfully established a Headquarters Staff and a Secret Service during his tenure but wanted to expand his staff further. From General Sir Cecil Francis Romer, Director of Staff Duties at the War Office, Solly-Flood requested seconding instructors to Northern Ireland to train men in machine gun, mortar and bombing drill.[531] It is usual for a police force to order Sentinel helmets and blue tunics but, not one-third of a billion rounds of ammunition and a regiment of heavy armour.

Solly-Flood's early weeks demonstrated his intentions in Northern Ireland. He would raise and train 20,000 'C1' Specials arm them with service rifles, machine guns and tanks and keep a small air force in support of them. Perhaps that highly mobile armoured 'C1' force would have been used to put down the threat of 'internal trouble'. What use would Mark V tanks be in the Sperrin Mountains, the wetlands of Fermanagh, the bogs of Tyrone or the streets of Belfast? How could bombers round-up IRA men on the Falls Road or in the Bogside or disrupt small IRA units sprinting across the border on hostage-taking raids? They could not. 'C1' Specials would be raised, trained and armed to carry-out Solly-Flood's invasion of Counties Monaghan and Donegal. Police

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528 Ibid.
529 Ibid.
530 Ibid.
531 Ibid.

intelligence and harsh security measures would defeat the IRA in Northern Ireland, tanks and bombers would only be needed to defeat the Free State Army in an all-out and large-scale conflict. Solly-Flood planned to cut off the 'Monaghan Salient' across the Crossmaglen-Castleblaney-Ballybay-Cootehill line. Severing Donegal from the rest of the area of the Provisional Government, 'C1' Specials would have formed a northern Pettigo-Coolmore-Donegal Bay line and a southern Belleek-Bundoran line on both sides of a 'Closed Western Flank' sector west of Lough Erne and north of Lough Melvin.[532]

From the Military Adviser's reports and correspondence, it is no stretch of the imagination to see how his plans would unfold. Columns of khaki-clad 'C1' Specials moving through the small towns on the Northern Irish side of the Monaghan border, Caledon, Ballygawley or Rosslea or on the border with Donegal in Derrygonnelly or Lisnarick watched and covered by 'B' Specials in defensive positions outside police barracks. Mark V or whippet tanks moving off at the van with 'C1' Specials filed behind them, heading through the townlands of Donegal and Monaghan, already smouldering from airstrikes conducted from Aldergrove. 'A' Specials held in reserve as reinforcements for the 'C1' Specials who would find themselves in hand-to-hand combat with the Free State Army, while thousands of grenades went by in tenders escorted by Lancia armoured cars. Taking the 'Monaghan Salient' and the 'Donegal Promontory' would be a full-scale war, and it is for full-scale war that Solly-Flood planned. However, for all of his ambition, and the encouragement he received from Wilson, reality caught up with him quickly.

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[532] Ibid.

Solly-Flood's lists and requests caused consternation at the War and Colonial Offices. In April Spender complained to Wilson that the Imperial Government's default position on supplying arms to Northern Ireland was obstruction.[533] In a telegram to Craig on 19 April Churchill blocked part of the Military Adviser's plans for the 'C1' Specials:

> [Solly-Flood's requests] go far beyond what a Police force would require. I must emphasise the fact that the defence of Ulster is an inalienable obligation of the Imperial Government.[534]

The Secretary of State for the Colonies made it clear that Northern Ireland did not need an air service, nor did the USC need tanks. It was Solly-Flood bypassing, 'my committee' (the Imperial Cabinet's Committee on the Provisional Government of Ireland), that piqued Churchill's frustration most. The Government of Northern Ireland, i.e. Craig and Spender, would make requests through the committee forbidding the Military Adviser (on secondment from the War Office) from directly contacting his colleagues in Whitehall. Churchill's legitimate intervention did highlight an inconsistency. He and McCready pushed for the establishment of the USC allowing Northern Ireland to fend for itself and the redeployment of Crown forces to the mainland and across the Empire. Also, airstrikes were used extensively against insurgents in Mesopotamia, and Mark V tanks supplied by the War Office to White Russian forces. Solly-Flood requested supplies and *matériel*, enabling him to use tactics deployed by contemporary Imperial and Crown forces in other parts of the world. The Military Adviser

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533 [PRONI], CAB/6/89.
534 [PRONI], CAB/6/41.

crossed a line, both in the process and nature of his requests, but the *laissez-faire* approach to Northern Ireland, be it on civil rights, electoral systems or boundaries meant that where the Imperial Government's line lay was unclear.

The whole Solly-Flood episode directly challenges and counters Farrell's argument that the interests of the Imperial Government drove Northern Irish security policy.[535] The establishment of the USC had eventual support from the Imperial Government, but the real drive came from leading Ulsterians harnessing the already emergent vigilance forces derived from the revivified UVF. The disagreements between Solly-Flood, with the support of the Northern Irish cabinet and Churchill, the cheerleader of the USC in London, is further evidence that Ulsterians drove Northern Irish security policy with the Imperial Government merely reacting to demands and developments on the border and in Belfast. Of course, the Northern Irish government did not give the orders to Westminster, but the Imperial Government seemed uninterested in Northern Ireland until events there embarrassed them. The centrality of Imperial Government policy in Northern Irish security policy as argued by Farrell is at odds with the research which demonstrates Ulsterians and the Northern Irish cabinet pushed for the establishment and proposed expansion of the USC with London merely checking its outlandish excesses.

Sir Charles Henry Blackmore, Assistant Cabinet Secretary for Northern Ireland, let Solly-Flood know the Imperial Government's position. A sensitive man, the Military Adviser wrote to Spender on 5 May, 'The Prime Minister's letter which Blackmore shewed [sic] me today had brought me out of Utopia with a sorry bump', noting but not accepting that aeroplanes were 'ruled out of court'

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[535] Farrell, *Arming the Protestants*.

and tanks 'vetoed', he carried on undeterred.[536] Requesting wireless instead of aeroplanes and field guns and Howitzers in place of tanks, Solly-Flood seemed determined that his paper army would march. He experienced first hand the frustration felt by Craig and the Northern Irish government at the reluctance of Whitehall to supply their outlandish requests. Wilson remained on the scene, in regular contact with Solly-Flood advising on the militarisation of the USC and pushing Craig to pressure the Colonial Secretary into agreeing to the Solly-Flood's demands. Churchill's chiding brush-off deflated Solly-Flood and angered Wilson, who told Craig that Churchill must supply the arms and *matériel* along with the instructors and staff and to tell the Secretary of State that 'he can stop writing peevish letters about Solly-Flood.'[537] Wilson had encouraged the Military Adviser towards militarisation, letting Craig know he had told Solly-Flood 'he has an absolutely free hand to carry out whatever measures he considers necessary.'[538] Expecting a free rein and briefed on an impending existential catastrophe from the south and west, the plans devised by Solly-Flood, a First World War general, can be seen in context although remaining wholly inappropriate for a police force.

By May 1922 money became the issue as Solly-Flood fleshed out his proposals.[539] The RUC remained at 3,000 constables, and the scheme required an additional 3,000 'A' Specials and 2,000 'B' Specials on full-time mobilisation. An additional 5,000 'B' Specials' gave a total of 25,000 with the Military Adviser requested full-time pay for the 23,000 part-time 'B' Specials reserved in contingency for full mobilisation of the entire force. There would remain 7,000 'C' Specials, as ever

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536 [PRONI], CAB/6/41.
537 CAB/6/89.
538 Ibid.
539 CAB/6/41.

the number remained speculative, with the new 'C1' Specials numbering 20,400 with the odd 400 being HQ and training staff. The number of men in the Northern Irish security forces would total 63,600. Within the expanded USC the Military Adviser audaciously returned to an air force and armoured units, adding cavalry and naval forces to the list of requests. He recommended three squadrons of mounted constabulary and:

> 14 Motor Boats and crews, for the use on the Loughs […] It may be necessary, should the circumstances arise, to consider the provision of a few Tanks and Aeroplanes at a later date[540]

In 1922 the total revenue for the Government of Northern Ireland was around £13,500,000 of which over £6,000,000 was allocated to reserved services leaving around £7,000,000 to cover the Imperial contribution. By 1922 there was almost no surplus for the government to invest in its own services and economic development.[541] When the Northern Irish Cabinet 'emergency' committee assessed Solly-Flood's plans they projected an eye-watering annual cost of £9,000,000.[542] The Northern Irish Cabinet made it clear they would not raise taxes and the scheme be limited to policing, but they nonetheless agreed to the proposals for the 'C' and 'C1' Specials. Approving Craig's army, commanded by Solly-Flood, it was unclear from where funding would come. Craig and his Cabinet decided it would be up to the Imperial Government, as it had been since

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[540] Ibid.
[541] Buckland, *The Factory of Grievances*, pp.82-83.
[542] CAB/6/41.

the establishment of the USC in 1920, to meet the cost of the new force. Westminster said 'no'. Solly-Flood went back to the drawing board.

Despite a lack of funds for his scheme the Military Adviser issued instructions to all county inspectors and commanders in late May 1922 in preparation for war:

> The state of unrest throughout Ireland due to the activities of the I.R.A. and to the Bolshevists [sic] aims of the Southern agitators is an obvious indication that it can only be a question of time before open hostilities between the North and South break out.[543]

Solly-Flood, like Craig, maintained that the threat to Northern Ireland was two-fold: red and green, Republican and socialist and a combination of the two. With the threat impending the time for preparation was over. Solly-Flood outlined this next 'precautionary phase' with practical steps for security force commanders to take instantly. All 'disaffected' areas, seemingly those areas with an active Republican movement, were to be proclaimed with only members of the security forces and 'provedly [sic] loyal persons' allowed to move in and out of them.[544] The whole of Northern Ireland would be placed under curfew between 23h00 and 05h00, with still stricter curfew hours in proclaimed areas. Commanders were instructed to destroy all bridges and block all roads on the border. The Military Adviser hoped to put Northern Ireland in a state of lockdown with only the 63,600 members of his security forces permitted to move about freely. Trade and commerce on the border would suffer, if not grind to a halt, with crossing

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[543] Ibid.
[544] Ibid.

destroyed and guarded by the enlarged USC force. Further instruction would follow 'on the outbreak of hostilities.'[545] Despite being checked by the Colonial Office, to which the Northern Irish Cabinet paid some lip service although broadly approving the plans, Solly-Flood remained focussed, not on internal security but external security despite being *ultra vires* of the Northern Irish government. He acknowledged it fell outside of his remit but carried on regardless, dealing with hostilities 'between North and South' and not the febrile sectarian climate across Northern Ireland. The Military Adviser spent much of his time chasing his list of requests for men and *matériel* from the War Office, with the assistance of Wilson, and lobbying Craig to do the same. Two days after issuing the instructions Major General Ellison told Solly-Flood the War Office agreed to send all the supplies requested except the mortars and rifle bombs.[546] Undaunted, the Military Adviser asked that the specification for mortars and rifle bombs be forwarded allowing him to set-up a production line in Northern Ireland.[547] The police chief decided to become an arms manufacturer too.

In September Solly-Flood proposed a new scheme cutting costs from £9,000,000 each year to a still considerable £570,000 each year when not mobilised.[548] Solly-Flood quickly withdrew the Ulster Voluntary Constabulary: Territorial Special Constabulary (UVC) plans weeks after circulating them to the Cabinet. Replacing the USC, the UVC achieved its savings by downgrading rates of pay from police levels to lower military levels. With policing duties removed the UVC would be an emergency military force of 30,000 with a Territorial Constabulary Reserve (TCR) for men not wishing to travel from their districts or

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[545] Ibid.
[546] Ibid.
[547] Ibid.
[548] [PRONI] CAB/9/G/25, 'Military Adviser's Proposals for Safeguarding Northern Ireland', (1922).

who, like the 'C' Specials, were too elderly or unfit to assume combat duties. The proposals removed the various USC classes and differential rates of pay with employers expected to make up the difference in civilian and UVC pay when training. The RUC was to remain a separate organisation responsible for crime and everyday law and order. Craig and the Cabinet interpreted the UVC scheme, which never reached formal proposal in Cabinet, as hostile to the shibbolethic 'B' Specials. Solly-Flood went back to the drawing board one last time.

In the final plans focus rested on the 'C1' Specials. In correspondence with Lord Derby, Secretary of State for War, Craig supported a territorial force similar to the 'C1' force, assuring the War Secretary Northern Ireland would prove fertile ground for recruits.[549] Cabinet's unwillingness to cut costs through disbanding the 'A' and 'B' Specials stifled the Military Adviser's ambitions. With Wilson's death, killed by the IRA outside his London home in June 1922, Solly-Flood lost a stalwart ally in Whitehall and source of support and encouragement. Printed copies of the UVC scheme were recalled and destroyed.

In October, the 'C1' permanent HQ staff, appointed by Solly-Flood found themselves accused of spreading discontent among 'C1' training and field officers.[550] Knowing that Northern Ireland would not fund any scheme, although approving of it in principle, and that the Imperial Government would only fund a force it could control, proposals came forward transferring command of the 'C1' Specials to the War Office. At a conference of 'C1' Special officers HQ staff produced a memorandum stating the future of the force lay in the War Office. Locally recruited training and field officers refused to sign and reported the affair

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[549] Ibid.
[550] [PRONI] CAB/6/52, 'Future of Special Constabulary as a military force after cessation of emergency', (October-December 1922).

to the government. Immediately the refusal to sign became a test of loyalty by Ulsterian officers against the untrustworthy War Office men. Blackmore sent Craig a cypher: negotiations were taking place between Solly-Flood and Whitehall to transfer the 'C1' Specials to the War Office as a territorial force which would see the Imperial Government remove the annual USC grant to Northern Ireland.[551] Craig had already told Lord Derby that a territorial force would be welcome in Northern Ireland, but now that it meant withdrawing the USC grant the Prime Minister had to take a very different stance. Robert Dick Megraw set up an inquiry.

Solly-Flood wrote to Spender letting him know the urgent meeting he had requested with Craig must be sooner than proposed and so, '[would] call at Stormont tomorrow at 10.a.m. and wait his [Craig's] convenience.'[552] It is unclear whether the meeting took place or what the topics of discussion were, but the eager Military Adviser said that he had to bring an urgent matter of security to Craig's attention in person. Asking for assurances that Solly-Flood had no involvement in the affair or had spoken to the War Office on any other matter, Spender further asked that an investigation take place within the 'C1' Specials HQ. An offended Military Adviser replied that he '[regretted] that the Prime Minister considers it necessary to ask me for a personal assurance on this matter' but that he could not say he had not spoken to the War Office on other issues.[553] There followed correspondence between the Cabinet Secretary and the Military Adviser, with Spender assuring Solly-Flood that Craig meant no slight and accepted he played no role in the affair. The sensitive Solly-Flood wrote a handwritten note to Craig, quoted Rudyard Kipling's poem *If* and drew an

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[551] Ibid.
[552] Ibid.
[553] Ibid.

analogy between the poem and his position in Belfast.[554] The reply went unrecorded: it seems unlikely that one was sent. The next week, 5 December 1922, Solly-Flood resigned. He complained that since the imminent threat of IRA invasion had subsided at the outbreak of the Irish Civil War his advice had been ignored, nor had it been sought. The attitude towards the Secret Service (Criminal Investigation Department (CID)), Solly-Flood's only tangible achievement alongside a limited 'C1' Force, by Northern Irish officials was unacceptable. The role of Military Adviser had become redundant, but no one had told him that this presence was no longer required.[555] Before leaving Belfast, he requested proposing his final plans for the USC and security in Northern Ireland and ensuring the honouring of his CID and HQ staff's contracts. Craig responded personally, assuring Solly-Flood he had never spoken ill of him behind his back. He thanked him for his service on behalf of the Cabinet of Northern Ireland but remained quiet about Solly-Flood's two final requests. When prompted in writing a few days later, the Prime Minister stayed silent. Solly-Flood left Belfast with the CID immediately transferred to the Commissioner of Police.

Outlandish though Solly-Flood's proposals were, the Northern Irish government did broadly approve them on 15 May 1922. Clipped by Churchill of an air force and armoured regiment, Craig and his Cabinet adopted the Military Adviser's plans. Even without the aeroplanes and tanks, the 'C1' Specials

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[554] Solly-Flood's extract from *If* to Craig was:

'If you can keep your head when all about you
Are losing theirs and blaming it on you,
If you can trust yourself when all men doubt you,
But make allowance for their doubting too;
If you can wait and not be tired by waiting,
Or being lied about, don't deal in lies,
Or being hated, don't give way to hating
&c. &c. &c.'

from, Rudyard Kipling, *Rewards and Fairies* (London: MacMillan & Co, 1910).

[555] [PRONI], CAB/6/52.

remained a purely military force. It was a lack of funding by a parsimonious government at Stormont, not a lack of will, that confined the excesses of Solly-Flood's schemes to the archive. By the time he left, Northern Ireland had both a Secret Service and a 'C1' force, the very essence of his proposals. With only Wilson's side of the story, Solly-Flood went to Belfast with the bellicose Field Marshal's advice in his ear expecting an immediate catastrophe and a free rein to fend it off. Craig appointed an army general known for fighting guerillas in South Africa and training a conscript army for intensive frontline combat. As Military Adviser he set out to establish an army for Northern Ireland: the Cabinet agreed, and the War Office approved the supplies. Never a police force, the brief for the USC had to be paramilitary cum military, and it is within that context Solly-Flood made his plans. However inappropriate, unacceptable and outlandish the plans were, Craig agreed with them and the Colonial and War Offices, with minor exceptions, promised to provide their support.

II: Struggle On The Border

Specials Under Fire

Controversy over the USC arise from the fear and loathing held against the force by Catholics and Nationalists but by the valorisation of them by Ulsterians. So far, in this thesis, the research has laid out cases and analyses that broadly and objectively detract from the USC. It is a detraction led by events and the sources. It is difficult, objectively, to find any redeeming features of the force, especially the 'B' Specials, in the cases of outrage, recklessness and planned full-scale war

seen above. However, the space for objectivity in Northern Ireland's politics and history has and remains limited. Competing and antagonistic historiographical traditions will likely remain impervious to any empirical evidence that challenges the teleological and determinist narratives they promote. This next section looks at the experience of the USC from a different perspective, that of the Special Constables in danger and peril and paying a heavy price for doing their duty. Special Constables found themselves in the firing line and were often the first to receive a call to defend their community against IRA kidnappers crossing the border or feel the momentary agony of a fatal bullet fired from across the border or a Belfast street.

Jeffrey Sluka rejects scholarly neutrality in his study of state violence, arguing cultural relativism cannot excuse abhorrent behaviour.[556] He is correct, it cannot, but to consciously reject academic neutrality and disregard relativism is dangerous and harmful academic practice. Sluka's research on 'Loyalist Death Squads' in the recent Troubles is an unapologetic exposé of British denials of state collusion and 'political lies', unflinchingly stating his motivation, 'I seek to tell the truth about Loyalist death squads and expose these lies'.[557] The perspective of the USC, seen as Loyalist death squads of the post-partition period, is not included to relativise the outrages and murders they committed. Nor is it objectivity for objectivity's sake but objectivity that tells the entire story of the USC. Some Specials were victims too. Their role and duty were dangerous, and they willingly put their safety and life on the line, perhaps for a few shillings (as discussed in chapter six) but more likely through a sense of doing right for the cause of their Ulster. The USC was a sectarian and paramilitary force created to

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[556] Jeffrey A Sluka (ed), *Death Squad: The Anthropology of State Terror* (Philadelphia, PA: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2000), p.20.
[557] Ibid., p.128.

secure Ulsterian hegemony and superordination and to secure and consolidate the Northern Irish state created from the Ulsterian Revolution. However, those abstract notions, genuinely felt, did not override the fear and anguish Special Constables felt as they put on their caps and armlets, took out their rifles and went on patrol. The incidents described above demonstrate malicious if not bloody motivations on the part of the Specials, but what follows below gives a different perspective.

'Invasion' of Fermanagh and Tyrone: 'We Are Picking Up All The Regulars And Specials We Can Find To-Night'

Events along the Northern Ireland and Provisional Government border in February 1922 remain confused, but what is without question is that this was a dangerous month to be a Special Constable. Two months before on the evening of 2 December 1921, twelve Republicans, the 'Derry Prisoners', failed in their attempt to break out of Derry Gaol, 'chloroforming' a RICUD constable and Special Constable.[558] Two Special Constables patrolling outside the gaol walls foiled the escape and three men, including a warder with Republican sympathies, were sentenced to hang for the killing of the two constables.

Six weeks later, at around 19h00 on 14 January at the village of Dromore near Omagh in County Tyrone, Special Constables who were deployed as pickets in anticipation of trouble at the forthcoming release of interned 'political prisoners' stopped and arrested a group of IRA men travelling in six cars, evidently from the direction of County Monaghan.[559]The cars were being followed by the USC, Omagh Platoon Commander, Special Lieutenant Thomas

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[558] [PRONI] CAB/6/34, 'Arrest of Monaghan "footballers" at Dromore Co Tyrone', (January-December 1922).
[559] Ibid.

McClay.[560] Once stopped, McClay noticed that some of the men were armed with revolvers. He stated:

> I ordered them out of their cars and marched them to the School, where the Dromore Detachment is stationed and had them searched. On being searched some wore I.R.A. Uniform six having Revolvers and four others having ammunition and practically all I.R.A. literature in their possession amongst them being noted I.R.A. men including the O.C. of the 5th. Northern Division [of the IRA][561]

McClay detained the ten armed men and released the rest, sending the ten under escort to the Omagh military barracks.[562] Dismissing their claims that they were merely armed for self-protection as they travelled through hostile territory to play Gaelic Athletic Association (GAA) football in Derry two days later, an RM indicted the ten 'Monaghan Footballers' on charges under 10 & 11 Geo V, cap 55 (War Emergency Laws (Continuance) Act (1920) (WELCA) also known as Emergency Powers Act (1920)).[563] Northern Irish authorities suspected the group of travelling to Derry armed and intending to break the 'Derry Prisoners' and the warder on death row from out of gaol. A closer look at the operation of WELCA, a statute making permanent the provisions of the war-time 4 & 5 Geo V, cap 29 (Defence of the Realm Act (1914) (DORA)), raises a point of conjecture over the legality of preferring charges under the law in Northern Ireland. Superseding DORA in Ireland (across the entire island North and South), 10 & 11 Geo V, cap

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560 Ibid.
561 Ibid.
562 Ibid.
563 Ibid.

31 (Restoration of Order in Ireland Act (1919) (ROIA)) came into force before WELCA excluding the island from its operation. Just as there are examples of martial law applied to unproclaimed counties to by-pass the Coroner's Inquest process, charges against the 'Monaghan Footballers' under WELCA were not, perhaps, correct, applicable or legal.[564] Other police reports laid charges under 10 & 11 Geo V, cap 43 (Firearms Act (1920)) which did apply to Ireland (with stricter penalties). On 19 January a Ministry of Home Affairs minute noted charges were made 'under the ordinary law […] which is equally in force in Great Britain' without clarifying which statute applied leaving ambiguity over the correctness of the charges. Remanded in Derry Gaol the 'Monaghan Footballers', ironically, ended up where they had likely been travelling to on 14 January. Concerted Republican action over the following weeks would see their stay there cut short.

On the evening of 7/8 February 1922 Republicans launched a coordinated attack on the border area in the north-west, kidnapping around seventy Ulsterians including twenty-eight 'B' Specials.[565] The February attacks preceded and were separate from the 'Joint IRA Northern Offensive' of May-November 1922.[566] Tensions rose on the border on 19 January when an IRA picket on the bridge at the border village of Clady, County Tyrone halted a bread van.[567] Enforcing the Belfast Boycott which Michael Collins had lifted for the

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564 [PRONI], HA/5/159, 'File relating to arrest of Terence McShane, Michael McAteer and Edward McGovern, on suspicion of murder of Special Constable George Lyness and wounding Joseph Gibson', (July-August 1921). This case saw the Coroner's process replaced by a military commission, with the dead mens' families excluded and certain statements expunged, despite protest from higher authorities that the commission was invalid in County Tyrone as the county had not been Proclaimed in summer 1921.

565 [PRONI], CAB/6/38, 'Incursions into Northern Ireland leading to ambushes, kidnapping etc', (February-March 1922) and *Belfast News-Letter*, Thursday 9 February 1922, p.5 and, *Belfast News-Letter*, Friday 10 February 1922, p.5.

566 Robert Lynch, 'Donegal and the Joint I.R.A. Offensive, May-November 1922', *Irish Historical Studies*, Vol.35, No.138 (2006) 184-199.

567 *Belfast News-Letter*, Saturday 21 January 1922, p.5.

Truce, the van owned by the blacklisted baker John W Russell was turned back to Strabane.[568] On returning to the bakery No.3 Platoon of the USC, 'A' Specials, provided an escort arresting the IRA commander at Clady bridge as he held the van up for a second time.[569] Before departing on its way to Stranrolar to supply the army, 12-15 Republicans fired on the van and escort and a short but lively exchange of fire took place for a few minutes. Although neither side reported any casualties, the incident represented a sharp escalation in trouble between the Republicans and the Northern Irish security forces in County Tyrone.

Three weeks later on 4 February, again at Clady, Republicans kidnapped two Ulsterians, Jack Baird a prominent merchant and active Ulster Unionist and creamery manager Mr A Yorke.[570] Bundled into a motorcar and driven over the border to the Free State their kidnappers said they them as hostages in exchange for the 'Derry Prisoners' and the 'Monaghan Footballers.'[571] A precursor of things to come, Baird and Yorke's kidnapping signalled coordinated Republican attacks along the border in the days that followed, all as leverage for the two dozen or so Republicans held in Derry gaol. The attacks highlighted the vulnerability of individual Specials and the ineffectiveness of the USC as a fighting force when confronted with an organised enemy.

Events in Clady were a precursor for a much more coordinated and determined assault by the IRA along the border a few days later. Telegram boys at the Belfast GPO earned their wage on 8 February 1922. From mid-morning, police districts along the Counties Fermanagh and Tyrone border with the Free State wired the

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[568] *Larne Times*, Saturday 28 January 1922, p.3.
[569] *Belfast News-Letter*, Saturday 21 January 1922, p.5.
[570] *Belfast News-Letter*, Tuesday 7 February 1922, p.5.
[571] *Belfast Telegraph*, Tuesday 7 February 1922, p.6.

Ministry of Home Affairs in Donegall Square, Belfast with reports and updates of attacks that took place during the previous hours.[572] Overlapping and equivocal messages failed to give a clear picture of what happened, but the clearly coordinated attacks led Bates to send messages to Ulsterian leaders at 13h00. These included Prime Minister Craig and his brother, the leading Westminster MP Captain Charles Craig, Education Minister the Marquis of Londonderry and Carson, erstwhile leader of the movement, who was as so often away in London. Bates reported:

> Invasion last night Tyrone and Fermanagh. In Fermanagh, Cooper M.P. house attacked. Falls house attacked. House of Maguire ex-Inspector attacked; Major Moore's house in Belleek attacked. Carson, ex-Sheriff wounded and kidnapped. Fifteen armed prisoners and three motor cars captured by our police. In Tyrone, Anketell Moutray aged 80, and Cummings of Aughrim, kidnapped. In Derry Draperstown, Fenny [sic] Bridge blown up. Those kidnapped believed to have been taken over border. Reports coming in.
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> From – DAWSON BATES[573]

The telegram barely scratched the surface of what happened late the previous night and early that morning. Reports continued throughout the day. From Belcoo police district, with the Counties Cavan and Fermanagh border to its

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572 [PRONI] CAB/6/38.
573 Ibid.

immediate south and nestled between the shores of Lough Macnean to the east and west, came reports of firing at police at 01h35.[574] A wire from Feeny in Limavady police district, County Londonderry twenty-five kilometres from the Donegal border reported the blowing up of the Glenendra bridge.[575] Then followed a telegram from Enniskillen police district in County Fermanagh, describing attacks against James Cooper MP and the 'B' Special Sergeant George Elliott in which raiders attempted to take the armed Ulsterian men as hostages but were repulsed.[576] Then from Aughnacloy police district, County Tyrone, one of the frontier districts hit hardest by the Republican raids, a message arrived detailing the kidnapping of nine men, although the number rose to nineteen the following day.[577] Three 'A' Specials remained missing, and Republicans kidnapped four 'B' Specials during an ambush in Newtownbutler police district, County Fermanagh.[578] In neighbouring Lisnaskea police district, the Inspector reported one RICUD constable and eight 'B' Specials as kidnapped.[579] To the east on the Counties Monaghan and Fermanagh border came a message that a RICUD constable had been taken from there too.[580] Later from the inspector at Lisnaskea came an update that as well as the incidents earlier in the day a further three 'A' Specials, one RICUD constable and eleven 'B' Special Constables were missing in the neighbouring Lisnaskea, Newtownbutler and Enniskillen districts.[581] By the end of the day, officials counted eleven Ulsterian men, one RICUD constable and twenty-eight 'B' Specials as hostages taken across to the Free State.[582]

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574 Ibid.
575 Ibid.
576 Ibid.
577 Ibid. and, *Belfast News-Letter*, Friday 10 February 1922, p.5.
578 [PRONI] CAB/6/38.
579 Ibid.
580 Ibid.
581 Ibid.
582 Ibid.

Additionally to those figures six 'A' Specials and two more RICUD constables from the telegram reports remained missing. Usually conspicuous by his absence in Ministry of Home Affairs correspondence and minutes, owing to Craig being in London, it fell to Bates to liaise with the Imperial Government on behalf of the Government of Northern Ireland. Writing to Lord Edmund FitzAlan, the last Lord Lieutenant of Ireland, the Minister of Home Affairs summarised the situation along the border and asked for action:

> [A] series of concerted raids by armed men […] at Enniskillen Newtownbutler Rosslea and Clogher Valley resulting in the ambushing and wounding of this Governments Police the murderous attack on the houses of a large number of persons and the kidnapping of a number of persons […] one RIC and 28 B Special Constables […]. The Government of Northern Ireland desires your Excellency as Governor General to take appropriate steps to deal with these outrages have the kidnapped persons released and take the necessary steps to prevent such occurrences in the future.[583]

The next day the *Belfast News-Letter* ran reports of the attacks.[584] Worst hit and reported under the headline **'ULSTER BORDER RAIDED'**, the Clogher Valley led the news.[585] The paper reported that Republicans kidnapped seventeen men there including the seventy-two-year-old Deputy-Lieutenant Anketell Moutray, a member of the Tyrone County Council, member of the UUC and

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583 Ibid.
584 *Belfast News-Letter*, Thursday 9 February 1922, p.5.
585 The Clogher Valley is an area running for c. 40 kilometres south-west of Dungannon towards Fivemiletown through County Tyrone including, east-to-west, the border towns of Aughnacloy, Augher and Clogher.

Grand Master of the Tyrone Orange Order. However, District Inspector Martin of Aughnacloy police district recorded twenty-one kidnappings between 08h00-09h00 from Fardross to the west of the Monaghan salient to Caledon on the east. Carried out simultaneously and with motorcars, the undisguised and unknown raiders carried revolvers, shotguns and carbines, taking the hostages directly over the border to Monaghan town and holding them at the County Courthouse. Although the motivation for the kidnapping was not obvious, Martin thought the hostage-taking was done as leverage to release the 'Derry Prisoners' and 'Monaghan Footballers'. 'B' Specials had been ordered back to duty in the district, and the Inspector warned that due to anger among the Ulsterian community at the raids and kidnappings, 'I am afraid that drastic action will be taken by Unionists.'[586] Although in the border communities of the Clogher Valley the Republican raids on Ulsterians gave a clear reason to call the 'B' Specials back on patrol, just as Ulsterians warned Craig of imminent reprisals in the summer of 1920 and as Spender used those warnings to justify the establishment of the 'Special Force' in autumn 1920, so too did local police in County Tyrone use fear of Ulsterian anger overflowing and causing sectarian outrages to justify the ordering of the 'B' Specials back on duty in 1922.

Republicans targeted Specials during the raids. At home, often in remote farms or in small hamlets or villages away from the nearest help, 'B' Specials proved especially vulnerable to the types of attacks seen in early February 1922. 'A' Specials and RICUD constables, lodged in strong and even fortified barracks, proved much more difficult targets for the raiders. For men living on the border, taking 'B' Special duty meant the constant threat of attack even when off-patrol. An account from Rosslea demonstrated the deliberate targeting of 'B' Specials

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[586] [PRONI] CAB/6/38.

that evening, with a witness to a raid reporting the armed and masked men as saying 'we are picking up all the Regulars and Specials we can find to-night'.[587] Safer in barracks and anonymous, 'A' Specials and RICUD constables and 'C' Specials respectively made less attractive targets than 'B' Specials. Reminiscent of the war in the south and west, armed Republicans set ambushes and attacked motorcars and tenders carrying Specials in both Rosslea and nearby Newtownbutler. Forced to abandon their motorcar four Specials were wounded, and three kidnapped at Rosslea.[588]

Responding to the kidnapping of three 'B' Specials at Kilturk townland near Magheraveely on the Counties Fermanagh and Monaghan border, Special Major Parkins-Cumnie, commanding USC 11 Platoon at Newtownbutler, fell into an ambush. Sending Special Lieutenant Swain to investigate reports of another kidnapping, Parkins-Cumnie took a tender to Kilturk.[589] Driving along the Clones-Newtownbutler Road, a few metres parallel to the Free State border, the Special Major came under machine-gun fire from a local house and a wooded outcrop called Lough Killey Green. With the road barricaded Parkins-Cumnie and his section jumped from the tender, with one of the 'A' Specials wounded in the leg and his rifle taken. Retreating to the safety of a bank 20 metres away Parkins-Cumnie and the rest of the section left the man on the road. After an hour and a half of exchanges of fire and an attempt to take and then burn the tender, the Republicans withdrew after a blast of a whistle. A few minutes later, a car carrying a section of RICUD passed by and helped search the area, finding only an abandoned machine-gun emplacement.

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[587] Ibid.
[588] *Belfast News-Letter*, Thursday 9 February 1922, p.5.
[589] [PRONI], CAB/6/38.

Special Lieutenant Swain and his section had a busy night too. After receiving reports that Republicans kidnapped 'A' Special Constable Spence and attempted to kidnap 'B' Special Constable Taylor.[590] Collecting 'B' Special Constable Taylor in the motorcar, Swain made for Droumally near Rosslea with thirty 'B' Specials rallied en route. Most of the party went ahead, and Swain along with eight 'A' Specials and four 'B' Specials found the road at Beggans Cross barricaded with farm equipment. Coming to a stop, a man from a nearby house, overlooking one of many loughs in the area on the other side of the road, demanded the section 'Halt'. Firing on the house, the USC then took fire from the house and men concealed either side of the road before a machine-gun opened up wounding the driver of the motorcar and a Special. Swain retreated with the remainder of the section. Republicans sniped at the section as it rested at the bridge forcing them to retreat further and leave five 'A' Specials and three 'B' Specials behind before falling back on foot to Newtownbutler. Later, Swain accompanied by the District Inspector for Lisnaskea returned to the scene finding that the motorcar was gone, and the part of his section left behind at Beggans Cross was missing, finding two Special Constables later on their way back to Newtownbutler.

The next day the *Belfast News-Letter* reported twenty 'B' Specials kidnapped in the area, but the District Inspector confirmed eleven taken hostage.[591] John Doonan of Lisnaskea 'a loyalist and very popular locally' and brother of a local 'B' Special, successfully resisted a kidnapping attempt.[592] Two men walked into the kitchen and asked him to accompany them down the road. Refusing to do so Doonan and Lizzie Brown, his servant girl, pushed the raiders out of the door.

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590 Ibid.
591 Ibid. and, *Belfast News-Letter*, Thursday 9 February 1922, p.5.
592 [PRONI], CAB/6/38.

Firing at and wounding Doonan and Brown the two men made off. Both Doonan and Brown underwent surgery for their bullet wounds. In the very remote townland of Clonshannagh, five kilometres south of Newtownbutler on the Counties Fermanagh and Monaghan border, Republicans raided the home of and injured Charlotte Godfrey. Looking for her brother 'B' Special Constable Godfrey, 'the raiders kicked and abused her because they considered she had raised the alarm' but finding him absent instead took two Lee Enfiled rifles, eighty rounds of service ammunition, a revolver, a bandolier, a police cap and all the money in the house.[593] District Inspector Henry Robinson noted the raid as part of 'a campaign of kidnapping extended over a wide area [carried out] on the same night against "B" Special Constabulary.'[594] 'B' Specials both on and off-duty took a heavy toll in Newtownbutler and Lisnaskea on 7/8 February, while their 'A' Special senior officers found a way home without too much trouble.

At Enniskillen, twenty-five kilometres north of Newtownbutler and closer to the County Leitrim and County Donegal borders than County Monaghan, Republicans launched a series of raids and ended the evening with fifteen of their men in RICUD custody.[595] At 01h00 James Cooper MP (Northern Irish Parliament, Fermanagh-Tyrone and formerly Imperial Parliament, Fermanagh South) heard a party of men surround his house.[596] Opening the window, the armed Cooper called to ask who was there and getting the reply 'Simpson from Armagh' responded 'Hands Up!'. As the raiders scattered, Cooper fired two shots after them. Soon after and nearby Ulster Unionist councillor George Elliott found

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593 Ibid.
594 Ibid.
595 *Belfast News-Letter*, Thursday 9 February 1922, p.5.
596 [PRONI] CAB/6/38.

his home surrounded by the same party of raiders who shouted 'we want you'.[597] Elliott called back that they had two minutes to leave before one of the party knocked on the door several times: Elliott armed his revolver and fired a few shots through the door, and the raiders ran off. The *Belfast News-Letter* reported two that separate raiding parties attacked Cooper and Elliott simultaneously, and the shots from both roused the local 'B' Specials and RICUD who secured Enniskillen and the district.[598]

Sending the alarm to outlying police districts 'B' Specials and the RICUD pursued the raiders up to the boundary with Counties Leitrim and Donegal. At Belleek, the security forces fired on Republican cars as they made their escape across to Donegal. At Tully on the southern banks of Lough Erne, 15 kilometres north of Enniskillen, 'B' Special Head Constable Robert Worrell escaped his kidnappers with the help of his wife.[599] He was tending his cattle when twenty raiders bundled him into a motorcar, but Mrs Worrell fired nine shots at them as they drove him away before they crashed their car and fled, leaving Worrell to escape.

Finding an abandoned and bloodied Ford car a few miles outside of Enniskillen, the USC detained a man named Reilly from Arva in County Cavan as he made his way to the frontier. RICUD pickets halted two carloads of Republicans coming into the town after an unsuccessful sortie to find a hostage in Derryinch, County Fermanagh. Both cars continued, only stopping when threatened with fire. Among the fifteen men, constables found the Officer Commanding (OC) for the Leitrim Brigade of the IRA and his adjutant, while others arrested included four local Republicans acting as guides. Pickets seised

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[597] Ibid.
[598] *Belfast News-Letter*, Thursday 9 February 1922, p.5.
[599] *Belfast News-Letter*, Thursday 9 February 1922, p.5.

pistols, bombs and rifle ammunition from the car before arresting and handcuffing the fifteen men and marching them to Castle Barracks.

Despite claims in the *Belfast News-Letter* of the district quickly being secured by the security forces, Republicans kidnapped John 'Ivan' Carson (seemingly no relation to Edward Carson), former High Sheriff in Lisbellaw, on the outskirts of Enniskillen.[600] Alerted by the earlier attempts to kidnap Cooper and Elliott, the 'B' Specials nevertheless failed to prevent the hostage-taking of this prominent local Ulsterian at 03h45, casting further doubt on the efficacy of the force at defending their community against organised and coordinated Republican attacks. District Inspector Henry Robinson from Lisnaskea police district reported that about twelve armed men 'wearing S.F. [Sinn Féin] uniforms, and Trench Coats' knocked on Carson's door and told him, 'We want you, dress and come down-stairs.'[601] Like Elliott and Cooper, Carson answered with shots but, the Republican raiders - unlike the men who had tried to abduct Elliot and Cooper - returned fire, injuring the former High Sheriff and knocking through the front door with a blacksmith's hammer. Both the District Inspector and the *Belfast News-Letter*'s report noted that the raiders 'spoke with a Southern accent'.[602] Leaving the house with Carson in their custody, the raiders told Mrs Carson that her husband would be all right and she was not to worry.

Covering Craig's reaction to the raids the *Belfast News-Letter* also reported on kidnappings of Ulsterians in County Donegal not covered by the Ministry of Home Affairs as they took place in the jurisdiction of the Provisional Government.[603] Northern Ireland's Prime Minister blamed the Imperial

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[600] [PRONI], CAB/6/38 and, *Belfast News-Letter*, Thursday 9 February 1922, p.5.
[601] [PRONI], CAB/6/38.
[602] Ibid. and, *Belfast News-Letter*, Thursday 9 February 1922, p.5.
[603] Ibid.

Government for the raids.[604] The terms of the July 1921 Truce disbanded the USC, at least on paper if not in practice and that, said Craig, meant the Imperial Government took the blame for the 7/8 February raids. Calling for the distribution of arms along the border and the recalling and reorganising of the USC Craig took what became a familiarly defiant stance:

> This series of dastardly outrage will never be forgotten. It merely strengthens our determination that what Ulster has she holds.[605]

With 'A' Specials kidnapped while on duty and 'A' Special officers supplying reports of the evening's incidents as commanding officers, and accounts of 'B' Specials taking part in ambushes and exchanges the USC, at least in the districts confronted by Republican raids, were not disbanded for the Truce. Nor from the accounts of 'B' Specials having rifles and ammunition seized were they disarmed. The USC, especially the 'B' Specials, quickly reorganised although it is clear they never disbanded in the first place, just as the UVF never went away and transformed itself into the USC. The following evening, back on patrol on Craig's order and organised by local police chiefs, was a quieter evening for the 'B' Specials but the next morning the telegram boys found themselves busy, as 'B' Specials, not for the last time in the days that followed, 'got lost' along the winding border and found themselves in the Free State and quickly in custody.

The raids did not come as a surprise. Underlining both the ineffectiveness of the USC as a border force and the lack of preparedness of the Government of Northern Ireland, despite repeatedly citing the threat across the border, to deal

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[604] Ibid.
[605] Ibid.

with raids and attacks from the Free State the Ministry of Home Affairs commented on the vulnerability of the border.[606] Junior Minster Megraw minuted that the kidnap of Baird and Yorke:

> […] discloses a serious condition of affairs. It looks as though the Free State could carry on outrages of this kind with comparative impunity. As the Police in Southern Ireland are to all intents and purposes under the control of the Provisional Government, it looks as though offenders in cases of this kind have only to step across the border to make themselves safe from punishment.[607]

Responding to the junior minister, Assistant-Secretary in the Ministry of Home Affairs, Andrew Philip Magill replied, 'Yes, these are the constitutional methods that appeal to primitive states of society, and I fear we need not be surprised at them.'[608] The exchange echoes Wilson's warning of southern Irish anarchy and Craig and Spender's sentiments in the summer of 1920 of lawlessness beyond the boundary. Despite that, and acknowledging the threat no steps were taken to prevent further incidents, a few hours later the raids began in earnest along the south and western portion of the border. Whether through a lack of capacity or willingness, the Northern Irish government and its security forces failed to prepare for attacks, attacks they vociferously and continuously warned of, or learn from events. Megraw and Magill's preference for complaint over action is a prime example of that. The seizure of a military ambulance in County Monaghan the

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606 [PRONI] CAB/6/38.
607 Ibid.
608 Ibid.

day after the raids demonstrated a yet further failure of Northern Ireland's security forces. Demonstrating an extraordinary level of naïveté, an ambulance from Belfast, detailed to collect two of the men wounded in Enniskillen the previous night, picked up an escort of 'B' Specials at Portadown, Co. Down and an 'A' Special Constable, Anderson, at Armagh, before crossing the border into Co. Monaghan, presumably under Anderson's guidance, en route to Enniskillen. The party was seised as they crossed the border, the scene of shootings, ambushes and raids only the night before. The Republicans soon released the ambulance to carry on to Enniskillen while detaining the five USC men to add to those already kidnapped. Reports in the Ulsterian press of the kidnap of four soldiers alongside the USC relate to the one sergeant and three privates of the Royal Army Medical Corps (RAMC) who Republicans promptly released along with the vehicle.[609] Instantly the military commander in Belfast wired 'Commandeth Dublin', the commander in the south, asking to arrange free passage of ambulances with the Provisional Government through the Free State. Whether through hubris or artlessness, incredibly, following the raids on the evening of the 7-8 February police and Special Constabulary commanders thought armed USC could travel through the border area without interference on the evening of 8-9 February. Neither was the journey through County Monaghan necessary as another, albeit longer route, was available to the RAMC ambulance. Military commanders sent pleas for free passage after the seisure instead of before, and to the Provisional Government rather than the Republicans who had actually carried out the raids along the border and were, according to the press, in command of the border towns.

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[609] *Belfast News-Letter*, Friday 10 February 1922, p.5 and, *Belfast Telegraph*, Friday 10 February 1922, p.5.

Republicans kidnapped Samuel Coulson, an off duty 'B' Special, and Alexander Magwood a pork buyer and 'Loyalist' attending Clones Market on 9 February.[610] Again, the wisdom of a 'B' Special such as Coulson crossing into Clones, even in a rapidly changing situation on the border, a few hours after the seisure of the military ambulance throws into doubt the individual and collective effectiveness of the USC during the week. On the evening of 9-10 February, 'A' Special Constable C McFadden died in an ambush at Clady when Republicans crossed the Donegal border. At about the same time Crossleys fired at Catholic houses in the town before crossing over into the Free State and shooting at the home of a Catholic curate in County Donegal. The District Inspector for Strabane, County Londonderry reported, 'This is reprisal for kidnapping Baird and Yorke. Protestant Sinn Feiners fired shots and party left no one injured other authorities informed.' If not the same incident, the reprisal and ambush were related.

Coming only weeks after the passing of the treaty by Dáil Éireann, Lloyd George warned Collins of the seriousness of the situation and pushed the Chairman of the Provisional Government to arrange for the release of the kidnapped men.[611] Again, Craig used the warning cum threat of 'unauthorised reprisals' to pressure the Imperial Government into pushing Collins. Here as elsewhere, the fear of sectarian reprisals carried out by uncontrollable Ulsterian mobs acted to legitimise the USC in its organisation and *raison d'être*, and to apply pressure helping Craig and the Ulsterian leaders to get their way. However, the USC, especially the 'B' Specials, carried out violence and reprisals while under the command of Craig's government and constables rarely came to justice. Warnings

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610 [PRONI] CAB/6/38.
611 Ibid.

from leading Ulsterians that unless the Imperial or Provisional Government acceded to their wishes, they would let the 'hotheads' off their lead were a thinly veiled threat. Outrages and violence by the USC reminded friends and foes alike that sectarian bloodshed was only a step away. It was Spender, Craig and Wickham who controlled it through the USC and could just as quickly unleash it. This research challenges the fighting effectiveness of the USC, but by taking the examples of USC violence in the round, highlights their potency as sectarian murderers and their potential as perpetrators of violent reprisal.

Given the events of 7-8 February and the continued outbreaks of raids and violence, the seisure of the military ambulance in County Monaghan and capture of four USC on 8-9 February and the detention of Coulson and Magwood on 9 February, it is also extraordinary that twenty armed USC travelled through Monaghan to Enniskillen by train, stopping at Clones, on 11 February. What was entirely predictable from the events of the previous days is that Republicans confronted the Specials and a bloody shootout, the 'Clones Affray', took place.

'Tommy Guns' At The Clones Affray

At around 17h45 on Saturday 11 February 1922 twenty-one 'A' Specials boarded a train for Derry via Enniskillen at Clones station, 1.5 kilometres south of the Northern Ireland border. Sent as reinforcements from Newtownards, County Down at least six of the 'A' Specials carried rifles while they waited for their connecting train. Local Republicans led by IRA Commandant Matthew Fitzpatrick had enough time to make their way, fully armed, to the platform

before the steam engine set off.[612] Accounts conflicted but a force of Republicans, numbering between ten and twenty, stood armed on the platform by the time the 'A' Specials took their seats. According to IRA Commandant John McGonnell, he arrived with Fitzpatrick after the Republicans had formed up on the platform and decided to interview the 'A' Special sergeant.[613] Finding the correct compartment, Fitzpatrick put his head through the window while McGonnell stood behind him concealing a Thompson sub-machinegun behind his back. Fitzpatrick disappeared from the carriage window after the firing of a single shot followed by a volley from within the compartments. McGonnell emptied the one hundred round magazine into the three compartments in front of him, directing a burst at the sergeant as he attempted to open the carriage door. McGonnell later found Fitzpatrick dead on the railway line between two carriages with a gunshot wound to the head. A passenger travelling from Dundalk to Derry confirmed the Republican account the next day in the nationalist *Derry Journal*. Another passenger who sustained a wound to the shoulder during the shoot-out recalled how the incident delayed the departure of the bloodied and almost empty train by three-quarters of an hour.[614] Relaying the report of the Press Association, the *Derry Journal* said Fitzpatrick ordered the 'A' Specials to 'Hands Up' assuring them the Republicans would not fire if they did when an 'A' Special left the compartment and walking down the platform shot the IRA commandant through the head triggering the firefight.

Statements from the 'A' Specials, the Northern Irish government and the Ulsterian press gave a different account. The Northern Irish Government

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612 Bureau of Military History (BMH), Witness Statement (WS) 574, 'Commandant John McGonnell, Clones, Co. Monaghan', (1917-1921), pp.13-15.
613 Ibid.
614 *Derry Journal*, Monday 13 February 1922, p.3.

reported that the firefight lasted for between ten and twenty minutes following unprovoked shooting from the Republicans.[615] The government wrongly reported it had been necessary for the 'A' Specials to change at Clones when in fact an alternative route from Newtownards to Enniskillen, that stayed in Northern Ireland along the entire route, did exist. Perhaps demonstrating arrogance over naïveté and explaining the USC crossing with the military ambulance days before, the statement went on 'The Crown forces, of which the Special Constables are part, have still the right to proceed through this [Free State] territory.' Commanders may have been testing the resolve of the Provisional Government and Republicans on both occasions when common sense dictated taking routes within the territory of Northern Ireland. Backed up by eyewitness statements the government alleged that Republicans fired shots at the same moment Fitzpatrick demanded the 'A' Specials surrender. Further, the Republicans had stood in formation, finding favourable firing positions allowing them to hit 'A' Specials as soon as the shooting and an ununiformed man with a Sam Brown belt fired at close range, hitting one constable in the head while he sat. After the initial exchange the Republicans opened fire with a machinegun, pinning 'A' Specials and civilians to the floor of the train compartments for twenty-minutes. Writing to Bates the Divisional Commander said that many of the 'A' Specials had been shot very quickly, as the Republicans laid and planned an ambush and fired without warning.[616]

Part of the Northern Irish Government's account came from the witness statement of Presbyterian minister George Thomas Boyd, an acquaintance of the

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[615] [PRONI] CAB/6/39, 'Ambush on Specials Constables at Clones Station, Co. Monaghan', (February 1922).
[616] Ibid.

'A' Special Sergeant William Doherty.[617] Boyd boarded the train along with two 'A' Specials and a young woman. Doherty ordered the two 'A' Specials to go to the other end of the train, which one did and the other ignored, shaking hands with Boyd who wished him 'God Speed' in return. As Doherty made his way to the front of the train, a shot shattered the window opposite the young woman and the ununiformed man in a Sam Brown belt mentioned in the Northern Irish Government's statement came to the window and shot the remaining 'A' Special, who held a revolver, in the head. Making no mention of the machinegun fire, which both sides reported, Boyd left the compartment after fifteen minutes of firing, and the Republicans searched him on the platform.

Robert Henry, a reporter for London's *Daily Express* newspaper, travelled on the train. Noting that the 'A' Specials had not behaved aggressively, Henry saw the Republicans standing in formation on the platform as he took his seat as fire starting without warning.[618] The men on the platform had formed an echelon and were firing at the 'A' Specials, one of whom returned fire while others lay in heaps on the floor of the compartments. Contradicting McGonnell, the journalist stated that the machinegun fire started after the initial exchange. Leaving the train during the firefight, Henry walked between the rails and jumped on a moving engine which took him to Monaghan town. There he wired his report to the *Daily Express* from the telegraph office, but on returning to his hotel was arrested and detained for a day by men accusing him of writing a false report. While in Monaghan the 'I.R.A.' told him they decoupled the engine from the train with the 'A' Specials in it, allowing them to capture all the USC.

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[617] Ibid.
[618] Ibid.

Robert Wilkinson, a civil servant at the Department of Agriculture, boarded the train on his way home to Enniskillen.[619] Taking his seat, Wilkinson saw men shouting, 'Hands Up' and 'Put Them Up' as others fired shots: the machinegun started firing straight-away. Wilkinson saw men in IRA uniform fire the first shots as the Republican officer (Fitzpatrick) fell. After lying on the compartment floor the passengers were ordered off and begun to be searched before a Republican officer stopped the searching as unnecessary and let the passengers go on their way. Wilkinson saw the Republican officer and four 'A' Specials lying dead before boarding the train and carrying on his journey home to Enniskillen. Frederick Browne, also of Enniskillen, stated seeing ten or eleven armed civilians moving around the platform and another group mixing among the passengers.[620] The men were armed, and some carried revolvers holding their finger on the triggers, and some of them wore Sam Brown belts ('crossbelt') and bandoliers. Looking out of the carriage window Browne saw three men in position at the front of the train (likely Fitzpatrick and McGonnell on the platform confronting Doherty in the front carriage) and other armed men lining the platform when machine gun and revolver fire broke out. It was after the firing that Browne heard the command to 'Hands Up'. A porter removed a dead body from the compartment, leaving it on the platform while Republicans ran up and down the carriage shooting between the compartments as 'A' Specials attempted to escape. The intermittent fire ceased, and the Republican Officer blew his whistle, and all the passengers were searched and allowed back on the train to continue their journey with injured passengers sent to receive medical assistance.

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[619] Ibid.
[620] Ibid.

Linked to the raids and kidnappings earlier in the week, the 'Clones Affray' was an attempt by the Republicans to pressure the Northern Irish government into releasing the 'Derry Prisoners' and the 'Monaghan Footballers'. Edgar McKegney, formerly an officer in the Royal Inniskilling Fusiliers, heard the 'Hands Up' followed immediately by shooting.[621] Along with the other civilian passengers McKegney was searched before being allowed to continue his journey. As they resumed their seats and the train readied to set off 'a member of the I.R.A.' checked there were no further wounded or Specials left onboard. Giving a clear indication of the Republican's motive that day, he said:

> They capture our men if they go into your country armed even when they were only going to a football match, and then you send your bloody men armed through our country. You are Unionists, I suppose.[622]

Both Wilkinson's and Browne's statements attribute the first shots to the Republicans. Wilkinson saw Fitzpatrick fall first, supporting McGonnell's claim the first shot came from the 'A' Specials, and if Republicans fired straight away it is not difficult to imagine in the chaos of the start of the firefight, it being challenging to work out where the first shot came from, with all sides saying they fired at each other almost instantaneously but differing over the sequence. Browne saw Fitzpatrick at the front of the train where he had likely confronted Doherty but did not see what happened. He heard a machinegun fired first, which was McGonnell, but it seems unlikely that the Republican fired a sub-machine gun while Fitzpatrick stood in front of him. It also seems unlikely Fitzpatrick put

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[621] Ibid.
[622] Ibid.

his head into a carriage of armed 'A' Specials knowing his comrades would open fire, making him a close and prime target for the USC riflemen.

Contemporary accounts stated there were eighteen or nineteen 'A' Specials in the party at Clones Station. However the report from the Fermanagh RICUD listed twenty USC (Special Constable Burnside had been reported absent at Newtownards but rejoined the party on the journey later bringing the total to twenty-one), all 'A' Class, one Special Sergeant, one Special Head Constable and nineteen Special Constables. Along with Special Sergeant Doherty, Special Constables McFarland, Lewis and McMahon died at the 'Affray'.[623] Eight were reported missing and nine returned. 'A' Special Constable William Preston's statement conflicts with those above.[624] On of the 'A' Specials armed with a rifle, Preston did not hear 'Hands Up' but 'All Clear' immediately before a machinegun opened fire from an office on the platform. With the other armed 'A' Specials dead or wounded, Preston returned fire until his magazine was empty. Reloading, he provided covering fire while a group of Special Constables escaped across the rails. Making his way to the street, Preston fired at a group of fifty men in the road, hitting three before making his way across the border with three of his comrades forcing unarmed local men to accompany them. 'A' Special Constable Porter Martin was with Preston.[625] Moments before the firing began he recalled how a railway porter came into the carriage and said 'they have it in for you boys.' Martin escaped the train and station under Preston's covering fire and made his way back to Newtownbutler with him. 'A' Special Constable Johnston sat in the same compartment as Preston and Martin and heard shouts demanding all

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[623] Ibid.
[624] Ibid.
[625] Ibid.

civilians leave the train before men opened up on the compartment with rifles.[626] Hiding in some ruins, the men left the station when the firing stopped, before travelling cross country until blocked by a river. Returning to the railway a group of men shouted at them to 'Hands Up' but the Specials fired on the men who scattered. They arrived back at Newtownbutler at 22h00 that evening.

'A' Special Constable Murray's account corroborated Preston's that the machine gun fired first from a concealed position:

> the I.R.A. came rushing into the Station and gave murderous fire on us from a machine gun which they had under cover in or about the Booking Office as far as I understand, and then told us to surrender […][627]

In 'A' Special Constable Hamilton's report, Republicans held up the train driver before the machinegun fired.[628] Escaping to Newtownbutler with a wounded 'A' Special Constable Flannery, Hamilton discovered two other Special Constables there before guiding four tenders back close to Clones that evening to look for wounded 'A' Specials they left behind. He could not find the wounded men.

Special Head Constable Gallagher travelled with Special Constable Burnside but separately from and not part of the party en route from Newtownards.[629] On the same carriage but in a different compartment, Gallagher heard machinegun fire without warning followed by rifle and revolver fire from about twenty men formed up on the platform. Gallagher had a particularly harrowing time after he was searched and had his Head Constable badges taken

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[626] Ibid.
[627] Ibid.
[628] Ibid.
[629] Ibid.

away and a Republican accused him of carrying a revolver during the shoot out. Gallagher denied the accusation, but the gunman marched him to a wall while two other armed men trained their rifles on him. Two of the men fired at the wall close to Gallagher twice before 'some one like an officer' stopped them, distracting their attention and giving the Special Head Constable the chance to make his escape on the train which began to move off the platform.[630] Later hospitalized, Gallagher stayed on the train to Enniskillen reporting the loss of his police cap, civilian coat and cap and the ruining of his suit.

Statements from the 'A' Specials conflict with those of the Republicans and the anonymous witnesses in the *Derry Journal* but broadly echo testimony from Wilkinson, Browne and McKegney that the Republicans fired first and without warning. Unlike the other statements the Specials did not hear a shot, perhaps fired by an 'A' Special killing Fitzpatrick, before the machinegun opened up. Martin heard shouts before the machinegun fired whereas Preston and Gallagher heard nothing before the firing started.

Four soldiers travelled on the train that day, and two of them made statements. Lance Corporal Chinnery of the Royal Army Service Corp sat in the compartment next to the 'A' Specials when ununiformed men fired at the train with rifles, revolvers and machineguns.[631] Directing their fire only at the three carriages with the 'A' Specials onboard, the gunmen fired from the platform and the room next to it. The soldier stayed on the train while Specials escaped through the rear door, pinned down for twenty minutes. All the kit they transported remained on board and was lost. Trooper Hector Jeffers travelled in uniform and boarded at Dundalk with one of the 'A' Specials getting on his

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630 Ibid.
631 Ibid.

carriage at Clones.[632] As the Special boarded Jeffers, in line with McGonnell's statement, heard a single shot followed by machinegun fire. Along with the 'A' Special and the rest of the passenger in the compartment, the Trooper lay under the seats as the fire carried on. After a few minutes, a bullet came through the woodwork in the carriage, hitting and killing the Special. After the firing stopped, the Republicans ordered all passengers off the train, searching them on the platform before an officer cancelled an order to take them all to the local barracks allowing them all to carry on with their journeys.

RICUD Sergeant Murphy waited for the Derry train for Enniskillen at Clones Station that evening.[633] The platform was empty except for railway staff as the 'A' Specials boarded. A few seconds later, Murphy heard a single shot followed by five or six more and then machinegun fire. The shooting carried on for ten to fifteen minutes after which two 'I.R.A. officers' entered the compartment asking if any of the passengers carried arms and, assured none were, allowed them to complete their journeys. As the train drew away, Murphy saw four dead 'A' Specials on the platform.

Events at Clones Station are unclear. It seems unlikely that Fitzpatrick put himself in the firing line when confronting Doherty and the party of armed 'A' Specials and it is unlikely McGonnell fired a sub-machinegun at the carriage if the IRA commandant still stood there. Similarly, there is no reason to believe that Boyd, Henry, Browne, Wilkinson and McKegney, separate and independent witnesses (as independent as anyone can be in a universally sectarian period), concocted a false story implicating the Republicans. The single-shot McGonnell heard which

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[632] Ibid.
[633] Ibid.

killed Fitzpatrick and caused him to fire his Thompson sub-machinegun at the carriage was heard by other witnesses who did not attribute it to a Special who may have killed Fitzpatrick. In the chaos of a firefight in a railway station on a busy train it is very difficult to know what happened and in what sequence. There is a familiar pattern of two parallel accounts.

There likely is a third. The railway porter's statement that 'they have it in for you boys' before the shooting and the Republican comment that if the Northern Irish security forces stopped the 'Monaghan Footballers' for being armed, then the Republicans would stop the USC, shows the Republicans intended to confront the 'A' Specials. Armed men were already in position when Fitzpatrick and McGonnell arrived and concealing a sub-machinegun was a statement of intent. Why were the 'A' Specials armed in County Monaghan after a week of raids, kidnap, seizure and reprisals? Maybe the military ambulance naïvely assumed the USC onboard had free passage through the Free State but after its seizure, there could be no doubt of the reaction of Republicans to USC in County Monaghan. An alternative train route was available. It seems a level of arrogance coloured the 'A' Specials' decision that day but if they had intended to provoke Republicans and spoiled for a fight, then surely more than six of the party would have been armed. In the tense atmosphere of February 1922, with Republicans furious that their comrades sat in Derry Gaol and the Specials livid at the raids and kidnapping earlier in the week, the tiniest of sparks could set a raging fire. Incensed Republicans and anxious 'A' Specials, outgunned in Free State territory, may have fired at the same time, or one side or the other pulled a hair-trigger without meaning to start a shootout.

Whatever the cause the USC fared worse. Four 'A' Specials died in the station, seven were wounded, and five remained prisoners for weeks to come.

While RICUD and soldiers were allowed to go on their way, Republicans targeted Specials at Clones as they had days before in the border raids. On either side of the border, a USC uniform made a Ulsterman a marked man. Carrying out their duty to reinforce a Northern Irish district recently attacked by Republicans, whether motivated by God, Ulster or a decent wage, four 'A' Specials paid the ultimate price, overwhelmed and unprepared for the firefight on Clones Station platform.

Despite Ulsterian protests Republican violence and pressure achieved what it sought: the release of the prisoners. Confirming Magill's comments after the Baird and Yorke kidnapping that the raids were an extra-constitutional tactic to gain concessions from the Northern Irish government Craig received a handwritten ransom note a few days after the 'Clones Affray':

> We the 42 hostages now in confinement request you to liberate the men who were travelling to football match in Derry as we are held here in custody until they are liberated. We trust you will carry out this request immediately.
>
> Anketell Moutray
>
> F. Moutray
>
> John Anderson
>
> J.M.McManus[634]

[634] Ibid.

Both incipient states had resorted to unofficial state-sanctioned violence in an attempt to coerce the other and pressure the Imperial Government. If the Provisional Government had descended to a 'primitive [state] of society' through the raids and kidnapping, so had Northern Ireland in the use and threat of USC violence.[635] The note triggered some debate in Craig's government. One, less confrontational, approach suggested co-operating with the Free State police force or threaten to build 'strong posts along the frontier.'[636] The option, the proposal went on, meant the building of counter-posts on the Free State side and the build-up of forces facing off along the border which 'were bound to come into conflict ultimately'. The Northern Irish government asked Crown forces to provide troops for the build-up 'to remain in an antagonistic position on the border.' The option gave the Free State an ultimatum: co-operate or go to war. If the Republicans did not release the hostages in the next few days a second, more confrontational and security intensive option proposed:

> […] arranging special protection for all active members of IRA or Sinn Fein in Northern Ireland. They will be asked to leave Ulster by Friday night or to get in touch with RIC authorities and act on their advice. They will be collected and handed over to military authorities for safeguarding and maintenance or placed on ships if preferred […][637]

Three ships, one in Derry, one in Newry and one in Belfast were to provide 6000 places for detainees. Craig had three options, work towards cross-border police

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635 Ibid.
636 Ibid.
637 Ibid.

co-operation, a military build-up on the border likely to provoke a war or the round-up of thousands of Catholic and Nationalists on the assumption they were active in Sinn Fein or the IRA. Ultimately, Craig took a fourth option: concede and release the prisoners in Derry. In return, Craig demanded the Provisional Government recognise the authority of the Northern Irish courts.

Craig replied to the ransom through an open letter to the hostages published in the press.[638] After consulting with Attorney-General Richard Best, Craig had written to Collins saying on applying to the court for bail the men would be released. On being returned for trial Best would enter *nolle prosequi* against the men. At first glance, the requirement looked fair enough but only weeks after the Treaty debate and subsequent split, applying to the Northern Irish courts was tantamount to accepting their authority which, politically, Collins could not do. The concession placed Craig in an awkward position too. Wickham wrote to Bates complaining that the release of the prisoners was detrimental to the discipline of the RICUD and USC.[639] Constabulary forces had borne the brunt of the Republican attacks, and two died in the Derry Gaol escape attempt. Sentenced to death, the Republicans had been reprieved and the raids, kidnapping and ambulance seizure followed. In Wickham's view making concession to the Republicans would mean more and further raids and kidnapping. The RICUD Commander then made the familiar veiled threat that if the security forces felt undermined, they would take stronger measures themselves:

> I greatly fear that if the impression became general that acts of violence can obtain release of offenders this practice of kidnapping for purposes of

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638 Ibid.
639 [PRONI] CAB/6/34.

> barter will grow and that the Police Forces will lose confidence in the efficacy of making arrests with the results that their vigilance will relax or that they will be driven to more drastic methods.[640]

Wickham, as had been done before, used the fear, or even veiled threat, of an uncontrollable USC to apply pressure on Craig. Contradicting himself, he chided Republicans for using extra-constitutional force while threatening it himself. Lord FitzAlan gave Craig no time to consider or reply to Wickham. Taking the letter in the press as the go-ahead, the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland ordered the release of the Derry Prisoners release at 09h00 the next morning and crucially without an application for bail submitted. Furious, the Attorney-General wrote to Spender to say FitzAlan had acted on the advice of the Ireland Office not his as a minister and therefore the release order was irregular and the prisoners had not been 'duly' released.[641] If the prisoners appeared at Assizes on their original charges, he could not direct Crown Solicitors to drop the case as FitzAlan acted outside the usual process of Northern Irish criminal procedure. Craig's Cabinet declined to take up Best's suggestion to inform the Lord Lieutenant that the Attorney-General was not 'merely the mouthpiece of the Executive [Imperial Government] to carry out their instructions'. Despite protests, the prisoner swap took place, but trouble on the border did not end there, and innovative cross-border proposals were soon suggested to maintain a fragile peace. The USC proved an insurmountable obstacle.

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[640] Ibid.
[641] [PRONI] CAB/6/36.

The 'Zone' Police and the Battle of Belleek-Pettigo

To avert the impending civil war Collins and anti-treaty leaders devised a Joint-IRA Offensive against Northern Ireland from April 1922.[642] Failing in its political aim of uniting the IRA in combat against Craig's government away from the dissension of the Treaty debate, the operation also failed militarily. Coinciding with the IRA retreat from Northern Ireland stringent security measures were introduced by the Northern Irish government following the killing of Unionist MP William Twaddell in Belfast on 22 May 1922. Tyrone's IRA units fell back to the County Donegal border village of Pettigo.[643] Ulsterian newspapers carried stories of thousands of 'I.R.A. troops' massed on the Fermanagh/Donegal border.[644] Not mentioned in contemporary newspapers, Lynch's sources record a build-up of 'A' Specials on the Northern Irish side of the border at Pettigo and heavy skirmishing there before the IRA crossed the border to Belleek on 27 May.[645]

Cut off from the rest of Northern Ireland by Lough Erne and a slim finger of Free State territory at the east running to its northern shore, the Belleek-Pettigo Triangle was accessible from the rest of Northern Ireland only by boat and seemed especially vulnerable to attack. In an effort to forestall this 'A' Specials crossed the lough on 27 May, securing Magherameena Castle on the Northern Ireland side. The *Northern Whig* reported extensive fighting on 28 May when the 'A' Specials attempted to secure the road from the triangle into the rest of Northern Irish territory, which ran for a few hundred yards through the Free

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642 For a thorough assessment of the 'Border Campaign' see: Lynch, *The Northern IRA*.
643 Ibid., p.154.
644 *Northern Whig*, Monday 29 May 1922, p.5.
645 Lynch, *The Northern IRA*, p,154.

State and were fired on by IRA troops.[646] Later that evening a group of 'A' Specials in vehicles led by an armoured Lancia travelled up this road from the other direction and were fired on by the IRA; the Lancia crashed into a ditch with its driver killed. Following in Crossley tenders, the remaining 'A' Specials abandoned their vehicles and made their escape whence they had come.[647] Sensationally, the *Belfast News-Letter's* headline ran:

INVASION OF ULSTER

FERMANAGH ATTACK

Towns Seized: Protestants Expelled

SIX SHOT DEAD

> The latest news from Co. Fermanagh last night was that fighting was proceeding in the North-West end of the county. The town of Belleek and Pettigo were reported to be in the hands of the "I.R.A." and thousands of Protestants were fleeing to Enniskillen.[648]

On 30 May the 'A' Specials remaining in the Triangle, cut off from the rest of Northern Irish territory, retreated from IRA units who had seized the village of Belleek and Magherameena Castle onboard a pleasure steamer captained by its owner, Mrs Laverton. The next day, the *Belfast Telegraph* reported the border

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[646] *Northern Whig*, Tuesday 30 May 1922, p.5.
[647] *Belfast Telegraph*, Monday 29 May 1922, p.4.
[648] *Belfast News-Letter*, Tuesday 30 May 1922, p.5.

mostly quiet except for sporadic machinegun fire from the Free State side, adding that Crown forces arrived from the towns of Garrison and Enniskillen, staying for a short while before returning to barracks.[649] In reality, however, the IRA held the triangle – the *Belfast Telegraph's* report was two days out of date. No further fighting took place over the coming days with Mrs Laverton's pleasure steamer, SS Pandora, attracting press attention. While evacuating the 'A' Specials from Magherameena Castle, 'Admiral Laverton' steered the boat close to the shore and held her telescope like a machinegun, forcing the IRA to retreat. Rebaptised HMS Pandora for its endeavours, the boat was made the flagship as a reward.

Collins gave Churchill assurances that the occupying forces were not from the Free State Army and with the 'A' Specials beaten back without much resistance on 4 June 1922 Crown forces entered the fray, moving against the Free State village of Pettigo. '**SEVEN REPUBLICANS KILLED. FLEEING FROM PETTIGO. WITH BRITISH SHELLS AS PERSUADERS**' reported the *Northern Whig*.[650] A machinegun position offered some resistance with an explosive shell hitting fleeing IRA troops who were cut-off by Crown forces, landed the evening before to the rear, advancing and holding a position a mile into Free State territory. An angry Collins demanded that Churchill launch an inquiry into the incident, claiming an unprovoked assault against the Provisional Government by forces dressed in mixed khaki and black uniforms: an apparent reference to the RICSR and the 'A' Specials.[651] With the captured Lancia recovered, and arms and ammunition seized, the entire Pettigo operation lasted

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[649] *Belfast Telegraph*, Wednesday 31 May 1922, p.4.
[650] *Northern Whig*, Monday 5 June 1922, p.4.
[651] *Belfast News-Letter*, Tuesday 6 June 1922, p.5.

less than four hours.[652] The Belleek-Pettigo Triangle, entirely in Northern Irish territory, remained in possession of the IRA.

On the evening of 7 June, Crown forces crossed Lough Erne, and without meeting resistance moved quickly to a position near the village of Belleek and recovered most of the 'Triangle' as they advanced.[653] The next morning the column from Lough Erne moved on the village with a second column moving westward from Pettigo in a pincer movement.[654] Armoured cars led the way followed on by infantry from the Manchester and Lincoln Regiments. Artillery fired on the evacuated Magherameena Castle, causing extensive structural damage, with 'A' Specials observing some miles back of the morning's jumping-off points. The manoeuvre started at 10h00 with units from the Stafford Regiment arriving in Enniskillen at midday in reserve, but the action had ended by 13h00. Crown forces reported that the IRA fired first and responded with machine guns and over twenty rounds of artillery aimed mostly at Belleek Fort in Free State territory. One man from the Lincoln Regiment received a light wound, but there were no IRA bodies recovered. The *Northern Whig* reported the Imperial troop's advance as liberators against 'mutineers':

> From whatever houses there were along the route miniature Union Jacks were flown, and the tenants, old hard-handed men, and women, bent over with toil, vigorous well-tanned girls and boys, and little children, gave the soldiers hearty cheers in passing.[655]

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[652] *Northern Whig*, Monday 5 June 1922, p.4.
[653] *Belfast Telegraph*, Thursday 8 June 1922, p.7.
[654] *Northern Whig*, Friday 9 June 1922, p.5.
[655] Ibid.

Those 'hard-handed' old men and women bent over with 'toil' had depended on the Imperial Government and Crown forces for their protection. While competent to carry out limited raids and patrols the 'A' Specials proved incapable of fighting the IRA in the field and unwilling to hold Northern Irish territory when faced with disciplined aggression. They relied on the courage of an eccentric woman to delay the IRA advance and their evacuation from Magherameena Castle. Unable to fend for themselves in the face of organised IRA hostility Ulsterians could not rely on them for their defence. Solly-Flood designed the 'C1' Specials for situations like the Battle of Belleek-Pettigo but, proposed only in April,they were not ready by May/June. As the Northern Irish government considered the Military Adviser's scheme and Solly-Flood pushed for supplies from the War Office, a different solution had to be found to prevent a repeat of Belleek-Pettigo. General Cameron, the General Officer Commanding Ulster, had a proposal.

Ulster's Military Commander suggested a 'Neutral Zone' about 35 kilometres long on the Counties Fermanagh/Donegal border along the line of Belleek, Pettigo, Kesh, and Garrison. Immediately the Northern Irish government agreed in principle and proposed extending it to other areas and eventually across the entire border.[656] The memorandum contained a point that belied their support and ultimately proved the downfall of the proposals agreed by Craig, Collins and Churchill. The problem was the USC. Cameron's 'Neutral Zone' included townlands on each side of the border, which would be patrolled by Crown forces, and in which all other arms would be prohibited. With alacrity, the Free State sent

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656 [PRONI] CAB/6/90, 'Papers and correspondence relating to creation of a neutral zone in frontier area', June-July 1922.

a liaison officer with the Government of Northern Ireland reminded to do the same on 23 June. Despite practical obstacles, significantly the lack of maps of the townlands in the 'Neutral Zone' the proposal was to be effective within days, that is from 12h00 on 28 June 1922. Writing to GHQ on 25 June, Cameron said only the lack of maps remained outstanding before the implementation of the proposals.

Two days later Churchill sent a note to the Northern Irish Cabinet stating that the Provisional Government insisted on a provision 'that all officially supplied arms should be called in and withdrawn from the Area.'[657] He acknowledged that this would mean the disarming of the USC in the 'Neutral Zone' townlands but he vouched for their security and safety. However, the Northern Ireland Cabinet noted the difficulty of disarming the USC men who would be affected by this (even though it estimated that there were little more than a dozen of them) on 20 June, and on the 28th Solly-Flood formally objected to the Ministry of Home Affairs and Craig made it clear to Churchill that the Northern Irish government would not entertain disarming any USC men in a reply to Churchill on the same day.[658] The Northern Ireland Prime Minister instead suggested removing all police and USC personnel from the 'Neutral Zone', transferring civil police powers and protection of police barracks to the Imperial forces in the area. So inconceivable was disarming a dozen or so USC men that Craig firstly jeopardised the tripartite agreement and secondly made a concession allowing the Provisional Government to maintain their unarmed police force despite the withdrawal of Northern Ireland's. Allowing a few Specials

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[657] Ibid.
[658] Ibid.

to keep their arms had priority over Imperial/Free State/Northern Irish relations and more remarkably, parity of esteem with the Provisional Government.

Showing that the Northern Irish side expected the proposals to proceed, Spender wrote to Cameron on 29 June asking to extend the proposal to a 9.5-kilometre zone along the Carrigans-Porthall line on the Counties Londonderry/Donegal border just south of Derry. Spender wrote to Solly-Flood telling him that Cameron would not assume responsibility for civil policing or barrack protection in the 'Neutral Zone'. Cameron's Director of Operations for the 'Neutral Zone' sent a 'WARNING ORDER' to police commanders setting out three zones the Crown forces intended to occupy, establishing an expanded 'Neutral Zone' along the entire border from Carlingford Lough to Lough Foyle.[659] The same order instructing the redeployment of 'A' Special platoons in the extended 'Neutral Zone' to Belfast. 'B' Specials remained the problem. Mobile 'A' Specials expected to be redeployed, and even those who were stationed at attached to RICUD barracks signed up to deployment anywhere in Northern Ireland. 'B' Specials were not expected to move from their districts and demanded to keep their arms at home. Cameron proposed to Solly-Flood and Samuel Watt at the Ministry of Home Affairs that the Northern Irish government raise what was in effect a fifth class of the USC, the 'Zone Police'. Unarmed and dressed in a distinctive uniform the 'Zone Police' would be responsible for civil policing on the Northern Irish side of the 'Neutral Zone'.[660] Writing to GHQ Cameron proposed storing the USC's arms in a barracks, or secured in USC homes. That proposal ran directly against the Provisional Government's condition for removing all officially issued weapons from the affected townlands.

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[659] Ibid.
[660] Ibid.

Nonetheless, on 5 July Spender instructed the Ministry of Home Affairs to prepare for the enlistment of 'Zone Police'. Next day, Solly-Flood reiterated his objection to disarming the USC in the 'Neutral Zone' because the 'B' Specials 'with the liability for their women-kind and property [would be] left defenceless.'[661] Solly-Flood either ignored or showed no faith in Imperial troops protecting the USC, their families and homes. The Military Adviser asked that recruitment for the 'Zone Police' be strictly from ex-RIC and informed Watt that no District Inspector was available to command the new force.

Despite being eagerly agreed to by the Northern Irish government who proposed its expansion across the entire border, and backed by Craig, Collins and Churchill, the intractability of disarming the few 'B' Specials in the 'Neutral Zone' saw the proposals shelved. Cameron's plan faltered because they interfered with the 'B' Specials. Two months later the hint of reorganising the 'B' Specials saw Solly-Flood scrap his UVC scheme discussed above. By summer 1922 the 'B' Specials had become as much a force within the politics and government of Northern Ireland as they were a force on the Free State/Northern Ireland border. Beyond a reluctance to disarm themselves in those townlands a 'Neutral Zone' offered the prospect of a secure border and a secure border precluded the necessity for the USC. Just as 'emergency' justified strong, if not draconian, measures by the Northern Irish government throughout its existence until Direct Rule from 1972, so too did an unstable border justify the very existence of the USC during the Outrages.

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[661] Ibid.

III: Conclusion

Solly-Flood's Class 'C1' shattered the thinly veiled illusion of Spender's USC being anything less than a paramilitary and military force. Bombers, tanks and naval vessels far exceed the requirements of even an armed police force like the USC. Increasing the size of the force satisfied the need to recruit Ulsterians to keep them under discipline, preventing them from turning against the Ulsterian élite. Arming them allowed Special Constables to protect the border. Acquiring heavy arms, vehicles, aircraft and boats would transform Class 'C1' into an offensive force as betrayed in Solly-Flood's plans to invade Donegal and Monaghan. Incredible as the plans may seem, the Northern Irish Cabinet approved them and, except for the tanks and bombers, so too did the War Office in Whitehall. Only when the cost of what would be in effect a standing army transferred from the Imperial Government to the Stormont régime did Craig's parsimonious government think again. Although adventurist and excessive, the failure of the USC during the first half of 1922 proves Solly-Flood's point that the USC needed reorganising and retraining to face threats effectively from across the border.

Failure and asininity mark out the performance of the USC between February and May 1922. Ostensibly suspended as a force since the Truce the preceding July, the USC remained intact across much of Northern Ireland. Days before the Republican raids, armed 'A' Specials provided an armed escort into Free State territory. Within minutes of the tocsin sounding armed companies of 'B' Specials were in action. Confronted with a coordinated attack, the USC proved incapable of either securing the border, which Republicans crossed over at will, or even protecting themselves, with Republicans singling out 'B' Specials

as hostages. Hubris and naïveté led the USC to make further mistakes. Despite raids and kidnappings, the force crossed into Free State territory where Republicans kidnapped more constables and at Clones killed and injured more. At Belleek and Pettigo a few weeks later the Republican forces routed the USC force there. Only the guile of Mrs Laverton saved the Special Contables from capture or death and it took the deployment of Crown forces to dislodge, with some ease, the occupying Republican forces.

Almost acknowledging the ineffectiveness of the force, Solly-Flood and the Northern Irish cabinet looked to the Imperial Government to secure the border by implementing a Neutral Zone. The 'B' Class, enthusiastic and competent in repressing Nationalists behind the border, proved singularly inept at holding the border but in their refusal to disarm in the Neutral Zone the scheme collapsed and a fifth class of the USC, the 'Zone Police', never became operational.

Solly-Flood endorsed the fears of Special Constables, who feared that disarmament would leave them, their families and their property vulnerable (even if being armed was of little help in February 1922). The Military Advisor reiterated the narrative that Special Constables enlisted for God and Ulster. Undeniably an important motivation for joining the USC, God and Ulster could not put bread on the table. For many men, the USC allowance, putting them a half a crown in front of their Nationalist neighbours, proved even more of an incentive for going out on patrol and putting themselves in harm's way. The final chapter explores how the militarism of the USC supported Ulsterian men's sense of manliness and formed a core part of a distinctive martial masculinity in public, and how the USC allowance supported his performance of masculinity domestically.

6. Remember Thiepval To Earn A Crust: Ulsterian Martial Masculinities

In January 1919, as the first shots of the Irish War of Independence were fired at Soloheadbeg, County Tipperary, British manhood lay as fresh, unidentifiable gore on the fields of northern France and Belgium.[662] Over 800,000 men who had fought for King and Empire and were killed in ways that four short years before seemed incomprehensibly inglorious and ungallant. A further 1.6 million men extricated themselves from the forests of barbed wire and seas of mud in countless shapes of dismemberment and to varying degrees of disablement.[663] Another two million men came back as survivors, not on the hospital ships and without a claim to a veteran's pension but often with hidden wounds that medicine and society had yet to begin to understand. The masculine ideal that those millions of men had sought to live up to was shattered. As the memorials were read-out in every parish and as mothers, fathers, wives, sons and daughters lived with their men, forever changed by their prosthetic limbs and mental anguish, a paradigm of masculinity was abandoned. The security and closeness of

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[662] **The Battle of Thiepval Ridge** and the Capture of the Schwaben Redoubt on the first day of the Somme Offensive (1916) was the key action of the 36th (Ulster) Division. The engagement (1 July1916) coincided with the anniversary of the Battle of the Boyne (Julian calendar) and the 36th were the only division, across the entire front, to achieve their battle objectives on the day.

[663] Nadége Mougel, 'REPERES: World War I Casualties', *Centre européen Robert Schuman*, (2011), <http://www.centre-robert-schuman.org/userfiles/files/REPERES%20%E2%80%93%20module%201-1-1%20-%20explanatory%20notes%20%E2%80%93%20World%20War%20I%20casualties%20%E2%80%93%20EN.pdf> [22 November 2017].

domestic masculinity replaced the horrors of martial masculinity as manhood was redefined as the ability to provide a safe home and put food on the table, to be committed to the family, to be reliable and to work hard. A man would prove himself by keeping his wife and children in a suburban semi-detached home after the First World War, not by sticking the King's enemy with the sharp, cold steel. Post-war British masculinity had been re-domesticated[664].

On the other side of the Straits of Moyle in Ulster, the old notions of masculinity continued despite the First World War. The global catastrophe of the First World War had interrupted the local turmoil of the Ulsterian Revolution. In Ulster, that turmoil of the Orange Agitation had moved into revolution in 1911. The war in Europe had only anaesthetised the Ulsterian Revolution. For Londoners, the carnage of Flanders was remembered with horror and disgust. In Belfast, Ulsterians remembered it as honourable and valorous. While citizens in Birmingham recalled terrible naïveté in the enthusiasm for the rush to war and at the recruitment offices in the summer of 1914, for Ulsterians in Lisburn, it evoked memories of a loyalty proved at a price worth paying.

The First World War radically transformed Britain's politics, society and economy but in Ulster, the Armistice was the starting gun that recommenced a much longer conflict between Ulsterians and Nationalists. Sectarian tension in Northern Ireland is a contemporary conflict with early-modern dimensions that still simmers today and was brought to the boil by the Ulsterian Revolution from 1911. Historians can now see, with the benefit of hindsight, that the First World War transformed modern Ireland, north and south. For the people of Ulster, viewing their world through the prism of a universal sectarianism that they, in

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664 For discussion on the redomestication of British masculinity see: Joanna Bourke, *Dismembering the Male: Men's Bodies, Britain and the Great War* (London: Reaktion, 1999) and, Eric J Leed, *No Man's Land: Combat and Identity in World War I* (Cambridge: CUP, 1979).

that place and at that moment defined themselves by, what happened at Verdun was less important than what might happen in Limavady. The peace conference in Paris would have less impact on their lives than the motions resolved by the UUC. It was not that the people of the province were parochial but local issues were the priority, and even catastrophic battles and world peace conferences were of secondary importance. What was at stake locally and that what happened locally was seen as a series of existential crises for both communities; an Irish tricolour raised on the wrong side of the street sent ripples through Ulster that eventually crashed down on peoples' lives as tidal waves.

In June 1920 as the Imperial Government and Republicans established a truce there was much relief across Ireland that the violence of the previous two years, of ambushes, assassinations, burnings, and reprisals, was at an end. In Ulster, now Northern Ireland, there was instead apprehension among Ulsterians that a peace settlement would mean Republicans running government in Munster, Leinster, and Connacht. Ulsterians were fearful that the newly victorious Republicans, no longer at war with the Empire, would turn their attention north and impose Home Rule on Northern Ireland by force with the unreliable Imperial Government unwilling to come to Northern Ireland's defence. In the spring of 1920, Ulsterians began to reestablish the UVF, the organisation that prevented Home Rule before the outbreak of the First World War.[665] Crawford's old rifles were pulled out of the cowsheds and barns as former UVF commanders established patrols in Northern Ireland. They no longer drilled enthusiastic amateurs, as they had from 1912, but veterans of the First World War.

Ulsterian men had proved themselves able to resist during the Orange Agitation, able to fight and pay the ultimate sacrifice at the Somme and

[665] Lawlor, p.45.

Passchendaele, and had the opportunity to prove themselves again as sectarian violence spread across Northern Ireland. In the violence of the early 1920s Ulsterian men also had the opportunity to provide for their families. By invoking their war record and publicly remembering the battles of the First World War they could put bread on the table, as demonstrated by the correspondence from John Hughes to James Craig, the new Prime Minister of Northern Ireland:

> I came off with a good carecter [sic] and that is a year last October and I have been on the Brew since and I am a Discharged Soldier and has a widow mother to help to support and I see in the Social Papers that all Special Police were entitled to a Bounty.[666]

I: Ideas of Ulsterian Masculinities

This chapter seeks to address a conceptual and theoretical gap in the lack of an analysis and framework to assess Ulsterian masculinities in the scholarship of Northern Ireland. It will look critically at the very limited research on masculinities in Ulster and Northern Ireland before exploring ideas in and from other disciplines, such as hegemonic, rural and military masculinities to form a new framework through which historians can investigate empirical sources. Sources and archive material will then be explored using the ideas set out, especially martial masculinity and gender performativity, to investigate dynamically and originally masculinities among Ulsterian men during the Ulsterian Revolution and the partition period and how the public role of the USC and

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666 [PRONI] PM/2/8/280, Correspondence from John Hughes seeking Bounty as disbanded 'A' S/C, (December 1923).

Special Constables complemented each other. The conceptual framework and the empirical sources taken together demonstrate that the USC provided opportunities for men in both the domestic and public sphere and that the expectations put on men in one sphere were supported by the role they played in the other.

It is not possible to embark on an empirical assessment of Ulsterian masculinities without setting out the theoretical and conceptual basis on which that assessment will be made. Masculinities, contemporary and historical, are one of many lacunae in the scholarship of Northern Ireland. For the letters, files, novels and autobiographies to make sense there needs to be a joined-up, coherent theoretical and conceptual framework with which to interpret it. Academic work from other subjects, periods and locations exist, but they need to be put together, resized and polished so they can be adapted to the context of Northern Ireland. A study of Ulsterian masculinity in the first half of the twentieth-century problematises much of the scholarship, from all disciplines, as little of it can be applied directly to the particularities of Northern Ireland during the Ulsterian Revolution. Nonetheless, the existing corpus on masculinity lends itself to the formulation of a new and original theoretical framework of masculinity in the province. Core ideas in the study of masculinities must be reassessed and contextualised before they can be applied here.

It is important to examine the existing scholarship and explains why it does or does not help to build a new theoretical and conceptual framework. Hegemonic masculinity is essential to understanding masculinities in Northern Ireland but how did it apply in a state cleft in twain by violent sectarianism? It seems evident that any assessment of a mass paramilitary organisation like the

USC should include 'hypermasculinity' but is the term robust enough to be applied in society as complex as post-war Northern Ireland? How does a mostly rural society like Northern Ireland fit into a scholarship based mainly on research on urban men? During a period of mass demobilisation and island-wide conflict and violence, how did war affect ideas on manliness? How did men encompass and play out one or many of the various constructions of masculinity?

Ulster: The Exception

The chapter looks at the exceptionalist continuities in Ulsterian masculinities during the period of the formation of the Northern Irish state and the establishment of the USC from 1920. Both aspects of the research, masculinity in Northern Ireland and the USC, are under-researched, the latter a real lacuna in the existing scholarship. Resistance to the redomestication of masculinity in Northern Ireland is demonstrated through an analysis of militarised Ulsterian organisations that immediately preceded the USC. The research demonstrates not only continuity in martial masculinity from the pre-war period but, also in the motivations of men who joined the UVF during the Orange Agitation, the 36th (Ulster) Division during the First World War and the USC during the Outrages from 1920-1927. Where accounts do exist, the narration of the USC is starkly martial and masculine; it is oppositional and triumphant. Hegemonic constructions of masculinity were not only maintained through a persistent *mentalité* but as a consequence of prolonged service by men who might have volunteered for the UVF, seen action at the Somme and then patrolled the country roads of rural Fermanagh or Armagh for decades after. Ulsterian identity,

politics and society was marked by the stultification of personnel at all levels of authority.

Although academic scholarship on the USC is nearly non-existent, there is a sizeable, and growing corpus of work on historical masculinity and the martial masculine construction, although its application to Northern Ireland and Northern Irish masculinity is limited to the recent research by Sean Brady, Jane McGaughey and Fidelma Ashe.[667] Each of the historians and sociologists refers to the USC. As one of the largest and most influential homosocial networks, and with police and emergency powers at their disposal, the lack of detailed work on the USC means much of their work, particularly their brief analyses of the USC, is speculative.

That Ashe's paragraph on the USC is a major intervention in the scholarship by stating what should be obvious as in fact significant, is an indictment of the current state of the historiography. From a cursory look at the sources available at PRONI and the National Archives, the USC was largely a means of harnessing the energy of plebeian Ulsterian men in 1920. Plebian troubled the Ulsterian élite leadership and who used the USC to enforce Ulsterian hegemony in the nascent state.[668] Brady's assessment, like Ashe's, correctly emphasises how Ulsterian mass membership in a homosocial network exercising the force of coercion resulted in hegemonic masculine control in Northern Ireland. Brady goes further to highlight the permanent mobilisation and perpetual sense of constitutional emergency as a device to control and dominate 'all aspects of political and social life'.[669] Underlining the lack of primary research in Brady's analysis of the USC is the

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667 Ashe, Brady, 'Why Examine Men?' and, McGaughey, *Ulster's Men*.
668 Ashe, pp.236-237.
669 Brady, 'Why Examine Men?', p.231.

vague statement that the 'B' Specials were 'largely Orange' when, although determined to maintain the Protestant hegemony, instead they were an explicit rejection of Freemasonic, middle-class Orangeism and a demonstration of plebeian paramilitarism.[670] Orangeism had the homosocial, highly organised (GOLI) with its extensive branch network so did not need to create a new organisation in the USC to further its agenda. If anything, Orangeism was forced to adopt the USC, which started as disparate groups of local vigilantes, forming a plebeian and urban threat to Orangeism's influence among Ulsterians.

McGaughey's work is the most relevant to questions of Ulsterian masculinities during the Ulsterian Revolution, focusing on the First World War and the period of the Orange Agitation which immediately preceded it. Establishing the importance of the exclusively Protestant and oppositional character of the Ulsterian hegemonic 'Ulsterman', McGaughey demonstrates the importance of masculinity not only in gender identity but in communal, and even national identity.[671] The key evaluation in her work is that martial masculinity, discussed below, was as applicable in Northern Ireland as it was in Britain. It formed an unbroken arc in Ulsterian men's sense of manliness from at least the establishment of the UVF in 1912, if not before, from the Second Home Rule Bill in 1893, until the formation of the USC and beyond.[672] McGaughey's work is comprehensive and based on extensive primary research with compelling conclusions and forms an essential starting point for further research on Ulsterian masculinity. Often her research is based on a 'militarized' masculinity which would better be defined as martial masculinity. The focus of McGaughey's work is the public displays of masculinity, and the findings would be strengthened by

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[670] Ibid.
[671] McGaughey, *Ulster's Men*, p.8.
[672] Ibid., p.196.

an assessment of the domestic sphere and links to the public role of the Special Constable. A lack of archival research on the USC leaves the work with loose-ends meaning, although compelling, the conclusions relating to Special Constables remain largely speculative. All three make assessments of public masculinities, and although the research will explore that, it will depart from the existing scholarship by examining the role of the USC and the Special Constable in the domestic sphere also.

Northern Ireland was a patriarchal and authoritarian state after the First World War.[673] In such circumstances, it is crucial to understand ideas of hegemonic masculinity. The dominant gender construction was hegemonically masculine with political power and culture and, social mores used to justify the patriarchy. Raewyn Connell's framework remains preeminent and sets the origins of hegemonic masculinity in the early modern period.[674] Features of European gentry masculinity, notably duelling, transferred from that period to the modern period and Europe's large and increasingly better-organised armies of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries consolidated and centralised patriarchy in the nascent states. Patriarchal hegemony was consolidated as the armies became mechanised and the states became established and bureaucratised in the nineteenth century with men controlling the forces of coercion.[675] The state, economy and society shifted to support the expanding armed forces and therefore men's hegemonic power. So it may further strengthen its position, hegemonic masculinity does not compromise with alternatives. Whether in the

[673] For gender relations in Ireland see: Myrtle Hill, *Women in Ireland: A Century of Change* (Belfast: The Blackstaff Press, 2003) and, Diane Urquhart, *Women in Ulster Politics, 1890-1940: A History Not Yet Told* (Dublin: Irish Academic Press, 2000) and, for authoritarianism in Northern Ireland see: Buckland, *The Factory of Grievances*.
[674] Raewyn W. Connell, *Masculinities 2nd Edition* (Cambridge: Polity, 2005).
[675] Ibid., p.189.

form of femininity or heterodox masculinities it purges itself of anything that may challenge its dominance. Nonetheless, hegemonic masculinity is fluid. It is different at different places and at different times. Its constancy is in that it is always ascendant, not that its characteristics are uniform.[676]

In the highly patriarchal and militarised environment of early-twentieth-century Ulster, hegemonic masculinity is a fundamental framework within which to explore masculinity. The term can be critiqued and nuanced to make it even more useful. Although hegemonic masculinity remains valid in Northern Ireland during the period in question, it must be understood within the context of a divided and adversarial state where the antagonistic communities often defined themselves in opposition to the 'Other'. Women, as the gendered 'Other', are dominated in Connell's definition. In Northern Ireland that is applicable, but it is only so when we understand the primacy of the sectarian 'Other' over the secondary, gendered other. Ulsterians dominated Nationalists first and foremost with the domination of the gendered 'Other' being of secondary importance.

In understanding ideas of hegemonic masculinity in Northern Ireland it is necessary to adapt Connell's model. The circumstances in Northern Ireland particularly challenge the notion that hegemonic masculinity does not compromise with marginal masculine constructions. Ulsterian ascendency depended on a cross-class alliance that appropriated features of plebeian culture while led by a landed and economic élite. There is no better example of this than in the establishment of the USC as a way to control the lower-class, rank-and-file 'hotheads' and channel the violent energy of the shipyard purges away from class

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[676] Berit Brandth, 'Rural Masculinity in Transition: Gender Images in Tractor Advertisements', *Journal of Rural Studies*, Vol.11, No.2 (1995), 123-133, p.124

antagonism and towards sectarianism.[677] Demetrakis Demetriou's critique of Connell, although not looking at Northern Ireland specifically, is informative in the context of Northern Ireland as it assesses the adoption of marginal forms of masculinity to form a Gramscian 'historic bloc alliance'.[678] Demetriou, looking at hegemonic masculinity as a concept, argues that the hegemonic group will form alliances of convenience with marginal forms of masculinity to create a dominant 'internal' bloc of men. In turn that 'internal bloc' focusses its attention on dominating the external 'Other' (women) to hold hegemonic power in gender relations. The 'internal bloc' can be seen in the example of the formation of the USC where the Ulsterian élite compromised with plebeian, rank-and-file Ulsterian men. The hegemonic construction appropriated some of their features to create a cross-class hegemonic Ulsterian masculinity. The case of Ulsterian man Alexander Ingram, who challenged cross-class solidarity when his manliness was challenged by a Special Constable who took sexual advantage of his wife while Ingram worked away in Scotland, is discussed later highlighting class issues within Ulsterian society. Ulsterian hegemony was used to dominate not only women but also Nationalist men (even if a counter-hegemonic construction existed within that community).[679] Through negotiation or what Demetriou terms 'dialectical pragmatism', Ulsterian men created a hegemonic masculine 'hybrid historical bloc alliance' which they used to reproduce their patriarchy over women in Northern Ireland and sectarian dominance over Nationalist men.[680]

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[677] [PRONI], D/1022/2/3.
[678] Demetrakis Z. Demetriou, 'Connell's Concept of Hegemonic Masculinity: A Critique', *Theory and Society*, Vol.30, No. 3 (2001), 337-361, p.345.
[679] For Irish Nationalist constructions of masculinity see: Aidan Beatty, *Masculinity and Power in Irish Nationalism,1884-1938* (Basingstoke: Palgrave, 2016) and, Joseph Valente, *The Myth of Manliness in Irish National Culture, 1880-1922* (Chicago, IL.: University of Illinois Press, 2011).
[680] Demetriou, p.346.

In Othering Nationalist masculinity, Ulsterians portrayed Nationalist men as effeminate, excluding them from the concept of a hybrid bloc on both gender and sectarian grounds. Further still, in the process of Othering and asserting political and economic dominance, by both feminising Nationalist men and employing religious discrimination in the workplace, Ulsterians barred them from all-levels of patriarchy. 'Complicit' masculinity accommodates marginal constructions that even fall outside the hybrid bloc, by giving them access to the patriarchal dividend and placing them above women.[681] Nationalist masculinity was viewed as so incongruous that Nationalist men were excluded even from complicit constructions of masculinity, giving Ulsterian women access to the more valuable 'sectarian' dividend. Hegemonic masculinity controlled gender relations in Northern Ireland but Ulsterian hegemony conditioned it and even relegated it.

The armed forces, from the large and powerful organisations to the individual soldiers, buttress hegemonic masculinity. John Tosh explains how the values of the armed forces deliberately percolated through society, as can be seen in the comments of Northern Ireland's military advisor, Arthur Solly-Flood below who sought to mobilise all loyalist men through the USC, and the education system to encourage mass recruitment among the population.[682] Hegemonic masculinity was further militarised during the early twentieth-century period to counter the feminine challenge, not only bolstering it among men but presenting

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[681] Ibid., p.342.
[682] John Tosh, 'Hegemonic Masculinity and the History of Gender', in Stefan Dudick, Karen Hagemann and John Tosh (eds), *Masculinities in Politics and War: Gendering Modern History* (Manchester: MUP, 2008), p.49.

the opportunity for militarised men to behave as though they were protecting their women more than asserting their gender dominance.[683]

A further difficulty in applying hegemonic masculinity to Northern Ireland in the period is that much of the historical work that informs it is based on research of the middle class in the industrial parts of western Europe. It is accepted that terms such as 'domestic sphere' and 'separate sphere' are problematic, even more so when masculine performativity is discussed, but this chapter focusses on masculinity, so the terms are used as an easy shorthand to describe different spaces where different gender constructions were expected to behave accordingly.[684] The separation of the home and work, as male artisans became industrial workers and professionals moved to offices, gave the home a more feminine character. As the home became increasingly feminine, there was a flight from domesticity which was a crucial attribute to the late Victorian crisis of masculinity, paving the way for the more assertive and militarised constructions that are discussed later.[685]

Outside Belfast, Ulster (and Ireland more generally) did not experience the scale of industrialisation seen elsewhere. Farmers and artisans dominated the workforce outside the Belfast shipyards and Derry shirt factories, even if Belfast remained central to the political developments in the province. Ulsterians were not pushed away from domesticated masculinity but attracted to adopting martial masculine constructions, investigated below, because of the specific circumstances of Ulster at the time. They were attracted to martial masculinity more than they were opposed to domesticity. Maintaining the farm together as a

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[683] Ibid., p.55.
[684] Amanda Vickery, 'Golden Age of Separate Spheres? A Review of the Categories and Chronology of English Women's History', *The Historical Journal*, Vol.36, No.2 (1993), 383-414, p.386.
[685] John Tosh, *A Man's Place: Masculinity and the Middle-Class Home in Victorian England* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2007), p.17.

family, and calling on their wife to work in their village workshop and shop stores, rural Ulsterian men in the borderlands, towns, villages, and townlands were, when compared to their industrial confreres in Belfast and to their fellow Imperial subjects in Glasgow, Liverpool and London, much more a feature of the domestic sphere. The politics of the Ulsterian Revolution and the oppositional nature of their sectarian community made martial masculinity attractive to them. The next section looks at the significance of rural masculinity in Northern Ireland.

Rurality and Manhood

Extant scholarship on modern masculinities is dominated by concepts based on industrialised societies. Those models are problematised in this study of a mostly rural and agricultural society. Hugh Campbell and Michael Meyerfield Bell's work on the need to consider masculinity in the rural setting, and the rural in the masculine setting, introduced scholars to the idea of there being a distinctive form of rural masculinities.[686] There is limited work on rural masculinity in Ireland and none on Ulster and Northern Ireland, but the extant scholarship enables a brief and interdisciplinary discussion on the applicability of rural masculinities in early-twentieth-century Ulster.[687]

Relevant historical work on rural masculinity in restricted to Barry Reay, however Reay's research is empirical and lacks a conceptual grounding but is useful here, particularly when we consider that industrial change was highly

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[686] Hugh Campbell and Michael Mayerfeld Bell, 'The Question of Rural Masculinities', *Rural Sociology*, Vol. 65, No.4 (2000), 532-546, p.539.
[687] For contemporary Irish rural masculinities see: Caitríona Ní Laoire, 'Young Farmers, Masculinities and Change in Rural Ireland', *Irish Geography*, Vol.35, No.1 (2002), 16-27.

limited and localised in Ireland.[688] Reay does sketch out a power relationship in the rural setting where the large élite and noble landlords either were absent or remote leaving the local farmers as the 'little kings', providing most of the employment and the 'hegemonic group' of rural society.[689] Power among smaller but influential landholders in Northern Ireland and in establishing the USC is discussed further on, and the picture provided by Reay seems apposite for Northern Ireland. Historians are reliant on rural sociologists to try to understand historic rurality and the research of Berit Brandth and David Bell is especially useful.[690] Rurality is important in certain societies, Northern Ireland's being a case in point. In those places and at those times, therefore, rural constructions of masculinity are an important part of hegemonic masculinity. Brandth explains in her study of modern Norway that rural masculinities, thwart with danger and focussed on the conquest of nature and beating the elements are the zenith of masculinity.[691] Rural men define themselves by their ability to tame nature, to fashion and master tools and machinery to aid them, contrasting themselves with industrial workers who are, on the contrary, controlled by machines. Being masters of their surroundings and their tools rural men see urban men as emasculated by their industrial and urban methods of working. Bell's work on rural homosexuality is illuminating. In cultural depictions of rural masculinities, rural homosexuals are seen as more masculine than urban heterosexuals.[692] Most masculine constructions consider same-sex desire to be effeminate and heterodox, but in Bell's work the rural man is so manly that even as a 'rustic

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[688] Barry Reay, *Rural Englands: Labouring Lives in the Nineteenth Century* (Basingstoke: Palgrave, 2004).
[689] Ibid., p.12.
[690] David Bell, 'Farm Boys and Wild Men: Rurality, Masculinity, and Homosexuality', *Rural Sociology*, Vol. 65, No.4 (2000), 547-561 and, Brandth, 'Rural Masculinity in Transition'.
[691] Brandth, p.125.
[692] Bell, p.552.

sodomite' he is manlier than any 'city-sissy'.[693] Rustic sodomites are, using the problematically undefined term, 'hypermasculine' but all urban men are affectionate and therefore effeminate. 'Sex is sex', and the vagina and anus are interchangeable for the highly priapic 'rustic sodomite'.[694] Affection is not part of the rural masculine construction.

By dint of his location and type of work, the rural man is more masculine than his urban brother. Of particular interest to this work of the USC paramilitary police force during a time of increased militarism is a study on the place of the British armed forces in the countryside by Rachel Woodward.[695] The armed forces are required to adopt the countryside as their home as they must justify their extensive rural landholdings, and this is particularly important in understanding the USC who had an extensive network of drill halls and headquarters. The innocuous and extensive files on Nissen huts, boilers and the general upkeep of rural USC buildings makes sense when that need for justifying their extensive impact on rural areas is borne in mind.[696] Woodward's visual example of a SAS soldier patrolling the hills of Armagh during the recent Troubles is also interesting during the period of partition. Ulster was settled and planted in the 1640s because it was the most Gaelic, barbarous and wild part of Ireland and Protestant planters from England and Scotland tamed the native population much as rural men tame the land.[697] The USC should be seen as part of a continuity. Farmers were taming the land by day and as Special Constables taming the descendants of the wild natives by night. Ploughs and thrashers were the tools used to conquer the land,

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[693] Ibid., p.552.
[694] Ibid., p.558.
[695] Rachel Woodward, "It's A Man's Life!': Soldiers, Masculinity and the Countryside', *Gender, Place & Culture*, Vol.5, No.3 (1998), 277-800.
[696] For example, see: [PRONI] USC/4/14/41, 'Nissen Huts – general'.
[697] Jonathan Bardon, *The Plantation of Ulster: War and Conflict in Ireland* (Dublin: Gill & Macmillan, 2011).

whereas rifles and special powers legislation were the tools used to conquer the Nationalist population. Just as Woodward's visual example of photographs of the SAS, weapons drawn on top of the hills of Armagh, shows the army's dominance over the landscape, so the Nissen hut and armed farmers show the USC's domination over the wild landscape and its even wilder Nationalist inhabitants during the period in question.

Rural and military masculinities are linked not only through the environment but through common traits. To survive a long country march displays a masculinity requisite to being admitted to the army. Physical masculinity is proved by fitness and stamina. That fitness and stamina are, despite most modern warfare being urban, no better tested than in the countryside. Through those common traits, rurality and military are linked. For the mostly rural USC, those rural physical tests were faced every day in their farms, forests and, bogs. Passing one as a farmer also meant passing as a martially masculine Special Constable. In Northern Ireland, rural masculinity linked to martial masculinity was a key component of hegemonic masculinity. Ploughing fields proved rural masculinity. Escaping an IRA ambush proved martial masculinity and in so doing secured the Special Constables sense of manliness.

Martial Masculinity

The term 'hypermasculinity' complements hegemonic masculinity well and seems ideal when exploring the gender constructions of the Special Constables. In those few instances where historians have written about masculinities in Northern Ireland and rarer still cited the USC, 'hypermasculinity' is, more often than not, included in the analysis. As a term, 'hypermasculinity' is used variously to talk

about men in the US military, SS men soliciting sex workers in the Third Reich, African-American men in large cities and even the volunteers of the UVF.[698] There is a list of examples of hypermasculinity, but a list of examples does not make a definition. 'Hypermasculinity' is used without much care. It is used, but without sketching its parameters, or by sketching them so widely the term becomes unwieldy or limited in its use. Historians, and scholars in many other disciplines, apparently use it to explain masculine constructions that emphasise particular 'manly' characteristics: violence, militarism, sexual conquest. The term is not appropriate for an analysis of the USC which remains highly problematic because it is undefined and because 'martial masculinities' is more apposite.

'Hypermasculinity' is problematic, and many examples of masculine performance problematise the term. 'Queans' were men, and therefore their characteristics were manly.[699] Did 'Dilly boys' in the Edwardian West End of London who placed special emphasis on make-up and polari, therefore, become 'hypermasculine'? After all, they were emphasising a characteristic of a certain masculine construction 'hyping' that part of their manliness. Those who use the term 'hypermasculine' without definition cannot argue Dilly boys were not hypermasculine, but they certainly do not use the term with young Edwardian homosexuals in mind. Other examples problematise the term further. The first is the 'good fellow', a military man who served his unit well, was courageous and

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698 See: McGaughey, *Ulster's Men*, and, Annette F. Timm, 'Sex with a Purpose: Prostitution, Venereal Disease, and Militarized Masculinity in the Third Reich', *Journal of the History of Sexuality*, Vol.11, No.1/2 (2002), 223-255, Margaret Beale Spencer, Suzanne Fegley, Vinay Harpalani, and Gregory Seaton, 'Understanding Hypermasculinity in Context: A Theory-Driven Analysis of Urban Adolescent Males' Coping Responses', *Research in Human Development*, Vol. 1, No.4 (2004), 229-257 and, Leora N Rosen, Kathryn H. Knudson, and Peggy Eancher, 'Cohesion and the Culture of Hypermasculinity in U.S. Army Units', *Armed Forces & Society*, Vol.29, No.3 (2003), 325-351.

699 Matt Houlbrook, *Queer London: Perils and Pleasures in the Sexual Metropolis, 1918-1957* (Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press, 2005), p.139.

brave in the face of the enemy.[700] He was surely 'hypermasculine', clad in khaki or the scarlet of the Brigade of Guards.[701] What became of his 'hypermasculinity' when late at night he went into the city park and had fellatio performed on him by a rent boy? Was his masculinity compromised if he, a married man away on tour, called a private soldier to his officer's quarters and had penetrative anal intercourse with his subaltern passing it off a release of sexual frustration?[702] What of that private soldier who spent the day ducking artillery bombardment and clearing out enemy trenches, possibly being mentioned in dispatches, who spent his leave in his commanding officer's bed playing the typical army 'poofter', a sexual surrogate and receptacle of his senior's sexual desire who left his medal for bravery on another man's bedstead?[703] Can that provide an example of 'hypermasculinity'? Catamites *cum* military heroes demonstrate the importance of understanding gender performativity discussed further on, but for this purpose, they challenge the binary ideas of 'hypermasculinity'. Those who wish to continue to use it need to offer a definition not just a list of examples. Scholars need to explain the place of marginal and non-hegemonic masculinities within 'hypermasculinity' and 'hypermasculinity' within marginal and non-hegemonic masculinities.

Donald Mosher and Silvan Tomkins' research on 'scripting the macho-man' is highly applicable in the adversarial and sectarian, zero-sum game of Northern Irish society.[704] Mosher and Tomkins, however, provide yet another

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[700] Emma Vickers, *Queen and Country: Same-Sex Desire in the British Armed Forces* (Manchester: MUP, 2015), pp.85-91.
[701] Matt Houlbrook, 'Soldier Heroes and Rent Boys: Homosex, Masculinities, and Britishness in the Brigade of Guards, circa 1900-1960', *Journal of British Studies*, Vol.42, No.3 (July 2003) 351-388, p.356.
[702] Vickers, pp.92-95.
[703] Ibid., pp.56-62.
[704] Donald L. Mosher & Silvan S. Tomkins, 'Scripting the Macho Man: Hypermasculine Socialization and Enculturation', *The Journal of Sex Research*, Vol.25, No.1 (1988) 60-84.

example of 'hypermasculinity' rather than a definition. It is a useful example, nonetheless, that describes how a series of 'macho scenes' in men's lives come together to form a 'macho script'. Entitlement to callous sex, violence understood as manly, and danger experienced as exciting define the 'macho personality constellation'.[705] Men perform this role, much like an actor follows their lines and stage instructions because they receive positive feedback. The 'macho script' plays out not just on the personality and personally but impacts culturally and nationally. To play the part is 'to celebrate the ideology of *machismo*'.[706] Through affecting binary outcomes of 'victor' or 'vanquished' and by responding to challenges and threats to the 'macho', with 'mucho macho' and an emphasis on adversaries and the scarcity of resources (the zero-sum game) historians can begin to see parallels in Ulsterian responses in their community.[707] When Home Rule challenged Ulsterian dominance in Ulster, men responded by importing rifles, drilling themselves and threatening civil war. Reliance on the perpetually undefined 'hypermasculinity' is a weakness in Mosher's and Tomkin's work but 'hypermasculinity' is the outcome of the 'macho script' not the cause.[708] It remains relevant until it reaches its destination but can be redirected.'Hypermasculinity' as a term is too problematic and although it has been used to explain, albeit very briefly, ideas of masculinity among the USC, any new analytical framework needs to be more robust. It is not the correct term especially when 'martial masculinity', a more nuanced term is available.

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[705] Ibid., p.60.
[706] Ibid., p.62.
[707] Ibid., p.80.
[708] Ibid., p.65.

The martial masculine construction gives a specific emphasis to traits associated with war and warriors and is demonstrated clearly in public displays of Ulsterian masculinity, most obviously through the USC but also before in the UVF and the 36th (Ulster) Division.[709] Not violence for the sake of violence but controlled, disciplined, and justified violence. Warrior-like behaviour employed for a cause: King, country, or faith. It informs a manly role beyond, but including, those in the armed forces. In many cases where the term 'hypermasculinity' is used, martial masculinity would be better. They may be similar but martial masculinity is more specific and better defined and for the reasons outlined above 'hypermasculinity' is too problematic.

It is used instead of 'militarised masculinity' because it can apply to men who adopted and performed military traits outside of military organisations such as the Boy Scouts, the USC and, even women in *Cumann na mBan*.[710] Notwithstanding the more obvious military traits above, martial masculinity encompassed ideas of adventure, in the British context Imperial adventure.[711] Volunteerism and Defenderism in the Irish and Northern Irish cases show martial but non-military organisations. Furthermore, as men outside of the full-time occupations of the armed forces could identify with the martial masculine construction it better lends itself to ideas of gender performativity which are assessed empirically below. In the period after the First World War across Europe and the European empires men (and women) were engaged in many asymmetrical conflicts, including the Irish War of Independence, an aspect and phase of the

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[709] For a fuller discussion on the historical development of the martial masculine construction see: Michael Paris, *Warrior Nation: Images of War in British Popular Culture, 1850-2000* (London: Reaktion, 2000).

[710] Ibid. pp.106-109 and, *Cumann na mBan* (Committee of Women) were an Irish Republican women's organisation. Although not involved in front line fighting in April 1916, dressed in khaki, drilled and, armed they were responsible for carrying messages between Republican positions in Dublin and for carrying and supplying arms throughout the city.

[711] Paris, pp.50-56.

Irish Revolution taking them outside the bounds of the recognised conventions of war. In the aftermath of that war millions of men, previously civilian and without military training, returned to their civilian life with years of military experience which affected their public and private lives and in turn influenced the public and private lives of the general population rendering the term 'militarised masculinity' too restrictive.

The separate research projects by Jessica Meyer, Michael Paris, and Emma Vickers, when synthesised offer a useful definition of martial masculinity in Britain, and by extension to Ulsterian men in Northern Ireland.[712] Meyer demonstrates how men on the frontline during the First World War, even under fire often defined their masculinity through reference to the domestic sphere. Paris explores the cultural significance of war and warriors outside of the war-zone in defining British masculinity outside of military organisations. Vickers examines the role of gay men, lesbians and homosexuals in the British armed forces during the Second World War and the crucial part they and it played in a conscript force that, in practice tolerated most queer behaviour. From the three works, a picture of martial masculinity appears which is distinct from 'hypermasculinity'. Martial masculinity negotiates between and supports both public and domestic masculinity, just as the Special Constables used their position both publicly and domestically. It informs gender constructions and organisations that are not typically militaristic. As well as accommodating children (and even women) and permeating through society more generally, it accommodates same-sex desire and marginal constructions of masculinity. Martial masculinity demonstrates the performativity of masculinities and the suppleness of 'public'

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[712] Jessica Meyer, *Men of War: Masculinity and the First World War in Britain* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2011), Paris and, Vickers.

and 'domestic' characterisations, ideas that are key to understanding outwardly militaristic groups like the USC that operated totally within the civilian realm. Martial masculinity brings together the farmer, the father, and the Special Constable: at least three models of 'men' in one body.

Performativity

It is clear, not only theoretically and conceptually but, also empirically that Ulsterian men performed many manly rôles. Through the USC men of all social and economic backgrounds, rural or urban, young and old were able to play the part of the paramilitary policeman in a way that, far from inhibiting their domestic role, in fact reinforced it. Masculinity is a construction, and there are many variations. In this research hegemonic masculinity, 'hypermasculinity', martial masculinity, machismo, mucho-machismo and, marginal masculinities based on sexuality have all been discussed. Empirically the research will explore the relationship between the public USC officer and domestic provider. Men were both, if not more, and performed parts that supported one another. A Special Constable could dominate the public sphere by enforcing sectarian boundaries and cite his valorous war experience to prove his worth in the evening. By day he could write letters begging for employment and explaining his domestic destitution as seen below in the assessment of letters to James Craig, even signing a letter, in the case of Thomas Greer below, written by his wife demonstrating subservience and deference. Understanding masculine performativity is crucial to understanding Ulsterian masculinities.

Gender performativity is explained in the formative work of David Morgan. Morgan cites the different language and behaviour he used as a young

man depending on whether he was in his Royal Air Force billet or eating Sunday dinner at home with his strictly Methodist parents and tells scholars, 'we should think of doing masculinities rather than being masculine.'[713] In itself, this is a practical example of Judith Butler's concept of the performativity of gender roles.[714] Gender, far from being innate, is subjective, and the praxis of the subjectivity varies greatly depending on both the long-term and immediate environment in which that gender role is performed, or in this case, masculine rôle. Importantly, the gender norms that are fundamental to gender constructions are the norms that are responded to, creating new roles to perform.[715] Hegemonic masculinity must reproduce itself to remain in the ascendency and in so doing, exposes itself to the alternatives which it works to suppress.[716] Performativity aids that process by creating the space for those alternatives to be constructed, but also it challenges and weakens the hegemon by exposing it to heterodox constructions while it is reproducing. For the Special Constable, the expectation that he would be able to provide for his family created a masculine construction played out as a Special Constable to enable him to fulfil those demands. Ideas of performativity allow us to argue that although the public discourse in Unionism in the period was of a political crisis to be met with military responses, for many Special Constables the imperative was to perform the domestic role and membership of the USC was a means to do that.

The Ulsterman

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[713] David H. J. Morgan, *Discovering Men, Critical Studies on Men and Masculinities* (London: Routledge, 1992), p.47.
[714] Judith Butler, *Gender Trouble: Feminism and the Subversion of Identity* (Abingdon: Routledge Classics, 2006), p.34.
[715] Judith Butler, 'Performativity, Precarity and Sexual Politics', *Revista de Antropologia Iberoamericana*, Vol.4, No.3 (2009), 1-13, p.11.
[716] Ibid., p.1.

The particularities of early-twentieth-century Northern Ireland (sectarianism, rurality, militarism) necessitate a theoretical and conceptual framework that can best evaluate the masculinities of the USC. Sean Brady's work on the social status of masculinity is apt here.[717] It, taken with the aspects of the ideas outlined above provide historians with an opportunity to explore masculinity through the USC and the USC through masculinity. Brady sets out the social dynamic of late Victorian and Edwardian masculinity in Britain. Although the period precedes the USC, it is still the most relevant in the context of the continuity of early-twentieth-century and wartime martial masculinity.[718] Despite the complicated relationship which Ulsterian identity had with ideas of British identity the latter was, in this period, an identity which Ulsterians broadly held. Brady explains that there are four threads to the social dynamic.

> For men to be seen as fully masculine, freedom of movement between home, work and the public association with other men were prerequisites. It is the emphasis and consideration of the linked system of home, the workplace, the all-male association and, in addition, the street, that offers the most potential to examine the social dynamics of masculinity in this period.[719]

Those four threads were demonstrated and supported through the USC. The home, the domestic sphere, was supported by a wage or Bounty that was paid to Special Constables. The workplace was bolstered by the additional income, social

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[717] Sean Brady, *Masculinity and Male Homosexuality in Britain, 1861-1913* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2005), p.1.
[718] McGaughey, *Ulster's Men*, p.196.
[719] Brady, *Masculinity and Male Homosexuality*, p.1.

status and access to a Ulsterian patronage network. Thirdly, the USC was an all-male association and a homosocial environment that reinforced men's idea of manliness and further strengthened the form of hegemonic masculinity in Northern Ireland.[720] Finally, the Special Constable on the street, armed with guns and special powers was culturally, politically, and legally dominant and superordinate. Each thread helped him fulfil his masculinity and together constructed the fabric that secured it.

At home, through the support of the USC, the Special Constable was able to perform a patriarchial, hegemonic and superordinate part. At work, including on a farm or as a rural artisan, the Special Constable was an Ulsterian, with greater access to employment than the Nationalist sectarian 'Other' or better access to promotion and advancement than his Nationalist colleague. Although able to defend his home with his rifle, as an all-male association the USC offered him an outlet from the domestic and the family spheres and space to confirm his place within hegemonic masculinity through homosociality. In his neighbourhood or townland, the public figure of the Special Constable was treated with awe and admiration by his fellow Ulsterian and dread, fear and contempt by Nationalist neighbours. Nonetheless, those feeling flowed from the real power a Special Constable had and the USC as a force exercised. Individually or together, imbued with the ideas of martial masculinity, the USC was a powerful organisation. Although interwoven the threads remained separate, able to be unpicked. Often complementary, the threads could seem contradictory, and the Special Constable had to be able to perform those different rôles at different times and in different places. The Special Constable was a man playing many parts.

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[720] Nils Hammarén and Thomas Johansson, 'Homosociality: In Between Power and Intimacy', *Sage Open* (2014) 1-11, p.1.

Martial masculine constructions remained key to hegemonic masculinity in the public sphere among Unionist men in the decade after the First World War, whereas masculinity in post-First World War Britain had become increasingly re-domesticated and distant from martial masculinities that dominated before and during the First World War. The current research departs from the extant scholarship by demonstrating, through archival material, that despite continued martial masculinity in the public sphere, Ulsterian men of all social classes affected a different role within the domestic sphere. Their respective roles within the USC not only supported both forms but linked them and demonstrated that individual Ulsterian men performed multiple manly roles.

For Unionist men, the First World War had been an opportunity to demonstrate their loyalty to the King and Empire. That had also been the case for Irish Nationalists, although not Republicans, during the first year of the war. What was exceptional about Ulsterian constructions of masculinity was that the emphasis on martial masculinity continued after 1918. In Britain, it became redomesticated when after the horror of the trenches men sought the comfort of home over the ugliness of mechanised war. In Northern Ireland, the First World War was an interruption and anaesthetic of a more protracted and more significant struggle.

Preceding the USC, as the paradigms of Ulsterian masculinity were the UVF and the 36th (Ulster) Division. Established at the height of early-twentieth-century martial masculinity, the UVF was explicitly military and created to stop the implementation of Home Rule in Ulster. The 36th (Ulster) Division was martially masculine and mostly recruited from Ulsterian men, and the USC was established from within the same generational recruitment pool (albeit with a

good number of enthusiastic, post-war young men included), and often with the same commanders.[721] Ulsterian men forming themselves into self-defence bands can be seen in the *longue durée* as a distinctive part of Ulsterian identity, so it is important to understand ideas of masculinity within the context, not only of male identity, but of cultural identity.[722] In the patriarchal world of early twentieth-century Ireland, man and citizen were synonymous. Identity and masculinity in the Ulster were also oppositional; Ulsterian men saw themselves as hardworking, stoic, and trustworthy while they considered their Nationalist neighbours to be feckless, hot-headed and treacherous. By the beginning of the twentieth-century the Ulsterian man's public identity was well defined and was neatly appraised by Ulsterian politician, Lord Ernest Hamilton:

> In every quarter of the globe, where Ulsterman meets Ulsterman and recognises him as such, there follows the same firm clasp of the hand and the same straight look in the eyes. Here, one feels, is a man to be trusted. Here is a man who will stand by you in a tight place and never, as the saying is, let you down, come what may in the way of danger or adversity. There is a wonderful freemasonry among Ulstermen— stronger I think than that which binds together any other race on earth. […] Their pride of race is great, and deservedly great. Search the records of Ulster's history, […] as a man may, he can lay his finger on no dirty spot which can tarnish the glory of the name of Ulsterman. On the other hand, salient acts of fidelity, of courage and of that peculiar Ulster characteristic which one

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721 Bowman, p.96.
722 Miller and, McGaughey, *Ulster's Men*, pp.8-15.

> may describe as "staunchness", crop up in every chapter, and, one might also say, on every page of these historical records.[723]

The lionisation of the character of the Ulsterian man is carried on to another paragraph. It is clear, however, that the Ulsterian man here is Protestant. Masculinity and identity are exclusive and oppositional. Reread Hamilton's appraisal, changing the positive adjectives for the negative antonyms, replacing the word 'Ulsterman' with 'Irishman' and the standard narrative of the Irish Nationalist emerges, only slightly obscured from the same page. In the same volume, the author James Logan further assesses the Ulsterian man's character, specifically the Belfastman:

> In summing up the Belfastman and awarding him a percentage of marks for various characteristics I shall say in all fairness: Determination 98, business capacity 94, courage 91, trustworthiness 90, self-esteem 84, mental vigour 78, hospitality 70, general culture 55, artistic tastes 48, social graces 44. Having said this, I deliver judgment in a trial of the Belfastman in a frequent charge brought against him (by those who do not know any better or who judge by minorities) of narrowness, bigotry and selfishness: *verdict for the defendant*.[724]

Just as explicit in stating the assumed and desired characteristics of an Ulsterian man, but less oppositional, Logan's evaluation taken with Hamilton's and synthesised with the martial masculine construct of the period, gives historians a

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[723] Logan, pp.13-14.
[724] Ibid., p.55.

good indication of how Ulsterian men saw themselves and to what they aspired. Furthermore, with divine sanction, they would meet any challenge to their position within the United Kingdom, by force if required. Calmly and confidently (they would say), within a faithful brotherhood that eschewed compromise and saw no contradiction in defying the Imperial Government, Ulsterian men established the UVF in 1912 to assert themselves against Home Rule.

237,368 men fraternally signed, in September 1912 the Ulster Solemn League and Covenant. 110,000 men swelled the ranks of the UVF by the middle of 1914.[725] Ulsterian society throughout the revolutionary years between 1911 and 1927 was highly organised, mobilised and politicised. At its height, one in six Ulsterian men were members of the USC.[726] Across all four classes of the USC, in the summer of 1922, there were no less than 32,000 Specials by 1924. After the disbanding of the 'A', 'C' and 'C1' classes the 'B' Specials establishment figure peaked at 40,000 in a Province with a population of roughly 1.2 million people throughout the period. Along with the mobilisation of the 36th (Ulster) Division, it is clear that the periods of the Ulsterian Revolution saw a near-constant mobilisation of the Ulsterian male population. Each of them, intimately linked with ideas of Ulsterian identity and cultural hegemony and superordination; each militaristic, homosocial networks which demonstrated martial masculinity in the ascendency; each a crucial part of the identity and mythology of Ulsterian. By drawing continuities between all three organisations, the UVF, the 36th (Ulster) Division and, the USC from across the decade of the Ulsterian Revolution, James Craig perpetuated and reinforced the romanticised ideas of Ulsterian and identity

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[725] Bowman, p.1.
[726] Ibid., p.199.

and formed an historical arc of martial masculinity distinct to Northern Ireland.[727] What is of interest in this chapter is that the constant application and invocation of existential emergency by Ulsterians extended that distinct arc of masculinity beyond 1924, throughout the entire period of the USC and even beyond.

Partitionist and Ulsterian accounts of the USC are narrated in a highly masculine way and former USC commander Clark's local history seeks to demonstrate a continuity in Ulsterian homosocial networks: legitimacy is gained by placing the USC firmly within the Ulsterian martial tradition which in turn perpetuated the martial masculine construction. In the rural Maghera district in County Londonderry, the USC unit was commanded by the same landed family from its inception until its disbanding. For fifty years the sons of the Clark family inherited the position of District Commander from their fathers.[728] That pattern of inherited command was the norm outside of Belfast. A quasi-feudal system of command and recruitment was a continuity from the UVF, with UVF commanders leading recruitment in the summer and autumn of 1920 of the newly established USC as seen in the rôle of Wilfrid Spender.[729] The long-term authority of the Clark family in Maghera demonstrated the importance of understanding rural masculinities in Northern Ireland during the period. Pre-First World War ideas of patriarchal authority were a further block to re-domesticated masculinity, compounded by the stultification of personnel and commanders.[730] In the 1950s, many commanders were in their 70s and 80s, likely making them veterans of the Ulsterian Revolution, the First World War and even the Second Anglo-Boer War of 1899-1901. In positions of authority, in remote rural communities, it is easy to

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[727] McGaughey, *Men of Ulster*, p.89.
[728] Clark, pp.11-12.
[729] Bowman, p.48.
[730] Hazlet, p.148.

see how these old men would have been able to impose their ideas of manliness on the rest of their community through the highly active and mobilised structures of the USC and the invocation of the Ulsterian martial tradition.

Social cleavages in the rural setting are less studied than those of class differences in urban environments. Ulsterians sought to promote sectarian difference over class difference. Even partitionist historians such as ATQ Stewart have conceded that covering over social cleavages was an essential factor in the militancy of Ulsterians.[731] Often explained as a way for Ulsterians to disenfranchise Nationalists, the abolition of proportional representation for local and then Stormont elections was instead a means to block the Ulsterian, Northern Ireland Labour Party from securing seats. There were, 'no room for diversities of opinion in Ulster', said the Unionist chief whip.[732] Hamilton and Logan sought to play down differences with their broad-brush assessments of Unionist men, but observance can often be seen best in the breach.

Alexander Ingram wrote to Sir James Craig on numerous occasions between July 1923 and March 1924. He explained how a lack of work in Northern Ireland had meant he had to move to Scotland, leaving his family behind, to find employment in the mines.[733] In his absence, Ingram alleged that 'C1' Special Sergeant Donaldson sexually assaulted his wife, with Donaldson using his position to force himself on her and get her pregnant. Like so many of the correspondence, Ingram was at pains, initially, to demonstrate his loyalty to the new state by making it clear he wanted to stay in 'loyal ulster [sic]'.[734] Donaldson's commander responded to the claims, not only by dismissing them as

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731 Ferriter, p.115.
732 Michael Laffan, *The Partition of Ireland, 1911-1925* (Dundalk: Dundalgan Press, 1983), p.107.
733 [PRONI] PM/2/9/3, Letters from Alexander Ingram re: alleged sexual assault by Sgt. D. Donaldson, July 1923-March 1924.
734 Ibid.

untrue but by emasculating Ingram by portraying him as a cuckold, 'I might add that from casual remarks that I have heard it would, I should imagine, be difficult to attach blame to any one man.'[735] Donaldson constructed a counter-narrative, the familiar trope of the USC, of the cuckold Ingram and did not deny his guilt. Ingram obviously felt he was being denied a fair hearing, frequently writing to ask for a face-to-face meeting with 'C1' Special Sergeant Donaldson but was rebuffed by the local USC commanders with whom the Prime Minister's office sided. Later, Ingram wrote to Craig again citing his loyalty and interestingly his working-class credentials too, 'see what justis a working man gets I am not a reble gun man nor a C.I. special scum i am a loyal ulster man so I hope you will get the matter goninto at onse' [sic].[736] After further dead ends, Ingram finally lashed out at Craig but also at the Northern Ireland government whom he blamed for Donaldson's alleged misconduct. By attacking Craig's class, Ingram breached the apparent understanding among Ulsterians, that social class was not relevant among Ulsterians and that the Nationalist 'Other' was the only threat:

> would you kindly let me know if your class law club called the ulster government and officers of the special constabulary have poot the specials which donaldson belongs to on the same footing as the murder gangs in the south and west who can outrage woman and children and no notice is taken of it your special hun donaldson outraged my wife and children and yous took no notice of it. [sic][737]

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[735] Ibid.
[736] Ibid.
[737] Ibid.

Ingram used the term 'class' diacritically, placing himself in opposition to Craig and his government for whom he had sought previously to demonstrate his support. Ingram was apparently angry at the Ulsterian élite and quickly pushed through the veneer that Ulsterians were was socially united. He was angry at his wife becoming pregnant by another man, and that sense of emasculation is felt in the aggression and insistence in his letters. He seemed less concerned about the alleged sexual assault against his wife and more concerned about his sense of justice against a dishonourable man. Ingram felt disgraced, not only as a man but as a Ulsterian. He finally threw the ultimate insult at the USC comparing them to the IRA.

Ingram's exchange demonstrated there was an understanding of what was expected of Ulsterian men. Ulsterian men were expected to demonstrate their loyalty and respect for the government, as Ingram initially did. Only after having what he felt was justice denied to him did he begin to use class to lash out. Nonetheless, the last correspondence refers back to that expectation, reasserting his loyalty before denigrating the USC as akin to the IRA. The insult is meant and understood. The USC portrayed itself as a bulwark against Republicanism and the 'murder' of the IRA, and Ingram understood that.

II: Ulsterian Masculinity And The Ulster Special Constabulary

The centrality of martial masculinities in the construction of Ulsterian masculinity in the public sphere is evidenced in contemporary sources which demonstrate the

thought-out link between the USC and martial masculinity. Arthur Solly-Flood was Military Advisor to James Craig during the partition period. Solly-Flood spelt out why he thought the formalisation of the 'C1' Class as a Territorial Army force would be of particular use, 'To discipline a nation under arms it is aimed at getting the whole physically fit man-hood of suitable character into the Force. C.1.'[738] For Solly-Flood, demonstrating the dominance of martial masculinity in the public sphere all physically fit Ulsterian men were to be shaped into soldiers through the USC.

Wallace Clark, discussed above, was a USC commander in Maghera, County Londonderry in the period after the Second World War inheriting the role from his father. Clark provides one of less than a handful of accounts on the USC, another by Arthur Hazlet, although not a Special Constable himself made it very clear that he was writing to honour the efforts of the USC.[739] Their historical accounts together tell us much about the public portrayal of the USC. Clark's narration is typically masculine and gives scholars an insight into the motivation of Special Constables. There was an almost constant sense of existentialist crisis in the 1920s for Ulsterians which could only be confronted by force of arms, and the Special Constables were proud of their links with the old UVF paramilitaries. Those links show an arc of martial masculine continuity, throughout the Ulsterian Revolution, between the Orange Agitation and the consolidation of the *ex nihilo* state of Northern Ireland during the Outrages, an arc Clark appeared eager to foster. Central to the identity of the USC as an organisation and of individual Special Constables is a narration of the arms and *matériel* used by them. Those guns and bullets, unashamedly martially masculine, are talked of in a semi-

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[738] [PRONI] CAB/9/G/40/2: 'Mobilisation of Special Constabulary', (5 July 1922).
[739] Clark, *Guns in Ulster* and Hazlet, *'B' Specials*.

religious way, as being relic-like. The guns that we are told the USC used to stop Republicans in 1922 were precisely the same weapons used by the UVF to stop Home Rule in Ulster and even by the 36th (Ulster) Division to prevent the Kaiser from defeating the Empire.[740] As they were passed on from organisation to organisation, from generation to generation so too was the martial masculine identity that appeared to be central to the Special Constable's esteem and sense of self.

Not only did ideas from the 1910s resonate through to the 1950s and 1960s but the *matériel* of the USC passed through the generations too. Crucial to the idea of Ulsterian exceptionalism and identity therefore was the Larne gun-run. Frederick Crawford's recollection of the events of spring 1914 read as from a *Boy's Own* fantasy tale.[741] Boxes of rifles piled onto boats sailing under false flags, rough seas, rougher stomachs, revolvers held to heads and a one-sided conversation with the Almighty; as much bravado as can be squeezed into one hundred and fifty-two pages. Crawford's guns were seen as crucial to the successful resistance of Home Rule and threat to overthrow the state in the months preceding the outbreak of the First World War and hold legendary status. Those antique German, Austrian and Italian rifles were distributed to the UVF; they saved Ulster from Rome Rule. They were taken to the Somme by the 36th (Ulster) Division, and they saved the Empire from the Kaiser. They were taken out of the back of piggeries by Special Constables in 1920, and they saved Ulster from the 'Shinners'. They were released from secured storage to the Ulster Home Guard, and they saved the United Kingdom from Hitler. Passing through generation to generation, crisis to crisis, those mostly redundant and unusable

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740 Bowman, pp.150-157.
741 Crawford, *Guns for Ulster*.

Mausers, Steyrs and Vetterli-Vitalis became sacred relics of militant Ulsterian resistance to all-comers. With rifle in hand what could stop an Ulsterian man?

Hazlet's narration is similarly masculine and portrays Ulsterian identity as oppositional to its Nationalist counterpart. In describing the relationship between Ulsterians and Nationalists through shoot-outs and ambushes, the entire framework in which we are asked to assess the USC and Nationalists is martially masculine. Specifically, the Nationalist is portrayed as effete, easily led, hot-headed and irrational; after combat Nationalist men run off or scurry away, if victorious it is because they are deceitful. Ulsterians of the USC are portrayed as masculine, the Ulsterian man is brave and strong-minded, good-tempered and measured, holding the line and waiting for reinforcement, never surrendering but occasionally making a tactical withdrawal and when the Ulsterian man wins it is because he is skilled and organised.[742] It is telling that Clark's, Hazlet's and Crawford's accounts were published, written retrospectively and intended for public consumption. The form of masculinity in their accounts, found in a close reading of the sources, is for the public and is accordingly, martially masculine.

Dear Prime Minister

Masculinities are a performance and the public role of the Special Constable and the expectations placed on him there were intimately linked to the part he was expected to play in the domestic sphere. Public and domestic spheres were not separate, they were linked, and the two roles supported one another. Personal letters, albeit to the very public figure of Craig, show, however, that Ulsterian men saw their rôle within the USC as being intrinsically linked to their home life

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[742] Hazlet, *'B' Specials*.

and domestic arrangements. The PM2 series at PRONI is, unlike the USC archive itself, open and catalogued and revealed much about the personal motivation of men in, or seeking a role in, the USC. Although publicly service was clearly about meeting a supposed existentialist threat from Irish Nationalism, whether from across the partition border or from Nationalist neighbours, within the domestic sphere membership, across different social classes it was about receiving a Bounty, regular income or a special payment to keep food on the table and a roof over one's head. During the partition period, applications for USC enlistment to Craig's office were mostly for the better paid 'A' Class that received a full-time wage and a quarterly Bounty in lieu of pension. Preference for the 'A' Class, in and of itself, is indicative of the financial imperative for many men and their families. If, as the published Ulsterian accounts discussed above suggest, Special Constables signed up to defend God and Ulster, then there was ample opportunity to enlist in the less munificent 'B', 'C' and 'C1' Classes. The higher rate of letters to Craig for application to the 'A' Class, with its much higher financial rewards demonstrates that money was the priority for many Ulsterian men, not the survival of the nascent Northern Irish state.

Petitions and appeals to Craig form a link between the domestic and public; seeking a public rôle from a public figure to provide domestically to support their domestic circumstances and using martial masculine language from the public sphere to advance their domestic case. Joseph Sheridan's letter is typical of unemployed, working-class Ulsterian men seeking a position in the USC. Sheridan had been an 'A' Special but was medically discharged and had been unemployed ever since. In writing to Craig for a paid position in the USC he made it clear that his foremost consideration was domestic, saying, 'I need it at

present I have only a pension of 8/6 per week to keep a home.'[743] Similarly, W Wright appealed to Craig for reinstatement in the USC, not to defend the Northern Ireland from Nationalists but because 'I am a married man with three children and as you're [sic] aware work is very hard to get.'[744] Further emphasising a financial imperative over the defence of Northern Ireland was the case of 'C1' Special Constable T Charters sought a transfer from the 'C1' Class to the 'A' Class as it was a paid position, saying, 'Sir, I have not been working for the past 2 years and I have had for thier [sic] is no one working in the house Dear Sir I hope you will look over this as I am in need'.[745] The letters were written in a formula with the petitioner normally citing their military record in the First World War and their loyalty to Ulster and Northern Ireland before pleading the particular hardship of their case. A military record was used to demonstrate the man's martial masculine credentials, to support and link in his domestic status as provider and protector of his family and home. Linking a military record with domestic circumstances is neatly demonstrated in the case of John O'Brien who sought a position in the USC by mentioning both his martial masculine military service and his domestic hardship;

> '[the armed services] i [sic] joined at the age of 15, celebrating my 16th birthday in the line at Loos. I am a member of L.O.L. 801, Sandy Row, as is also our esteemed Member of Parliament, Mr T.H. Burns MP., who I

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[743] [PRONI] PM/2/20/86, 'Correspondence from Joseph Sheridan seeking reinstatement in 'A' Special Constabulary', (December 1921-March 1922).
[744] [PRONI] PM/2/23/245, 'Correspondence from W Wright seeking reinstatement in the USC', (March 1924).
[745] [PRONI] PM/2/3/117, 'Correspondence from T Charters seeking transfer from 'C1' Special Constabulary to 'A' Special Constabulary', (October 1922).

> am sure can vouch for my character. As I am unemployed at present and have a wife and family to support […]'.[746]

O'Brien's letter reveals the perceived need to demonstrate how loyal one was to Ulsterian in opposition to the disloyal, Nationalist Other. This profession is the same as the loyalty test discussed in chapter five. It supports and corroborates Timothy Bowman's argument that to Ulsterians the USC was a patronage network that at its peak in 1922 enlisted one-sixth of all Protestant men, providing financial support and assistance to loyal Ulsterians that was not available to their Nationalist neighbours.[747] 'A' Special Constable William Beck had been dismissed from service after being convicted of various charges but felt his service and loyalty warranted special consideration. Nationalists, even those who had served in the First World War, were excluded from the patronage network.[748] Beck's appeal demonstrated that Ulsterian masculinity was constructed around martial masculinity and loyalty and that even a criminally convicted Ulsterian was more deserving than any Nationalist:

> I am at home now no work and only receiving 15/- for to keep seven of us. I have served my country under Queen Victoria, King Rdward [sic] and King George, so think my case is worthy of consideration.[749]

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[746] [PRONI] PM/2/16/7, 'Letter from John O'Brien seeking reinstatement into the Special Constabulary', (March 1922).
[747] Bowman, p.199.
[748] Jane G V McGaughey, 'The Language of Sacrifice: Masculinities in Northern Ireland and the Consequences of the Great War', *Patterns of Prejudice*, Vol.46, Nos.3-4 (2012) 299-317.
[749] [PRONI] PM/2/2/89, 'Correspondence from William Beck seeking re-instatement to USC', (September-December 1921).

Beck followed the established formula of citing his loyalty and military credentials before explaining his hardship. Beck ends his plea to the Prime Minister with a promise of further loyalty and support for the nascent state, '[I] do all that lay in my power for the sake of Ulster [sic].'[750]

Correspondence from Ulsterian women on their husbands' behalf show that the public performance of masculinity as a Special Constable, or aspiring Special Constable, were often supported by female assertiveness. The women were not challenging the hegemonic masculinity; they were using it to find means for their husbands to support them and their families in a conventional, domesticated female role. In not challenging the hegemonic position of men, correspondence from women shows how crucial martial masculinity was in the hegemonic construction to the entire family as it helped men provide for their dependents. What is important is that the women wrote as Ulsterians and petitioned for access to the Ulsterian dividend, which in Northern Ireland at the time was more valuable than the patriarchal dividend. W.R. Holdsworth had been dismissed for breaking marriage regulations and pleaded his precarious position to support his case for reinstatement, 'things aren't very bright with me at present owing to the slackness of business everywhere'.[751] Holdsworth received a negative answer from the Prime Minister's Office when his wife Wallis Holdsworth took up the case on his behalf. Wallis Holdsworth explained how there was disbelief among her fellow Ulsterians at the treatment her husband had received before following the

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[750] Ibid.

[751] [PRONI] PM/2/28/229, 'Correspondence from W R Holdsworth and his wife Wallis Holdsworth seeking reinstatement in the S/C', (September 1921 - June 1922).

established rubric of citing his war record and explaining that he is a 'Belfast loyalist'.[752] The appeal failed.

Mothers would also write to Sir James Craig, petitioning for access to the Ulsterian dividend and patronage network. As ever, they would use their sons' masculinity to support their case. All correspondence from women use the manliness of their husband, son or father to advance their cause and circumstances. Mrs A White's correspondents were particularly effective. Her son was an 'A' Special who died on duty, leaving her without sufficient financial support after his death. Her letters convinced the Prime Minister to convene a cabinet committee to introduce a more generous policy to the families of dead USC men. Just as men cited their martial masculinity and loyalty, so did wives and mothers like Mrs White:

> I was willing to sacrifice my son who served in the late war and again in the Special Constabulary and now he is gone who is going to keep me in my old age. Surely £16.0.0 in not expected to keep me a lifetime or even would it put me in a position to prepare for my old age.[753]

Having demonstrated her son's loyalty and martial masculinity Mrs White followed the established formula and then explained the seriousness of her position, 'I am behind in my rent and I have just to depend on other people for my food'.[754] Awarded £16 for funeral expenses and an *ex gratia* payment of £52.18s.4d, Mrs White showed her determination by refusing a further

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[752] Ibid.
[753] [PRONI] PM/2/23/129 and PM/2/23/133, 'Correspondence from Mrs A White seeking grant for death of 'A' S/C son', (March 1923-March 1924).
[754] Ibid.

compassionate grant of £23.1s.8d through her solicitor. After refusing the grant, she pressed home her plight:

> I would not mind Sir if I had anything at all but i [sic] am almost at the door with the rent and everything staring me in the face and hardly what food would keep me living so i [sic] thought Sir that if you would send them [the Paymaster at Omagh] word it might hurry them up for me so Sir i [sic] will close and wait.[755]

Craig took a personal interest in the case and changed the policy. Through her persistence and the citing of her son's masculinity and sacrifice, Mrs White not only prevailed in her case but also changed government policy.

The letters of Constance Greer provide yet another useful insight into appeals for employment in the USC.[756] Constance Greer portrayed herself as a petty aristocrat without the means to support a high-class lifestyle, and she wrote to Craig on her husband's behalf appealing for a paid command position in the USC. Through the correspondence, we can see the cross-class use of the USC to support the domestic sphere and also, the willingness of women to involve themselves in the homosocial network of the USC to support, or in the case of Constance Greer advance, her and her family's domestic position through established hegemonic masculinity. She hoped to secure a command for her husband to pay boarding school fees and allow her family to move out of the farmhouse and back into the ancestral manor house. Similarly, and from the other

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[755] Ibid.
[756][PRONI] PM/2/7/220, 'Correspondence from Constance Greer re her husband Thomas Greer seeking employment in the 'B' Special Constabulary', (December 1925).

end of the social scale, the case of Minnie Harkness demonstrated the cross-class access to patronage.[757] Harkness, far from hoping to advance her social status, appealed to the Prime Minister so that she would be able to send her child, not to public school, but a school for blind children. Her husband was an 'A' Special who had been shot off duty but had also been in possession of an illegal firearm, and was lying injured in hospital awaiting trial. Because the papers about his war record were being held by the authorities, he was unable to claim relief:

> and as we are starving only what day work I can get which is not much these days as my husband allways [sic] was good to me and his son whom is blind I have 10/- per month to pay for him at school on the Lisburn Road Institute as a day pupil and my rent of 6/4 per week I do not know what to do.[758]

The desperate position of the Harknesses stands in contrast to that of the Greer family. As their matriarch explains, 'our boy is almost old enough to go to a boarding school, & we do not know how we are to send him'.[759] For one woman it is a case of staving off destitution, for the other keeping up appearances. For Constance Greer nonetheless, the inability to send her son to boarding school was a priority just as feeding her children was for Minnie Harkness. The cases, taken together, demonstrate that from all social classes the USC was part of a Ulsterian patronage network. From all social classes, men and women alike, Ulsterian saw the USC as a way of securing the means to support their domestic

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[757][PRONI] PM/2/8/86, 'Correspondence from Mrs Minnie Harkness and her husband, 'A' Special Constable Thomas re: injury, hospital and trial', (July-October 1921), who claimed destitution and was looking for financial support to send her son to a school for the blind.
[758] Ibid.
[759] [PRONI] PM/2/7/220.

position without any real regard to the *raison d'être* of the USC: to secure the partition border and protect Northern Ireland.

III: Conclusion

Gender relations in Northern Ireland were hegemonically masculine which is evidenced in the letters of Ulsterian women. A conceptual and theoretical framework for masculinity has been lacking in the scholarship, but through analysis of hegemonic masculinity and gender performativity, this chapter has gone some way to addressing that deficit. Ulsterian masculinity was primarily martial, but for it to be understood fully, the nuances in the domestic sphere displayed through gender performativity have to be recognised. Ulsterian men were genuinely concerned by the threat of physical force Irish Republicanism. However, those anxieties led to an opportunity. Through the remembering of a loyal war record, Special Constables were able to access the Ulsterian dividend, earn a Bounty, and keep their family fed.

In the decade after partition, the most visible construction of masculinity in Northern Ireland was martial, setting of Northern Ireland apart from post-war Great Britain where masculinity was increasingly re-domesticated. Martial masculinity is demonstrated through public displays and discourse, most obviously through the USC and through the published account of the time. However, a more nuanced approach must be taken in the research to understand the importance of the USC within the domestic sphere of masculinity. Although ostensibly a paramilitary force established to defend nascent Northern Ireland from the perceived existentialist threat of physical force Irish Nationalism, for

many Special Constables their imperative to join was not the defence and security of the Partition border but instead was to receive pay and Bounties to support their domestic needs. Appearing as a very public assertion of Ulsterian dominance the USC was also, and to many Special Constables, more importantly, a means to secure rent and food more than it was to secure Ulsterian Northern Ireland.

Conclusion

The USC and its predecessor, the UVF, emblematised the distinct Ulsterian national identity as together the fraternal organisations mobilised and militarised over 100,000 Ulsterian men intent on defying both the Writ of the United Kingdom government and the popular will of the Irish population. Neither British or Irish Ulsterians, through the UVF, the Covenant and Declaration and the USC organised as a distinct community to control their agenda. History and theology legitimised the Ulsterian stance. A distinct *éthnie* since Plantation and Scottish migration of the sixteenth-century, defined by the theology and system of belief of that same early-modern period, the Ulsterian Revolution had precedent and historical context. History and religion, however, never made Ulsterian identity or the Ulsterian Revolution inevitable. No teleological arc existed predestining revolution. Events, attitude and behaviour, drove and motivated Ulsterian revolutionaries and the action of the Ulsterian élite and the nation they defined and controlled caused the Orange Agitation and the Outrages. Ulsterians looked to control their destinies and made their choices, but they never chose to step off the rebellious, treasonous and revolutionary path on which they set foot in 1911.

Sectarian and paramilitary from its birth in 1913 the UVF, revived in the townlands, towns and cities of Ulster from 1920, eased into a new rôle as a similarly sectarian and paramilitary police force commanded by the same officers and directed by the same Ulsterian elite: 'Volunteers' became 'Special Constables'

as they swapped their smuggled German Mausers for War Office Lee-Enfield rifles. Through the remote rural villages and border counties of the new Northern Irish state and in its capital, Belfast, the armed Specials consolidated the Ulsterian Revolution during the Outrages from 1921-1927. Republican militancy and violence in the south and west of Ireland and the creation of the Irish Free State frightened an Ulsterian population determined to maintain its social, economic and political ascendency over the Nationalist 'Other'. Fear mixed with existing, mutual prejudices. In a state with borders drawn entirely to maintain Ulsterian ascendency, the USC secured and forced Ulsterian ascendency through sectarian violence at the point of the bayonet. Being 'Catholic' and synonymously 'Nationalist' became reason enough to live in fear of deliberate and indiscriminate violence and death at the hands of Northern Ireland's new security apparatus. The 'B' Class and 'B' Specials earned a particularly nefarious and gruesome but deserved reputation, even if their colleagues in the 'A' Class behaved, although not universally, in a more professional and restrained manner. Beyond violence against Nationalist neighbours, the USC largely failed in securing the Irish border against IRA and Republicans based just over the boundary. The force proved itself incapable of confronting an organised enemy or avoiding flashpoints and escalations. USC security failures, a constant push for militarisation and distrust in the Imperial Government and Crown forces led to the creation of the 'C1' Class. Never a police force, the paramilitary USC verged on becoming a standing Northern Irish army when the Northern Irish cabinet, and by-and-large the War Office, agreed to Solly-Flood's proposals for the 'C1' Class and militarisation of the entire USC. As the Imperial Government became increasingly keen to off-load what remained if the 'Irish Question' Ulsterians proposed an army parading as a constabulary to control not only its border but its fate entirely and to force

further concession from London and Dublin. While USC arms ensured the physical dominance of Ulsterians, the allowances and bounties available supported Ulsterians economic dominance. As an Ulsterian patronage network, the USC offered jobs and esteem not open to Nationalists. In the zero-sum game of Northern Ireland, the half-a-crown earned by 'B' Specials acted as a financially small but psychologically significant income not available to the Nationalists. Not content to walk through the streets with rifles and to be emboldened by specials powers, the 'B' Specials also had more money in their pockets. USC membership buttressed both private and public performances of masculinity, allowing Special Constables to protect their community and provide for their families.

Membership of the USC allowed men, many former UVF Volunteers, to assert their Ulsterian ethnic identity while consolidating their theologically informed revolution. Assertive Ulsterian identity crossed into sectarian violence when the Ulsterian élite allowed the fear of the Nationalist 'Other' to double as bloody superordination of Ulsterian ascendency and a way of canalising potential social and class tensions within Ulsterian society. Militarisation meant Ulsterian men dominated their Nationalist neighbours physically (even if they usually failed to effectively see-off organised Republican attacks from across the border) and performed a similarly manly rôle at home through their allowances and bounties.

Thomas Paul Burgess and Gareth Mulvenna's social scientific study of late-twentieth/early-twenty-first-century, Protestant, Unionist and Loyalist PUL identity is not especially relevant to this research, but in setting out a distinct PUL

community, it allows a historical investigation into the community here.[760] Overlapping Burgess and Mulvenna's work with established historical scholarship on ethnicity and national identity such as Benedict Anderson, Eric Hobsbawm and Anthony Smith and applying contemporary sources indicates the communities identity is historic.[761] Although ATQ Stewart's scholarship on Ulster and its inhabitants points to a very long-term, almost teleological, mediaeval community identity, this research rejects that.[762] Despite using early-modern tropes and justifications, Ulsterian identity relied on modern technology and means to support simultaneity across Ulster. Ulsterian is a early-modern, non-modular nationalism born in the modern and modular nationalist period. That mobilised nation mobilised for revolution.

This research builds on the work of Roy Foster, Robert Lynch and Okan Ozseker, placing Ulster and Northern Ireland within the framework of the Irish Revolution.[763] Foster's work on a revolutionary generation and pre-revolution opens the prospect of re-periodisation of the revolution some considerable time before 1916. By dismissing the Ulsterian self-denial of revolution and engaging with the events from 1911-1927 through a conceptual framework of revolution and highlighting the separate but connected revolutionary events in Ulster and the south and west of Ireland this thesis demonstrates that the Ulsterian mobilisation and militancy from 1910/1911, the Orange Agitation, is a starting point of the Irish Revolution. In recent scholarship, Lynch and Ozseker refer to events in Ulster and Northern Ireland during the period as 'revolutionary'. This research uses a conceptual framework of revolution and contemporary sources to evidence

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[760] Burgess & Mulvenna, *Contested Identities of Ulster Protestants*.
[761] Burgess & Mulvenna, *Contested Identities of Ulster Protestant*, Anderson, *Imagined Communities,* Hobsbawm, *Nations and Nationalism* and Smith, *Ethnic Origins of Nations*
[762] Stewart, Narrow Ground and Ulster Crisis.
[763] Foster, *Vivid Faces*, Lynch, *The Partition of Ireland*, and Ozseker, *Forging the Border*.

those claims and adds weight to emerging, but very limited, scholarship on the revolutionary potential of Ulsterian mobilisation and state-building from 1911-1927.

Arthur Hazlet, Wallace Clark, Michael Farrell and Pearse Lawlor's books are the only work that approaches the research undertaken in chapters four and five looking at the activity and contemporary accounts of the USC.[764] Hazlet's hagiography of the USC relies entirely on 'headquarters' material such as notices of allowance and bounties and establishment figures from minutes. Admittedly one-sided and underresearched, the incredibly dull *The 'B' Specials* makes no use of contemporary accounts even though he would most probably have had a sympathetic response from Special Constables if he had asked them to give interviews. Clark's much more readable and slightly fairer *Guns In Ulster* makes use of the personal recollections of the former USC commander but mostly from the period after 1930 and contained entirely to the area of west County Londonderry. As a lawyer from the civil rights movement of 1960s Northern Ireland, Farrell's work contains an obvious bias. On first reading, the Nationalist perspective is apparent. Depositors denied Farrell access to many of the relevant files and his conclusions, therefore, seem partial and one-sided. With the benefit of greater file access (although certainly not complete) thirty-five years later Farrell's conclusions stand-up against this research. Farrell's agenda remains clear throughout: the USC was a violent force for Ulsterian oppression. The sources back-up Farrell's conjecture although the personal dangers faced by Special Constables need to be borne in mind to understand the contemporary context. With better access to British archives, Farrell's conclusion, that the Imperial

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[764] Hazlet, 'B' Specials, Clark, Guns in Ulster, Farrell, Arming the Protestants and Lawlor, Outrages.

Government drove the security policy of Northern Ireland, is contradicted by contemporary local sources in PRONI. Ulsterians pushed security policy in Northern Ireland with the Imperial Government relegated to occasional constraints on their excesses while determined to extract themselves from Ireland. Farrell's conclusion on the centrality of the Imperial Government in Northern Irish security policy likely owes as much to the lack of availability of Belfast documents as to the historiographical bias of a Nationalist denying Ulsterians of agency which reduces all historical debate to Britain versus Ireland at the exclusion of Ulsterians and moderate Irish nationalists. Lawlor's *The Outrages* lacks analysis, reading more like a disconnected diary of events. Lawlor depends mostly on BMH digital sources with the obvious bias of IRA volunteers coming through in the writing. As a potted history of IRA activity on the border Lawlor's book is passable, but not as a serious academic history of the consolidation of Northern Ireland and the experience of the USC.

Other scholarship, including Robert Lynch's *The Nothern IRA and the Early Years of Partition,* is useful, but Lynch's focus is on forces of Republicanism and Nationalism with the USC necessarily playing a bit part and incidental rôle.[765] Timothy Wilson's work on the period is an excellent comparative history that looks at ideas of sectarian violence from a transnational perspective. Conclusions from *Frontiers Of Violence* that even-handed policing frustrated Ulsterians, that Ulsterian identity sat distinctively from 'pan-Britishness' and that sectarian violence acted as a safety-valve for internal Ulsterian pressure bears out in this research.[766] Alan Parkinson's study on sectarian violence in Belfast during The

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[765] Lynch, The Northern IRA.
[766] Timothy Wilson, *Frontiers of Violence: Conflict and Identity in Ulster and Upper Silesia, 1918-1922*, (Oxford: OUP, 2010).

Outrages is outstanding in a minimal field of scholarship.[767] Entirely limited to the provincial capital, *Belfast's Unholy War* examines sectarian violence in the city. Parkinson explores both Nationalist and Ulsterian violence and the interaction between the USC and wider political Ulster Unionism and Ulsterian society and culture in the capital. Sixteen years after its publication, the thoroughness of Parkinson's work means research here largely excludes Belfast. Parkinson concludes that violence in Belfast was sporadic and lacked coordination but that local authority failed to respond to Ulsterian violence as the USC focussed entirely on Republican threats and not challenges from Ulsterian violence.[768] There is no evidence of coordination of Ulsterian violence in the thorough exploration of the archives here. No central hand directed violence. Although Parkinson examines the part the USC played in sectarian violence, especially in Brown Square Barracks and through the McMahon murders, the analysis on a force distracted by Republican action is not strong enough for the counties outside of Belfast. In those areas, the USC, especially the 'B' Class, far from protecting Nationalists from sectarian violence, acted as the perpetrators. In many places, the 'B' Specials busied themselves with the carrying out of the violence. Preoccupied with outrage and raiding no prospect existed of the USC protecting Nationalist whether or not Republicans actively attacked them.

In addressing masculinity, this research relies on an interdisciplinary scholarship to create the framework to analyse new sources. It moves on from the research of Fidelma Ashe, Sean Brady and Jane McGaughey.[769] Ashe's assessment that the Ulsterian élite used the USC as a safety valve for internal

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[767] Parkinson, Belfast's Unholy War.
[768] Parkinson, p.309.
[769] Ashe, Brady 'Why Study Men?', and McGaughey, *Men of Ulster*.

social pressures is correct, and the research here on Spender's task to establish a force in 1920 and on Craig's fear of Bolshevism gives further credence. Chapters five and six explore the mass-mobilisation and militarisation of Ulsterian men through the USC, which support Brady's conclusion that 'Ulstermen' maintained a permanent state of alert through special policing and the use of permanent emergency powers. McGaughey's work is most apposite to this research. While McGaughey looked at the public performance of masculinity, domestic performance is the focus here. This analysis, taken together with McGaughey gives a comprehensive assessment of Ulsterian masculinity in the early-twentieth-century.

Sources from the Ministry of Home Affairs of Northern Ireland give some voice to the Special Constables both individually and as a group. There is no Ulsterian equivalent to the BMH and betraying a phlegmatic vein, except for Clark, no published first-hand accounts. The USC file series at PRONI is mostly dull and administrative (although compelling reading for any researcher interested in the cost of hot water boilers in Nissen huts) with the disciplinary files relating to the post-Second World War period, and the personnel files, closed even to researchers. The silence may be more than phlegmatic. Combined with the witness accounts to USC, especially 'B' Special, violence and outrage Specials likely did not want to incriminate themselves. Requests for access to USC related files or material at the PSNI Police Museum in Belfast (formerly the RUC Museum) led to dead ends.

There are anecdotes from Nationalists of 'B' Specials who took up their rifles to guard Nationalist neighbourhoods against Ulsterian mobs during the

Twelfth in the 1930s and 1940s. The photo album of a Nationalist family from Derry even includes a photograph of an Ulsterian neighbour and his wife. She stands at his shoulder while he sits on a chair dressed in full 'B' Special uniform, rifle leant against the wall. Every year he stood at the end of the Nationalist enclave in the Waterside with his rifle, ready to warn Ulsterians not to cross him or attack his neighbours. Despite deliberate searches in the archives and thousands of pages foliated for other stories like these, there are none to be found. Writing letters of commendation and thanks for courteous and good-natured conduct by Special Constables was not a priority for otherwise occupied Nationalists in 1920s Northern Ireland. Whatever the motivation, the lack of testimony of Special Constables of their service leads to a deafening archival silence. Only the Ministry of Home Affairs of Northern Ireland files quietly break the stillness. Commendations and good service record may sit in the personnel files, but until depositors open them, historians cannot tell that side of the story.

Constructed and invented by an élite, Ulsterian national identity sits between Irishness and Britishness and challenges the modular and modernist ideas of nationalism. Based on early-modern ideas and *éthnie* does not take away the nationalist character of Ulsterian identity, which kept the Ulsterian population as a cohesive and congruous unit throughout the Ulsterian Revolution. Through their manipulation and mobilisation, the Ulsterian élite created a nation which soon needed a state: Northern Ireland. The consolidation of the process of state-building came with the Outrages where communal identities became sharply defined through violence and institutional 'Othering' of Nationalists. Communal boundaries were not new to Ulster or Northern Ireland, and the Ulsterian

Revolution accelerated and emphasised existing communal diacritics. Religion or at least confessionalism sat at the centre of communal differences. Those differences came from the early-modern period and carried through to the Ulsterian Revolution because early-modern Calvinist theology maintained relevance and currency. Consistency in theology carried through the constant reference to historical resistance, rebellion and agitation with seventeenth-century events compared with contemporary events to set a precedent and justify action in the early-twentieth-century as well as forming the *mythomoteur* of Ulsterian identity. Resistance theory alone did not make Ulsterians revolutionary, but it gave a theological justification to a devout and scripturally literate and biblically literalist community to resist. Revolution and revolutionaries founded Northern Ireland in 1920. In 1911 Tyrone and Down were as much a part of the United Kingdom state as Worcestershire or Lancashire. After 1920 a new state sat between them and the the Imperial Government. Ulster's wide-reaching, abrupt and popular change of government came about from the mobilisation of the Ulsterian population where 93% of Ulsterian adults pledged in Solemn League & Covenant and the Declaration to resist Home Rule, where 110,000 men volunteered for the UVF and smuggled 25,000 rifles and 3,000,000 rounds of ammunition into Larne. Carsons's declaration of the UPG, fomenting the Curragh Mutiny and opposition to the Army Bill while Nationalists fled their homes and workplaces form Ulsterian violence pushed the revolution forward. The Imperial Government watched the Ulsterian élite and their supporters tour the Province while the law officers drew up advice and indictments for treason. From 1920 Ulsterians consolidated the revolution when the UVF became the USC, the Northern Irish parliament abolished PR, gerrymandered electoral boundaries and passed CASPA. The disbanding of the Boundary Commission in

1925 made the revolutionary settlement, and the repressive measure to secure it, permanent but not before waves of bloody violence engulfed Belfast and the border areas. Those Outrages killed Ulsterians and Nationalists alike but with the power of the new state behind them and with a revolutionary state to secure, Ulsterians used force to finalise what they started during the Orange Agitation from 1911 to 1914. As a core tool for Ulsterian consolidation, the USC, indisciplined, reckless and murderous, performed their duty to hold the border and hold-off Nationalists in Northern Ireland with varying degrees of success. The 'B' Specials proved especially capable at violently asserting Ulsterian superordination while the entire USC proved incapable of holding the border against organised Republican attacks. As as an outlet of 'rank-and-file' anxiety and means to control any social tension within Ulsterian society, the force performed successfully in taking security powers into the hands of everyday Ulsterians and out of the mistrusted Imperial Government. Created as a paramilitary force masquerading as a constabulary, the proposals for the 'C1' Class crossed the line between civil and military. As instigator of Northern Ireland's Army, Solly-Flood asked for tanks, bomber-planes and artillery as he drew up details plans for an invasion of the Irish Free State. A lack of money more than a lack of will meant the plans never fully materialised and when the Free State/Republican forces did clash in Belleek-Pettigo, Crown forces came to relieve the routed USC. Eventually, the Northern Irish government sought a 'Neutral Zone' in the townlands along the border, but the intransigence of the 'B' Specials to hand in their rifles saw that plan scuppered too. Solly-Flood's plans sought to militarise not only the USC but also much of Ulsterian manhood.

In post-war Britain, masculinity became redomesticated and reacting to the horrors of mechanised war moved away from the militarised masculinities of the late-Victorian and Edwardian period. Exceptionally in the United Kingdom, Ulsterian men maintained the militarised masculinity. Martial masculinities supported a public rôle that dominated Nationalist 'Others' with arm and special powers and a domestic rôle which exploited the USC as a homosocial patronage network to draw allowances and bounties to provide financially. Drawing an income from a position available exclusively to Ulsterian men further subordinated Nationalists in the zero-sum game of Northern Irish society. Seen as champions of Northern Irish security through the lens of masculinity demonstrates that financial subsistence played as important a motivation for USC membership for some Specials as securing the border did.

Asserting a sectarian Ulsterian identity, consolidating the Ulsterian Revolution with all of its religious and historic motivations to bring power to Northern Ireland and away from Britain, protecting Ulsterian ascendency through the repression of Nationalists while evading and setting to one side social tensions and giving Ulsterians, through male-only patronage, esteem and a paradigm of masculinity, the USC is integral to understanding Ulsterian society, culture and politics and through them the history of Northern Ireland. This research set out to understand the USC and the Specials, so integral to the partition period and creation of Northern Ireland and the decades that followed. Without understanding the Ulster Special Constabulary and Special Constables, our understanding of Irish and Northern Irish history is only partial and incomplete. It is impossible to understand the Troubles without understanding the 'B'

Specials, and they cannot be understood without understanding the USC. This thesis explores the origins and establishment of an organisation that cast a long shadow over Northern Irish history. What happened in that shadow in the decades that followed remains a vital but unenviable task for some future researcher.

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