

## Between Exclusion and Recognition: The Politics of the Ulster Defence Association

by  
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### INTRODUCTION

Over the past decade there has been a notable increase in the literature devoted to Protestant paramilitarism in Northern Ireland. It has been of variable quality and sometimes distinctly *parti pris*. Of the serious academic works there would appear to be a consensus on one distinctive aspect of paramilitarism. Militant loyalism has been explored and described in terms of its ambiguity, its contradictions and its confusions of aims. The governing word appears to be "uncertainty" and the implication is, that since the collapse of the "beautiful unity" of Unionism, ideologically and institutionally, the present Ulster crisis has brought loyalists face to face with the precarious instability of their whole system of values.<sup>1</sup> Though this "beautiful unity" is a myth, it is a myth that exercises a powerful attraction for the Ulster Protestant. Such a situation is bound to provoke inconsistency if not schizophrenia. The simplest way to express this contradiction is to divide loyalists in paramilitary organizations into "politicos" and "militarists" or soft-liners and hard-liners. This has been the general division used to categorize members of the Ulster Defense Association from the mid-1970s onwards. For instance, O'Malley in *The Uncivil War* defines his understanding of the UDA's strategic uncertainty as being rooted in the division "between those who think purely in paramilitary terms and those who want to move in a political direction."<sup>2</sup> This is a valuable distinction, and a necessary one, but is not in itself sufficient to explain the complexity of argument within the UDA. As a tool of analysis or conceptual framework it is aware of division. In short, it is asking the right question but giving a somewhat distorted answer. A more subtle approach is necessary to ferret out a clearer perspective regarding militant loyalism.

While it is evident that in terms of personality and disposition some members of the UDA would be more aggressive than others, the simple physical division or counting of heads does not get to the heart of the present dilemma. Arguably, the significant split is not between persons of choleric or pacific humor but is within the paramilitary mind itself. The UDA has travelled some way from the heyday of massed ranks loyalism in the early seventies. Its leadership has been seeking a role beyond mere organizational survival and the process of reflection has been a painful one in a community known for its inarticulateness. The purpose of this article is to suggest one framework within which to conceptualize the alternatives faced by the UDA and the difficult uncertainties posed by present circumstances. The politics of the UDA are considered within the framework of a debate between the ideas of *exclusion* and of *recognition*. Further, there are three appropriate levels or

dimensions of this political dichotomy. The first concerns relations with the Catholic community in Northern Ireland. The second involves the relationship with the British Government and the third encompasses the broader context of the internationalization of the Ulster problem, although particular emphasis is given to relations with the Republic of Ireland. While there are clear and obvious overlaps with the military-political division, analysis in terms of exclusion and recognition set new boundaries and suggests a more complex interpenetration. The main weakness of the existing understanding is the implication that one "line" or one "side" may win out against the other. Use of the above criteria seems to indicate that the contradictions shown by the UDA are really different sides of the same coin. Literally, each is stuck with the other. Together, they form the reality of the political life to which Protestants in general have had to accommodate since 1972.

### **ULSTER CATHOLICS: EXCLUSION OR RECOGNITION?**

The historic voice of militant loyalism has been unequivocally exclusionist. The thrust of the cry of "No surrender" has meant no compromise whatever to meet demands emanating from sources outside the Ulster Protestant "family." It was a watchword of the majoritarian democracy institutionalized on the basis of a Protestant parliament for a Protestant people. Hence the significance of the slogan "We are the people!" implying a political and social non-identity for Catholics and the illegitimacy of the goals of Catholic politics. This was certainly not a "liberal" style of politics though it was understandable as a feature of Irish history. It was also understandable when the alternative presented by both Unionist and Nationalist leaders appeared to be one which was unacceptable to a "free" and "British" people. It was and is a position that excludes all distinction between the constitutional and the unconstitutional. All activity is swept into the same category of political threat. It helped perpetuate the idea of separateness which the present crisis has only served to exacerbate — the social and political polarization of Protestant and Catholic communities.

Conducting their survey on the problems of Northern Ireland in the late 1950s and early 1960s Barritt and Carter found "racial, religious, political, economic and social conflicts all rolled into one; ... two communities which live apart, even to the extent of playing different games."<sup>3</sup> In this period, however, mutual exclusion was ritualized and indeed stylized to such an extent that, Barritt and Carter argued, Protestant and Catholic could live side by side "generally at peace." Arend Lijphart defined the society as "one of majority dictatorship dealing firmly with a minority claiming both democratic rights and a different political framework."<sup>4</sup> The concept of majority is firmly embedded in a definition of Protestantism in Northern Ireland and in Ulster politics. The UDA inherited this concept. The campaign of the Irish Republican Army and the Catholic political challenge to simple majoritarianism generated further self-reliance and exclusionist tendencies. As *Loyalist News* put it: "Ulster is ours, not Westminster's, not Dublin's, but OURS."<sup>5</sup>

Following the logic of the political mentality defined by Lijphart, the UDA stated early on that those responsible for violence against Protestants would have the answer to the law — more precisely, to the “Majority Law.” Only those Catholics who wished to remain *under* the majority would be welcome to stay. There was to be no idea of equality or of political partnership. Catholics were to be excluded from any positive contribution to the content of the majority law. This idea of justice is not a participatory, inclusive one. What is ultimately just is what is conducive to the maintenance of Protestant hegemony with Catholics being treated justly only on sufferance.<sup>6</sup>

The exclusion option has a paramilitary appeal because it pays homage to the myth that were the majority given its head then it could “clear out” Republican areas and return Northern Ireland to “peace.” Such a disposition is encapsulated in the following doggerel of a Protestant drinking song:

The RC should be pressed from this part of the North  
And foolish he would be to return,  
To the land of the Prod where we will vow to God,  
His friendship of evil to spurn.

Behind such pure bravado, the exclusionist spirit is strong though it is more frequently expressed in rage and frustration within the Protestant community than in violence against Catholics. Despite the conciliatory posture evident latterly, this spirit remains a sturdy bulwark of the UDA leadership.

In the recent interview in the local journal *Fortnight*, Andy Tyrie, the long-serving Chairman of the UDA, took care to express his own and his organization’s optimism with regard to a peaceful resolution of the present crisis. Yet it was clear that he had difficulty in distancing himself from the exclusionist tendency in thought and in word. Tyrie admitted that he saw little on which loyalists could compromise without betraying the very being of their community. He also sought to establish a distinction between the Catholic community as such and the Republican threats to Protestants and their way of life. The word “Ulster” appeared to have defeated him. “Ulster” can be used as inclusive of Catholics, or may refer to the common territory inhabited by Catholics and Protestants. Alternatively, it can be interpreted as the living spirit and symbol of Protestant resistance to all things Catholic. Tyrie’s own use of “Ulster” seems to be exclusionist. Commenting on recent events, he noted that, at present,

...the bulk of the nationalist groups [say] there is no future for the Ulster Protestant community and their job is to destroy it. If you’re talking about the warring groups, the groups that are involved in the war — and you must see the SDLP in that, and after Cardinal Tomas O’Fiaich’s recent statement, you must see him as part of the war effort against the whole Protestant community — then there’s a big build-up of everything that’s opposing Ulster survival.<sup>8</sup>

In his statement Tyrrie clearly views "Ulster" as Protestant and at war with any and every Catholic and Catholic institution. It is not a matter of semantics but a matter of political realities. Yet, he retreats quickly into vagueness and equivocation. His choice to be less than clear on most other points is perhaps understandable. As a spokesman frequently quoted in the media, Tyrrie, of necessity, is sensitive to the conflicts within his own organization. The UDA has chosen to respond to the growing opposition to Ulster's survival in more than words. It claims to be in the process of developing an Ulster Defence Force from within its ranks in preparation for a "doomsday situation."

The notion of the Ulster Defence Force is neither a totally sinister nor exclusionist one. Rather, it can be contended that, at present, the currents within the UDA actually make it impossible to establish absolute exclusionism at the top level. The proposal for the UDF is fraught with qualifications concerning the need for a political approach *as well as* military preparations. It is the use of language again that tends to betray the confusion or uncertainty in the minds of the leadership over the purpose of political and military activity. Political activity suggests compromise, cooperation and recognition. However, the UDA document on reorganization speaks of losing ground and of combatting the forces which would "oppose the development of a strong Ulster Protestant society."<sup>10</sup> Such phraseology leads one to believe, first, that the UDA wants to void whatever positive gains Catholics have made since 1969, and second, that the idea of a strong Ulster Protestant society *by definition* should totally exclude Catholics from political influence. If this is not the intention of the UDA, more care and precision is needed in its statements. If such statements can be taken at face value, then the UDF may be a device to give expression (whether simply on paper or in men with arms remains to be seen) to the exclusionist tendency while the "war" is pursued by other means. If massed ranks loyalism is a thing of the past, then elite corps loyalism may be the next best thing. Circumstances often dictate policy and organization. In this case, though, the circumstances come not only from external exigencies but also from internal debate.

The other voice in this internal debate appeals less to emotion or aggression and more to political reason. The trauma of the troubles and the intractability of "zero-sum partisanship" (exclusion) has led elements of the UDA to accept, perhaps reluctantly, the emptiness and negativity of the old simplicities. There has emerged, in a limited fashion, an understanding of the common experience of Protestant and Catholic, indeed, that the very definition of Protestantism itself is closely bound up with Ulster Catholicism. Or, to paraphrase that mysterious Hegelian phrase, the common identity of identity and non-identity. The idea of exclusion sees this relationship purely in terms of master and slave. The concept of recognition embodied in some of the arguments and ideas of the UDA leadership is a disposition to view the relationship as one of equality in adversity. Recognition was a political theory expressed clearly in the New Ulster Political Research Group's (the original political wing of the UDA) document *Beyond The Religious Divide*. Published in 1979,

it represented a distillation of some years of debate and reflection and it argued for an independent Ulster as a "no-loss" outcome for both communities.<sup>11</sup>

Under the inspiration of Glen Barr, the NUPRG proposed a form of political identity that recognized the rights of both communities but attempted to overcome the conflicting national aspirations of Protestant British and Catholic Irish. It would be an identity-in-difference. The common experience of sectarian strife, it was argued or implied, had forged a certain respect for each community's uniqueness and that this was the basis upon which commonly acceptable institutions could be built — on an Ulster basis alone. There would be a classic constitutional trade-off: Protestants would sever the British link and Catholics would sever their allegiance to a United Ireland. Both would admit the impossibility of domination, but would recognize that between themselves they could build a harmonious society. Difference would contribute to political stability rather than destroying it. As far as the NUPRG was concerned, these proposals were the best way to return Ulster to "proper politics," which meant not an exclusionist struggle but a recognition of genuine issues of socio-economic importance. The language of *Beyond The Religious Divide* is forthright, concluding that it is not designed to achieve "the creation of a Protestant dominated State, nor is it the stepping stone to a United Ireland." It does, however, provide "an opportunity for peace and stability. It is an opportunity for the Ulster people to get back their dignity."<sup>12</sup> Clearly "Ulster people" meant something very different here than the exclusive term traditionally used.

The transformation of the NUPRG into the Ulster Loyalist Democratic Party and the change in political spokesmen from Barr to John McMichael has not altered the open advocacy of independence. However, since the Hunger Strike of 1981 and the subsequent political successes of Provisional Sinn Fein (the political wing of the IRA) there has been a distinct change in the substance and spirit of the message. As far as formal policy documents are concerned, the ULDP appears to have carried the NUPRG's standard forward. In the statements "Peace With Dignity" and "The Way Ahead," it was clearly argued that recognition and involvement of both communities in Ulster's political process is a prerequisite of any way forward. Democracy must triumph, and "the imposition of partisan values, creeds and philosophies should be replaced by the accepted recognition that we are a pluralist society." Though two distinct traditions are involved, the ULDP's desire and aim is to establish constructive co-existence.<sup>13</sup> This is the benign model of political activity generally embraced by McMichael in public. Putting his case to Padraig O'Malley, McMichael was clear that no political party in Northern Ireland should endeavor to create a monolith (thus placing the blame with the old Protestant identity of the Unionist Party). Further, he acknowledged that there could never be any recognized settlement "if you have circumstances where there is one majority and one minority."<sup>14</sup> These are views to which Tyrie would also subscribe, without in the least feeling he had contradicted his previously cited opinions.

Since the Hunger Strikes of 1981, which proved such a propaganda and political success for the Provisional IRA, there has developed a sharper edge to this message of conciliation. The recognitionists openly condemn indiscriminate shootings of Catholics. This is no longer acceptable as necessary policy. But, whereas the Barr strategy was one of open-handed peaceful intent at a time when sectarian tensions were low, such a course cannot be universally accepted within the UDA while the Provisional campaign, political and military, continues. Between Catholicism and violent Republicanism a distinction must be made if the idea of recognition is to hold any ground as a political force in the organization. The elements of IRA terror have to be isolated and destroyed. They are legitimate targets for UDA "Soldiers" so long as the forces of the state are incapable of dealing with the enemies of Ulster. Both Tyrie and McMichael are quite plain about this. While the UDA ought not to "come into conflict with the Catholic community" the campaign against the IRA and INLA "cannot be shelved," serving as it does as an "ongoing crusade" through which "only the guilty suffer." To the UDA, "That's the way any war should be fought."<sup>15</sup>

Despite their political commitment to recognition, the UDLP/UDA's idea of what is to be recognized remains selective. Recognition is only on the basis of an Ulster community, not on the basis of an Irish Republic. Voting for Sinn Fein is seen as illegitimate, an expression of non-recognition of Protestantism, and it takes two to make recognition meaningful. The weakness of the recognitionist position within the UDA, its dependence on circumstances beyond its control, are summed up in McMichael's classically coded message after the Provisional Sinn Fein garnered ten percent of the vote in the Northern Ireland Assembly elections of October 1982:

Where does this situation leave Ulster Protestants? If we are to survive must we adopt a simple "us-or-them" attitude and fight for what we want? And if we do, will we again be branded as small-minded bigots? What have we got to lose?<sup>16</sup>

That he left all these questions in their simple rhetorical form is an indication of the mental struggle between exclusion and recognition.

The uncertainty of the UDA's present attitude towards Ulster Catholics has led some commentators to question their political sincerity. For instance, O'Malley gives the distinct impression that he believes that it is a cleverly calculated maneuver. The UDA leadership may contain political amateurs, may stumble about in the fog of its rhetoric, but it has given itself a good cover, a mantle of earnest good intentions. Through this, O'Malley contends that it has gained "a measure of respectability which pays a handsome dividend: its past transgressions, if not forgotten, are for the most part largely forgiven: and its current lapses, if not forgiven, are for the most part largely excused."<sup>17</sup> That the UDA is now a different creature only reluctantly provoked into action and retaliation is, says O'Malley, "a conclusion the UDA itself carefully cultivates." This is perhaps too harsh and cynical a judgement. Certainly good

intentions are never enough, but at least there has been some attempt at political movement. That circumstances have not been favorable is not entirely of the UDA's making. It has no independent control over its resolution and, when even small steps can lead to disaster, it is unrealistic to expect too much soon.

## RELATIONS WITH THE BRITISH GOVERNMENT

Relations with the British Government present the same degree of complexity, the ironies and subtleties of which have been explored historically by David Miller in his book *Queen's Rebels*. The UDA exhibits the modern configuration of the same complexity, and in its deliberations and posturings encapsulates the tension between Britishness and Ulster Protestantism. While both are features of the same identity, they may call forth conflicting loyalties to the sovereign political authority on the one hand and to communal loyalty on the other. In the flux of the present crisis, they also involve a conceptual, ideological struggle between exclusion and recognition. Indeed in this case the two are even more confusingly intertwined and convoluted. There appear to be two significant aspects to recognition by the British Government that motivate the UDA. First, there is a negative factor, the recognition that the UDA is able, by massed-ranks loyalism, to exercise an effective veto over the plans of any administration in London. It is a possibility that must be constantly restated, otherwise it may not be believed and it gains force by being kept in the public mind. Second, there is a positive aspect which claims for the UDA the right to some sort of involvement in mapping out the constitutional future of Ulster. It is a claim to be taken seriously, particularly as a political force with ideas to contribute to the current debate. Similarly, exclusion has two aspects. The UDA may be ignored altogether as a political or military force and not be accorded any hearing by those in authority. It could also be banned altogether as an organization.

The negative dimension of recognition has been the UDA's historical experience. The price of Ulster's integrity is held to be eternal vigilance and a refusal to go along with the honeyed words from Westminster. With the fall of the Stormont administration, the inception of direct rule and then, later, with the establishment of the power-sharing Executive as an instrument of British policy, militant loyalists felt that their normal channels of communication (the Stormont "system") had been bypassed to facilitate a "sell-out" to the Irish Republic. The loyalist response, the Ulster Worker's Council strike of 1974, was what A.O. Hirschman would have termed a "boycott," that is "a weapon of customers who do not have, at least at the time of the boycott, an alternative."<sup>18</sup> Hirschman's economic analysis is rather an appropriate description of the political circumstances encountered by the UDA in 1974. Its action was a classic one of political negativity for there was no consensus within the Protestant community regarding an alternative. No one was prepared to seize the moment of governmental paralysis to impose one, not least the UDA.

Thus the UDA had proved that an effective "boycott" could

prevent solutions from being imposed by the British Government without the whole-hearted consent of Ulster Protestants and in a fashion that upstaged the rhetoric of Unionist politicians. It also served to show that, in the face of Westminster priorities, militant loyalists could not enforce their own solutions. As the failure of the subsequent 1977 strike showed, boycott without effective alternatives is subject to diminishing returns. Its over-employment may fragment that Protestant unity it is designed to foster. Therefore the present circumstances of the Ulster crisis place severe limitations on the purely negative power of loyalist paramilitarism. In the words of David Miller, it is useful as a means to "keep Britain up to the mark in honouring her imputed obligations," or, in other words, to recognize her duty to defend and protect Ulster from all Republican threats in order to maintain the Protestant identity.<sup>19</sup> The fact that the British Government certainly recognizes a duty to Northern Ireland does not mean that it recognizes it in the manner posed by the UDA. British perspectives are not those of the militant loyalist no matter how strong the professions of fidelity on both sides. Thus the negative idea of recognition, while a powerful one, was seen to be ultimately undignified by sections of the UDA leadership. The need for an alternative, to avoid the Hirschman dilemma and to get beyond the sterility of boycott, helped to stimulate thinking on the idea of Ulster independence. Here was an historical claim for a positive contribution and a recognition by British politicians that the UDA was not just the strong arm of local politicians but a legitimate party to discussions in its own right.

The central thrust behind the proposals for a negotiated independence for Northern Ireland has already been mentioned. The question remains regarding how far this was recognized as legitimate by the British Government. For here was a curious phenomenon, a loyalist organization, whose roots lay deep in the sacrifices of Ulster troops in both world wars for Empire, Queen and Country, whose Protestant community is suffused with all the symbolism of Britishness, being prepared to put forward as a *first* option breaking the link with Great Britain. In other words, on principle, the UDA was proposing to exclude the British Government from the affairs of Northern Ireland, internally if not externally. As a recent policy document argues, the outcome, though not the intention of a "London based government for Northern Ireland is by nature a repressive one." Even if this is the result of ignorance and not malice, it is time for "self-determination."<sup>20</sup>

The British Government's response has been, understandably, equivocal. While it professes to be open to all political suggestions for a way forward in Northern Ireland, obviously there are certain options that any Government will not accept for both domestic and international reasons. The pattern of British policy has been to encourage the UDA in its political activities, to keep it talking, and, thus, to keep it off the streets. Leaders like Tyrie and McMichael have been transformed from representatives of the sinister, hooded "thugs" to quasi-respectable political spokesmen. They both make good journalistic copy. Since the late 1970s the leadership has coveted the kudos of formal and informal links with the Northern Ireland Office. There is a nice irony in this.



Many UDA statements have attacked the middle class Unionist leadership for their historic role of “duping” the Protestant working class, of embroiling them in “border” politics rather than “proper politics.” Now the paramilitaries’ own working class leaders are, in fact, doing what the Unionist leadership did in the 1920s — acting as a disciplining and restraining influence to attain their own political goals.

However, the NIO has never given any visible credence to the independence option either because it fears that it would lead to Protestant hegemony or because it fears the diplomatic response of the Republic of Ireland, or both. For instance, the constitutional talks initiated in 1980 by Humphrey Atkins, then Secretary of State for Northern Ireland, specifically excluded independence from the constitutional agenda. It was not recognized as an option at all. Similarly, it has never appeared on any subsequent governmental agenda. Indeed, since the creation of the Assembly in 1982 on the initiative of the present Secretary of State, James Prior, the UDA’s aggressively independent tones have been muted. Since neither of the political parties representing Catholics — the Social Democratic and Labour Party (SDLP) and PSF — participate in the Assembly, it has, in practice, become a Protestant Parliament for a Protestant People. It could well be that many in the UDA are happy with this despite all the fine words about accommodation with the “other side.” It could also be that the existence of the Assembly is held to be a step in the right direction, not only towards greater local control but also, eventually, to independence. In this way, at least, the UDA might feel “passively” involved in political deliberations about a new Northern Ireland.<sup>21</sup>

The UDA is the largest paramilitary organization in Northern Ireland and the only one not proscribed under Schedule 2 of the Emergency Provisions Act. Exclusion through proscription has always hung over its head. Calls for proscription have been frequent and tend to follow terrorist incidents where known UDA members have been involved or implicated. The fact that most of these members have been convicted under a *nom de guerre* such as the Ulster Freedom Fighters has not fooled anyone. However, it is clear that it is neither in the interest of the Government nor the UDA for the Association to be proscribed. An open, legal UDA is also open to penetration by security forces. A legal UDA allows the organization to continue its lucrative business operations — taxis, social clubs, bars — from which members and loyalist prisoners profit. When Secretary of State for Northern Ireland, Humphrey Atkins, declared that the “test of proscription is whether an organization is actively supporting, encouraging or engaged in terrorist activities,”<sup>22</sup> it was obvious the Government diplomatically deemed the UDA to be innocent of such charges. To exclude the UDA might only drive it underground to something worse. Better to have it above ground where the *threat* of proscription will act as a further agent of political discipline, even though UDA leaders may claim to ignore such threats. As an established element in Ulster Protestant life, the UDA as an organization has too much to lose by rash behavior. Since 1974, the British Government too has become more sensitive in its management of

opinion. Both appear to recognize the limits of the possible and have tacitly agreed to play within the "rules."

### INTERNATIONAL PERSPECTIVE

Ulster Protestantism in general, and militant loyalism in particular, has traditionally been noted for its inarticulateness and self-reliance. It has usually spoken and acted in terms of the integrity of the Ulster problem and savagely denounced all outside interference. This being so, it has never really made much effort to justify its cause, preferring to rely upon God and the strength of the community. However, the modern internationalization of the Ulster problem by mainstream political nationalists and extreme Republicans has forced a reconsideration of Protestant insularity. There has been an increasing tendency to modify exclusion by a recognition of the importance of outside links and the need to engage forthrightly in the battle of ideas. This development is slow, hesitant and fitful yet increasingly salient. Two examples illustrate this new concern of the UDA.

It is no longer possible to ignore the international successes of the IRA's propaganda war, even though Protestants would tend to be united regarding the illegitimacy of any external involvement, verbal or material (except, of course, support for Protestantism). For instance, statements on Ulster by American Presidential candidates are received with hostility as are any actions deemed to lend support to the ideal of Republicanism. However, the UDA recognizes that any counterpropaganda is difficult to formulate. As Tyrie argues, Ulster has become established as a colonial problem and the IRA as an anti-colonial freedom force.<sup>23</sup> The UDA has not the resources to combat such a world view. Nevertheless, it has recognized the need to manufacture a counter-myth that may be of some future use. It has thus commissioned historical research by local author Ian Adamson into the curious, mysterious origins and development of the "Cruthin." The Cruthin are claimed to be the "original" Ulster tribe that colonized Scotland and the north-east of Ireland *before* the Celts. The return of the Protestant Scottish settlers during the Plantation of Ulster in the seventeenth century and the driving out of the Catholic Celts (the struggle of Planter and Gael) is viewed therefore as repatriation, not an occupation. Indeed, this is quite a reversal of historical perspective, and it establishes, so the UDA contends, the inalienable and unshakable right of Ulster Protestants to retain their true "homeland." Although most Ulster Protestants feel no need for this historical interpretation, at least it provides a useful counterpoint to the Republican interpretation of history.<sup>24</sup>

The important international perspective is more tangible and closer to home. It concerns relations with the Republic of Ireland. Exclusionist feeling is undoubtedly the most powerful of emotions and deeply rooted in communal experience. O'Malley provides an expression of this feeling in the UDA's journal *Ulster*, claiming "Southern Ireland is a foreign state with whom we can find nothing of importance in common. Our heritage, history and culture are separate and different."<sup>25</sup> Indeed, none of the political parties receiving substantial support from within the

Protestant electorate, not even the bi-confessional Alliance Party, can accept any positive role for the Irish Republic in Ulster affairs, except in the suppression of terrorism on *its own* side of the border. The main difference is simply that the UDA is usually prepared to use stronger language in its condemnation.

Recently the UDA political wing has been more concerned with stressing recognition as the positive dimension to the Protestant case. In the document "The Way Ahead" an open-handed, softer line is taken. It recognizes two distinct traditions in the island of Ireland and indicates the UDA wishes "to co-exist in peace, harmony and in mutual respect." This is much more conciliatory than the denunciations of misty, historical Celtic twilights. Significantly, "The Way Ahead" argues that the ULDP needs help and advice, and that the leadership would welcome not only the advice of the British Government but of the Irish as well, always provided that such aid is "motivated by the desire to encourage reconciliation of Ulster People" and not "self-interest or imperialist design."<sup>26</sup> Such pronouncements have been welcomed by the Irish Government in Dublin. On occasion party and government leaders from the Republic have engaged in dialogue with the UDA. It is clear, however, that the perspective is different on both sides. For the Dublin Government, the aim is to build support for some kind of eventual Irish unity and the recognition of the legitimacy of that ideal. For the UDA, recognition of a separate Ulster identity legitimately having its own political institutions is the goal about which there can be no compromise.

Yet, even such a predictable view of the Irish Republic is difficult to sell to the UDA rank and file. Just the acceptance of a Dublin Government showing concern over Northern Ireland goes deeply against the grain of militant loyalism. Dublin is the "enemy without." McMichael had been working on a submission for the Dublin sponsored New Ireland Forum which had invited proposals from all concerned parties regarding Ireland's constitutional development. He admitted that in the wake of the Darkley murders and the assassination of Unionist Assemblyman Edgar Graham it had been impossible to go forward. To recognize that the proceedings in Dublin had any significance for loyal Ulster people in such circumstances would have "split the movement."<sup>27</sup> While some may deem it a necessity of life, a part of Realpolitik, to recognize that the Republic must at least be involved in the ratification of an Ulster "solution," most do not. Lloyd George was perceptive in his view that borders, once made on a map, become indelible in the minds of an insecure people. The border between Northern Ireland and the Republic of Ireland has for too long been the symbol of Protestant fidelity. It is felt to be the cordon sanitaire for a distinctive way of life. As such, exclusion must remain the main disposition of militant loyalists towards the Dublin Government.

## CONCLUSION

It is not the purpose of this paper to suggest some transcendental synthesis between these two poles of paramilitary thinking. To play around with such concepts as "exclusive recognition" or "recognized

exclusion" would really not fill any need and would be mere academic posturing. It is hard to imagine to what they might apply, although the UDA leadership might find either an "exclusive recognition" of loyalism by Britain or a "recognized exclusion" of an independent Northern Ireland from interference by the Irish Republic a congenial conclusion. Nor indeed would any simplistic moralization be appropriate. That may be left up to archbishops. The wide gulf between exclusion and recognition, the extreme difficulty of compromise, illustrate the clear intractability of the Northern Ireland "problem." As interviews with the UDA leaders show, both conceptions can exist consciously or unconsciously within the same argument.

It would be unfair to attribute such schizophrenia to the UDA leadership alone. It exists in every Protestant consciousness and every Catholic consciousness in Ulster's divided society. At least Tyrrie and McMichael, whatever their shortcomings, conduct their mental wrestling in public. As Michael Oakeshott once wrote somewhere, men sometimes unexpectedly achieve great things in the fog of the unknown and uncertain. Perhaps in the struggle with the uncertainty of their own priorities, the UDA may achieve something worthwhile, a positive contribution to the politics of conflict resolution. To which one may add, but, on the other hand ....

Author's Note

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Footnotes

1. See for instance S. Nelson, *Ulster's Uncertain Defenders* (Appletree Press, 1984); P. O'Malley, *The Uncivil Wars* (Blackstaff Press, 1983); B. Probert, *Beyond Orange and Green* (Zed Press, 1978); G. Bell, *The Protestants of Ulster* (Pluto Press, 1976); D. Miller, *Queen's Rebels* (Gill and Macmillan, 1978); J. Darby (ed.), *Northern Ireland: The Background to the Conflict* (Appletree Press, 1983).
2. O'Malley, p. 341.
3. D.P. Barritt and C.F. Carter, *The Northern Ireland Problem* (OUP, 1962), p. 3.
4. A. Lijphart, "The Northern Ireland Problem: Cases, Theories and Solutions," *British Journal of Political Science*, 5 (1975), p. 83.
5. *Loyalist News*, 7 October, 1972.
6. *Ibid.*, 9 September, 1972.
7. Anon., "Home, Home in Belfast," in *Love Orange, Love Green: Poems of Loving, Living and Dying in Working Class Ulster* (Whitcor Publications, 1973).
8. *Fortnight*, May 1984.
9. *Ibid.*
10. Ulster Defence Association, "Reorganisation," mimeo, 1984.
11. New Ulster Political Research Group, *Beyond the Religious Divide*, March 1979.
12. *Ibid.*, p. 2.
13. Ulster Loyalist Democratic Party, *Peace with Dignity* (1983).
14. O'Malley, p. 337.
15. *Ulster*, April 1982.
16. *Ibid.*, December 1982.
17. O'Malley, p. 355.
18. A.O. Hirschman, *Exit, Voice and Loyalty* (Harvard University Press, 1970), p. 86.
19. Miller, p. 157.
20. ULDP, *The Way Ahead* (1983).
21. See *Ulster*, June 1984.
22. Speech to the House of Commons, 13 February 1981. Reported in *Belfast Telegraph*, 14 February 1981.
23. Cited in N. Frankel, "Conservations in Ulster," *Conflict Quarterly*, 3 (Fall 1982), p. 32.
24. See I. Adamson, *The Cruthin* (Donaldson Press, 1978).
25. Cited in O'Malley, p. 344.
26. *The Way Ahead*.
27. J. McMichael, Interview with P. Boskett, 19 December 1983. Once circumstances were propitious again, once the emotional wave had passed, the ULDP sent their submission to the Prime Minister of the Irish Republic. This may be deemed some form of recognition.