

Black and Green
The Fight for Civil Rights in Northern Ireland and Black America

PhD by Publication

Brian Dooley

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Black and Green: The Fight for Civil Rights in Northern Ireland
and Black America

and accompanying critical analysis

Brian Dooley MPhil

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Abstract

My book and accompanying critical analysis argue that the connections between the struggle for civil rights in Ireland and black America have been strong and underplayed for over a century and a half. The book traced the historical links from the 1840s with a focus on the 1960s, and brought new perspectives to the academic research of both contexts, which had generally been explored separately. By reflecting on a review of literature produced since 1998, the critical analysis shows how the book has influenced academic reach since, including on the transnational connections between the two experiences. It also explores how the civil rights movements in both countries have inspired and guided contemporary struggles, notably those in the Middle East, and continue to inform and guide activists and policy-makers.

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Introduction

This paper is submitted as part of the requirements for the degree of PhD by Publication at the University of East Anglia. According to the regulations (paragraph 5.1) “The submitted material should show evidence of adequate industry and application. The candidate is expected to take due account of previously published work on the subject, to show distinct ability in conducting original investigations and in testing ideas whether the candidate's own or those of others. The candidate is also expected to show understanding of the relationships of the special theme to a wider field of knowledge. The submitted material should represent a significant contribution to the development of understanding, for example, through the discovery of new knowledge, the connection of previously unrelated facts, the development of a new theory or the revision of older views.” It also requires (paragraph 5.2) “A critical analysis of the work submitted (between 10,000 and 20,000 words in length covering the development of the candidate’s submitted work and its contribution to the field in general).”¹

This paper addresses these requirements in a few ways, including an attempt to reflect on how the publication, *Black and Green: The Fight for Civil Rights in Northern Ireland and Black America* (hereafter *Black and Green*) could be improved if it were published today. It also explores developments in the historiography of the two movements and the relationship between them. Over three sections it will address the following areas:²

First, a brief review of what I had hoped *Black and Green* would achieve when I wrote it 20 years ago, and some assessment of how it has since contributed to the conversation about U.S.-Irish transnational civil rights.

¹ UEA Regulations for the Degree of PhD by Publication.

<<https://portal.uea.ac.uk/documents/6207125/7465906/Section+3+PhD+by+Publication.pdf>>

² Brian Dooley, *Black and Green: The Fight for Civil Rights in Northern Ireland and Black America* (London and Chicago: Pluto, 1998).

Second, a selective literature review of relevant work produced since 1998, which suggests that although some academic areas have been well covered, there are still gaps in the scholarship.

Third, why this issue of comparison between the two experiences still matters, and how it continues to be helpful to other contemporary movements and policymakers.

The portrait of Frederick Douglass still hangs in the same place on the wall of Kelly's Irish Times Pub in Washington D.C. as when I first saw it 25 years ago. Then, as now, the bar staff don't know when or why it was put up, or who included the Nineteenth Century African-American abolitionist among the more traditional Irish-American pub iconography of IRA leaders Michael Collins and Eamon de Valera, of Presidents John F. Kennedy and Ronald Reagan, of American police department badges from Boston, Chicago and Philadelphia.

It's heartening that Douglass's association with Ireland is still recognized. One of my hopes for *Black and Green*, when it was published 20 years ago, was to encourage interest in Douglass's Irish connections and how the black American-Irish relationship developed over the following 150 years. Since then, a raft of new literature has emerged on the black American-Irish exchanges of the 1800s, and on how those connections progressed through the Twentieth and Twenty-First Centuries.

Black and Green was the first book to focus specifically on the dynamic between the two movements. It traced the connecting threads back to the Nineteenth Century, through the 1920s and up to the early 1990s. It outlined the ties between key activists in both movements in the late 1960s, and analyzed the complicated and powerful part played by Irish America in the struggle for civil rights in both contexts. My intention was partly to highlight how surprisingly common the experiences were between activists, and how activists (particularly in Northern Ireland) emphasized the similarities for political advantage. The book also explored, albeit in a limited way, how both movements experienced and addressed intergenerational conflicts, the tension

surrounding gendered roles, the discussions around violence and non-violence, and other aspects of working in multi-layered and complicated political struggles.

Since *Black and Green* appeared, a series of major events have occurred that have reshaped civil rights in both contexts, including an end to large-scale violence in Northern Ireland, Barack Obama's election victories, the first year of the Trump administration and the rise of the Black Lives Matter movement. Were I researching and writing *Black and Green* today there would be much more material to analyze and include than was available in the mid-1990s. New scholarship has also emerged, such as on the role of women in the movement, that I would incorporate. The development of a transnational focus, as well as the history and development of the definition of civil and human rights would also be discussed in an updated version.

1. Scholarly Significance Two Decades On

Just how much *Black and Green* has changed and contributed to the academic debate on the relationship between the two civil rights movements is hard to quantify. A significant amount of research into that dynamic has been produced in the last 20 years, some of it citing *Black and Green*. These studies - and transnational struggles for rights elsewhere in the world since 1998 - prompt new questions beyond the impact of those movements on each other. It would now also be useful to offer some understanding of how they have influenced, and continue to influence, other political movements.

The book's publication coincided with a transnational turn in the study of American history. Daniel T. Rodgers's study *Atlantic Crossings*, exploring how American progressives in the early Twentieth Century looked to European examples of reform for inspiration, was published the same year as *Black and Green*. The following year a special issue of *The Journal of American History* was titled "The Nation and Beyond: Transnational Perspectives on United States History". *Black and Green* is an early example of this focus on transnationalism. In a 1999 review of *Black and Green* for the *Irish Journal of Sociology* Gregory Maney suggested that "Dooley's effort is to be commended. The piece is well-timed as political sociologists increasingly turn their attention towards transnational dimensions of ostensibly domestic protest".³

In 2013 I chaired a one-day academic conference organized by the University College Dublin – *The Ongoing Struggle for Civil Rights: The United States, Northern Ireland and Worldwide* – with *Black and Green* as the central text and theme. Seven academic speakers presented papers and joined veteran activists Bernadette Devlin McAliskey of the Northern Ireland civil rights movement and Minnie Jean Trickey of the Little Rock Nine to discuss the relationship between the movements and their current impact on non-violent struggles in the Middle East. Prominent human rights defender Maryam Al

³ Daniel T. Rodgers, *Atlantic Crossings: Social Politics in a Progressive Age, 1870–1945* (Harvard University Press, 1998); *Journal of American History* Vol 86, 1999; Gregory M. Maney, "Black and Green: The Fight for Civil Rights in Northern Ireland and Black America" *Irish Journal of Sociology*, May 1, 1999.

Khawaja from Bahrain was also a speaker, and explained the relevance of the two struggles on the experience of her own country. I've also given lectures at various universities about the relationship between the movements.

To date, the book has approximately 75 citations on Google Scholar, including a significant proportion from recent years, suggesting a healthy afterlife and continuing relevance to the subject area.

A new version of *Black and Green* might incorporate a more contemporary definition of rights than that which I presented 20 years ago. A largely Cold War distinction between civil and political rights on one hand, and economic, social and cultural rights on the other, has steadily faded over the last few decades. Presenting the struggles as agitations for *human rights* (notwithstanding the widely used 1950s and 1960s terminology of civil rights) might now be more appropriate as organizations and activists increasingly describe their work in terms of human rights. For example, the U.S. Leadership Council on Civil Rights, founded in 1950 by A. Philip Randolph, head of the Brotherhood of Sleeping Car Porters, Roy Wilkins of the NAACP, and Arnold Aronson, a leader of the National Jewish Community Relations Advisory Council, was renamed in 2010 as The Leadership Conference on Civil and Human Rights, a move it says is “designed to reflect the founding principles of The Leadership Conference and recognize the central importance of both ‘civil rights’ and ‘human rights’ in the work of [its NGO membership] coalition”.⁴

While *Black and Green* is partly a comparative study it also traces tangible transnational connections between the two struggles. An updated version might also include a deliberately broader interpretation of rights – whether or not and how, for instance, the push for LGBT rights in Northern Ireland and black America were connected.⁵

⁴ <<https://civilrights.org/history-leadership-conference-civil-human-rights-leadership-conference-education-fund/>>

⁵ For a brief explanation of a modern understanding of terminology around rights, see <<http://www.ohchr.org/EN/Issues/ESCR/Pages/AreESCRfundamentallydifferentfromcivilandpoliticalrights.aspx>>

Black and Green was received relatively well. It was reviewed in scholarly journals, excerpted for a chapter of a 2011 American high school text book *The Irish Americans*, cited by students in undergrad, masters and doctoral thesis, mentioned in academic papers and books, included on suggested or required reading on university courses, and regularly quoted in the media.⁶

While not wholly uncritical, academic reviews near the time of publication were generally positive. M.L.R. Smith, writing for *Political Studies* in 1999, suggested: "This is a well-researched study, written from an unusual angle that illuminates this understudied international influence on the Ulster conflict," and for *Studies in Conflict and Terrorism* in 2000 he wrote, "This should be treated as a serious work which, although it does not revolutionize our understanding of Northern Ireland's civil rights movement, turns out to be a valuable comparative exercise, drawing useful parallels

⁶ An excerpt from *Black and Green* makes up a chapter in a U.S. high school text book: James V. Mullin *The Irish Americans* (McDougal Littell 2001), and another appears on The Gilder Lehrman Center for the Study of Slavery, Resistance, and Abolition at Yale University, see <<https://glc.yale.edu/excerpts-black-and-green-fight-civil-rights-northern-ireland-and-black-america>>

For doctoral theses see Amy L. Washburn, "Slave Ships, Shamrocks, and Shackles: Transatlantic Connections in Black American and Northern Irish Women's Revolutionary Auto/Biographical Writing, 1960s-1990s" (unpublished thesis, University of Maryland 2010); James Campbell, "The Roots Of Bloody Sunday" (unpublished thesis, Wayne State University, 2013).

For Masters' theses see Michel Jacques Gagné "The Harp, the Hammer and the Plough: the Northern Ireland Civil Rights Movement and the World Beyond, 1963-1969" (unpublished thesis, Concordia University, 2005); Douglas Jones "Constructing a Revolutionary Narrative: Black Liberation and the Political Uses of the Past in the United States and South Africa, 1960-1975" (unpublished thesis, Florida International University, 2011).

For course readings see University of Mississippi: IRELAND: A CASE STUDY OF GLOBALIZATION (spring 2007) <<http://home.olemiss.edu/~lduck/UNHP3251.pdf>>; University of Memphis course (2007) on Ireland: A Case Study of Globalization <<http://umdrive.memphis.edu/lduck/www/courses/UNHP3251.pdf>>; Ohio State University course Department of African American and African Studies [Black Politics 504 course] (2008) <<http://crmtview.asc.ohio-state.edu/cur-rofc/docs/1916/Civic%20Engagement%20Track%20Syllabi.pdf>> [page 8]; Georgia State University (2010) <<https://blog.library.gsu.edu/2010/11/15/study-abroad-in-northern-ireland-and-ireland/>>; University of Wisconsin (2011) History of the Civil Rights Movement <<http://hum.lss.wisc.edu/bplummer/hist628/ref.html>>.

and contrasts with the black rights struggle in the U.S. and offering an effective contribution to the understanding of this crucial period".⁷

In 1998 I attempted to bring something new to the academic and public conversation about the two struggles. Most, if not all, previous accounts of the Northern Ireland civil rights movement had mentioned the inspiration or influence of the American experience, but this had typically been done in passing, and the relationship had been generally underplayed.⁸

The history of both experiences continues to offer inspiration and practical examples to human rights struggles elsewhere in the world today. This includes the Middle East, where I and others have drawn parallels between 1960s examples of activism and policy and today's movements. Some research since 1998 offers important new perspectives which, were I researching the book today, would significantly influence my thinking and writing.

⁷ M.L.R. Smith, *Political Studies*, Vol. 47, Issue 4 (1999); M. L. R. Smith, *Studies in Conflict & Terrorism*, Vol. 23, Issue 3 (2000); See also *Amsterdam News* "Parallels" Vol 100, Issue 37 (2009).

⁸ Bob Purdie, *Politics in the Street* (Blackstaff, 1990) p. 244.

2. New Perspectives on African Americans and Ireland

Some studies have explored issues in greater depth than I managed, not least on the pre-1960s relationship between Ireland and black America. It's not possible to examine everything produced over the last 20 years that has relevance to either or both struggles. But a brief review of some of the leading work suggests that various authors have profitably delved into archives that I didn't or couldn't, and have unearthed a far richer trove of documents than I worked with. Archives established in the last 20 years include wondrously rich online resources, including those hosted by the universities of Georgia and Southern Mississippi, the U.S. National Archive, and Irish state broadcaster RTE. The University of Ulster also curates the wonderful Conflict Archive on the Internet (CAIN). Among the jewels to be found on the CAIN site is a 1970s photo of a protestor holding a placard asking "Catholic Lives Who Cares?" – 40 years before #blacklivesmatter appeared on social media.⁹

The RTE website also hosts a trove of audio visual treasure, offering dozens of clips of civil rights marches and interviews with activists from the 1960 and 1970s. One clip shows footage from "a demonstration inspired by the US civil rights march from Selma to Montgomery, a People's Democracy march consisting mainly of students [who set out for] Derry from Belfast". In another, a Catholic man in Belfast is interviewed in 1969 about his views on sectarianism, and says he didn't care what religion his co-workers were: "I don't give a hoot if he is a Muslim. He can work away with me. I am quite happy to know him and be friends with him".¹⁰

The digital archive at the University of Southern Mississippi includes an oral history interview with Irish-born priest Fr. Peter Quinn, parish priest in the city of Hattiesburg,

⁹ RTE Archives, War and Conflict <<http://www.rte.ie/archives/exhibitions/1031-civil-rights-movement-1968-9/>>

¹⁰ RTE Archives, War and Conflict <<http://www.rte.ie/archives/exhibitions/1031-civil-rights-movement-1968-9/1039-peoples-democracy-march-belfast-to-derr/319645-belfast-to-derry-civil-rights-march-day-1/>>; <<http://www.rte.ie/archives/exhibitions/1042-northern-ireland-1969/1043-stormont-election/320117-a-divided-house-falls-road/>>

Mississippi in the mid-1960s, which was a scene of conflict over voter registration. Quinn – an advisor to the Youth NAACP – says his experience of growing up in Ireland sensitized him to the civil rights cause in the U.S.; he knew Dr King well enough to introduce him whenever he spoke in Hattiesburgh, and for King to sleep at his house. “We started a boycott in Hattiesburg in '67, about May of '67, and a boycott of the whole town, and our kids, all the kids that we had in our youth group were always active,” he said. “They were always picketing ... and that was part of my job with them, was just organizing them. I also became the advisor to Youth NAACP both on the local and state level”. Such material, now available at a click, either didn't exist or was far beyond my reach 20 years ago. The availability of such collections and other resources have enabled not only more detail to emerge about the areas covered in *Black and Green*, but also more nuanced analyses.¹¹

For example, Angela F. Murphy's 2010 book *American Slavery Irish Freedom* delivers a fabulous level of research into the Nineteenth Century transnational abolition movement, tracing relationships between leading Irish, British and American abolitionists. The study also prompts a series of questions on comparing the antislavery movements of the 1800s and the civil rights movements of the 1900s. For instance, her analysis of how leading Irish nationalist, Daniel O'Connell's abolitionism caused havoc in Irish America, and split Irish American organizations, provides far more detail than is offered in *Black and Green*. A study by Gregory Maney (2000) also provides a useful guide on how international support for the 1960s Northern Ireland civil rights movement – primarily from the U.S. – weakened the Northern Ireland activists. It outlines how competing agendas of diaspora organizations exacerbated feuding within factions of the civil rights movement in Ireland, and examines the tensions within U.S.-based Irish support groups for civil rights in America. Maney not only provides grounds for ready comparison between Nineteenth and Twentieth Century experiences (and how Bernadette Devlin's “radical” views on black civil rights in the U.S. proved explosive in

¹¹ Civil Rights Digital Archive <<http://crdl.usg.edu>>; Civil Rights in Mississippi Digital Archives <<http://digilib.usm.edu/crmda.php>>; The National Archives, Civil Rights in America <<http://www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/education/resources/civil-rights-in-america/>>.

Irish America), he also presents a practical example for Twenty First Century activists in Africa, the Middle East, Asia, and elsewhere, who rely on diaspora support - including from the U.S. - for their human and civil rights struggles.¹²

Murphy also describes in powerful detail the contribution of non-Catholic, Irish American support for Irish nationalism and abolition, notably from Quaker groups. This raises questions about potentially fruitful lines of comparative research, both between the experiences of 1960s white Americans active in the American civil rights movement and Protestant (and other non-Catholic) civil rights activists in Northern Ireland, and how those histories compare with non-Catholic Irish Americans of the 1800s, who supported Irish nationalism and/or abolition. Michael Byrne's 2015 study touches on this issue while making an ambitious attempt to examine the Northern Irish civil rights movement "beyond the politics of identity". Although the essay doesn't really succeed in disproving the central role that nationalist and sectarian identity played in the movement, it offers valuable reminders to other historians to be wary of casually equating civil rights supporters with Catholics, and demonstrates how the U.S. model has a better record on promoting a more diverse image of the American movement.¹³

Murphy's accounts of tensions and fractures over the role of women in the Irish, British and American abolitionist movements of the 1830s and 1840s raise no less compelling avenues for comparison across the centuries and between the movements. *Black and Green* partly addressed a 1960s version of this dynamic, which in 2010 was generously credited in a book by Kathleen Gough as "the most thorough study of these [U.S. and Northern Ireland civil rights] intersecting political movements and the only one to fully acknowledge how central women were to the formation of the civil rights mass movements". But more research focusing on how previous organizations experienced

¹² Angela F. Murphy, *American Slavery Irish Freedom - Abolition, Immigrant Citizenship, And The Transatlantic Movement For Irish Repeal* (Louisiana State Press, 2010); Gregory M. Maney, "Transnational Mobilization and Civil Rights in Northern Ireland" *Social Problems* Vol. 47, No. 2 (May, 2000), pp. 153-179.

¹³ Michael Byrne, "Politics beyond identity: reconsidering the civil rights movement in Northern Ireland," *Identities*, Vol. 22, Iss. 4, 2015.

and addressed the gendered nature of their internal hierarchy and power dynamics would be fascinating, and of practical use to many of today's rights activists.¹⁴

Jeffrey R. Kerr-Ritchie's 2016 study of black abolitionists and their Irish supporters also goes beyond the connections made by Frederick Douglass-Daniel O'Connell, as it details the visits of half a dozen other black abolitionists who visited Ireland between the late Eighteenth and mid-Nineteenth Centuries. While citing *Black and Green's* research as evidence that the transatlantic relationship is centuries old, he goes much further than I did in providing examples from the 1800s, by unearthing nuggets such as the story of Cork-born Thomas Addis Emmet, who arrived in the U.S. in 1804 and set up a legal practice specialising in defending fugitive slaves.¹⁵

The last 20 years has also seen greater study on the transnational rights experiences of the 1920s. Tracy Mishkin's short book *The Harlem and Irish Renaissances* was published the same year as *Black and Green*, and contains valuable research I would have referred to had I known of it beforehand, not least the views of Jamaican-born poet and socialist Claude McKay, who during the summer of 1920 "wore a green necktie to a Sinn Fein demonstration in London and was addressed with camaraderie as 'Black Murphy' and 'Black Irish.'" Mishkin also explores in much greater depth than *Black and Green* the impact of Irish literary figures (notably playwrights) on the new Harlem movement, and the influence of the black American experience on the Gaelic cultural revival of the early Twentieth Century.¹⁶

Bob Johnson's 2006 study of the Harlem Renaissance suggested that the "dean" of the renaissance, Alain Locke, saw the movement as part of an international phenomenon linked to Ireland, Mexico and elsewhere. *The Survey* magazine was central to the

¹⁴ Kathleen Gough, *Haptic Allegories: Kinship and performance in the Black and Green Atlantic*, (Routledge, 2014).

¹⁵ Jeffrey R. Kerr-Ritchie, "Black abolitionists, Irish supporters, and the brotherhood of man," *Slavery & Abolition*, Vol. 37, Iss. 3, 2016.

¹⁶ Tracy Mishkin, *The Harlem and Irish Renaissances*, (University of Florida, 1998). See p. 20 for McKay at Sinn Fein demonstration.

Harlem Renaissance. In 1921 it devoted an edition to Ireland's cultural resurgence, featuring some of Ireland's leading writers and nationalists, and explored whether the Irish experience was predominantly national or racial.¹⁷

Cathy Bergin's 2017 study of the 1920s African Blood Brotherhood (ABB) and how it was influenced by the Irish experience has produced similarly valuable new perspectives. When looking at Brotherhood's link to the American Communist Party, she traces the ties between the black leftist intellectuals and Ireland far more deeply than *Black and Green* did. Where I noted the support of Marcus Garvey (and 50 years later, Angela Davis) for Irish rights she examines how others, also often originally from the Caribbean, identified with the Irish struggle. She presents for example, the reflections of McKay (another leading light in the ABB), who said: "I react more to the emotions of the Irish than to those of any other whites..." and how Cyril Briggs, the founder and editor of Harlem Renaissance magazine *The Crusader*, was so well known for his sympathy to the Irish struggle that he is described by historian Robert Hill as "a representative of a black Fenianism inside the New Negro Movement".¹⁸

This focus on the Harlem Renaissance's Irish dimension is convincing evidence that cultural links and affinity should have been a larger part of my own study. An exploration of the role that black American arts and culture potentially played in Northern Ireland's international political awakening in the 1960s would be beneficial.

In retrospect, *Black and Green* underplayed the possible impact of cultural ties during the 1960s. In the Introduction there is a brief, cursory acknowledgment of literary connections, including the influence of James Joyce on James Baldwin, and of Sean O'Casey on Harry Belafonte, but this is offered largely as opening froth before the substantial history is presented. An updated version of *Black and Green* would analyze

¹⁷ Bob Johnson, "Globalizing the Harlem Renaissance: Irish, Mexican, and 'Negro' renaissances in *The Survey*, 1919–1929," *Journal of Global History* Vol. 1 Issue 2, (July 2006), pp.155-175.

¹⁸ Cathy Bergin, "'Unrest among the Negroes': the African Blood Brotherhood and the politics of resistance," *Race and Class* Volume: (2017) pp. 45-58.

these connections more seriously, incorporating recent work on the Harlem Renaissance and exploring, for example, whether black American music influenced Irish activists in the 1960s. Such a focus is an omission in *Black and Green*, despite Bernadette Devlin having remarked that when she was at university in Belfast “There was more real politics in the Folk Music Society than in any of the [political] parties. They sang black civil rights songs in the folk music society before anyone else in Queen’s [University] was interested in the race problem...you had the best of both American protest song and traditional Irish music”. Indeed, the portrait of Douglass in the Washington Irish pub is also an important cultural touchstone in the historical relationship. An examination of other examples of such iconography including murals in Northern Ireland, which feature American civil rights references would also be useful.¹⁹

Others continue to explore these links. Carolyn McDonald is an award-winning film maker and screenwriter. She was the executive producer on the Emmy & Image Award-nominated TNT civil rights saga, *Freedom Song*, and produced the critically acclaimed Western *Buffalo Soldiers*, about post-Civil War African-Americans in the military. She is currently producing a series of podcasts and a documentary film on the cultural connections between black America and Ireland. She told me “*Black and Green* has helped me immensely in my research. It’s been the portal to many, many other sources. Your book is what made me aware of this pivotal connection between Irish and black people. I don’t know anyone else who’s covered this like you, opening this portal like that”.²⁰

Other areas are also ripe for further research. While Simon Topping’s work on black American soldiers stationed in Northern Ireland during the Second World War offers more examples of interaction between the soldiers and the local Northern Ireland population than was offered in *Black and Green*, including establishment fears of too

¹⁹ Bernadette Devlin, *The Price of My Soul* (Macmillan, 1969) p. 76.

²⁰ Correspondence with author, February 4, 2018.

close an affinity between Catholic girls and black American G.I.s, it also raises important questions.²¹

Given its focal point roughly 20 years after the Harlem Renaissance and 20 years before the very public association between the two civil rights movements in the 1960s, it makes the interesting claim that “in all the debates about the arrival of black troops and the impact of the Americans more generally, neither the British, American nor Northern Irish authorities discussed the possibility of solidarity between black soldiers and the Catholic population. Northern Ireland’s Catholic population and African Americans, therefore, did not identify with each other’s plight.” Further investigation into this assessment would seem an appropriate area of study, one I would likely have undertaken, to assess whether the authorities simply didn’t see the solidarity, or whether, in fact, it wasn’t present. If not, it would be interesting to analyze why such connections were absent in the 1940s despite being so strong in the 1920s and 1960s.²²

There has also been significant new academic study on the impact of the 1950s/1960s American civil rights movement on black radicalism and black communities in England. In this context, the connection between the American and Northern Ireland civil rights movements still isn’t universally acknowledged, with some studies apparently regarding the Northern Ireland civil rights movement of the 1960s as completely unrelated to agitation for civil rights in the rest of Britain at the time, despite both sharing at least a common connection to the American experience.²³

²¹ See Simon Topping, “Laying down the law to the Irish and the coons: Stormont’s response to American racial segregation in Northern Ireland during the Second World War,” *Journal of Historical Research* (November 2013).

²² Simon Topping, “The Dusky Doughboys’: Interaction between African American Soldiers and the Population of Northern Ireland during the Second World War,” *Journal of American Studies*, (February 2013), p. 68.

²³ For example, studies of connections between black American radicals and British activists don’t necessarily include the Northern Ireland context, which isn’t mentioned in works including by Joe Street, “Malcolm X, Smethwick, and the Influence of the African American Freedom Struggle on British Race Relations in the 1960s,” *Journal of Black Studies*, (2008) Vol. 38, No. 6, pp. 932-950, or Paul Field Bunce, “Obi B. Egbuna, C. L. R. James and the Birth of Black Power in Britain: Black Radicalism in Britain 1967–72,” *Twentieth Century British History*, (September 2011), Volume 22, Issue 3, Pages 391–414, or Anne-

While Stephen Tuck's 2014 *The Night Malcolm X Spoke at the Oxford Union: A Transatlantic Story of Antiracist Protest* and Brian Ward's 2017 *Martin Luther King: In Newcastle Upon Tyne: The African American Freedom Struggle and Race Relations in the North East of England* both concentrate on a short visit by a leading black American activist to Britain in the mid-1960s, and their respective influence on the communities beyond the universities to the wider civil rights struggles in Britain, Ward includes the Northern Ireland context where Tuck does not.

Ward acknowledges, albeit briefly, the inspiration of King and the American civil rights movement on activists in Northern Ireland during the 1960s, and cites its influence on British activists, "not least Catholic civil rights campaigners in Northern Ireland".²⁴

Tuck appears unaware of the impact, or does not judge it salient enough to include even in the section titled "The American Civil Rights movement...in Britain". There's no mention of Malcolm X's possible influence on the Northern Ireland civil rights movement, well under way by 1964. Tuck also suggests the relationship between the early 1960s protests in the U.S. and Britain as one where British activists slowly learn from American examples. "The first British sit-ins began three years after their American counterparts and were few and far between," he says, apparently unaware of the Northern Ireland civil rights sit-ins at Dungannon in 1963, (or Springtown in 1967, or Caledon in 1968). He also suggests that "activists in Britain followed the American model," and that "Paul Stephenson's [Bristol] bus boycott followed its Montgomery predecessor by seven years."²⁵

Marie Angelo, "The Black Panthers in London, 1967 – 1972: A Diasporic Struggle Navigates the Black Atlantic," *Radical History Review*, (January 2009) pp.17-35.

²⁴ Brian Ward, *Martin Luther King: In Newcastle Upon Tyne: The African American Freedom Struggle and Race Relations in the North East of England* (Tyne Bridge Publishing, 2017) p.166.

²⁵ Stephen Tuck, *The Night Malcolm X Spoke at the Oxford Union: A Transatlantic Story of Antiracist Protest* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2014) p. 185.

Put another way, Martin Luther King's boycott in Montgomery followed its Mayo predecessor by 75 years, when the tactic was already established, developed and named during the campaign to withhold payments to Captain Boycott, an agent of a local absentee landlord.

It's a connection acknowledged by Claire Mansour in her 2014 investigation of "cross-national diffusion" in relation to the Bristol bus boycott, acknowledging (and citing *Black and Green*) that "The etymology of the verb 'to boycott' can be traced back to the British Captain Charles Cunningham Boycott who demanded unfair rents from his Irish tenants and then evicted those who could not pay up. In 1880, Charles Stewart Parnell — the President of the Irish National Land League — asked the local farm labourers to refuse to harvest Boycott's crops, leaving them out to rot. The name stuck to the strategy which then spread quickly all over Ireland".²⁶

In his 2005 study of 1960s U.S. counterculture George McKay also recognized that "the [American] civil rights movement spoke loudly to many involved in organising against [British] racism directed at recent generations of black migrants from the Caribbean as well as African ex-colonies – the Bristol Bus Boycott campaign of 1963 for instance, is one small, clear example of engaged transatlantic exchange around black protest. The Civil Rights Association was established in Northern Ireland in 1967, drawing on American experiences and tactics, in order to push the challenge to historic social and religious discrimination in the province".²⁷

Another area that merits further academic investigation is the relationship and commonalities between civil rights activists based in Northern Ireland and elsewhere in Britain during the 1960s, and the extent to which similarities and connections depended on a common identification with the American civil rights movement.

²⁶ Claire Mansour, "The Cross-National Diffusion of the American Civil Rights Movement: The Example of the Bristol Bus Boycott of 1963," (2014) *Miranda* pp10-24.

²⁷ George McKay, "The social and (counter) cultural 1960s in the USA, transatlantically," , *Summer of Love: Psychedelic Art, Social Crisis and the Counterculture in the 1960s*, (2005) *Tate Liverpool Critical Forum*, Liverpool University Press, Liverpool, pp. 35-62.

While *Black and Green* focused largely on comparing the Irish movement of the 1960s to its American counterpart, locating them more within the global turmoil of the decade would also have been illuminating. Mary L. Dudziak's study of 2000 detailed how U.S. activists appealed to an international audience, including the United Nations, and exploited the Cold War context to embarrass the American government internationally on its domestic record. The Northern Ireland activists occasionally used a similar tactic to shame the U.K. government internationally. A comparison between the two experiences would have been useful in *Black and Green*, as would an exploration of how the two movements related to convulsions elsewhere. For example, a discussion on how events in Derry and Chicago in 1968 related to what was happening in Berlin, Mexico City, Paris, Prague, London, Rome or Tokyo would also be useful.²⁸

There could perhaps be greater of an acknowledgement of regional nuance within the movements. Clearly the participation of civil rights activists in Chicago was not the same as those in Biloxi. Although Northern Ireland is relatively small, the experiences of people living in Belfast were often significantly different from those in Derry, which in turn were also dissimilar from those in rural areas.

If all history is to some extent simultaneously local and transnational, greater attention might be paid to exploring the relationship between the civil rights experiences of those in specific localities and how they connected to wider international forces. A 2017 study by Gerard Madden examines the responses of a few counties in the west of Ireland to civil rights protests in Northern Ireland 1968-1972. Citing *Black and Green*, it looks at the connections between the west and the north of Ireland (including student activism and agitation for Travellers' rights), and the influence of the black American experience.²⁹

²⁸ Mary L. Dudziak, *Cold War Civil Rights: Race and the Image of American Democracy* (Princeton, 2000).

²⁹ Gerard Madden, "Responses in the west of Ireland to civil rights protest in Northern Ireland, 1968-72," *Journal of Irish Historical Studies*, (2017).

Black and Green can also be understood as an early contribution to a broader historiographical shift concentrating on transnational race relations. Although discussions of transnational race issues – including those of the U.S. and South Africa – began long before the 1990s, since then there has been an encouraging focus on experiences and exchanges between movements in different parts of the world. Even more encouraging is a recent trend to incorporate these experiences into other geographical areas, including in north Africa and the Iranian Gulf, a development that is explored further in the next section.³⁰

³⁰ Earlier examples of discussions about apartheid South Africa and the U.S. include Donald Woods, *Asking for Trouble* (Gollancz, 1980) pp. 112-116, and Woods, *South African Dispatches* (Henry Holt, 1986) pp. 153-156. More contemporary examples include Nicholas Grant, *Winning Our Freedoms Together - African Americans and Apartheid, 1945–1960* (University of North Carolina, 2017); Nicholas Grant “Apartheid South Africa and the 1957 Little Rock Crisis”, *University of North Carolina guest blog* <<https://uncpressblog.com/2017/09/23/nicholas-grant-apartheid-south-africa-and-the-1957-little-rock-crisis/>> (2017); Matthew Greeson “Fighting for Equality: Anti-Apartheid Movement and the Legacy of Civil Rights” *Colgate Academic Review*, (2009) Vol 5. For U.S. - U.K. relations see Stephen Tuck, *The Night Malcolm X Spoke at the Oxford Union: A Transatlantic Story of Antiracist Protest* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2014); Brian Ward, *Martin Luther King: In Newcastle Upon Tyne: The African American Freedom Struggle and Race Relations in the North East of England* (Tyne Bridge Publishing, 2017).

3. Lessons for Today's Movements

Whatever the scholarly significance of *Black and Green* over the last 20 years, it also offers a modern political relevance, not just in Northern Ireland and the U.S. but also in some rights movements in the Middle East. Both during and since the 2011 uprisings in the region, the experience of the American and Irish civil rights movements has provided some guidance and inspiration to Arab activists. Some have directly cited *Black and Green*, or sought me out for advice and suggestions on what their movements can learn from the American and Irish struggles. A generation on, a new *Black and Green* would reflect on this legacy of activism and its contemporary applicability.

It would also encompass a wider remit than a 1960s or 1990s understanding of rights, and consider more modern terminology. *Black and Green* is subtitled *The Fight for Civil Rights in Northern Ireland and Black America*. Whereas 20 years ago I considered possible alternatives to the politically-charged terms Northern Ireland (including northern Ireland, the north of Ireland and Ireland), and options other than Black America (including black America and the African-American civil rights movement), the more contested term is now “civil rights”. The phrase is probably too narrow for what a more modern comparative study might attempt, and might better be replaced with human rights. Thomas F. Jackson’s 2007 study, for instance, addresses some of these issues from the perspective the American struggle, and reframes some of the understanding of Martin Luther King’s activism into a more economic context.³¹

In fact, King was using the language of human rights as early as 1957, telling the congregation in the Finney Chapel at Ohio’s Oberlin College that: “In the struggle for human rights and justice, Negroes will make a mistake if they become bitter and indulge in hate campaigns”. Two years later he urged students in Washington D.C. at a march

³¹ Thomas F. Jackson *From Civil Rights to Human Rights: Martin Luther King Jr. and the Struggle for Economic Justice* (University of Pennsylvania Press, 2007).

for integrated education to “Make a career of humanity. Commit yourself to the noble struggle for human rights. You will make a greater person of yourself, a greater nation of your country, and a finer world to live in”. A few days before his assassination in 1968 King spoke at the National Cathedral in the country’s capital, saying “there is a human rights revolution, with the freedom explosion that is taking place all over the world. Yes, we do live in a period where changes are taking place”.³²

Sam Moyn’s 2010 book *The Last Utopia* suggests that a modern consensus on the understanding of “human rights” only emerged in the 1970s, when the phrase began to mean one of a new internationalism, a sort of universal jurisdiction trumping national sovereignty. But the development of the term and the principles it represents are much more complex than that, and a contemporary understanding can certainly be traced back well before the 1970s.³³

King used both terms, and his references to human rights in the 1950s and 1960s are neither outdated nor irrelevant. In fact, he has become recognized as a human rights icon as much as a civil rights leader. In 2014 a new museum, the Center for Civil and Human Rights, opened in Atlanta. King's legacy is core to the project. It regularly exhibits his personal papers and other items, and lectures are offered on his life and work. Five leading human rights organizations - Amnesty International USA, Freedom House, Human Rights Watch, Minority Rights Group International and my own organization, Human Rights First, partnered with the museum to provide examples of contemporary human rights struggles to support the center’s mission in “educating visitors on the bridge between the American Civil Rights Movement and the contemporary struggle for Human Rights around the world”.³⁴

³² *The Chronicle* <<http://www.chroniclet.com/news/2008/01/21/When-MLK-came-to-Oberlin.html>;
https://swap.stanford.edu/20141218230015/http://mlk-kpp01.stanford.edu/kingweb/popular_requests/quotes.htm>; Some accounts report King said “equal rights” and not “human rights”;
<http://kingencyclopedia.stanford.edu/encyclopedia/documentsentry/doc_remain-ing_away_through_a_great_revolution/>

³³ Sam Moyn, *The Last Utopia, Human Rights in History* (Harvard University Press, 2010).

³⁴ See Henry J. Richardson III, “Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. as an International Human Rights Leader”, *Villanova Law Review*, (2007) Vol 471; <<https://www.hrw.org/news/2014/06/20/us-center-civil-and-human-rights-opens>; <https://www.civilandhumanrights.org/about-us/>>

An updated *Black and Green* might also examine whether other local rights struggles in Northern Ireland and black America connected and influenced each other. For example, an exploration of the transnational commonalities between those fighting other forms of identity-based discrimination – activists for disability rights, LGBT rights or feminist activists – would also be appropriate areas for inclusion. At the least, there should be an updated discussion about the experiences of activists in the civil rights movements who were feminists, or struggling for LGBT rights, or who had a disability. There could also be an exploration of how discussions over the “prioritisation of rights” occurred in both contexts. Such conversations occupy much time in contemporary human rights movements, and being able to present the experiences of the American and Irish civil rights movements would be of serious practical benefit to activists today.

Another under researched area in both contexts seems to be the experience and reaction of those who opposed the rights movements – of counter-protestors or those in the security forces, who attacked the marchers (*Black and Green* includes the views of a Northern Ireland police officer who was on duty at some of the early civil rights events, but more perspectives from the other side might also be illuminating).

What might be valuable too is a deeper analysis of where the movements were fundamentally different. How much difference did it make, for example, that the activists in Northern Ireland could not cite the ultimate legal authority of a national constitution? Or that many of the Irish activists looking for equal rights under British law were simultaneously waging a nationalist, separatist struggle to break away from the authority of the British state?

While *Black and Green* does not comprehensively examine these and many other issues, it does continue to offer some relevance to today’s students and is listed on university syllabuses, quoted in the media and cited in academic studies. Human rights

activists in the Middle East have also found it useful to inform the developments of their own movements, not least in addressing internal tension between various factions.³⁵

Since 2011, in the context of my work for Human Rights First, a Washington D.C.-based international non-governmental organization, I have been regularly asked by human rights activists from many countries, and by U.S. government officials, about relevant lessons for them from the Northern Ireland and black American experiences.

Many contemporary leading civil and human rights activists – at times with my encouragement – refer to the experience of the U.S. or Northern Ireland civil rights movements in relation to theirs. In 2011, Egyptian revolutionary Ahmed Maher visited the U.S. and advised the Occupy Movement on tactics, and cited Martin Luther King’s non-violence.³⁶ Leading Bahraini revolutionary Zainab Al Khawaja wrote a *New York Times* piece in 2013 from prison drawing heavily on the example of Martin Luther King. “I feel that [Dr. King] is reaching out to us from another land and another time to teach very important lessons. He teaches us, for example, that we must not become bitter, that we must be willing to sacrifice for freedom, and that we can never sink to the level of our oppressors,” she wrote. “When I look into the eyes of Bahraini protesters today, too many times I see that hope has been replaced by bitterness. It’s the same bitterness Martin Luther King Jr. saw in the eyes of rioters in the slums of Chicago in 1966”.³⁷

³⁵ See Birmingham-Southern College: HRC 56: Black, Green, and Between: Human Rights Study in Alabama and Ireland, 2017 <http://faculty.bsc.edu/sspraybe/INTERIM/INT2017/IRE2017_Pol.pdf>; PhD theses by Nicole Dorothea Ives-Allison “P Stones and Provos: Group Violence in Northern Ireland and Chicago,” (unpublished thesis, University of St Andrews 2015), and Rachel Alayna Oppenheimer “Of Prisons and Politics: The Black Panther Party, Irish Republican Army and Radical Socio-Political organization, 1966-1983, (unpublished thesis, Carnegie Mellon University 2017). For recent media citations, see Chandra Thomas Whitfield “Dr. King’s Impact on the Fight for Civil Rights in Northern Ireland” (January 18, 2016 NBC) <https://www.nbcnews.com/news/nbcblk/dr-king-s-impact-fight-civil-rights-northern-ireland-n495701>; Niall O’Dowd, “Gerry Adams and the infamous n-word tweet - let’s put it in context *Irish Voice*, (2016) <<https://www.irishcentral.com/opinion/niallodowd/gerry-adams-and-the-n-word-tweet-lets-put-it-in-context>> and O’Dowd, “Freedom’s Son: How Martin Luther King inspired North uprising” *Irish Voice*, (2017) <<https://www.irishcentral.com/opinion/niallodowd/freedom-s-son-how-martin-luther-king-inspired-north-uprising>>.

³⁶ Spencer Ackerman “Egypt’s Top ‘Facebook Revolutionary’ Now Advising Occupy Wall Street” (2011). <<https://www.wired.com/2011/10/egypt-occupy-wall-street/>>

³⁷ Zainab Al Khawaja, “Why I am on Hunger Strike in Bahrain” (2013); <<https://kristof.blogs.ny-times.com/2013/03/24/a-letter-from-a-political-prisoner-on-hunger-strike-in-bahrain/>>

A 2012 book *Arab Spring Dreams* presents the views of young Arab dissidents reflecting on the previous year's tumult, and includes several references to the inspiration of the U.S. civil rights movement on the Mideast insurrections of 2011. A 2016 academic study on Arab revolts situated the Middle East uprisings in the context of the U.S. and Irish civil rights struggles (and cited *Black and Green*).³⁸

Copies of a comic book produced in 1958 recounting the story of the Montgomery bus boycott were reportedly common during Cairo's Tahrir Square protests of early 2011, which brought down the dictatorship of President Hosni Mubarak. In May that year President Obama drew a connection between the Arab uprisings and the American civil rights movements. "There are times in the course of history when the actions of ordinary citizens spark movements for change because they speak to a longing for freedom that has been building up for years," he said. "In America, I think of the defiance of those patriots in Boston who refused to pay taxes to a King, or the dignity of Rosa Parks as she sat courageously in her seat," he said. "So it was in Tunisia, as that vendor's act of desperation tapped into the frustration felt throughout the country. Hundreds of protesters took to the streets, then thousands. And in the face of batons and sometimes bullets, they refused to go home – day after day, week after week – until a dictator of more than two decades finally left power".³⁹

Two years later Martin Luther King III, son of the Rev. Dr. King, told an audience in the repressive Gulf monarchy the United Arab Emirates that: "My father and his team, first and foremost, were extremely organised". He cited the example of the Montgomery bus boycott and urged activists to "build bridges to negotiate with those in power". Sound enough advice, although in the UAE those in power have since brooked no dialogue

³⁸ Nasser Weddady & Sohrab Ahmari, *Arab Spring Dreams* (Griffin, 2012); Eitan Y. AlimiAvraham SelaMario Sznajder, *Popular Contention, Regime, and Transition: Arab Revolts in Comparative Global Perspective* (Oxford University Press, 2016).

³⁹ All Things Considered, MLK Comic Book Inspired Arab Spring <https://wamu.org/story/11/08/24/mlk_comic_book_helped_inspire_arab_spring/>; Remarks by the President on the Middle East and North Africa (2011) <<https://obamawhitehouse.archives.gov/the-press-office/2011/05/19/remarks-president-middle-east-and-north-africa>>

with peaceful dissidents, and crushed all peaceful calls for reform on rights, jailing and torturing critics.⁴⁰

The connections between American, Irish and Arab rights struggles continue to emerge. When veteran African-American New Jersey Congressman Don Payne died in March 2012 Irish American organizations paid tribute to his long commitment to civil rights in Northern Ireland. Payne had been a local civil rights activist in Newark during the 1970s before becoming the state's first black member of Congress when elected to the House in 1998. He was also a Chair of the Congressional Black Caucus.

The New York City-based Irish Parades Emergency Committee noted that Payne had led many U.S. Congressional delegations to the north of Ireland, and built support for the Good Friday Agreement of 1998 and fundamental reform of the Northern Ireland police and state. It recalled how Payne, "A veteran of the U.S. civil rights movement ... was a strong supporter of equality and non-discrimination legislation in the north of Ireland. During a debate in Washington on the [workplace anti-discrimination] MacBride Principles Congressman Payne said: 'I and other members of the Congressional Black Caucus can easily identify with the Catholic minority...I recognize many similarities in how they are treated with how people here were treated.'"⁴¹

In one of his last acts as a member of Congress, a few weeks before he died, Payne wrote a letter to the king of Bahrain complaining, that my access to the kingdom to investigate human rights abuses was being impeded.⁴²

A 2017 study by Yusuf O. Hakeem is just one of several citing the Good Friday Agreement and its aftermath as an example of a model of transitional justice, relevant to the Middle East. Arab activists also regularly ask my advice on a range of issues related to Northern

⁴⁰ Awad Mustafa, "Martin Luther King and the Arab Spring," *The National* (February 26, 2013).

⁴¹ "U.S. Irish groups, Adams, salute Donald Payne," *Irish Echo* (March 21, 2012).

⁴² Letter to King of Bahrain from members of U.S. Congress, <<http://www.pomed.org/wp-content/uploads/2012/02/2-Feb-2012-Letter-to-King-of-Bahrain-on-access-for-NGOs.pdf>> (February 2, 2012).

Ireland's civil rights movement, including activism from inside prison, often addressing the problem of informers within the movement.⁴³

Being the author of *Black and Green* has also afforded me the opportunity to contribute to other contemporary discussions about civil rights and human rights, such as in the capacity of an official advisor on the award-winning 2014 *We Are The Giant* film. The documentary examines nonviolent resistance during the 2011 Arab uprisings and compares them to other movements, including the Irish and black American struggles. I have also frequently drawn on these comparisons in both private advocacy with the U.S. government, and in public media work. In 2014, I published an article about the technique of boycotts, linking the Arab uprisings to the Irish and black American struggles.⁴⁴

The connections are not only relevant for activists, but for policymakers too. U.S. government officials regularly ask me for foreign policy recommendations based on “successful” approaches of the two movements. I've advocated with success in the U.S. Congress, State Department and White House for the U.S. government to push for greater representation of Shias in Bahrain's security services, using examples from 1990s Northern Ireland and 1960s America in integrating Catholics and African Americans into police forces.

Prior to the April 2016 Gulf Co-operation Council (GCC) Summit in Riyadh I briefed senior Obama administration officials at the White House on pressing the ruling Gulf monarchs, particularly those in Bahrain, Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates, to combat sectarianism by diversifying the recruitment base of their security forces. I cited U.S. and U.K. government-commissioned reports into civil rights reform to push for a change in U.S. policy towards its repressive allies. I described the 1968 Kerner

⁴³ Yusuf O. Hakeem, “Transitional Justice in the Middle East and North Africa – Taking Account of Islam,” *Muslim World Journal of Human Rights*, (July 2017).

⁴⁴ We Are The Giant <<http://www.imdb.com/title/tt3455850/>>; Brian Dooley, “Boycotts from Mayo to Montgomery to Manama” *Human Rights First*, (June 5, 2014) <<https://www.humanrightsfirst.org/resource/muf-tah-boycotts-mayo-montgomery-manama>>

Commission findings into the causes of the 1967 riots, and its recommendations on police recruitment to avoid further unrest, and the 1999 Patten Commission into reform of Northern Ireland policing. Officials at the U.S. National Security Council were persuaded to include these issues in their negotiation with the GCC. As a result, the U.S. government has continued to press, publicly and privately, for security force reform, particularly in Bahrain.⁴⁵

But the two struggles offer practical examples for a range of human rights activists too on a variety of issues, including prison protests (notably hunger striking), the use of media, the presence of children at protests, the benefits and disadvantages of clerical leadership, the opportunities afforded by political funerals, whether to participate in or boycott elections, intergenerational and gender tensions, and other internal organizational frictions. Such practical engagement is harder to quantify than counting the number of citations in academic papers, but no less significant.

Being the author of *Black and Green* has also given me various platforms to raise sensitive human rights issues elsewhere. When in 2011, New York Congressman Peter King announced he would be convening hearings on the Muslim community, it provided an opportunity to highlight his hypocrisy in targeting a vulnerable demographic. King's record on civil rights in Northern Ireland had been strong, and I was able to write for a large Irish-American audience reminding them of the similarities between discrimination against Muslims in America and the experience of Northern Ireland.⁴⁶

⁴⁵ The Kerner Commission - *Report of the National Advisory Commission on Civil Disorders*, (New York Times, 1968) pp. 316-318. The report recommended that police departments "intensify their efforts to recruit more Negroes," and outlined ways to achieve that. *The Patten Commission - A New Beginning: Policing In Northern Ireland* <<http://cain.ulst.ac.uk/issues/police/patten/patten99.pdf>> successfully advocated for a 50-50 Catholic/Protestant recruitment policy for a period of 10 years.

While the Obama and Trump administrations' criticism of their dictatorship ally Bahrain has been generally muted, both openly pushed for greater diversity in the recruitment of the kingdom's police force; see U.S. government written questions at Bahrain's Universal Periodic Review at the UN Human Rights Council <https://www.upr-info.org/sites/default/files/document/session_27_-_may_2017/advance_question_bahrain.pdf> (May 2017).

⁴⁶ Brian Dooley "Irish should know better than to demonize Muslims given their own history," *Irish Central*, (March 11, 2011).

Three years ago, I used my credentials as the author of *Black and Green* to criticize the ban on LGBT representation at St. Patrick's Day parades in Boston and New York, and to remind *Huffington Post* readers of Irish America's selective record on supporting civil rights.⁴⁷

The opportunities have extended beyond American audiences. In 2014 I was invited to give a TV interview on the Chinese State broadcaster CCTV about events marking the 60th anniversary of the *Brown v Board of Education* decision. Using the opportunity of the live transmission, I also spoke about how the 40th anniversary of the Dublin-Monaghan bombings would be commemorated, in addition to raising the 25th anniversary of the Chinese government's massacre of protestors in Tiananmen Square (at which point the interview was swiftly ended).⁴⁸

Since *Black and Green's* publication in 1998, history – and the study of history – has moved on. The Good Friday Agreement, ending decades of conflict in Northern Ireland, was also signed and then ratified by referenda in the north and south of Ireland in 1998. It ushered in the sort of new politics demanded by the civil rights movement of the late 1960s, which sought political equality between different parts of the community (a “parity of esteem” to use the 1990s jargon) and the end of second-class citizenship, but not necessarily a process to end British rule in Northern Ireland.

In the U.S. the years since 1998 have also witnessed seismic political shifts, including the election and re-election of Barack Obama and the rise of the Black Lives Matter movement. In May 2011 Obama visited Ireland, announcing: “My name is Barack Obama - of the [County Offaly] Moneygall Obamas ... and I've come home to find the apostrophe [in his name] that we lost somewhere along the way.” During the trip Obama cited the black American-Irish relationship of the 1840s. In his address to a crowd in Dublin he mentioned the “unlikely friendship” between Douglass and O'Connell. “When

⁴⁷ Brian Dooley “Irish America's Identity Parades” *Huffington Post* (March 4, 2104).

⁴⁸ Brian Dooley on *Brown v Board of Education Decision*, CCTV <<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=dGUKRdpcFi0>> (May 17, 2014).

we strove to blot out the stain of slavery and advance the rights of man, we found common cause with your struggles against oppression,” he said. “Frederick Douglass, an escaped slave and our great abolitionist, forged an unlikely friendship right here in Dublin with your great liberator, Daniel O’Connell. His time here, Frederick Douglass said, defined him not as a color but as a man. And it strengthened the non-violent campaign he would return home to wage”.⁴⁹

Contemporary associations survive. In January 2015 the *Derry Journal* reported that “Reverend Osagyefo Sekou, American civil rights campaigner” would be speaking at that year’s Bloody Sunday event about “why ‘Black Lives Matter’”. It also noted that “the main speaker at this year’s Bloody Sunday rally has arrived in the city in advance of tomorrow’s march. Patrisse Cullors, co-founder of ‘Black Lives Matter’, ...[is] ...telling the world her opinion about injustices that she believes are happening in the U.S. Speaking to an audience in Pilots Row community centre, Derry, on Saturday afternoon Patrisse said....‘Hearing stories here in Northern Ireland in particular, I argue that this is an international epidemic of state violence, and that is key in the moment as we are pushing for change, that we build international solidarity’”.⁵⁰

The following year, a Black Lives Matter vigil was held in Belfast. Organizer Dr Chaminda Weerawardhana explained the July date would be an opportunity to commemorate the 150th anniversary of the death of “Mary Ann McCracken (1770-1866), one of Belfast’s foremost advocates of anti-slavery activism, workers’ rights and women’s empowerment... Mary Ann was a powerful figure with a deep interest in working towards a more equitable society, fighting injustice wherever she saw it”.⁵¹

An updated *Black and Green* would trace these Twenty First Century connections, attempt to identify their origins, and explore the relevance for today’s activists struggling

⁴⁹ “Obama in Ireland, Uplifting and Shrewd,” *New America Media* (May 28, 2011).

⁵⁰ Greg Sharkey, “American civil rights campaigner to be main speaker at Bloody Sunday rally,” *Derry Journal* (January 23, 2015).

⁵¹ “BLACK LIVES MATTER: A GLOBAL MOVEMENT FOR JUSTICE COMES TO BELFAST,” *The Last Round*, (July 26, 2016).

in a range of contexts. The original book drew heavily on case studies and oral interviews with figures from both civil rights movements. It also emphasized the value of storytelling by protagonists from the time, especially when it came to the influence that the struggles had on each other. An updated version would also revisit surviving activists from the 1960s to see if their reflections had changed since I spoke to them 25 years ago.

One ambitious exercise would be an attempt to measure contemporary attitudes around the two struggles – how far the publics of the U.S. and Northern Ireland (and Bahrain, Egypt, Syria, Tunisia and elsewhere for that matter) view the movements as “successes,” and why. With such information it might be possible to assess the influence of the two experiences on modern transnational politics and rights.

Further study on how tensions and internal conflicts exist even in successful movements would also be of practical contemporary use, as would presenting examples of the past in terms of policy issues for today’s governments. This could include, for example, the integration of security services in both movements, or the reflections of activists who became elected political leaders or government officials.

In recent years, the rise of reactionary politics and illiberal authoritarianism in the U.S. and Europe has led to a new assault on rights in Northern Ireland and black America. In August 2017 President Trump condemned “both sides” over conflict at a white supremacist protest in Charlottesville. Some prominent Irish Americans in the Trump administration and Congress have supported the bigotry, including (now former) Communications Director Sean Spicer, Senator Pat Toomey and Representative Tim Murphy, all of whom endorsed the anti-Muslim visa ban.⁵²

The new illiberalism also has alarming consequences for Northern Ireland. The June 2016 U.K. referendum vote for Brexit undermines the complicated political deal

⁵² Brian Dooley, “Irish American Apologists For Trump’s Visa Ban Should Know Better,” *Huffington Post*, (February 2, 2017).

protecting rights under the Good Friday Agreement. A year ago I produced a report outlining the risks to rights in Northern Ireland, including death threats to human rights lawyers, and a proposal by the U.K. Defense Committee to introduce a statute of limitations covering murders and other crimes for all British military personnel serving in Northern Ireland during the Troubles.⁵³

Governments in the U.S., Northern Ireland and elsewhere are threatening civil societies, press freedoms and the organisation of peaceful political dissent. The current U.S. administration is enabling a worldwide crackdown on civil society. Human rights organizations which operated openly a decade ago in Washington-backed dictatorships across the Middle East are now harassed and banned, their activists tortured and jailed. In Europe, access to foreign funding for human rights work is under threat, such as in Hungary, Ireland and Poland. Generations of hard-won gains are under attack, including freedoms of association, the right to protest and paths to citizenship.

In this new environment, the need for human rights movements to learn from each other is as great as ever. While young activists are often dismissive of advice from older generations, the U.S. civil rights movement, the anti-apartheid struggle and the transformation of Northern Ireland are widely regarded by today's revolutionaries as inspirational examples. The relevance of these past experiences for today's challenges remains strong. Discussions about their tactics, successes and failures should be strongly encouraged.

While *Black and Green* has, I hope, helped over the last 20 years to encourage academic and activist interest in transnational struggles for human rights, more exposure than my book can offer is needed to explore and promote the shared ideas, tactics and history of black American-Irish political relationships. These would benefit activists not only in those contexts but in others too. Over the next two decades a wider understanding of the two histories could reduce internal friction in human rights

⁵³ "A Troubling Turn: The Vilification of Human Rights Lawyers in Northern Ireland," Human Rights First, (June 2017).

movements, increase closer co-operation between transnational human rights organizations, and maybe even solve the mystery for the staff and customers of Kelly's Irish Times of why the portrait of Frederick Douglass is on the wall.

